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## The Early Christian Prayer Circle: Coptic Liturgical Text

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**Title** The Early Christian Prayer Circle: Sidebar, Coptic Liturgical Text

**Author(s)** Hugh Nibley (commentary on L. Saint-Paul Girard's modern edition)

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**Abstract** This text, from a Christian "Book of Breathings," highlights the importance of the prayer circle in early Christian worship.

IN THE CAIRO MUSEUM, written on a huge shard of red pottery, is an ancient Coptic liturgical text which provides a remarkable link between ancient Egyptian and early Christian beliefs. It is a Christian “Book of Breathings” with the name of Osiris (representing the initiate) replaced by that of Adam, as if the “Egyptian Endowment” were organically linked to the Christian. Equally instructive is the predominance of the prayer circle in the text and the cosmic significance given it. As its modern editor, L. Saint-Paul Girard, notes, it has eight main divisions.<sup>1</sup>

A. *Calling upon God*

- Line 1. (The Tau-Rho sign).<sup>2</sup>  
Hail El! Fathouriel,<sup>3</sup> who giveth  
2. strength (comfort?), who gives  
replies [*antiphonei*] to the angels!<sup>4</sup>  
3. Hail Adonai (My Lord), Hail Eloï (My  
God), Hail  
4. Abrasax! Hail Iothael!<sup>5</sup> Hail  
5. Mistrael (for Mizrael) who has looked upon  
the face of the Father<sup>6</sup>  
6. in the power of Iao!<sup>7</sup> KHOK.<sup>8</sup>

B. *Solemn adjurations; Adam as the type of initiate*

I adjure you (i.e., put you under covenant).<sup>9</sup>

- 7. by the first seal placed upon the bo-
- 8. dy of Adam. I adjure you (a different word: “give the hand to,” “make to swear”)<sup>10</sup> by the second

9. [seal] which is upon the members of Adam. I covenant with you

- 10. by the third seal which marked the vitals (bowels)<sup>11</sup>

11. and also the breast (heart, mind)<sup>12</sup> of Adam, when he was brought low (cast down) to become dust (earth)

C. *The healing of the man Adam*

12. until Jesus Christ stands bail for him (lit. takes him by the hand) in the embrace

13. of his Father.<sup>13</sup> The Father hath raised him up (or met him).<sup>14</sup>

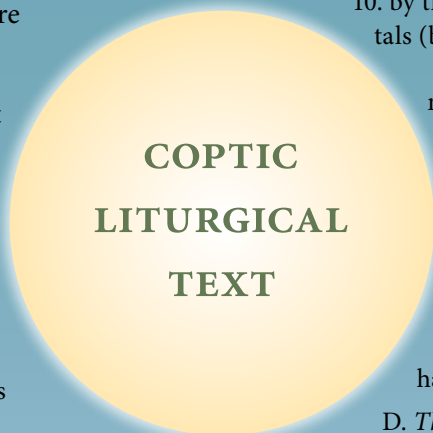
D. *The breathing (resurrection) motif*  
He hath breathed in

14. his face and filled him with the breath of life. Send to me

15. thy breath of life, (even) to this true and faithful one (or, to this vessel).<sup>15</sup> Amen, amen, amen!

E. *A type of the crucifixion*

16. Sousa, sousa, sousa!<sup>16</sup> I covenant with you by the three cries (of distress) which



**Commentary for this sidebar begins on page 90.**

**Notes to “The Early Christian Prayer Circle”**

1. Johannes D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* (Graz: Akademischer Verlag, 1960), 13:169–75. The minutes of the meeting are instructive, beginning with col. 172 (see sidebar on p. 65). Conventional Christianity views the ancient prayer circle as a sort of gnostic aberration. L. Gougaud, “Danse,” in *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (hereafter *DACL*), ed. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1907), 4:248–58. It is never mentioned again in orthodox sources. See Henri Leclercq, “Agape,” in *DACL* 1:787–92.
2. Max Pulver, “Jesus’ Round Dance and Crucifixion according to the Acts of John,” in *The Mysteries*, ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Pantheon, 1955), 169.
3. Texts of this part of the *Acts of John*, taken from a number of sources, may be found in Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Acta*; Leclercq, “Agape,” 787–92; Montague R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (hereafter *ANT*) (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 253–70; Edgar Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher and Robert McL. Wilson (hereafter *NTA*) (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963–65), 2:227–32.
4. Augustine, *Epistolae (Letters)* 237, in *Patrologiae Latinae* (hereafter *PL*) 33:1034–38; quoted partially by Leclercq, “Agape,” 786, and *NTA* 2:227–28 n. 5.
5. Ignatius Ephraem II Rahmani, ed., *Testamentum Domini*

