

RECONSTRUCTING THE ORIGINS
OF
THE COPTIC CHURCH THROUGH ITS LITURGY

by

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A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of McMaster Divinity College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts (Christian Studies)

McMaster Divinity College
Hamilton, Ontario
2015

Master of Arts (Christian Studies)
Hamilton, Ontario

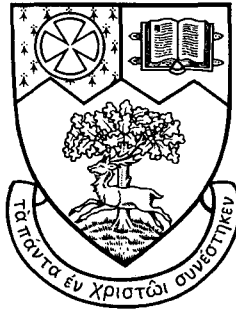
McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE

TITLE: RECONSTRUCTING THE ORIGINS OF THE COPTIC CHURCH
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NUMBER OF PAGES: vi + 128



McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

“Reconstructing the Origins of the Coptic Church through its Liturgy”

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Master of Arts (Christian Studies), 2015

This thesis is an initial attempt to shed light on mutual interaction between Coptic and Jewish traditions by demonstrating a Jewish impact on the early stage of the Alexandrian Church as seen in the Coptic Morning Service. It explores the possible influence of the Jewish liturgies and prayers including the writings of the late Second Temple era (200 BCE–70 CE) on some of the origins of fundamental Coptic rituals. The Coptic Morning Service holds almost identical texts, order of prayers, and, many major Jewish thematic interrelations.

This study argues for an important lacuna in the spirituality of the contemporary Coptic worshiper. The mystifications that surround many Coptic liturgical components prevent parishioners from praying with understanding (1 Cor. 14:15). The twenty-first century Copt needs a sort of “Halakah” guidance towards their worshipping practices.

This thesis hopes to offer a potential reconstruction of the early history of the Alexandrian Church through liturgy that could open a new scholarly field of Judeo-Coptic studies.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

I dedicate this study to my mom Rose Mattar, who before her departure to Christ on 1998 has always been my spiritual mentor and a zealous devotee to Coptic studies.

It is a pleasant duty to record my gratitude to my mentor Dr. Wendy J. Porter, who supervised my study and made herself available for many hours of stimulating conversation on the themes of the thesis. Her humbleness has been remarkable in editing my manuscript and patiently helping in uttering my insights.

One more word of thanks, this time to Professor Stanley E. Porter, President and Dean of McMaster Divinity College, who beside his busy schedule, welcomed me to his office for long discussions bursting invaluable advices and inspirations.

I am extremely grateful to my wife Eman Ghaly, who sparked the flame for me to complete my master's degree. Eman has shown considerable forbearance during the period of this research. I owe thanks to my son Philip, his wife Lindsay, and, their beautiful daughters Grace Elizabeth and Magdalena Julie for their prayers and love. Special thanks to my beloved mother in law Fayza Guirguis, and, my daughter Nada.

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Introduction

1. Alexandrian Judaism—Backbone of the Early Egyptian Church?

Ivan Pavlov, Nobel Prize winner, states: “Don’t become a mere recorder of facts, but try to penetrate the mystery of their origin.”¹ Indeed, the origin of the Coptic Church is still a mystery for many historians.² The paucity of documents regarding the early centuries of the Coptic Church life causes confusion and many contradicting opinions, especially for Coptic worshippers. Many Copts would claim certainty about the Egyptian roots of the Coptic Church, but these would be more conceivable during the third century CE, when the Coptic language flourished. Seeing an absolute “Egyptianity” in ritual, in art, and in the apothegms of the Church Fathers in the first two centuries is unjustified. By the time of the advent of Christianity, even if Egypt was a Roman colony, Greek prestige was reigning over all. Egyptian Temples remained open for the native Egyptians, but with less influence on society, where the diversity of different ethnic groups was significant. Attempts to tie the early days of the Alexandrian Church primarily with Ancient Egyptian culture makes the depiction of the origins of the Coptic Church highly enigmatic and imposes false assertions. For example, how could one observe the early prayers of the Coptic Church, which display a massive quantity of direct quotations from Scripture, include many Mosaic law practices, and contend that the Church was derived from a pagan faith such as the Ancient Egyptian religion?

My thesis is about a new orientation towards the understanding of some of the origins of Coptic liturgy. It attempts to open a new door that may lead to deciphering some of the enigmatic sources of the Coptic Church, not through documents that attempt to lay out its history (which

¹ Ivan Pavlov. BrainyQuote.com, <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/i/ivanpavlov284441.html>, accessed October 27, 2014.

² Chapter 2 deals with the issue.

provide limited information) but through its liturgy. The purpose of my thesis is to shed light on the mutual interaction between Jewish and Coptic tradition as seen in the Coptic liturgy and, in particular, in the Morning Service ritual. This investigation will explore possible influences of the Jewish liturgies, prayers, and writings of the late Second Temple era (200 BCE–70 CE) on the origins of some fundamental Coptic rituals.

Before I begin to lay out some of many of my findings that strengthen the potentiality of a Jewish seed in the Coptic Church, I want to emphasize a simple fact that is usually ignored, and articulated here by R. T. Beckwith:

At its origin, Christianity was a Jewish religion. Jesus Christ was a Jew, and his first followers were Jews. The Judaism of the first century, especially in the dispersion but also in Palestine, had been considerably influenced by Greek thought, culture, and language, but its roots were still in the Old Testament, and its basic languages were still Hebrew and Aramaic. The teaching of Jesus had, of course, great originality, but whatever in it was traditional it owed to Judaism rather than to any other source. Moreover, in their practice, Jesus and his first followers conformed to a large extent to Jewish customs. When, therefore, the question is asked against what background Christian worship arose, the only answer that can be given is Jewish worship. Such Greek influences on Christian worship as had not first affected Jewish worship are mainly of later date. From the outset, the originality of Christianity is seen in its worship, but so is the traditional, Jewish character of Christianity.³

How is this important statement revealed in the paradigm of the early Coptic Church? What counts for evidence? Is the large Jewish community that is known to have existed in Alexandria during the first century at the heart of this church? Does Scripture indicate any apostolic mission in Egypt? To what extent did Jewish beliefs shape Christian worship in the diasporic community of Egypt where the Greek world of thought was widespread? To answer these questions requires one to take a deeper look into the many hidden aspects of the Coptic Church, particularly into its liturgy.

