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A CHRISTIAN PRAYER FROM RAMSES IVTH TOMB
IN THE THEBAN VALLEY OF THE KINGS

The text under consideration is a *dipinto* written in black ink on the left wall of the tomb's corridor. The hand is an upright, well-practised cursive and may be dated to the VIth century. *Upsilon* as a part of *-ou-* is usually reduced to a curve over the preceding *omikron*.

The inscription was published in 1920 by J. Baillet with several cruces (*Inscriptions grecques et latines des tombeaux des rois ou syringes à Thèbes I* [= *Mémoires Publiés par les Membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire* 42], Le Caire 1920, pp. 71-72, no. 302, pl. 4). We believe that the photograph permits to establish the text with almost hundred per cent certainty. Below, Baillet's reading is printed in left hand side, our in right hand side:

Κύριε παντοκράτωρ καὶ
ἅγιε Κόλλουθε, καὶ ἅγιε ἀπᾶ
Πατέρμουθι, καὶ ἅγιε ἀπᾶ Ἀμ-
μώνης ἀναχωριτῆς, παρα-
καλέσατε τὸν θεόν, ὅπως
χαρίσασθαι ζῶν τῇ Ἀρτε-
μιδώρα, μετὰ [Πα]πνουθίου εἰς
ὀλίγον χ[ρόνον], πρὸς τὸ θέλη-
μά σου καὶ ποιήσων εἰμται Παραγια

Κύριε παντοκράτωρ καὶ
ἅγιε ἀπᾶ Κολλοῦθε καὶ ἅγιε ἀπα
Πατερμουῦθι καὶ ἅγιε ἀπα Ἀμ-
μώνης ἀναχωριτῆς, παρα-
καλέσατε τὸν θεόν ὅπως
χαρίσασθαι ζῶν τῇ Ἀρτε-
μιδώρα μετὰ [Πα]πνουθίου εἰς
ὀλίγον χ[ρόνον] πρὸς τὸ θέλη-
μά σου καὶ ποιήσων ἐμαὶ Πανούθις

εὐχαρίστησαι πάσαι εὐχαριστία
πνευματικῆ κερσεπτατο παν-
τόκρατορ.

εὐχαριστήσαι πάσαι εὐχαριστία
πνευματικῆ, δέσποτα παν-
12 τόκρατορ.

1. παντόκρατορ? (cf. com.) 4. Ἀμμώνι (cf. com.) ἀνα-
χωρητά; 9. ἐμέ; 10-11. πάση (cf. com.); 11. δέσποτα

“O Lord the Almighty, and the saint *apa* Kollouthos, and the saint *apa* Pathermouthis, and the saint *apa* Ammonis anachorite, ask God to grant life to Artemidora together with Papnouthios for a short time according to your will and make me, Panouthis, to thank (you) with every spiritual thank (or: in every spiritual prayer), o Lord the Almighty.”

1. παντοκράτωρ: nominative instead of vocative or an orthographic mistake, *omega* for *omikron*.
2. Saint Kollouthos, a martyr of Diocletian time, has been one of the most celebrated saints of the Coptic church (there is, however, no entry Kollouthos/Collothos in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*; see W.E. CRUM, ‘Colluthos, the martyr and his name’, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 30, 1929-30, pp. 323-327). He was a patron-saint of Antinoe from where he originated and where he suffered his martyrdom. Antinoe, therefore, was the most important centre of his cult (cf. A. PAPACONSTANTINOU, *Le culte des saints en Egypte d’après la documentation papyrologique et épigraphique grecque (Ve–VIIe siècle)*, unpublished dissertation, Strasbourg 1993, pp. 226–231). In documents concerning his cult places there he is called either *hagios Kollouthos* or *hagios apa Kollouthos*; in Greek documents the first form occurs more often while in Coptic texts the latter prevails (cf. S. TIMM, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit* III, Wiesbaden 1985, pp. 1348-1350). This hesitation could be reflected also in our inscription where *apa* has been added later, probably under the influence of two other instances occurring here: *hagios apa Patermouthis* and *hagios apa Ammonis*.

Απα is a title of respect, not necessarily meaning that the man was either an anchorite or a monk (cf. T. DERDA – E. WIPSZYCKA, ‘L’emploi des titres *abba*, *apa* et *papas* dans l’Egypte byzantine’, *JJP* 24, 1994, pp. 23-56). It was, however, a common habit in Christian Egypt to provide with this title the names of saints, including the martyrs of the great persecution of the 3rd and of the beginning of the 4th century (cf. *ibidem*, p. 34).

- 2-3. For St. Patermouthis, cf. R.-G. COQUIN, *The Coptic Encyclopedia* VI, p. 1908, s.v. *Patermouthis, Saint*. He originated from Oxyrhynchos but the place of his life as a hermit is not recorded. He was celebrated in various places from Saqqara to Esna with predominance of Middle Egyptian localities.

- 3-4. Most probably Ἄμμωνης for Ἄμμῶνις (from Ἄμμώνιος). Both the saint's name and his designation ἀναχωριτῆς stay here in nominative instead of being in vocative. The use of nominative for vocative is a phenomenon frequently encountered in late *koine* and cannot surprise in connection with the regular vocatives ἅγιε Κολλοῦθε and ἅγιε Πατερμουῦθι.

Two saint hermits with the name Ammonios are known to us: 1) Ammonius of Kellia, an origenist monk from the end of the 4th century (A. GUILLAUMONT, *The Coptic Encyclopedia* I, p. 113 sq., s.v. *Ammonius of Kellia*) and 2) Ammonius of Tunah near el-Ashmunein, contemporary of the famous Apollo of Bawīt who intervened in his life (R.-G. COQUIN, *The Coptic Encyclopedia* I, p. 114, s.v. *Ammonius of Tunah*). In our opinion it could have been the latter who was concerned here since the saints invoked in this prayer, which is a manifestation of personal piety, seems to be specifically Middle Egyptian ones.

