

Two Versions of the Coptic Psalter.

J. DYNELEY PRINCE, PH.D.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY.

IN 1897, the text of a Psalter in the Upper Egyptian or Sahidic dialect was published by E. A. Wallis Budge without notes or comment other than a brief introduction. This is the only complete version of the Psalms in Sahidic. Previous to its publication, the Sahidic Psalter was known merely in a fragmentary form.¹ Budge's work is the edition of an unilluminated papyrus manuscript of 156 leaves (Pap. Codex Orient. 5000, Brit. Museum) which was discovered by natives in 1895, together with a book of ten homilies, in the ruins of an ancient Coptic Church and Monastery in Upper Egypt. The books were found bound in leather within a buried stone coffer. The exact date of this Sahidic Psalter is indeterminable, but its general style, size, and shape lead the editor to place the most ancient parts of it not later than the end of the seventh Christian century and not earlier than the end of the sixth century A.D. The Ms. was evidently repaired at a date somewhat later than the time when the oldest portions of it were written. This text is evidently the *second* oldest known Coptic Psalter.² Since its appearance, Alfred Rahlfs has edited in the *Abhandlungen der kön. Ges. der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, New Series, IV. 4 (1901), fragments of still another version of the Psalter in Sahidic taken from a papyrus in the Berlin Museum.³ There is every reason to believe that this Berlin Ms. is older than Budge's text, although both versions are textually practically identical in all essential points. Rahlfs regards the Berlin Ms. as a production of the fifth century A.D., reasoning

¹ For a list of extant Coptic Mss., cf. Hyvernat, *Revue Biblique Internationale*, 1896, nr. 4, pp. 540 ff. See especially Ciasca, *Sacr. Bibl. Fragm. Copto-Sahidica*, Rome, i. (1885), ii. (1889); and Lagarde, *Egyptiaca*, pp. 65 ff.

² The title is: *The Earliest Known Coptic Psalter*, by E. A. Wallis Budge, London, 1898. For a review, see Luzac's *Oriental List*, ix., p. 904.

³ *Die Berliner Handschrift des Sahidischen Psalters*, Berlin (*Weidmann'sche Buchhandlung*), 1901.

chiefly from the very archaic form of the consonant *Šima*, which closely approaches the original Demotic sign, from which *Šima* was developed. The only other place where *Šima* appears in this form is in the ancient Akhmim papyrus "The Apocalypse of Elias," published in *Texte u. Untersuchungen*, New Series, II. 3a. It is evident, therefore, if this conclusion be correct, that Rahlfs' version represents fragments of the earliest known Coptic Psalter. Budge's text, however, being complete, is of course of greater value for purposes of comparative criticism. Rahlfs' work can therefore be used only to supplement and occasionally to correct Budge's rather hastily edited material. It would perhaps not be too daring to suggest a connection between the Berlin fragments and the supposed version of the fourth century A.D. contemporaneous with St. Pachomius.⁴

The Sahidic dialect,⁵ in which Rahlfs' and Budge's versions of the Psalter are written, was probably in early times the language only of the region about Thebes. Later, this idiom undoubtedly spread all over Upper Egypt, from Minyeh to the Nubian border. Makrizi, the Arab historian who lived at the beginning of the fifteenth century A.D., alludes to Sahidic as the primitive source of the Coptic language,⁶ and that from which the northern Boheiric dialect was derived. While there can be no doubt that Boheiric is linguistically later than Sahidic, as will be evident from the following comparisons, it is not impossible that instead of being actually a derivative from an early Sahidic stock, it is rather the later development, tainted by Hellenic influence, of an older extinct northern dialect.