6. Rahmani, *Testamentum Domini Nostri*, 36–37.
7. Rahmani, *Testamentum Domini Nostri*, 38, 40–42.
8. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis XX, Mystagogica II, de Baptismi Caeremoniis (Catechetical Lecture on the Rites of Baptism)*, in *Patrologiae Graecae* (hereafter *PG*) 33:1081; also in Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2005), 520.
9. *NTA* 2:230–31, lines 31–42.
10. Rahmani, *Testamentum Domini Nostri*, 44, 60.
11. A. Wilmart and E. Tisserant, “Fragments grecs et latins de l’évangile de Barthélemy,” *Revue biblique* 22, n.s., 10 (1913): 321.
12. Wilmart and Tisserant, “Fragments grecs et latins,” 324.
13. Wilmart and Tisserant, “Fragments grecs et latins,” 327.
14. Some references to this are found in Hugh Nibley, “Qumran and The Companions of the Cave: The Haunted Wilderness,” in *Old Testament and Related Studies* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1986), 261–62.
15. Wilmart and Tisserant, “Fragments grecs et latins,” 324–25.
16. *Joseph and Asenath* 14–17.
17. *Evangelium Mariae* 17–18, in *Gnostische Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis 8502*, ed. W. C. Till (Berlin: Akademie, 1955), 74–76.

17. The Son uttered on the cross, namely:  
*Eloi, Eloi, A-*

18. *hlebaks atōnē*<sup>17</sup> That is to say, God, my God, why (*djou*) hast thou forsaken me?

F. *The hymn*

19. Holy, Holy, Holy! Hail David the father (ancestor)

20. of Christ! He who sings praises (psalms) in the Church of the First-born (pl.) of heaven, Hail

21. David, theopa [tor?] (ancestor of the Lord), of the joyful ten-stringed lyre<sup>18</sup> who sings

22. within (the veil of) the altar<sup>19</sup>

23. the joyful one (either David or the altar). Hail Hormosiel, who sings within the veil

G. *Prayer circle*

24. of the Father!<sup>20</sup> They repeat after him, those who are at the entrances (gates,

25. doors) and those who are upon the towers (i.e., the watchmen at the gates). And when they hear what he says, namely the tribes (or gates?) who

26. are within the Twelve Worlds, they joyfully

27. repeat it after him:<sup>21</sup> Holy, Holy, One (or Jesus) Holy Father.<sup>22</sup> Amen,

28. Amen, Amen. Hail Arebrais in heaven and earth!

29. Then you (pl.) bless (praise God, pray), KOK (meaning that at this point certain actions are performed). Hail O Sun! hail ye twelve little children

30. who overshadow (protect?) the body of the Sun!<sup>23</sup> Hail ye twelve phials

31. filled with water. They have filled their hands, they have scattered abroad

32. the rays of the Sun, lest they burn up the fruits

33. of the field.<sup>24</sup> Fill thy hands, pronounce blessing upon this

34. cup. KOK [another ordinance]

H. *Entering the Presence*

Hail ye four winds of heaven!

