

Epistula Apostolorum

English translation of the Coptic text

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In 1895 Carl Schmidt published a report of a fragmentary Coptic text he had discovered at the French Institute in Cairo. As he was about to publish this text in 1910, he learned that there was a complete Ethiopic version of the same text, of which he had up to that time been unaware. He decided to wait for the publication so that he could incorporate knowledge arising from it into his own work. For various reasons the Ethiopic text was not published until 1913 by Abbé Guerrier in *Patrologia Orientalis* 9. In the meantime one folio of a 6th cent Latin palimpsest version had also been identified. Schmidt enlisted the support of Isaak Wajnberg to study and re-translate the Ethiopic, and their work did not appear until 1919 in *Texte und Untersuchungen* vol. 43 under the (short title) title of *Gespräche Jesu*. In addition to the Coptic, translations of the Ethiopic and Coptic, there are extensive notes to both, together with studies on (I) Cerinthus, (II) the *Descensus ad Inferos* in the early Church and (III) the celebration of the Passover in Asia Minor between pp. 403 and 725. The title *Epistula* derives from the statement in p. 9 of the text: 'we have not delayed in writing to you'.

The text was probably composed in the 2nd cent. in Greek. The Greek text has not survived, but the three translations of it have, in one way or another. The Ethiopic text is probably the latest and may have been translated from Arabic, which its turn may have been translated from Coptic or Syriac. The Coptic was almost certainly translated directly from the Greek. A critical summary of Schmidt and Wajnberg's publication was made by Kirsopp Lake in 'Epistula Apostolorum' in the *Harvard Theological Review* 14 (1921): 15-29.

The Coptic text is written in an Upper Egyptian dialect known as Akhmimic (the town of Akhmim being not far from the White Monastery) in skilled and attractive handwriting that is usually dated to the 4th or 5th cent. AD. It seems likely that the text belonged to the library of the White Monastery near Sohag, on the other side of the river from Akhmim, founded in the late 4th cent. and well-known in Christian Egypt because of its second abbot, Shenoute. Each page of the book has between 14 and 15 lines. The surviving page numbers make it possible to work out how many pages are now missing. The book itself may well have survived intact until Europeans showed an interest in buying it, whereupon it was probably dismembered in order to maximize earnings from the sale of the book.

The Schmidt.Wajnberg publication can be found on Internet Archive:
<http://archive.org/details/gesprchejesumi00schmuoft>.

Schmidt believes that the text was first composed in Asia Minor in the 2nd cent. Lake himself thinks that the text may have been written before 150 AD. The information in the text that makes this speculation possible is the statement that the Second Advent will happen 120 years (Coptic) or 150 years (Ethiopic) after the Resurrection. As for the place of origin, Cerinthus, about whom Schmidt has written a substantial appendix, suggests a connection with Ephesus, which may be further reinforced by the connection between Easter and the Passover, which was quite pronounced in Asia Minor. As to place, Lake speculates that the list of apostles (in the Ethiopic but not in the Coptic text) indicates a tradition in which Peter and Cephas were regarded as two separate figures, and the home of this tradition may have been Egypt. Schmidt, according to Lake, seems to be very reluctant to accept that non-canonical sources were used by the writer of the *Epistula*.

R. Cameron (ed.) *The Other Gospels* (1982) writes in his introduction to this text:

In presenting an alleged revelation of Jesus to his apostles, the *Epistula Apostolorum* superimposes the literary form of revelation discourse and dialogue upon its traditions. Jesus speaks as the risen Lord who mediates instruction to the community. This literary layering is clearly secondary: the discourse and dialogue are not composed of sayings, but comprise creedal formulas, catechetical instructions, and portions of abbreviated dogmatic treatises, all of which are used in the service of "orthodoxy." The *Epistula Apostolorum* thus mimics a form of revelation literature which was popular among many gnostics, attempting to combat its opponents with their own theological weapons. This apologetic purpose is heightened by prefixing an Epistulary introduction to the document. Against the claims of authority of certain writings that circulated under the names of individual apostles or disciples of Jesus, all the apostles are mentioned by name as the authors of this "letter" and the recipients of this revelation. The *Epistula Apostolorum* thus modifies the form of the letter to stress that this revelation is encompassed with a truly catholic epistle, that it is not a secret teaching, and that what is revealed is known by and available to all. The *Epistula Apostolorum*, therefore, is an anti-genre, a parody of a form of apocalyptic literature favored by its Christian gnostic opponents, an attempt to domesticate the literature of those who portrayed Jesus as the revealer of otherworldly knowledge disclosed in mystery books.

