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The Barcelona Papyrus and the Opening Dialogue of the Christian Anaphora

Resituating Egyptian Scribal Practices
Amid Scholarly Anaphoral Reconstructions

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Abstract

Inscribed within the liturgical portions of the manuscript commonly known as the “Barcelona Papyrus” (MS *P.Monts.Roca* Inv. 128–178, 292, and 338) are various acclamations consisting of Εἰς Θεός , among others. Previous scholars studying these phrases have argued that they represent a part of the liturgical formulary, generally replacing the staple opening of the anaphoral dialogue of the celebrant’s “The Lord be with you”, and the congregational response, “And with your spirit”. In this paper, I demonstrate, through a detailed paleographical analysis of the phrase Εἰς Θεός with its various appendages in the liturgical portions of the said manuscript, and in comparison to other literary and material, visual cultural sources within Egyptian Christian customs, that these invocations are scribal practices rather than part of the pronounced prayers and thus are “marginalia” that function externally to the liturgical formulary.

Keywords

Early Christian Anaphoras | Early Christian Papyri | Early Christian Inscriptions | Paleography, Greek | Papyrology, Greek | Coptic Liturgy

The Barcelona Papyrus and the Opening Dialogue of the Christian Anaphora

*Resituating Egyptian Scribal Practices Amid Scholarly Anaphoral Reconstructions**

Arsany PAUL

1 Introduction

The 1975 discovery of the manuscript *PMonts.Roca* inventory 128–178, 292, and 338 (*Montserrat Codex Miscellaneus*), now commonly known as the “Barcelona papyrus”, stimulated a cascade of studies about the eucharistic anaphora contained within it.¹ Copied in the fourth century in Middle Egypt, this anaphora represents one of the oldest extant manuscript examples of a Christian eucharistic prayer.² Foundational work on

* This paper originated as a research project in an “Early Christian Liturgies” doctoral seminar of Maxwell Johnson in Fall 2021 at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana (USA). A preliminary version of this article was also presented in the “Problems in the Early History of Liturgy” seminar of the North American Academy of Liturgy (NAAL) held at Kansas City, MO from January 2–5, 2022, and I am grateful to participants of both seminars and the blind reviewers of *Ex Fonte* for their constructive feedback.

¹ In contrast, the expression “Barcelona tradition” is used to address general customs of this anaphoral tradition without reference to a specific codex.

² Papyrological analyses have dated MS *PMonts.Roca* to the fourth century. See Ronald C. D. JASPER – Geoffrey J. CUMING, *Prayers of the Eucharist. Early and Reformed*, ed. by Paul F. BRADSHAW – Maxwell E. JOHNSON (ACC 94), Collegeville/MN 42019, 96. On the premise of a tripartite structure of praise, offering, and petition, as well as various correlations to the third century church order known as the *Apostolic Tradition*, Bradshaw attempted to date the earliest recension of the anaphora in the Barcelona codex to the second century. Moreover, he draws further attention to a possible second century origin by suggesting that due to the usage of the word “child (παῖς)”, which is a common expression in works no later than the mid-second century, rather than “Son

this anaphora has been set forth by the likes of Ramón Roca-Puig,³ Mikhail Zheltov,⁴ and Nathan P. Chase,⁵ to name a few,⁶ and future studies will

(*υἰός*)” in relation to Jesus in the Preface (§ 1.4 below) and in the concluding Doxology (§ 1.11 below), reflects possible second century origins. Paul F. BRADSHAW, *The Barcelona Papyrus and the Development of Early Eucharistic Prayers*, in: Maxwell E. JOHNSON (ed.), *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West*, Colledgeville/MN 2010, 129–138, here: 136 f.

- 3 His 1950s discovery of the Barcelona papyrus and his 1966 publication of the first edition of its text opened the door to rethinking what a complete anaphora entails, since most now consider the Barcelona anaphora as a complete eucharistic text. Although groundbreaking, his edition of the papyrus was criticized by Zheltov, who viewed his edition as undiplomatic since Roca-Puig did not reproduce the manuscript verbatim preserving the scribal hand. Moreover, Roca-Puig filled the lacuna in the second epiclesis (§ 1.10), through his own reconstruction that was dependent upon the Byzantine anaphoras of Basil and Chrysostom, though the Barcelona tradition should be considered Alexandrian in its ethos. See Ramón ROCA-PUIG, *Sui Papiri de Barcelona*, in: *Aeg.* 46 (1966) 91 f.; ID., *Anàfora de Barcelona I Alters Pregàries. Missa Del Segle IV*, Barcelona 1999; Michael ZHELTOV, *The Anaphora and the Thanksgiving Prayer from the Barcelona Papyrus. An Underestimated Testimony to the Anaphoral History in the Fourth Century*, in: *VigChr* 62 (2008) 467–504, here: 470.
- 4 Starting in 2002 but culminating in 2008, Zheltov provided a revised diplomatic text and amended critical edition, that are now regarded as the textual standards for the Barcelona tradition. Michael ZHELTOV, *Греческая Литургия IV Века в Папирусе Barcelon. Папур. 154b–157b*, in: *Богословский Сборник* 9 (2002) 240–256; ZHELTOV, *Anaphora and Thanksgiving*, 471–494.
- 5 Cf. Nathan P. CHASE, *The Antiochenization of the Egyptian Tradition. An Alternate Approach to the Barcelona Papyrus and Anaphoral Development*, in: *EO* 34 (2017) 319–367; ID., *Rethinking Anaphoral Development in Light of the Barcelona Papyrus* [unpubl. dissertation University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame/IN], 2020; ID., *The Fruits of Communion Across the Classical Anaphoras*, in: *OCP* 87 (2021) 5–70. Many thanks to Nathan Chase for providing a copy of his final dissertation.
- 6 Among other scholarship is Paul Bradshaw who once attempted to locate the prayers within the West Syrian tradition, though subsequent scholarship has not supported his view and has overwhelmingly placed the Barcelona tradition as Middle or Southern Egyptian. Still, Bradshaw’s most grounded contribution to understanding the text remains his differentiation between what he identifies as the older nucleus of the prayer, that is, a “tripartite pattern of praise, offering, and petition”, versus possible later supplements. Walter Ray also supports a tripartite structure. Like Bradshaw, Reinhard Meßner argues against the Egyptian origins of MS *PMonts.Roca* since it lacks intercessory prayers and the verb “to fulfill”, which typically connects the *Sanctus* prayer to the first epiclesis, that are common to other early Egyptian anaphoras. See also Alistair Stewart’s treatment of the papyrus. Among other scholarship, looking at the material evidence, Tea Ghigo and Sofia Torallas-Tovar contributed to the

certainly continue to substantiate, nuance, or counter the various theories that have been put forth concerning this anaphora. This study aims to offer a new interpretation about the initial unit within the Barcelona anaphora, namely, the opening dialogue.

Liturgical scholarship has established that, from around the fourth century, most anaphoras were preceded by an opening dialogue between the celebrant and congregation, a practice that is omnipresent in liturgies of the Christian East.⁷ However, the anaphora in the Barcelona tradition, specifically the eucharistic text within MS *P.Monts.Roca*, fols. 154b–155b, lacks the typical first line of this staple introductory prelude. In the absence of the pre-anaphoral interchange, “The Lord be with you / And with your spirit”, scholars have attempted to reconstruct an analogous dialogue within the first line of the papyrus’s anaphora, “Ἐἰς Θεὸς Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος”. Contrary to such arguments, however, I present that an attentive reading of the papyrus in its entirety, as well as in comparison to similar literary, material, and visual culture, reveals that this opening line is not part of the anaphoral formulary and that an opening stanza containing anything close to “The Lord be with you / And with your spirit”, is simply not found in the manuscript. Furthermore, the opening line of the papyrus’

material study of the papyrus through an archaeometric analysis performed upon the inks used within the codex to reaffirm that it was probably produced by a scribe over a period of time prior to the mid-fourth century. BRADSHAW, *The Barcelona Papyrus and the Development*, 129–38; Walter RAY, *The Barcelona Papyrus and the Early Egyptian Eucharistic Prayer*, in: *StLi* 41 (2011) 211–229; Reinhard MESSNER, *Das eucharistische Hochgebet in den Traditionen und Kirchen des Ostens*, in: Hans-Jürgen FEULNER – Alexander ZERFASS (eds.), *Ex oriente lux? Ostkirchliche Liturgien und westliche Kultur* (ÖSLS 13), Vienna 2020, 121–167; Alistair C. STEWART, *Two Early Egyptian Liturgical Papyri. The Deir Balyzeh Papyrus and the Barcelona Papyrus with Appendices Containing Comparative Material*, Norwich 2010, 22–38; Tea GHIGO – Sofia TORALLAS-TOVAR, *Between Literary and Documentary Practices. The Montserrat Codex Miscellaneus (Inv. Nos. 126-178, 292, 338) and the Material Investigation of its Inks*, in: Paola BUZI (ed.), *Coptic Literature in Context (4th–13th Cent.)*. Cultural Landscape, Literary Production, and Manuscript Archaeology. Proceedings of the Third Conference of the ERC Project “Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature. Literary Texts in their Geographical Context (‘PATHs’)”, Rome 2020, 100–114.

⁷ Cf. Paul F. BRADSHAW – Maxwell E. JOHNSON, *The Eucharistic Liturgies. Their Evolution and Interpretation*, Collegeville/MN 2012, 39.

anaphora serves an entirely different function, which is the topic of the present article.

I open with an overview of the sources augmented with the various scholarly contributions, followed by an edition of the anaphora. After this, I pass to analyze the use of the Ἐἵς Θεός phrases throughout the entirety of the Barcelona Papyrus. I conclude that the opening acclamation of Ἐἵς Θεός at the beginning of the anaphora and its variations prevalent within the codex are auxiliary “marginalia” that the celebrant does not pronounce as part of the formal prayer. Instead, these invocations are common forms of scribal practice attested in the manuscript and cultural traditions of Coptic Christian Egypt.⁸ Additionally, I reevaluate what is considered a colophon, or dedication page within this collection and explore the peculiarity of the inverted command to “bless (Εὐλογεῖτε)” in this folio.

