

A Greek-Coptic Miaphysite Litany from Thebes (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 49)
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Abstract: A bilingual Greek-Coptic manuscript (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 49+592) found at the monastic settlement of Epiphanius in Western Thebes contains a litany recounting the principal events in the saving work of Christ. The litany has been overlooked in scholarship on the manuscript and on comparable litanies from antiquity. It differs from other litanies in attributing all the statements to God rather than to Christ. The article argues that the litany was an expression of miaphysite affiliation and belief. The article contextualizes the litany in the robust miaphysite culture of Thebes in the early seventh century and in the Greek-Coptic bilingualism of the time, and it discusses possible uses of the litany in collective worship, monastic prayer, and other rituals.

Keywords: litany, *P.Mon.Epiph.* 49, Miaphysites, Christology, bilingualism, Thebes

1 Introduction

In the late Roman and early Arabic period in Egypt, numerous monastic settlements were created in unoccupied Pharaonic tombs and mortuary temples in the region west of the Nile at Thebes, an area known in antiquity as the “Holy Mountain of Jeme.”¹ One of the better

This paper has its origins in a presentation given at a workshop on Magic in Late Antiquity organized by Avigail Manekin-Bamberger, Gideon Bohak, and Yakir Paz at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2020. I am appreciative of the hospitality and conversations on that occasion. I also gratefully acknowledge the comments of the anonymous reviewer on several points in the Coptic texts. I remain responsible, of course, for what follows. References to papyri, ostraca, and graffiti published in papyrological series use the system of abbreviations found in John F. Oates et al., “Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets,” <http://www.papyri.info/docs/checklist>.

¹ For an overview, see E. Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte (IVe-VIIIe siècles)* (Warsaw 2009) 171-197; D.L. Brooks Hedstrom, *The Monastic Landscape of Late Antique Egypt: An Archaeological Reconstruction* (Cambridge 2017) 238-239, DOI 10.1017/9781316676653. For a map of the monastic settlements in Western Thebes and of the surrounding section of the Nile valley, see R. Dekker, *Episcopal Networks and Authority in Late Antique Egypt: Bishops of the Theban Region at Work* (Leuven 2018) 309-310. For a satellite photograph of Western Thebes, see Wipszycka, *Moines*, 173.

known sites is the *topos* of Apa Epiphanius. Although it was a relatively small settlement, it figures prominently in scholarship because of the exemplary archaeological investigation, description, and documentation from the Metropolitan Museum Egyptian Expedition early in the twentieth century.²

The settlement initially consisted of a cluster of rooms built out of the corridor and subterranean room of the XI Dynasty tomb of Daga at the beginning of the seventh century. Subsequent expansions included the construction of a large “First Tower,” a smaller “Second Tower,”³ a boundary wall, and an adjoining set of rooms built out of another XI Dynasty tomb, that of Sebeknakht, east of the original buildings, eventually also enclosed within a wall. Nearby, three cells for hermits were built out of other XI Dynasty tombs, each with spaces for working and for receiving visitors (Cells A, B, and C). Outside the wall below the larger tower there was a small cemetery for inhabitants of the settlement.⁴

Epiphanius, the monk after whom the settlement is customarily named, was the fourth in a series of leaders of the small community of monks. He held that position from 619 until his death sometime before 623, having been a member of the community under at least two previous leaders,⁵ although at times he may have retreated elsewhere.⁶ Letters and graffiti found at the settlement show that he was revered both in his lifetime and after his

² H.E. Winlock and W.E. Crum, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes, part 1: The Archaeological Material and the Literary Material* (New York, N.Y. 1926), hereafter Winlock and Crum, *Epiphanius 1*; W.E. Crum and H.G. Evelyn White, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes, part 2: Coptic Ostraca and Papyri and Greek Ostraca and Papyri* (New York, N.Y. 1926), hereafter Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*. References to texts edited in part 2 are abbreviated in accordance with papyrological conventions as *P.Mon.Epiph.* (for papyri), *O.Mon.Epiph.* (for ostraca), and *I.Mon.Epiph.* (for inscriptions and graffiti); texts and translations are presented separately in the volume.

³ Although C. Thirard, “Le monastère d’Épiphane à Thèbes: Nouvelle interprétation chronologique,” in *Études coptes IX: Onzième journée d’études, Strasbourg, 12-14 juin 2003*, ed. A. Boud’hors, J. Gascou, and D. Vaillancourt (Paris 2006) 367-374 at 369, argued that the “First Tower” in Winlock’s description was built after the “Second Tower,” Dekker, *Episcopal Networks*, 109 n. 150, gives reasons to accept Winlock’s sequence.

⁴ Winlock and Crum, *Epiphanius 1*, 29-50; Brooks Hedstrom, *The Monastic Landscape*, 241-243.

⁵ R. Dekker, “A Relative Chronology of the *Topos* of Epiphanius: The Identification of Its Leaders,” in *Coptic Society, Literature and Religion from Late Antiquity to Modern Times: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Rome, September 17th-22nd, 2012, and Plenary Reports of the Ninth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Cairo, September 15th-19th, 2008*, ed. P. Buzi, A. Camplani, and F. Contardi, 2 vols. (Leuven 2016) 1,755-767.

⁶ Winlock and Crum, *Epiphanius 1*, 218.

death. He received numerous letters seeking his prayers, advice, mediation, and intervention from local folk, village leaders, clergy, and bishops in the region.⁷

In the interior underground chamber (Room 5) of the original monastery, where the leader of the community probably dwelt, a small space in a corner under the floor (a *serdab* in the Pharaonic tomb) was used for rubbish.⁸ There, along with various discarded items (papyrus sheets, bits of string, old onions, etc.), were found a will addressed to Epiphanius, letters or fragments of letters sent to him, a letter by an unidentified writer to Bishop Pesynthius of Coptos, a manuscript, and fragments of some other texts (a creed, a life or history, and works of Eusebius of Caesarea).⁹ It is reasonable to surmise, as did Herbert Winlock, that Epiphanius dwelt in the chamber while he was leader of the community. After his death, prayers addressed to him were inscribed in the vestibule and corridor leading to the chamber.¹⁰

The litany that is the subject of this paper is found in the manuscript, eight papyrus leaves (17 cm h x 12.5 cm w) stitched together to form a gathering of sixteen pages (a quaternion).¹¹ The first page is unnumbered; the remaining pages are numbered one to fifteen. Most of the manuscript is taken up by two hymns presented in Greek (as an acrostic) and Coptic on facing pages (fol. 1v to 7r).¹² The remaining pages have a miscellany of sayings in Coptic from Athanasius of Alexandria, Severus of Antioch, and the apostles Paul and James (fol. 1r and 8r-v), and a litany presented in Greek and Coptic (fol. 7v).¹³ According to Walter Crum, editor of the Coptic texts found at the site, all the texts in the manuscript were written by the same scribe in a sloping semi-uncial hand resembling that found in a contract

⁷ Winlock and Crum, *Epiphanius 1*, 212-214.

⁸ Winlock and Crum, *Epiphanius 1*, 31, with the plan of the site and buildings at plate III.

⁹ Winlock and Crum, *Epiphanius 1*, 31 n. 5, 218: will (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 87); letters to Epiphanius (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 131, 162, 163, 429, and 442); letter to Pesynthius (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 466); manuscript (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 49+592); other texts (*P.Mon.Epiph.* 43, 82, 584).

¹⁰ *LMon.Epiph.* 640, 644, 647, 680; cf. Winlock and Crum, *Epiphanius 1*, 214.

¹¹ For what follows, see Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 309; A. Boud'hors, "Toujours honneur au grec? À propos d'un papyrus gréco-copte de la région thébaine," in *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the Abbasids*, ed. A. Papaconstantinou (London 2010) 179-188 at 183-185, DOI 10.4324/9781315238210; Á.T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri: An Introduction* (Tubingen 2019) 118-119, DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-157552-5.