35. Hail ye four corners of the earth! (the inhabited earth, *oikoumenē*)<sup>25</sup>

36. Hail ye hosts (*stratia*) of heaven (i.e., the stars)! Hail

37. thou earth (land) of the inheritance

38. Hail O garden (or power, authority) of the Holy Ones (saints)

39. [of] the Father!<sup>26</sup> One holy Father

40. Holy [Son] Holy Ghost

41. Amen.

**Commentary to “Coptic Liturgical Text”**

1. L. Saint Paul Girard, “Un fragment de liturgie magique copte sur ostrakon,” *Annales du Service*

18. *2 Jeu* 54 (40), text in Carl Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache aus dem Codex Brucianus* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1892), 99. Cf. German trans., 193.
19. *2 Jeu* 66–67 (53g), in Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 114–17, quotation from p. 114; cf. trans., 204. Both *1* and *2 Jeu* contain sketches showing various arrangements of prayer circles. Other texts, e.g., the *Gospel of Bartholomew* and *Pistis Sophia*, p. 358, make it clear that the facing in four directions denotes standing in a circle.
20. Kasr al-Wazz fragment, p. ii–end, from photographs kindly lent to the author by Professor G. A. Hughes at the University of Chicago at the time of their discovery in 1966.
21. Pulver, “Jesus’ Round Dance and Crucifixion,” 186, notes that mourning here denotes that the initiate is expected to suffer after the manner of the leader. The word for “mourn” in Matthew 11:17 is *koptomai*, literally, to inflict wounds upon oneself.
22. Variants in Montague R. James, *Apocrypha Anecdota*, II (Cambridge: University Press, 1897), 3:10–16.
23. Clement of Alexandria, *Cohortatio ad Gentes (Exhortation to the Nations)* 12, in *PG* 8:241.
24. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos (Expositions on the Psalms)* 111, 2, in *PL* 37:1172; quoted differently along with other texts on the same subject, by Gougoud, “Danse,” 250.
25. John Chrysostom, *Commentarius in Sanctum Matthaum Evangelistam (Commentary on Matthew)* 48, in *PG* 58:491, and Gougoud, “Danse,” 248.
26. Basil the Great, *Epistolae (Letters)* 1.2, in *PG* 32:225–26.
27. Augustine, *Expositiones on the Psalms* 91, in *PL* 37:1171–81; Chrysostom, *Contra Judaeos et Gentiles, quod Christus Sit Deus (Against the Jews and the Gentiles that Christ Is God)*, in *PG* 48:845–46.
28. Philo, *On the Contemplative Life* xi. The passage as rendered by F. H. Colson in the Loeb Classical Library edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), Philo series, 9:165–69, reads: “After the supper . . . they rise up all together and standing in the middle of the refectory [cf. Qumran!] form themselves first into two choirs [*choroi*, circles], one of men and one of women, the leader and precentor [*exarchos*] . . . being the most honored amongst them. . . . Then they sing hymns to God . . . sometimes chanting together, sometimes . . . antiphonally. . . . Then . . . they mix and both together become a single choir, a copy of the choir set up of old beside the Red Sea.” This is the way Augustine and Chrysostom describe the Sabbath dancing of the Jews (see preceding note), but Philo being himself a Jew found nothing shocking in it.
29. Gougoud, “Danse,” 250, giving these and other examples of ancient dances surviving in the Christian church. Hans Leisegang, “The Mystery of the Serpent,” in Campbell, *Mysteries*, 244.
30. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Caeremoniis Aulae Byz-*

*des Antiquités de l’Égypte* 27 (1927): 62–68. [Cf. the translation in *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, ed. Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994), 228–30.]

2. The earliest signs of the cross were formed by a Greek chi (χ) with the vertical shaft of a Greek rho (ρ) or iota (ι) through the middle, or by a rho with a horizontal bar below the loop. They were interchangeable and are found in varying combinations, being closely associated also with the “Crux Ansata,” the famous Egyptian ankh or life symbol: †. For many examples, see Henri Leclercq, “Chrisme,” in *DACL* 3:1481–534. The classic Latin cross does not appear in the West until the fourth century and like the others seems to have come from Egypt, Leclercq, “Chrisme,” 1485–89, and Leclercq is puzzled “that the Christians adopted a sign which ran a serious risk of being misunderstood,” *ibid.*, 1483. Not to worry: these symbols had conveyed for centuries the very ideas which the Christians wished them to represent in a new context, just as they borrowed current alphabets and other symbols of general acceptance to convey their own peculiar ideas. The symbol prefacing this note is both the monogram of Christ and the earliest symbol of the crucifixion; as such, it also designates the victory of light over darkness as represented in the performance of the mysteries.
3. Fathouriel for Bathuriel, from Hebrew Bait-ṣuri-el,

“the house of my strength is God,” or “My God My Rock.” Girard, “Fragment de liturgie,” 66 n. 1, citing Moise Schwab, *Vocabulaire de l’angelologie* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1897), s.v.; cf. Souriel, “My Rock Is God.” Henri Leclercq, “Abraxas,” in *DACL* 1:145. Since the names El, Adonai, Eloi, and Abrasax invoked together at the opening of the rites are all designations of the supreme God, Bathuriel, as second on the list, must be another epithet for El. Ṣur is properly a stone and a foundation; coming at the beginning of the rites it strongly suggests the Stone of Truth in the Egyptian initiation rites and the *eben shetiyah* of Hebrew tradition. Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 190–202.