The following translation is as literal as I can manage, while remaining faithful to my own language. There are several lacunae in the text where restoration has been made by Schmidt. Square brackets indicate restorations that are not immediately obvious. Passages where the obvious text has been supplied do not have square brackets.

I must make it clear that this is not a work of scholarship, merely an attempt to present a reliable English version of the Coptic text in the hope that it may be of some use to those interested in early Christian literature. I have no knowledge of Ethiopic whatever, so I have had to rely on the notes of Schmidt-Wajenberg where I have cited the Ethiopic text. It also has to be pointed out that Schmidt, in the notes to the translation (pp.26-155), revised some of the readings and emendations that are still in the Coptic text and critical apparatus. I refer to these passages simply as 'translation notes'.

I have put the page numbers at the top of each page without brackets, whether they are in the text or not. The first four leaves of the Coptic text are missing. Schmidt uses two numbering systems: Roman I=Coptic 9, and so on.

Cerinthos¹ and Simon came [...] ² in the world. But these are e[nemies] of Our Lord Jesus Christ, for they turn aside the words and the thing³, that is Jesus Christ. So remove yourselves from them, for death is in them and a great destructive de[filament], these upon whom judgement shall be together with the end and error. For this reason we have not delayed in writing to you about the witness of Our Saviour Christ, the things which he did, we following him⁴ and still in the thoughts and deeds which we witnessed about him, that he is the Lord who was crucified by Pontius Pilate and Archelaus between the pair of thieves and was buried in place called

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[...] ⁵. They went to that place, walking,⁶ three women, Mary, Martha and Mary Magdalenê. They took an ointment to pour it ⁷ on his body, weeping and grieving over what had happened. When they approached to enter the tomb, they looked inside but did not find the body. As they were grieving and weeping, the Lord appeared to them and said to them, "For whom are you weeping? Stop weeping, I am the one you are looking for. Let one of you go to your brothers and say, 'Come. The Master has risen from the dead.'" Martha came to us and told us. We said to her, "What do you want with us, woman? This one who has died and been buried, is it possible for him to be alive?"

We did not believe her that the Saviour had risen from the dead. Then

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she went to the Lord and said to him, "None of them believed me that you are alive." He said to her, "Let another of you go to them and tell them again." Mary came and told us again, and we did not believe her. She went back to the Lord. She told him the very words. The Lord then said to Mary and her sisters, "Let us go to them."

He came and found us inside. He called us out. But we thought it was an illusion. We did not believe that he was the Lord. He then said to us, "Come. Do not be afraid. I am the Lord, the one whom, you Peter, denied three times and now still deny. We

¹ The text writes Corinthos, which may be due to the dialect of the writer or suggest that the writer is not entirely familiar with the name.

² In the notes to the Coptic text Schmidt suggests supplying the verbal phrase might be 'they performed wonders' (ΑΥΡΜΑΙΖΕ). cf. translation notes 'they walked' (ΑΥΜΑΛΖΕ)

³ For the same pairing: 'word' (ΛΟΓΟΣ) and 'thing' (ΖΩΒ) cf. below p.18 of the text

⁴ Lit. 'looking after him'

⁵ The reading is [...]ΟΝ for which he suggests ΚΗΠΟΝ (garden). In his translation he writes 'place of skulls' (ΚΡΑΝΙΟΝ). The names of the three women in the Ethiopic text: Sara, Martha and Maria.

⁶ ΕΥΜΑΖ seems to be ignored by Schmidt, and my translation is an attempt to relate it to the verb 'walk'.