³ Beckwith, "The Jewish Background to Christian Worship," 68.

The reasoning of Beckwith makes sense when we consider many of the primary factors related to the birth of Christianity in Egypt. When Christ commissioned his disciples to preach the Gospel, he commanded them to give priority to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel,”⁴ and this became an apostolic “custom.”⁵ Thus priority was given to the Jews of Israel and of the diaspora when the early mission started. Also, on the day of Pentecost, Cyrene and Alexandria were broadly introduced in the first predications of the apostles. Their citizens were stupefied when they witnessed the gift of tongues given to the apostles.⁶ The episode of Apollos in Acts 18:24–28 narrates the story of a first-century Alexandrian Christian Jew, a contemporary of Paul. He is mentioned several times in the New Testament⁷ and played an important role in the church in Ephesus and in Corinth. The Lukan account, however, does not relate any mission activity by Apollos in Egypt. Schnabel locates early evangelism in Egypt and identifies some important facts, including that Egypt was a Roman province since 30 BCE.⁸ The Egyptian temples and priests had been allowed to retain most of their privileges, but they had to accept the dissemination of the imperial cult. Jews were settled in Egypt during the time of Alexander the Great, in order to escape the political upheavals in Syria. About 311 BCE, under the rule of Ptolemy I Soter, thousands of prisoner Jews were brought to Egypt. The inscriptions attest to the existence of many synagogues in the time of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 BCE). Schnabel attests that “The Jewish communities of Alexandria and Rome were the largest outside of Palestine. The Jews of Alexandria would have been a natural destination for the Christian missionaries.”⁹ Jewish population was a considerable part of the Alexandrian population. They

⁴ Matt 10:5–6.

⁵ Acts 17:1–2.

⁶ Acts 2:10, 12.

⁷ Acts 18:24, 19:1; 1 Cor 1:12, 3:4–6, 3:22, 4:6, 16:12; Titus 3:13.

⁸ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 852.

⁹ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 854.

were Jews with Hellenistic education and culture, Jews who were the transmitters of Philo's works and the Septuagint Bible.

These primary facts provide awareness about the importance of the Jewish community in Egypt during the early age of the Egyptian Church. Many years ago, this recognition encouraged me to start a serious and exciting exploration into the Jewish and Coptic traditions in order to find parallels in their liturgies. In the following pages of this chapter, I will refer to some of the Jewish liturgical reverberations that find their source in the writings of the late Second Temple era and still exist in the Coptic tradition. I will also show two slightly tangential Coptic observances that clearly come from the Mosaic Law and are steadily promulgated in both Jewish and Coptic rules as examples that undeniably link Jewish and Coptic together.

2. The Writings of Hellenistic Judaism Reverberate in the Coptic Church

In the field of Coptic studies, scholars have not made great effort to connect the massive Jewish liturgy and the sources of the late Second Temple era with the establishment of the Alexandrian Church and its liturgy during the first centuries. If Schnabel's statement cited above is accurate,¹⁰ which I believe it is, the Jewish communities in the diaspora, and specifically Alexandrian Judaism with its multicultural heritage, should be considered as significant historical and liturgical sources of this unknown stage of the earliest history of the Alexandrian Church. Eventually, Alexandrian and Hellenistic Judaism develop an extensive number of parallel sources, some of which clearly can be traced in the Coptic tradition in different forms of liturgy, hagiography, and also in the sayings of the Early Fathers. In this thesis, however, I will focus on

¹⁰ Blouin, *Le Conflit Judéo-Alexandrin de 38–41*, 15. Blouin believes the Alexandrian Jewish community to be the most important one after that of Jerusalem: "Si la majorité des habitants de l'Alexandrie des Lagides était d'origine grecque, la communauté juive y devint en peu de temps la plus importante du monde méditerranéen après celle de Jerusalem." (My translation: If the majority of the inhabitants of Lagides' Alexandria were of Greek origin, the Jewish community became in a short time the most important one in the Mediterranean world after the one of Jerusalem).

several specific features and worship practices of Jewish liturgy and their possible—even likely transmission into the early Coptic tradition.

Lawrence Schiffman¹¹ and Michael Stone¹² classify extensive collections of writings belonging to the Jewish people in the period of the late Second Temple. Their sources include biblical, apocryphal, pseudepigraphal, and sectarian and non-sectarian Qumran texts. Many of these texts were well-known within Hellenistic Judaism and many of them apparently were used in individual daily prayers. Upon investigating these Jewish sources, I have found that many elements appear to correspond to the Alexandrian Church repertoire. In various sections from these categories, the list of similarities appears to be lengthy and highly interwoven. The chapters of Exodus 12–15 were a cherished inherited theme during the late Second Temple era, as they were also later in the Coptic liturgy. The story of the splitting of the Red Sea holds a long tradition in the Jewish ritual of the night preceding the Pesach feast.¹³ Similarly, the First Ode¹⁴ (called *Hos* in Coptic), which is the same biblical text (i.e. Exod. 12–15), is sung during the night that precedes the Coptic “Bright Saturday,” the Coptic Easter eve,¹⁵ and is also sung at the Coptic Midnight Praise on Saturdays on a weekly basis.¹⁶ From the Greek additions to the *Book*

¹¹ Schiffman, *Texts and Traditions*. The author collects the most frequent sources cherished by the Jews of the Second Temple era. I use Schiffman’s titles of categories.

¹² Stone et al., *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*.

¹³ On Saturday night of the Jewish Passover, the retelling of the story of Exodus 12–15 is an important part of the Seder (the order of prayers) of that night. This part in the Seder is called “Maggid.” The earliest documentation of this practice is mentioned in Exodus 13:8: “On that day tell your son, I do this because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.”

¹⁴ Muftah, et al., “Coptic Music,” 1715–47. Authors explain the *Hos* (Odes) as a part in the Service of Psalmody and actually agree on a synagogal origin for these Odes. *Hos* ⲁⲠⲤ Coptic derives from Egyptian h-s-j, “to sing, to praise.” Burmester refers to them as odes. They are *Hos* One, Song of Moses (Ex. 15:1–21); *Hos* Two, Psalm 136 with an Alleluia refrain in each strophe; *Hos* Three, the Song of the Three Young Men (The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Holy Children is a lengthy passage that appears after Daniel 3:23 in the Septuagint); and *Hos* Four, Pss 148, 149, and 150. A fragment of papyrus, brought from the Fayyum, and published by W. E. Crum (*Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts* 51, 103), contains portions of *Hos* One and Three. Further, part of the Greek text of *Hos* Three has been found on an ostrakon dating probably from the fifth century.

