

# The Letter 'Ad filios Dei' of Saint Macarius the Egyptian – Questions and Hypotheses

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## Introduction

For a long while our idea about early monasticism had been determined by the classical hagiographical sources (such as, above all, the *Vita Antonii*) and the sayings collected in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*. Beside the evaluation of the papyrological evidences,<sup>2</sup> the first and most important challenge to this view was Samuel Rubenson's book on the Letters of Saint Antony.<sup>3</sup> Rubenson not only proved that the letters are authentic, but also criticized the cliché of the first monks being simple *fellahs*. He inspired scholars to rethink or debate questions on the desert fathers' approach to the philosophical schools and in particular the legacy of Origen in the framework of the Alexandrian theological tradition.<sup>4</sup> While a number of scholars has accepted Rubenson's views, others have violently contradicted them,<sup>5</sup> it was only at a relatively late stage that scholars began to compare systematically the letters of Saint Antony with the fourth-century letter collection attributed to Ammonas,<sup>6</sup> while other collections – including the one attributed to Saint Macarius the Great – are almost completely left out from the research.<sup>7</sup> Therefore this study is far from being complete.

Prior to the thesis of Rubenson, among the letters which are attributed to the pioneers of early monasticism – apart from the writings of Ammonas – only the first letter of Macarius the Great (or Macarius the Egyptian), widely known with its Latin title *Ad filios Dei*,<sup>8</sup> was which, according to Antoine Guillaumont, 'a *quelque chance d'être authentique*'<sup>9</sup>. This paper surveys the central motifs of this letter and their possible relationship with the early monastic literature then I turn to examine some philological aspects of the text which are rather important to the question of the letter's authenticity.

## **1. The Text to be examined**

The text is quite a short – a little more than a hundred lines – introductory teaching on the process leading to the ascetic life. The text is called letter due to the opening lines of the Syriac and the Athenian Greek manuscripts, which introduce the passage as a quasi quote saying ‘Abba Macarius writes to his beloved sons exhorting them’. However, I would regard it rather as a treatise than as a letter, since there is no any sign of a relation with the addressees or with current events. It is a kind of exhortation, but it mostly emphasizes the difficulties and the temptations for the beginner monks. It became quite popular in the first millennium due to the there ancient versions in five ancient languages - Syriac, Coptic, Latin, Armenian, and Greek - in which it was transmitted.<sup>10</sup>

The first Syriac manuscript dates to 534 AD and contains other works belonging to the pseudo-Macarian corpus as well. Since Gennadius of Massilia was the first to mention this text independently – with a short summary of its teaching and together with a Latin translation of it - its *terminus ante quem* is as early as the seventies of the fifth century AD.<sup>11</sup> It is worth noting that in contrast to the almost contemporary Syriac tradition, Gennadius emphasizes that this is the only written work of Macarius the Egyptian.<sup>12</sup>

Although it was partly bequeathed as a piece of the pseudo-Macarian corpus, scholars have demonstrated that the author could not be the writer of the famous spiritual homilies, the so called pseudo-Macarius/Symeon. For these reasons, I attempt to examine this text separately.<sup>13</sup>

## **2. The central motifs of the text and the parallels of them**

Even though *Ad filios Dei* does not use the word “monk”, it is obviously a guide for novices for the spiritual combat with temptations (a *topos* from other writings such as the *Vita Antonii* or the ascetical writings of Evagrius Ponticus) through which they become

experienced fighters, true ascetics. A particular characteristic of this process is the dynamic role of the divine help. The conversion to ascetic life and the first experiences of repentance trigger the demons' attack; nevertheless, God sends him a holy power (δύναμιν ἁγίαν, **ΟΥ̅Ι ΟΜ̅ Ε̅ΣΥ̅Δ̅Β̅**, **سورة المدثر**), and with its help, he can easily defeat the spiritual enemy. But when 'God sees that his heart is strengthened enough against the enemies', he withdraws the power and leaves the ascetic alone for a while. Thus, through this almost hopeless fight, the monk becomes aware of the true source of his strength and learns humility and trust.<sup>14</sup>