4. Girard alters *eb-ti phonē nenankelōs* (“who gives a voice to the angels”) to *ef [an]tiphonei nenangelos*, “whose voice replies to the angels,” because he cannot imagine the meaning of the former. Girard, “Fragment de liturgie,” 66 n. 2. The first suggests the creation hymn, the second the exchange of expressions at the conclusion of the rites (lines 24–27 below).
5. The names of Adonai, Eloi, and Abraxas are the most common found on those carved gnostic gems called “Abraxas” or “Abraxas.” Henri Leclercq, “Ange,” in *DACL* 1:2087–88. Such gems representing “the world of Alexandria and the Egyptian-Greek magical papyri” consist of “stones which figure in superstition as well.” Reiss, “Abraxas,” in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der classischen*

*antinae* (*On the Ritual of the Byzantine Court*) 1.65, in *PG* 112:568; 1.83, in *PG* 112:689.

31. Many illustrations from early Christian art published in Gougaud, “Danse,” 253–58.
32. Philo, *De Opificio Mundi* (*On the Creation*) 70–71, trans. Colson (as cited in Leisegang, “The Mystery of the Serpent,” 234), modified; see Hugh Nibley, “The Ascension Dramas,” in *One Eternal Round* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2010), 402, fig. 50A.
33. Gougaud, “Danse,” 248.
34. *IQS* 8:12–16.
35. See above, notes 20 and 21.
36. *Acts of John* 88, in *NTA* 2:225; *Apocryphon of John*, in *NTA* 1:322; cf. the *Life of John according to Serapion*, in *NTA* 1:415; *Pistis Sophia*, p. 77 (Schmidt), in *ANT*, 66.
37. Joachim Jeremias, “The Lord’s Prayer in Modern Research,” *Christian News from Israel* 14 (April 1963): 12–13. Cf. Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1967), 1–29.
38. *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* 2, in *Patrologia Orientalis* 2:133.
39. Jeremias, “Lord’s Prayer in Modern Research,” 10, emphasis added.
40. Jeremias, “Lord’s Prayer in Modern Research,” 11.
41. Pulver, “Jesus’ Round Dance and Crucifixion,” 175.
42. *Pistis Sophia*, p. 358; trans. Mead, 295.
43. *Pistis Sophia*, p. 375; trans. Mead, 310; 357–58; trans. Mead, 295.
44. *I Jeu*, in Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 326, 370.
45. *Apocalypse of Abraham* 12:8–9; 17:11–17; cf. James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (hereafter *OTP*) (New York: Doubleday, 1983 and 1985), 1:697.
46. Micha J. bin Gorion, *Die Sagen der Juden* (Frankfurt: Rutten & Loening, 1913), 1:260–62; cf. Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, trans. Henrietta Szold et al. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1937–66), 1:91.
47. G. B., “Le Combat d’Adam et Eve,” text in Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., *Dictionnaire des apocryphes* (hereafter *DA*) (Paris: Migne, 1856–58), 1:329–32.
48. *Coptic Gnostic Work*, 37–38, in Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 253; cf. trans., 300.
49. Sebastian Euringer, “Die Binde der Rechtfertigung,” *Orientalia*, 2nd ser., 9 (1940): 249.
50. Henri Leclercq, “Main,” in *DACL* 10:1212; see Hugh Nibley, “Sacred Vestments,” in *Temple and Cosmos* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 92, fig. 14.
51. Pulver, “Jesus’ Round Dance and Crucifixion,” 175–78, 193.
52. Psalm 54:2: ʾElohîm shʾmaʿ ʾtʾphillatî haʾāzinah lʾmrē-pî.
53. Friedrich Preisigke, *Vom göttlichem Fluidum nach ägyptischer Anschauung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1920), 41 n. 3; 42.
54. Zohar, *Lech Lecha*, 88a.
55. *I Enoch* 65:2.
56. See above, note 17.



*Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1893–), 1:110; Augustine writes, “Basilides gives to the Almighty God the portentous name of ABRAXAS, and says it contains the number of the course of the year in the Sun’s circuit, while the Gentiles designate the same number by the name of Meithra.” *Commentarius in Amos (Commentary on Amos)* 1.3, in *PL* 25:1080–89. In our text, Abrasax is an epithet of God as the ruler of all and the director and guide of Mysteries: The most common type of Abrasax gem (of Egyptian origin, though their meanings have never been explained; Reiss, “Abrasax,” 109–10) depicts the god as Anubis with the staff of office that shows him to be the psychopomp, conductor of souls or *paralempstor* (guide) through the mysteries; as such, he is identified with the classic Mercury and the Christian Michael. Leclercq, “Abrasax,” 134–37. He is often shown as the mummified Osiris, with or without a crown; cf. Leclercq, “Anges,” 2127, fig. 653.

6. Mizrael is the angelic embodiment of divine authority, which enables him to see behind the veil. Girard, “Fragment de liturgie,” 66 n. 5, cit. Schwab, *Vocabulaire de l’angelologie*.
7. Iao is the common equivalent for Jehovah and God. Leclercq, “Abrasax,” 147, 141.
8. KHOK occurs in lines 29 and 32 as KOK. It introduces a new phase or change of scene and indicates that at this point certain actions take place. Our text, in the manner of a prompting sheet, contains only words recited, without describing acts or rites performed but only the point at which they take place. The Coptic word KOK is the common word for “disrobe” and related concepts, and may indicate changes in costume.
9. *Ti-ōrk erō-tn*, the *erō-* indicating “the person adjured,” here in the plural, while the *n-* is the thing sworn by; see W. F. Crum, *Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939), 529. To adjure is to place another under solemn obligation by entering a covenant with him.
10. *Titarko* means literally “give the hand to” in token of covenant. Wilhelm Spiegelberg, *Koptisches Handwörterbuch* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1921); “make to swear, adjure, entreat.” Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, 430.
11. *Tōōbe e-* as here means to set a mark or stamp upon, to impress upon, to leave a mark on. For vitals the original has *t-tčot*, meaning size, age, form, which Girard emends to *tčlot*, meaning “Kidney, also other internal organs” (possibly from the root *tčlodj*, bend, be interlaced). It is the Hebrew *kliyyot*, “the reins, kidneys, inward parts.” Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, 813.
12. *P-hēt*, heart mind, thought reason; cf. the Greek, *stēthos*, the breast as the receptacle of principles of thought, and Hebrew *lēb*, the heart “as the seat of the various feelings, affections and emotions . . . and of the moral sentiments.” Benjamin Davies, ed., *A Compendious and Complete Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* (Boston: Bradley, 1875), 315.

57. Pulver, “Jesus’ Round Dance and Crucifixion,” 174–76.
58. Pulver, “Jesus’ Round Dance and Crucifixion,” 186.
59. Pulver, “Jesus’ Round Dance and Crucifixion,” 176.
60. Rahmani, *Testamentum Domini Nostri*, 40, 44; cf. Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 520–21.
61. “Combat d’Adam,” in *DA* 1:329–32.
62. Bin Gorion, *Sagen der Juden* 1:260–62.
63. F. Tempestini, trans., “Livre d’Adam,” in *DA* 1:87.
64. *Recognitiones Clementinae (Clementine Recognitions)* 1.32–33, in *PG* 1:226–27.
65. *Apocalypse of Abraham* 12; cf. *OTP* 1:695.
66. Robert A. Kraft, *The Testament of Job according to the SV Text* (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1974), 3–111 on the various texts. Part of the Greek version is also reproduced by F. C. Conybeare, “The Testament of Job and the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 13 (October 1901): 111–13.
67. *Testament of Job* 46:1–5.
68. *Testament of Job* 46:8.
69. *Testament of Job* 46:9.
70. *Testament of Job* 47:3.
71. *Testament of Job* 47:4–6.
72. *Testament of Job* 47:7–10.
73. *Testament of Job* 47:10–11.
74. *Testament of Job* 47:11–12.
75. *Testament of Job* 47:12.