¹⁵ Azmy, *Book of Holy Pascha*, 521–24.

¹⁶ *The Holy Psalmody*, 15.

of *Daniel*,¹⁷ the “Prayer of Azariah,” and the “Hymn of the Three Young Men,”¹⁸ is drawn the Third Ode, which is also sung on the night that precedes “Bright Saturday” and Midnight Praise on Saturdays.¹⁹ The Coptic text is derived from Greek Jewish texts and both the Coptic and Greek forms have similar features.²⁰ Nickelsburg observes that the two texts, the “Prayer of Azariah” and the “Hymn of the Three Young Men,” are in accordance with the Hellenistic Jewish prayers of the late Second Temple era.²¹ Common features are that they appear to be antiphonal, they have a repetitive refrain, and they imitate the repetitive refrain of Psalm 136, which is the Second Ode or *Hos* that precedes this Danielic Hymn in the Coptic *Holy Psalmody*.²²

A quick survey of the category of sacrifice and law also shows the interconnection between Jewish and Coptic practices: the laws of purity for priests, as described in Leviticus 21, are still in effect today in the Coptic priesthood customs. This biblical text is combined with the Pseudepigrapha of the *Testament of Levi*, which states: “Before you enter the sanctuary, bathe; while you are sacrificing, wash; and again when sacrifice is concluded, wash.”²³ This is still followed by the twenty-first century Coptic priest.²⁴ It is significant that some reminiscences from the *Letter of Aristeas*,²⁵ a letter believed to be a composition of an Alexandrian Jew from between 170 and 100 BCE, concerning the translation of the Torah from Hebrew to Greek, are

¹⁷ Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 552–53.

¹⁸ **The additions to the *Book of Daniel* are preserved in the Septuagint and in the Greek version ascribed to Theodotion. The first to quote these songs is Justin Martyr (died 165 CE) in *Apologia* 1:46. See Flusser, “Psalms, Hymns and Prayers,” 553.**

¹⁹ For “Bright Saturday,” see Azmy, *Book of Holy Pascha*, 539–43; for every Saturday Midnight Praise, see *The Holy Psalmody*, 32–39.

²⁰ For the Greek text, see Horst and Newman, *Early Jewish Prayers in Greek*, 181–215; Oegema “Reception of the Book of Daniel in the Early Church,” 243–52.

²¹ Nickelsburg, “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded,” 149–52.

²² *The Holy Psalmody*, 554.

²³ Schiffman, *Texts and Traditions*, 353.

²⁴ Coptic priests wash their feet before the Morning Service (old tradition) and wash their hands before, during, and at the washing of the vessels at the end of the mass.

²⁵ Thackeray, ed., *The Letter of Aristeas*. The first major section of the *Letter* recounts the events surrounding Ptolemy’s request for a translation of the Law. See Nickelsburg, “Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times,” 75–80.

found in the *Coptic Synaxarium*.²⁶ In the *Synaxarium*, a liturgical reading under the eighth day of the Coptic month of Amshir,²⁷ shows a combination of the translation event with the feast of “Presenting the Lord Christ in the Temple.” Simeon the Elder (as portrayed in Luke 2:29–32) is believed to be one of the 70 elders who translated the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek. The Coptic narrative seems to extend the story of the Septuagint in order to emphasize the virginity of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The *Synaxarium* states that Ptolemy Soter, in the year 296 BCE:

Put every two of them [the Torah translators] in an isolated place so they would not agree on one translation, and to ensure a correct text after comparing all of the translations. Simeon the elder was one of them. When Simeon was translating the verse from Isaiah 7:14, Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel, he was afraid to translate that a virgin would conceive, because the King would mock him. He wanted to translate the virgin as a young lady. He was disturbed because of this inaccurate translation, and God revealed to him in a vision that he would not die before he would see Christ the Lord born of a virgin.²⁸

Locating an apocryphal or pseudepigraphal text of the Old Testament in a liturgical book, as seen previously in the case of *Hos 3* (Daniel Greek addition) or the Coptic *Synaxarium*, or one such as the *Letter of Aristeas*, should not be a surprise. Hellenistic Jewish writings were also quoted by some early Church Fathers, as they perceived them to be authoritative sources. For instance, by the first century, the Greek version of *1 Enoch*²⁹ was already a popular story in Alexandrian Jewish circles.³⁰ Pearson finds that Origen, well-known scholar and early

²⁶ The *Synaxarium*, also called *Synaxarion*, is a compilation of hagiographies of saints and martyrs, a Coptic liturgical book, which according to the day, is read just before the Gospel during the mass. For more details on the legacy of the Synaxarium, see Atiya, “Copto–Arabic Synaxarion,” 2171–90.

²⁷ Amshir (Meshir, Coptic) is the sixth month of the Coptic calendar.

²⁸ *Coptic Synaxarium*, 1, 273–74.

²⁹ The earliest books of *1 Enoch* (known as *Apocalypse Ethiopic of Enoch*) are the *Book of the Watchers* and the *Astronomical Book*, which date to the third century BCE. The latest book of *1 Enoch* is the *Similitudes*, which dates to the first century BCE/CE. The book of *2 Enoch* (known as *Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch*) survived in a number of Slavonic manuscripts, which date from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries CE. Some Coptic fragments were discovered in Qasr Ibrim (Nubia, Egypt). For more details, see Knibb, “Ethiopic Apocalypse of Enoch,” 585–87; also Orlov, “Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch,” 587–90. The *Enoch* books occupy an important place in the Coptic tradition. Both books (*1* and *2 Enoch*) need a detailed investigation. See Schiffman, *Texts and Tradition*, 336–52; Bautch, *Geography of 1 Enoch 17–19*; Vanbeek, “*1 Enoch Among Jews and Christians*,” 93–116. For the alleged priesthood of Enoch, see Bow, “Melchizedek’s Birth Narrative in *2 Enoch*,” 33–42.

³⁰ Pearson, “Enoch in Egypt,” 217.