⁷ The Gospel passages recording this detail: Mk 16, 1 and Lk 24,1. Both use the word 'aromata' and Mk uses the verb 'anoint'. The verb 'pour' seems a little peculiar in connection with 'ointment'.

came to him, doubting in our heart that perhaps it was not the Lord. He then said to us

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"Why do you still doubt and have no faith? I am the one who spoke to you about my flesh, death and resurrection, so that you would know that it is I. Peter, put your fingers into the nails of my hands and you too, Thomas, put your fingers into the spear wounds of my side. You, Andrew, look at my feet. You will see that they do not stick to the ground. For it is written in the Prophet⁸ that an illusory demon's foot does not stick to the ground." We touched him that we might know truly if he had risen in the flesh and we threw ourselves on our faces, confessing our sins, for we had been faithless. The Lord Our Saviour the said, "Rise

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and I will reveal to you the things that are below heaven and those that are in heaven and your repose in the kingdom of heaven. For my Father has given me the power to take you up with those who believe in me. The things he revealed to me are the things he says: It happened when I came, coming⁹ from the Father of everything. I passed into the heavens. I assumed the wisdom of the Father and I assumed his power.¹⁰ I was in heaven, and the archangels and angels, I passed into their likeness as if I were one with them among the powers and authorities. I passed by them, having the wisdom of the one who sent me. The archistrategos of the angels, Michael and Gabriel and Uriel and Raphael, they

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are the ones who followed me as far as the fifth firmament. For they thought in their heart that I was one of them. The Father gave me the power of greatness and on that day I created archangels with a wonderful voice that they might go into the altar of the Father and serve and complete their service until I go to him. This is what I did through the wisdom of the likeness. For I was everything in everybody so that <I may praise>¹¹the dispensation of the Father and the glory of the one who sent me, I may complete it and go to him. For you all know that Gabriel the angel brought the good news to Mary." We replied

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"Yes, Lord." He replied and said to us, "Do you not remember that I said to you on

⁸ The quotation is unknown. The meaning is that footprints of illusory demons are invisible. For a similar idea in connection with Jesus cf. Apocryphal Acts of John c. 93.

⁹ The same wording is used in the Pistis Sophia of Jesus' descent into the world. It may mean something like 'be about to'. In some parts of the North of England (e.g. Lancashire) it is not uncommon to hear pleonastic verbal expressions such 'he stood standing there'

¹⁰ Coptic uses a Greco-Coptic tautology here (lit. 'the strength of his power').

¹¹ If one adds <ΑΓΙΝΑCΜΟΥ>, as Schmidt suggests.

the way for a short time that I was an angel and that I had become everything in everyone?" We said to him, "Yes, Lord." He then replied and said to us, "On that day when I assumed the form of Gabriel the angel, appeared to Mary and spoke with her, her heart received me to her, she believed. I¹² gave myself form. I went into her. I became flesh. Since I became for myself alone a deacon to Mary in the perceived form of an angel, this is how I will do it after going to the Father, and you, remember my death¹³. When the Passover happens, there is one of you
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who will be put into prison because of my name and and he will be in a state of grief and concern that you were keeping the Passover while he was in prison and not with you. For he will grieve that he was not keeping the Passover with you. For I will send my power in the likeness of Gabriel the angel. The gates of the prison will open. He will come to you and will keep a vigil (lit. a measure of watch) with you and stay with you until the cock crows. When you complete the remembrance which is for me (literal translation) and the agapê¹⁴, he will once again be put into prison as a witness until he comes forth and preaches the things I said to you." We said to him, "Lord, is it not necessary once again that we take the cup and drink?" He said to us, "Yes, it is necessary

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until the day when I come together with those who have been killed for my sake." We said to him, "Lord, the things which you revealed to us at the beginning are great things. In what sort of great power will you come? Or what sort of perceptible state?" He answered and said to us, "Amen, I say to you that I will come like the sun shining, I being light of seven times greater than it (sun) in my glory. The wings of clouds carrying me¹⁵ in glory and the sign of the cross before me, I will come upon the earth and give justice to the living and the dead." We said to him, "Lord, after how many years will these things happen." He said to us, "If the part of a hundred and the part of twenty¹⁶ are complete in the middle of the Pentecost and the feast of the unleavened bread, the presence of the Father will take place."