¹² *P.Mon.Epiph.* 592 (Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 127-129 [text], 309-312 [translation]; plate I).

¹³ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 49 (Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 9-10 [text], 161 [translation]).

written by a certain Mark,¹⁴ identified as “a priest of the *topos* of St. Mark the Evangelist in the mountain of Djeme,”¹⁵ a site now known as Qurnat Mura’i.¹⁶

2 The litany

In her otherwise excellent discussion of this bilingual manuscript, Anne Boud’hors mistakenly identified the litany as a list of hymn titles.¹⁷ Ágnes Mihálykó comes closer to the mark in describing it “as a series of short statements on Jesus’s life.”¹⁸ But there is more to be said. The litany reads as follows:

Text¹⁹

θεὸς ἡγοῦ : ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΧΙ ΜΟΕΙΤ

θεὸς ἦλθεν : ΔΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΕΙ

θεὸς ἐσαρκώθη ΔΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΧΙ ΣΑΡΞ

θς²⁰ ἐγεννήθη : ΔΥΔΠΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ

(5) θς ἐβαπτίσθη : ΔΥΒΑΠΤΙΖΕ ΜΠΝΟ[ΤΕ]²¹

θς ἐσταυρώθη : ΔΥΣΡΟΥ²² ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ

θς ἀπέθανεν ΔΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΟΥ

¹⁴ Crum and Evelyn White, *Eiphanius 2*, 309.

¹⁵ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 84, lines 30-37; cf. Crum and Evelyn White, *Eiphanius 2*, 173 n. 7.

¹⁶ For a description of the site and the stages of the monastic community there, see M. Martin, R.-G. Coquin, and G. Castel, “Qurnat Mar’i,” in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. A.S. Atiya, vol. 7 (New York, N.Y. 1991) 2040-2043; C. Heurtel, “Marc, le prêtre de Saint-Marc,” in *Actes du huitième Congrès international d’études coptes: Paris, 28 juin-3 juillet 2004*, ed. N. Bosson and A. Boud’hors, 2 vols. (Leuven 2007) 2,727-749 at 727-728; *Ostraca et papyrus coptes du topos de Saint-Marc à Thèbes*, ed. A. Boud’hors and C. Heurtel, 2 vols. (Cairo 2015), 1,6-8. On the priest Mark and the documents associating him with the site, see Heurtel, “Marc, le prêtre de Saint-Marc,” 729-749; Boud’hors and Heurtel, *Ostraca et papyrus coptes du topos de Saint-Marc*, 1,9-14.

¹⁷ Boud’hors, “Toujours honneur,” 183.

¹⁸ Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 119.

¹⁹ My transcription reproduces that of Crum and Evelyn White, *Eiphanius 2*, 10, except that the Greek is normalized.

²⁰ Read: θ(εὸ)ς.

²¹ Read: ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ. In the original, the omicron is written above the word.

²² Read: ΔΥΣΤ(ΔΥ)ΡΟΥ.

Θ̄ς ἀνέστη ἀπνοῦτε τῶογν

Θ̄ς ἀνελήμφθη : ἀπνοῦτε

(10) τῶογν ἀφβωκ

εζραϊ̄ ἐμπηγε

Θ̄ς ἔρχεται πνοῦτε νηγ

Ἰς Χς²³ νικῶ, ἀμὴν ϰΘ²⁴

Ⲡ Ⲡ Ⲡ²⁵

Translation²⁶

Lead,²⁷ O God.²⁸

God came.

God took flesh.

God was born.

God was baptized.

God was crucified.

God died.

God arose.

God was taken up [Greek]. | God arose and went up to the heavens [Coptic].

God is coming.

²³ Read: Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς Χ(ριστὸ)ς.

²⁴ The number 99, the sum of ἀμὴν or ἀμην read as numbers rather than letters (1+40+8+50), a common isopsephism in Greek and Coptic texts from Egypt.

²⁵ In the printed edition, each of the staurograms has a small comma descending from the left end of the cross-bar and a small *lambda* descending from the right end of the cross-bar. Unfortunately, there is no photo of the page. This form of the *crux commata* does not match the one often (but not always) used by Mark, which has a small comma descending from the right end of the cross-bar; see C. Heurtel, “Écrits et écritures de Marc,” in *Études coptes XI: Treizième journée d’études (Marseille 7-9 juin 2007)*, ed. A. Boud’hors and C. Louis (Paris 2010) 139-150 at 140; Boud’hors and Heurtel, *Ostraca et papyrus coptes du topos de Saint-Marc*, 1,9.

²⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, the translation for the Greek and the Coptic is identical.

²⁷ In the Greek, the verb is a present (deponent) imperative. In the Coptic, the verb could be read as either a durative or an imperative; see Bentley Layton, *A Coptic Grammar, with Chrestomathy and Glossary: Sahidic Dialect*, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden 2004), §365. Crum translated it as a durative: “God leadeth”; see Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 161.

²⁸ In later Greek, the nominative form can function as vocative; see F.T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, vol. 2: *Morphology* (Milan 1976) 22 n. 6.

Jesus Christ is victorious, Amen [Greek]. | Amen [Coptic].

The first line—“Lead, O God”—is not part of the litany. The same expression is found above the first bilingual hymn in the manuscript, in both Greek and Coptic, set off by two staurograms.²⁹ H. G. Evelyn White suggested that it was “a pious invocation, or perhaps an *incipit* indicating some well-known melody.”³⁰ The former suggestion seems more likely. The litany lacks the metrical system of the Greek hymns, where each verse has four accents borne by major words with a pause in the middle.³¹ Moreover, a similar invocation appears at the end of a prayer for several monks at the Monastery of Apa Apollo at Bawit.³²

The litany proclaims in a series of declarations the principal moments of Christ’s saving activity as summarized in the second article of early Christian creeds. We find similar litanies in two Greek amulets against fever from Egypt,³³ both of unknown provenance, *Suppl.Mag.* I 23, assigned to the fifth century,³⁴ and *Suppl.Mag.* I 35, assigned to the sixth.³⁵ In *Suppl.Mag.* I 23 the litany reads: “† Christ was born, amen. | Christ was crucified, amen. | Christ was buried, amen. | Christ arose, amen. | He has awoken to judge the living | and the dead.”³⁶ This is followed by an injunction commanding the fever to flee and a second injunction enjoining the “holy inscription and mighty signs” drawn on the amulet (a stele and two *charaktères*) to chase the fever away. In *Suppl.Mag.* I 35 the litany reads: “✠ Christ was proclaimed in advance. | ✠ Christ appeared. | ✠ Christ suffered. | ✠ Christ died. | ✠ Christ was raised. | ✠ Christ was taken up. | ✠ Christ reigns.”³⁷ The text continues with the assertion

²⁹ See Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, plate I.

³⁰ Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 309 n. 5.

³¹ Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 309. On the metrical accentual system, see D.G. Martinez, *P. Michigan XIX: Baptized for Our Sakes. A Leather Trisagion from Egypt (P. Mich. 799)* (Stuttgart 1999) 2-5.

³² J. Maspero, *Fouilles exécutées à Baouît par Jean Maspero*, ed. É. Drioton, vols. 59.1 of *Mémoires de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale* (Cairo 1932) 60 n. 3 (no. 49).

³³ On these two amulets, see T. de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian: Artefacts, Scribes, and Contexts* (Oxford 2017) 207-210, DOI 10.1093/os0/9780199687886.001.0001.

³⁴ R.W. Daniel and F. Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum*, 2 vols. (Opladen 1991) 1,63-66.

³⁵ Daniel and Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum*, 1,102-103.

