

EX FONTE

Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy

VOLUME 3 | 2024

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exfonte.org

How to Cite

MIKHAIL, Arsenius, Occasional Prayers Concerning Sickness & Healing in Bohairic Euchologia, in: Ex Fonte – Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy 3 (2023) 1–38.

DOI [10.25365/exf-2024-3-1](https://doi.org/10.25365/exf-2024-3-1)

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Abstract

Prayer texts from late antiquity and the medieval period attest to the prevalence of practices related to healing, both those promoted as official ritual and those denounced by Church authorities as competing magical practices. These healing practices often, consisted of prayers pronounced by clerics empowered for such ministry (e. g. priests and bishops) to bless substances like oil or water or to otherwise invoke divine grace for the healing of individuals. Such practices took place either in church or in a domestic setting, though in many cases were designed for individual use on a particular sick person. The present article provides texts, translations, and commentary on a group of seven such prayers related to sickness and health found in manuscripts of the Bohairic Coptic Euchologion as part of a broader analysis of the manuscript tradition of the Bohairic Euchologion and the prayer practices of medieval Copts that it reflects.

Keywords

Coptic Liturgy | Euchologia | Occasional Prayers | Blessing | Manuscripts | Health | Sickness

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Occasional Prayers Concerning Sickness & Healing in Bohairic Euchologia

Arsenius MIKHAIL

One of the least known contents of the Bohairic Coptic Euchologion is a group of occasional stand-alone prayers serving various social contexts, such as in the contexts of meals, travel, and sickness. Besides the numerous Euchologia manuscripts, a group of nine such prayers were eventually printed in the influential Euchologion prepared by Hegumen 'Abd al-Masīḥ Ṣalīb al-Baramūsī in 1902 in a section titled "Prayers of Benediction or Blessing (صلوات تبريك أو بركة)"¹. In a previous article in this journal, an overview was given of this little-studied group of prayers, totaling 17 in available Euchologia manuscripts.² Within this group of 17 prayers, 7 prayers have to do with the topics of sickness and healing. Within this broad heading, these seven prayers can be further sub-divided into prayers for oil (2), prayers for water (2), prayers for a person bitten by a snake (2), and a prayer for someone suffering from fever (1). Textual evidence from late antiquity and the medieval period attests to the prevalence of practices related to healing, both those promoted as official ritual and those denounced by Church authorities as competing magical practices. These healing practices often, though not always, consisted of prayers pronounced by clerics empowered for such ministry (e. g. priests and bish-

¹ Cf. 'Abd al-Masīḥ ṢALĪB, ΠΙΧΩΜ ἸΤΕ ΠΙΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ ΕΤΕ ΦΑΙ ΠΕ ΠΙΧΩΜ ἸΤΕ †ΩΜ† ἸΑΝΑΦΟΡΑ ἸΤΕ ΠΑΓΙΟΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΟΣ ΝΕΜ ΠΑΓΙΟΣ ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΣ ΝΕΜ ΠΑΓΙΟΣ ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟΣ ΝΕΜ ΖΑΝΚΕΕΥΧΗ ΕΥΟΥΑΒ [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, 759–777. See also the edition and Italian translation with helpful introduction and notes: Andrea NICOLOTTI (ed.), *Il libro delle anafore della Chiesa copta ortodossa* (JThF 45), Münster 2023, 822–835.

² Cf. Arsenius MIKHAIL, Occasional Prayers in Bohairic Coptic Euchologia. A Preliminary Overview and Inventory, in: *ExF* 2 (2023) 337–362.

ops) to bless substances like oil or water or to otherwise invoke divine grace for the healing of individuals. Such practices took place either in church or in a domestic setting, though in many cases were designed for individual use on a particular sick person.³ The present article provides texts, translations, and commentary on this group of seven prayers related to sickness and health seeking to situate them within the broader context of medieval ritual practice in Egypt.

1 *The Prayer for the Sick in the Formulary of BAS*

Before the occasional prayers on sickness and health can be presented and analyzed, however, mention must be made of a much more familiar and ubiquitous prayer for the sick, namely, the *Prayer for the Sick* (Ar. أوشية المرضى). This is a relatively lengthier petition that features commonly in several liturgical services of the Coptic rite: In the morning incense service, as part of the anaphoral intercessions of the anaphora of MARK/CYRIL, and generally as part of a sequence known as the Seven Great Prayers (Ar. السبع الأواشي الكبار), which feature in the services of the blessing of the water,⁴ baptism,⁵ and the prostration service on Pentecost.⁶ Early redactions of this prayer are attested in a 10th-century Greek

³ Much of the information here on late-antique healing practices is discussed in Ágnes T. ΜΙΗÁΛΥΚÓ, *Healing in Christian Liturgy in Late Antique Egypt. Sources and Perspectives*, in: *TC* 13/1 (2021) 154–194.

⁴ Cf. Roshdi Wassef Behman Dous, *Ο Αγιασμός των υδάτων του Νείλου Ποταμού στην Αλεξανδρινή Λειτουργική Παράδοση* [unpubl. dissertation Aristotle University of Thessaloniki], 2011, 67 f.; Oswald H. E. BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church. A Detailed Description of Her Liturgical Services and the Rites and Ceremonies Observed in the Administration of Her Sacraments* (Publications de la Société d'archéologie copte: Textes et documents), Cairo 1967, 250–256.

⁵ For descriptions of the Coptic baptismal ritual, see Oswald H. E. BURMESTER, *The Baptismal Rite of the Coptic Church (A Critical Study)*, in: *BSAC* 11 (1945) 27–86; ID., *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, 114–125; Heinzgerd BRAKMANN, *ΒΑΠΤΙΣΜΑ ΔΙΝΕΣΕΩΣ*. Ordines und Orationen kirchlicher Eingliederung in Alexandrien und Ägypten, in: ID. et al. (eds.), “Neugeboren aus Wasser und Heiligem Geist”. *Kölner Kolloquium zur Initiatio Christiana* (JThF 37), Münster 2020, 85–196, here: 165.

⁶ Cf. Oswald H. E. BURMESTER, *The Office of Genuflection on Whitsunday*, in: *Le Muséon* 47 (1934) 205–257; ID., *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, 303–311.

fragment from Nubia,⁷ in the Euchologion of the White Monastery (ca. 10th c.),⁸ and in a Sahidic redaction identical to the Bohairic version from the 10th/12th c.⁹ According to Mihálykó, the text of this prayer shares verbal similarities with other Alexandrian prayers for the sick.¹⁰ The structure of this prayer, as is common with other such litanies,¹¹ consists of a priestly call to prayer stating the purpose of the prayer [1], followed by a deacon's command to the people reiterating that purpose [2], the people's *Kyrie* [3], followed by a *collect* intoned by the priest [4]. Below is the text divided into these sense units:

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| <p>ΠΑΛΙΝ ΟΝ ΜΑΡΕΝΤΖΟ ΕΦΤ ΠΙΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ΦΙΩΤ ΪΠΕΝΟ̅ ΟΥΟΖ ΠΕΝΝΟΥΤ ΟΥΟΖ ΠΕΝ̅ΩΡ ΙΗΣ ΠΧ̅. ΤΕΝΤΖΟ ΟΥΟΖ ΤΕΝΤΩΒΖ ΪΤΕΚΜΕΤΑΓΑΘΟΣ ΠΙΜΑΙΡΩΜΙ ΑΡΙΦΜΕΥΙ Π̅Ω ΝΗΝ ΕΤΩΩΝΙ ΪΤΕ ΠΕΚΛΑΟΣ.</p> | <p>[1] <i>Priest:</i> Again, let us ask God the Pantocrator, the Father of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ. We ask and entreat your goodness, O lover of mankind, remember, O Lord, the sick among Your people.</p> |
| <p>ΚΥΡΙΕ ΕΛΕΗΣΟΝ</p> | <p>[2] <i>People:</i> Lord have mercy.</p> |
| <p>ΤΩΒΖ Ε̅ΧΕΝ ΝΕΝΙΟΥΤ ΝΕΜ ΝΕΝΣΗΝΟΥ ΕΤΩΩΝΙ ΪΕΝ ΧΙΝΩΩΝΙ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΙΤΕ ΪΕΝ ΠΑΙΤΟΠΟΣ ΙΤΕ ΪΕΝ ΜΑΙ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΖΙΝΑ ΪΤΕ ΠΧ̅ ΠΕΝΝΟΥΤ ΕΡ̅ΜΟΤ ΝΑΝ ΝΕΜΩΟΥ ΪΠΙΟΥΧΑΙ ΝΕΜ ΠΙΤΑΛΒΟ ΪΤΕΦΧΑ ΝΕΝΝΟΒΙ ΝΑΝ Ε̅ΒΟΛ.</p> | <p>[3] <i>Deacon:</i> Pray for our fathers and our brothers, who are sick with any sickness, whether in this place or in any place, that Christ our God may grant us with them health and healing and forgive us our sins.</p> |

⁷ *Pap. Colon. XXVIII 7.* See Jürgen HAMMERSTAEDT, *Griechische Anaphorenfragmente aus Ägypten und Nubien* (PapyCol 28), Opladen 1999, 123–126.

⁸ Cf. Emmanuel LANGE, *Le grand euchologe du Monastère Blanc. Texte copte édité avec traduction française* (PO 28/2), Paris 1958, 338.

⁹ *Prague Or. Inst. MS I p. 3, 12–6, 14.* See Valerie HAŽMUKOVÁ, *Miscellaneous Coptic Prayers*, in: *Archiv Orientální* 8 (1936) 318–333, here: 326–331.

¹⁰ See the summary of this history in MIHÁLYKÓ, *Healing in Christian Liturgy in Late Antique Egypt*, 163 f.

¹¹ Cf. Robert F. TAFT, *The Structural Analysis of Liturgical Units. An Essay in Methodology*, in: ID. (ed.), *Beyond East and West. Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, Rome 2001, 187–202, here: 193–196.