2 Sources

Manuscript *P.Monts.Roca inv.* 128–178, 292 and 338 is predominantly written in Greek with some Latin.⁹ The anaphora under examination is on fols. 154b–155a, with the remainder of the euchologion’s prayers on fols. 155b–157b.¹⁰ In addition to this codex, two other primary sources have been identified as providing parallels to the content of the Barcelona tradition. These are:

1. Manuscript *PVindob.* G 41043 (here as *MS Vienna G 41043*), a subsequent Greek redaction considered a sixth-century source.¹¹

⁸ Opening a text with a pious expression directed to God is not limited to Christianity but is also found in Islamic sources; consult: François DÉROCHE et al., *Islamic Codicology. An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script* (Al-Furqān Publications 102), London 2005, 237 f.

⁹ A complete paleographical and codicological study is found in Sofia TORALLAS-TOVAR – Klaas A. WORP, *To the Origins of Greek Stenography. P.Monts. Roca I (OMont 4)*, Barcelona 2006, 15–23.

¹⁰ Corresponding plates are accessible in ROCA-PUIG, *Anàfora de Barcelona*, 127–139.

¹¹ For a critical edition and English translation consult, respectively: Kurt TREU – Johannes DIETHART, *Griechische literarische Papyri christlichen Inhaltes*, vol. 2: *Textband*, Vienna 1993, 68 f.; JASPER – CUMING, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 99 f.

2. Manuscript *Louvain 27* (here as MS *Louvain 27*), a Sahidic Coptic version of the prayers attributed to no later than the seventh century.¹²

MS *P.Monts.Roca*, however, is the primary and sole textual witness to the pre-anaphoral dialogue debate in the Barcelona tradition and thus forms the core textual reference of this study since the latter two lack the section that would contain the anaphoral opening dialogue.¹³

3 *An Edition*

Reproduced below is a layout of the various prayers of the liturgical portion of MS *P.Monts.Roca*, with references to the other folia of the Barcelona Papyrus and their content discussed elsewhere.¹⁴ In the following list of the liturgical material, the numbering of the anaphoral subsections corresponds to the table below.

1. The Anaphoral Prayers (fols. 154b–155b):
 - 1.1 Acclamation
 - 1.2 Prayer Title
 - 1.3 Introductory Dialogue
 - 1.4 Preface
 - 1.5 1: Pre-Sanctus, 2: Sanctus, 3: Post-Sanctus
 - 1.6 Oblation

¹² For a critical edition and an English translation consult, respectively: Louis-Théophile LEFORT, *Coptica Lovanensia*, in: *Le Muséon* 53 (1940) 1–66, here: 22–24; Sebastià JANERAS, *L'Original grec del fragment copte de Lovaina Núm. 27 en l'Anàfora de Barcelona*, in: *MLC* 3 (1984) 13–25; JASPER – CUMING, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 99.

¹³ The pre-anaphoral dialogue is omitted from both counterparts of MS *P.Monts.Roca* – the Sahidic Coptic text in MS *Louvain 27* and the later Greek edition in MS *Vienna G 41043*. This exclusion may simply be due to the fragmented nature of these two codices.

¹⁴ For the complete content of the entire codex consult: Juan GIL – Sofía TORALLAS-TOVAR, *Hadrianvs (P.Monts. Roca III) (OMont 5)*, Barcelona 2010, 19 f. Recently, through archaeometric analysis of ink used, Ghigo and Torallas-Tovar reaffirmed that the codex had one patron and that the scribal work occurred in consecutive phases authored by one hand in GHIGO – TORALLAS-TOVAR, *Between Literary and Documentary Practices*, 110.

- 1.7 Epiclesis I
- 1.8 Institution Narrative
- 1.9 Anamnesis
- 1.10 Epiclesis II
- 1.11 Doxology
- 1.12 Acclamation
- 1.13 Thanksgiving after Communion
- 1.14 Acclamation

2. Prayer for the imposition of hands on the sick (fols. 155b–156a).¹⁵

3. An exorcism of the oil of the sick (fols. 156a–b).¹⁶

4. An acrostic hymn on Abraham’s offering of Isaac (fols. 157a–b).¹⁷

What follows is an edition of the anaphora and the thanksgiving prayer from the Barcelona Papyrus. Since Zheltov has already produced a revised critical and diplomatic edition, my own edition does not differ much from his, beyond the fact that I have taken the liberty to structure and annotate my own version according to structural theories about this anaphora’s development.¹⁸ Thus, the text below should be read with the following in mind:

- The section column is added for clarity, and the corresponding section numbers and names are added to aid later discussions in the article.

¹⁵ For a critical edition and English translation consult, respectively: Cornelia E. RÖMER et al., *Das Gebet zur Handauflegung bei Kranken in P. Barc. 155*, 19–156, 5 und *P. Kellis I 88*, in: *ZPE* 119 (1997) 128–131; STEWART, *Egyptian Liturgical Papyri*, 26 f.

¹⁶ The critical edition and English translation are respectively found in: Wolfgang LUPPE, *Christliche Weihung von Öl. Zum Papyrus Barc. 156a/b*, in: *ZPE* 95 (1993) 70; STEWART, *Egyptian Liturgical Papyri*, 27 f.

¹⁷ A critical edition and corresponding English translation are in: A. VINOGRADOV, *Три Крещальных Гимна с Алфавитным Акrostихом*, in: *Вестник Древней Истории* 3 (2005) 91–114; STEWART, *Egyptian Liturgical Papyri*, 28–30.

¹⁸ Zheltov’s critical edition is bolstered through his philological decisions, which are based upon a conjectural reading of the sources and a detailed analysis of the texts using all three literary witnesses. ZHELTOV, *The Anaphora and the Thanksgiving*, 483–492.

- Adoption of the subsequent sigla appear throughout the text:
 - <...> Angled brackets indicate added text for clarification, not present in the MS *P.Monts.Roca* but included within Zheltov's rendering that is based also upon the two other witnesses of the anaphora.
 - {...} Braces denote text that should be expunged.
 - (...) Letters within parentheses are supplied.
 - [...] Square brackets represent a lacuna in the manuscript.
 - | A vertical bar indicates the start of a folio with the subsequent folio and side number written in superscript.

Table 1: An Edition of the Anaphora according to MS *P.Monts.Roca* fols. 154b–155b.

Section	Greek Transcription	English Translation
1.1 Acclamation	^{154b} Εἷς Θεὸς Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος	One God, Jesus the Lord
1.2 Prayer Title	Εὐχαριστία περὶ ἄρτου καὶ ποτηρίου	Thanksgiving for the bread and the cup
1.3 Introductory Dialogue	Ἄνω τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, εὐξομεν πρὸς Κύριον. Ἐπι εὐχαριστήσωμεν, ἄξιον καὶ δίκαιον.	Lift our hearts; we have to the Lord. Then, let us also give thanks; fitting and right.
1.4 Preface	Ἄξιόν ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιον· σὲ αἰνεῖν, σὲ εὐλογεῖν, σὲ ὑμνεῖν, σοὶ εὐχαριστεῖν, Δέσποτα Θ(ε)ῒ παντοκράτωρ τοῦ Κ(υρί)ου ἡμῶν Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ, ὁ ποιήσας τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ μη ὄντος εἰς τὸ εἶναι· τὰ πάντα· οὐρανοῦς, γῆν, θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς, διὰ τοῦ ἠγαπημένου σου παιδὸς Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ τοῦ Κ(υρί)ου ἡμῶν, δι' οὗ	It is fitting and right to praise you, to bless you, to hymn you, to give you thanks, O Master, God Almighty of our Lord Jesus Christ, who created all things from non-exis- tence into being; all: heaven, earth, the sea, and all that is in them, through your beloved child Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom you have called

	ἐκάλεσεν ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ σκοτόους εἰς φῶς, ἀπὸ ἀγνωσίας εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν δόξης ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, ἀπὸ φθορᾶς θανάτου εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν, εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον·	us from darkness into light, from ignorance to knowledge of the glory of his name, from decay of death into incorruption, into life eternal;
1.5.1 Pre-Sanctus	ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ ἄρματος, χερουβὶν καὶ σαραφὶν ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ· ὃ παριστᾶσιν χίλιαι χιλιάδες καὶ μύριαι μυριάδες ἀγγέλων, ἀρχαγγέλων, θρόνων καὶ κυριοτήτων, ὑμνοῦντων καὶ δοξολογούντων· μεθ' ὧν καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμνοῦντες, λέγοντες,	Who sits on the chariot, cherubim and seraphim before it, who is attended by thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads of angels, archangels, thrones and dominions, hymning and glorifying, with whom we are also hymning, saying:
1.5.2 Sanctus	Ἅγιος, Ἅγιος, Ἅγιος, Κύριος Σαβαώθ· πλήρης {σου} ὁ οὐρανὸς <καὶ ἡ γῆ> τῆς δόξης σου·	Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts! Heaven <and earth> are full of your glory,
1.5.3 Post-Sanctus	ἐν ἧ ἑδόξασας ἡμᾶς διὰ τοῦ μονογενοῦς σου καὶ πρωτοτόκου πάσης κτίσεως Ἰ(ησοῦ) Χ(ριστοῦ), τοῦ Κ(υρίου) ἡμῶν· ὁ καθήμενος ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης σου ἐν τοῖς οὐρανόις· ὃς ἔρχεται κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς <οὐ τὴν θανάτου ἀνάμνησιν ποιοῦμεν·>	in which you have glorified us through your only-begotten, the firstborn of every creature, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who sits on the right hand of your greatness in heaven, who is coming to judge the living and the dead, <the remembrance of whose death we do>
1.6 Oblation	^{155a} δι' οὗ προσφερόμεν σοι κτίσματά σου ταῦτα, ἄρτον τε καὶ ποτήριον·	through him we offer you these your creations, the bread and the cup:
	αἰτούμεθα καὶ παρακαλοῦμέν σε ὅπως καταπέμψης	we ask and beseech you to send onto them your

