A COPTIC APOCRYPHON
OF SAINT STEPHEN THE ARCHDEACON

The text of this Apocryphon is preserved in MS. M577 of the Pierpont Morgan Collection, which is dated on fol. 49v A.M. 611 (= A.D. 894-895). It runs from fol. 2r to fol. 12r (pp. 3-23).

Our text is in the Sahidic dialect, though there are a few words which have Fayyumic forms. Orthographical errors are few, and these have been recorded in the foot-notes.

The Coptic text contains:
1) A short exhortation by Saint Stephen.
2) His marriage and the birth of a daughter.
3) His retirement to a mountain.
4) The appearance of the Holy Virgin Mary to him, commanding him to go and see his daughter and to encourage her to accept her death willingly.
5) The conversion of three robbers by him.
6) His election as one of the Seven Deacons and Stewards.

Mr. Jacob Mayser has drawn my attention to a fragment of this text edited without translation or commentary by I. Guth, Fragmenti copti, 2 fasc. (Roma, 1887), pp. 47-52. This fragment corresponds to the text on fol. 9v, l. 24a to fol. 10r, l. 17a of our MS (§ 27-34). I thank my friend Dr. Burmester for his kind help.

NAIMS NEHRANTHA HIPZHAPOS MINARTYROS MITEZC STEFANOS PARTHALAKONOS AEVO PAPROTI MNARTYROS. ENOYEPHN HSTEYNYTE, GAHNI.

1. GATH EPOI 6NEMAIKCHS XUCHI ENAGAE NEMLAIKOHOS

These are the affairs of the holy martyr of Christ Stephen (Stephanos), archdeacon and first martyr, in the peace of God. Amen.

2. Hear me, O lovers of knowledge, listen to my words, lovers of the

* OE. AM. VAN LANTHOORN, Eeuwil des Colophones de Monasties christiennes d'Egypte, t. I (Louvain 1923), No. XXI, pp. 33-42, who gives the text of the colophon of this MS. in full with the translation in French.
word of God, that ye may know that the man who shall give his heart to God, He is not ever wont to forsake him, but He is wont to hasten to give him life and to exalt him in glory.

2. I am Stephen (Stephanos) the least, one of the seven deacons, those of the stewards whom our fathers the Apostles appointed. They put us in charge of what was needed that we might have care of the widows and the orphans and of everyone who was in want, providing for them in their need.

3. And it happened to me, at that time, I being young, (that) my parents took for me a woman according to (the law of) marriage, so that I might not walk in the way of the lawless. She bore to me an only child.

4. I had many possessions; I fled upon a mountain; I made for myself a tent there in order that I might not come down again to the city to see (either) a man or a woman. And I pleased the Lord with my sacrifices which I made, and (with) all (my) good (works); but in saying these (things), I honour myself.

5. For the rest, every man who shall boast of the good (work) which he doeth, is not wont to receive any wage from God, but rather he is wont to be humbled with regard to his honour in the city of Christ on account of the pride which he hath assumed to himself.
6. For also there are some men abiding in great sins, committing them until evening every day, taking usury, wronging the poor, striking the orphans, afflicting the widow, robbing the labourers of their wage, fornicating with women who are not theirs, and committing a multitude of other iniquities.

7. And if they reach a day (on which) they remember God, they are wont to say: «Let us arise to-day, and give charity for our salvation and for the salvation of all our house». They are wont to arise and proclaim the work which they will do, to stir the world, while their servants go hither and thither, heralding the work which they do.

8. To these, moreover, of this kind, Our Saviour declared, saying to them in the Gospel: «Amen, I say unto you, they have already received their reward». They will not be able to receive the honour of men and to receive that of God. All these (things) I said, because I served the Lord, doing hidden works which no man knows save the Lord alone.