³⁶ *Suppl.Mag.* I 23.1-6: † Χριστὸς ἐγεννήθη, ἀμήν. | Χριστὸς ἐσταυρόθη, ἀμήν. | Χριστὸς ἐτάφη, ἀμήν. | Χριστὸς ἀνέστη, ἀμή<ν>. | γεγέρθη κρῖνε ζῶντας | και νεκρούς; translation by Daniel and Maltomini.

³⁷ *Suppl.Mag.* I 35.2-8: ✠ Χ(ριστὸ)ς προεχ[ηρύχθη] | ✠ Χ(ριστὸ)ς ἐφάνη | ✠ Χ(ριστὸ)ς ἔπαθεν | ✠ Χ(ριστὸ)ς ἀπέθαγεν | ✠ Χ(ριστὸ)ς ἀνηγέρθη | ✠ Χ(ριστὸ)ς ἀνελήμφθη | ✠ Χ(ριστὸ)ς βασιλεύει; translation by Daniel and Maltomini.

that Christ saves the named individual from every fever. Both amulets conclude with the customary formula “now, now, quickly, quickly.” Similar litanies surface much later in incantations and exorcisms preserved in Greek manuscripts from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries.³⁸ But the amulets offer the most explicit evidence to date that recitations of the saving activity of Christ were used in incantations in Late Antiquity to repel or expel sickness-bearing evil spirits. Otherwise, we have only indirect evidence from Justin Martyr and Origen that brief recitations of the career of Christ were used to drive out such spirits.³⁹

The litany in the bilingual manuscript, however, has a different purpose. It is not the preamble to an adjuration or exorcism. It stands alone as a declaration of belief and affiliation, and the belief and affiliation it affirms is that of a miaphysite Christian. This is evident from its attribution of all the events in the litany to God rather than to Christ. In the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon in 451, Miaphysites held that all the human experiences of Christ could be and should be attributed to the one nature of the Word-made-flesh; they rejected the Chalcedonian position that one could distinguish two natures in Christ, a divine nature and a human nature, and that the human experiences of Christ should properly be attributed to the latter.

3 Miaphysitism in Egypt and Thebes

In Egypt, the schism between pro-Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians did not coalesce into parallel institutional structures until late in the sixth century.⁴⁰ Opponents of Chalcedon

³⁸ A. Vassiliev, *Anecdota Graeco-Byzantina: Pars Prior* (Moscow 1893) 339 (no. 18), 343 (no. 1); F. Pradel, *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete, Beschwörungen und Rezepte des Mittelalters* (Giessen 1907) 13.23-14.6 with 48-49; A. Delatte, *Anecdota Atheniensiæ*, vol. 1: *Textes grecs inédits relatifs à l'histoire des religions* (Liège and Paris 1927) 146 (lines 17-19), 616 (lines 2-4); and A. Tselikas, “Spells and Exorcisms in Three Post-Byzantine Manuscripts,” in *Greek Magic: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*, ed. J.C.B. Petropoulos (Abingdon and New York, N.Y. 2008) 72-81 at 75, 77-78.

³⁹ Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 85,2, in *Justin Martyr, Dialogue avec Tryphon*, ed. P. Bobichon, 2 vols. (Fribourg 2003) 1,416; Origen, *Con. Cels.* 1,6 (SC 132,90). For further discussion, see de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 205-207; T.S. de Bruyn, “What Did Ancient Christians Say When They Cast Out Demons? Inferences from Spells and Amulets,” in *Christians Shaping Identity from the Roman Empire to Byzantium: Studies Inspired by Pauline Allen*, ed. W. Mayer and G.D. Dunn (Leiden 2015) 64-82 at 64-67.

⁴⁰ On the shifting fortunes and loyalties of anti-Chalcedonians in Egypt in the sixth and early seventh century, see P. Booth, “Towards the Coptic Church: The Making of the Severan Episcopate,”

were divided among several factions, and the anti-Chalcedonian hierarchy was further weakened by persecution under the emperor Justinian and his successors, who pursued a policy of installing only pro-Chalcedonian bishops. After the death of the Alexandrian patriarch Theodosius I (535-566), the patriarchate was vacant for nine years, and the “Severan” or “Theodosian” hierarchy in Egypt, so named for their allegiance to the tradition of Severus of Antioch and Theodosius I of Alexandria,⁴¹ was depleted. However, the patriarch Peter IV (575-577), despite his contested election and short tenure, ordained bishops throughout the region, effectively establishing a parallel hierarchy. His efforts were consolidated by his successor, Damian (577-c. 606), an energetic leader of the Severan miaphysite tradition in Egypt and a determined proponent of Alexandrian primacy among his miaphysite colleagues in the eastern empire.⁴²

The monks of the *topos* of Apa Epiphanius affiliated with Damian’s robust miaphysitism. Damian’s *Synodal Letter*, addressed to Jacob Baradaeus and the clergy and monks of the East soon after he was consecrated patriarch of Alexandria, was painted on the wall to the right of the steps descending to the vestibule fronting the corridor that led to the inner chamber of the monastery. It was one of several miaphysite texts inscribed in Greek and Coptic alongside the steps and on the facing wall of the vestibule.⁴³ The letter, originally

Millennium 14 (2017) 151-189, DOI 10.1515/mill-2017-0005. For briefer accounts, see Dekker, *Episcopal Networks*, 4-9; J. van der Vliet, “Pesyntios of Coptos/Qift (ca. 568-632) and the Rise of the Egyptian Miaphysite Church,” *Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies* 3-4 (2012) 27-42 at 28-29; E. Wipszycka, “The Institutional Church,” in *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300-700*, ed. R.S. Bagnall (Cambridge 2007) 331-349 at 343-344.

⁴¹ Dekker, *Episcopal Networks*, 4 n. 28.

⁴² On Damian and his actions in Egypt and in the eastern empire, see Booth, “Towards the Coptic Church,” 171-174; P. Blaudeau, “Le voyage de Damien d’Alexandrie vers Antioche puis Constantinople (579-580) - motivations et objectifs,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 63 (1997) 333-361; C.D.G. Müller, “Damian, Papst und Patriarch von Alexandrien,” *Oriens Christianus* 70 (1986) 118-142; *Peter of Callinicum: Anti-Tritheist Dossier*, ed. R.Y. Ebied, A. van Roey, and L.R. Wickham (Leuven 1981) 34-43; and J. Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches d’Alexandrie depuis la mort de l’empereur Anastase jusqu’à la réconciliation des églises jacobites (518-616)*, ed. A. Fortescue and G. Wiet (Paris 1923) 278-317.

⁴³ For the location of these inscriptions, see Winlock and Crum, *Epiphanius* 1, fig. 2; for the texts and translations, see Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius* 2, 148-152, 331-341 (Appendix 1), with 124-125, 141, 306-308, 326 (*LMon.Epiph.* 585, 586, and 635). The *Synodal Letter* of Damian is inscription A in the figure and in Appendix I. L.S.B. MacCoull, “Prophethood, Texts and Artifacts: The Monastery of Epiphanius,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 39 (1998) 307-324 at 314-316, vividly evokes the effect of this visual display of orthodoxy on a visitor.

composed in Greek, is given in Coptic on the wall.⁴⁴ The inscription has survived only in a fragmentary state. The Greek text of the letter has not survived, but a Syriac version of the letter is found in the twelfth-century *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian.⁴⁵ The Coptic inscription differs frequently from the Syriac version and omits certain sections,⁴⁶ including the preamble describing how Damian came to be ordained by Peter IV and then elected patriarch upon the latter's death.⁴⁷ But the Coptic inscription is nevertheless sufficient as a context for the litany.