ΕΑΚΧΕΜΠΟΥΩΙΝΙ ΉΕΝ ΖΑΝΝΑΙ ΝΕΜ
 ΖΑΝΜΕΤΩΕΝΖΗΤ ΜΑΤΑΛΩΟΥ.
 ΑΛΙΟΥΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΑΡΩΟΥ ΝΕΜ ΕΒΟΛ
 ΖΑΡΟΝ ΝΩΩΝΙ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΝΕΜ ΙΑΒΙ
 ΝΙΒΕΝ ΠΙΠΝΑ ΝΤΕ ΝΙΩΩΝΙ ΒΟΧΙ
 ΝΣΩΦ. ΝΗ ΕΤΑΥΩΣΚ ΕΥΩΥΤΗΟΥΤ
 ΉΕΝ ΝΗΑΒΙ ΜΑΤΟΥΝΟΣΟΥ
 ΟΥΟΖ ΜΑΝΟΜΤ ΝΩΟΥ. ΝΗ
 ΕΤΤΖΕΝΚΗΟΥΤ ΝΤΟΤΟΥ ΝΗΠΠΝΑ
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 ΙΕ ΝΗ ΕΤΟΥΑΜΟΝΙ ΝΜΩΟΥ ΉΕΝ
 ΟΥΜΕΤΒΩΚ ΕΣΕΝΦΑΩΙ ΠΩ
 ΑΡΙΤΟΥ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΝΡΕΜΖΕ ΟΥΟΖ ΝΑΙ
 ΝΩΟΥ. ΧΕ ΝΘΟΚ ΠΕΤΒΩΛ ΝΗΝΗ
 ΕΤΣΩΝΖ ΕΒΟΛ ΟΥΟΖ ΕΤΤΑΖΟ
 ΕΡΑΤΟΥ ΝΗΝ ΕΤΑΥΡΑΪΤΟΥ ΕΪΡΗΙ
 ΤΖΕΛΠΙΣ ΝΤΕ ΝΗ ΕΤΕ ΝΜΟΝΤΟΥ
 ΖΕΛΠΙΣ ΤΒΟΗΘΙΑ ΝΤΕ ΝΗ ΕΤΕ
 ΝΜΟΝΤΟΥ ΒΟΗΘΟΣ. ΘΟΝΟΜΤ ΝΤΕ
 ΝΗ ΕΤΟΙ ΝΚΟΥΧΙ ΝΖΗΤ ΠΙΛΥΜΗΝ
 ΝΤΕ ΝΗ ΕΤΧΗ ΉΕΝ ΠΙΧΙΜΩΝ,
 ΨΥΧΗ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΕΤΖΕΧΖΩΧ ΟΥΟΖ
 ΕΤΟΥΑΜΟΝΙ ΕΧΩΟΥ ΜΟΙ ΝΩΟΥ
 ΠΩ ΝΟΥΝΑΙ, ΜΟΙ ΝΩΟΥ ΝΟΥΜΤΟΝ,
 ΜΟΙ ΝΩΟΥ ΝΟΥΧΒΟΒ, ΜΟΙ ΝΩΟΥ
 ΝΟΥΖΜΟΤ, ΜΟΙ ΝΩΟΥ ΝΟΥΒΟΗΘΙΑ,
 ΜΟΙ ΝΩΟΥ ΝΟΥΣΩΤΗΡΙΑ, ΜΟΙ
 ΝΩΟΥ ΝΟΥΜΕΤΡΕΦΧΩ ΕΒΟΛ
 ΝΤΕ ΝΟΥΝΟΒΙ ΝΕΜ ΝΟΥΑΝΟΜΙΑ.
 ΑΝΟΝ ΔΕ ΖΩΝ ΠΩ ΝΙΩΩΝΙ ΝΤΕ
 ΝΕΝΨΥΧΗ ΜΑΤΑΛΩΟΥ ΟΥΟΖ ΝΑ
 ΝΕΝΚΕΣΩΜΑ ΑΡΙΦΑΪΡΙ ΕΡΩΟΥ.
 ΠΙΧΙΝΙ ΝΜΗΙ ΝΤΕ ΝΕΝΨΥΧΗ ΝΕΜ
 ΝΕΝΣΩΜΑ, ΠΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ ΝΤΕ
 ΣΑΡΞ ΝΙΒΕΝ, ΧΕΜΠΕΝΩΙΝΙ ΉΕΝ
 ΠΕΚΟΥΧΑΙ.¹²

[4] *Priest:* Having visited them with mercies and compassions, heal them. Lift away from them and from us every sickness and every illness; the spirit of sickness, chase away. Those who have long lain in illness, raise them up and comfort them. Those who are afflicted by impure spirits, set them all free. Those who are in prisons or in the mines, those who are in exile or captivity, or those who are held in bitter bondage, O Lord, set them all free and have mercy upon them. For you are he who sets free those who are bound and lifts up the fallen, the hope of those for whom there is no hope, the help of those for whom there is no help, the comfort of the fainthearted, the harbor of those in the storm. All souls that are distressed or bound, grant them mercy, O Lord. Grant them rest, grant them refreshment, grant them grace, grant them help, grant them salvation, grant them the forgiveness of their sins and their iniquities. As for us, too, O Lord, heal the sicknesses of our souls and also cure those of our bodies. O true physician of our souls and bodies, the guardian of all flesh, visit us with your salvation.

¹² ὩΛΙΒ, ΠΙΧΩΝ ΝΤΕ ΠΙΕΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ, 57–61; NICOLLOTTI, *Il libro delle anafore*, 188–192 (§ 85–90). See the English translation in Frank E. BRIGHTMAN

Characteristic of such a prayer designed for public liturgical services, the text is explicitly generic and inclusive. This is evident from the start, where the text entreats on behalf of the generic plural sick among the people. It continues throughout the lengthy celebrant's *collect*, which speaks in the plural of those suffering of "every sickness and every illness". Nor is the text confined solely to physical illness. Throughout the prayer, mention is made also of those afflicted by impure spirits, those whose souls are distressed or in bondage, and even those who are imprisoned, exiled, the captives, and those who labor in the mines, perhaps as part of captivity and imprisonment. As will become clear below, this general and ubiquitous prayer for the sick distinguishes itself from our group of seven occasional prayers by the following: **1.** A classic liturgical/textual structure characteristic of litanies in the Alexandrian/Coptic rite, **2.** a much lengthier text, **3.** intercession on behalf of an anonymous group of multiple sick individuals, and **4.** request for healing from a variety of ailments, likely physical as well as spiritual/psychological in nature. By comparison, the Bohairic occasional prayers related to sickness and healing are shorter, stand-alone orations, on behalf of specific cases of illness, and have well-defined scopes.

2 Prayers over the Oil (Prayers 7 & 12)

Within this group of seven occasional prayers, the following two can be grouped together for purposes of analysis. These are Prayers 7 and 12 (based on the extended numbering established in the previously published overview of the occasional prayers), both of which are prayers over oil. The first of these is Prayer 7 with the following text:

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| <p> ΠΩΣ ΦΗ ΕΤΓΑΛΛΟ ἸΝΙΨΟΜΪΕΜ ἸΤΕ ΝΕΝΨΥΧΗ ΝΕΜ ΝΕΝΩΜΑ ΪΕΝ ΠΕΚΝΑΙ ΝΕΜ ΝΕΚΗΕΤΩΕΝΖΗΤ, ἸΘΟΚ ΠΕΝΝΗΒ ΑΡΙΑΓΙΑΖΙΝ ἸΠΑΙΝΕΖ, </p> | <p>[1] O Lord who heals the brokenness of our souls and bodies with your mercy and compassions,</p> |
| | <p>[2] sanctify, O our master, this oil</p> |

(ed.), *Liturgies Eastern and Western Being the Texts Original or Translated of the Principal Liturgies of the Church*, vol. 1: Eastern Liturgies, Oxford 1896, 166.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p> ρΙΝΑ ἸΤΕΦΩΠΙ ἸΝΗ ΕΘΝΑΣΙ ἘΒΟΛ ἸΒΗΤΥ ἘΟΥΘΕΡΑΠΙΑ ἘΟΥΦΩΛΧ ἘΒΟΛΞΑ ἸΚΑΞ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΝΕΜ ΩΩΝΙ ΝΙΒΕΝ ἸΣΩΜΑΤΙΚΟΝ ΝΕΜ ΠΩΛΕΒ ἸΤΕ †ΣΑΡΞ ΝΕΜ ΠΙΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΝΕΜ ΠΕΤΡΩΟΥ ΝΙΒΕΝ, </p> | <p>[3] that it may become for those who receive from it unto healing and relief from every pain, every bodily illness, defilement of flesh and soul, and every evil,</p> |
| <p> ρΙΝΑ ΞΕΝ ΦΑΙ ἸΤΕΦΙΩΟΥ ἸΧΕ ΠΕΚΡΑΝ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ ΞΕΝ ΡΩΒ ΝΙΒΕΝ, ΦΙΩΤ ΝΕΜ ΠΩΗΡΙ ΝΕΜ ΠΙΠΝΕΥΜΑ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ, </p> | <p>[4] so that in this your holy name may be glorified in all things, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,</p> |
| <p>†ΝΟΥ ΝΕΜ ἸΣΗΟΥ.¹³</p> | <p>[5] now and at all times.</p> |

The text, given here from the Euchologion edition of Hegumen ‘Abd al-Masīh, appears identically also in *Vatican, Borgia Copt. 7* (AD 1379), an Euchologion of the three liturgies from the Monastery of Saint Antony.¹⁴ It also features in late Euchologia from other regions, such as *Suryān Liturgy 468* (AD 1601) from the Monastery of Baramūs and *Macarius Liturgy 232* (AD 1899), though the exact text in these latter cases was not available for comparison in preparation for this study. Contrary to the Euchologia however, the Euchologion of Ṣalīb adds rubrics to this prayer situating it within the context of a short liturgical service: The priest is to begin with the acclamation, “Have mercy on us (ελεησον ημας), etc.”, by which is to be assumed also the Our Father and the *Prayer of Thanksgiving* characteristic as the initial prayers of most liturgical services in Coptic usage. This is to be followed by *The Prayer for the Sick* discussed above, the present prayer over the oil, then the dismissal rites consisting of Our Father, the *Prayer after Our Father*, the *Prayer of Inclination*, the *Absolution to the Son*, and the dismissal blessing. None of these indications appear in the Euchologia manuscripts examined. In the absence of manuscript evidence for this liturgical framework seen in Ṣalīb’s Euchologion, one would have to assume that it was constructed *de novo* based on this familiar liturgical service structure to design a complete service around the prayer.

¹³ ṢALĪB, ΠΙΧΩΜ ἸΤΕ ΠΙΕΧΧΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ, 772 f.; NICOLOTTI, *Il libro delle anfore*, 830–833 (§ 1089).

¹⁴ *BAV Borgia Copt. 7* (AD 1379), fol. 224^{r-v}.

The prayer text is relatively short and has as its explicit theme the sanctification of oil using the Greek/Coptic verb *ἀγιάζειν*. This oil is to be a cause of healing and relief for those who receive it, take it, or even consume of it (ἸΝΗ ΕΘΝΑΣΙ ΕΒΟΛ ἸΉΗΤΥ). This phrasing may point to a domestic setting, in which several uses of the oil are envisaged and sanctioned, rather than a specific clerical anointing as may be expected in the context of the rite of anointing of the sick or other formalized rituals involving anointing. Healing practices in the context of home visits by clergy is an attested aspect of Christian life and practice in late antiquity. Canon 24 of the *Canons of Hippolytus* from fourth-century Northern Egypt specifically instructs clergy to visit the sick in their community, though Canon 21 of the same collection indicates that oil and water may have been consecrated within the community gathering before their sending to the homes of the sick by the clergy.¹⁵ In support of the possibility that oil and water were consecrated during the liturgy of the Eucharist itself is Prayer 5 of the collection attributed to the fourth-century Sarapion of Thmuis, where a prayer for those offering oil and water occurs after the thanksgiving for Communion.¹⁶ A similar prayer for blessing of oil appears in the so-called Barcelona Papyrus dated to the fourth century, though it is unclear whether this blessing took place during the eucharistic service or independently.¹⁷ The use of oil or water for healing purposes was such a cultural commonplace that not only clergy but healers labeled as “magicians” utilized these means, much

¹⁵ Cf. René-Georges COQUIN, *Les canons d’Hippolyte. Édition critique de la version arabe, introduction et traduction française* (PO 31/2), Paris 1966, 388–391. For an English translation see Paul F. BRADSHAW, *The Canons of Hippolytus* (Gorgias Liturgical Studies 7), Piscataway/NJ 2010, 26–27. See also ΜΗΑΛΥΚΟ, *Healing in Christian Liturgy in Late Antique Egypt*, 165.