The "Orthodox Coptic Church of St. Mark" of Egypt (Arabic : *elkentse elmarqustye elqibtiye elortodokstye*) uses at the present day a version of the Psalter which, like all the biblical texts and services of this communion, is in the Boheiric or northern Egyptian dialect of Coptic. This idiom seems to have been originally the language of only the environs of Alexandria, but it soon became the tongue of all Lower Egypt, and eventually, as a literary vehicle, displaced even its powerful rival the Upper Egyptian Sahidic, although the latter lived on as a spoken language after the Boheiric had passed from

⁴ See Forbes Robinson in Hastings' *Dict. of the Bible*, i., pp. 670-671.

⁵ Arab. *es-Sahid* (also *es Sa'ida*) 'Upper Egypt.' There are a few apparent points of contact in both Rahlfs' and Budge's text with Akhmimic and occasionally even with Boheiric, but these must be studied with care, as they may really be Sahidic phenomena.

⁶ See Quatremère, *Recherches sur la langue et la littérature de l'Égypte*, Paris, 1808, p. 42.

the mouths of the people. The Boheiric remains to-day, however, the official idiom of the Coptic Church all over Egypt, although its present pronunciation in Upper Egypt still retains much of the earlier Sahidic peculiarities. On the other hand, the pronunciation of the church language in the Delta has assumed a number of distinctively Neo-Hellenic characteristics. The official Boheiric version of the Psalter as now in current use in Coptic churches has been printed in an excellent edition under the auspices of the reigning Orthodox Patriarch, Cyril the Fifth, dated 1613 *Anno Martyrum*.⁷ This volume consists of two parts separately paged, *i.e.*, the Psalms, pp. 1-318, and "the Canticles of the Prophets" (extracts from various Scriptural books), pp. 1-71.⁸ In both these sections the Coptic text and the literal Arabic translation appear in parallel columns.

The object of the present treatise is merely to illustrate, by means of a few excerpts from the first three psalms in both these Coptic translations, the amount of textual differentiation and dialectic variation between the ancient Sahidic version as published by Budge and supplemented by Rahlfs' older fragments, and the current Boheiric text of the Orthodox Coptic Church. The absolute dependence of both the Sahidic and the Boheiric translations on the LXX, characteristic of all Coptic versions of the O.T., will be apparent from the following few tabulations.

As there is unfortunately no font of Coptic type in this country, I have been compelled to use the Greek alphabet with certain modifications to represent the Coptic text in this article. The following changes in the Greek characters should be observed: Coptic *Sima* is represented by σ (final ς), *Fii* by Φ , *Kii* by χ , *Šai* by $\acute{\sigma}$ (final $\acute{\varsigma}$), *Fai* by ϕ , *Chai* by $\dot{\chi}$, *Hori* by the rough breathing', *Ganga* by ξ , *Šima* by $\kappa\acute{\sigma}$, and *Di* by $\nu\tau$. An accent over a consonant, as $\grave{\nu}$, indicates the presence of a short *e*-vowel.

⁷ The Coptic "Era of the Martyrs" (Arab. *senet es-Šuhada*), used officially by the Church, begins with the accession of the persecuting Diocletian, 284 A.D.

⁸ The Coptic title of the Boh. version is Πζωμ ντε νψαλμος ντε Δαυιδ πιπροφητης ουο' πιουρο νεμ νι'ωδη, 'The Book of the Psalms of David the Prophet and King, and the Canticles.' The best European editions of the Psalms are those of Ideler, *Psalterium Coptice*, Berlin, 1837; Schwartze, *Psalt. in Dialectico Memphiticum translatum*, Leipzig, 1843; Lagarde, *Psalterii Versio Memphitica*, Göttingen, 1875, unfortunately in Roman characters.