The purpose of the letter was to set out for his colleagues in the East the orthodoxy to which Damian subscribed. The doctrinal exposition is divided into two parts, the first trinitarian,⁴⁸ the second christological.⁴⁹ In the trinitarian section, Damian affirms repeatedly that there is a single essence and godhead in God, as there is a single nature, rule, kingdom, glory, might, operation, power, will, and knowledge. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share equally, as hypostases, in this single essence and godhead without confusion, distinguished by their properties. (These are explained in the Syriac document, but not the Coptic inscription, to be fatherhood/ingeneracy, filiation/generacy, and procession.⁵⁰) After expounding on this at length, Damian anathematizes “those who say that the Holy Trinity did altogether take flesh in one of the hypostases and who do not confess that only one of the three hypostases, God the Word, took flesh and became man. For neither [the Father nor the] Holy Spirit took flesh or was made man.”⁵¹ In other words, the consubstantiality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit should not lead one to attribute the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Word to the other persons of the Trinity. In the christological section that follows, Damian explains how God the Word, one of the Trinity, took flesh with a reasonable

⁴⁴ Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 148-150 (text), 332-337 (translation); U. Brouriant, “L'Église copte du tombeau de Déga,” *Mémoires publiés par les membres de la mission archéologique française au Caire* 1 (1889) 33-50 at 36-41.

⁴⁵ Michael the Syrian, *Chron.* 10,14, in *Chronique de Michel le Syrien Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (n66-n99)*, ed. J.-B. Chabot, vol. 2 (Paris 1901) 325-334 (translation).

⁴⁶ Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 331-337; the variances are noted in the translation.

⁴⁷ Chabot, *Chronique de Michel*, 325a-328a. The translation in Chabot reads down the first column (a) of pp. 325-332, followed by the text on pp. 333-334, and concluding with the second column (b) of pp. 325-332.

⁴⁸ Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 148, frag. a, line 7-149, line 45; cf. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel*, 328a-334.

⁴⁹ Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 149, line 45-151, line 125; cf. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel*, 325b-331b.

⁵⁰ Chabot, *Chronique de Michel*, 329a.

⁵¹ Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 149, lines 32-35 (text); 334 (translation, here modified).

and intelligent soul such that the one divine nature of God the Word remained impassible and immortal, on the one hand, and experienced suffering and death in his flesh, on the other. As Damian affirms at one point in this exposition, all the qualities of the humanity are taken up into the divine nature of God the Word such that both the miracles and the sufferings are of this one nature enfleshed.⁵² Those who attempt to distinguish between what may be ascribed to the divine nature of Christ and what may be ascribed to the human nature of Christ (double predication) deny the oneness of the one born of the Virgin and are unable to call her “God-bearer.”⁵³

The litany in the manuscript, I would argue, is an expression of this miaphysite orthodoxy. All the statements are attributed to God rather than to Christ. Such unqualified declarations would have smacked of theopaschism to adherents of Chalcedon, who would have objected to them for the same reasons that they objected to the introduction of the clause “who was crucified for us” into the Trisagion. For miaphysite Christians, however, the statements epitomize the conviction that, in the words of Damian, the one born of the Virgin is “true God”;⁵⁴ all the experiences of Jesus can and should be attributed to this One after the incarnation. The litany is, evidently, not as nuanced as Damian’s exposition; “God” is not explained to refer to “God the Word.” Nevertheless, the events mentioned would have been taken to refer to God the Word, as the final acclamation, “Jesus Christ is victorious,” indicates.

4 The litany and the Trisagion

As a ritualized and simplified declaration of miaphysite orthodoxy, the litany invites comparison with the Trisagion. A quintessential liturgical expression of miaphysite orthodoxy was a version of the Trisagion in which the words “who was crucified for us” were inserted before the words “have mercy on us”: “Holy is God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, who was crucified for us, have mercy on us.”⁵⁵ In its original form, without the

⁵² Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 150, lines 74-76 (text); 335 (translation).

⁵³ Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 150, lines 76-82 (text); 335 (translation).

⁵⁴ Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 150, lines 80-81 (text); 335 (translation).

⁵⁵ The literature on the Trisagion is extensive. For a comprehensive overview, on which the following summary draws, see S. Janeras, “Le Trisagion: Une formule brève en liturgie comparée,” in *Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (1872-1948): Acts of the International Congress, Rome, 25-29 September 1998*, ed. R.F. Taft and G. Winkler (Rome 2001) 495-562, with prior literature at 495 n. 2. In addition, see Martinez, *P. Michigan XLIX*, 6-20; S.P. Brock, “The Thrice-Holy Hymn in the Liturgy,” *Sobornost* 7 (1985) 24-34 at 28-30; E. Klum-Böhmer, *Das Trishagion als Versöhnungsformel*

addition, this chant was an affirmation of Christ’s divinity, power, and immortality. It is first attested at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, where it was chanted by bishops from Syria, Asia Minor, and Thrace at the end of the first session when the imperial commissioners provisionally deposed Dioscorus of Alexandria, Juvenal of Jerusalem, and four other bishops for their role in deposing Flavian, the patriarch of Constantinople, during the Second Council of Ephesus in 449.⁵⁶ In a sermon on the Trisagion given in April 518, Severus of Antioch asserts that at the time of Chalcedon the chant was a relatively recent liturgical innovation.⁵⁷ Many sources, both pro-Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian, attest that the clause “who was crucified for us” was introduced into the chant by Peter the Fuller, the miaphysite patriarch of Antioch, in 470. In regions where the chant was traditionally addressed to Christ—Syria, parts of Asia Minor, and Egypt—the chant with the addition was not exclusively miaphysite; it could be understood and rendered in accordance with Chalcedonian christology.⁵⁸ But in the long contentious struggle between pro-Chalcedonians and anti-Chalcedonians, the chant with the addition came to be viewed by both sides of the doctrinal divide as a characteristic liturgical expression of churches opposed to Chalcedon. Likewise, in regions that previously ascribed the acclamation to the Trinity rather than to Christ—Jerusalem, Constantinople, and the West—the original chant addressed to the Trinity became the form sung in the liturgies of churches adhering to Chalcedon.

Numerous examples of the Trisagion with clauses referring to the principal events in the life of Christ—not only the crucifixion—have survived from Egypt. Many of these “developed Trisagia,” as they are termed, are believed to have come from the area west of the Nile at Thebes in the seventh or eighth century,⁵⁹ the period when the *topos* of Apa

der Christenheit: Kontroverstheologie im V. und VI. Jahrhundert (Munich 1979); L. Koenen, “Ein christlicher Prosahymnus des 4.Jhdt.s (O. Zucker 36),” in *Antidoron Martino David Oblatum, Miscellanea Papyrologica*, ed. E. Boswinkel, B.A. van Groningen, and P.W. Pestman (Leiden 1968) 31-52 at 34-37; and S. Janeras, “Les byzantins et le Trisagion christologique,” in *Miscellanea liturgica in onore di sua eminenza il Cardinale Giacomo Lercaro*, 2 vols. (Rome 1966) 2,469-499.

⁵⁶ The Council of Chalcedon, *act.* 1,1068-1071 (ACO 1.2.1.1,195). On these events, see R. Price and M. Gaddis, trans., *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 3 vols. (Liverpool 2007) 1,31-33, 45-46, 364.

⁵⁷ Severus of Antioch, *hom.* 125 (PO 29.1, 248-249). For the date of the sermon, see M. Brière, “Introduction générale aux homélies de Sévère d’Antioche,” PO 29.1 (Paris 1960) 7-72 at 62; cf. Janeras, “Les byzantins,” 475-476.

⁵⁸ Janeras, “Le Trisagion,” 546; Martinez, *P. Michigan XIX*, 17-18; cf. Janeras, “Les byzantins,” 489-491.