¹⁶ Cf. Maxwell E. JOHNSON, *The Prayers of Sarapion of Thmuis. A Literary, Liturgical, and Theological Analysis* (OCA 249), Rome 1995, 52. See the discussion in *ibid.*, 121–123 and ΜΗΑΛΥΚΟ, *Healing in Christian Liturgy in Late Antique Egypt*, 171.

¹⁷ *P. Monts. Roca inv. 156a.6–156b.3*. For the date, see Ágnes T. ΜΗΑΛΥΚΟ, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri. An Introduction* (STAC 114), Tübingen 2019, 236. For the edition of the text, see Ramón ROCA-PUIG, *Anàfora de Barcelona i altres pregàries. Missa del segle IV*, Barcelona 1999, 103–111. See also the most recent study of this important anaphoral text in Nathan P. CHASE, *The Anaphoral Tradition in the “Barcelona Papyrus”* (STT 53), Turnhout 2023.

to the chagrin of the institutional Church.¹⁸ This contest over legitimacy of healing practices is seen for example in an untitled sermon by Shenoute of Atripe (designated *Acephalous Work A14* by Stephen Emmel), where the famous archimandrite of the White Monastery criticizes Christians who use oil or water obtained from sorcerers.¹⁹ A similar warning against receiving the same healing materials of water or oil from sorcerers rather than from official clergy appears in the Coptic *Canons of Ps.-Basil*, composed in Greek ca. 6th century.²⁰

Besides the existence of Prayer 7 as a stand-alone text in Euchologia manuscripts, it also exists in a slightly different recension in the Coptic rite of anointing of the sick, attested at least since the sacramentary *Vatican, Borgia Copt. 112* (AD 1307/08), an important complete and early witness of non-episcopal mysteries and occasional services that remains to be studied and published.²¹ There, the text appears as an inaudible prayer by the priest within the first out of seven parts of the rite,²² the same location of this prayer in the current rite.²³ In keeping with the context of anointing however, the prayer entreats for healing for those who are “anointed from it (εΤΟΥΘΩΞΕΜ ἡΜΩΟΥ ἔΒΟΛ ἡΪΗΤΥ)”, reflecting a liturgical/clerical context in which the oil is used specifically for anointing by clergy. This version of the prayer adds “the compassionate (ΠΙΡΕΥΩΞΕΝΞΗΤ)” to the initial address. Rather than “healing (ΘΕΡΑΠΙΑ) and relief from every pain,

¹⁸ For the category of magician or sorcerer in Coptic Egypt, see Korshi Dosoo, *Healing Traditions in Coptic Magical Texts*, in: TC 13/1 (2021) 44–94, here: 49–56. See also Matthew W. DICKIE, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*, London 2001.

¹⁹ The passage is quoted in full in Dosoo, *Healing Traditions in Coptic Magical Texts*, 51 f.

²⁰ Cf. Canon 35. For a translation of the Coptic text, see Dosoo, *Healing Traditions in Coptic Magical Texts*, 53. For a German translation of the Arabic text of this canon, see Wilhelm RIEDEL (ed.), *Die Kirchenrechtsquellen des Patriarchats Alexandrien*, Leipzig 1900, 253 f.

²¹ For a short description of the manuscript, see Adolphe D. HEBBELYNCK, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits coptes de la Bibliothèque Vaticane*, in: *Miscellanea Francesco EHRLE*, vol. 5: *Scritti di storia e paleografia* (ST 41), Rome 1924, 35–82, here: 69.

²² *Vatican, Borgia Copt. 112* (AD 1307/08), fol. 90^r.

²³ Cf. BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, 146. See also the description in Stefanos ALEXOPOULOS – Maxwell E. JOHNSON, *Introduction to Eastern Christian Liturgies* (ACC 96), Collegeville/MN 2022, 292–298, here: 295.

every bodily illness, defilement of flesh and soul, and every evil”, the anointing of the sick prayer entreats for “healing from the defilement of the spirit and the passions (μπαθος) of the body”, reflecting a certain textual conciseness and symmetry absent in the Euchologia version of this prayer. The witness of this important Borgia “sacramentary”, which belonged once to the famous scholar and priest of Old Cairo Abū-l-barakāt ibn Kabar (d. 1324),²⁴ is supplemented by the description of the rite in Ibn Kabar’s own work, *The Lamp of Darkness (Miṣbāḥ al-ḡulma)* written ca. 1320. The reference to this prayer however appears not in *The Lamp’s* earliest extant manuscript (*BnF Ar. 203*, AD 1363–69), but in a later copy, *Uppsala, O. Vet. 12* (AD 1547).²⁵

Beyond the Coptic tradition however, the prayer *O Lord who heals the brokenness* is well-known as one of the prayers of the Byzantine rite of anointing of the sick.²⁶ The Coptic and Byzantine rites of anointing share many similarities, such as the seven-office structure ideally celebrated by seven priests as well as several prayers in common.²⁷ Some scholars have suggested that the Byzantine anointing rite was subsequently imported by

²⁴ Cf. Khalil SAMIR, L’encyclopédie liturgique d’Ibn Kabar († 1324) et son apologie d’usages coptes, in: Hans-Jürgen FEULNER et al. (eds.), *Crossroad of Cultures. Studies in Liturgy and Patristics in Honor of Gabriele WINKLER* (OCA 260), Rome 2000, 619–655; Georg GRAF, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. 2: *Die Schriftsteller bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts* (ST 133), Vatican City 1947, 438–445; Wadī ‘AWAḍ, Al-Shams ibn Kabar, in: David THOMAS – Alex MALLETT (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 4: 1200–1350 (*History of Christian-Muslim Relations* 17), Leiden 2012, 762–766.

²⁵ *Uppsala, O. Vet. 12* (AD 1547), fol. 215^v.

²⁶ For the Byzantine rite of the anointing of the sick and its late antique and medieval background, see Stefano PARENTI, *Care and Anointing of the Sick in the East*, in: Anscar J. CHUPUNGO (ed.), *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, vol. 4: *Sacraments and Sacramentals*, Collegeville/MN 2000, 161–169; Paul MEYENDORFF, *The Anointing of the Sick* (OLS 1), Crestwood/NY 2009, 31–61; Tina-tin CHRONZ, *Die Feier des Heiligen Öles nach Jerusalem Ordnung. Mit dem Text des slavischen Codex Hilferding 21, der Russischen Nationalbibliothek in Sankt Petersburg sowie georgischen Übersetzungen palästinischer und konstantinopolitanischer Quellen. Einführung – Edition – Kommentar* (JThF 18), Münster 2012; ALEXOPOULOS – JOHNSON, *Introduction to Eastern Christian Liturgies*, 285–292. For a general treatment of the use of oil for healing purposes in Christian practice, see Benedikt KRANEMANN, *Krankenöl*, in: *RAC* 21, 915–965.

²⁷ These similarities are pointed out in BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, 144–151.

non-Byzantine eastern traditions.²⁸ Others were cautious, suggesting instead that while the sevenfold rite celebrated by seven priests was indeed a Byzantine import, the details of the rite, such as the order of pericopes was likely adopted indirectly via the Hagiopolite tradition.²⁹ Alexopoulos and Johnson on the other hand cast doubt on Byzantine influence altogether, since neither early Constantinopolitan nor Hagiopolite sources attest to this sevenfold structure and assuming such wholesale borrowing would be unlikely in later periods, an assumption not easily admissible *a priori*.³⁰ At any rate, similarities do exist between the Coptic and Byzantine rites of anointing, such as the present prayer for blessing the oil, and several other prayers. It seems likely then that the present occasional Prayer 7 for the oil ultimately finds its origin in the Byzantine tradition. Within that context, the prayer's earliest witness is the oldest extant Byzantine Euchologion *Vatican, Barberini Gr. 336* (late 8th century) as Prayer 199. It appears in this context as the fourth prayer in a sequence of five for the sick and/or oil:

| Εὐχὴ ἐπὶ ἔλαιου ἀρρώστου | Prayer over the Oil of the Sick Person |
|---|--|
| Κύριε, ἐν τῷ ἔλεει καὶ τοῖς οἰκτιρμοῖς σου ὁ ἰώμενος τὰ συντρίμματα τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ τῶν σωμάτων ἡμῶν. | [1] O Lord, who heals the brokenness of our souls and bodies by your mercy and compassions, |
| αὐτός, δέσποτα, ἀγίασον καὶ τὸ ἔλαιον τοῦτο, | [2] sanctify also, O master, this oil, |
| ὥστε γενέσθαι τοῖς χριομένοις ἐξ αὐτοῦ εἰς θεραπείαν, εἰς ἀπαλλαγὴν παντὸς πάθους, νόσου σωματικῆς, μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος καὶ παντὸς κακοῦ, | [3] that it may become for those who are anointed from it unto healing and relief from every suffering, from bodily illness, from defilement of flesh and spirit, and from every evil, |

²⁸ See for example Aimé-Georges MARTIMORT, *The Church at Prayer. An Introduction to the Liturgy*, vol. 3: *The Sacraments*, new ed. Collegeville/MN 1987, 124; ΜΗΓΑΛΥΚΟ, *Healing in Christian Liturgy in Late Antique Egypt*, 189. Parenti is cautious, noting only that the existence of the sevenfold-structure anointing rite in non-Byzantine eastern traditions is of interest to comparative liturgy: PARENTI, *Care and Anointing of the Sick*, 166.

²⁹ Cf. CHRONZ, *Die Feier des Heiligen Öles*, 393 f.

³⁰ Cf. ALEXOPOULOS – JOHNSON, *Introduction to Eastern Christian Liturgies*, 283.

| | |
|---|---|
| ἵνα καὶ ἐν τούτῳ δοξασθῇ σου τὸ πανάγιον ὄνομα. | [4] so that also in this your all-holy name may be glorified. |
| Σὸν γὰρ ἐστὶν τὸ ἐλεεῖν καὶ σώζειν, ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, καὶ σοὶ τὴν δόξαν. ³¹ | [5] For mercy and salvation are yours, O our God, and to you belongs the glory. |

Since its earliest attested appearance in the Barberini Euchologion in the late eighth century, the Byzantine prayer for blessing the oil of the sick has been ubiquitous and consistent throughout the Byzantine manuscript tradition. Irrespective of whether a given Euchologion reflects a developed anointing rite or merely a set of isolated prayers, the prayer over the oil appears in other Southern Italian Euchologia, such as *Grottaferrata Γ.β. IV* (10th c.),³² *Grottaferrata Γ.β. X* (10th c.),³³ *St. Petersburg RNB Gr. 226* (10th c.),³⁴ *Oxford, Bodleian Auct. E.5.13* (AD 1121–1132),³⁵ and *Grottaferrata Γ.β. II* (12th c.).³⁶ The prayer is Constantinopolitan in origin, appearing already in the Constantinopolitan Euchologion *Paris, BnF Coislin 213* (AD 1027).³⁷ Although the prayer also appears in several Middle Eastern Byz-

³¹ Cf. Barb. gr. 336, 199 (PARENTI – VELKOVSKA 406).