This early occurrence of the divine help's withdrawal for pedagogical reasons becomes a frequent motif in the later spiritual literature, from the works of Diadochus of Photiké, Maximus the Confessor, and Niketas Stethatos, to *The Screwtape Letters* of C.S. Lewis, and the contemporary athonite tradition, where it is known as Παιχνίδι τῆς χάριτος, 'the game of the grace'.<sup>15</sup> However, there is a closer example in the *Conferences* of John Cassian: Abba Chæremon explains this phenomenon using a parable of the nurse who occasionally stops holding an infant's hand in order to teach him (or her) to walk alone.<sup>16</sup> One has to note that, even though scholars relate this passage<sup>17</sup> to the parable of the caring mother (who actually symbolizes the Holy Spirit) from the Pseudo-Macarian *Homilies*,<sup>18</sup> in this case, only the source of the analogy (a caring woman) is similar. The target, that is the role and the operation of the Holy Spirit, is different, since the parable of Pseudo-Macarius does not refer to the essential detail of John Cassian (the nurse who stops holding the child's hand). Instead, he emphasizes the intimacy and care of the Holy Spirit through an analogy with breastfeeding, without mentioning the method employed for teaching a child to walk.

Nevertheless, other motifs of the *Ad filios Dei* are more closely related to the heritage of the first desert fathers, especially by the letters of Antony and Ammonas. In his publications, Samuel Rubenson discusses most of these.<sup>19</sup> In the following lines, I will briefly mention them:

- All three texts refer to things which cannot be declared, but only experienced<sup>20</sup> (a commonplace of any mystical experience).
- All of them emphasize the rest and freedom which the divine power or grace grant<sup>21</sup> (and the oxymoronic coexistence of gladness and weeping).
- There are different spiritual beings (powers or spirits, and The Spirit) which help the ascetic on the way towards perfection: the lower spirits act at the time of purification and repentance, and the Holy Spirit only enters the scene – and the ascetic – after the purification.<sup>22</sup>
- Both texts of Antony and Macarius speak about the commendments of the Spirit; when an ascetic does not keep them, he must face a new wave of attacks, until he converts again. (Thus, repentance is possible even after the process of purification and the reception of the Spirit).<sup>23</sup>
- The letters of Ammonas also refer to the withdrawal of the divine help – in this case, of the Holy Spirit – with a pedagogical aim (the central theme in *Ad filios Dei*).<sup>24</sup>
- Similarly to Antony, but in contrast with Ammonas, the *Ad filios Dei* emphasizes the idea of knowledge, and particularly of self-knowledge. It also refers to the purification of the body's members.<sup>25</sup>
- Like Ammonas, Macarius assesses the role of the mystical revelations; Antony's letters do not address this topic.<sup>26</sup>

Even though any sign of a connection between the author and the recipients of his letter is absent, as it happens in the Letters of Antony and Ammonas, the parallel analysis which I briefly referred to above confirm that the author of *Ad filios Dei* 'belonged to very much the same community and period, as the authors of the Antonian and Ammonan

letters.<sup>27</sup> However, the picture becomes more obscure once one approaches the text at the philological level.

### 3. Two adverbial phrases indicating time

The original language of the *Ad filios Dei* – according to the general opinion – is undoubtedly Greek.<sup>28</sup> However, I would like to present the use of two unusual adverbial phrases which could alter or at least nuance this opinion.

The first one occurs at the end of the text, in a passage which summarizes its teaching. I quote its translation of the Greek version:

According to my judgment I am telling (you) that if man has not acquired great humility in his heart and in his body and (the ability) not to measure himself in anything and to reduce haughtiness and to constrain himself in everything and to keep his death before him day by day and renunciation of the material things and renunciation of the things of the body, he cannot keep the commandment of the Spirit.<sup>29</sup>