9. And it happened one day, that I was outside the door of (my) dwelling-place, (and) I sat for a little. I looked (and) I saw a shining cloud,
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10. ΔΗΜΟΚ ΑΕ ΝΗΤΕΡΙΚΟΣΤΗ ΕΝΑΙ ΑΙΡΙΜΕ ΜΗΝΑΤΕ ΕΝΑΔΑ ΑΥΓ ΠΕΞΑΣ ΝΑΙ ΧΕΝΠΕΡΡΙΜΕ ΕΤΕΚΖΟΟΥ ΜΑΛΛΩΝ ΔΕ ΡΑΒΕ ΝΑΚ ΧΕΣΚΝΑΤΑΣ ΝΑΩΡΟΝ ΜΠΕΞΗ ΝΕΡΕΦΕΡΝΟΕ ΓΑΡ ΝΕΤΕΦΕΞΕ ΕΡΙΜΕ ΕΡΟΟΥ, ΕΥΘΑΝΗΝΟΥ ΧΕΕΝΑΙΝΩΤ ΕΥΚΟΛΑΚΙΟ ΦΑΕΝΕΣ ΧΕΙΝΚΩ ΝΒΟΟΥ ΜΠΕΥΩΝΗ ΜΑΓΑΛΥ ΑΥΓΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΣΜΕΣΙΝΟΟΣ ΕΥΦΟΙΖΕΙΤ ΑΥΓ ΝΕΥΣΕΑΝΤΟΟΝ ΦΟΕΙΤΕΤ ΕΝΙΖΗΝΗ ΜΠΟΟΤΟΥ ΕΤΕΡΕΧΙΟΟΤ ΜΑΓΑΛΥ ΕΝΗΤΡΟΦΗ ΟΥΝΖ ΝΣΕΟΟΥ ΑΥΓ ΟΝ ΕΥ- ΖΗΠΑΚ ΕΝΘΕΡΙΑ ΕΝΗΜΟΟΥ ΜΠΟΟΤΟΥ ΕΜΗΖΟΙΤΕ ΖΙΜΟΥ.

11. ΔΗΜΟΚ ΟΝ ΕΥΝΙΤΕ ΕΝΜΑ ΜΗΩΣΑ ΜΗΝΗΜΕ ΜΠΙΚΛΑΚΕ (and) Mary, the Mother of the Lord, sitting upon it. She called to me, saying: «Stephen the archdeacon, peace (be) to thee». Then she said to me: «Arise, go in peace quickly unto thy only daughter. Behold, it is seven days that she lieth sick and her mother being troubled at heart, desiring to know where thou art. They (the mother and the daughter) know not the place in which thou art that they may send for thee (while) thou art not yet far from them, that thou mayest see thy daughter ere she departeth from the body, for to-day she will go in purity into the hands of God, and there shall be great honour for her with all the Saints, because she is a great virgin, pure (and) free from every stain of this world».

10. And when I heard these (things), I wept exceedingly much, and She said to me: «WEEP not concerning this matter but rather rejoice that thou wilt give her as a gift to Christ; for it is fitting to weep for the sinners when they die, because they shall go to punishment for ever, because they have left behind their only life (and) they have gone forth from this life, being empty; and their vessels also being empty; there being no fare in their hands that they may pass over alone, there being no provision following them, and also while being parched on earth, having no water, having no garments upon them.

11. «Truly also they go to the place of cold and weeping and outer dark-
ness and gnashing of teeth, there being no shoes on their feet (with which) to walk in that way which is full of thorns and poison and every wild beast, there being no staff in their hands; but these (things) are (the things) which they carry and which follow them, namely, fornication and slanders and pride and boastfulness and also the rest of the pleasures (of the flesh). And now, weep not for thy daughter, for she belongeth to those of this kind, (of whom) is the Kingdom of the Heavens. For it is not fitting to weep for the righteous, because they go forth from a prison to a vast kingdom for ever, and to an unending inheritance.

12. And when the Holy Virgin Mary had said these (things), she departed to the Heavens. And I arose (and) I prayed. I walked to the place (in which) were my wife and my daughter. I found that (it was) the seventh (day) she was sick even as Mary had said to me.

13. And the men who were outside the house did not recognize me. They were weeping, saying: «God send the father of this little daughter, because she hath desired to see him ere she goeth forth from (the) body and so that she may not be faint-hearted, while departing from (the) body, until she...»

* Cf. 1 Macc. 5, 14.
* MS. reads 'children'.
* Lit. 'her'.

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has passed those enemies who are in the ways. And I said to them: "Peace (be) to you. They moreover, themselves also said, "Peace (be) to thy spirit. Thou hast come at the right time. God (it is) Who hath sent thee to us, so that thou mightest see my daughter once more, and that she might also see thee. In truth, what we pray to Him is this: "God, look upon the wretchedness of Thy little daughter. Behold, it is seven days that she weepeth, saying: I desire to see my father ere I die. Whence dost thou know, indeed what is the place in which thou art (sic) living, or who hath told thee the news? But, however, the Lord is not wont to forsake those who hope in Him."

14. And while they were saying these (things), I went into my house, (and) I saw my daughter, a multitude being assembled around her. And when they saw me they all wept in great mourning but I said to them: "Weep not, neither cry aloud on account of the departure from (the) body. For she was not in need of any thing with regard to the body. This other matter, also, we are not able to avert according to the word of our spirit bearing fathers: "Who shall be able to hinder flowing water or who shall be able to restrain the spirit of God that He might not cause it to go to Him?".