Ancient Sahidic Version.	Current Boheiric.	LXX.
Ψ I.		
1 ^a . ετε ιμφβωκ ιμ πσοζνε ινασεβης.	ετε μεφεσε χεν ισοκάνι ιτε νιασεβης.	οὐκ επορευθη εν βουλη δσεβω.
2 ^b . αυω φραμελετα ιμπεφροσμοι ιμπε'ουο μν τευση.	εφεερμελεταν χεν πεφρομοο μπιε'ουο νεμ πιεζωρ'.	και εν τω ρωμω αυτου μελετησει ημερας και νυκτοσ.
3 ^b . εννεφκωβε νασροφρεφ αν. ωβ νιμ ετφρασαα νασουτν.	ουο' ουζωβι ιταφ ινεσφορφερ. ωβ νιβεν εσαφαιτου σαφνιμαντι ιχητου.	και το φυλλον αυτου οκ απορρησεται. και παντα δσα αν ποιη κατευοδωθησεται.
4 ^b . αλλα ευαρθε ιμσοει εσαρε πτην θλοφ εβολ ιζιμ π'ο μπκα'.	αλλα μφρηντι μπιρησι εσαρε ιθηου νε'φ εβολ ιζεν π'ο μπκα'ι.	αλλ' η ωσ ο χρουοσ εν εκριπτει ο ανεμοο απο προσωπου τησ γησ.
5. ι ν συναγωγη ινδικαιοσ.	χεν πσοκάνι ιτε νιμμη.	εν βουλη δικαίων.
Ψ II. Heading :		
Τωδη ινΔαυειδ.	Τω Δαυιδ. Ντι προφητια εθβε νιμκαν' ιτε Πχζ.	No equivalent.
1 ^a . αυζισε ινητ.	Αυωι εβολ.	εφρβαζαν.
2 ^a . αυω αναρχων.	Ουο' νικεαρχων	και οι αρχοντες.
2 ^b . Ends verse with Διαψαλμα.	Lacking.	Lacking.
6. ανοκ δε ακαθιστα ιμοι ινρο εβολι τοσφ.	ανοκ δε αφτα'οι ερατ ιουουρο εβολ ιτοσφ.	εγω δε κατεσταθην βασιλευοσ ιπ' αυτου.
7. ειζω μπουε'σα'νε ιμζοειοι.	ειωιε ιμπισα'σα'νι ιτε Ποι.	διαγγελων το προσταγμα κυριου.
8. αιτι ιμοου αντινακ.	αριετιν ιντοτ ιταντινακ.	αλησαι παρ' εμου και δωσω σοι.
11. αρι'ιαλ ιμζοειοι ιν ουο'τε ιτετ'ιτεληλ ναφ ιν ουστωτ.	αριβωκ μΠοι χεν ου'ο'ντι. Ουο' θεληλ ναφ χεν ουσθερτερ.	δουλευσατε τω κυριω εν φοβω και αγαλλιασθε αυτω εν τρομω.
12. Κοζζ' τηντν ινεσβω μηποτε ιτε πζοειοι ρουκσ ινετ'νε εβολι τε'ιη ινεφ μντμε.	αμοι ιουσβω μπερχασ ιτε Ποι ζωντ ουο' ιτετεντακο εβολ 'αφμωιτ ντε ιντιμεβμη.	δραξασθε παιδειασ μηποτε οργισθη κυριοο και απολεισθε εξ οδου δικαiaoσ.
εσαν πεφκωιτ μου' ιν ουκσκη ναιατου ιουον νιμ ετκω ιντην εροφ.	εσωπ αρεσαν πεφζωντ μο' ιχλωλεμ. Ιουνιατου ιουον νιβεν ετε'θηου χη εροφ.	δταν εκκαυθη εν ταχει ο θυμοο αυτου μακάριοι παντεοι ο πεποιθότεο επ' αυτω.
Ψ III.		
2. ουν 'α' ζω ιμοο ιταψυχη φε μντφουζαι ιμμαν ινα'ριμ πεφροντε Διαψαλμα.	ουον ουμηζι ζωιμοο ιταψυχη ζε ιμμοι ουζαι οσπ ναφ χεν πεφΝουντι.	πολλοι λεγουσι τη ψυχη μου. Ουκ εστι σωτηρια αυτω εν τω θεω αυτου.
8. Παπζοειοι πε πουζαι αυω πεκουοι εζιμ πεκλαοο.	Φα Ποι πε πιοζαι ουο' πεφσμου εζεν πεφλαοο.	του κυριου η σωτηρια και επι τον λαον σου η ευλογία σου.