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We said to him, "Now, what is this that you said to us, 'I am coming' and what do you mean, 'The one who sent me is the one who is coming'?" He then said to us¹⁷, "I am entirely in my Father and my Father is in me. From the likeness of the form

¹² Schmidt thinks that the 3rd p. is also a possible reading here: 'she gave me form', but in his translation notes is not confident.

¹³ This can also be divided as follows: 'This is what I will do. After I have gone to my Father, remember my death.'

¹⁴ Communal meal. Earliest ref. seems to be I Cor. 11, 17ff.

¹⁵ cf. the translation notes.

¹⁶ cf. translation notes: this would be an attempt to translate the Greek 'to ekaston' and 'to eikoston'. The Latin text of this passage is also preserved, but unfortunately the number is unreadable.

¹⁷ Some sentences have been left out of the Coptic. The Ethiopic text is fuller and Schmidt's translation of it can be found on p. 58.

and the power and the fullness and the light and the perfect measure and the voice. I am the logos. I have become a thing for it, which means, [I am the]¹⁸ perfect thought in the type. I was in the eighth¹⁹, which is the Lord's day. The whole completion of the perfection, you will see it because of the salvation which has happened to me, and you will see me as I make my way up to heaven to my Father who is in heaven. But until I give you a new commandment, 'Love one other and

One folio is missing

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He said to us, "You will see a light [...] elevated more than the one who shines [...]the perfection in [...] But I entirely am the [substance] of the Father [...] to me²⁰, which is the fullness. " We said to him, "Lord in everything, you have become for us a [salvation and life]²¹. You have preached to us these words of this sort." He said to us, "Courage and you will be content. Amen I say to you that your repose will be in heaven, the place in which there is no eating or drinking or joy or sorrow or destruction of those who are in me²². For you will not share my [...]which partake of the [immortality which]²³ is in him

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your own repose in me." Again we said to him, "Will you come like the angels or in some other form?" He answered and said to us, "[...]I²⁴ [have] put on [your] flesh, this in which I was born and in which I was crucified and rose through my Father who sent me²⁵ that the prophecy of David the prophet might be fulfilled concerning the things that were preached about me and my death and my resurrection, saying, 'Lord, those who contend with me are many and many have risen up against me. For there are many who say to my soul, 'It has no salvation before God. "' But you are the Lord, you are the one who has received me to yourself. You are the glory and the one who raises my head. With my voice I cried up

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to the Lord. He heard me. I closed my eyes and fell asleep. I rose, because you the Lord are the one who has received me to you. I will not be afraid of a myriad of people who surround and are very hostile to me. Lord, save me, my God, for you

¹⁸ cf. translation notes: Schmidt suggests that one might read 'word' (in its Coptic form), as the Ethiopic does, but he is clearly not happy about that either, since the Coptic otherwise uses the Gk 'logos'.

¹⁹ cf. Clement of Alexandria *excerpta Theodoti* 63,1. Schmidt has emended the text to produce this word, which he translates as 'eightness'.

²⁰ cf. translation notes: this may be part of the comparative structure 'than me.

²¹ cf. translation notes.

²² Or 'in it', if one emends the text, as Schmidt suggests.

²³ cf. translation notes.

²⁴ The following is based on the translation notes.

²⁵ Or perhaps 'who is in heaven '

have crushed everyone who has been my enemy without cause. The teeth of the sinners, you have smashed them. Salvation is of the Lord and his love for his people. If all the words spoken by the prophets are fulfilled by me, for I am the one who was in them, then how much more will the things that I say to you really happen so that the one who sent me will be glorified through you and those who believe me." After he had said these things to us, we said to him, "Lord in all things you

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have been merciful to us and you have saved us. You have revealed to us everything. But still we wish to ask you, if you will let us." He replied and said to us, "I know that you will bear²⁶ and your heart is firm when you listen. Concerning that which you wish, ask me about it and I will speak to you fittingly. Amen I say to you, 'As my Father raised me from the dead, this is how I will treat you. You will rise and you will be taken up to heaven to the place which I told you from the beginning, to the place which the one who sent me has prepared for you. And this is how I will fulfil every dispensation, I being unprocreated, (albeit) having been born of man, I, without a body, put on the body that I came for this reason so that you

Pages 25 and 26 are fragmentary, but Schmidt has reconstructed them on the basis of the Ethiopic. Square brackets are really not necessary, because most of the text has been restored

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10 to 11 lines are missing

We replied, "Yes, Lord." He then said to us, "Truly, I say to you, 'I have received all power from my Father so that I may lead into the light those who are in the dark.

