

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Controversial addition in the Paschal praise θωκ τε ተቋዎን according to the Coptic rite

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هذا المقال يهدف إلى البحث في أصل وتاريخ إضافة عبارة ‘قوتي وتسجحتي هو الرب وصار لي خلاصاً’، وهي الآية الثالثة في تسبحة البصخة الشهيرة، θωκ τε ተቋዎን – لك القوة والمجد. هذه الآية والتي قد أخذت من مزمور 118، يبدو أنها قد أضيفت للترنيمة الأصلية خلال العشرينات من القرن الماضي. وخلال العقود القليلة الماضية نمت إضافة عبارة ‘خلاصاً مقدس’، والتي ليس لها سند كتابي أو لينتوري. وبالرغم من إنتشارها الواسع بمساعدة وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، إلا أنه يتبع على خبراء اللغة القبطية وعلماء المخطوطات اللينتوريجية أن يعيدوا النظر في هذه المصطلحات اللغوية وأيضاً التسجيلات الصوتية المتداولة. وتصحيحها.

Dutch: Dit artikel bezoekt de geschiedenis van het derde vers, **ταχούνειη πάσμον πεπόνοις αφρωπή νηὶ ηὸντωτηρίᾳ**. Mijn kracht en mijn lof is de Heer, en hij is mijn verlossing geworden, van het meest populaire Koptische hymne in de Heilige Pascha, θωκ τε ተቋዎን – Aan u zij de kracht’. Deze vers is afkomstig uit **psalm 118** en lijkt te zijn toegevoegd aan het oorspronkelijke hymne in de twintigste eeuw. In de afgelopen decennia is een andere zin **εὐτῷτηρίᾳ εὐοτᾶς** – Heilige, toegevoegd, die geen bijbelse of liturgische verwijzing heeft. Hoewel de media heeft geholpen bij het verspreiden van deze laatste toevoeging, zouden deskundigen op het gebied van de Koptische taal en liturgie het oude literatuur- en opnamemateriaal opnieuw moeten bekijken om dergelijke taalkundige fouten te corrigeren.

English: This article searches the history of the third verse, **ταχούνειη πάσμον πεπόνοις αφρωπή νηὶ ηὸντωτηρίᾳ** – My strength and my praise are the Lord who became to me a salvation, of the most popular Coptic hymn in the Holy Pascha, θωκ τε ተቋዎን – Yours is the power. This verse is taken from **psalm 118**, and seems to have been added to the original hymn in the 20th century. Over the past few decades, another phrase **εὐτῷτηρίᾳ εὐοτᾶς** was added, which has no biblical or liturgical reference. Although the media has assisted in spreading the latter addition, the enlightened Coptic language and liturgy experts should revisit the old literature and recordings to address such linguistic error and correct it.

French: Cet article vise à étudier l'origine et l'histoire de l'ajout du verset « **ταχούնειη πάσμον πεπόνοις αφρωπή νηὶ ηὸντωτηρίᾳ** » – Le Seigneur est ma force et ma louange, et il est devenu mon salut», qui est le troisième verset du célèbre hymne Copte Pascal θωκ τε ተቋዎን – À toi appartient la puissance et la gloire. Ce verset, tiré du **Psaume 118**, semble avoir été ajouté à l'hymne original dans les années 1920. Au cours des dernières décennies, l'expression « **εὐτῷτηρίᾳ εὐοτᾶς** – saint salut » a été ajoutée, sans aucun support biblique ou liturgique. Malgré leur large diffusion grâce aux médias sociaux, les experts en langue copte et les spécialistes des manuscrits liturgiques doivent reconsidérer et corriger ces termes linguistiques, ainsi que les enregistrements audio en circulation.