COMMENTARY.

Psalms i. has the heading in Cod. D,⁹ but in neither of our texts: *ἐπὶ τὸν ἐβόλ πνψαλμος ἰτε Δαυὶδ* (also *ḏād*) *πί'ουιτ στνχος ιε*. The numeral fifteen *ιε* denotes the number of verses. It is spelled out in one Ms. This heading is not found even in Cod. C. Its Heb. rendering would be *למנצח מזמור לדוד המלך*. The words *ἐπὶ τὸν ἐβόλ* 'to the going forth' are universally used in Coptic to translate LXX *εἰς τὸ τέλος*. The verse numbering of B differs entirely from that of S, which practically agrees with that of the ordinary LXX text. Thus, in *ψ* i. B gives seven and in *ψ* ii. nine verses, in contrast with S, which gives six (so LXX and M) in *ψ* i. and twelve (so LXX and M) in *ψ* ii. Cod. D divides *ψ* i. into fifteen and *ψ* ii. into twenty verses.

i. 1^a. Both S *βωκ ἴμ* and B *σέ χεν* are more exact equivalents of M *כך* than LXX *ἐπορεύθη ἐν*. For B *σοκῶνι*, Cod. C has *πεφσοκῶνι*, and for B *ασεβης*, C has *ασεβες* (elsewhere *εσεβες*). S *μπεφνοσμοῶς* is clearly a scribal error for *νομος*.

i. 2^b. Note that S and B prefer to use the Gk. *μελετα* 'consider' rather than the usual Sah. *ῥροῦνίς* and B *βιλαονίς* respectively. Ideler's *εφιερμελεταν* is not so good as in B.

i. 3^b. Ideler omits *ουῶ* here. Note S *Šima* = B *Ganga* in *κῶσωβεζῶβι*. This is a common interchange. May one not be tempted to regard constructions like B *ουζῶβι ἰταφ* 'the leaf belonging to him' for 'his leaf,' as having influenced the common modern Egyptian Arabic usage *el beyt beta'o* 'the house belonging to him' for simple *beyto* 'his house'? Rahlfs' reading *εννεφκῶβς* here is inexplicable. He adds in a note that the *Sima* is clear, only the superior line being doubtful. The occurrence of *Sima* in this word must be regarded as a scribal error for *ε*. Note the Sah. metathesis *ροφρεφ* (so also Rahlfs) for B *φορφερ cadere, decidere* (M *לרל* 'wither'). S *ετφνααν* 'those things which he doeth' is better than B *εῶσφαιτου* 'those things which he seeketh' (Gk.); cf. LXX *ῶσα ἂν ποιῆ*. B *εῶφντιμαντι* 'he shall prosper in them' is also less accurate than S *νασοοντι* 'they (the things) shall stand upright,' *i.e.*, 'prosper' (M *לצלי*).

i. 4^b. S *εναρθε* 'they shall be like' (*ρ + θε = τ'ε*). S *ῶσεις* 'dust' and 'contagion.' B uses no verb, but leaves the copula understood with *μφρηντι* (Cod. C has *ρσι*). S *θλοφ* 'causes to fly, scatters by

⁹ The abbreviations S and B = Budge's text and the Boheiric, respectively. C and D are references to Boheiric codices.

blowing,' and B νε'φ εβολ 'scatters' have slightly more the sense of M מנפנת than of LXX ἐκρίπτει 'casts forth.' Rahlfs' text here is identical with S.

i. 5. Note how S prefers the Greek words. Fragments in Rahlfs also show the word [τ]σ[v]ν[α]γω[γη].