³² Cf. Stefano PARENTI, L'Eucologio manoscritto G.B IV (X sec.) della Biblioteca di Grottaferrata [unpubl. dissertation Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Rome], 1993, § 245.

³³ Cf. Santo LUCÀ, Su origine e datazione del *Crypt. B.β. VI* (ff. 1–9). Appunti sulla collezione manoscritta greca di Grottaferrata, in: Lidia PERRIA (ed.), Tra Oriente e Occidente. Scritture e libri greci fra le regioni orientali di Bisanzio e l'Italia (Testi e Studi Bizantino-Neellenici 14), Rome 2003, 145–224, here: 192.

³⁴ Cf. André JACOB, L'euchologe de Porphyre Uspenski Cod. Leningr. Gr. 226 (X^e siècle), in: Le Muséon 78 (1965) 173–214, 198 (§ 206).

³⁵ Description in André JACOB, Un euchologe du Saint-Sauveur “in Lingua Phari” de Messine. Le Bodleianus Auct. E.5.13, in: BIHBR 42 (1972) 109–139.

³⁶ Santo LUCÀ, Manoscritti “rossanesi” conservati a Grottaferrata. Mostra in occasione del Congresso internazionale su S. Nilo di Rossano (Rossano 28. Sett.–1. Ott. 1986), Grottaferrata 1986, 61 f.

³⁷ The prayer is regarded as such in key studies of Byzantine Euchologia, such as Miguel ARRANZ, Le preghiere degli infermi nella tradizione bizantina. I sacramenti della restaurazione dell'antico Eucologio costantinopolitano II-5, in: OCP 62/2 (1996) 295–351, here: 308 f., a view confirmed also in Stefano PARENTI, Vino e olio nelle liturgie bizantine, in: Olio e vino nell'alto Medioevo. Spoleto, 20–26 aprile 2006 (Settimane di studio della Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo 54), Spoleto 2007, 1251–1289, here: 1275. For refer-

antine Euchologia ca. 11th/12th century, such as *Sinai Gr. 958* (11th c. Sinai/Palestine),³⁸ *Sinai Gr. 959* (11th c. Palestine),³⁹ and *Vatican, Ottoboni Gr. 434* (AD 1174 Middle East/Sinai),⁴⁰ this is likely due to early Byzantinization, since the earliest Hagiopolite tradition of the rite of anointing in *Sinai Geo. O. 12* (10th c.) does not include this prayer.⁴¹

Thus, the likeliest scenario is that this Constantinopolitan prayer for blessing the oil, existing already since the 8th century at least, became widely popular in the Middle East by the 10th/11th century. As part of this process of Constantinopolitan influence on the Middle Eastern periphery, it appears the prayer was also assimilated into the Coptic rite. All this is perhaps already established in scholarship on the rites of anointing and the notable similarities between the Byzantine and Coptic rites. The most significant addition to this dossier however is that the stand-alone version of the prayer over the oil as it appears in Bohairic Euchologia (occasional Prayer 17) is closer to the Byzantine version of this prayer than the Bohairic version in the rite of the anointing of the sick, with the exception of the operative participle “those who are anointed from it” (Byzantine), compared to “those who receive from it” (Bohairic). It is true that the Bohairic

ence to the prayer in *Coislin 213*, see Alexej ДМИТРИЕВСКИЙ, Описание литургических рукописей, хранящихся в библиотеках православного Востока, vol. 2: *Εὐχολόγια*, Kiev 1895, 1018; Miguel ARRANZ, *L'eucologio costantinopolitano agli inizi del secolo XI. Hagiasmatarion & Archieratikon (Rituale & Pontificale) con l'aggiunta del Leitourgikon (Messale)*, Rome 1996, 380. For a partial publication of this important Constantinopolitan Euchologion, see J. M. МАJ, *Coislin 213. Eucologio della Grande Chiesa. Manoscritto greco della Biblioteca Nazionale di Parigi (ff. 101–211). Excerpta ex Dissertatione ad Doctoratum*, Rome 1995.

³⁸ Cf. ДМИТРИЕВСКИЙ, Описание II, 35. For information and bibliography on this manuscript, see also Giulia ROSSETTO, Greek Palimpsests at Saint Catherine's Monastery (Sinai). Three Euchologia as Case Studies (VBF 44), Vienna 2023, 101.

³⁹ Cf. ДМИТРИЕВСКИЙ, Описание II, 49. For information and bibliography on this manuscript, see also ROSSETTO, Greek Palimpsests, 101.

⁴⁰ Cf. Andreas A. ТИЕРМЕYER, *Das Euchologion Ottoboni gr. 434* [unpubl. dissertation Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Rome], 1992, § 103. For provenance and bibliography, see Robert F. TAFT – Stefano PARENTI, *Il Grande Ingresso*. Edizione italiana rivista, ampliata e aggiornata (AK 10), Grottaferrata 2014, 708.

⁴¹ See the edition of the ancient Hagiopolite anointing rite and the Constantinopolitan rite, from *Sinai Geo. O. 12* (10th c.) and *Sinai Geo. O. 73* (12/13th c.) respectively in CHRONZ, *Die Feier des Heiligen Öles*, 82–107.

prayer is attested in both forms in the anointing rite earlier than the Euchologia evidence: *Borgia Copt. 112* (AD 1307) compared to *Borgia Copt. 7* (AD 1379). Yet, based on textual comparison and the provenance of the prayer in Constantinople, the Bohairic Euchologion in fact preserves the older recension of this prayer, one that is closer to the Greek Constantinopolitan original, and one that may have existed in earlier, now lost, witnesses of the Coptic anointing rite prior to the 14th century.

By comparison, another prayer for blessing the oil exists in only two extant Bohairic Euchologia so far (Prayer 12 in our numbering). This alternate prayer seems to have been much rarer in the Coptic realm and is unattested in the Byzantine tradition as far as was possible to determine. Below is the text from its earliest extant witness, *Vatican Copt. 25* (14th c.):

| صلاة على زيت | A Prayer over Oil |
|--|--|
| <p>ϥⲛⲏⲃ ϥⲟⲥ ⲓⲏⲥ ϥⲗⲥ ⲡⲓⲗⲟⲓⲟⲥ ⲛⲧⲉ ϥⲧⲓ ϥⲓⲱⲧ ϥⲏ ⲉⲧⲁ ⲛⲉϥⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲛⲙⲁⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲟⲩⲟⲗ ⲛⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲁⲅⲧⲥⲃⲱ ⲛⲏⲓⲗⲁⲟⲥ ⲉⲑⲏⲁⲗⲧ ⲉⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲉϥⲗⲱ ⲛⲙⲟⲥ</p> | <p>[1] O Master Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos of God the Father, whose saintly disciples and holy apostles taught the nations who believe in your holy name saying,</p> |
| <p>ⲕⲉ ⲉⲱⲱⲡ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲟⲩⲁⲓ ⲑⲉⲛ ⲑⲏⲛⲟⲩ ⲉϥⲱⲱⲛⲓ ⲛⲁⲣⲉϥⲙⲟⲩⲧ ⲉⲛⲓⲡⲣⲉⲥⲃⲱⲧⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲕⲕⲏⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲧⲟⲩⲉⲣⲡⲣⲟⲥⲉϥⲕⲉⲥⲉ ⲉⲗⲱⲥ ⲟⲩⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲟⲩⲑⲁⲗⲥϥ ⲑⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲛⲉⲗ ⲑⲉⲛ ⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ.</p> | <p>[2] "If one among you is sick, let him call the presbyters of the Church that they may pray over him and anoint him with oil in your name,"</p> |
| <p>ⲟⲩⲟⲗ ⲛⲑⲟⲕ ⲑⲉⲛ ⲧⲉⲕⲗⲟⲙ ⲛⲧⲉⲕⲉⲣϥⲁⲑⲣⲓ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲉⲱⲱⲡ{1} ⲛⲧⲉϥⲓⲣⲓ ⲛⲗⲁⲛⲛⲟⲃⲓ ⲛⲧⲉⲕⲕⲱ ⲛⲁϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ.</p> | <p>[3] and you in your power would heal him and if he had committed sins they would be forgiven him.^a</p> |
| <p>ⲗⲟⲩⲱⲧ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲑⲉⲛ ⲧⲉⲕϥⲉ ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ ⲉⲗⲉⲛ ⲡⲁⲓⲛⲉⲗ ϥⲁⲓ ⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲙⲟⲓ ⲛⲁϥ ⲛⲧⲉⲕⲗⲟⲙ</p> | <p>[4] Look down from your holy heaven upon this oil. Bless it. Grant it your power.</p> |
| <p>ⲉⲑⲣⲉ ⲟⲩⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲃⲉⲛ ⲉⲣⲕⲣⲁⲥⲉ ⲛⲙⲟϥ ⲑⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲑⲟ ⲛⲣⲏⲧⲓ ⲉϥⲱⲱⲡ ⲛⲧⲉϥⲑⲁⲗⲥϥ ⲛⲑⲏⲧϥ ⲛⲧⲉϥⲟⲩⲱⲙ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲑⲏⲧϥ ⲁⲣⲓϥⲁⲑⲣⲓ ⲉⲣⲟϥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲗⲁ ⲛⲉϥⲱⲱⲛⲓ ⲧⲏⲣⲟⲩ.</p> | <p>[5] So that anyone that uses it in various manners, whether to be anointed with it or to consume of it, would be healed of all their diseases.</p> |

| | | |
|--|-----|--|
| <p>ΜΑΡΟΥΦΩΤ ἘΒΟΛ ΞΕΝ ΠΑΙΝΕΖ ΦΑΙ ἸΧΕ ΩΩΝΙ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΜΑΓΙΑ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΦΑΡΜΑΓΙΑ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΝΕΜ ΖΩΒ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΕΤΖΩΟΥ.</p> | [6] | May every disease, every magic, every sorcery, and every evil thing flee from this oil. |
| <p>ΜΑΡΕΦΩΠΙ ἸΟΥΝΕΖ ΕΦΟΥΔΒ ΟΥΝΕΖ ἸΟΥΟΥΧΔΙ ΟΥΝΕΖ ἸΤΑΛΛΟ ΟΥΝΕΖ ἸΤΟΥΒΟ ΖΙΤΕΝ ΠΕΚΠΝΑ ΕΘΥ</p> | [7] | May it become a holy oil, an oil of health, an oil of healing, an oil of purification, through your Holy Spirit. |
| <p>ΧΕ ἸΘΟΚ ΓΑΡ ΠΕ ΠΕΝΝΟΥ†. ΕΡΕ ΠΩΟΥ.⁴²</p> | [8] | For you are our God and to you belongs the glory. |

^a James 5:14–15

By comparison to the previous prayer, Prayer 12 displays an even stronger connection to the practice of the ritual anointing of the sick, seen in the explicit quotation of James 5:14–15, which also features in the first epistle reading in the Coptic anointing rite. The biblical dependence of the prayer may also be a sign of a relatively later redaction, compared to the previous prayer, which lacks such clear biblical quotations. Yet, it is interesting that when quoting James 5, Prayer 12 departs slightly from the received text of the Bohairic NT, which has the Coptic verb *μαρουτωβη* (let them pray), instead of the Greek loan *ἵτουγεπιπροσευχεςεε* (that they may pray).⁴³ Rather than a Spirit-epiclesis upon the oil, it is Christ himself who is asked to look down upon the oil and bless it. Consistent once again with domestic use, the prayer allows for the possibility of anointing oneself with it or even consuming (lit. eating) of it. Finally, there is an implicit understanding that ointments can act as mediums of both good and evil, seen in the exorcistic portion of the prayer [6] entreating for the removal of any effects of magic or sorcery from the oil. The reference to protection from both magic and sorcery (*μαγια νιβεν φαρμαγια νιβεν*) is a common trope in Coptic magical texts for healing.⁴⁴

⁴² *BAV Vatican Copt. 25* (14th c.), fols. 222^r–223^v.