The adverbial phrase ‘day by day’, ( ἡμέραν καθ' ἡμέραν ) is rare in Greek,<sup>30</sup> while the parallel Syriac (ܫܘܠܘܢ ܫܘܠܘܢ ) is very common, and the Coptic one (ⲚⲈⲪⲬⲞⲞⲮ Ⲙⲁ ⲐⲪⲬ ⲚⲈⲪⲬⲞⲞⲮ) is not unprecedented. According to the present state of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae,<sup>31</sup> the Greek phrase occurs only – as an obvious Semitism – twice in the Septuagint (2Chron. 30:21, Psalms 67:20), and once as a paraphrase or quotation variant in the text of the second letter to the Corinthians (2Cor. 4:16).<sup>32</sup> Besides these occurrences, most of the other passages are quotations or commentaries of these biblical verses. There are only few exceptions in which the term is used independently: on the one hand, several later examples, such as the *Bellum Troianum*<sup>33</sup> and a passage from Symeon the New Theologian,<sup>34</sup> and Digenes Akritas;<sup>35</sup> on the other hand, one quotation from Mani by Epiphanius,<sup>36</sup> the *Vita Barlaam et Joasaphaat*,<sup>37</sup> one quotation attributed to Saint Basileus in the *Physiologus*,<sup>38</sup> a

passage from the *Vita Symeonis*,<sup>39</sup> and eleven(!) passages from the *corpus* of Ephrem the Syrian.<sup>40</sup> Although the oriental roots of the contemporary parts of these texts suggest a Semitic language background for the Macarian letter also, one should analyze it more thoroughly. Since the phrase is used in the Septuagint, and especially because it occurs in the Book of Psalms, undoubtedly the most used text in the monastic milieu, one can only argue that the Greek text of the letter uses an unusual phrase which deviates from the literary standards.

The second adverbial phrase is even more astonishing. It appears in the passage which describes the divine power's withdrawal:

When the good God sees that the heart has been strengthened against the enemies, he takes away the power from him hour by hour, and allows the enemies to fight against him in licentiousness and with the pleasure of the eyes and vainglory and haughtiness.<sup>41</sup>

The phrase ὥραν εἰς ὥραν ('hour by hour') is a hapax legomenon in Ancient Greek.<sup>42</sup> Technically, one could argue that the phrase itself could be a mirror translation either from the Syriac ܫܘܪܐ ܫܘܪܐ or from the Bohairic **NOYXÖ 4EN OYXÖ** expressions. Each of the three words ὥρα, ܫܘܪܐ, and XÖ, mean a certain – although obscure – period of time. However, the Syriac and the Coptic expressions have special senses in a different way. While the Syriac ܫܘܪܐ ܫܘܪܐ in usual context used to mean a rather longer period of time, such as 'year',<sup>43</sup> the Bohairic Coptic **NOYXÖ 4EN OYXÖ** means precisely a very short one ('sudden').<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the Coptic version of the letter has a different syntax:

When the good God sees that the heart is strong against the enemy (lit. enmity), then seeing his intention (**ΠΡΟΔΙΡΕCIC**) he begins to take away the power from him, and suddenly allows the enemy in him to fight against him with defilement and the pleasure of the eyes and vainglory and haughtiness.<sup>45</sup>

The adverbial phrase (ΝΟΥΧÖ 4ΕΝ ΟΥΧÖ) does not belong to the preceding clause (the withdrawal of the power), but to the subsequent one. Therefore, in contrast to the Syriac text, which denotes a gradual process, this passage suggests that after God has started to take away the power from the ascetic, at one point he find himself in the middle of a spiritual combat. Although a Coptic sentence in the present form (with a third, additional circumstantial clause between the other two) cannot be a direct source for the structure of the Greek or the Syriac sentence, its meaning seems to be more coherent.

### **A short conclusion**

In the first instance it is obvious that, in its main motives, the *Ad filios Dei* is so close to the Antonian and Ammonian letters that it is almost impossible to be independent of them. The closes parallel of the motif of the game of the grace – which is the special feature of the text – namely the parable of Abba Chæremon in the work John Cassian, also shows an Egyptian connection (or at least Cassian attributes it to an Egyptian origin).

Secondly, the unusual Greek forms of the adverbial phrases of time suggest a strong bilingual environment, which is not at all surprising in the Eastern Mediterranean. Even if one agrees that the letter was composed in Greek – and at the present point of research, there is absolutely no solid evidence against that *communis opinio*<sup>46</sup> – I argue that the author also used translations which are influences of his other native language. On the other hand, the problem of the Semitic or Coptic nature of this bilingual environment – and thus the very possibility of finding an answer to the question of authenticity in any sense – still has to be resolved.