ii. It is highly interesting to observe that we find in B τω Δαυιδ, clearly a corrupt abbreviation of S Τωδη ἸΔαυειδ 'the hymn of David.' The Arabic translator of B evidently regarded τω here as a particle of possession like φα 'of or belonging to,' as he renders simply *I'Daud*. The last part of B's heading of ψ ii., 'a prophecy concerning the sorrows of the Messiah' (μκαν' pl. of μκα'), is given also by Ideler after the words ψαλμος ἴτε Δαυιδ 'a psalm of David.' Cod. D has simply ὑτιπροφητια εθβε Πχς 'a prophecy concerning the Messiah.'

ii. 1^a. The Sah. version translates ἐφρούαξαν ('they snort, act insolently') by the pregnant phrase 'they lift up the heart.' B is closer to LXX, as ὡς εβολ means properly 'cry out.' M שו נש means rather 'they rush together excitedly.'

ii. 2^a. S αναρχων is an unusual writing for ἡαρχων 'the rulers' (cf. ανλαος ii. 1^b), but it is an exact translation of LXX. B has νικεαρχων 'the other (-κε-) rulers.' This rendering has the support of C and D.

ii. 2^b. Note that S ends with διαψαλμα, which is lacking elsewhere.

ii. 6. Both versions* render literally 'as for me they (indef. 'one') have appointed me (B αφτα'οι ερατ 'constituted me') for a king by his hand,' i.e., 'through him.' This is the usual periphrasis of the passive (κατεστάθην). Ideler gives ἰουρο without the indefinite article ου; cf. Boh. ἰουουρο and Sah. ἰρρο 'for a king.' Cod. D renders here ανοκ δε α πκός τα'οι ερατ 'the Lord has appointed me,' contrary to the Greek and Hebrew. The authorized Arabic version also has *aqāmnī er-Rabb*. The Arabic translation of B, however, renders literally, 'I was appointed king.' Rahlfs' version has μμοει for μμοϊ. The diphthong ει appears practically throughout his text for ι.

ii. 7. S εἶξω 'I saying' (*casus pendens*) is a better equivalent for LXX διαγγέλλων than B εἰωίς 'in order to announce.'

ii. 8. In S, the reading αιτι μμοῦν ἀντινακ cannot be correct, owing to the difference in person, αιτι μμοῦν 'seek them,' i.e., 'those things.' The correct reading, as already indicated by the unusual diaeresis over the ου must be αιτι μμοῖ 'seek from me.' The form μμοῦν probably depends on a defective copying, influenced in some degree by

the preceding $\mu\pi\sigma\upsilon$ 'to-day' in verse 7. The form $\alpha\tilde{\nu}\tau\iota\nu\alpha\kappa$ must be an error for $\tau\alpha\tilde{\nu}\tau\iota\nu\alpha\kappa$ 'and I give thee' (so B with prefixed ν , $\iota\tau\alpha\tilde{\nu}\tau\iota\nu\alpha\kappa$, *i.e.*, the conjunctive; see Steindorff, Gr. §§ 257 ff.). Rahlfs' text here reads [$\alpha\iota\tau\epsilon\ \mu$] ($\mu\sigma$) $\epsilon\ \tau$ (α) $\tilde{\nu}\tau\iota\nu\alpha\kappa$, which gives the key to correct Budge's version. Cf. LXX $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \delta\acute{\omega}\sigma\omega$, but M $\overline{\tau\iota\tau\iota\tau\iota}$ 'that I may give thee'; so V *ut dem.* Both S, when amended as indicated, and B are exact renderings of LXX in this passage.