<p>1.7 Epiclesis I</p>	<p>ἐπ’ αὐτὰ τὸ ἅγιόν σου {τὸ ἅγιόν σου} καὶ παράκλητόν σου Πνεῦμα ἐκ τῶν οὐ(ρα) νῶν· εἰς τὸ σωματοποιῆσαι αὐτὰ καὶ πο(ι)ῆσαι τὸ(ν) μὲν ἄρτον σῶμα Χρ(ιστο)ῦ, τὸ δὲ ποτήριον αἷμα Χρ(ιστο)ῦ, τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης·</p>	<p>Holy and Comforter Spirit from heaven, to represent them materially and to make the bread the Body of Christ and the cup the Blood of Christ, of the New Covenant.</p>
<p>1.8 Institution Narrative</p>	<p>Καθὼς καὶ αὐτός, ἥνικα ἔμελλεν παραδιδόναι <ἑαυτόν>, λαβὼν ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας καὶ ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ λέγων· Λάβετε, φάγετε, τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα. Καὶ ὁμοίως, μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, λαβὼν ποτήριον, εὐχαριστήσας, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· Λάβετε, πῖτε τὸ αἷμα τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυ(ν)όμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν·</p>	<p>As he himself, when he was about to hand <himself> over, having taken bread and given thanks, broke and gave to his disciples, saying, ‘Take, eat, this is my body;’ likewise after supper, having taken a cup and given thanks, he gave to them, saying, ‘take, drink the blood, which is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’</p>
<p>1.9 Anamnesis</p>	<p>Καὶ ἡμεῖς τὸ αὐτὸ ποιῶμεν εἰς τὴν σὴν ἀνάμνησιν, ὡς ἐκεῖνοι ἂν συνέρχοντες, ποιῶντές σου τὴν ἀνάμνησιν, τοῦ ἁγίου μυστηρίου διδασκάλου καὶ βασιλέως καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χρ(ιστο)ῦ.</p>	<p>And we also do the same in your remembrance, like those whenever we meet together, we make the remembrance of you, of the holy mystery of our Teacher and King and Savior Jesus Christ.</p>
	<p>Ναί, ἀξιοῦμέν σε, Δέσποτα, ὅπως εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσης καὶ ἀγιῶς ἀγιασῆς [...] τοῖς πᾶσιν ἐξ αὐτῶν μετα-</p>	<p>Even so, we pray to you, Master, that in blessing you will bless and in sanctifying sanctify [...] ¹⁹ for</p>

¹⁹ In his examination on the “Fruits of Communion” in various early Christian anaphoras, Chase filled this lacuna based on an extrapolation of the first epicle-

<p>1.10 Epiclesis II</p>	<p>λαμβάνουσιν εἰς πίστιν ἀδιάκριτον, εἰς μετοχὴν ἀφθαρσίας, εἰς κοινωνίαν Πνεύματος ἁγίου, εἰς καταρτισμὸν πίστεως καὶ ἀληθείας, εἰς συντελείωσιν παντὸς θελήματός σου,</p>	<p>all communicating from them for undivided faith, for communication of incorruption, for commu- nion of the Holy Spirit, for perfection of belief and truth, for fulfillment of all your will.</p>
<p>1.11 Doxology</p>	<p>ἵνα ἔτι καὶ ἐν τούτῳ δοξάζωμεν τὸ πανέντιμον καὶ πανάγιον ὄνομά σου, διὰ τοῦ ἁγιασμένου σου παιδὸς Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χρ(ιστο)ῦ τοῦ Κ(υρίου) ἡμῶν, δι' οὗ σοὶ δόξα, κράτος εἰς τοὺς ἀκηράτους αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων· Ἀμήν.</p>	<p>So that in this and again we will glorify your all-revered and all-holy name, through your sanctified child, our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom glory [be] to you, power unto the unblended ages of ages. Amen.</p>
<p>1.12 Acclamation</p>	<p>^{155b} Εἷς Θεός</p>	<p>One God.</p>
	<p>Ἔτι δεόμεθά σου, Δέσποτα Θ(ε)ῖ παντοκράτωρ, καὶ εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι ἐπὶ τῇ μεταλήμψει τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς</p>	<p>Then, again, we pray to you, O Master, God Almighty, and give you thanks for the commu-</p>

sis in CYRIL, completing the text as: “Ναί, ἀξιοῦμέν σε, Δέσποτα, ὅπως εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσης καὶ ἀγίως ἀγίασης [ταῦτα τὰ πολύτιμα δῶρα σου ἐνώπιον τοῦ προσώπου σου τεθέντα, τὸν ἄρτον τοῦτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο] τοῖς πᾶσιν ἐξ αὐτῶν μεταλαμβάνουσιν εἰς πίστιν ἀδιάκριτον, εἰς μετοχὴν ἀφθαρσίας, εἰς κοινωνίαν Πνεύματος ἁγίου, εἰς καταρτισμὸν πίστεως καὶ ἀληθείας, εἰς συντελείωσιν παντὸς θελήματός σου / Even so, we pray to you, Master, that in blessing you will bless and in sanctifying sanctify [these your precious gifts which have been set before your face, this bread and this cup] for all communicating from them for undivided faith, for communication of incorruption, for communion of the Holy Spirit, for perfection of belief and truth, for fulfillment of all your will ...”. CHASE, *The Fruits of Communion*, 15–17.

1.13
Thanks-
giving after
Communion²⁰

ζωῆς καὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου, καὶ τοῦ ἁγιασμένου· καὶ παρακαλοῦμέν σε ὅπως ἁγιάσης ἡμᾶς πάντας τοὺς μετειληφότας ἀπ' αὐτῶν· πρὸς τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι ἡμῖν εἰς κρίμα ἢ εἰς κατάκριμα, τοῖς μεταλαμβάνουσιν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς ὑγείαν σαρκὸς καὶ ψυχῆς, εἰς ἀνανέωσιν τοῦ πνεύματος ἡμῶν, εἰς πίστιν καὶ σωφροσύνην, εἰς ἰσχὺν καὶ δύναμιν, εἰς ἀγάπην καὶ φιλαλληλίαν, εἰς συντέλειαν παντὸς θελήματός σου, εἰς τέλειόν σου ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ Θεὸν κτισθέντα· ἵνα ὦμεν τέλειοι καὶ καθαροί, ἀμάχητοι, σεσωσμένοι ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀνομιῶν καὶ τελειομένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· δι' οὗ σοὶ δόξα, κράτος, αἰῶνος τιμὴ, μεγαλωσύνη· καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς τοὺς σύμπαντας αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· Ἀμήν.

nion of the bread of life and the cup, and of the sanctified, and we beseech you, so that you will sanctify all of us who have partaken of them, so that they will be to us, the communicants, neither for judgment nor for condemnation, but rather for health of body and soul, for renovation of our spirit, for faith and chastity, for strength and force, for love and mutual love, for perfection of your will, for your perfect man, who is created after God, so that we will be perfect and clean, invincible, saved from each of crimes and being accomplished in every will of God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom [be] to you glory, power, honor of aeon, greatness, now and unto all the ages of ages. Amen.

1.14
Acclamation

Εἷς Θεός

One God.

²⁰ See Buchinger's treatment on the development of post-communion thanksgiving supplications, where he specifically discusses the anaphora in *MS P.Monts. Roca*: Harald BUCHINGER, *Die Postcommunio. Zu Frühgeschichte und Charakter eines eucharistischen Gebetes*, in: *EO* 38 (2021) 45–94, here: 59–63. Also see CHASE, *The Fruits of Communion*.

Below, I propose that the acclamations witnessed in the anaphora and thanksgiving (1.1, 1.12, and 1.14) are not part of the recited tradition in the Barcelona Papyrus but are representative of broader scribal practices.

4 Discussion

The uncontracted (unabbreviated) forms of *nomina sacra*, that is, sacred names within religious texts, appear throughout MS *P.Monts.Roca* together with abbreviated forms. These unabbreviated forms feature also in those lines that I propose as auxiliary to the formulary texts. The four earliest Christian epithets commonly abbreviated are Θεός, Ἰησοῦς, Κύριος, and Χριστός, all of which are considered *nomina divina* titles. These form an earlier core to the practice and development of abbreviating *nomina sacra*, which later expanded to numerous other terms.²¹ Within MS *P.Monts.Roca*'s liturgical portions, there are a total of twelve witnesses for what comes to later be termed as *nomina sacra* but most are given in an uncontracted form, which is typical for the papyrus' era.²²

²¹ For a comprehensive list of divine titles used as *nomina sacra* and for further details on this topic, consult Larry W. HURTADO, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts. Manuscripts and Christian Origins*, Grand Rapids/MI 2006, 134. See his original treatment of this topic in Larry W. HURTADO, *The Origin of the Nomina Sacra. A Proposal*, in: *JBL* 117 (1998) 655–673. As an example, for its use specifically within Coptic practice, see and the discussion below and: Birger A. PEARSON, *The Coptic Inscriptions in the Church of St. Antony*, in: Elizabeth S. BOLMAN (ed.), *Monastic Visions. Wall Paintings in the Monastery of St. Antony at the Red Sea*, New Haven/NJ 2002, 217–239, here: 219 f.

²² Paap's survey of early Christian Greek papyri concludes that the epithets Θεός, Ἰησοῦς and Κύριος all remained unabbreviated through the first half of second century, while Χριστός in the first half of the third century; Anton H. R. E. PAAP, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries* (PLB 8), Leiden 1959, 119. Within the euchologion prayer text (§§ 1.4, 1.9, 1.11 and 1.13 above), the same "divine names" are contracted, which may represent an impersonation of Hebrew and Semitic consonantal writing systems where vowels are naturally omitted. Such a writing style, especially for nomenclature related to the divine, likely carried over into Christian practice. Ludwig TRAUBE, *Nomina Sacra. Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung*, Munich 1907, 36. A case in point is the contracted opening line, Εἰς θεοῦ, εἰς Χρῆ, of the circa fifth to sixth century Christian amulet prayer from the same genre. Sofia TORALLAS-TORVAR – Klaas A. Worp, *Greek Papyri from Montserrat (P.Monts.Roca IV)* (*Scripta Orientalia* 1), Barcelona 2014, 176.