26

8 to 9 lines are missing

[...] After he had said these things to us, we said to him, "Lord, [...] the flesh will be judged with the soul and the spirit. Some will find repose in the kingdom of heaven, but others will be punished alive forever." He said

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to us, "Until which day are you seeking and looking?" Once again we said to him, "Lord, it is necessary for us to ask you, because you order us to preach so that we

²⁶ Something missing ; perhaps $\text{q}\text{p}\text{r}\text{a}\text{y}\text{w}$ 'take care'.

ourselves may understand with certainty through you²⁷ and we may be good preachers and those who will teach through us, they will believe in you and so we ask²⁸ you many times." He answered us saying, "Amen I say to you that the resurrection of the body will happen, the soul being in it with the spirit." And we said to him, "Lord, is it possible for that which has disintegrated, having perished, to be whole - we ask you not as unfaithful or whether it is possible for you - but as true believers, that what you say

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will happen." And he became angry with us, saying to us, "You of little faith, until which day are you asking ? But what you want, tell me and I myself will tell it to you, only without envy. Keep my commandments and do what I tell you. Do not turn your face away from anyone, so that I myself will turn my face from you, but without hesitation, without shame²⁹, without partiality, serve the upright and narrow way, which is also hemmed in, this is the way of my Father. He will rejoice over you." Again we said to him, "Lord,

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"we are already ashamed that we have asked you so many times and are a burden to you." He then answered and said to us, "I know that in faith and with all your heart you ask me about this. I rejoice over you. For amen I say to you that I am [in agreement]³⁰ with my Father who is in me that you ask me. Your lack of shame is for me a joy and it gives you yourselves life³¹." After he had said these to us, we [spoke freely]³² and questioned him. And we said to him, 'Lord in all things, you give us life and you have mercy on us. Now therefore, will you tell us about the things we will ask you ?' Then he said to us, "Is the flesh destroyed or the spirit ?"³³ We said to him, "The flesh is destroyed."

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He then said to us, "Will the one who has fallen rise, the one who is lost be found, the one who is lame be healed, so that in this the glory of my Father will be revealed, as he did with me ? I myself will also do it with you, all who believe. Amen I say to you that the flesh will rise with the soul [and the spirit]³⁴, so that their defence will happen on that day because of what they have done, whether good or bad, so that a selection of the faithful will be made, those who have kept the commandments of my Father who sent me. This is how the judgement will in

²⁷ Schmidt's text reads: 'through me'

²⁸ cf. translation notes.

²⁹ The text of the next two lines was, according to Schmidt, bracketed by the copyist who discovered that it was a dittography.

³⁰ cf. translation notes.

³¹ cf. translation notes.

³² cf. translation notes, where 'rejoice' is suggested to agree with the Ethiopic.

³³ cf. translation notes.

³⁴ cf. translation notes: instead of 'the spirit' read 'living'.

strictness be. For my Father said to me, 'My son

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on the day of judgement you will feel neither shame for the rich nor pity for the poor, but according to the sin of each one, you will hand him over to eternal punishment.' My beloved, he who has kept the commandments of my Father, the one who sent me, I will give them³⁵ repose of life in the kingdom of my Father who is heaven. They will see the things that he has granted them. He gave me authority to do what I want. I will give to those to whom I have promised and those to whom I have decided to give and grant. For this reason I have come to the place of Lazarus³⁶ and preached to the just and the prophets that they may come forth from the repose of above and go into that which [is above,

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I, stretching out my right],³⁷ hand over them [in a repose] of life and remission and salvation from every evil, as I have done for you and those who believe in me. If one believes in me and does not keep my commandments, having confessed my name, has no benefit from it, he has gone on an empty path. For people of this sort, they are lost and [doomed], because they have transgressed against my commandments. Moreover, you are the children of life. I saved you from every evil and from the authority of the archons and everyone of you who believes in me. That which I promised to you, I will send to them also so that they will come forth³⁸ from prison and the chains of the archons and