76. *Testament of Job* 48:1–8.
77. *Testament of Job* 49:1–3.
78. *Testament of Job* 50:1–3.
79. *Testament of Job* 1:1–5.
80. *Testament of Job* 28:7–8.
81. *Testament of Job* 33:1–9.
82. *Testament of Job* 36:1–6.
83. *Testament of Job* 38:5.
84. *Testament of Job* 40:1–3.
85. Cf. *Testament of Job* 24:6–8.
86. *Testament of Job* 43:1.
87. *Testament of Job* 43:1–17.
88. *Testament of Job* 43:14.
89. *Testament of Job* 44:1.
90. *2 Jeu* 54 (40), in Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 99; trans., 193.
91. *Pistis Sophia*, pp. 358–60 (363–66); Mead, 300.
92. *Acts of John* 1:43, in *NTA* 2:231.
93. Even those gnostic versions defending the proposition that Jesus did not really suffer on the cross celebrate “a pseudo passion and a pseudo death of Christ,” according to Pulver, “Jesus’ Round Dance and Crucifixion,” 176–78.
94. *Gospel of Bartholomew*, fol. 14b–15a, in E. A. Wallis Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha* (London: British Museum, 1913).
95. *Hypostasis of the Archons* 140:3, translated into German by Hans-Martin Schenke, “Das Wesen der Archonten: Eine

13. The verb for covenant is here *sh(e)p tōre*, vb. intr., “grasp the hand, be surety for, undertake”; Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, 425; with the object *mmof* (as here) it means “be surety for.” *Hn n-tčidj m-pefiōt* Girard renders “entre les mains de son Pere,” i.e., “in his embrace.”
14. *Tahof erat.f* can mean either “set up,” “establish,” “cause to stand,” or “meet with,” “reach another.”
15. The Coptic word *pites* Girard reads as Greek *pithos*, vessel, though he finds the idea “bizarre.” Early Christian and Jewish writers, however, speak of the living body (which is the subject of this passage) as a vessel (*angeion*). Barnabas calls the living body “the blessed vessel” (*to kalon skeuos*), Barnabas, *Epistola Catholica (Catholic Epistle)* 21, in *PG* 2:727–82. On the other hand, *pithos* is an alternative spelling for *peithos*, a Greek equivalent for *pithanos*, “obedient,” “receptive,” a fit epithet for an initiate.
16. Girard makes no attempt to translate *sousa*, but since this is a cry for help, one thinks of the Greek imperative *sōze* (mid. *sōzou*, aorist *sōson*) or aorist mid. *sōsai*, meaning “to rescue.” Some maintain that the name of *Abrasax* is derived from *Habros* and *Sao*, “gentle Savior” or “le magnifique sauveur.” Leclercq, “*Abrasax*,” 129.
17. Is the unfamiliar Aramaic the subject of mystic speculation or just confusion? Girard restores it to *elema sabaktani*. The trouble seems to be the scribe’s insistence on reading the last three syllables as the familiar *Adonai (atōnē)*.
18. Girard alters *thea* to *theo* and borrows the *pat-* from the next word to get *theopator*, “l’ancêtre du Christ,” an epithet of David in Byzantine liturgy. *Pa.ti. tčittharašē* is divided into [*pa*] *ti-kithara* [*nn*] *raše tamēt nkap*, the harp of joy of ten strings. The ten-stringed harp is a cosmic concept, ten being the perfect number of the Pythagoreans.
19. After writing “veil of the altar” the scribe erased the “veil.” The expression *m.pethesasterion* is for the Greek formula *entos tou thysiassteriou*, meaning “inside the sanctuary.” Walter Bauer, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), s.v. *thysiassterion*, 366; though *thysiassterion* properly means altar.
20. Harmosiel is the exalted angel who sounds the trumpet and shares with Mizrael the privilege of beholding the Lord behind the veil. The Priscillianists were accused of worshipping him.
21. Harmosiel instructs them? Girard: “Ceux qui sont sur les portes et les tours font écho à sa voix” is quite specific.
22. *Is per hakios* for the Greek formula *Heis Pater Hagios*, though *Is* is the common writing for Jesus, and such an identity is monophysite, making Jesus identical with the Father. As it is, Girard must insert another *hagios* to make a proper *trishagion*.
23. Girard: “Salut, o douze petits enfants qui protegez le corps du soleil.” Though this can also be read

gnostische Originalschrift aus dem Funde von Nag-Hamadi,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 83 (1958): 667.