The introductory dialogue (§ 1.3) of the anaphora in MS *P.Monts.Roca* opens atypically without the ubiquitous presider's inaugural call of "The Lord be with you" and the subsequent congregational response of "And with your spirit".²³ Rather, the folio containing the anaphora (154b; *figure 1*) begins with Εἰς Θεός Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος. Roca-Puig had previously postulated that these phrases were likely outside the anaphoral prayer, yet he did not provide an argument or evidence to his statement.²⁴ On the contrary, Zheltov understood the first line in MS *P.Monts.Roca* fol. 154b, that is, the phrase Εἰς Θεός Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος, as part of the anaphoral prayer. Zheltov states that the "introductory dialogue" consists of the lines 1–5, which begins with the phrase Εἰς Θεός and concludes with the words Ἀξιὸν καὶ δίκαιον.²⁵ Then, in his commentary, he explains that the expression Εἰς Θεός serves as the initial greeting of the presider, arguing that the first line in MS *P.Monts.Roca* is a "brief form once popular in Egypt"²⁶. Zheltov, dependent on the work of Erik Peterson, is correct that the invocation of the name of God is a popular tradition in the early Christian church. At the same time, the popularity of declarations about God's oneness do not necessarily correlate to the usage of such as a form of anaphoral dialogue, since no clear evidence can be cited to substantiate this claim.²⁷

²³ For treatment of the first stanza and of the initial anaphoral dialogue in Eastern liturgy, see the following three publications of Robert F. TAFT, *The Dialogue before the Anaphora in the Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgy I: The Opening Greeting*, in: OCP 52 (1986) 299–324; *id.*, *The Dialogue before the Anaphora in the Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgy II: The Sursum Corda*, in: OCP 54 (1988) 47–77; *id.*, *The Dialogue before the Anaphora in the Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgy III: Let Us Give Thanks to the Lord – It Is Fitting and Right*, in: OCP 55 (1989) 63–74.

²⁴ ROCA-PUIG, *Anàfora de Barcelona*, 17. Janeras follows Roca-Puig in excluding this line from the anaphora. See JANERAS, *Copte Lovaina* Núm. 27, 16. Stewart seems to waffle on the question of whether or not such lines form part of the liturgical prayers of the papyrus. See discussion below and fn. 27 and 36.

²⁵ Cf. ZHELTOV, *The Anaphora and Thanksgiving*, 493.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 494.

²⁷ Peterson's study on the epigraphical usage of Εἰς Θεός does not illustrate it as a replacement for the commencing words of the Anaphoral dialogue. Rather, his liturgical focus is primarily on the use of related phrases as a call to communion. Stewart, also extrapolating from Peterson, discusses the liturgical employment for such an acclamation. Cf. Erik PETERSON, *Εἰς Θεός*. Epigraphische, formgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen (FRLANT 41), Göttingen 1926, 130–140. 317. Zheltov's argument is found here, though the

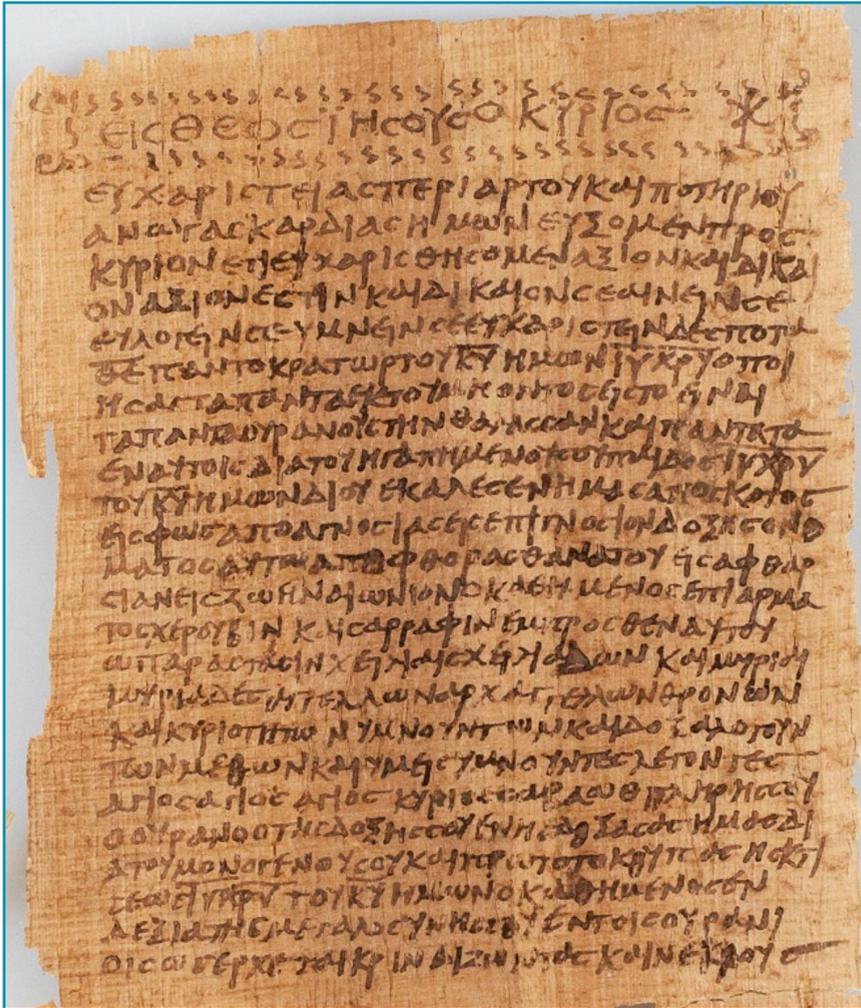


Figure 1: MS P.Monts.Roca fol. 154b.

Chase followed and built upon Zheltov’s argument in his 2020 dissertation dedicated to the anaphora in the Barcelona Papyrus. There, he drew connections between this phrase and affirmations of God’s oneness as forms of early Christian acclamations stemming from various New Testament parallels, stoic philosophy, and also within a Jewish milieu.²⁸ Based upon New Testament expressions, particularly 1 Cor. 8:1–6, he puts forth the idea that “Jesus the Lord” (Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος) is a congregational response

reference to Peterson is unclear: ZHELTOV, *The Anaphora and Thanksgiving*, 486, fn. 61; STEWART, *Egyptian Liturgical Papyri*, 23, fn. 83.

²⁸ Cf. CHASE, *Anaphoral Development*, 228–231.

to the initial celebrant's acclamation of "One God" (Εἷς Θεός), essentially swapping these expressions in for a celebrant's typical opening line of "The Lord be with you" and the congregants' reply of "And with your spirit" found in other anaphoral sources.²⁹ Yet both Zheltov and Chase seem to have largely analyzed the Barcelona anaphora outside the context of the broader papyrus manuscript in which it is found. Overlooked in their discussion of this phrase is the repeated use of this same line throughout other portions of the papyrus and the use of similar expressions in other manuscript and visual sources of the same genre. When examined in its entirety and comparatively, the phrase employed at the beginning of the Barcelona anaphora and throughout this codex serves an entirely different purpose as discussed below.

I support Roca-Puig's initial suggestion but wish to provide evidence as to *why* such acclamations are not part of the proper anaphora. To do so, a thorough analysis of this opening line's placement, its different uses, derivations prevalent throughout MS *P.Monts.Roca*, and a comparison to other codicological and epigraphical practices attested within Egypt are needed. In doing so, I suggest that the use of Εἷς Θεός and its diverse adaptations are no more than auxiliary words used as invocational blessings, demarcations of a Christian text, and space fillers (especially when coupled with ornamentations), used throughout Egyptian scribal practice.

4.1 The "Εἷς Θεός" Acclamations in MS *P.Monts.Roca*

Upon inspecting digital, high-resolution colored images of the anaphora in MS *P.Monts.Roca*, the following observations are deduced about the invocation of God's name in this codex.³⁰ The phrase Εἷς Θεός Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος at the top of the first papyrus of the anaphora is written in a relatively larger, majuscule script and enclosed in a rectangularly shaped structure formed by a repeated pattern (*figure 1*). This initial phrase occurs above the unanimously accepted title for the prayer, Εὐχαριστία περὶ ἄρτου καὶ ποτηρίου (*Thanksgiving for the Bread and the Cup*), which makes it chal-

²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 231.

³⁰ All reproduced images for MS *P.Monts.Roca* are copyright of Abadia de Montserrat and are used here with their permission, for which I am most thankful. All other photos are from my private collection unless otherwise noted.

lenging to consider the enclosed preceding line, Εἶς Θεός Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος, as part of the anaphora since it is interjected with the prayer's header.

Neither Zheltov nor Alistair C. Stewart discuss the oddity of the prayer title's interpolation between what they consider liturgical phrases.³¹ For his part, Chase acknowledged it as the prayer's title but still concludes that Εἶς Θεός is the commencement of the anaphora, though it sits above the prayer's title.³² It would be odd to have the beginning of the prayer interjected with a title, which suggests that the first line of Εἶς Θεός Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος is outside the anaphora and could serve as a marker, or blessing, for initiating or concluding a prayer's text, as evident in the thanksgiving prayer (§§ 1.12–1.14).

Post-communion thanksgiving prayers are a well-attested practice in early Eucharistic praying.³³ These supplications are typically an appendage to the anaphoral core and thus are seen as a standalone petition. Similar to the opening of the anaphora in *P.Monts.Roca*, the thanksgiving prayer, fol. 155b (*figure 2*), not only commences with the phrase Εἶς Θεός but also concludes with the same acclamation (§§ 1.12 and 1.14). On the papyrus containing the thanksgiving prayer, Εἶς Θεός is boxed off at the top center of the prayer on its own line, with the remainder of the space filled with various emblems, shapes, and *sigla*. Additionally, after the conclusion of the prayer's Ἀμήν, the exact phrase, Εἶς Θεός, is repeated and flanked by a decorative line made up of several *diples* (>>>), which is a typical *siglum* generally marking the conclusion or inception of a new section within papyri.³⁴ The termination of this prayer is further verified by the left-hand side marginal *coronis*, the series of vertical *diples* common in

³¹ ZHELTOV, *The Anaphora and Thanksgiving*, 486 f. 493 f.; STEWART, *Egyptian Liturgical Papyri*, 23.

³² CHASE, *Anaphoral Development*, 231. In an unpublished paper, John Paul Abdelsayed notes the idiosyncrasy of a supposedly recited text situated above a rubric or prayer title without elaboration or analysis in John P. ABDELSAYED, *The Barcelona Papyrus Reexamined*, n.p. n.d.

³³ See the analysis attesting to its early witness in BUCHINGER, *Die Postcommunio*; CHASE, *The Fruits of Communion*.

³⁴ Ágnes T. ΜΙΧÁΛΥΚÓ, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri. An Introduction* (STAC 114), Heidelberg 2019, 175, fn. 100.