* Lit. 'good'.
* Read 'be is'. This question is apparently addressed to the daughter.
For ye loved her for a short time and ye desire not that she should be separated from you. But God Who knoweth the purity of her heart, Himself hath asked for her. And I know that her dwelling-places are already prepared, and her glorious gates too are garnished that she may enter within them, and that the children of light may rejoice with her.

15. And the multitude were still weeping, (when) Saint Apa Stephen turned to his daughter. He saw her troubled, the time of the agony of death having come upon her. The rational souls, namely those who came for her to bring forth her soul ... ¹⁰, and immediately she lifted up her eyes towards mine. She saw me (and) her eyes shed tears. And I said to her: Weep not, my daughter, nor be grieved to leave behind thee this world which is full of iniquity, for we all shall sleep, and come to thee. That which hath come upon thee, O my daughter, will come upon us all; everyone awaiteth his hour. For those who eat and drink in this world are not wont to keep their food and those also who rejoice will not keep their joy. For who hath remained for ever without death that we our-

¹⁰ Verb missing.
selves shall dare to say that we shall not die! If the heaven and the earth and their elements and the mountains shall be dissolved, shall we ourselves also not be dissolved? 16. I know, indeed, O my daughter, that there is no profit in this world, apart from tribulation. Therefore I did not stay with you, but withdrew myself to a mountain in a desert place until this day. I have been worthy of this great honour: Mary the Virgin the Mother of my Lord Jesus Christ, came to me. She informed me about thee so that I set forth (and) came out to thee, my beloved daughter. 17. Therefore, fear not, my daughter, since the Mother of the Lord loveth thee in truth. For I came to console thee on account of thy departure from the body, but I have little grief, for none among the Saints saw the death of his children and wept over them, on the contrary the sons themselves were wont to weep over their parents. A great grief is it, in truth, that parents should weep over their children, when they depart from (the) body. On the contrary, rather I rejoice to-day that I have sent a fruit before me to the heavens.

18. And while saying these (things) his eyes shed tears and all those who were round him were weeping. Afterwards, he turned to his daughter (and)

Coptic reads ᾧμα = I shall not.
SAINT STEPHEN

πειραχ νας χειμεράτων ὑπερευθείσης τῷ ταχείᾳ ιντεριστικοὶ εἰς τὸν χειμεράτω
νὰ μᾶς ἀλάστη καὶ ἐρνήθην εἰς τὴν ίντεριστικὴν ἑπεξεργάζοντα σεβασμοῦν ἑπεξεργάζοντας ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῶν ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῶν ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῶν ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῶν ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῶν ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῶν ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῶν ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῶν ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῶν ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῶν ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῶν ἑπεξεργάζο

ταῦτα τοὺς ἐπεξεργάζοντας τῷ ταχείᾳ ιντεριστικῷ γράφοντοι μιᾶς ἑπεξεργάζοντάς τινὰς εἰς ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῷ ταχείᾳ ιντεριστικῷ γράφοντοι μιᾶς ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῷ ταχείᾳ ιντεριστικῷ γράφοντοι μιᾶς ἑπεξεργάζοντας τῷ ταχείᾳ ιντεριστικῷ γράφοντοι μιᾶς ἑπεξεργάζο


said to her: 「Grieve not, O my daughter, that thou departest, for no weakening will take hold of thee, while departing from (the) body, because thou hast never known the cough of a man when thou hast a taste of the light of God and the sweetness of virginity. When the good husbandman prepareth well the cultivation of the earth, he is wont to pluck out the weeds of the earth that it may be clean, in order not to have any blemish in it before his lord. This is even thy condition, O my daughter. Thou art purified from every defilement and there is no blemish in thy womb and thy soul before the Lord Jesus, thine Immortal Bridegroom for ever.」

19. And when he had said these (things), he said: 「Arise and let us pray and beseech God on account of departure of this soul from (the) body.」 And he arose (and) prayed to God, saying: 「My Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Immortal (and) the Only begotten Son of the Father, Who fashioned the first man Adam according to Thy likeness and Thine image, Whom nothing is impossible, we beseech Thee, God Lover of man, forget us not, neither be far from this little daughter, but look upon her, cause her not to be troubled in her coming unto Thee. Let the enemy be ashamed, and his mouth be shut. Let the accuser be ashamed and flee far」

19 The Coptic reads 'His'.

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away. Let Thy good Angel Michael come in haste to her that he may take her into the fold of Thy sheep. Cause her not to be a stranger to Thy bride-chamber, but her rejoicings in Thy perpetual inheritance for ever, for Thine is the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen ».