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the blazing fire." [We answered and said] to him, "Lord, you have given the eternal rest and you have given [...] in miracles to strengthen the faith. These also you will preach them to us, for you have preached to the just³⁹ and the prophets." Then he said to us, "Amen I say to you, 'Everyone who has believed in me and the one who sent me, I will [take them] up to heaven, the place which my Father has prepared for the elect and I will give you the chosen kingdom in repose and everlasting life. But those who have transgressed against the commandments and taught teachings outside the scriptures, adding to them

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³⁵ Coptic has the plural of the pronoun. The plural is continued in the next sentence.

³⁶ Bethany cf. Lk 24,50

³⁷ Ethiopic: 'I have offered them my right hand, the baptism of life, remission of sins and forgiveness.' Schmidt suggests that the text in the gap be emended from 'in a repose' to 'the water'

³⁸ Translates the emendation of Schmidt.

³⁹ cf. translation notes for the suggestion 'to the fathers'

[...] alone, they teaching with other words those who believe in me uprightly. If they cause them to fall as a result of things of this sort, they will be punished forever." We said to him, "Lord, will there not be teachings of others outside the things you have said to us?" He said to us, "There have to be, so that [those who do evil] and those who are good will be revealed. This is how the judgement of those who do these things will be revealed, and they will be judged according to their deeds. They will be handed over to death". Again we said to him, "Lord, we are blessed, for [we see you] and hear you say ⁴⁰words of this sort, because the eyes see the

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great wonders that you have performed." He replied and said to us, "More blessed indeed are those who have not seen and believed, for these people will be called the children of the kingdom and will become perfect and I will become a cornerstone⁴¹ in the kingdom of my Father." Again we said to him, "Lord, how will they be able to believe? Will you go and leave them behind you? As you say to us, 'A day will come and an hour and I will go to my Father.'" He said to us, "Go and preach to the twelve tribes and preach to the nations and the whole land of Israel⁴² from

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the east to the west and from the south to the north. Many will believe the son of God." We said to him, "Lord, who will believe us or who will listen to us or who will be taught [...] the wonders and signs that you have performed and the miracles." He then replied and said to us, "Go and preach the mercy of my Father, and what he has done through me, I will do through you, I being in you. I will give you my peace, and from my spirit I will give you strength that you may prophesy to them that they may live forever. As for the others, I will give them the power that they may teach other nations

In the translation notes Schmidt writes that 6 folios are missing, in the printed text seven. There is so little to translate pf page 49 that I have decided against writing anything. This is what is left of page 50.

50 from line 12 to the end

[rebuke their neigh]bours. For [he will become a child] of wisdom, [believing. But if he is not] a child [of wisdom], he will hate [his brother in arrogance [...]

⁴⁰ cf. translation notes, where Schmidt prefers 'preach'

⁴¹ cf. translation notes, where Schmidt suggests 'life for them/life eternal'

⁴² cf. translation notes for discussion of this phrase

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from his neighbour and take possession of him⁴³ and be at a loss over/deprives him.⁴⁴ Those who live their lives in truth and the knowledge of faith, they have love for me. They endure insults. They will be proud of them, walking in poverty and enduring those who hate them and those who insult them. They have inflicted pain on them, being naked. People are arrogant towards them, as they walk in hunger and thirst. But since they endure the goodness of the heavens, they will be with me forever. But woe to those who walk in arrogance and are proud, for their

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end is error." We said to him, "Lord, is it yours to leave us in order to come upon them?" He replied and said to us, "How will the judgement be made? The just or the unjust?" We said to him, "Lord, on that day, they will say to you, 'You have not pursued justice, light and dark, bad and good.'" ⁴⁵He then said, "I will answer them, saying, 'Adam was given the power to choose one of two things. He chose light. He brought his hand down upon it. The dark, however, he left it behind him and cast it from him. In this way every man has power