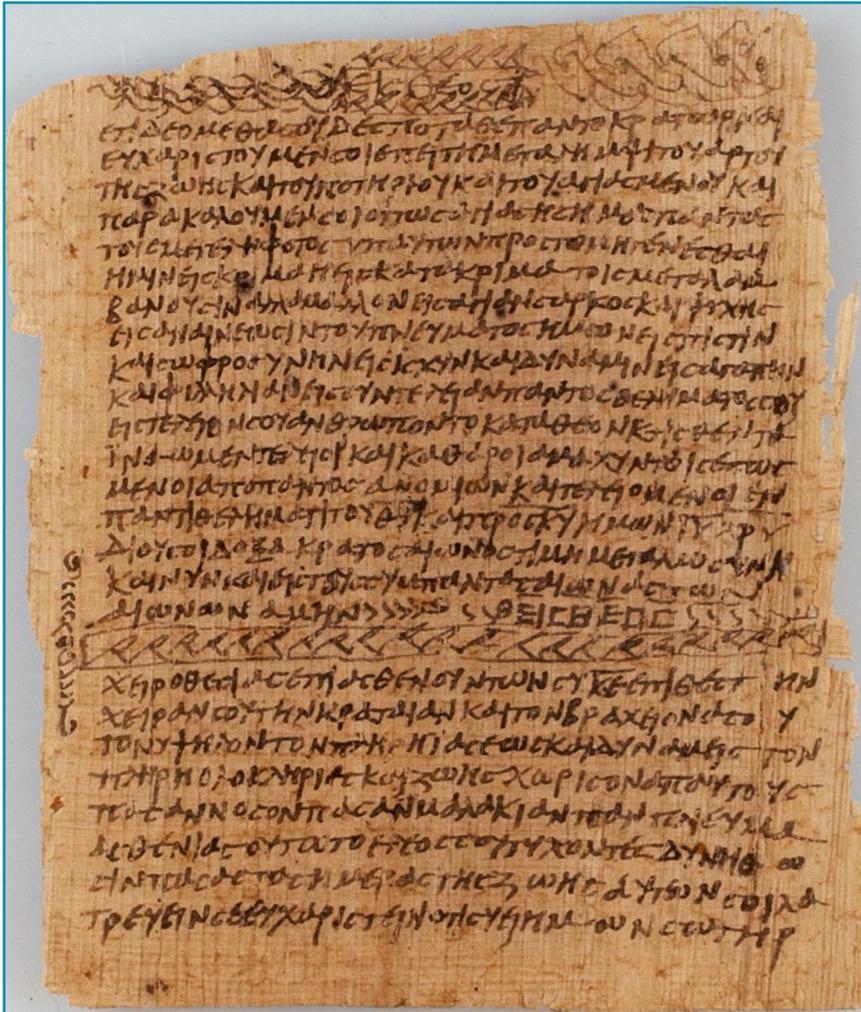


Figure 2: MS P.Monts.Roca fol. 155b.

Greek papyri, noting the terminus of a text or section.³⁵ I would therefore propose that like the case before in the anaphora, the Εἰς Θεός phrases flanking either side of the post communion prayer are not part of the recited prayer.

The theocentric invocations found around these eucharistic prayers are likewise written and expanded on fol. 156b (figure 3) after the conclu-

³⁵ Compare the coronis marking the conclusion of fol. 155b (figure 2) to P.Oxy. X 1231 fol. 56 from the second century. For more on the use of a coronis reference Eric G. TURNER, Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World, Princeton/NJ 1971, 14.

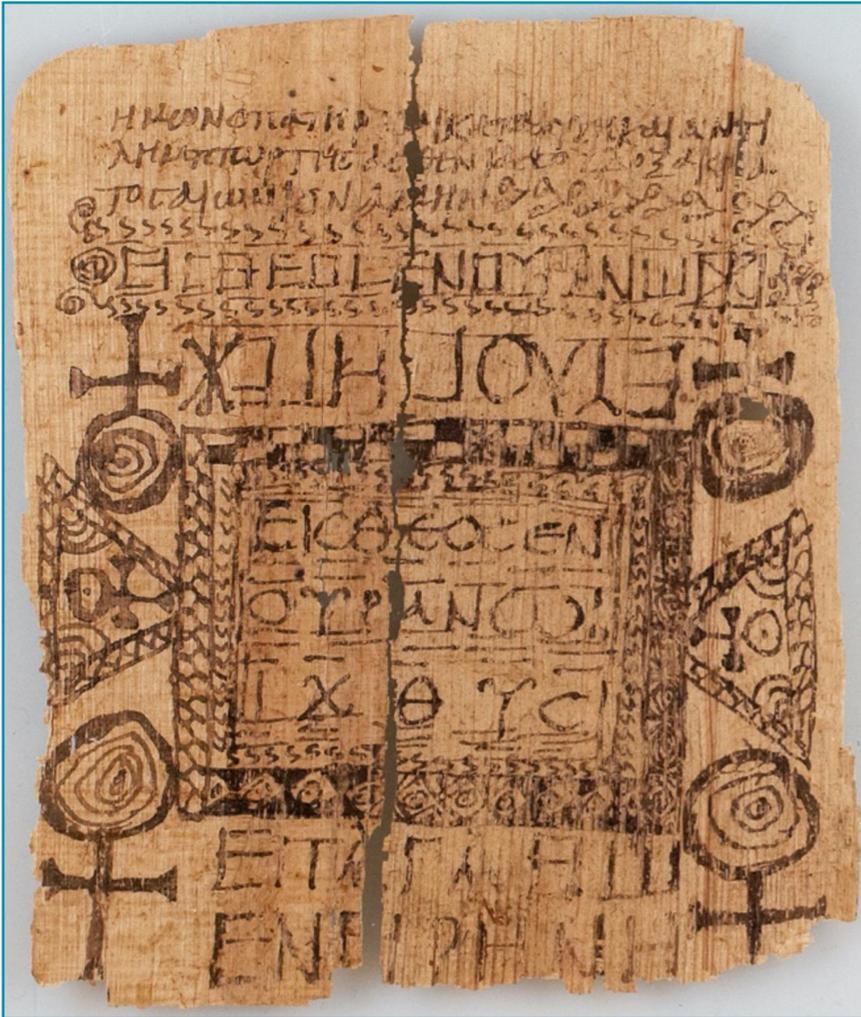


Figure 3: MS P.Monts.Roca fol. 156b.

sion of the prayer for the oil of exorcism and again on fol. 157b (figure 4), after the acrostic hymn.³⁶ In these instances, Εἰς Θεός is written within a *tabula ansata*, a tablet design with dovetail handles flanking a rectangular box, with each *ansa* (dovetail) ornamented with *ansate* crosses.³⁷ This

³⁶ Stewart's edition of the exorcism prayer and the acrostic hymn in *P.Monts.Roca* includes the texts within and around the *tabula ansata* as part of the prayer formula, though he specifically notes the ΙΧΘΥΣ on fol. 156b (figure 3) and the repeated $\text{Εἰς Θεός ἐν οὐρανῶ}$ on fol. 157b (figure 4) as "scribal decorations". STEWART, *Egyptian Liturgical Papyri*, 28. 30.

³⁷ On a history of *ansate* crosses as they relate to the ancient Egyptian *ankh*, and as distinct symbols from the stauogram, also employed by the scribe of

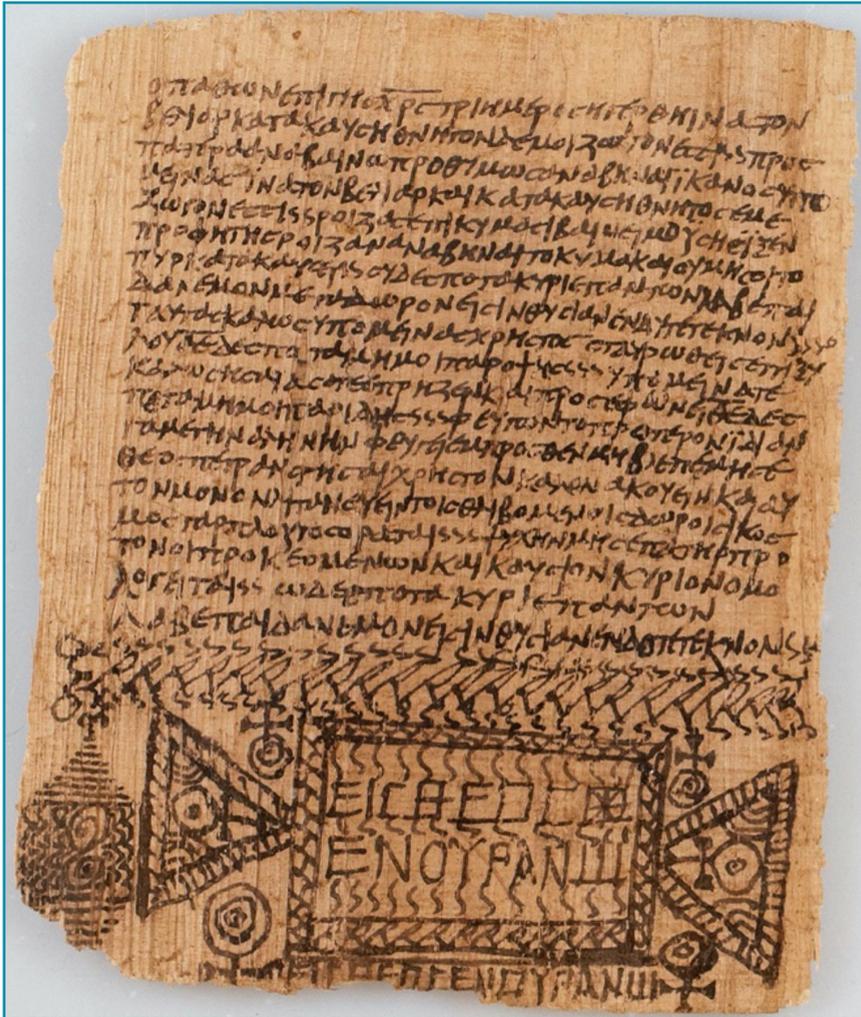


Figure 4: MS P.Monts. Roca fol. 157b.

same phrase is used at the opening of the anaphora (figure 1) examined above, though here, ἐν οὐρανῷ (in heaven) is added as an appendage, replacing Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος, to the main Εἰς Θεός inscription.