⁵⁹ For Trisagia possibly or certainly from Western Thebes, see Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, Table of Liturgical Papyri, nos. 11, 12, 70, 86, 104, 108, 110, 143, 175, 222-225, 233, 258, and 307. Hereafter the number in this table will be given for items when they are first cited.

Ephiphanius was inhabited.⁶⁰ Several of them were found at the site of the monastery.⁶¹ These developed Trisagia took various forms. In several instances, each of the three acclamations is amplified by a clause.⁶² In other instances, the clause is added after all three acclamations.⁶³ In yet another instance, the acclamations precede stanzas of a hymn (a *χαίρετισμός*).⁶⁴ In the first two types—those in which the additional clauses follow each acclamation and those in which an additional clause follows all three acclamations—the formulation of the clauses is not standard; they vary in the events recalled and the phrasing of the recollection. In other words, these renderings of the Trisagion are not determined by a set form such as one finds, for example, in later manuscripts of the Liturgy of the Hours, where the chant is repeated three times, followed first by a recollection of the incarnation, then by a recollection of the crucifixion, and finally by a recollection of the resurrection and ascension.⁶⁵ But at the same time, not every instance is unique. One developed Trisagion is

⁶⁰ Dekker, “A Relative Chronology,” identifies two periods of settlement, one in the first half of the seventh century, the other in the first half of the eighth century.

⁶¹ *O.Mon.Epiph.* 595, 596, 597 (see now C. Grassien, “Problèmes d’édition dans le corpus papyrologique des hymnes chrétiennes,” *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete* 51 [2009]: 253-279 at 265-270, DOI doi.org/10.1515/apf.2005.51.2.253), 598, and 607 (see now Á.T. Mihálykó, “P.Mon.Epiph. 607: Great Doxology and ‘Trisagion’,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 194 [2015]: 97-100) (Mihálykó nos. 222-225, 233).

⁶² E.g., Geneva, Private collection Georges Nagel 8 (Mihálykó no. 108), in A. Di Bitonto Kasser, “Due nuovi testi cristiani,” *Aegyptus* 79 (1999) 93-106 at 93-101; London, British Library, O 5852 (Mihálykó no. 11), in Koenen, “Ein christlicher Prosahymnus,” 51-52 (lines 1-11); *O.Crum* Add. no. 39 (Mihálykó no. 86), in Koenen, “Ein christlicher Prosahymnus,” 42-44 (*e*, lines 16-26); *O.Frangé* 791 inside (Mihálykó no. 104), in *Les ostraca coptes de la TT 29: Autour du moine Frangé*, ed. A. Boud’hors and C. Heurtel, 2 vols. (Brussels 2010), 1,423-424, 2, plate 130; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 597 recto and verso (Mihálykó no. 224), in Grassien, “Problèmes d’édition,” 265-270; *O.Mon.Epiph.* 598 (Mihálykó no. 225), in Koenen, “Ein christlicher Prosahymnus,” 40-41 (*b*), with L. Koenen, “Der erweiterte Trishagion-Hymnus des Ms. Insinger und des P. Berl. Inv. 16389,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 31 (1978) 71-76 at 75 n. 5; *Pap.Graec.Mag.* II O 3 (Mihálykó no. 307), in Koenen, “Ein christlicher Prosahymnus,” 39-40 (*a*).

⁶³ E.g., Berlin, Staatliche Museen P 364 (Mihálykó no. 143), in K. Treu, “Varia Christiana I,” *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 24/25 (1976) 113-127 at 114-117; London, British Library O 5852, lines 16-20 (see n. 62 above).

⁶⁴ *P.David* 5 (Mihálykó no. 175), in Koenen, “Ein christlicher Prosahymnus,” 31-32.

⁶⁵ H. Quecke, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Stundengebet* (Louvain 1970) 302-304, with the texts at 420-421 (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS 574, 9th century), 485-486 (Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum, MS 924.68.2, 13th-14th century), and 504-505 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS copte 68, 15th or 16th century). Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 123, suggests that, given the absence of

attested by three witnesses: an ostrakon from the writings of Frange,⁶⁶ a monk who in the eighth century inhabited a tomb close to the *topos* of Apa Epiphanius (Theban Tomb [TT] 29);⁶⁷ another contemporary ostrakon from the region;⁶⁸ and a later Arabic liturgical manuscript, in a ritual for the consecration of the Myron.⁶⁹ Likewise, a hymn incorporating the Trisagion is attested by two witnesses: a papyrus sheet of unknown provenance assigned to the sixth or seventh century,⁷⁰ and a parchment manuscript from the White Monastery assigned to the eighth or ninth century,⁷¹ where it is given the rubric “Trisagion of the fourth Sunday.”⁷²

The litany in the manuscript differs from these developed Trisagia in several respects. First, it recites all the moments in the salvific activity of God the Word: coming, incarnation, birth, baptism, crucifixion, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming. Furthermore, it recites these moments in the manner of the second article of early Christian creeds, without any of the elaborations found in the developed Trisagia, which refer, for example, to details of the nativity or the descent to Hades,⁷³ as might be expected of Trisagia for specific feasts.⁷⁴ Finally, all the events are attributed simply to God, whereas in the developed Trisagia they are understood to refer to the Word before and after the

texts from the Eucharist from Western Thebes, the developed Trisagia found there were used in the Liturgy of the Hours.

⁶⁶ *O.Frangé* 791 inside (see n. 62 above).

⁶⁷ Boud'hors and Heurtel, *Les ostraca coptes de la TT 29*, 1,10-12, 16.

⁶⁸ Geneva, Private collection Georges Nagel 8 (see n. 62 above).

⁶⁹ Boud'hors and Heurtel, *Les ostraca coptes de la TT 29*, 1,423; Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 312.

⁷⁰ Berlin, Staatliche Museen, P 16389 (Mihálykó no. 162), in K. Treu, “Ein altkirchlicher Christushymnus (P. Berol. 16 389),” *Novum Testamentum* 19 (1977) 142-149; date given as VI-VII in the Berliner Papyrusdatenbank (<https://berlpap.smb.museum/04117/>).

⁷¹ Leiden, MS Insinger 32, p. 68, lines 2-9, in W. Pleyte and P.A.A. Boeser, *Manuscripts coptes du Musée d'Antiquités des Pays-Bas à Leide* (Leiden 1897) 140; Th. Schermann, *Ägyptische Abendmahlsliturgien des ersten Jahrtausends in ihrer Überlieferung dargestellt* (Paderborn 1912) 222; Koenen, “Ein christlicher Prosahymnus,” 38 n. 22; cf. Koenen, “Der erweiterte Trishagion-Hymnus.” For the date, see Treu, “Ein altkirchlicher Christushymnus,” 144 n. 8.

⁷² Treu, “Ein altkirchlicher Christushymnus,” 145. Schermann, *Ägyptische Abendmahlsliturgien*, 222, identifies it as a Trisagion for the Octave of Epiphany.

⁷³ Nativity: *O.Frangé* 791 inside (see n. 62 above); Geneva, Private collection Georges Nagel 8 (see n. 62 above). Descent to Hades: *O.Mon.Epiph.* 598 (see n. 62 above).

⁷⁴ Cf. Quecke, *Untersuchungen*, 302 n. 11, on the forms for Christmas, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, and Easter in the Coptic Church.

incarnation. (In one developed Trisagion, which follows a Troparion that alludes to the Definition of Chalcedon, this understanding is rendered explicit by inserting “Christ our God” before “have mercy on us.”⁷⁵)

5 The scribe, bilingualism, and the litany

As we have already mentioned, Walter Crum observed that the hand of the manuscript resembled that of the inscriptions and the contract written by the priest and scribe Mark.⁷⁶ Although we cannot know for certain if he wrote the texts in the manuscript,⁷⁷ his work as a scribe can still help us understand the type of person who might have written them. Numerous letters and documents written by Mark on his own behalf or on behalf of others, as well as letters addressed to him, have been found at the *topos* of Apa Epiphanius, the *topos* of St. Mark, and the tomb that later served as the hermitage of Frange.⁷⁸ From them and other documents emerges a picture of someone who was closely associated both with the monks at the *topos* of Apa Epiphanius, particularly Epiphanius and his disciple and successor Psan, and with the miaphysite bishops in the region, whom Mark served as scribe and emissary.⁷⁹ At the time several miaphysite bishops resided in Western Thebes rather

⁷⁵ O.Crum Add. no. 39 (see n. 62 above); cf. lines 12 and 25.