### **Notes**

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<sup>2</sup> Colin H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London, 1979) and Ewa Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Egypte, IV<sup>e</sup>-VIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplements* 11 (Varsovie, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony: Origenist Theology, Monastic Tradition and the Making of a Saint* (Lund, 1990), 2<sup>nd</sup> revisited edition: Samuel Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Antony – Monasticism and the Making of a Saint*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that these connections are far from being as unambiguous as the common view suggests it in the case of the traditional sources. For example, there could be some possible Origenist implications in the *Vita Antonii* as well, the discourses of Antony therein being based on his Letters, see: István Perczel, 'Mankind's Common Intellectual Substance: a Study in the Letters of Saint Antony and His Life by Saint Athanasius', in Nagy Balázs and Sebök Marcell (eds.), *The Man of Many Devices, Who Wandered Full Many Ways... : Festschrift in Honor of János M. Bak*, (Budapest, 1999), 197-213.

<sup>5</sup> For the debate about Rubenson's thesis: Jan Pollok, 'The Present State of Studies on the Apophthegmata Patrum: An Outline of Samuel Rubenson's and Graham Gould's Perspectives', in Marek Starowicyski (ed.), *The Spirituality of Ancient Monasticism* (Kraków, 1995), 79-90. Rubenson's opinion as a standard point of view: Samuel Rubenson, 'Asceticism and Monasticism I: Varieties of Eastern Monasticism', in Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (eds.), *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 2007), 637-68.

<sup>6</sup> Bernadette McNary-Zak, *Letters and Asceticism in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Lanham, MD, 2000), 20-33. This comparison appears as a criticism of Rubenson's opinion: Rowan Williams, Faith and Experience in Early Monasticism: New Perspectives on the Letters of Ammonas, in *Akademische Reden und Kolloquien der Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg*, Bd. 20, (Erlangen-Nürnberg, 2002), and Dimitrij Bumazhnov, *Visio mystica im Spannungsfeld frühchristlicher Überlieferungen* (Tübingen: 2009).

<sup>7</sup> In spite of the close connections with the contents of the Letters of Antony, McNary-Zak does not even mention the Macarian letters, probably because in their critical edition of the Greek collection Paul Géhin dates them to the 5<sup>th</sup> century: Paul Géhin, 'Le dossier macarien de l'Atheniensis gr. 2492.' in *Recherches augustinienes* 31 (1999) 89-147. In his article about one of the letters (which had been published before Géhin's publication) Tim Vivian briefly touched upon this topic; however, because of the popular character of his article, he did not give a deep analysis: Tim Vivian, 'The Good God, the Holy Power, and the Paraclete', in *Anglican Theological Review* 80/3 (1998) 338-65. A notable exception is a short conference paper by Samuel Rubenson, 'Argument and Authority in Early Monastic Correspondence', in Alberto Camplani and Giovanni Filoramo (eds.), *Foundations of Power and Conflicts of Authority in Late-Antique Monasticism*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 157 (Leuven: 2007), 75-87, in which he presumes that two of the letters could be authentic, and treats them as belonging to the same corpus with the letters of Antony and Ammonas.

<sup>8</sup> I am referring to it as *Ad filios Dei* in the main texts and as 'Ep.Mac. I.' in the footnotes.

<sup>9</sup> 'Macaire l'Egyptien', in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. 10, 12.

<sup>10</sup> P. Géhin, 'Le dossier macarien' (1999), 104-108 (Greek recension), Émile Amélineau, *Histoire des Monastères de la Basse-Egypte*, *Annales du Musée Guimet* 25 (Paris, 1894), 122-125, 175 (Coptic, *errata et corrigenda*: Tim Vivian, 'The Virtues of Saint Macarius, The Manuscript, and Amelineau's Text', in *Coptica* 1 (2002) 69-76, 70, 74.), André Wilmart, 'La lettre spirituelle de l'abbé Macaire' in *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* 1 (1920) 58-83 (Latin); Werner Strothmann, *Die Syrische Überlieferung der Schriften des Makarios*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1981), 73-84 (Syriac).

<sup>11</sup> P. Géhin, 'Le dossier macarien' (1999), 100.

<sup>12</sup> *Gennadius, De Viris Illistribus* 10.