96. *Apocalypse of Abraham* 12:8–10; 17:11–17.
97. 2 *Jeu* 54–55, in Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 100–109.
98. August Wünsche, *Der Midrasch Bemidbar Rabbah* (Leipzig: Schulze, 1882), 11 (101).
99. G. H. Box, *The Apocalypse of Abraham* (London: SPCK, 1919), xxv.
100. See the important discussion of “Three Men in White,” in Erwin Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York: Pantheon, 1953), 1:25–28.
101. Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (New York: Holt, 1932), 3.
102. *Clementine Recognitions* 4.11, in *PG* 1:1319–20.
103. F. Dieterici, ed., *Thier und Mensch vor dem König der Genien* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1881), 2–4; cf. Clement, *Epistola I ad Corinthios (First Epistle to the Corinthians)* 20, in *PG* 1:249.
104. Leisegang, “Mystery of the Serpent,” 244.
105. See Hugh Nibley, “Ancient Temples: What Do They Signify?” in *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 402–3, fig. 40.1.
106. Hyemeyohsts Storm, *Seven Arrows* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 20.
107. Especially instructive on the circles of eight and twelve, etc., is the Coptic *Sophia Christi*, 95–96, 107–17, 123–24, in Till, *Gnostische Schriften*, 230–33, 254–75, 286–89.
108. 1 *Jeu* 10–11, in Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 52–53; cf. trans. 151; cf. *Second Coptic Gnostic Work*, 10–11, in *ibid.*, 233–34, cf. trans. 284.
109. *Second Coptic Gnostic Work*, 8a, in Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 231–32.
110. Pulver, “Jesus’ Round Dance and Crucifixion,” 175–77.
111. Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 10.5–6.
112. Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini (On the Life of Constantine)* 58–60, in *PG* 20:1209–11. Fieldwork in 2001 has identified the foundations of the church and what may be Constantine’s mausoleum.
113. Photo in Moses Hadas, *Imperial Rome* (New York: New York Times, 1965), 175.
114. Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend, *Hamlet’s Mill* (Boston: Godine, 1977), 48–49.
115. Plato, *Phaedrus* 247.
116. Clement, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* 20, in *PG* 1:249.
117. IQS (*Community Rule*) 10:1–3, 9–13; cf. Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, rev. 4th ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1962), 83–85.
118. Adolf Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrasch* (Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1967), 5:172 (*Book of Enoch*).
119. *Ascension of Isaiah* 4:15–17, in *OTP* 2:162.
120. Philo, *On the Creation* 70–71.
121. Pulver, “Jesus’ Round Dance and Crucifixion,” 187.

