**Miscellanea Epigraphica Nubica IV:**
A New Edition of the Wizz Codex with an English Translation

[Miscellanea Epigraphica Nubica IV:]
Una nueva edición del Codex Wizz con una traducción inglesa

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**Abstract:** The discovery of a complete codex in Coptic at the Nubian monastery of Qasr el Wizz has attracted the attention of several scholars. The edition of Péter Hubai has provided a base for all subsequent analyses of the text and already two related publications have been announced. The present contribution is the result of reading the Wizz Codex in a study group at the University of Bergen on Coptic texts, yielding an updated transcription and translation of the text.

**Resumen:** El descubrimiento de un códice completo en el Monasterio nubio de Qasr el Wizz ha atraído la atención de varios estudiosos. La edición de Péter Hubai ha provisto una base para todos los análisis posteriores del texto y ya han sido anunciadas dos publicaciones relacionadas. La presente contribución es el resultado de la lectura del códice Wizz por parte de un grupo de estudio de textos coptos de la Universidad de Bergen, que ha dado lugar a una transcripción y traducción actualizadas del texto.

**Key words:** Lower Nubia. Qasr el Wizz. Wizz Codex. Coptic. The Cross.

**Palabras clave:** Nubia Baja. Qasr el Wizz. Códice Wizz. Copto. La Cruz.

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Introduction

The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago was one of numerous institutions that participated in the Aswan High Dam Campaign, which was conducted under the auspices of UNESCO in the 1960s. Among the sites excavated, most have already been published in the Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition (OINE) publication series. The monographs of the last three remaining sites are set to be published by 2015. They concern the sites of Dorginarti, Serra East and Qasr el Wizz. Material from all these sites has already been published by different scholars in various venues. For example, the monastic site of Qasr el Wizz has become famous mainly through two publications regarding two of the hundreds of textual finds there. More precisely, a bilingual (Old Nubian and Greek) version of the Benedicite, written with ink on the walls of the church at the monastery, was published by John Barns;¹ and a complete codex in Coptic, containing two hitherto unknown Early Christian texts, was published by Péter Hubai.²

The focus of this fourth paper in the series Miscellanea Epigraphica Nubica will be the corrigenda to the Coptic codex published by Hubai. These will be provided as an updated transcription and translation that were prepared during the group reading of both texts of the Wizz Codex at the University of Bergen.

Publication History

Since the discovery and excavation of the monastic site at Qasr el Wizz, the codex in question has been the object of research activities on three different occasions. The first was undertaken by the philologist of the

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Oriental Institute, the late George Hughes. A preliminary translation in English was produced, but never published due to Hughes’ expressed wish that it remain in the archive of the Oriental Institute. Hughes’ translation has been consulted by several other scholars in the years that ensued, including Péter Hubai, the Hungarian scholar who published a monograph on the Wizz Codex, first in Hungarian and then in German. Hubai correctly noted the similarities between the Wizz Codex and the Gospel of the Savior. An English translation of the second text of the Wizz Codex was published by Pierluigi Piovanelli, who also linked the Wizz text with the Gospel of the Savior. These similarities have also been discussed by Stephen Emmel while he was preparing the reedition of the translation of the Gospel of the Savior. In the same work, Emmel also presented his own translation of the first five folia of the Wizz Codex. In a forthcoming collection of Christian apocrypha edited by Tony Burke and Brent Landau, Alin Suciu “will be contributing with several translations, including the partly parallel ‘Gospel’ of the Savior and in the same volume Paul Dilley will present his own English translation of the Wizz Codex.

As mentioned above, all the archaeological material unearthed at the Wizz monastery in 1965 by OINE will be published in the Chicago series...
of monographs. Although the final publication of the OINE series will not include a translation of the Wizz Codex, upon reading the text it became apparent that there were still some issues to be settled. In anticipation of OINE and Dilley’s publications, we decided to present in this short paper the outcome of our weekly meetings that took place between January and March 2013.

Transcription and Translation

The transcription of the Wizz Coptic Codex, presented in the column on the left-hand side, follows the Leiden editorial rules. The main points of divergence between the present transcription and the one of Hubai concern the supralinear strokes; two cases where visible (but corrected by the scribe) letters are not transcribed (page 11, line 8, and page 17, line 9); one case of a haplography wrongly transcribed (page 24, line 1); and three more substantial improvements to the reading of the text, namely in page 17, lines 7 & 8, in page 25, lines 1 & 2 and in page 25, line 3.

The updated translation is presented in the right-hand column and attempts, to the extent that it is possible, to respect the distribution of lines in the original. Some points of grammar are explained in footnotes.