⁷⁶ See n. 14 above.

⁷⁷ Boud'hors, “Toujours honneur,” 184, opined that Mark could well have been the scribe of the manuscript; Boud'hors and Heurtel, *Ostraca et papyrus coptes du topos de Saint-Marc*, 21, include only *P.Mon.Epiph.* 592 (not *P.Mon.Epiph.* 49) in their list of ostraca and papyri written by Mark from sites other than the *topos* of St. Mark and describe it more tentatively as possibly copied by Mark (“Copié par Marc ?”). See also n. 25 above.

⁷⁸ A number of these were initially presented and discussed in Heurtel, “Marc, le prêtre de Saint-Marc”; C. Heurtel, “Écrits et écritures de Marc”; C. Heurtel, “Trois ostraca supplémentaires de la main du prêtre Marc,” in *Études coptes XII: Quatorzième journée d'études (Rome, 11-13 juin 2009)*, ed. A. Boud'hors and C. Louis (Paris 2013) 77-84; C. Heurtel, “Un nouvel exemple de l'activité de scribe du prêtre Marc à Thèbes,” in *Études coptes XIII: Quinzième journée d'études (Louvain-la-Neuve, 12-14 mai 2011)*, ed. A. Boud'hors and C. Louis (Paris 2015) 121-126. All the ostraca from the *topos* of St. Mark written by the priest Mark (*O.Saint-Marc* 1-167) have now been published in Boud'hors and Heurtel, *Ostraca et papyrus coptes du topos de Saint-Marc*, with a list of those originating elsewhere given at 19-22.

⁷⁹ J. van der Vliet, “Le prêtre Marc, Psan et Pesynthios: Un réseau miaphysite autour du monastère d'Épiphane,” in *Études coptes XIII: Quinzième journée d'études (Louvain-la-Neuve, 12-14 mai 2011)*, ed. A. Boud'hors and C. Louis (Paris 2015) 127-136. Mark's position in the networks of Pesynthius,

than in the towns to which they were appointed because, as Ewa Wipszycka has suggested, their pro-Chalcedonian counterparts controlled the towns.⁸⁰ This was the case for Pesynthius, bishop of Coptos from 598/9 to 631/2, who, according to the *Encomium* recounting his life, began his episcopate while he was a monk at Tsenti, near the modern town of Naqqada, and spent much of it in Western Thebes, near the *topos* of Apa Epiphanius.⁸¹ Thus, Mark was at the centre of miaphysite leadership, organization, communication, and, of course, worship in the region.

An obvious feature of the manuscript is its presentation of the two hymns and the litany in Greek and Coptic. For all three texts, the Greek and the Coptic are presented such that the reader can see the two versions at once, on facing pages for the two hymns and in parallel columns for the litany. The Coptic versions are not exact translations of the Greek; in all three texts, the Coptic diverges at points from the Greek,⁸² a phenomenon observed in other bilingual manuscripts from this period.⁸³ Since the Coptic versions of the hymns do not replicate the acrostic design and metrical arrangement of the Greek stanzas, it is unlikely that they were included to be sung. Rather, as the presentation on facing pages suggests, the Coptic was meant to assist a reader in following or understanding the Greek. The same is probably true for the litany.

Although prayers in Coptic begin to appear in significant numbers in the sixth and seventh centuries, particularly in Western Thebes, Greek continued to be the language of the liturgy.⁸⁴ Acclamations were chanted in Greek,⁸⁵ and hymns were sung in Greek.⁸⁶ While Greek and Coptic copies of the Nicene and Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creeds—one of the

Epiphanius, and Psan, especially from 620 to 630, has now been mapped out in detail in Dekker, *Episcopal Networks*, 138-140, 215-216, 220, with plates 2.1, 2.2, 3.4, 5.7, 5.8.

⁸⁰ Wipszycka, "The Institutional Church," 344-345; van der Vliet, "Pesyntios of Coptos/Qift," 30; Booth, "Towards the Coptic Church," 179-180.

⁸¹ On Pesynthius, see P. Booth, "A Circle of Egyptian Bishops at the End of Roman Rule (c. 600)," *Le Muséon* 131 (2018) 21-72 at 39-43, DOI 10.2143/MUS.131.1.3284834; Booth, "Towards the Coptic Church," 174-177; Van der Vliet, "Pesyntios of Coptos/Qift," 31-32; R. Dekker, "Bishop Pesynthios of Koptos (Egypt): 'He Did Not Pursue the Honour, but It Was the Honour That Pursued Him,'" in *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, ed. J. Leemans *et al.*, (Berlin 2011) 331-341 at 332-333, DOI 10.1515/9783110268607.331; Winlock and Crum, *Epiphanius 1*, 223-231.

⁸² See the observations of Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, 309-311.

⁸³ Boud'hors, "Toujours honneur," 186-187.

⁸⁴ Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 259-265, with 261-262 on Western Thebes.

⁸⁵ Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 265-266.

⁸⁶ Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 268, 271.

texts with which our litany has an affinity—have survived from Western Thebes,⁸⁷ the numerous examples of developed Trisagia from the region—the other text with which our litany has an affinity—are all in Greek. It is likely, therefore, that the litany was originally composed or conveyed in Greek. The Coptic version was presumably added to help a reader understand the Greek, enable someone to recite in Coptic a text commonly recited in Greek, or possibly, as Anne Boud'hors has suggested, validate the Coptic version by presenting it alongside the Greek version.⁸⁸

The Coptic version of the litany is a more layered text than it might seem to be at first sight. This becomes apparent when the statements in both versions of the litany are compared with the second article of early Christian creeds.⁸⁹ The litany does not echo the second article of the creeds exactly. On one point, in fact, it diverges from them all: the baptism of Jesus does not figure in the articulation of the saving work of the incarnate Son of God in the numerous synodal statements from the fourth century.⁹⁰ But an interesting difference between the Greek and Coptic versions of the litany emerges when one compares them with the Greek and Coptic texts of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed,⁹¹ the creed that was probably recited during the Eucharist in Western Thebes.⁹² In the Greek, the litany

⁸⁷ Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 143 n. 235. In addition to the instances given there, see A. Delattre, “Graffiti de la montagne thébaine. I,” *Chronique d’Égypte* 76 (2001) 333-339 at 333-336, DOI 10.1484/J.CDE.2.309182 (the Greek text of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed inscribed by some monks at a site in the Valley of the Queens).

⁸⁸ Boud'hors, “Toujours honneur,” 188.

⁸⁹ The literature on the development of early Christian creeds is considerable. For a recent compilation of all the evidence, see W. Kinzig and C.M. Hays, *Faith in Formulae: A Collection of Early Christian Creeds and Creed-Related Texts*, 4 vols. (Oxford 2017). For a convenient overview of the phrasing of the second article in multiple creeds, see H. Lietzmann, “Symbolstudien III,” in H. Lietzmann, *Kleine Schriften III: Studien zur Liturgie- und Symbolgeschichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Berlin 1962) 194-211 at 198-208.