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German: Dieser Artikel erforscht die Geschichte der dritten Strophe, ταχού νευ πάσμον πε πόοις αψωπι ηνη ἡντωτηρια – Meine Stärke und mein Lied ist der Herr, er ist für mich zum Heiligen Retter geworden, des beliebtesten koptischen Hymnus in der Heiligen Pascha, οωκ τε τζου – Dein ist die Kraft. Diese Strophe stammt aus *Psalm 118* und scheint im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert zu dem ursprünglichen Hymnus hinzugefügt worden zu sein. In den letzten Jahrzehnten wurde eine weitere Phrase, εντωτηρια εφοταβ, hinzugefügt, die keinen biblischen oder liturgischen Bezug hat. Obwohl die Medien dazu beigebracht haben, diese spätere Ergänzung zu verbreiten, sollten die aufgeklärten Experten der koptischen Sprache und Liturgie die alte Literatur und Aufnahmen erneut untersuchen, um solche sprachlichen Fehler zu adressieren und zu korrigieren.

Greek: Αυτό το άρθρο αναζητά την ιστορία του τρίτου στίχου, ταχού νευ πάσμον πε πόοις αψωπι ηνη ἡντωτηρια' – Η δύναμή μου και η αινεσή μου είναι ο Κύριος μου που έγινε για μένα Αγία Σωτηρία', του πιο δημοφιλούς Κοπτικού ύμνου στο Αγιο Πάσχα, Θωκ τε Τζομ – Σου ανήκει η δύναμη. Αυτός ο στίχος προέρχεται από το ψαλμό 118 και φαίνεται να προστέθηκε στον αρχικό ύμνο κατά τον 20o αιώνα. Τα τελευταία χρόνια προστέθηκε ένα άλλο στοιχείος εντωτηρια εφοταβ ('εντωτηρία Εφουάβ'), το οποίο δεν έχει βιβλική ή λειτουργική αναφορά. Παρά την ευρεία διάδοσή του μέσω των μέσων κοινωνικής δικτύωσης, είναι αναγκαίο για τους ειδικούς στην Κοπτική γλώσσα και τα λειτουργικά χειρόγραφα να επανεξετάσουν την παλαιά λογοτεχνία και τις ηχογραφήσεις προκειμένου να διορθώσουν τέτοια γλωσσικά λάθη.

Italian: Questo articolo esplora la storia e l'aggiunta dell'espressione 'mia forza e mio canto è il Signore, egli è stato la mia salvezza'. Questa espressione corrisponde al terzo versetto nella popolare lode della Santa Pasqua, οωκ τε τζου – A te la forza e la Gloria'. Questo versetto, tratto dal *salmo 118*, sembra essere stato aggiunto all'inno originale negli anni Venti del secolo scorso. Negli ultimi decenni è stata aggiunta un'altra espressione, 'Santa salvezza', la quale non ha alcun riferimento biblico o liturgico. Anche se i media hanno contribuito a diffondere quest'ultima aggiunta, gli esperti di lingua copta e dei manoscritti liturgici dovrebbero riconsiderare questa terminologia e le correnti registrazioni e correggerli.

Swedish: Denna artikel utforskar historien bakom den tredje versen ταχού νευ πάσμον πε πόοις αψωπι ηνη ἡντωτηρια – min styrka och min lovsång är Herren som blev min frälsning" i den populära koptiska hymnen under den Heliga Påskens οωκ τε τζου – Din är makten'. Denna vers är hämtad från *psalm 118:14* och verkar ha lagts till den ursprungliga hymnen under 1900-talet. Under de senaste decennierna har en annan fras 'εντωτηρια εφοταβ – helig frälsning', lagts till, vilken saknar biblisk eller liturgisk referens. Även om medierna har hjälpt till att sprida detta senare tillägg, bör de upplysta koptiska språk- och liturgiexperten återvända till den gamla litteraturen och inspelningarna för att adressera sådana språkliga fel och korrigera dem.

The most famous prayer of the Holy Pascha in the Coptic church is οωκ τε τζου – Yours is the power. It is the starting praise of all Pascha hourly prayers. Being sung 12 times in each hour and 636 times throughout the Holy week, οωκ τε τζου is one of the most popular hymns in the Coptic church throughout all generations. It is taught in Sunday schools, and even new comers to church learn it easily because of its repetitive pattern and its simple melody that is syllabic in nature which does not require melismatic singing. οωκ τε τζου – Yours is the power, is the chorus chant of the hymn, which is repeated 3 times in an alternating fashion, followed by two verses as responses: Εμμανουήλ πεννοντή πεννότρο – Emmanuel is our Lord and King (first response) and παροις Ιησούς πινχριστος πασωτηρηνάσαθος – my Lord Jesus Christ my Good Savior (second response). On Good Friday, a third verse is added to the hymn, ταχού νευ πάσμον πε πόοις αψωπι ηνη ἡντωτηρια – My strength and my praise are the Lord who became to me a salvation. Although the exact history of such addition is not well documented, its objective could be highlighting the fulfilment of the human salvation that happened through the death of Lord Jesus on the cross on Good Friday.