Alexandrian theologian (184–254 CE), while he was still in Alexandria, quotes *1 Enoch* 21.1 and 19 in his treatise, *On First Principles*. Origen introduces his quotations with the words, “Enoch speaks thus in his book” and “in the same book, Enoch himself being the speaker.”³¹ In his *Commentary on John*, Origen adds, “Jared was born to Maleleel, as it is written from the Book of Enoch...”³² It was only later, when Origen moved to Caesarea, that he started to doubt the authenticity of Enoch’s Books.³³

Apparently, late Second Temple writings already were being entrenched in the Alexandrian Church by the first Jewish-Christians believers during the first century. The next generation of Alexandrian Church leaders systematically ignored such things as Origen’s statement about the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal biblical additions. Thus it is hardly surprising that Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria (296–373), in an abjuration discourse in his Paschal Letter of 367, writes: “Who has made the simple folk believe that those books belong to Enoch even though no Scriptures existed before Moses?”³⁴

This survey of a number of similarities between Jewish sources and Coptic tradition has prompted me to believe that Alexandrian Judaism is not only an important factor to understanding the New Testament and the Pauline letters, but also to comprehending some of its scattered knowledge dispersed over 300 years before Christianity. By assembling some of these pieces together, there is a potential to reconstruct something of the origins of the early Egyptian church, as well as to reveal the Jewish seed of its main liturgical texts (i.e. the Coptic Midnight Praise, Morning and Evening Services, and the Eucharist). Both Jewish and Coptic liturgical practices are highly conservative in order to protect the faith tradition, the liturgical practices, and

³¹ Pearson, “Enoch in Egypt,” 219.

³² Pearson, “Enoch in Egypt,” 219. Here the author quotes Origen’s saying from *Anti-Nicene Fathers* 10.371.

³³ In his treatise *Against Celsus*, Origen states: “the books entitled Enoch are not generally held to be divine by the churches.” Here Pearson, “Enoch in Egypt,” 219, quotes Chadwick (trans.), *Origen: Contra Celsum*, 306.

³⁴ Pearson, “Enoch in Egypt,” 219, quotes Brakke, *Athanasius and Politics of Asceticism*, 330.

the customs against any forfeiture, manipulation, or modification. It is because of this conservation in both that there is potential to find significant parallels. Likewise, while the oral Torah³⁵ targets the protection of unwritten Moses teachings as he heard it from the mouth of God, the oral tradition in the Coptic Church resembles the sanctuary where the inherited elements of Hellenistic Judaism were kept virtually intact.

3. The Concept of “Judaism” and Some Coptic Observances

Jewish observances and customs are usually associated with the concept of “Judaism.” This word, deriving from a Greek word, “*Ioudaimos*,” means “way of life.” Jews aimed by their strict customs to thoroughly keep the “tradition of their fathers.”³⁶ In the diaspora, this strict lifestyle marked the uniqueness of the Jewish society, especially when they lived or worked next to inhabitants who held very different beliefs. Their customs strictly complied with the Mosaic Law in various observances: e.g. circumcision, dietary patterns, keeping the Sabbath, and many others. At the beginning of the Hellenistic era (300 BCE), this lifestyle was already noticed and praised by the Greek historian, Hecataeus of Abdera. Undoubtedly, this “Judaism” was one of the main distinguishing features of Egyptian Jews, as in every place in the diaspora. Hecataeus claims that their faithfulness to their law is demonstrated by their preoccupation in raising their temples and altars.³⁷

Observing this “Judaism” meant that diaspora Jews faced serious challenges in keeping their ancestors’ traditions, particularly after the conquests of Alexander the Great (356–323 CE) and his victory over the Persian king, Darius III. Seaman observes that Alexander’s accession

³⁵ For Jewish oral tradition, see Elman and Gershoni, *Transmitting Jewish Traditions*; Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*; Neusner, *The Oral Torah*; Schimmel, *The Oral Law*. For Coptic oral tradition, see Malaty, *Tradition and Orthodoxy*; Awadallah, *Manaret El Akdas*, 6–16; Muftah, et al., “Coptic Music,” 1715–47.

³⁶ Matt 15:2; Mark 7:3, 7:5.

³⁷ Collins, “Pseudo-Hecataeus,” 718.

was metamorphosed by “far-reaching consequences on Jews.”³⁸ They were brought into contact with a wider world with different dogmas compared to the restrictions outlined in the Old Testament. During this crucial period preceding the birth of Christianity, cities such as Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch prospered, and they attracted many Jews “to establish thriving and vigorous communities, self-assured in the exhibition of their traditions and their special character.”³⁹

Many aspects of this Judaism, especially when observing it as a lifestyle, are still traceable in the Coptic tradition. The Coptic Church observes strict practices concerning circumcision, rituals surrounding menstruation, weekly two-days fasting,⁴⁰ ablution, and many other rituals. The reasons for discussing briefly topics like circumcision and a woman’s menstruation in my thesis introduction is because, although they do not directly influence the discussion of the Morning Service, they do occupy an important place in both Jewish and Coptic customs, and give strong evidence of ties between the two in rituals and canons of both traditions. Their peculiar survival in the Coptic Church strengthens the evidence that Jewish influence on the Coptic Church bears significant further investigation.

As I have mentioned, one example of the influence of Jewish regulations on Coptic practice can be seen in how the Copts strictly followed the practice of circumcision, at least until the mid-twentieth century in the main cities. It is still in effect in rural areas. On the eighth day after birth, the infant is circumcised.⁴¹ On that day, family and friends gather to celebrate this event. Murqus Ibn Qanbar, a reformer of the late twelfth century, pleaded for the abolition of

³⁸ Seeman, “Jewish History from Alexander to Hadrian,” 25.

³⁹ Gruen, “Judaism in the Diaspora,” 81.

⁴⁰ In the Jewish tradition, the fasting is on Tuesday and Thursday; the Coptic days of fasting are Wednesday and Friday.