20. And as they were praying, the little daughter went to (her) rest in repose. She gave her spirit into the hands of the Lord on the third of Poopo. He sat down (and) he caused them to prepare her for burial, (and) they took her to the tomb in glory. And when he had laid her body in the tomb, he returned to his dwelling-place which was on the mountain, giving glory to God for every thing that had happened and he conducted himself according to his former asceticism.

21. And it happened again one day that while I was performing my synaxis, I lifted up my eyes (and) I saw Mary the Mother of the Lord. She said to me: «Stephen, priere not on account of thy daughter for she hath merited an honourable place, (and) hath inherited it. And thou thyself hearken to this word which I shall say to thee. For behold, three men are coming to thee to morrow who have committed great transgressions, receive them unto thee (and) instruct them in the teaching of the Lord, because the evil enemy hath rejoiced over them (and) hath been glad at the deed

19 See, month of Bābēh (Na.)(Δοράς).
which each one hath done in his sin. Let them know their Lord and produce fruit worthy of repentance so that the enemy may be ashamed and God Himself be glorified. Who hath accepted the repentance of sinners. God is merciful and compassionate, and He desireth not that any man die in his sins.°

22. And it happened on the morrow (that) three men came to me. And I was persevering in looking out for them even as it had been said unto me. They arrived being weary (from) walking in the way, (and) they sat outside the door. And when they rested themselves a little and I, being within, heard them talking about the transgressions which they had committed, saying to one another: «Let us enter this place at this hour and let us sleep until morning, as evening has come, and when it is morning, we will go to the house of this rich man and rob him, for also we are living by this means, since our childhood».

23. And I opened the door, (and) I went out to them. I said to them, a Peace (be) unto you, my brethren, the Lord will be with you». They said: «Will thou receive us unto thee at this hour?». I said to them: «Yea». And I took them inside my dwelling-place. I entered the place in which they

14 Cf. Matt, iii, 8.
16 Read probably kat ydp.
were lying down (and) I said to them: «My sons, inform me whence ye are, or whether ye are going!».

24. But they all remained silent. One of them said: «Really, my father we have come stealing and robbing, that which is not ours. Behold, what is thy business with us now?» And they brought out an iron tool which they had with them, wishing to kill me. And immediately their hands became stiff and were like stones, (and) they could not move them at all. And afterwards they wept beseeching me, saying: «Our father, have pity upon us».

25. And I said to them: «Confess your sins which ye have committed; and I shall pray to God to have pity upon you». The first answered, saying: «Forgive me, my father, I have never done a good deed but rather evil (ones), robbing that which was not mine, fornicating (and) worshipping the Sun and the Moon».

26. And the other one answered, saying: «I, myself also, O my holy father, have killed a man on account of his wife so that I might sleep with her, apart from other sins which I have committed by day and by night, (and) I am not wont to refrain from any of the sins which I am accustomed to commit. Let thy holy prayers touch me, because my sins have multiplied exceedingly. Pray, perhaps God may have mercy upon me».
27. The other one also answered, saying: "Woe unto me, my father. Great is the sin which I have committed, for I was, at first, a husbandman, working for a man for my wage. The master of that land chided me one day, on account of the vineyard which I showed, which the Devil had put into my heart. I arose at mid-night and I set fire to all his crop of wheat, his beasts I took to a different city and I sold them. I arose (and) I came to this place. I followed the two other lawless men, and I took part with them in stealing and in many other godless deeds. And now, behold, the sins which we have committed, we have confessed before God and thee. Now, moreover, let thy mercy reach us, that we may stay with you in this place. And spare us beneath the shadow of thy holy prayers."

28. And I arose with them (and) I prayed to God, and immediately their hands stretched out and became as before. And I myself sat down (and) instructed them in the Holy Scriptures, saying to them: "If a man commit every sin and turn to God, He (God) is not wont to make a reckoning with him."

29. And I asked them, their names (and) they informed me. The first
30. After these things, they went to the city one day to buy our deeds, (and) behold, Mary the Mother of the Lord came to me. She said to me: a Blessed art thou Stephen, shepherd who pasturest the flock of Christ, turning them to the Lord. For behold, three crowns are prepared for thee in the Heavens in the place of these three sinful men whom thou hast instructed in the Lord until they have been saved, apart from the crown which thou wilt receive from God for thy martyrdom. For also there shall go forth great cures through thine hands, (and) thou shalt bring back a multitude to the Lord of the Jews and of the Greeks. Afterwards, the Jews will look to thee, for thou hast preached the Name of the Lord, and they will rise up against thee, and stone thee, and thou shalt accomplish thy martyrdom. God will give great glory unto thy name and thy body, because thou hast endured suffering for His Name. He will cause them a Martyrium to be built for thee (as) a memorial unto thee for ever. There shall be great miracles in the place in which thy name shall be invoked and there shall be great cures for those who believe in thee. Arise, moreover, now with these three other men who are with thee, Onesimus.
and Aratus and Trophimus and go to the Apostles and become disciples to them, and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.