⁴³ Cf. George HORNER (ed.), *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect, Otherwise Called Memphitic and Bohairic, with Introduction, Critical Apparatus, and Literal English Translation*, vol. 4: *The Catholic Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles Edited from MS. Oriental 424, the Apocalypse Edited from MS. Curzon 128 in the Care of the British Museum*, Oxford 1905, 30 f.

⁴⁴ Cf. Dosoo, *Healing Traditions in Coptic Magical Texts*, 51.

The prayer itself however does not appear in the Coptic anointing rite in its received tradition, seen for example since *Vatican, Borgia Copt. 112* (AD 1307). Within the Euchologia corpus, the prayer is attested since *Vatican Copt. 25* (14th c.), an Euchologion of the three liturgies of no clear provenance. Although Budde does not assign a provenance to this Euchologion,⁴⁵ two readers' notes on two of its original folia (fols. 89^v and 90^r) point to ownership by a Deacon Yūḥannā and what may be his son Yūsuf after him, with the latter statement dated 1669/70. Thus, whatever the original provenance of *Vatican Copt. 25* was, it eventually became the property of two or more deacons in a parish setting between the 14th and 17th centuries. At any rate, unless this Euchologion was originally from Scetis, we have to wait until the late-fifteenth century for firm evidence of this prayer making inroads in Scetis, attested in *Vatican, Borgia Copt. 124* (AD 1495) from Saint Macarius Monastery, as well as in the Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 496*, fols. 138^r–139^v.

Caution is necessary especially in the absence of comprehensive data on Euchologia and their contents. Yet, with this in mind, it appears that Prayers 7 and 12 as alternative prayers over the oil began appearing within clearly defined regions. That is, focusing only on the earliest witnesses of each prayer with defined provenance, one can note that Prayer 7 (*O Lord who heals the brokenness of our souls*) appears first in the Antonian Euchologion *Vatican, Borgia Copt. 7* (AD 1379), while Prayer 12 (*O Master ... whose saintly disciples and holy apostles*) appears in the Macarian Euchologion *Vatican, Borgia Copt. 124* (AD 1495). At this point in the ongoing research into the typology of the Bohairic Euchologion, two directions have the potential of nuancing this observation: **1.** Further access and analysis of hitherto unknown Euchologia manuscripts, where these prayers may be found, and/or **2.** Improved overall understanding of the Bohairic Euchologion and its regional differences among various centers of Coptic ecclesiastical culture, which may lead to a more specific localization of the Euchologion *Vatican Copt. 25*.

⁴⁵ Cf. Achim BUDDE, *Die ägyptische Basilios-Anaphora. Text – Kommentar – Geschichte* (JThF 7), Münster 2004, 114.

3 Prayers over the Water (8 and 8^{bis})

The next pair of prayers are essentially very similar variants of a single text concerned with blessing water for the domestic purpose of purification, a therapeutic use for water already discussed above as attested in the *Canons of Hippolytus* 21. Below is the first of these, Prayer 8, the one that appears in the Ṣalīb Euchologion and in at least eight Euchologia beginning with the Antonian Euchologion *Vatican Copt.* 17 (AD 1288):

| εχεν νι[μωου] | Over the Water |
|---|---|
| φνηβ πῶς ἰη̅ς̅ π̅χ̅ς̅ π̅ρ̅ι̅ν̅β̅ ἰ̅λ̅ο̅γ̅ο̅ς̅ ἰ̅ω̅η̅ρ̅ι̅ ἰ̅τ̅ε̅ φ̅τ̅ φ̅ι̅ω̅τ̅, | [1] The Master Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos and lamb, the Son of God the Father, |
| φ̅η̅ ε̅τ̅α̅ϕ̅ι̅ ρ̅ι̅χ̅εν̅ ν̅ι̅β̅α̅τ̅ ἰ̅τ̅ε̅ π̅ι̅ο̅ρ̅δ̅α̅ν̅η̅ς̅ ν̅α̅ρ̅ρ̅α̅ϕ̅ ἰ̅ν̅ι̅ω̅δ̅α̅ π̅ι̅ρ̅ε̅ϕ̅τ̅ω̅μ̅ς̅ α̅ϕ̅ε̅ρ̅α̅γ̅ι̅α̅ζ̅ι̅ν̅ ἑ̅ρ̅ω̅ϕ̅ α̅ϕ̅ε̅ρ̅α̅γ̅ι̅α̅ζ̅ι̅ν̅ ἰ̅μ̅ω̅ϕ̅, | [2] who came to the waterways of the Jordan in the presence of John the Baptist and blessed them and sanctified them, |
| ἰ̅τ̅ε̅ϕ̅ε̅ρ̅α̅γ̅ι̅α̅ζ̅ι̅ν̅ ἑ̅ν̅α̅ι̅μ̅ω̅ϕ̅ο̅ϕ̅ ν̅α̅ι̅, ἰ̅τ̅ε̅ϕ̅ε̅ρ̅α̅γ̅ι̅α̅ζ̅ι̅ν̅ ἰ̅μ̅ω̅ϕ̅. | [3] may bless this water and sanctify it. |
| ρ̅ι̅ν̅α̅ ο̅ϕ̅ο̅ν̅ ἰ̅β̅ε̅ν̅ ε̅θ̅ν̅α̅ι̅ω̅ι̅ ⁴⁶ ἑ̅β̅ο̅λ̅ ἰ̅β̅η̅τ̅ο̅ϕ̅ ἰ̅τ̅ε̅ π̅ῶ̅ς̅ τ̅ο̅ϕ̅β̅ο̅ϕ̅ ἑ̅β̅ο̅λ̅ρ̅α̅ ν̅ε̅ϕ̅η̅ν̅ο̅β̅ι̅ | [4] So that the Lord may purify everyone that washes from it of their sins |
| ρ̅ι̅τ̅ε̅ν̅ ν̅ι̅τ̅ρ̅ο̅ ἰ̅τ̅ε̅ π̅ι̅β̅α̅π̅τ̅ι̅ς̅τ̅η̅ς̅ ἰ̅ω̅δ̅α̅ν̅η̅ς̅, | [5] through the prayers of John the Baptist, |
| ἕ̅ν̅ε̅ν̅ φ̅ρ̅α̅ν̅ ἰ̅φ̅ι̅ω̅τ̅ ν̅ε̅μ̅ π̅ω̅η̅ρ̅ι̅ ν̅ε̅μ̅ π̅ι̅π̅ν̅α̅ ε̅θ̅. ⁴⁷ | [6] in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. |

This oldest attested version of the prayer is seen also in the Macarian Euchologion, *Paris, BnF Copt.* 83 (AD 1602), fols. 102^r–103^r, and is the same version appearing both in Ṣalīb’s Euchologion⁴⁸ and as one of the

⁴⁶ *Paris, BnF Copt.* 83 (AD 1602), fol. 102^v has ε̅θ̅ν̅α̅ι̅α̅τ̅ο̅τ̅ϕ̅ (to wash one’s hands).

⁴⁷ *Vatican Copt.* 17 (AD 1288), fol. 128^{r-v}.

⁴⁸ Cf. ṢALĪB, ΠΙΧΩΜ ἰ̅τ̅ε̅ π̅ι̅ε̅χ̅ο̅λ̅ο̅γ̅ι̅ο̅ν̅ ε̅θ̅ο̅γ̅α̅β̅, 773–775; NICOLOTTI, *Il libro delle anafore*, 832–835 (§ 1090–1093). Similar to the previous prayer over the oil, here too the Ṣalīb Euchologion expands this into a full rite with introductory prayers and concluding absolutions.

versions in the Euchologion of Ṭūḥī.⁴⁹ With the exception of *Vatican Copt.* 17 (AD 1288), all these versions have the more specific verb εΘΝΑΙΑΤΟΥϚ (to wash one's hands), rather than simply to wash oneself (εΘΝΑΙΩΙ). A slightly different recension of this prayer is attested in Ṭūḥī's Euchologion and in at least one manuscript source, the Euchologion *Vatican Copt.* 25 (14th c.) mentioned above. The only difference here is that the blessing of the Jordan is expanded to, "He blessed them, purified them (ΔΥΤΟΥΒΩΟΥϚ), and sanctified them", the additional verb then supporting the petition to follow to purify the water.⁵⁰ As such, this variant recension is designated here as Prayer 8^{bis}. It is important to note that this is a slightly different categorization than the one appearing in the previous article overviewing the Bohairic occasional prayers. There, it was stated that Prayer 8^{bis} appears only in the Ṭūḥī Euchologion, before closer examination of the Euchologia manuscripts revealed that it is also present in *Vatican Copt.* 25 (14th c.).⁵¹ Although ultimately we are dealing with various versions of the same prayer, the designation Prayers 8 and 8^{bis} is retained here simply to account for the inclusion of this text as two independent prayers in the Ṭūḥī Euchologion.

The most expanded version of this prayer is preserved in *Paris, BnF Copt.* 82 (AD 1307), fol. 49^{r-v}, an Euchologion of the three liturgies from the Church of St. Sergius in Old Cairo, known as Abū Sarḡa. Below is the text in full, assigned also under Prayer 8 within the corpus of occasional prayers:

⁴⁹ Cf. Rāfā'ī AL-ṬŪḤĪ, ΠΙΧΩΜ ἸΤΕ ΠΩΩΜΤ ἸΑΝΑΦΟΡΑ ἸΤΕ ΝΑΙ ΝΕ ἸΠΑΓΙΟϚ ΒΑϚΙΛΙΟϚ ΝΕΜ ΠΑΓΙΟϚ ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟϚ ΠΘΕΟΛΟΓΟϚ ΝΕΜ ΠΑΓΙΟϚ ΚΥΡΙΛΛΟϚ ΝΕΜ ΝΙΚΕΕΥΧΗ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ [The book of the three anaphoras, which are of Saint Basil and Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint Cyril, and other holy prayers], Rome 1736, 370.