<sup>13</sup> W. Strothmann, *Die Syrische Überlieferung* (1981), XXIV-V. and P. Géhin, ‘Le dossier macarien’ (1999), 92, 96-97.

<sup>14</sup> *Ep.Mac.* I.10.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. *Philokalia* 1: 375., *Philokalia* 2: 302., *Philokalia* 4: 156., Carl Staples Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York, 2001), 37-41.

<sup>16</sup> *Cassianus, Collationes* 13.14.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. Vincent Desprez, *Pseudo-Macaire: Oeuvres Spirituelles I – Homélie propre à la Collection III*, Sources Chrétiennes 275 (Paris, 1980), 320. and Boniface Ramsey, *John Cassian: The Conferences* (New York, 1997), 498.

<sup>18</sup> Collection III. 27.3 (SC 275, 320-2), Collection II. 46.3 (Hermann Dörries and Erich Klostermann and Matthias Kroeger (eds.), *Die 50 geistlichen Homilien des Makarios*, Patristische Texte und Studien 4 (Berlin, 1964), 302.)

<sup>19</sup> S. Rubenson, ‘Argument and Authority’ (2007) and *Id.*, ‘Antony and Ammonas, Conflicting or Common Tradition in Early Egyptian Monasticism’, in Dmitrij Bumazhnov and Emmanouela Grypeou and Timothy B. Sailors and Alexander Toepel (eds.), *Bibel, Byzanz und Christlicher Orient: Festschrift für Stephen Gerö zum 65. Geburtstag* (Leuven, 2011), 185-201. and *Id.*, ‘The letter-collections of Antony and Ammonas – Shaping a community’, in Bronwen Neil and Pauline Allen (eds.), *Collecting Early Christian Letters from the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2015), 68-79.

<sup>20</sup> *Ep.Ant.* VII.48, *Ep.Amm.* I.1, *Ep.Mac.*I.13.

<sup>21</sup> *Ep.Ant.* I.45, IV.13, VI.16, 99, 115; *Ep.Amm.* II.3, VII.2, VIII.2, IX.2, X.3, XI.3, *Ep.Mac.* I.9.

<sup>22</sup> *Ep.Amm.* XIII.2.; *Ep. Ant.* I.25-26; *Ep.Ant.* II. 7, 26–30, III.31, IV. 9-10.; *Ep.Mac.* I.9;14.

The situation is somewhat similar in Evagrius’ ascetic writings, but there specifically the angels help the πρακτικοί. See Jason Scully, ‘Angelic Pneumatology in the Egyptian Desert:

The Role of the Angels and the Holy Spirit in Evagrian Asceticism', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 19.2 (2011), 287-305.

<sup>23</sup> *Ep. Mac.* I.15-16. *Ep. Ant.* I.42-45.

<sup>24</sup> *Ep.Amm.* IX.; *Ep.Mac.* I.10.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. *Ep.Ant.* IV.16; *Ep.Mac.* I.1. For the wider context see S. Rubenson, *The Letters of St. Anton*, 2nd ed.(Minneapolis, 1995), 59-88.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. *Ep.Amm.* IV, XIII.; *Ep.Mac.* I.13.

<sup>27</sup> S. Rubenson, 'Argument and Authority' (2007), 79. All the more so because the second letter of Macarius verily shows this feature, and it is closely related to the first one.

<sup>28</sup> See e.g. T. Vivian, 'The Good God, the Holy Power, and the Paraclete' (1998), note 65.

<sup>29</sup> *Ep.Mac.* I.17. Κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν οὖν γνώμην λέγω ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ ὁ ἄνθρωπος κτήσῃται μεγάλην ταπείνωσιν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ σώματι καὶ τὸ μὴ μετρεῖν ἑαυτὸν ἐν μηδενὶ πράγματι καὶ τὸ ὑποφέρειν ὕβριν καὶ τὸ ἑαυτὸν βιάζεσθαι ἐν παντὶ καὶ τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἔχειν ἔμπροσθεν ἡμέραν καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ ἀποταγὴν τῆς ὕλης καὶ ἀποταγὴν τῶν κατὰ σάρκα, οὐ δύναται κατασχεῖν τὰ ἐντάλματα τοῦ πνεύματος.