Over the last few decades, it has been noticed that the lyrics of the hymn have been changed and the ending of the third verse has become εὐτελήρια εὐογάθ. This paper sought to discuss the accuracy of such change.

The paschal praise οώκ τε τζού seems to be textually based on the verse ‘Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the splendor and the majesty, for everything in heaven and on earth belongs to You’, *1 Chronicles 29:11* and also the verse ‘For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever’ *Matthew 6:13*. The two verses Ευαγνούτη πεννούτη πεννούτρο and παδοί Ιησούτε πιχριστός πασωτηρίας αφωνού are simple praising compositions, that are very familiar in the Coptic culture, being repeated in many other prayers. The third verse ταξούμ νεμ παέμον πε πόνοις αφωποί ηνη ηνογωτηρία is a direct quotation from *psalm 118:14*, which fits nicely the events of fulfilment of human salvation, the Lord Jesus went through during the Pascha week, particularly in Good Friday.

To accurately discuss the meaning of the third verse, ταξούμ νεμ παέμον πε πόνοις αφωποί ηνη ηνογωτηρία, in order to determine its origin we searched the original languages of the Old Testament including the psalms. The original Hebrew and Greek translations of *Psalm 118:14* are

Δύναμίς μου και ύμνος είναι ο Κύριος, και έγεινεν εις εμέ σωτηρία.

עָזִי זְמָרָת יְהוָה יְהוָה יְלִישָׁמָה

(*Psalm 117,118:14*) قوتي وترنمي الرب وقد صار لي خلاصا

|The LORD is my strength and song, and has become my salvation
ταξούμ νεμ παέμον πε πόνοις αφωποί ηνη ηνογωτηρία

Of note, the word salvation has been mentioned in many other places in both the Old and the New Testaments

Firstly, without adding an adjective

(1) The LORD is my strength and song, and he has become my salvation (*Exodus 15:2*)

יְהוָה יְהוָה יְלִישָׁמָה

الرب قوتي ونشيدي وقد صار خلاصي . خر(2:15)

Ο Κύριος είναι η δύναμίς μου και το άσμά μου, και εστάθη η σωτηρία μου

οτβοηθος νεμ οτρεψχωβε εβολ χιχωι αφωποί ηνη ηνογωτηρία

(2) I will praise You: for You have heard me, and have become my salvation.

أَحْمَدُكَ لَاكَ اسْتَجَبْتُ لِي وَصَرَّتْ لِي خلاصًا . مز (21:118)

אָזְךָ כִּי עֲנִיתִנִי וְתַהֲרִילִי לִישָׁמָה

Θέλω σε δοξολογεί, διότι μου επήκουσας και έγεινες εις εμέ σωτηρία.

†ΝΑΟΤΩΝΩΝ ΝΑΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΠΙΒΟΙΣ ΣΕ ΑΚΕΩΤΕΜ ΕΡΟΙ ΟΤΟΘ ΑΚΦΩΠΟΙ ΗΝΗ ΗΝΟΓΩΤΖΑΙ

(3) I will also clothe her priests with salvation

كَهْنَهَا الْبَسْ خلاصا مز (16:132)