⁵⁰ AL-ṬŪḤĪ, ΠΙΧΩΜ ἸΤΕ ΠΩΩΜΤ ἸΑΝΑΦΟΡΑ, 369; *Vatican Copt.* 25 (14th c.), fol. 220^{r-v}.

⁵¹ Cf. ΜΙΚΗΑΙΛ, Occasional Prayers in Bohairic Coptic Euchologia, 348.

| <p>ΟΥΕΥΧΗ ΖΙΧΕΝ ΟΥΗΩΟΥ ΝΙΩΙ ΝΞΙΧ</p> | <p>A Prayer over the Water for the Handwashing</p> |
|--|--|
| <p>ΦΗΗΒ ΠΩΣ ΙΗΣ ΠΧΣ ΠΕΝΝΟΥΤ,</p> | <p>[1] O Master Lord Jesus Christ our God,</p> |
| <p>ΦΗ ΕΤΑΥΣΜΟΥ ΕΝΙΜΩΟΥ ΝΤΕ ΠΠΟΡΔΑΝΗΣ ΝΑΖΡΑΦ ΝΙΩΔΑΝΝΗΣ ΠΡΕΦΤΩΜΣ, ΑΦΕΡΑΓΙΑΖΙΝ ΝΜΩΟΥ ΑΥΤΟΥΒΩΟΥ ΖΙΤΕΝ ΠΕΦΧΙ[Ν]ΣΙΩΜΣ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΉΗΤΟΥ.</p> | <p>[2] who blessed the waters of the Jordan in the presence of John the Baptist, sanctified them, and purified them by being baptized in them.</p> |
| <p>ΑΥΤΟΥΒΟ ΝΠΙΚΟΣΜΟΣ ΤΗΡΦ ΖΙΤΕΝ ΠΕΦΧΙΝΜΩΩΙ ΖΙΧΩΦ.</p> | <p>[3] He purified the whole world by walking upon it.</p> |
| <p>ΤΕΝΤΖΟ ΕΡΟΚ ΣΜΟΥ ΕΝΑΙΜΩΟΥ ΝΑΙ ΟΥΟΖ ΑΡΙΑΓΙΑΖΙΝ ΝΜΩΟΥ ΜΑΤΟΥΒΩΟΥ ΟΥΟΖ ΟΥΟΘΒΟΥ.</p> | <p>[4] We ask you, bless this water, sanctify it, purify it, and change it,</p> |
| <p>ΖΙΝΑ ΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΕΘΝΑΣΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΉΗΤΟΥ ΝΤΟΥΤΟΥΒΟ ΕΒΟΛ ΉΕΝ ΝΟΥΝΟΒΙ.</p> | <p>[5] so that whoever receives from it may be purified from their sins.</p> |
| <p>ΧΕ ΦΣΜΑΡΩΟΥΤ ΟΥΟΖ ΕΦΜΕΖ ΝΩΟΥ ΝΧΕ ΠΕΚΡΑΝ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ ΦΙΩΤ ΝΕΜ ΠΩΗΡΙ ΝΕΜ ΠΠΠΝΑ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ, ΤΗΝΟΥ.⁵²</p> | <p>[6] For blessed and full of glory is your holy name, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now [and forever].</p> |

The expansions in this version of Prayer 8 concern mainly the elaboration about Christ’s baptism in the Jordan as well as his purification of the entire world through his incarnation. Otherwise, the verbs of consecration are also expanded here to four: To bless, sanctify, purify, and change, a sequence already known in the Prothesis Prayer of the Eucharistic liturgy.⁵³ The context of the prayer in this particular Euchologion following a *Prayer after Eating* and its title “for the washing of hands”, suggest the social setting of washing one’s hands after a meal, either in a domestic setting or in the monastic context of sharing meals in the refectory.

⁵² Paris, BnF Copt. 82 (AD 1307), fol. 49^{r-v}.

⁵³ Cf. Ramez ΜΙΚΗΑΙΛ, The Presentation of the Lamb. The Prothesis and Preparatory Rites of the Coptic Liturgy (SECL 2), Münster 2020, 312–333.

Besides the manuscript and print sources mentioned so far, similar prayers over the water appear in other Euchologia, such as *Vatican Copt. 124* (AD 1495), *Suryān Liturgy 468* (AD 1601), *Suryān Liturgy 496*, *Macarius Liturgy 232* (AD 1899), and *Macarius Liturgy 133* (19th c.). Further analysis is needed to determine which of these two versions (8, or 8^{bis}) are transmitted in each of these Euchologia, other than the identifications made here so far. Regarding the chronological and regional dimensions of this prayer, nothing much can be said besides that versions of this prayer were already known by the late-thirteenth century in the earliest extant Bohairic Euchologion, *Vatican Copt. 17* (AD 1288) from the Monastery of Saint Antony. The prayer was known both in monastic settings (both at Saint Antony and Scetis), as well as in parishes. The fact that a considerably expanded version of the prayer appears already in 1307, only 19 years after Prayer 8 attested in *Vatican Copt. 17*, may indicate that this prayer was long in use prior to the time of the extant Euchologia, and that it was already undergoing editorial revision by the 13th/14th centuries. The Antonian version designated Prayer 8 therefore represents a more textually conservative recension of this prayer at a time when it was already undergoing expansion in places like Old Cairo.

4 *Prayers for Healing from Venomous Bites* (Prayers 13 & 14)

The third category of prayers related to sickness and health, represented in the present numbering convention as Prayers 13 and 14, concern the event of someone who was bitten by a serpent or some other venomous animal. This topic is extremely rare in liturgical texts generally, though one can surmise must have been a common if not frequent part of daily life in Egypt during the period of the prayer texts presented here. The first of these prayers (Prayer 13) is written in a language that is much more akin to a “magical spell” rather than traditional liturgical orations. Below is the text from its earliest witness, *Vatican Copt. 25* (14th c.):

| [[رقوة؟]] للدغة الوحش النافث السم للابن | [[A Spell?]] for the Bite of a Venomous Beast, addressed to the Son |
|---|--|
| <p>†ταρκο ἡμῶτεν ἡα λοϋζ ηἰβεν ἡθηριον ἡρεφριμαθογι ετρωπ ριχεν πκαρι ἡφι εταγερσταγρωνιν ἡμοϋ ε̅ρηι ε̅χων ηαρρεν ποντιος πιλατος ογος αφερομολογιν ἡτομολογια εθηανες πενο̅ς ἡης π̅χ̅</p> | <p>[1] I adjure you, O every venomous bite of beast that is upon earth, by him who was crucified for us before Pontius Pilate and confessed the good confession, our Lord Jesus Christ,</p> |
| <p>εθρεκαμονι ἡτημαθογι ἡεν πιμα ε̅τακχω ἡμαγ ἡπιλοϋζ</p> | <p>[2] that you should hold the venom in the place where you have bitten them</p> |
| <p>ογος ἡτογωτεμχας⁵⁴ ε̅μοϋι ε̅πωϋι ε̅χεν τεφαφε ογδε ε̅χεν †ϋγχι ογδε ε̅χεν πρητ ογδε ριχεν πιαλωχ ογδε ε̅χεν πιβοϋ ογδε ε̅χεν κε̅ρι ἡμα ἡτε πισωμα φαι ε̅τωρς ἡμοϋ ἡεν παινερ ιε παινωϋ.</p> | <p>[3] and that it may not be allowed to travel up to his head or to the soul or to the heart or to the thigh or the lung or any part of the body that I anoint with this oil or this water.</p> |
| <p>αλλα ρινα ἡτεκαμονι ἡτεκαθογι ἡεν πιμα ε̅τακχω ἡμαγ ἡπιλοϋζ ογος ἡτε πιρωμι ωπι ε̅ροι ἡατηκαρ ιε ἡθοϋ ογτεβνη</p> | <p>[4] But that you may hold your poison in the place in which you have bitten them and that the person or animal may be without pain,</p> |
| <p>ε̅βε φραν ἡπ̅χ̅ φαι ε̅ταγερσταγρωνιν ἡμοϋ ε̅ρηι ε̅χων.</p> | <p>[5] for the sake of the name of Christ, who was crucified for our sake.</p> |
| <p>φαι ε̅τε ε̅βολ ρι[τοτϋ].⁵⁵</p> | <p>[6] This is through whom.</p> |

Besides *Vatican Copt. 25* (14th c.), this curious prayer is attested thus far in two other manuscripts: The undated Euchologion collection *Suryān Liturgy 496*, fols. 141^v–142^v, and the rather recent Euchologion *Coptic Museum Liturgy 412* (AD 1867), fols. 240^v–241^v, from Southern Egypt's Suhāġ. In

⁵⁴ *Suryān Liturgy 496*, fol. 142^r has the active construction ἡτεκαωτεμχας (that you may not allow it).

⁵⁵ *Vatican Copt. 25* (14th c.), fols. 223^v–225^r.

addition, it was included in the Euchologion published by Ṭūḥī, likely relying on the same Vatican manuscript, *Vatican Copt.* 25.⁵⁶ The designation of the prayer itself is rather unique. Rather than the formulaic designation as the Arabic *ṣalāt* (صلاة), or the Arabized Greek loan *awšiyat* (أوشية), *Suryān Liturgy* 496 uses the term *ruqiyat* (رقية), which means a spell, charm, or incantation.⁵⁷ Curiously, this initial word in *Vatican Copt.* 25 seems to have been deliberately erased or scratched off. It is only given here conjecturally based on comparison to *Suryān Liturgy* 496. This spell sets itself apart from classical Euchological texts by addressing the “venomous bite” directly. The priest speaks here in the first person, adjuring the bite that the poison may remain in one place and not spread to other organs. This is brought about in two ways, the verbal invocation of Christ’s crucifixion, and the anointing either with oil or water. In a later clause [4], it is made clear that this spell can be used for the curing of either human beings or cattle that may have suffered from a venomous bite. The social context of the prayer is perfectly at home in Egypt’s agrarian context and warm weather, where the presence of venomous snakes and scorpions is to be expected, and where physical harm to men and cattle can have dire financial consequences.

The prayer is in fact attested as early as the seventh/eighth century in Egypt. Two Greek papyri fragments in the *Papyrussammlung* of the *Österreichische Nationalbibliothek* of no precise provenance and dated between AD 601–725 contain the text of this prayer in Greek: *P. Vindob. G 329* and *G 29 508*.⁵⁸ The first fragment was identified by Franco Maltomini as trans-

⁵⁶ Cf. AL-Ṭūḥī, πλχων ἵτε πωροντ ἡαναφορα, 382 f.

⁵⁷ Cf. Hans WEHR, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Arabic–English), ed. J. Milton COWAN, Wiesbaden 1979, 411.