⁹⁰ See, briefly, Lietzmann, “Symbolstudien III,” 203-205, and, comprehensively, Kinzig and Hays, *Faith in Formulae*, 1,269-552. The baptism of Jesus does, however, figure in developed Trisagia, particularly those for the Feast of the Epiphany; see, e.g., Berlin, Staatliche Museen P 364, line 30 (see n. 63 above); Berlin, Staatliche Museen, P 16389, lines 5-7 (see n. 70 above); Leiden, MS Insinger 32, p. 68, lines 4-5, in Koenen, “Ein christlicher Prosahymnus,” 38 n. 22 (see n. 71 above); *O.Frangé* 791 outside, line 2 (see n. 62 above); *P. Mich.* 799, lines 14-15 (see n. 31 above).

⁹¹ The litany refers to the crucifixion, which the Nicene Creed does not mention, but the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed does.

⁹² See the observations of Delattre, “Graffiti de la montagne thébaine. I,” 335; Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 143 n. 235.

has ἦλθεν for the coming of the Son, ἐγεννήθη for his birth, ἀπέθανεν for his death, and ἀνελήμφθη for his ascension, whereas the creed has κατελθόντα, ἐνανθρωπήσαντα, παθόντα και ταφέντα, and ἀνελθόντα for these statements.⁹³ In the Coptic, however, the litany and the creed use the same expressions for all the statements—ⲁⲩⲉⲓ, ⲁⲩⲁⲓ ⲥⲁⲣⲗ, ⲁⲩⲥⲣⲟⲩ (for ⲁⲩⲥⲦⲁⲩⲣⲟⲩ), ⲁⲩⲙⲟⲩ, ⲁⲩⲦⲱⲟⲩⲛ, ⲁⲩⲩⲱⲕ ⲉⲣⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲛⲙⲡⲏⲩⲩⲉ, and ⲩⲛⲏⲩ⁹⁴—except the birth of Jesus, which has ⲁⲩⲗⲡⲉ (“was born”) in the litany, but ⲁⲩⲡ̅ ⲣⲱⲙⲉ (“became a human being”) in the creed (see Table 1). Thus, in providing a Coptic equivalent to the Greek text of the litany, the writer drew on a broader Coptic aural-written culture, specifically, on the Coptic version of the creed.

Table 1: Comparison of Vocabulary Used in the Litany and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

Litany		Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed		
Greek	Coptic	Greek ⁹⁵	Coptic ⁹⁶	English
ἦλθεν	ⲁ- ⲉⲓ	κατελθόντα	ⲁⲩⲉⲓ	(he) came
ἐσαρκώθη	ⲁ- ⲁⲓ ⲥⲁⲣⲗ	σαρκωθέντα	ⲁⲩⲁⲓ ⲥⲁⲣⲗ	was incarnate
ἐγεννήθη	ⲁⲩⲗⲡⲉ	ἐνανθρωπήσαντα	ⲁⲩⲡ̅ ⲣⲱⲙⲉ	was made a human being
ἐβαπτίσθη	ⲁⲩⲩⲱⲕⲧⲓⲥⲉ	—	—	—
ἐσταυρώθη	ⲁⲩⲥⲣⲟⲩ	σταυρωθέντα	ⲁⲩⲥⲣⲟⲩ	was crucified

⁹³ For the Greek text of the creed, see G.L. Dossetti, *Il simbolo di Nicea e di Costantinopoli: Edizione critica* (Rome 1967) 244-251; Kinzig and Hays, *Faith in Formulae*, 1,511-519. For an instance from Western Thebes, written on a piece of limestone and assigned to the first half of the eighth century, see *P.Gen. IV 154*, in *Les papyrus de Genève. Quatrième volume: Nos 147-205. Textes littéraires, semi-littéraires et documentaires*, ed. S. Gaffino Möri et al. (Geneva 2010) 57-65. To the list of extant attestations of the creed on papyrus, ostraca, and wood given there at p. 58 and in A. Delattre, “Un symbole de Nicée en copte sur ostracon: Édition de O. Berol. Inv. 20892,” *Journal of Coptic Studies* 13 (2011) 113-115 at 113 n. 3, DOI 10.2143/JCS.13.0.2141793, add A. Delattre and N. Vanthieghem, “Un symbole de Nicée-Constantinople au verso d’un protocole arabe: Édition de P. Stras. Inv. Kop. 221 + 224,” *Journal of Coptic Studies* 15 (2013) 239-252 at 244-247, DOI 10.2143/JCS.15.0.3005422.

⁹⁴ *P.Mon.Epiph.* 43, the sole extant witness to the Coptic text of the creed from Western Thebes, has only the opening lines. For two witnesses to the Coptic text of the creed from the ninth century, see Quecke, *Untersuchungen*, 436-438 (the entire text in a manuscript of the Liturgy of the Hours) and Delattre and Vanthieghem, “Un symbole,” 244-247 (a fragmentary and faulty text on the back of an Arabic protocol).

⁹⁵ From Dossetti, *Il simbolo*, 246-248.

⁹⁶ From Quecke, *Untersuchungen*, 436.

Litany		Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed		
ἀπέθανεν	ⲁ- ⲙⲞΥ	παθόντα και ταφέντα	ⲁϫⲙⲞΥ ⲁΓΚⲁⲁϫ ϺⲎ ⲐΥΤⲁϫⲞϫ	suffered and was buried
ἀνέστη	ⲁ- ΤΩΟΥⲎ	ἀναστάντα	ⲁϫΤΩΟΥⲎ	rose
ἀνελήμφθη	ⲁϫⲞⲘⲔ ⲉϺⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲙⲡⲏⲛⲏϫⲉ	ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς	ⲁϫⲞⲘⲔ ⲉϺⲣⲁⲓ ⲉⲙⲡⲏⲛⲏϫⲉ	ascended to the heavens
—	—	καθεζόμενον	ⲁϫϺⲙⲐⲐⲐ	sits/sat down
ἔρχεται	ⲎⲎΥ	ἐρχόμενον	ϫⲎⲎΥ	is coming

This fits with what we know of the bilingual environment of Western Thebes in Late Antiquity.⁹⁷ Coptic was the language monks used for their daily correspondence; devotional reading and prayers were increasingly appearing in Coptic;⁹⁸ and legal and administrative documents were increasingly being recorded in Coptic.⁹⁹ As Jean-Luc Fournet has observed in his study of these documents, they are not merely translations or copies of prior Greek models; rather, the formulation and the vocabulary of the Coptic documents is shaped by their predominantly ecclesiastical or monastic context and purposes.¹⁰⁰ So too, in a more modest way, the Coptic version of the litany shows the influence of a liturgical tradition that is slightly different from the Greek one.

⁹⁷ For a recent discussion, with references to a large body of scholarship, of the emergence of Coptic as a writing system, its sociolinguistic relationship to Greek, and its use for literary and documentary texts, see A. Camplani, “Il copto e la chiesa copta: La lenta e inconclusa affermazione della lingua copta nello spazio pubblico della tarda antichità,” in *L’Africa, l’Oriente mediterraneo e l’Europa: Tradizioni e culture a confronto*, ed. P. Nicelli (Milan and Rome 2015) 130-153; cf. also J.-L. Fournet, “The Multilingual Environment of Late Antique Egypt: Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Persian Documentation,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, ed. R.S. Bagnall (Oxford 2009) 418-451 at 430-441, DOI 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199843695.013.0018; S. Emmel, “Coptic Literature in the Byzantine and Early Islamic World,” in *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300-700*, ed. R.S. Bagnall (Cambridge 2007) 83-102.

⁹⁸ Most of the letters found at the *topos* of Apa Epiphanius are written in Coptic, but excerpts from numerous devotional texts in Coptic have also survived. See Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius 2*, ix, 3-26, 155-172; cf. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 261; Emmel, “Coptic Literature,” 87-88.