⁴¹ Lev 12:2–3.

circumcision even though it was required before infant baptism.⁴² His petition included other items, such as confession to the priest and the administration of the Eucharist, but these were strongly opposed by the official defenders of Coptic morals and customs.⁴³

A historical view of this practice can be beneficial in understanding its inclusion in the Alexandrian Church. During the Hellenistic period, Greeks brought serious cultural and political pressure against the Jews who were strictly obeying the Mosaic Law in observing the act of circumcision.⁴⁴ Greeks detested the practice and considered it a barbaric mutilation of the human body. The book of *Maccabees* depicts this conflict in some daily challenges. Jews, who were eager to assimilate to the Greek culture, faced stigmas in participating at the athletic games in the Gymnasium.⁴⁵ In order to avoid such challenges, they performed “epispasm,”⁴⁶ a practice that reached a peak of popularity during the first century.⁴⁷

In a very informative article by David deSilva,⁴⁸ the author mentions that in Alexandria, Philo (died circa 50 CE) defended the practice of circumcision. Philo wrote about the hygienic benefits of being circumcised, the ritual purity, and fertility.⁴⁹ The ethical meaning of the practice, as expressed and promoted by Philo, reflects that this practice was strictly in effect, and that it was an issue within the Jewish community in Egypt. Therefore, this raises some questions: did this Jewish practice enter the Coptic ethical life through the first Judeo-Christians of Alexandria or just in fulfillment of the Mosaic Law? Why does the Coptic tradition cherish the rite of circumcision and link it to baptism (as was the case during Ibn Kanbar’s time)? The mirroring of

⁴² The male infant is baptized 40 days after his birth and the female 80 days after.

⁴³ Frederick, “Murqus Ibn Qanbar,” 1699–1700; Basilios, “Baptism,” 336–39.

⁴⁴ Gen 17:12, 14.

⁴⁵ 2 *Macc* 4:13–15.

⁴⁶ A surgical procedure, an operation that “corrected” a circumcised penis. Some might call it circumcision in reverse. See Hall, “Epispasm,” 52–57.

⁴⁷ Hall, “Epispasm: Circumcision in Reverse,” 52–57.

⁴⁸ deSilva, “Circumcision,” 139–40.

⁴⁹ deSilva, “Circumcision,” 139, mentions the Philonic sources *Spec. Laws* 1.1.1–1.2.11.

Jewish practice by Coptic Christians demands a closer inquiry of the pseudepigrapha and Dead Sea Scrolls, where this topic is treated at length.⁵⁰

The second example of the influence of Jewish laws on Coptic practice can be seen in how the Coptic Church still watches over a woman's purification as stated in the Book of Leviticus, where God equates her uncleanness during her menstruation cycle with her impurity after giving birth to either a son or a daughter.⁵¹ The language of the "Tohorot" sections in different Jewish books, such as the Tosefta and the Mishna,⁵² resounds also in the Coptic Canons. The church requires that the man abstain from sexual intercourse with his wife until her child is weaned. Concerning her fellowship with the congregation, the woman may enter the church but she is forbidden to receive the Eucharist. The Coptic Church formulated the rules of a woman's purification as early as the third century. The Second Canon of Dionysius the archbishop of Alexandria (died circa 265 CE) states: "concerning the menstruating woman, whether they ought to enter the temple of God while in such a state, I think it superfluous even to put the question. For I opine, not even they themselves, being faithful and pious, would dare when in this state either to approach the Holy Table or to touch the body and blood of Christ."⁵³

Bishop Youssef notes that in this Canon, Dionysius conflates Christian altar with the Temple space.⁵⁴ Therefore it is surprising that he did not link such early regulations with a possible heritage from the Jews who lived in Egypt. Despite many other levitical ordinances, the

⁵⁰ Bernat, "Circumcision," 471–74.

⁵¹ Lev 12:1–8; Lev 15:19–33.

⁵² Neusner, *The Tosefta*, the section of "Niddah" deals with the woman's menstruation laws, 1779–1808; Danby, *Tractate Sanhedrin*, 745–57.

⁵³ Youssef, *Encyclopedia of Christian Q & A*, 699–701.

⁵⁴ Youssef, *Encyclopedia of Christian Q & A*, 701.

question is why the woman's purification with its detailed regulations was still conveyed in the thirteen-century Church Canons as in *Misbah al-Zulmah* book of Ibn Kabar.⁵⁵

4. Conclusion: An Embryonic Stage for a New “Judeo-Copto” Scholarship

In this introduction, I have depicted some of several Jewish signatures in the Coptic tradition that help to initiate a new direction in studying the origins of the Coptic Church liturgy and to contribute to its early historical reconstruction. As seen previously, the Jewish community in Egypt was an important target for the early Christian mission. Surely this is an important consideration in evaluating and probing the early stage of Egyptian Church history. Searching for similarities and digging into the late Second Temple era writings (200 BCE–70 CE), the early Jewish prayers, and rabbinic dictums, opens a wide door for locating the roots of some fundamental Coptic rituals and particularly the Coptic Morning Service, which forms the core of my thesis. This is an exciting study, because linking the two traditions wasn't feasible in the past. Judeo-Christian studies saw its momentum only during the last fifty years, while scholarship that perceives a possible Jewish core at the heart of the Egyptian Christianity has been on the rise only for the last twenty-five years.⁵⁶ This thesis lays a foundation for a new Judeo-Coptic scholarship, which could advance Coptic liturgical studies significantly.

This thesis also targets an important lacuna in the spirituality of the contemporary Coptic worshipper. The mysteries and puzzles that surround many Coptic liturgical components prevent contemporary Coptic parishioners from praying with understanding (1 Cor. 14:15). The twenty-first century Copt needs a sort of “Halakah” guidance towards their worshipping practices.

⁵⁵ Ibn Kabar was a Coptic scholar, born at the end of the thirteenth century. He wrote an encyclopedia of Coptic ecclesiology in twenty-four sections, with numerous supplements, under the title of *Misbah al-Zulmah, Fildah al-Khidmah*. For his biography, see Atiya, “Ibn Kabar,” 1267–68. For the canons in regard to the menstruation, see Ibn Kabar, *Misbah al-Zulmah*, 114, 138.

⁵⁶ In Chapter 2, I will discuss some of the history of the research and will highlight some of the recent scholarship.

It is necessary to conclude this introduction with an important statement. The research involved understanding the existence of many Jewish elements in the Coptic Church is challenging. Although I will show numerous significant similarities between the two liturgies and, will clearly show that the Jewish traditions are deeply embedded in the Coptic liturgical tradition, it is nearly impossible to prove how exactly the one was transferred to the other. Historical documents of the early Egyptian Church are silent in this regard. Thus a slip into anachronism could easily occur while engaging in such an investigation. Therefore it is important to consider the singularity of the socio-religious details of the community of the Jews of Egypt, their religious communal life as an integral part of the global Hellenistic Judaism, and their ties with the Jews of the Land of Israel.