⁵⁸ (TM 65256). I thank Ágnes Mihálykó for pointing my attention to this seventh-century Egyptian evidence. For more information, see the entry in the online database *Coptic Magical Papyri* of the University of Würzburg: Korshi Dosoo, et al. (eds.), KYP M433, in: *Kyprianos Database of Ancient Ritual Texts and Objects*. URL: www.coptic-magic.phil.uni-wuerzburg.de/index.php/manuscript/kyp-m433. For the *editio princeps* of the Greek text, see Karl PREISENDANZ, *Papyri Graecae Magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, vol. 2, Berlin 1931, 199 f. English translation in Marvin W. MEYER – Richard SMITH (eds.), *Ancient Christian Magic. Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, Princeton/NJ 1993, 41 (§ 17).

mitting a spell against venomous serpents,⁵⁹ while Cornelia Römer correctly identified the second fragment as belonging to the same papyrus sheet and giving a heading of the prayer attributed to Severus of Antioch.⁶⁰ The text of this seventh-century redaction of the prayer is largely similar to the Bohairic version of Prayer 13, beginning with the priest's adjuration of the serpent's bite with the verb ἐξορκίζω (I adjure or exorcize) in the name of Christ and through the anointing with oil (τοῦ ἐλαίου τούτου). The oil is applied to the place of the bite and the poison is commanded not to spread to the heart, head, or – surprisingly – the vulva (!). Numerous other examples exist of spells/prayers against snakebites in magical texts from Egypt, an unsurprising phenomenon given Egypt's rural environment. The earliest such examples is *P. Kellis Copt. 56* dated to ca. AD 331–400, giving a Sahidic version of this type of spell, though the text is highly fragmentary and not identical to the Bohairic Prayer 13.⁶¹

Like several other of these occasional prayers, this type of prayer found its way also outside Egypt, where it is attested at least in the Southern Italian Euchologion *Grottaferrata Γ.β. VII* (10th c.) from Campania.⁶² This Italo-Byzantine version of the prayer is remarkably identical to the Egyptian Greek redaction from the seventh century. The operative initial verb is ἐξορκίζω (I adjure or exorcize), addressed to, “every venomous bite of beasts”. The prayer then invokes Christ, “the living God and Lord ... our Savior”, and mentions anointing with oil (but not water, seen only in the Bohairic version). The anointing is done so that the poison may not travel

⁵⁹ Cf. Franco MALTOMINI, Un “utero errante” di troppo? PGM 12 riconsiderato, in: ZPE 160 (2007) 167–174.

⁶⁰ Cf. Cornelia Eva RÖMER, Gebet und Bannzauber des Severus von Antiochia gegen den Biss giftiger Tiere, oder: Maltomini hatte recht, in: ZPE 168 (2009) 209–212.

⁶¹ (TM 128633). Edition: Iain GARDNER (ed.), *Kellis Literary Texts*, vol. 2 (Dakhleh Oasis Project, Monograph 15), Oxford 2007, 130–135. For more information, see the entry in the online database *Coptic Magical Papyri of the University of Würzburg*: Korshi Dosoo et al. (eds.), KYP M178, in: *Kyprianos Database of Ancient Ritual Texts and Objects*. URL: www.coptic-magic.phil.uni-wuerzburg.de/index.php/manuscript/kyp-m178.  A new edition of this important and early witness will be published by Ágnes T. Mihálykó and Korshi Dosoo. I thank Ágnes Mihálykó for this helpful information.

⁶² Cf. Gaetano PASSARELLI, *L'Eucologio Cryptense Γ.β. VII* (sec. X) (AB 36), *Thesaloniki* 1982, § 241.

to the rest of the body and that the person may be without pain. In both Greek versions, the text is labeled explicitly as a prayer (εὐχή) and no mention is made of anointing an animal or of using water. Compared to the extended mention of body parts in the Bohairic text, both Greek redactions mention the heart, the head, and the rest of the body (or the female external sex organ in the Egyptian Greek version). The Italo-Byzantine redaction returns however to describe Christ near the end of the text, not only invoking the Crucifixion and confession before Pilate, but also the second coming and final judgment. The text then invokes the power given to humankind to “trample upon serpents, scorpions, and all power of the enemy” (Lk 10:19) and to trampling upon the asp and basilisk and treading upon the lion and dragon (Ps 90:13 LXX). According to Stefano Parenti, the Italo-Byzantine prayer is also attested in another Southern Italian Euchologion, *Vatican Gr. 1833* (10th c.).⁶³

The presence of this curious prayer in the Italo-Byzantine tradition may itself be an indication of Egyptian origin, a geographical bridge already well-attested in the regional history of the Byzantine liturgy.⁶⁴ The significant differences between the two traditions, such as the mention of water for anointing both humans and animals, may be a reflection of variant social circumstances and local needs across the Mediterranean. Yet, a more concrete hypothesis regarding the origins and reception of this prayer in Egypt, Southern Italy, and possibly beyond will be possible once a comprehensive database of Byzantine occasional prayers and their occurrence in various Euchologia is made publicly accessible, a much-needed desideratum that will be of usefulness also for the study of Bohairic liturgy in the medieval period.

By contrast to Prayer 13’s explicit “magical” tones, another prayer for this same purpose is preserved in a single manuscript, the eclectic Euchologion *Suryān Liturgy 496*:

⁶³ Cf. PARENTI, *Vino e olio nelle liturgie bizantine*, 1276.

⁶⁴ Cf. Gabriel RADLE, *The Liturgical Ties between Egypt and Southern Italy. A Preliminary Investigation*, in: Diliانا ATANASSOVA – Tinatin CHRONZ (eds.), *ΣΥΝΑΞΙΣ ΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ. Beiträge zu Gottesdienst und Geschichte der fünf altkirchlichen Patriarchate für Heinzgerd BRAKMANN zum 70. Geburtstag* (OPOe 6/2), Vienna 2014, 618–631.

| صلاة للدغة الوحش النافث السم تقولها من بعد تلك للآب | A prayer for the Bite of a Venomous Beast. Say it after the former. Addressed to the Father |
|--|--|
| ΦΝΗΒ ΠΟC Φ† ΠΑΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ΦΙΩΤ ΞΠΕΝΟC ΟΥΟZ ΠΕΝΝΟΥ† ΟΥΟZ ΠΕΝCΩΡ ΉC ΠΧC | [1] O Master Lord God the Pantocrator, the Father of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ. |
| ΤΕΝ†ΖΟ ΟΥΟZ ΤΕΝΤΩΒZ ΞΜΟΚ ΞΖΡΗ ΞΧΕΝ ΠΕΚΒΩΚ ΠΑΞΙΜ ΞΤΕΚΝΑΙ ΝΑΦ ΟΥΟZ ΞΤΕΚΤΟΥΧΟΦ ΞΒΟΛ ΞΕΝ †ΑΝΑΓΚΗ ΕΤΧΗ ΖΙΧΩΦ. | [2] We ask and entreat you on behalf of your servant N.N. that you may have mercy on him and cure him from the tribulation that has come upon him. |
| ΜΑΡΕCΛΟΧC ΞΧΕ †ΕΝΕΡΓΙΑ ΞΤΕ ΛΟΥΖ ΝΙΒΕΝ ΞΤΕ ΝΙΘΗΡΙΟΝ ΞΡΕΦΖΙΜΑΘΟΥΙ. | [3] May the action of every bite of venomous beast be alleviated. |
| ΦΗ ΕΤΑΦ† ΕΡΦΙΩΙ ΞΝΕΦΕΒΙΑΚ ΞΜΑΘΗΤΗC ΟΥΟZ ΞΑΠΟCΤΟΛΟC ΞΘΥ ΞΖΩΜΙ ΞΧΕΝ ΝΙΖΟΦ ΝΕΜ ΝΙCΛΗ ΝΕΜ ΞΧΕΝ †ΧΟΜ ΤΗΡC ΞΤΕ ΠΙΧΑΧΙ, | [4] O you who has given his servants the disciples and holy apostles the authority to trample on serpents, scorpions, and all power of the enemy, ^a |
| ΑΡΙΖΜΟΤ ΠΕΚΒΩΚ ΞΟΥΧΟΜ ΞΧΩΛΕΜ ΝΕΜ ΟΥΝΟΜ† ΞΤΕ †ΨΥΧΗ ΝΕΜ ΠΙCΩΜΑ ΝΕΜ ΠΙΠΝΑ. | [5] grant your servant power speedily and rest for the soul, body, and spirit |
| ΖΙΤΕΝ ΠΕΚΜΟΝΟΓΕΝΗC ΞΘΗΡΙ ΠΕΝΟC ΟΥΟZ ΠΕΝΝΟΥ† ΟΥΟZ ΠΕΝCΩΤΗΡ ΉC ΠΧC | [6] through your only-begotten Son our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, |
| ΦΑΙ ΕΤΕ ΞΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΟΥΦ. ⁶⁵ | [7] this is he to whom. |

^a Lk 10:19

The prayer appears immediately after Prayer 13 in *Suryān Liturgy 496*, its only witness to date. The heading of both prayers in the manuscript links them as a connected pair to be recited in succession. By contrast however, Prayer 14 is much more consistent with traditional Euchological language. It begins with a formulaic invocation of God the Father, then proceeds to its main entreaty, namely, cure from the distress of a venomous

⁶⁵ *Suryān Liturgy 496*, fols. 142^v–143^v.

bite and a speedy recovery and rest. The heart of the prayer is the scriptural reference from Luke 10:19, where the disciples are granted power over serpents and scorpions, a natural choice in this context and one that is already known from the *Prayer of Thanksgiving*, the ubiquitous presider's prayer at the beginning of most liturgical services in the Bohairic tradition.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, it remains a curious fact that Prayer 13 is significantly better attested in the Bohairic Euchologion tradition (3 manuscripts total). In two such cases, it is the only such prayer envisioned for this purpose, copied by the original scribe of each manuscript within a sequence of other occasional prayers (*Vatican Copt.* 25) or at the very end of the codex before the manuscript's colophon (*Coptic Museum Liturgy* 214). Once again, a more comprehensive knowledge of the manuscript witnesses of Bohairic occasional prayers can help clarify the regional and historical character and frequency of attestation of these two prayers.

5 *A Prayer for Healing from Fever (Prayer 15)*

The final prayer to be analyzed with respect to the topic of health is a prayer for healing from fever attested so far in only one source, the collection of miscellaneous Euchologion texts *Suryān Liturgy* 496. Throughout the papyrological sources for "magical" healing practices in late antique and medieval Egypt, fever was the most common medical complaint mentioned and addressed. According to Dosoo, the prevalence of fever in Egyptian magical spells is consistent with Greek-language amulets and with the broader trends for medical care in Egypt, which explains the variety of terms designating fever in Coptic, including the term πῦμον, which conveys specifically the experience of burning.⁶⁷ Below is the text from its single manuscript witness:

⁶⁶ Cf. ṢALĪB, πλῶμη ἵτε πιεγχολογιον εθογαβ, 22–30; NICOLOTTI, Il libro delle anafore, 154–163 (§ 12–31); MIKHAIL, The Presentation of the Lamb, 290–307.