- “minor servants,” the reference to the little children in our prayer circle situation recommends the former. Also the preposition *mmof* would justify “screen from him the body of the Sun.” Walter Till, *Koptische Grammatik* (Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1970), #258. See the following note.
24. The twelve water jugs and reference to the watering of vegetation recall the peculiar arrangements of the prayer circles in *1* and *2 Jeu*. According to *Pistis Sophia*, p. 84, the earth must be shielded from the rays of the sun by veils or curtains lest all life be consumed. Today, the filtering of the sun’s rays by layers of atmosphere of various particles is held to be essential to sorting out life-giving rays from deadly ones and thus making vegetation and other life possible upon the earth.
  25. The imagery of the closing passage belongs to the coronation rites. The four corners of the earth motif is basic; see Hugh W. Nibley, “Facsimile 1: By the Figures,” in *An Approach to the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2009), 296–313. Paulinus of Nola associated the coronation and universal rule with the types of crosses discussed above, note 1; *Poema (Poem)* 19.638–41, in *PL* 61:546; a teaching confirmed by Ambrose and Jerome.
  26. *P-tčom* means either garden or authority; both are appropriate, the garden as the sanctified inheritance of the Saints, the authority being that with which the exalted “Holy Ones of the Father” are invested. The original text, however, has *p-šōm*, which also makes sense, since it means “summertime,” i.e., the “Summertime of the Just” when the Saints receive their celestial inheritance, e.g., the Shepherd of Hermas.
122. See Hugh Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2000), 523–24, 490–91.
  123. *Second Coptic Gnostic Work*, 6a, text, in Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 230; cf. trans., 282.
  124. Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1978), 34, 39–42; Hugh Nibley, “Return to the Temple,” in *Temple and Cosmos*, 53, fig. 11.
  125. Plutarch, *De Defectu Oracularum* 22.
  126. I.e., the so-called Pyramidologists. A hypocephalus like that of Facsimile 2 of the Book of Abraham depicts the geography of Egypt as a reflection of that heaven, with the Delta represented by its nome standards; see Hugh Nibley, *One Eternal Round* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 2010), 196, fig. 17.
  127. Clement of Alexandria (dubia), *Excerpta ex Scriptis Theodoti (The Teachings of Theodotus)* 80, in *PG* 9:696.
  128. *Second Coptic Gnostic Work*, 8a, in Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 231–32.
  129. *Pistis Sophia*, 10–11.
  130. “Livre d’Adam,” in *DA* 1:87–88.
  131. *Or ha-Meir*, ii, 109b, cited in J. G. Weiss, “The Kavvanoth of Prayer in Early Hasidism,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 9 (1958): 182–83.
  132. Isaac Myer, *Qabbalah* (Philadelphia: Myer, 1888), 306.
  133. *Odes of Solomon* 5 and 6.
  134. *Pistis Sophia*, 10–11.
  135. Cf. *1 Jeu* 10, in Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 53–54; *Apocalypse of Abraham* 21–22, emphasis added.
  136. Leisegang, “Mystery of the Serpent,” 201; cf. 241; see Nibley, “The Circle and the Square,” in *Temple and Cosmos*, 160, fig. 39E.
  137. Leisegang, “Mystery of the Serpent,” 211, 215.
  138. Leisegang, “Mystery of the Serpent,” 233.
  139. Leisegang, “Mystery of the Serpent,” 259.
  140. Leisegang, “Mystery of the Serpent,” 240.
  141. *Enuma Elish* 1:60–80; 6:51–73 (esp. 69, 73); 4:136–46. Cf. translations by Speiser, in James Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 60–72, and Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942). See Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*, 43 n. 96 for further bibliography.
  142. *Enuma Elish* 6:113. It is the circle of time divided into twelve lunar positions, 5:1–4, 9–14.
  143. Cf. *Second Coptic Gnostic Work*, 1, in Schmidt, *Gnostische Schriften in koptischer Sprache*, 226; *Pistis Sophia*, 65, p. 134.
  144. Hugh Nibley, “The Hierocentric State,” in *The Ancient State* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 99–147.
  145. Hugo Odeberg, *3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch* (New York: KTAV, 1973), 3.
  146. Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, 3–4; cf. *OTP* 1:255.
  147. *Life of Adam and Eve* xii–xvii, in R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 2:137. Cf. *OTP* 1:262–64.
  148. Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, ch. 1, p. 4; ch. 10, pp. 27–28. Cf. *OTP* 1:263.
  149. Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, ch. 1, p. 28.
  150. Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 436–44.
  151. De Santillana and von Dechend, *Hamlet’s Mill*, 273, with reproduction.
  152. Sir Mark Aurel Stein, *Innermost Asia* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930), 2:665–67.
  153. Fred Andrews, in Stein, *Innermost Asia*, 707.
  154. De Santillana and von Dechend, *Hamlet’s Mill*, 273, with reproduction.
  155. Haus Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1952), 700; see Nibley, “Rediscovery of the Apocrypha,” in *Temple and Cosmos*, 229, fig. 46.
  156. IQS 10.
  157. Another veil was found by Stein, sloppily executed by an artist to whom the details were a puzzle. His constellations are unrecognizable save for the Great Bear, which is identical on both veils. Stein, *Innermost Asia* 2:708.
  158. This is made perfectly clear in Odeberg, *3 Enoch*, chs. 10 and 12.
  159. Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 496–98; cf. 439–40.
  160. See above, notes 5 and 6.
  161. Augustine, *Letters* 237, in *PL* 33:1037–38.
  162. Otto Stegmüller, “Diptychon,” in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1957), 3:1138.
  163. Fernand Cabrol, “Diptyques (Liturgie),” in *DACL* 4:1050.
  164. Cabrol, “Diptyques,” 1095–96.
  165. Cabrol, “Diptyques,” 1046–47; Stegmüller, “Diptychon,” 1140.