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to believe in the light, which is life and which is the Father who sent me. Everyone who believes and performs the things of the light, they will live through them (things of the light). But if one confesses that one belongs to the light, doing the things of the dark, this one has no defence to offer, nor will he be able to lift up his face opposite the son of God, that is to say, myself. I will say to him, 'When you looked, you found; when you asked, you received. How did you condemn me, man. Why did you take yourself away from me and deny me? Does each one have the power to live and die? The one, therefore who has kept,

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my commandments, he will be a child of the light, which is the Father who is in me. But because of those who destroy my words, I have come down from heaven, I the logos. I became flesh, taking trouble and teaching that those who are called will be saved and those who are lost will be lost forever. They will suffer while they live. They will be punished in their flesh and their soul." We said to him, "Lord, truly we are concerned about them." He said to us, "You do well to do so. For the just, they are concerned about the sinners and pray for them, begging my Father." Again we

⁴³ W.E. Crum Coptic Dictionary 535a comments that this passage is 'obscure'.

⁴⁴ Schmidt admits that the reading he has given in the text ('aporein') is uncertain. He suggests emending to 'aposterein'. He is clearly not satisfied with either. In his translation notes he writes <schleicht sich ein>, for which there is no Coptic text, followed by dots to indicate that he does not know which verb to choose.

⁴⁵ Schmidt has notes on the difficulty of understanding this passage on pp. 124-125. He speculates that the Coptic translator has misunderstood διακρίνειν as διώκειν and has put the negative in the wrong place

said to him, "Lord, why does nobody feel respect for you ?" He said

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to us, "I will hear the prayer of the just who do it among them." After he had said these things to us, we said to him, "In everything you have taught us and you have been merciful to us. You have saved us so that we may preach to those worthy of salvation and create for ourselves a wage with you." He replied and said to us, "Go and preach and you will be labourers and fathers and deacons." We said to him, "You are the one who will preach through us." He then replied to us, saying, "Do not be father at all and do not be teacher at all." We said to him, "Lord, you are the one who said to us, 'Do not call (anyone) father to you upon earth, for your Father who is

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in heaven is one and your teacher. Why do you continue to tell us now, 'You will be father of many children, deacons and teachers ?" He replied and said to us, "As you say. Amen I say to you, the one who listens to you and believes in me will receive from your hands the light of the seal from me and baptism from me. You will become father and deacon and also teacher." We said to him, "Lord, how is it possible for each one of us to make three ?" He said to us, "Amen I say to you, you will be called 'father', for with a heart that is precious and a love you will reveal to them the deeds of the king-

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dom of heaven. You will be called 'deacons', because they will receive baptism, forgiveness of sins from my hand through you. You will be called 'teacher', because you have given them the word. Without envy you have chastised them. When you castigated them, they returned. You did not feel shame before their wealth or their face, but you kept the commndments of my Father and you have performed them. A great reward will be yours with my Father who is in heaven and forgiveness of sins will be for those and life everlasting. They will partake of the kingdom of heaven." We said to him, "Lord, even if each one of us had

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a myriad of tongues to speak, we would not be able to thank you who promise us things of this sort." He then replied, saying to us, "Only do what I tell you to do, as I myself have done. You will be like the wise virgins who kept watch and did not sleep, but came to the bridal chamber to be with the Lord. [The foolish ones], however, were unable to keep watch but fell asleep." We said to him, "Lord, which

are the wise and which the foolish ?" He said to us, "The five wise and the five foolish are the ones whom the Prophet called the children of God. Listen to their names." We were weeping and

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grieving at heart over the ones who had fallen asleep.⁴⁶ He said to us, "The five wise ones are: faith, love, charity, peace and hope. Those among the believers who have them, these will be leaders of those who have believed in me and sent me. For I am the Lord and the bridegroom whom they have received. They went into the house of the bridegroom. They lay rejoicing with me. But the five foolish ones, after they had slept, they woke up and came to the door of the bridal chamber. They called inside. But the door remained locked to them. Then they wept and began to grieve, because no-one would open the door to them." We said to him, "Lord, their wise sisters who were in the house of the bridegroom