31. And when She (the Virgin) had continued sitting in the house (and) speaking with me about other great mysteries (and) She was still sitting beside me speaking with me; those who were with me entered in. They looked (and) they saw Mary the Virgin sitting beside me, and immediately She saw them. She gave me the peace (and) departed to the Heavens in glory.

32. And they remained beseeching me with many prayers and many entreaties, saying: «Inform us, O our father, who was this woman who was speaking with thee?». When they oppressed me exceedingly and compelled me, I informed them that this woman whom ye saw speaking to me was Mary the Mother of the Lord. And I informed them of the words which She had said to me. They were convinced of her words (and) they glorified God.

33. We arose (and) went to the Apostles. We became disciples at their feet, and we were in number seventy-two Disciples. And after a time a murmuring happened among the Greeks and the Hebrews, because they were not attending to those who were in need and want among the widows in the ministry.
34. The twelve *Apostles* called the seventy-two *Disciples* 19 (and) said to us all together: «Choose seven men among you, lovers of instruction, not being proud, not being slanders, but being workers (and) stewards, that they may have chance 20 of all the works and the money and all the needs of the *Church*, and may have care of the *widows* and *nourish* them in a fit manner 21. We, ourselves, (shall) persevere unto the prayer and the ministry of God 22.»

35. They chose six men together with me, whose names are: Parmenas, and Nicolas (Nikolaos), and Prochoros, and Philip (Philippos), and Timon (Dimôn), and Nicanor (Nikanor). And all these were ministers of God, walking in purity, and being upright in all their deeds.

36. And I, I am a sinful man (and) am not worthy to minister to the things of God. All men who shall watch over the things of the house of 24 God, shall minister them well (and) shall give them to those who are needy, (and) shall not spend them, (and) shall not give (them) to the chiefs as (?) a gratification, (and) shall not hide anything of them, but

20 Lit. "that they may be upon...".
21 Lit. 'Life'.
24 In a different order in Acts, vi, 5.
shall watch over them because they were well entrusted to them (and) they shall give them to those who are needy and to those who are in want. 

I confess to you that they shall be heirs in the Kingdom of the Heavens.

37. If, again, it happen that they despise the bread of the Church of God and do not give to those who are needy and who are in want among them but eat of the things (the things) and drink of them (the things) and spend them in wantonness, we confess to you, we the seven stewards, that as they dispersed the things of the Church, God shall disperse their bones, and that which they shall take away from them, shall not profit them, but they shall be in grief and in much sickness (and) their bones shall wither speedily, because they are the things of the Church (and) they have dissipated them, (and) have favoured in vain. If God shall judge the guardians and those who are above the chiefs, because they have destroyed their things (and) have wasted them, is how much more the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ! He it is Who shall judge the stewards because they destroyed their ministry and brought to nought the labours of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of the Father, even as saith Paul the Apostle: “These who are under guardians and stewards unto the term appointed of the Father.”

38 MS. reads “steward”.
And thus we have hastened to please the Lord and serve Him in truth and worship Him in righteousness.

38. Behold Joseph, when his Lord set him over his house and all his belongings. We did not hear in the Scriptures that he destroyed anything of the things of his lord; rather we heard that blessing was in the house of the Egyptian on account of Joseph 27.

39. Behold Jacob to whom Laban entrusted his flock of sheep. And he bore witness to him saying: "I did not bring up unto thee that which a wild beast had destroyed, and I did not sell a sheep of thy flocks of sheep or a kid stealthily." And he bore witness also, saying: "I was in the heat of the day and in the frost of the night and also sleep departed from me as I watched over thy sheep at night 28."

40. Behold Moses watching over the first-fruits and the tithes which the Children of Israel gave to him 29. And let us, ourselves minister in all things which they are wont to give to Christ as a gift, knowing that after every time we go unto His hands. He gives to every one according to his works. May it now be (given to us) to find mercy before Him, He, Our

28 Cf. Gen., xxx, 40.
29 Cf. Deut., xiv, 22.
Lord Jesus Christ through Whom is due unto Him with His Good Father and the Holy, Life-giving and Consubstantial Spirit all glory now and at every time unto all ages of the ages Amen.

Cairo, Coptic Museum.

YASSİ 'ANB AL-MANİB.