Chapter 1

Research History, Problems, and Possibilities

The purpose of my thesis is to demonstrate a clear Jewish impact on the early stage of the Alexandrian Church liturgy as seen in the Coptic Morning Service. As I mentioned previously, the notion of a Jewish impact on the Coptic Church has not yet produced a committed following of Coptic liturgists or Coptic historians, so presenting this is fairly contrarian. However, tracing the Jewish influence on an important ritual such as the Coptic Morning Service has compelled me to enlarge my scope of understanding as to how primary sources describe the early days of the Church, how especially Coptic scholars picture its primitive seed, and how the Coptic Church perceives its own origin. These stimulating avenues of scholarship represent the current research history of my thesis.

Traditionally, most Coptic Church historians remain undecided as to its origin. Some scholars observe a “possible influence” of Egyptian, Greek, or Jewish, without specifying which “influence” had the most impact on the church’s beginning or exactly on which aspect, i.e. liturgy, practices, customs, art, liturgical cantillation, etc. The most common scholarly consensus is that Alexandria is considered the cradle of Christianity in Egypt because of its larger Jewish community in the diaspora and that Alexandria was also an attractive target for early Christian missions. This important seaport city was a true melting pot “for many ethnic cultures and the city itself was subject to a wide range of local developments, which created and formatted a distinct Alexandrian ‘culture’ as well as several distinct ‘cultures’.”⁵⁷ However, this places the aura of the Church origins in a gloomy sky, where scholars sometimes see it as holding heretical origins, that is, the Coptic Church springing from a Jewish seed is viewed as heretical. Sometimes—depending on their scope of research interest—Coptic Church historians perceive a

⁵⁷ Hinge and Krasilnikoff, “Introduction,” 9.

pell-mell of many cultures: Egyptian, Greek, and Byzantine. Some of these scholars have written what I would call a type of broad-spectrum monograph about the Coptic Church, where they lightly discuss the origin of the Coptic Church. For example, we find a Professor of History at the University of Utah, Aziz Atiya, stating in his book, *The Copts and Christian Civilization* (1979), that “The origins of Coptic Christianity need no great elaboration. St Mark the Evangelist is its recognized founder and first patriarch, in the fourth decade of the first century.”⁵⁸ In other words, Atiya determines that no scholarly investigation is needed, and no other notions regarding the Coptic Church origins need to be considered. On the other hand, John Watson observes that worship in churches in Egypt reverberates different resonances, with various cultural impacts. In *Among the Copts* (2000), he writes, “the worship in Coptic churches conveys the sights and sounds of the mystical, Semitic and antique. From the moment when the Oriental Orthodox priest begins to sing the exquisite Arabic Melisma, the newcomer is beguiled.”⁵⁹ Jill Kamil, on the other hand, in *Christianity in the Land of the Pharaohs* (2002),⁶⁰ bases her view of the Coptic Church ritual on personal observation during her stay in Egypt, although without any documented evidence. She is inclined towards a Pharaonic impact on the Copts in their social customs and church ritual.

In this chapter, I will group scholars who find interest in digging into the Coptic Church origins or into the history of early Egyptian Christianity under different categories. The first group consists of historians who mainly attempt to find the origins of the Coptic Church through the early history of the Alexandrian papacy. The second category brings together scholars who do

⁵⁸ Atiya, *The Copts and Christian Civilization*, 2.

⁵⁹ Watson, *Among the Copts*, 2.

⁶⁰ Kamil, *Christianity in the Land of the Pharaohs*. Instead of understanding the Philonic concept of the “Logos,” the author tries to find its legacy in the Memphite doctrine, or cosmogony, which is regarded as a more sophisticated story of the creation than those of Heliopolis or Hermopolis. See p. 97. Also, she attempts to locate several biblical terms, such as in Genesis 1 and in John’s Gospel, “the Creator spoke,” within ancient Egyptian and gnostic literatures, see pp. 98, and 104–105.

find some Jewish trace or seed in the origins of the Coptic Church. Their evidence and conclusions are vital for this dissertation for the purpose of strengthening my case for a Jewish seed in the Coptic Church. Finally, the third category assesses the authors of the Coptic catechism books who undertake the study of Church history and its liturgy. Within this collection of writings, I will display how religious stories are considered an authoritative source in describing the early phases of the Church, regardless of their veracity.

After looking at these three groups, I will examine some problems with the existing hypotheses and theories in order to bring together evidence obtained from their findings that could be beneficial for a new scholarly orientation towards the origins of the Coptic Church, especially of its liturgy. When comparing and contrasting these points of views with my own search for the evidence of a Jewish foundation to the Coptic liturgy, I believe that new criteria for evolving a fresh hypothesis will develop.

1. Historians Who Focus on the Early Alexandrian Papacy

The first group deals with historians who mainly attempt to study the early history of the Coptic Church through the biographies of the Alexandrian popes, highlighting the early traditions of St. Mark as founder of the Alexandrian Church.

The *Church History* of Eusebius⁶¹ (known also as *Historia Ecclesiastica*) is the first monograph, dated from the fourth century, that includes the evangelization of Egypt by St. Mark and his martyrdom in Alexandria. The Eusebius tradition wanted to present this apostolic figure as the founder of the Church of Alexandria, after Mark's appointment of Anianus as his successor

⁶¹ Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260–c. 340 CE) was a Roman historian of Greek descent. Eusebius' fame principally rests on his important book, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which rightly earned for him the title "Father of Church History." When Caesarea became a center of persecution of Christians, he decided to flee to Tyre. From there he went to Egypt. In 313, he returned to Caesarea, where he was elected as its bishop in 315. See Atiya, "Eusebius of Caesarea," 1070–71.

in pastoring the followers of Christ in Egypt.⁶² Starting from the fourth century, this tradition became the main source of the apostolicity seed of the Coptic Church, which later entailed many traditions surrounding the ordination of the bishop of Alexandria (later called pope).⁶³ The Eusebius tradition heavily impacted the views of many following historians. Therefore, it is worthwhile to look over the Coptic primary sources in this regard.