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did they refuse to open the door ? Did they not grieve for them ? Did they not beg the bridegroom on their behalf to open the door to them." He replied and said to us, "They were not yet able to receive grace on their behalf." He said to us, "Lord, on which day will they go in because of their sisters ?" He then said to us, "They were not locked out [...]⁴⁷" We said to him, "Lord, this word [...].⁴⁸ Who then are the foolish ones ?" He said to us, "Listen to their names: knowledge, understanding, obedience, patience and mercy. For these are the ones who have fallen asleep among those who believed and confessed me, but did not keep my commandments through those who fell asleep. For they will remain outside the king-

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dom and the sheepfold. The one who will remain outside the sheepfold will be devoured by wolves and will [...]⁴⁹ dying a painful death. He will have no peace or endurance. He will be badly tortured, so that [...] he will be punished greatly and be subjected to many painful tests." We said to him, "Lord, it is good that you have revealed everything to us." He then replied saying to us, "Do you not understand these words ?" We said to him, "Yes, Lord. Through the five they will come into the kingdom of heaven. To be sure, those who kept watch were with you, Lord and bridegroom, even if they do not rejoice over those who fell

⁴⁶ Coptic uses a construction which has so far not been satisfactorily explained, but seems to me to have some of the properties of the English Past Continuous tense, which acts as a sort of background: 'John was teaching when the news arrived.' The construction is used only once in this text: **ⲛⲁⲣⲉ+SUBJ+PRED+ⲡⲈ**

⁴⁷ The passage is difficult. Following the Ethiopic text, Schmidt suggests, : 'The one who is locked out is locked out.'

⁴⁸ Schmidt suggests deleting his emendation. The Ethiopic has a question here: 'What does this word mean ?'

⁴⁹ Ethiopic: 'will be condemned'.

asleep." He said to us, "They are rejoicing that they went inside with the bridegroom Lord and they are grieving, because they are their sisters. The ten⁵⁰ are the daughters of God the Father." We then said to him, "Lord it is your job to [...]"⁵¹ He said to us, "[...]"⁵², but belonging to the one who sent me, I myself agreeing with him. You preach well and correctly and you teach, not feeling shame before anyone. You are not afraid of anyone, especially the rich, for they do not keep my commandments but they are blinded by their wealth

We said to him, "Lord, is it only the rich?"⁵³ He replied, saying to us, "If a person is not rich but has a little of life's goods and gives to the needy and the poor, he will be called a benefactor. But if he falls under a burden because of the sins he has committed, let his neighbour rebuke him instead of the good that he has done for his neighbour. If his neighbour has rebuked him, he will rescue himself and be saved. The one who has rebuked him will receive his reward and live forever. For a needy man, if he sees the one who has done him good as one who sins and does not rebuke him, he will be judged

in a harsh tribunal. A blind man leading a blind man, they both fall into a pit. The one who takes sides about them becomes like them both, as the Prophet said, 'Woe to the one who takes sides and justify the impious because of their gifts, these in which [there is death]'⁵⁴. See therefore that judgement⁵⁵[...] Amen I say to you, 'On that day I will feel no shame before the rich and I will not pity the poor.' If you see a sinner, [rebuke him] between you and him. If he does not listen to you, take the others with you up to three and teach your brother. If he still does not listen to you, place him before you like [a heathen and tax collector]'⁵⁶

The end is missing.

⁵⁰ The Coptic word in the text means 'birth' (MICE), but in this context it makes no sense and so has been emended to 'ten' (MITE)

⁵¹ In the translation notes Schmidt suggests an emendation that would fit the available space: 'that you show them grace for the sisters' sake.'

⁵² In the translation notes Schmidt suggests: 'it is not my job', which would fit in the space

⁵³ In the translation notes Schmidt decides to change his textual emendation to read as above.

⁵⁴ The Ethiopic reads: 'whose belly is God.' Schmidt proposes a Coptic for the lacuna that would correspond to this: ΕΤΕ [ΝΟΥΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΕ] ΖΗΤΟΥ. I have translated the emendation suggested in his edition of the Coptic text.

⁵⁵ Text reads 'creation'. The following lacuna: 'will be assigned to him'.

⁵⁶ Supplied from the Ethiopic text.