⁹⁹ Fournet, “The Multilingual Environment,” 439.

¹⁰⁰ J.-L. Fournet, *The Rise of Coptic: Egyptian versus Greek in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J. 2020) 112-148.

We have independent confirmation of this in the graffiti that monks and visitors wrote on the walls of the original monastery and two outlying cells (Cells A and B).¹⁰¹ These graffiti consist almost exclusively in prayers and requests for prayer. Coptic writers left mostly requests for prayer.¹⁰² They bid those who inhabit or enter the space to pray for them, frequently using the first-person formula “I, so-and-so; pray for me” and its variants. This type of request is often found in monastic spaces;¹⁰³ many of the requests were probably left by monks of the community. By contrast, Greek writers left prayers addressed not to the person inhabiting or entering the space, but to God.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the prayers frequently refer to “so-and-so and all his house,” suggesting that they were written by or on behalf of people living in villages or towns in the region.

Among the Coptic graffiti is an invocation that is comparable in form to the litany in the manuscript.¹⁰⁵ It reads: “[Jesus] has created. | Jesus has conquered. | Jesus has prevailed. | Jesus has redeemed | the universe. | [four (?) effaced lines] | food of/for my God. | [*crux quadrata* composed of four triangles].”¹⁰⁶ Traces of the missing lines reveal that they were longer than the lines of the litany. This suggests that, as in the two Greek amulets (*Suppl.Mag.* I 23 and 35), the litany was followed by some type of request. However, the litany in the graffito differs from the litanies in the amulets and the manuscript in that it appeals to Jesus rather than to Christ or God, and in that it refers to his accomplishments in general terms (created, conquered, prevailed, redeemed) rather than by echoing the second article of the creed. The christology of the graffito is still a high one: the actions attributed to

¹⁰¹ *I.Mon.Epiph.* 637-702. For the locations of the graffiti, see the translations at Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius* 2, 326-330, with the facsimiles at 379-386.

¹⁰² *I.Mon.Epiph.* 637-675A.

¹⁰³ See, e.g., the requests left by monks at the *topos* of Apa Phoibammon in the Rock, a less accessible site built into a cliff at the end of a ravine some distance away from the Pharaonic tombs, in R. Rémondon, Y. ‘Abd al-Masih, W.C. Till, and O.H.E. Khs-Burmester, *Le monastère de Phoebammon dans la Thèbaïde*, vol. 2: *Graffiti, inscriptions et ostraca* (Cairo 1965) *passim*.

¹⁰⁴ *I.Mon.Epiph.* 676-702.

¹⁰⁵ *I.Mon.Epiph.* 661b, written in Cell B.

¹⁰⁶ Crum and Evelyn White, *Epiphanius* 2, 142, with the facsimile at 381: [ⲓϥ ⲁ]ϣϥⲟⲩⲛⲧ | ⲓϥ ⲁϣⲁⲉⲣⲱ | ⲓϥ ⲁϣⲟⲩⲛ ⲉⲁⲙ | ⲓϥ ⲁϣⲟⲩⲧⲉ | ⲙⲓⲣⲧⲉⲣϥ | [four (?) lines] | ⲛⲕⲁⲟϥⲱⲙ ⲙⲓⲣⲁⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ | †. In the last line of text, Crum proposed ⲕⲛⲁ instead of ⲛⲕⲁ since in his view “food of/for my God” was more improbable than “You shall eat my God” (328 n. 2). But it would be unusual for a request or adjuration to end with the latter instruction. For the translation of the phrase as written, cf. W.E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford 1939), 223b, 479a. The meaning of the phrase remains a puzzle; Crum wondered whether it might refer to the bread of the eucharist.

Jesus are divine in character. But the human dimension of this saving work is not spelled out, as in the other litanies. It is simply implied in attributing the actions to Jesus.¹⁰⁷ Thus, this instance of the litany underscores two aspects of the form in general: it was malleable, and it could serve various purposes.

6 The uses of the litany

We can only speculate as to how the litany in the manuscript was used. It was designed to be chanted, like the two hymns that were also copied in the manuscript. The most likely context for this would have been in worship, collective or individual. The Trisagion, which resembles the litany as an expression of miaphysite affiliation, was chanted in several liturgies in Egypt: the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, the observances on Good Friday, and at other occasions.¹⁰⁸ (Two witnesses to the Great Doxology followed by the Trisagion from the Liturgy of the Hours survive from Western Thebes.¹⁰⁹) The Trisagion evidently had a liturgical status that the litany did not have. Nevertheless, the litany could have been chanted by monks as one of their hymns, which, though they were sung in services, have left few traces.¹¹⁰ Alternatively, or in addition, the litany could have been chanted by monks on their own in the course of their work and during their prayers.¹¹¹

The litany was, fundamentally, a proclamation of the saving work of God the Word enfleshed. As such, it was a powerful declaration, as the concluding acclamation of the Greek version attests: “Jesus Christ is victorious.” It could have been recited by monks to ward off the distractions, doubts, and temptations by which, according to the monastic understanding of ascetic combat, the demons sought to waylay the monk.¹¹² It is well known that monks recited short prayers, verses from the Psalms and other scriptures, and similar

¹⁰⁷ References to Jesus *tout court* are unusual among remains from the site—“Jesus Christ” or “Lord Jesus Christ” are more common—but they do surface occasionally. One graffito opens with “Jesus, have mercy” (*I.Mon.Epiph.* 645), and one letter ends with “Farewell in Jesus” (*O.Mon.Epiph.* 175, lines 10-11).

¹⁰⁸ For a comparative overview, see Janeras, “Le Trisagion,” 496-511; for some monastic observances in Egypt, see Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 146 n. 253.

¹⁰⁹ Berlin, Staatliche Museen P 364 (see n. 63 above), and *O.Mon.Epiph.* 607 (see n. 61 above); cf. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 145.

¹¹⁰ Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 145.

¹¹¹ For an overview of the everyday occupations of monks at the *topos* of Apa Epiphanius, see Winlock and Crum, *Epiphanius 1*, 155-166.

¹¹² As the first hymn in the bilingual manuscript attests; see *P.Mon.Epiph.* 592, line 17.

statements to repel the attacks of demons.¹¹³ Walter Crum suggested that this practice may account for the many ostraca from the *topos* of Epiphanius inscribed with prayers for help, verses from the Psalms, and, indeed, the Trisagion.¹¹⁴ By extension, the litany could also have been used to repel or expel demons or demonically induced illnesses from other people, in manner akin to the litanies that preceded the injunctions in the two Greek amulets and, in all likelihood, an injunction in the graffito.

As a declaration of miaphysite orthodoxy and as a proclamation of Christ's saving work, the litany was much easier to remember and repeat than the second article of the creed. It was certainly far more accessible than the inscription of Damian's *Synodal Letter* in the passage to the interior chamber of the monastery. This quality of the litany is not insignificant. As a short, simple, rhythmic chant, it had a performative capacity that prosaic texts did not. It could become deeply ingrained in the individual and collective consciousness of Christians in the region, monastic and lay.¹¹⁵ Whatever its uses were, they are owing to this capacity. In fact, that may be why the litany was copied into the manuscript: it was memorable, it was symbolic, it was unifying, and it was powerful.

¹¹³ See, e.g., D. Brakke, "Introduction," in *Evagrius Pontus. Talking Back: A Monastic Handbook for Combating Demons*, trans. D. Brakke (Collegeville 2009) 1-40 at 14-23; D. Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York 1993) 122-129.

¹¹⁴ Winlock and Crum, *Epiphanius 1*, 168-169. Many of the Trisagia found in the region cannot be assigned to a particular liturgy; see Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 146 n. 253.

¹¹⁵ On the performative capabilities of liturgical acclamations, see de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 186-187.