Page 3

3 ΟΥΑΛΟΓΟΣ ΉΓΑ
ΕΠΕΝΖΗΡ ΛΥΟ
ΕΠΕΛΕΞΕΝΟ
ΤΗΣ ΚΕ ΠΕΝΧ
ΤΑΜΗΕΙΩΗΕ

6 ΤΟΥΛΛΑΚ ΕΤΤΑ
ΕΟΟΥ ΤΠΑΛΙΟΣ
ΤΟΛΞ ΚΗΑ

9 ΤΟΥΧΑΛΑΛΜΡΑ
ΗΕ ΤΠΟΥ Η ΣΤΒΕ
ΤΩΝ ΜΠΙΝΑΡ

A discourse that our Savior and our Master, Jesus the Christ, taught his holy and glorious apostles before he was taken up, concerning the power and the
authority and the conduct of the glorious and life-giving Cross. In God’s peace.

My beloved ones! It happened one day, while our Savior was sitting on the Mount of Olives, four days before he was taken up into the heavens, with his apostles gathered around him, that he told them the unfathomable mysteries, those that are in the heavens and those that are upon the earth, and also how he would judge the living and the dead, and the resurrection of the dead. Peter spoke, and
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πέχεις ἦλθε· χε
πενθογείς ἀγω
πενθογείε· ἀγω
said to him:
“Our Lord and
our God, and
Savior of the souls
and of everyone
who has his hopes in you,
and Cure of the
souls that are
wounded by sins:
You have revealed
to us
all the mysteries;
now as well,

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μακουγοῦνθεν ἦν
μημύπτηριον
come on,9 reveal to us
the mystery
that we will ask you about.”
The Savior replied
and said:
“O Peter,
my chosen one,
and you,
my fellow heirs;
Tell me, have I ever kept hidden

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ἀν εγείρεις ἐκοττῆ 
οὐκ ἀραὶς ἑοῦρτ
from you
a single word

9 The form ἑκ is not easily identifiable as any known Coptic verbal conjugation prefix. The proposed translation here and in Page 9, line 6 is conjectural and based on the context.
that you have asked me about?
Nor will I
hide anything from you.
But, come on, ask me
about everything that
you wish to know
about, and I
shall reveal them

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to you.” Peter replied
and said:
“Our Lord
and our God
and our Savior,
we want you to
teach us the mysteries
of the Cross:
why is it that you
will bring it with you

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on the day that you
will judge with
justice? (And teach us) the
sign of the honored
Cross, so that
we shall hear
from you concerning
it and we will
preach it in the entire

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world.” The Savior
replied
and said: “O Peter, my chosen one, and you, my brothers, you know all the things that they did to me, namely the lawless Jews, as well as

the blasphemies that they heaped upon me on the Cross - they spat on me, they punched me, they put on me the crown of thorns - and the insulting words that they cast upon me.

That is why I will bring with me the Cross, so that I may expose their shame. And I will lay their lawlessness upon their head. But now listen closely to me, and I will explain to you another great honor.
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ο Μνησταύρος τό θάνατον ἔφευρεν ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς δόξας. Καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι, τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὕτως ἔδωκαν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῇ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῇ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων θάνατον ἔδωκαν.

3 ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς δόξας ο Ἱησοῦς Χριστός ἀνέβη ἐν τῷ χειρὶ τοῦ θανατού τῆς δόξας. Καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῇ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων θάνατον ἔδωκαν.

6 οἱ θρήνοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὐκ έδόθην ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῇ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῇ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων θάνατον ἔδωκαν.

9 οἱ θρήνοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὐκ έδόθην ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῇ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῇ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων θάνατον ἔδωκαν.

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While its root goes down into the earth, its branches will go up again, as before. Now, its branches have covered the earth, the three parts of the earth. Anyone who has believed in the Cross will come under the shadow of the Cross and they will stand there - either if one has given the hungry to eat, or they have given the thirsty to drink, or one gives clothes to the naked, but especially

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in the Cross with all their heart will come under the shadow of the Cross and they will stand there - either if one has given the hungry to eat, or they have given the thirsty to drink, or one gives clothes to the naked, but especially
to those who have written the books of praise to the Cross - until I finish judging the entire world.

After I have judged all the just and the sinners,

the Cross arose again

and went up to the heavens. Everyone who has believed in it will return with it, entering the kingdom of heaven. They will inherit eternal life. I will not judge anyone among them, either by word or by deed, but

they will be saved by the power of the Cross.