the Barcelona papyrus (MS P.Monts. Roca fols. 154b and 156b, figures 1 and 3, respectively, where the scribe makes a conscious distinction between the ansate and the staurogram), consult: Gillian SPALDING-STRACEY, *The Cross in the Visual Culture of Late Antique Egypt* (TSEC 19), Leiden 2020, 93–94; Erika DINKLER-VON SCHUBERT, *CTAYPOC: Vom "Wort vom Kreuz"* (1 Kor. 1,18). *Zum Kreuz-Symbol*, in: *Byzantine East, Latin West. Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt WEITZMANN*, Princeton/NJ 1995, 30–38; Larry W. HURTADO, *The Staurogram in Early Christian Manuscripts. The Earliest Visual Reference to the Cru-*

The phrase Εἶς Θεὸς ἐν οὐρανῶ is repeated a second time in a different box surrounded by various repeated patterns, crosses, staurograms, and asterisk shapes situated above the *tabula ansata* in [figure 3](#) and in a less decorative form below the table in [figure 4](#). Within the *tabula* of [figure 3](#), the abbreviation ΙΧΘΥΣ, which abbreviates “Ι(ησοῦς) Χ(ριστός) Θ(εοῦ) Υ(ἰός) Σ(ωτήρ) / Jesus Christ the Son of God, Savior”, is found and represents a Christological phrase similar to that used earlier by affirming Christ as God and Lord: Εἶς Θεὸς Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος. Although the acronym ΙΧΘΥΣ is in a contracted, abbreviated form, which typically represents post-third century usage of the *nomina divina*, it is likely that the scribe was utilizing the specific symbolism of the contraction ΙΧΘΥΣ, meaning fish, which was already a well-established Christian symbol by the time the Barcelona papyrus was copied.³⁸

4.2 The Inversion of Εὐλογεῖτε

Additional phrases, such as the vocative Εὐλογεῖτε (bless!), exceptionally written upside down, and Ἐπ’ ἀγαθῶ – Ἐν εἰρήνῃ (for the good – in peace), written traditionally in an upright manner, are used in fol. 156b ([figure 3](#)) on the upper and lower perimeter of the *tabula ansata*. As I treat the latter phrases below in the colophon discussion, here I emphasize the peculiar nature of the inverted Εὐλογεῖτε. If we read all texts in the euchologion portion of the Barcelona papyrus as pronounced prayers, one might wonder whether this is meant as a diaconal line, since a standard component of later liturgical sources is the deacon’s invitation for the priest to give a blessing. In such a case, the inversion of the text could indicate that it is pronounced by another, perhaps one standing opposite the priestly user of the book, yet this is highly unlikely.³⁹ The use of inverted texts for clergy

cified Christ?, in: Thomas J. KRAUS – Tobias NICKLAS (eds.), *New Testament Manuscripts. Their Text and Their World* (TENT 2), Leiden 2006, 207–226; HURTADO, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 135–154.

³⁸ On the Christian representation of abbreviation “ΙΧΘΥΣ”, see: Tuomas RASMUS, *Revisiting the Ichthys. A Suggestion Concerning the Origins of Christological Fish Symbolism*, in: Christian BULL et al. (eds.), *Mystery and Secrecy in the Nag Hammadi Collection and Other Ancient Literature. Ideas and Practices* (NHMS 76), Leiden 2012, 327–348.

³⁹ In known Medieval customs, the deacon would customarily stand opposite the celebrant in Egyptian liturgical practice. In circa twelfth century Egypt, the Is-

standing opposite one another is unprecedented and no other indications in the Barcelona papyrus refers to diaconal expressions. Moreover, if such a single one-word response was in use within the liturgy at the time, the deacon could have easily committed it to memory.

Once again, here I suggest that this line is not intended as a pronounced prayer but is envisioned by the scribe for a different function. The imperative to bless could be a scribal request directly to God, and the text could be intentionally inverted to be read from the perspective above the book. From the geographical perspective of looking down from the heavens, the command to bless would appear upright. As such, the scribe of the Barcelona papyrus might be making use of writing practices that were believed to be spiritually efficacious to the users of such books. These concepts can be found in broader scribal practices, including in magical papyri, where manipulations or adulterations of “normal” forms of writing seem to have been viewed as efficacious in encouraging immaterial bodies toward a particular outcome. Further connections between the Barcelona papyrus and wider writing habits is that Christian amulets of this era typically bear uncontracted forms of the *nomina sacra* that appear to have been written to bring about spiritual benefit.⁴⁰ Thus, while the Barcelona papyrus does not bear any discernible direct link with “magical” papyri, it nevertheless suggests general scribal habits of using the writing of texts for spiritual benefit beyond the creation of a mere record of liturgical prayers for public recitation.⁴¹

Islamic Fatimid ruler Al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām-illāh (1101–1130 CE) visited a monastery questioning the position of the celebrant and deacon in Coptic liturgical practice in Pseudo-Sālih the Armenian, *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and Some Neighbouring Countries*, trans. by Basil T. A. EVETTS, Oxford 1895, 182. Such attestations continue throughout later Medieval Coptic literature as the unanimous position for the deacon, possibly stemming from an earlier tradition: Severus AL-MUQAFFA', *Die Ordnung des Priestertums. Ein altes liturgisches Handbuch der koptischen Kirche*, trans. by Julius ASSFALG (Coptica 1), Cairo 1955, 36 (Arabic)/111 f. (German); Yūḥannā ibn Abī Zakarīā ibn SIBĀ', *Pretiosa Margarita de Scientiis Ecclesiasticis*, trans. by Mistrīḥ VINCENTIO (SOC.Ae), Cairo 1966, 182 (Arabic)/490 (Latin).

⁴⁰ Theodore S. DE BRUYN – Jitse H. F. DIJKSTRA, *Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements. A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets*, in: *BASP* 48 (2011) 163–216, here: 168 f.

⁴¹ Within magical papyri, the deformation of a “normal” text is typically the writing of something in reverse, often done to bring about misfortune or the reverse

At the same time, there are reasons to avoid reading too much into the inversion of this text. The scribe may have simply done so for the sake of symmetry.⁴² If the scribe intended the inversion for the sake of viewing from above, one might question why the additional good fortune statements, “for good – in peace”, below this *tabula* (figure 3), are not likewise inverted even though they seem to form part of the same textual unit, namely a request of God’s blessing for the good and in peace. Additionally, it is less common to find Christian spiritual requests and amuletic statements written non-traditionally.⁴³ Evidence within the Barcelona papyrus itself attests to the preservation of the normal writing direction for Christian amuletic statements.⁴⁴ Scribal symmetry thus appears more probable for the textual inversion. The upside-down *Eὐλογεῖτε* is flanked by two *crux ansata* symbols, which are also inverted. These are written parallel as mirror images to the bottom portion surrounding the *tabula ansata*. Thus, the scribe may have simply continued the inverted writing to mimic the remainder of that section’s design to preserve symmetry. The exact inversion of the *ansata* cross occurs in the corners of another *tabula ansata* in fol. 157b (figure 4). However, since there is no space for the scribe to write, we are left to hypothesize on a single instance since no other known textual examples of inverted writing exist in the papyrus. Nevertheless, balanced symmetry also occurs with the same symbol in the handles of the tablet in both fols. 156b and 157b (figures 3 and 4, respectively). On what I propose is plausibly a subscription leaf (fol. 165b, figure 5), where *Ἐπ’ἀγαθῶν* is written above the *tabula* in the same position as *Eὐλογεῖτε* on fol. 156b (figure 3), it is retained in the upright position

of what is written. See the discussion and examples in Juraj FRANEK – Daniela URBANOVÁ, “As Isis Loved Osiris, So Let Matrona Love Theodoros...”. Sympathetic Magic and Similia Similibus Formulae in Greek and Latin Curse Tablets (Part 2), in: *Philologia Classica* 14/2 (2019) 177–207, here: 188–193. Many thanks to Korshi Dosoo for alerting me to this publication and theory.

⁴² I wish to thank Ágnes T. Mihálykó for her suggestion on scribal symmetry.

⁴³ In their comprehensive survey of Greek-Egyptian amulet formularies on various mediums from the fourth to sixth centuries, all were written traditionally from left to right, and top to bottom. See tables in DE BRUYN – DIJKSTRA, *Greek Amulets*, 184–215.

⁴⁴ In this instance, the writing convention is standard, spanning from left to right. TORALLAS-TOVAR – WÖRZ, *Greek Papyri from Montserrat*, 175–177.

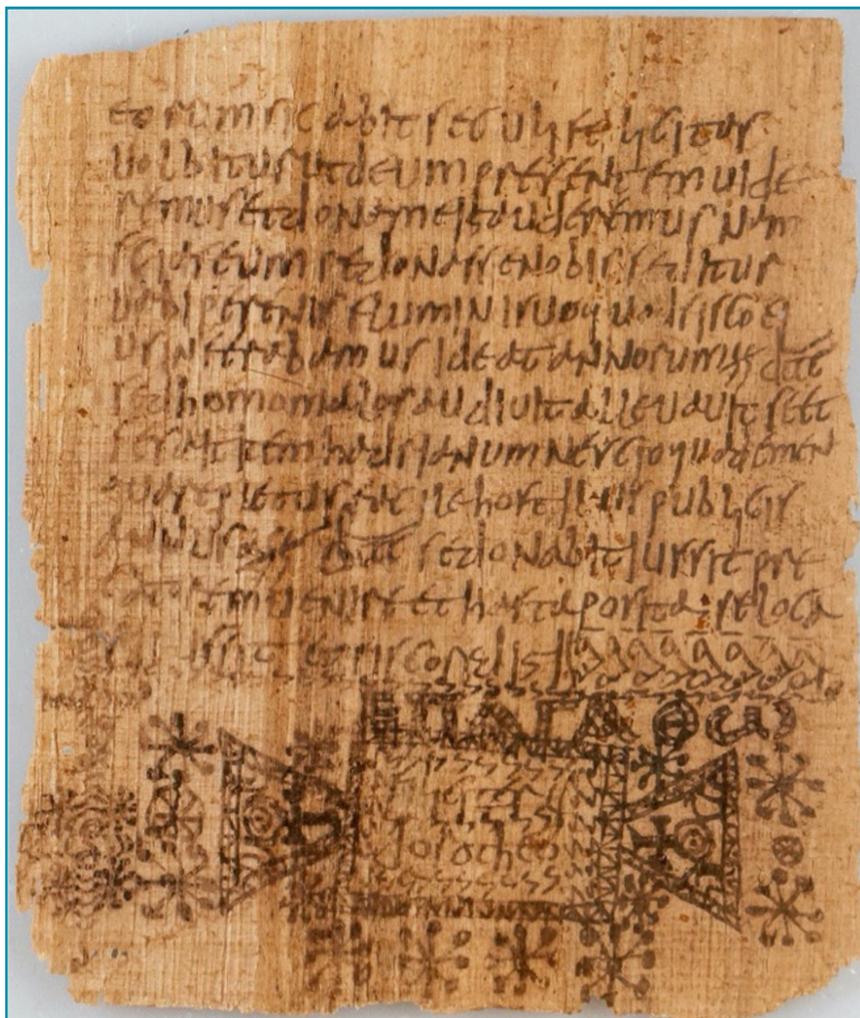


Figure 5: MS P.Monts.Roca fol. 165b.

since it matches the structural symmetry of the ornaments, thus preserving the proportioned appearance of the *tabula*. The scribe, possibly rotating the papyrus in ninety-degree increments in order to complete the graphic, ornamental design on each side of the *tabula*, simply retained the upright position of writing in that particular direction and instance.