From the tenth century, we find a monumental work known as *Siyar al-Bi'ah al-Muqaddasah* (“*Biographies of the Holy Church*”).⁶⁴ It was first translated and studied by Basil Evetts in 1904 when the Arabic title became the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*.⁶⁵ The *Siyar* was composed, in various epochs, by Coptic authors who recorded the history of the Church, and apparently each one of them continued the work of his predecessor.⁶⁶ The general consensus regarding the authorship of the book is that it is attributed to Sawirus (Severus) ibn al-Mukaffa’, who died in 987 CE.⁶⁷ He was the bishop of al-Ashmunayn,⁶⁸ and because of his

⁶² Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.24.1 (ed. E. Schwartz and T. Mommsen, 1903). Eusebius in the same book (2.15) also describes how Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome in response to several appeals from the Christians in Alexandria. In another book, also written by Eusebius, titled *Chronicles*, the author places Mark’s arrival in Alexandria in 43 CE, the third year of Claudius’ reign. In chapter 2:16, Eusebius tells us about Mark’s mission in Alexandria and his establishment of churches (2.16.1–2). For book 2, chapters 15, 16 and 24, see Crusé, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 64–66 and 79–81.

⁶³ Traditions and liturgical symbols surrounding the ordination and the enthronement of the pope of Alexandria will be examined with the book of *Siyar al-Bi'ah al-Muqaddasah* attributed to Severus Ibn al-Mukaffa.

⁶⁴ Also known as *Tarikh Batarikat al-Kanisah al-Misriyah*.

⁶⁵ The book of *Siyar al-Bi'ah al-Muqaddasah* preoccupied many scholars. Eusebe Renaudot (1713) published the Latin translation known as *Historia Patriarcharum: Alexandrinorum Jacobitarum*. Evetts published and translated different parts from Severus’ book between 1904 and 1910. See his work in *Patrologia Orientalis*, part 1 (1904), part 2 (1907), part 3 (1910).

⁶⁶ Den Heijer, “History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria,” 1239–42. Heijer contests its attribution to Severus ibn al-Mukaffa as he considers him only a collector of popes’ biographies from earliest sources. After Severus ibn al-Mukaffa, this tenth-century book was continued by Michael, bishop of Tinnis (11th century). He wrote in Coptic and covers the epoch between 880 to 1046 CE. Mawhub ibn Mansur ibn Mufarrig, deacon from Alexandria, and finally Pope Mark III, covers the epoch of 1131 to 1167.

⁶⁷ Severus is a well-known erudite on many subjects: first, on theological science, where he discussed all types of problems from the Coptic viewpoint. Second, he composed a number of items on Coptic traditions and liturgical practices. Third, he displayed an extraordinary knowledge of exegetical and biblical studies. A scholar like Atiya assumes that Severus must have memorized the whole Bible and that he was able to quote it freely in his disputation with Rabbi Moses in the presence of the Fatimid caliph al-Mu‘izz in 975. Fourth, he proved himself to be the great champion of Coptic Christianity in works defending its doctrines against the intense attacks of the Melchite patriarch Eutychius (also known as Sa‘id ibn Bitriq), a favorite of the Fatimid caliphs. In 950, Severus composed his book on

erudition, he was highly venerated by contemporary patriarchs, respected by the Fatimid caliphs, and beloved and appreciated by noted figures of his own day. The text of Severus regarding Mark's foundation of the Coptic Church demonstrates his dependence on Eusebius' opinions in his *Church History*.⁶⁹

In the end of the nineteenth century, Edith Butcher, in *The Story of the Church of Egypt* (1897), mentions that St. Mark seems to have been accompanied by St. Peter to preach the Gospel in a city called Babylon in Egypt.⁷⁰ Montague Fowler, in *Christian Egypt: Past, Present and Future* (1902), also asserts that the Coptic Church's founder is St. Mark.⁷¹ Although these are not scholarly books, they represent the current and common opinion among Copts, including scholars, regarding the origins of the Coptic Church, and maintained throughout the twentieth century.

The early twenty-first century witnessed some remarkable work concerning the Coptic Church history. Stephen Davis (2004) in *Early Coptic Papacy* looks at the *History of Patriarchs* narrated by Severus and his predecessors with an eye of critique. In his first volume, he analyzes the development of the Egyptian papacy from its origins to the rise of Islam. In searching for the historical Mark, he finds that the New Testament writings do not connect the apostle with any Christian mission to Alexandria,⁷² but rather to Pamphylia with Paul and Barnabas. The figure of Mark is also related to Peter. Regarding that, Davis lists scholars who question whether the Mark

the councils in reply to an abusive treatise by Eutychius. For his main works, see Atiya, "Sawirus Ibn Al-Muqaffa," 2100–103.

⁶⁸ Al-Ashmunayn is the ancient Hermopolis Magna in the district of Antinopolis, now called El Sheikh Ibada, a small village in Upper Egypt.

⁶⁹ Seybold, "Severus: Historia Patriarcharum Alexandrinorum," 1, 2–3; 16–22.

⁷⁰ Butcher, *The Story of the Church of Egypt*, 19.

⁷¹ Fowler, *Christian Egypt*, 2.

⁷² Davis, *The Early Coptic Papacy*, 2–4, sketches the figure of St. Mark through the New Testament. Mark is known as John Mark (Acts 12:12, 25), a companion of the early mission with Paul and Barnabas, who was Mark's cousin (Col 4:10), and known as a helper (13:5). He traveled with Paul and Barnabas to Pamphylia in Asia Minor where he left them and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). The consequence of his decision created a quarrel between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:39–40).

of 1 Peter⁷³ is the same person mentioned by Luke in *The Acts of the Apostles*.⁷⁴ Early writings that connect Mark with Peter are hit-and-miss in providing clear information about Mark.⁷⁵ Davis mentions that many early traditions surrounding the writings of the canonical gospel of Mark were conjectured.⁷⁶

Davis observes the sources where Mark is portrayed as the founder of the Egyptian Church, including an important quotation from Eusebius' book, the *History of the Church*, that must not be omitted here. Eusebius states: "Now they say that this Mark was the first to have set out to Egypt to preach the Gospel, which he had already written down for himself, and the first to have organised churches in Alexandria itself."⁷⁷ The language used by Eusebius shows that his knowledge about Mark's writing of his Gospel as well as his organization of churches in Alexandria is based on an oral tradition: "Now they say." Davis finds a controversial text attributed to Clement of Alexandria that refers to Mark's mission to Alexandria, where, it states, he wrote his Gospel.⁷⁸ This document intrigues Davis as it corroborates with John Chrysostom's saying about that.⁷⁹ But, the authenticity of the text remains questionable. Davis also cites a long quotation from Clement of Alexandria's letter, where he clearly attests the existence of Christians before Mark's arrival and the fact that he wrote his gospel for them.⁸⁰ The questions about and inaccuracies in the earliest information concerning Mark's activities and his martyrdom in

⁷³ 1 Pet 5:13.