Normally μηθεξα takes focalzed past, not the present tense; cf. B. Layton, A Coptic Grammar (Wiesbaden, 2004), § 457 & § 493.
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But now, O my holy members, go and preach to the entire world, so that they may follow the Cross.

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and attain this great glory on that fearful day.”

When we heard these things, we the apostles worshiped our Savior, and said to him: “Glory to you, the Father who is in the Son, the Son who is in the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever, Amen. For at all times you have glorified those who love you.” So let it come to pass for us that we find mercy and grace on the day.

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in the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever, Amen. For at all times you have glorified those who love you.” So let it come to pass for us that we find mercy and grace on the day.

when he will judge with justice.
And it happened one day as the Savior sat on the Mount of Olives, before the lawless Jews had crucified him, that all of us gathered around him. He conversed and said: "O my holy members, gather around me and I shall sing a hymn to the Cross. And as for you, you shall sing after me." And as for us, we made a circle and surrounded him. He said to us: "As for me, I am in your midst just as little children." He said: "Amen. It is a little (while) longer that I am with you in your midst. They take counsel against me now. Do not hold me back, O Cross! Arise,
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O holy Cross, and raise me up,
O Cross. I am rich, Amen. I will climb up on you,
O Cross. They will hang me upon you as a testimony against them.
Take me to you, O Cross, Amen. Do not cry, O Cross, but rather rejoice

greatly, Amen.” And when he had completed the hymn, we repeated after him all together: “Amen.”
The second hymn of the Cross: “I am the way of the precious life, Amen. I am the immortal bread.
Eat and satisfy yourselves, Amen.” We repeated after him: “Amen.”
He said to us again: “Gather around me, O

my holy members, and I shall dance to the Cross a third time,
while you repeat after me saying: Amen. O
Cross that is full of light. And again:
It will bear the
light, Amen. I will rush up to you, O Cross,
Amen. I shall climb

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up on you as a testimony against them. Take me to you, O Cross!
Do not reveal my body, Amen.
The fourth dance of the Cross: "I am not poor, O light-giving Cross,
Amen. I will fill you
with my richness,

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Amen. I will climb up on you. Take me to you, O Cross!
Glory to you for you have obeyed your Father. Amen. Glory to you, sweetest of all, 12

This is a rather free translation of what stands in the text, which literally says: ‘all sweetness’.
Amen. Glory to the divinity, Amen.

Open your grace, O Father,

so that I can sing hymns to the Cross, Amen. I have taken for myself the crown of the kingdom from the tree, Amen. I will make my enemies subject to me, Amen. The enemy will be brought to naught by the Cross, Amen. The sting of death will be annulled by the only-begotten Son, Amen.

To whom does the kingdom belong to? It belongs to the Son, Amen.

Where is his kingdom from? It is from the tree, Amen. Who is the one who sent him to the Cross? It is the Father, Amen.

What is the Cross? Where is it from? It is from the Spirit, Amen.

It exists from eternity, always, from
Concluding remarks

The Wizz Codex is a luxurious example of Early Christian book production. The codicological, paleographical and iconographical details of the manuscript are therefore worth becoming the objects of special case studies in the future. This will allow research to move beyond Hubai’s publication which has opened the path for further investigations on the dating of this work, the locality of the scriptorium that produced it, the meaning of the texts, their liturgical function and literary significance. The ambition of the present paper has been solely to improve the reading and understanding of the two literary works written on the 17 parchment leaves of the Wizz Codex.

The text is written in easily understandable Sahidic Coptic. However, the scribe seems to have been uncomfortable with longer and more
complicated sentences. The most characteristic example, and a passage that might appear obscure in our translation without further commentary, is the phrase between the end of page 17 and the first lines of page 18: “...they will come under the shadow of the Cross and they will stand there - either if one has given the hungry to eat, or they have given the thirsty to drink, or one gives clothes to the naked, but especially to those who have written the books of praise to the Cross”. In our opinion, the italicized to translates the direct object marker 돝, which puts the authors of the books in the same category as the hungry, the thirsty and the naked. Therefore they are not to be counted among those who will stand under the shadow of the Cross, but are rather among those who are recipients of benefactions. This element in the text points to the existence of Christian patrons who commissioned the production of such prestigious objects. Thus, for the scribe of the Wizz Codex his (or her?) patrons are set among the merciful Christians who deserve the blessings of the Cross. Our reading of this passage gives the modern reader insight into the sentiments evoked by this object of religious contemplation, as well as into the social dynamic between those who participated in the book market in Christian Nubia and Coptic Egypt.

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