4.3 On the Colophon(s) and Dedications

Scholars have considered fols. 156b and 157b (figures 3 and 4) as colophons.⁴⁵ Both leaves contain a *tabula ansata* inscribed with forms of the *nomina sacra*, discussed earlier. Below the tablet in fol. 156b (figure 3), a possible dedication term is used – Ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ – that is coupled with Ἐν εἰρήνῃ spread over two lines, which may have led to the classification of the leaf as a colophon due to dedicatory language. However, this folio contains no proper noun or patronage, possibly due to a lacuna at the end of the page, or, more reasonably, because the scribe intended these phrases as blessings – “for good, for peace” – which may well correspond to the text above the *tabula* to bless (Εὐλογεῖτε) written upside down. Since colophons generally contain pertinent information related to the manuscript's production, such as scribal name, endowments, dedications, and dating, which are all lacking from these two folia, it is less likely these two specific leaves serve as proper colophons or dedication pages.

It would not be odd for the codex to lack a colophon, since older Greek majuscule manuscripts only exceptionally contained subscription pages and it was in the Middle Ages that colophons took precedence in Greek codices.⁴⁶ However, on fols. 165b and 149a (figures 5 and 6, correspondingly), the manuscript does include what can be described as simplistic colophons or dedications. Here, rather than ornamenting the *tabula ansata* with a form of the *nomina sacra*, the copyist dedicates the manuscript to a Dorotheus. In fol. 165b (figure 5), line one is written in Greek, followed by two lines in Latin: Ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ / *filiciter Dorotheo*.

Tea Gil and Sofía Torallas-Tovar note that “*filiciter*” is a usual expression in Late Antique Latin manuscripts, referring to the codex's receiver, a common feature of colophons.⁴⁷ Ἐπ' ἀγαθῶ in the dative could render an expression of patronage along the lines of “for the good of ...”, though the scribe may have emphatically expressed who the book was endowed to in

⁴⁵ ROCA-PUIG, *Anàfora de Barcelona*, 113–115. 135; CHASE, *Anaphoral Development*, 163. 165; ΜΗΑΛΥΚÓ, *Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 208, fn. 84. On what qualifies as a colophon in oriental manuscripts see Eugenia SOKOLINSKI et al. (eds.), *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies. An Introduction*, Hamburg 2015, 85.

⁴⁶ Cf. SOKOLINSKI, *Oriental Manuscript*, 205 f.

⁴⁷ Cf. GIL – TORALLAS-TOVAR, *Hadrianvs*, 30.



Figure 6: MS P.Monts.Roca fol. 149a.

both Greek and Latin since ἐπ' ἀγαθῶν could be cognate for the Latin *feliciter*, according to Gil and Torallas-Tovar.⁴⁸

A similar stylistic approach is used on the colophon-like, dedication page found on fol. 149a (figure 6), though without any Greek inscription. After two rows of *diples* horizontally spanning the papyrus, demarking the terminus of the previous text, a *tabula ansata* is drawn enclosing the following Latin text: “feliciter dorotheo”. A subsequent name below the *tabula*

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 30. See also the discussion in ΜΗΑΛΥΚÓ, Christian Liturgical Papyri, 207–209.

written in majuscule, VTERE F[...]IX DORTHE also exists, representing an endowment to a particular person. Due to these factors, these two inscriptions on fols. 149a and 165b are more likely colophons, whereas fols. 156b and 157b are not, but rather contain theological invocations within and surrounding a *tabula ansata* that serve ulterior functions.

4.4 Commentary

Having detailed the scribal witnesses and employment of these acclamations and associated expressions within the codex, a discussion on their intended auxiliary usage outside the recited supplications is warranted. I first grant attention to the opening dialogue in response to the previous scholarship with which I opened this discussion. Then, I identify similar uses within later Egyptian Christian scribal and material cultural forms that testify to such uses within writings of the Medieval Copto-Arabic era and beyond.

The phrase “One God, Jesus the Lord”, or its various derivations presented in the whole of *MS P.Monts.Roca*, are not part of the prayers but are intended as a scribal profession and blessing for the work’s commencement and completion. Employment of this acclamation occurs at the start or end of prayers and typically occupies its own isolated space separate from the proper, recited prayers. These peripheral phrases are enclosed or written outside the body text in all cases within this codex, alluding to their external nature from the main corpus.⁴⁹ Moreover, the line is often stylistically distinct since it is generally larger and written in straight majuscule, distinguished from the smaller, more inclined style customarily followed for the prayer texts of the manuscript. In some instances, take the anaphora as an example (*figure 1*), this initial blessing for the written work appears *before* the title of the prayer, which allows us to likewise assume that the presider would not have pronounced this line as part of the supplication that follows.

⁴⁹ See the discussion of distinct writing styles that visually mark divine names in early Christian writing in Larry W. HURTADO, *At the Origins of Christian Worship. The Context and Character of Earliest Christian Devotion*, Grand Rapids/MI 1999, 121.

These acclamations, mainly when ornamented with a *tabula ansata* or other emboxing methods, may also function as space fillers. If we were to look at the space occupying the formulaic prayers with the exclusion of these curious acclamations used throughout the papyrus, there would be a significant amount of dead or blank space within each papyrus. Ágnes T. Mihálykó suggests that various acclamations, theological statements, and or hymns were used as “space fillers” throughout the making of Christian liturgical papyri.⁵⁰ When employed in the studied papyrus, the various theological acclamations and invocations could appear as space occupiers, possibly to prevent the opportunity for another hand to add further texts; similar to the modern-day signage in printed monographs “This Page is Left Intentionally Blank”. In this realm, it is most clearly seen on leaf 156b (*figure 3*) where a prayer for the exorcism of oil concludes on the top first quarter of the page and then detailed, ornate, and repetitive illustrations are used to fill the page inscribed with the various uses of the Ἐἴς Θεός invocation and its appendages as detailed earlier. This is again employed on the last leaf of the liturgical section on fol. 157b (*figure 4*) and other instances, such as the two texts I have described as colophons (fols. 165b and 149a; *figures 5 and 6* respectively), as noted earlier.

These phrases and designs as space filler is certainly a strong possibility. Yet their use for filling space does not provide the best explanation for their utilization at the top of folia, and even if space filling is a motive in certain cases, this does not exclude other intentions, including for blessing and distinguishing these texts as decisively Christian. With the eclectic blend of documents circulating in the early Christian period amid other literary, religious sources, the use of the *nomina sacra* emerged as a practice for signifying literature as distinctly Christian.⁵¹ In this tradition, the scribe would typically use the name of God or other distinctly theological titles in an abbreviated or complete form as an appendage throughout a document to signify its Christian authenticity.⁵² As noted earlier, the four earliest attestations are the usage of Θεός, Ἰησοῦς, Κύριος, and Χριστός as

⁵⁰ MIHÁLYKÓ, *Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 204. 210.

⁵¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 37.

⁵² For a detailed study on the *nomina sacra* within Greek manuscripts and within Egypt, see PAAP, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri*.

nomina sacra within the corpus of Christian Greek papyri. Other words, such as οὐρανός and σωτήρ, also appear as later, mid-third to early-fourth century additions to the sacred name tradition, which also occur in the received texts of MS *P.Monts.Roca*.⁵³ Simply, the scribe may be consecrating the text or invoking God's support by using these markers or sealers of the texts' Christian identity while calling upon God to sanctify the work. The tradition of lucidly marking a text as belonging to a Christian genre may be more vital in the early centuries, as new anaphoras and prayers were still nascent and intermixed with a heterogeneous blend of pagan and Jewish sources. In a similar vein, the repeated use of these expressions, prominently abundant on the folio (*figure 3*) containing the conclusion of the exorcism prayer, could function in an apotropaic fashion. Nevertheless, regardless which of these theories hold (of which they are not mutually exclusive), it is apparent that these phrases serve an auxiliary purpose in the papyrus and are not part of the recited prayer texts.

4.5 Comparative Analysis

The fragmentary nature of early liturgical papyri does not easily afford the opportunity to draw parallels within the same genre and era. Yet, it is safe to assume that the tradition of inserting acclamations invoking God before a prayer is typical, as Mihálykó and Arsenius Mikhail have noted in their study on a Coptic liturgical papyrus from the eleventh century.⁵⁴ Due to the lack of literary evidence in early and late antique practice, I point forward to other sources to demonstrate how a similar tradition has carried over throughout Medieval Coptic Egypt and into modernity.

Various benedictions invoking the name of God are written throughout Coptic, Copto-Arabic manuscripts, and material culture where they are not part of the recited prayers or script. These opening phrases generally beseech God's blessing or mercy on the work undertaken. Within Egyptian

⁵³ For a list of the four core *nomina sacra* and later additions, see HURTADO, *At the Origins of Christian Worship*, 97 f. 134. On their development over time in Greek papyrology, consult PAAF, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri*, 100 f. 104. 107. 109. 119.

⁵⁴ Cf. Ágnes T. MIHÁLYKÓ – Arsenius MIKHAIL, *A Prayer for the Preparation of the Priest and the First Prayer of the Morning in Sahidic Coptic* (P.IIves Copt. 8), in: OCP 82 (2021) 353–370, here: 357.