- 5-9. παρακαλέσατε τὸν θεόν (...) ποιήσου εὐχαριστήσαι: the author of the prayer addresses God twice, for the first time — indirectly, through the three saints; for the second time — directly.
- 7-8. χαρίσασθαι ζωὴν τῇ Ἀρτεμιδώρα μετὰ [Πα]πνουθίου εἰς ὀλίγον χρόνον] πρὸς τὸ θέλημά σου: The author of the prayer is a pious Christian who gives the two persons entirely at God's disposal. He only asks God to grant them as much life as God wills. This time for mundane life on earth, determined by God, is minimal and insignificant if compared with timelessness of God himself and with the eternal life after death, which is stressed by the phrase εἰς ὀλίγον χρόνον.

ὀλίγος χρόνος is a common expression; numerous examples of its occurrence are quoted by *LSJ* and W. BAUER, *WB zum NT*. The expression combined with the verb ζῶν usually appears in the funerary inscriptions (from among non-Christian texts, cf. e.g. *CIJ* II 1513, a metrical epitaph from Tell el-Yehoudieh commemorating a certain Rachelis who died at the age of 30: εἰ δ' ὀλίγον ζῆσα χρόνον κε(κ)ριμένον [line 4]; for the Christian ones see Th. MACRIDY – J. EBERSOLT, 'Monuments funéraires de Constantinople', *BCH* 46, 1922, p. 358: καὶ γὰρ ὁ ταπιυὸς ζῆσασας τῶν ὀλίγον μου χρόνον τῆς ζωῆς [line 11]; *ICUR* IX 24268: Ἀνατόλι, ἡμῶν πρωτότοκον τέκνον, ὅστις ἡμῖν ἐδόθη πρὸς ὀλίγον χρόνον, εὐχου ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν). It stresses the fact of a premature death of a person. Although the meaning of the whole expression in funerary epigraphy is different than in our dipinto from Thebes its formulaic use might have influenced the wording in this case.

9. Πανοῦθις might be considered as a simple mistake of the writer (for Παπνοῦθις) but we could not find any evidence for the loss of *pi* before *nu*. Πανοῦθις, however, is a name with the same meaning as Παπνοῦθις; the only difference is the lack of the article in the former (cf. F. HEUSER, *Die Personennamen der Kopten*, Leipzig 1929, p. 24, 25). It is quite probable then that in our inscrip-

tion both names, Πανοῦθις and Παπνούθιος (Παπνοῦθις), refer to the same man. He might have been a son or, less probably, the husband of Artemidora. It is likely that the inscription comes from his very hand or, at least, that he was its formulator.

9-12. A standard expression is κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ or διὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ. πρὸς τὸ θέλημα – “nach seinem Willen” is however registered by BAUER, *WB zum NT*, s.v. θέλημα.

10-11. The reading of the very end of line 10 makes difficulties for the ink has faded considerably here. We accept Baillet's εὐχαριστία although we ourselves can distinguish only ευχαριστα.

The syntax of this part of the inscription is puzzling. ευχαριστια πνευματικη, as it is written, could be either nominative or dative. The first possibility gives of course no sense, the latter should be taken as *dativus instrumentalis* dependent on the infinitive εὐχαριστήσαι. If so, πασαι is to be interpreted as an equivalent of the dative πασῆ. On the basis of the evidence given by F. Th. GIGNAC, *A Grammar I*, pp. 247-248 this might be considered a phonetical phenomenon (interchange of αι and η is recorded by him with numerous occurrences, especially in ending of the subjunctive of the active aorist), but it cannot be totally excluded that for the author of this inscription πᾶσα had a levelled declension with the vowel of the nominative extended to the oblique cases (cf. GIGNAC, *A Grammar II*, p. 6 where he noted the same phenomenon in nouns' declension).

εὐχαριστέω, εὐχαριστία must appear here with the meaning “to thank (to the God) in a prayer”, “personal prayer”. Baillet was of the opinion that the expression εὐχαριστία πνευματικῆ suggests heretic influence. Contrary to him we see nothing unorthodox in it. In early Church, in combination with εὐχαριστία the term πνευματικῆ must have had only the meaning “spiritual” which is quite usual in describing an ideal Christian offering: cf. Just. *Dial.* 118.2 (MIGNE 6.749c): μὴ ... θυσίας ἀφ' αἱμάτων ... ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον ἀναφέρεισθαι, ἀλλὰ ἀληθινούς καὶ πνευματικούς αἶνους καὶ εὐχαριστίας; Irenaeus *Theol., Fragmenta deperditorum operum*, Fragment 36, lines 14-16: ἡ προσφορὰ τῆς εὐχαριστίας οὐκ ἔστι σαρκική, ἀλλὰ πνευματικῆ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ καθαρὰ; Origenes [Dub.], *Selecta in Psalmos* (MIGNE 12.1672): Ψαλμὸς ρμδ'. Ὑψώσω σε, ὁ Θεός μου, κ. τ. έ. “Ὑψωσις πνευματικῆ ἔστιν εὐχαριστία νοῦ καθαρῶ ἐπὶ τοῖς συμβάσω αὐτῷ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀγαθοῖς.

It should be pointed out, however, that all the authors quoted above are of rather early date and none of them wrote in days of great theological controversies of antiquity. This could be the reason why Baillet suggested heretic influence.