<sup>30</sup> Augustinus for example explains the Greek phrase in particular (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 67.28.)

<sup>31</sup> <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu> (30.11.2015.)

<sup>32</sup> *Basileius: Quod rebus mundanis adhaerendum non sit* (PG 31.549.40), *Cyrillus: Epistulae paschales sive Homiliae paschales* (PG 77.412.36), *Severianus: In Job* (PG 56.578.33)

<sup>33</sup> *Bellum Troianum* 9289

<sup>34</sup> *Catecheses* 3.313

<sup>35</sup> *Digenes Acritas* 9.4208

<sup>36</sup> *Panarion* 74.3 (115.1)

<sup>37</sup> *Vita Barlaam et Joasaphaat* 39.94.

<sup>38</sup> *Physiologus* (redaction tertia) 25.8

<sup>39</sup> *Vita Symeonis Stylitae iunioris* 157.40

<sup>40</sup> *De paenitentia* 365.3, 375.4, *De compunctione* 381.12, *Sermo compunctorius* 387.11, *De iudicio et compunctione* 399.3, *Paraenesis ad ascetas* 341.3, *De iis, qui filii dei naturam scrutantur* 205.6, *Precationes* 324.11, *Encomium in martyres* 185.13, *Sermo in pulcherrimum Ioseph* 277. 11.

<sup>41</sup> *Ep.Mac.* I.10. Τότε ὁ ἀγαθὸς θεός, ἐὰν ἴδῃ ὅτι ἡ καρδία ἐνεδυναμώθη ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς, ἀφαιρεῖ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὴν δύναμιν ὥραν εἰς ὥραν καὶ συγχωρεῖ ἀφεθῆναι τοὺς ἐχθροὺς πολεμεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀσελγείαις καὶ ταῖς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἡδοναῖς καὶ τῇ κενοδοξίᾳ καὶ ὑψηλοφροσύνῃ, ὡς πλοῖον ἀπηδάλωτον ὧδε κἀκεῖ προσκροῦον.

<sup>42</sup> At least I was not able to find any occurrence earlier than the eighteenth century. Even the much more regular ἀπὸ ὥρας εἰς ὥραν form is very rare, I found only three occurrences: *Adamantius: De ventis* 35.31, *Ammonius: Catena in Joannem* 315.16, and *Basilica* 10.4.3.8.

<sup>43</sup> R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, vol. 2. (Oxford, 1901), 2811. *annus integer*

<sup>44</sup> Walter E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford, 1939), 721b.

<sup>45</sup> *Ep.Mac.* I.10. ΤΟΤΕ ΔΡΈΔΝ Ὡ ΠΙΔΓΔΖΟC ΝΔΥ ΕΠΙΧΗΤ j ε  
ΔΦj ΕΜj ΟΜ ΕΧΡΗΙ Εj ΕΝ ὩΜΕΤj Δj ι ΤΟΤΕ ὩΦΕΡ ΧΗΤC ΝΩΛΙ  
Ἡj ΟΜ ΕΒΟΛΧΔΡΟΦ ΕΦCΟΜC ΕΤΕΦΠΡΟΧΕΡΕCΙC ΟΥΟΧ ΝΟΥΧᾶ  
4ΕΝ ΟΥΧᾶ ὩΦΕΡCΥΓΨΩΡΙΝ ἩΜΕΤj Δj ι Ε4ΟΥΝ ΕΡΟΦ

ΕΖΡΕΣΕΡΠΟΛΕΜΙΝ ΝΕΜΔΦ 4ΕΝ ΠΙΘΩ4ΕΜ ΝΕΜ ΞΥΔΟΝΗ ΝΤΕ  
ΝΙΒΔΛ ΝΕΜ ΠΙΩΟΥ ΕΤΟΥΙΤ ΝΕΜ ΜΕΤΘΔCΙ ΧΗΤ

<sup>46</sup> It is also worth noting that it looks like almost impossible to find any evidence against it, because we have not a single Greek text which was testified as a result of a translation either from Coptic or Syrian. See *e.g.* David Brakke, 'The Greek and Syriac Versions of the Life of Antony', *Le Muséon* 107 (1994), 29–53.