I give the entire text of ii. 11-12 as being of interest in connection with this difficult passage. These verses are lacking in Rahlfs' version.

ii. 11. S $\iota\tau\epsilon\tilde{\nu}\tau\iota\epsilon\lambda\eta\lambda$, B $\sigma\upsilon\sigma'$ $\theta\epsilon\lambda\eta\lambda$ are probably loan words from Heb. לֵלֶךְ (?).

ii. 12. S $\kappa\acute{\sigma}\lambda\acute{\zeta}$ $\tau\eta\tau\eta\tilde{\nu}$ $\iota\tau\epsilon\sigma\beta\omega$, B $\alpha\mu\omicron\iota$ $\iota\upsilon\sigma\beta\omega$, LXX $\delta\rho\acute{\alpha}\xi\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon$ $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ = M $\overline{\text{כרן}}$. Note that in 11-12 in B there is no sign for the 2 p. pl. until 12, $\iota\tau\epsilon\tilde{\nu}\tau\alpha\kappa\omicron$ 'ye shall perish.' In S, however, the 2 p. is represented in each imperative except $\alpha\rho\acute{\iota}\mu\acute{\alpha}\lambda$. S $\kappa\acute{\sigma}\lambda\acute{\zeta}$, B $\alpha\mu\omicron\iota$ = *adprehendere*. There is no help to be got from these texts towards the interpretation of the passage. They simply follow LXX, which simply represents an original $\overline{\text{כרן}}$ (see Prince, JBL., 1899, pp. 1-3).

S again prefers the Gk. form $\mu\eta\pi\sigma\tau\epsilon$ to Sah. $\mu\epsilon\sigma\acute{\alpha}\kappa$ 'lest.' B uses its own form $\mu\pi\epsilon\rho\chi\alpha\varsigma$ 'lest.'

S $\epsilon\rho\acute{\sigma}\alpha\nu$ often means 'whenever,' as here, but usually 'if.' B $\epsilon\acute{\sigma}\omega\pi$ $\alpha\rho\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\alpha\nu$ (Ideler better $\epsilon\rho\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\alpha\nu$) 'if, perchance' is not so good an equivalent of $\delta\tau\alpha\nu$ as is S.

Cod. D adds $\sigma\upsilon\sigma'$ wrongly here before $\iota\chi\omega\lambda\epsilon\mu$, and in Cod. C $\chi\eta$ is lacking.

iii. 2. S $\phi\epsilon$ is undoubtedly a clerical error for $\zeta\epsilon$ 'that' (conj.). In $\mu\tilde{\iota}\nu\tau\phi\omicron\upsilon\zeta\alpha\iota$ the negative should be $\mu\tilde{\iota}\mu\tilde{\iota}\nu\phi$; lit. 'not is salvation there' ($\mu\mu\alpha\nu$). LXX $\alpha\tilde{\iota}\tau\tilde{\omega}$ is apparently not represented; $\epsilon\nu\ \tau\tilde{\omega}$ $\theta\epsilon\tilde{\omega}$ $\alpha\tilde{\iota}\tau\tilde{\omicron}\tilde{\upsilon}$ is rendered by S 'before ($\nu\tilde{\nu}\alpha\tilde{\rho}\tilde{\mu}$) his God.' S $\delta\iota\alpha\psi\alpha\lambda\mu\alpha$ (also Rahlfs) is not found in the other Mss. B is a literal translation of LXX here.

iii. 8. S keeps the 2 p. correctly here, $\pi\epsilon\kappa\omicron\upsilon\omega\varsigma$ 'thy blessing,' $\pi\epsilon\kappa\lambda\alpha\omicron\varsigma$ 'thy people'; but note B $\pi\epsilon\phi\sigma\mu\omicron\nu$ 'his blessing,' $\pi\epsilon\phi\lambda\alpha\omicron\varsigma$ 'his people.'

A complete collation of Budge's Psalter with the other Coptic versions, both Sahidic and Boheiric, would be of considerable value from a text-critical point of view. As will be observed from the examples here given, the ancient Sahidic translation is evidently a rendering quite independent of the current Boheiric version. This

Sahidic Psalter, as represented by both Budge's and Rahlfs' Mss., contains a number of differences in the Psalm headings and frequent variations in the text itself, showing that it must have had for its basis a Ms. of the LXX differing in many important particulars from that followed by the current Boheiric rendering.

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