⁶⁷ Cf. DOSOO, Healing Traditions in Coptic Magical Texts, 71 f.

| صلاة تقرأ على من هو مريض بالحمى للأب | A Prayer to be Read over one Suffering from Fever, addressed to the Father |
|---|---|
| <p>Πῶς φτ̄ π̄παντοκρατωρ φ̄η ε̄τωοπ̄ η̄εν ο̄γ̄ναῑ ν̄εν ζ̄αν̄μετ̄ω̄εν̄ρη̄τ̄ ε̄ρη̄ῑ ε̄χ̄εν ο̄γ̄ον̄ ν̄ιβ̄εν̄ μᾱλῑστᾱ ν̄η̄ ε̄τ̄τω̄β̄ε̄ Ἰ̄πεκ̄ραν̄,</p> | <p>[1] O Lord God the Pantocrator, who dwells with mercy and compassions upon everyone, especially those who entreat your name,</p> |
| <p>Ἰ̄θο̄κ̄ τ̄εν̄ω̄ω̄ ο̄γ̄β̄η̄κ̄ π̄ῶ̄ς̄ τ̄εν̄τ̄ζ̄ο̄ ε̄ρο̄κ̄ χ̄ε̄μ̄ π̄ω̄ῑν̄ῑ Ἰ̄πεκ̄β̄ω̄κ̄ π̄αν̄ῑμ̄ μᾱτᾱλλ̄οῡ σ̄ῑ ν̄ε̄μᾱϋ̄ ε̄β̄ολ̄ η̄εν̄ τεκ̄χῑλ̄χ̄ Ἰ̄ᾱτ̄θ̄νᾱϋ̄ ε̄ρο̄ς̄ ν̄εν̄ ε̄β̄ολ̄ ζ̄ῑτε̄ν̄ τεκ̄χ̄ο̄μ̄ Ἰ̄ρε̄ϋ̄τᾱλλ̄ο̄ ο̄γ̄ο̄ζ̄ ᾱρῑε̄πῑτῑμᾱν̄ Ἰ̄π̄η̄μ̄ο̄μ̄</p> | <p>[2] We cry out to you, O Lord. We entreat you, visit your servant N.N., heal him, touch him with your invisible hand and your healing power, and rebuke the fever.</p> |
| <p>ᾱλῑο̄γ̄ῑ ε̄β̄ολ̄ ζ̄ᾱρο̄ϋ̄ Ἰ̄ω̄ω̄ν̄ῑ ν̄ιβ̄εν̄ ν̄εν̄ ἰ̄ᾱβ̄ῑ ν̄ιβ̄εν̄ ν̄εν̄ τῑτ̄κ̄ᾱς̄ ν̄ιβ̄εν̄.</p> | <p>[3] Remove from him every sickness and every illness and every pain.</p> |
| <p>ᾱρῑχᾱρῑζε̄ς̄θε̄ νᾱϋ̄ Ἰ̄ο̄γ̄ο̄ϋ̄χ̄αῑ ν̄εν̄ ο̄ϋ̄ς̄ω̄τ̄η̄ρῑᾱ η̄εν̄ ζ̄ω̄β̄ ν̄ιβ̄εν̄.</p> | <p>[4] Grant him healing and well-being in everything,</p> |
| <p>ζ̄ῑτε̄ν̄ πεκ̄μο̄νο̄γε̄νη̄ς̄ Ἰ̄ω̄η̄ρῑ π̄εν̄ῶ̄ς̄ ο̄γ̄ο̄ζ̄ π̄εν̄νο̄ϋ̄τ̄ ο̄γ̄ο̄ζ̄ π̄εν̄ς̄ω̄τ̄η̄ρ̄ Ἰ̄η̄ς̄ χ̄ρῑς̄,</p> | <p>[5] through your only-begotten Son, our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ,</p> |
| <p>φ̄αῑ ε̄τε̄ [ε̄β̄ολ̄ ζ̄ῑτο̄τ̄ϋ̄].⁶⁸</p> | <p>[6] through whom.</p> |

The prayer is a straightforward appeal to the Father as merciful and compassionate, to visit the sick person, and “touch him with the invisible hand and healing power”. Here too the likely domestic context of the prayer may be reflected in the use of the singular with respect to the sick person. Expressions such as asking for God’s visit and touch may themselves indicate a literary employment of the clergy’s visit of the home of the sick person and touching them in the context of a domestic healing ritual. The prayer concludes with a request for healing from fever first [2], but also from every sickness, disease, and pain [3], and to grant them health and well-being in general [4]. Unfortunately, *Suryān Liturgy 496* is the only manuscript attestation of this prayer to date, though this very source claims to

⁶⁸ *Suryān Liturgy 496*, fols. 143^v–144^v.

be a compilation from numerous older Euchologia. We are thus left with the likelihood that this prayer was transcribed and potentially used in at least Scetis if not elsewhere in Egypt, but no precise information as to when, where, and how frequently.

As a common medical complaint in the medieval world, fever features also as the subject of at least one Byzantine Greek prayer. The prayer in question is titled “Prayer for those suffering from fever (εὐχὴ ἐπὶ πυρεττόντων)”, and is attested since the Constantinopolitan Euchologion *BnF Coislin 213* (AD 1027).⁶⁹ It references the healing of the mother-in-law of Peter (Lk 4:38–39) as a biblical pretext for the healing presently sought. God is then asked to heal (ἰάσαι) his servant and to raise him up from his bed of pain and his couch of suffering (κλίνης ὀδυνηρᾶς καὶ στρωμνῆς κακώσεως) and to place upon him the medicine of his mercy (τὸ φάρμακον τοῦ ἐλέους σου). Despite sharing in the general sense of invoking divine mercy and healing power as the effective medicine for healing, hardly anything specific can be said to link this prayer to the Bohairic version for the same purpose. Thus, for the time being, Prayer 15 should be considered a Bohairic text local to Egypt, though of course answering to human needs for healing and recovery common throughout the medieval Mediterranean.

6 Conclusions

Healing rituals and practices, especially those involving oil and water, were ubiquitous throughout late antiquity and the medieval period, as seen in numerous sources cited above. These healing practices formed part of the “official” liturgical program of the Church, or took place in the domestic/private setting, whether licitly by official clergy and monks, or through practices considered magical or paraliturgical. It has seemed so far that such domestic healing practices began to decline by the 6th/7th centuries, leaving behind only official generic prayers for the sick as part of public liturgical rites and underlying themes of healing and exorcism in

⁶⁹ Paris, *BnF Coislin 213* (AD 1027), fol. 109^v. For the text and Italian translation of two versions of this prayer [O1:1a, O1:1b], see ARRANZ, *Le preghiere degli infermi nella tradizione bizantina*, 302 f.; ID., *L'eucologio costantinopolitano agli inizi del secolo XI*, 376.

baptismal rituals. References to home visits and anointing by priests do appear in later periods, as late as the 10th/11th centuries, but they are very scarce and do not provide clear information on the context and rituals practiced in such visits.⁷⁰ By the 14th century at the latest, we have our earliest liturgical manuscript of the elaborate seven-fold ritual of anointing the sick (*Vatican, Borgia Copt. 112*), a rite that shares similarities with the Constantinopolitan and later Hagiopolite traditions. Subsequently, this elaborate rite of anointing the sick became the primary and officially sanctioned ritual for the Church's ministry of healing. Though it is unclear whether or how often this rite was celebrated in the domestic setting (if at all) in the medieval period, it eventually entered into public ritual, celebrated on the final Friday of the forty-day Lenten period. Without a doubt such adoption into the public liturgical sphere helped solidify the official status of the rite and guarantee its performance in the controlled environment of ecclesiastical ritual. Yet, other healing rituals continued to co-exist, such as the service known as *Abū Tarbū*, intended for healing from dog bites and also officially sanctioned in numerous liturgical manuscripts and the *Ritual Order* approved by Pope Gabriel V in AD 1411.⁷¹ In fact, it is likely that numerous such "popular healing ministries" continued to exist in a variety of forms throughout Egyptian history,⁷² with anecdotes and testimonies even in the early 20th century.⁷³

The set of prayers published here, many for the first time, demonstrate that such traditional prayers for healing continued to be of utility well into the second millennium as part of the Bohairic tradition, the standard litur-

⁷⁰ Cf. MIHÁLYKÓ, Healing in Christian Liturgy in Late Antique Egypt, 187–189.

⁷¹ Cf. Ramez MIKHAIL, A Magical Cure for Rabies. The Coptic Liturgical Service in Honor of Abū Tarbū, in: Predrag BUKOVEC – Vedrana TADIĆ (eds.), *Ritualia Orientalia Mixta. Reflexionen über Rituale in der Religionsgeschichte des Orients und angrenzender Gebiete* (RVO 4), Hamburg 2017, 267–289. For the rite of Abū Tarbū in the *Ritual Order* attributed to Gabriel V, see Alfonso 'ABDALLAH, L'ordinamento liturgico di Gabriele V, 88° patriarca copto (SOC Aegyptiaca), Cairo 1962, 152–155 (Arabic), 348–350 (Italian).

⁷² For the terminology, see Otto F. A. MEINARDUS, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*, Cairo 1999, 100. See the discussion in DOSOO, *Healing Traditions in Coptic Magical Texts*, 48.

⁷³ Cf. Regine SCHULZ – Kamal Sabri KOLTA, Schlangen, Skorpione und feindliche Mächte, in: BN 93 (1998) 89–104, here: 89, cited in DOSOO, *Healing Traditions in Coptic Magical Texts*, 78.

gical rite of the Coptic patriarchate. These prayers seem to have found a place alongside the elaborate full rite of the anointing of the sick. This was at least in part to provide more convenient and easily performed healing rituals in the domestic setting, ones that do not prescribe numerous prayers and scriptural readings. Thus, we find that late medieval Copts continued to respond to the need for healing and relief, at least in part, by means of such small-scale private healing rituals enlisting a set of familiar elements: Prayer texts (whether uniquely Coptic or with strong parallels elsewhere in the East) invoking the healing power of Christ, physical touch in the form of blessing or anointing by a priest, and the blessing of oil and water, sometimes for the sick person to anoint oneself or consume. In several cases, the same scribes and users of our Euchologia transcribed a magical spell, identifying it as such in the heading, right alongside more traditional liturgical prayers, demonstrating the blurry boundaries between liturgy and magic. In either case however, Coptic Christians of the second millennium were nonetheless propagating a long tradition of religious healing practices attested throughout Egyptian history in late antiquity and even beyond in the broader medieval Mediterranean.

Abbreviations

| | |
|---------|---|
| AB | Ἀνάλεκτα Βλατάδων |
| ACC | Alcuin Club Collections |
| AK | Ἀνάλεκτα Κρυπτοφέρνης |
| BIHBR | Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome |
| BN | Biblische Notizen |
| BSAC | Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte |
| ExF | Ex Fonte – Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy |
| JThF | Jerusalem Theologisches Forum |
| OCA | Orientalia Christiana Analecta |
| OCP | Orientalia Christiana Periodica |
| OLS | Orthodox Liturgy Series |
| OPOe | Orientalia – Patristica – Oecumenica |
| PapyCol | Papyrologica Coloniensia |
| PO | Patrologia Orientalis |
| RAC | Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum |
| RVO | Religionen im Vorderen Orient |
| SECL | Studies in Eastern Christian Liturgies |
| SOC | Studia Orientalia Christiana |
| ST | Studi e Testi |
| STAC | Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum |
| STT | Studia Traditionis Theologiae |
| TC | Trends in Classics |
| VBF | Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung |
| ZPE | Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik |

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