וְכַהֲנִהָּ אַלְבִּישׁ יִשְׁעָ

και τους ιερείς αυτής θέλω ενδύσει σωτηρίαν

ηεσουηβ ειετχιωτογηνογωτζαι

years. The two oldest books, published in 1920, ‘Service of the Deacon’ collected by Ecladius Bek Labib (1920), and ‘Dallal and the arrangement of Good Friday and the Glorious Easter’ by Father Philotheos al-Maqari, Father Barnabas Al-Barmoussi and Cantor Michael Gerges’ (1920) did not contain the phrase **ταχούνευ πάσμον πεπόνις**. Likewise, the same phrase was not mentioned in Dallal of the Holy Week collected by Father Atallah Arsanios Al-Muharraqi (1971). Interestingly, the phrase **ταχούνευ πάσμον πεπόνις αψωπινηίνοτσωτηρια** – My strength and my praise are the Lord who became to me a salvation started to appear in the early 1970s, in a Euchologion published by El-Mahaba Coptic Orthodox Society. In a discussion with Dr Labib Gorgy, a senior Coptic chanter, he confirmed that they never sang **ταχούνευ πάσμον πεπόνις** before the late bishop Anba Ioannis started his bishopric service in Tanta in 1972. Likewise, in an interview with Dr Roushdi Demian, a Senior chanter confirmed that at St Marks Cathedral in Alexandria they used to chant **ταχούνευ πάσμον πεπόνις αψωπινηίνοτσωτηρια** – My strength and my praise are the Lord who became to me a salvation in the typical Alexandrian melody, until the late seventies when they were instructed to follow the Cairo melody and to add the word **εφοταβ** after **ετσωτηρια**.

In view of the above references, it seems that the third verse, the phrase **ταχούνευ πάσμον πεπόνις αψωπινηίνοτσωτηρια** was added to the Paschal prayers in the 20th century. It may have been known in some places and not others a little before that time. This analysis is supported by the most recent appearance of that phrase in the Eucholgian published in the late sixties. As is the nature with publishing houses, particularly of small communities, as is the case with the Coptic church, they copy each other. So, once a new material appears, particularly in commonly used books, Pascha and deacon service books, they get copied without any critical search, hence the wide spread of the last additions.

Again according to the above evidence, it seems that **ταχούνευ πάσμον πεπόνις αψωπινηίνοτσωτηρια** was added first, and practiced in a number of places including Alexandria, Tanta and even Cairo, since the publishing office of the ‘ElMahaba Society is in Cairo where the largest market for Christian book selling was and still remains. Interestingly, the Pascha service book by Fr Arsanios Al-Muharaqi, from upper Egypt did not include that verse, suggesting that it was first added around the Cairo region then got spread to Alexandria and the delta region.

As for replacing the word ‘**νοτσωτηρια**’ by ‘**ετσωτηρια εφοταβ**’ it is certainly a more recent addition, again probably starting from Cairo, that coincided with the start of mobile recorders and later on video recordings which allowed its fast spread. Add to this, the then move for changing most regional hymnology to follow the Cairo school must have helped the wide spread of such addition. While the person responsible for such change is not known, it seems that he added the Arabic word first, which later on got wrongly translated into Coptic. The correct adjective should be ‘**εφοταβ**’ and not ‘**εφοταب**’ because the word ‘**ετσωτηρια**’ is in this case of the indefinite feminine singular from ‘**ετσωτηριا**’, and therefore the relative noun that follows it (which replaces the adjective or description). He might have added the word ‘**εφοταب**’ in Arabic first to serve adjusting the melody he desired in the twelfth time **θωκ τε τχού** which is sung in Arabic, then tried to translate it into Coptic, but that was not accurate. This suggestion is based on the time this addition took place when the Coptic language was somewhat poorly practiced and understood. The critical research in Coptic hymnology could find other similar examples, although rare.

On the other hand, the suggestion that the addition of **ταχούνευ πάσμον** has possibly emerged by 14th century from the St Mary’s church, Haret El-Rum and **αψωπινη**

novità τηρία was possibly popularised by the 17th century by Philemon Kamel cannot be confirmed based on the clear evidence we presented above. In the early 2000s, deacon George Andrawes Salib assumed erroneously that the Coptic has a grammatical mistake, and offered a new version that matches Arabic.

In conclusion, based on the above analysis of our biblical verses and liturgical publication, it is very clear that replacement of the original scriptural word novità τηρία by the recent addition of εὐτελήτηρία εὐτελάβ is not liturgically accurate. It would be better revisiting the old recordings of the original hymn and correcting such unnecessary confusion.

References

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