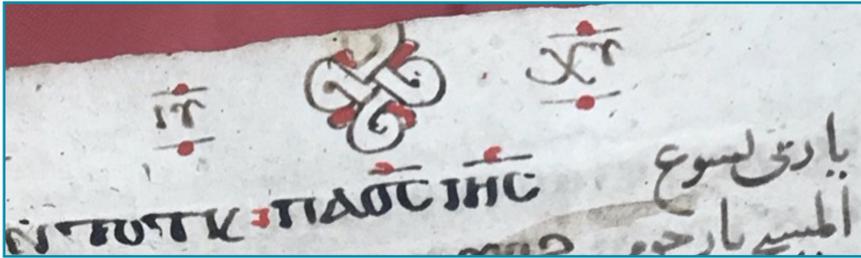


Figure 7: MS Suryān Liturgy 383, fol. 74r.

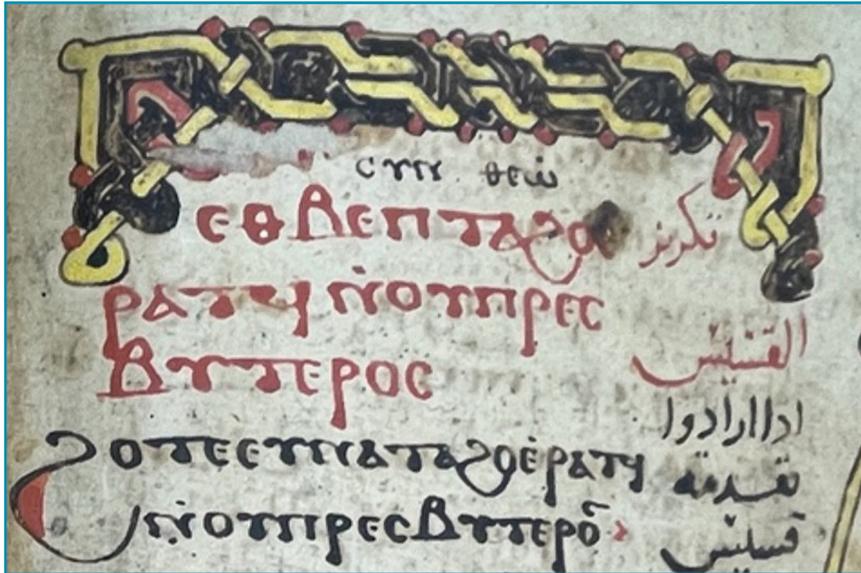


Figure 8: Al-Muḥarraḡ Taqs Kanīsa 14K/4, fol. 67r.

Christian manuscripts, typically the name of God and Jesus Christ are usually written in an abbreviated form within the headers and are commonly associated with marking a quire, a grouping of pages within a manuscript. Such traditions are common in Coptic and Copto-Arabic manuscripts known to date.⁵⁵ Take for instance *figure 7*, the thirteenth century MS *Suryān Liturgy 383*, which contains a contracted form of the *nomina sacra* on the first page of each quire.⁵⁶ The abbreviations appear as $\bar{\tau}$ and

⁵⁵ SOKOLINSKI, *Oriental Manuscript*, 145 f. See Zanetti’s examination of this in Ugo ZANETTI, *Les Manuscrits de Saint-Macaire. Observations codicologiques*, in: Philippe HOFFMANN (ed.), *Recherches de Codicologie Comparée. La Composition du Codex au Moyen Âge, En Orient et en Occident*, Paris 1998, 171–182, here: 177.

⁵⁶ For more on this manuscript’s contents, including an edition and commentary of some of its prayers, as well as codicological and paleographical details consult, Arsany PAUL, *Approaching the Ecclesia in Medieval Coptic Cairo. Church*



Figure 9: Al-Muḥarraḡ Taḡs Kanīsa 14K/2, fol. 71r.

$\overline{\alpha\chi}$ and flank an illuminated cross design, preserving a type of ornamental scheme as seen in the black and white decorations of MS *P.Monts.Roca*. The same is also visible in [figure 9](#), which contains the following additional invocations $\overline{\gamma\epsilon}$, and $\overline{\theta\epsilon}$.

More profoundly though, are unique inscriptions summoning God in a colorfully decorated arched headpiece that demarks a new prayer section within codices. Depicted in [figures 8 through 10](#) are images from two undated, medieval manuscripts from the monastery known as al-Muḥarraḡ, located in the middle of Egypt some 400 kilometers south of Cairo (in a similar geographical location where MS *P.Monts.Roca* is thought to have originated), which contain *nomina sacra* at the commencement of prayers, and are not part of the pronounced petitions. [Figure 8](#) has a simple form of $\epsilon\chi\eta\ \theta\epsilon\omega$, “with God”, and lacks an Arabic counterpart. Whereas [figures 9 and 10](#) contain an expanded form invoking God’s powerful assistance in both Greek and Arabic – $\epsilon\chi\eta\ \theta\epsilon\omega\ \iota\sigma\chi\upsilon\ \rho\omicron\varsigma$ (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الْقَوِي), meaning “with God the powerful”. Each acclamation is situated above the prayer’s title in a decorated style and commences a new section of the manuscript, similar to the liturgical prayers in the Barcelona papyrus presented earlier.

Entrance Petitions from the Thirteenth-Century Copto-Arabic Manuscript Sur-yān Liturgy 383 (folia 190r–194r), in: *EO* 39 (2022) 143–173.



Figure 10: Al-Muharrraq Taqs Kamisa 14K/2, fol. 119v.

A similar tradition is also exhibited in the circa thirteenth century iconographic campaign in the richly illuminated Church of the Apostles at Saint Antony's Monastery in the Red Sea, Egypt. On two instances, various epigraphic inscriptions begin with the same divine invocation as seen in figure 8.⁵⁷ In one instance, prior to the master painter of the church's prayerful inscription, Theodore begins by calling upon God with the phrase – θ[εος] κυν (figure 11).⁵⁸ In another example, the same acclamation is employed in the scroll of Arsenius the monk (figure 12).⁵⁹ Moreover, visitors seeking intercessions at the monastery adopted the practice in their own "graffiti" etchings on the monastery walls and would begin their appeals with similar phrases. For example, a lengthy supplication for remembrance opens with a similar benediction in Arabic: "In the name of God the benevolent and merciful / بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّؤُوفِ الرَّحِيمِ" (figure 13).⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Images 11–13 from St. Antony's Monastery in Egypt are kindly reproduced by permission of the American Research Center in Egypt, Inc. (ARCE), whose project was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Photo credit: Patrick Godeau.

⁵⁸ Cf. PEARSON, *Coptic Inscriptions*, 217.

⁵⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 222.

⁶⁰ Cf. Sidney H. GRIFFITH, *The Handwriting on the Wall. Graffiti in the Church of St. Antony*, in: Elizabeth S. BOLMAN (ed.) *Monastic Visions. Wall Paintings in the Monastery of St. Antony at the Red Sea*, New Haven/NJ 2002, 185–194, here: 187.

Figure 11: Theodore's inscription.



Figure 12: Arsenius' scroll.

The tradition to invoke God's assistance through various inscriptions prior to commencing a task continues in current Coptic practice, as demonstrated in modern liturgical publications.⁶¹ These instances appeal to the strong affinity of the tradition in both professional and amateur scribal customs.

Such acclamations at the start of Egyptian Christian texts, iconographic works, and wall writings are typical scribal habits invoking God's divine assistance when undertaking the task to author or transcribe holy texts or images. These lines mark a scribe's activity as being done with and in the service of God. MS *P.Monts.Roca* invites us to envision these later Coptic scribal practices in line with much earlier precedent.

⁶¹ The production of modern Coptic liturgical books typically preserves the inscription of various theological acclamations in the title page or before commencing prayer sections. See, for instance, the twentieth century printed Copto-Arabic Liturgicon of Šalīb 'ABD AL-MASīh ΠΙΧΩΜ Ἰτε Πιεχολογιον Εσογαν Ἐτε Φαι Πε ΠΙΧΩΜ Ἰτε Ψωμητ Ναναφορα Ἰτε Πιαγιος Βασιλιος Νεμ Πιαγιος Γρηγοριος Νεμ Πιαγιος Κυριλλος Νεμ Ζανκεεγχι Εσογαν [The Book of the Holy Euchologion, Which Is the Book of the Three Anaphoras of Saint Basil and Saint Gregory and Saint Cyril, and Other Holy Prayers], Cairo 1902, 17. 193. 451. 470. 555. 573. 680.



Figure 13: Wall inscription from the monastery.

5 Conclusion

Attention to visual presentations and scribal practices is indispensable for understanding liturgical texts not merely as disembodied edited texts, but as they occur *in situ* in their respective textual medium. As demonstrated here, an attentive reading of the text within its apparatus and comparatively to other literary and material evidence shows that the codicological acclamations and blessings, such as $\text{Εἰς Θεὸς Ἰησοῦς ὁ Κύριος}$, represent Egyptian Christian scribal annotations. In this study, I have demonstrated that these invocational blessings are not part of the pronounced prayer tradition within the Barcelona papyrus but rather fulfill other purposes, namely, to demarcate Christian texts, provide a blessing for the authorship, and as space fillers especially when combined with various ornamental sketches. Thus, in the case of the MS *P.Monts.Roca*, the opening benediction is not part of the anaphora but merely an introductory scribal text typical of this area's manuscript tradition, which has carried over into medieval and modern Coptic practices. Therefore, concerning the opening dialogue in the anaphora of the Barcelona papyrus, we should conclude that it contains no equivalent to "The Lord be with you / And with your Spirit", and if any such expressions were used in the original community to which this papyrus was destined, they were not recorded by this manuscript's scribe.

Abbreviations

ACC	Alcuin Club Collections
Aeg.	Aegyptus
BASP	The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists
EO	Ecclesia Orans
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
MLC	Miscellània Litúrgica Catalana
NHMS	Nag Hammadi and Manichaeae Studies
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica
OMont	Orientalia Montserratensia
ÖSLS	Österreichische Studien zur Liturgiewissenschaft und Sakramententheologie
PLB	Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava
SOC.Ae	Studia Orientalia Christiana. Aegyptiaca
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
StLi	Studia Liturgica
TENT	Texts and Editions for New Testament Studies
TSEC	Texts and Studies Eastern Christianity
VigChr	Vigiliae Christianae
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

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