⁷⁴ For a list of scholars who debate this issue, see Davis, *Early Coptic Papacy*, 182 note 5.

⁷⁵ In an Arabic book edited by the Committee of the Church of St. Mary in Choubra (Cairo), entitled *St. Mark in Prayers and Hymns*, the editors publish a manuscript 82/13 where the narrative recounts the ancestors of St. Mark and his early life.

⁷⁶ The authorship of the canonical gospel of St. Mark appears in the writing of Papias, bishop of Hierapolis (120–130 CE); and Irenaeus of Lyon (180–200 CE) in his *Against Heresies* claims that Mark, "after Peter's death in Rome, handed down to us in a written form the things that had been preached by Peter." For the books concerning Papias and Irenaeus, see Davis, *Early Coptic Papacy*, 4, 182 notes 10, 11.

⁷⁷ Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.16.1.

⁷⁸ Davis, *Early Coptic Papacy*, 8. For the scholars who deal with Clement's attributed letter and the *Secret Gospel*, see 184 note 30.

⁷⁹ Davis quotes from John Chrysostom, *Homily on Matthew* 1.3 (*Patrologia Graeco*), and from B.A. Pearson, "Earliest Christianity."

⁸⁰ For this lengthy quotation, see Davis, *Early Coptic Papacy*, 8–9.

Alexandria “led to rise of oral traditions that tried to fill in the historical gaps.”⁸¹ A certain fourth-century text called *Acts of Mark*—from which I believe the Coptic Synaxarium sourced Mark’s bibliography—holds three significant streams: Mark’s foundation of the Church, his encounter with Anianus, the shoe maker (Mark’s successor), and his martyrdom on the outskirts of Alexandria. The earliest of Mark’s successors as listed by Eusebius⁸² includes a brief chronology, but according to Davis, there is almost nothing about their lives and their leadership of the church at their time.

Despite many early documents dated from the second century examined by Davis, we find him quoting from Walter Bauer (whose work will be discussed later) that this lack of information about the Church origin and the earliest of Mark’s successors is “a mere echo and a puff of smoke.”⁸³

This longstanding Coptic tradition about St. Mark’s mission, his gospel, his visit, and his martyrdom at Alexandria, is repeated in countless monographs. Furthermore, we find that the relic of St. Mark also maintains an ongoing history, especially by Coptic scholars, for it continues to be tied to the liturgical ceremony of the new pope’s ordination and enthronement, even today. Otto Meinardus (2000) has been preoccupied with tracing its narrative from the earlier period to its “translation”⁸⁴ from Alexandria to Venice in the eighth century.⁸⁵

2. Scholars Who Consider a Gnostic or Jewish Seed of the Coptic Church

This group of scholars ignores the Eusebian traditions about Mark as the founder of the Church and tries to find other evidence for the roots of Christianity in Egypt. Walter Bauer

⁸¹ Davis, *Early Coptic Papacy*, 9.

⁸² Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, follows the successors of Mark chronologically: Anianus 2:29; Abilius 3:14; Primus 4:1; Justus 4:4; Eumenes 4:5; Mercianus 4:11; Celadion 4:11; Aggripinus 4:19; Julian 5:9; Demetrius 5:22.

⁸³ Davis, *Early Coptic Papacy*, 14. Davis quotes Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 45.

⁸⁴ The “translation of relics” is the removal of the remains of the saint’s body from one locality to another.

⁸⁵ Meinardus, *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*, 28–30.

(1971) notes that the earliest predominant form of Christianity in Egypt was heretical, specifically Gnostic. He questions: “What reason could [churchmen] have had for being silent about the origins of Christianity in such an important center as Alexandria if there had been something favorable to report?”⁸⁶ Such a question encouraged Colin Roberts (1979) to investigate in the field of papyrology the issue of the obscurity of the early stage of the Church.⁸⁷ The importance of Roberts’ survey consists of his finding extant Christian manuscripts from the second century CE (there is no manuscript evidence from the first century).⁸⁸ He discovers in these literary sources a remarkable scribal feature: the “nomina sacra,”⁸⁹ which he argues are of Jewish origin.⁹⁰ The penchant of scholars who follow Roberts is to continue to locate and investigate the earliest texts of the biblical text and the Christian Church, which could offer further hopes in locating the earliest foundations of the Egyptian Church.⁹¹

There is a noticeable gap in the scholarly assessments between those who are dismissive of a heretical origin⁹² and those who are open to the possibility of a Jewish Alexandrian seed. I will

⁸⁶ Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 45. See also, Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 227. Bauer pursues the enigma of the silence of first-century documents. He sees that the reason for such silence is due to the annihilation of primitive Christianity along with the entire body in which it was immersed, i.e. the Jewish community. See also Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity*, 15.

⁸⁷ Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*. Prior to Roberts were Bell and Skeat, who, in *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel*, edited three different papyri from Egypt: an unknown gospel, where they found the tradition of using nomina sacra in scribal practices, two fragments belonging to 2 Chronicles 24: 17–27, and a leaf from a liturgical book that does not mention the name of Christ or Jesus.

⁸⁸ Some of Roberts’ findings are: seven Old Testament, three New Testament, and four non-biblical gospels known as “Egerton Gospels,” *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Gospel of Thomas* 26–28 (P. Oxy. 1), and *Irenaeus Adversus Haereses*. See Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 12–14; see also Pearson, “Earliest Christianity in Egypt,” 101.

⁸⁹ The term nomina sacra (Latin) means “sacred names.” It refers to customs of abbreviated writing of several frequently occurring divine names or titles in early Holy Scripture used in Greek, Latin, and Coptic manuscripts. Frequent nomina sacra include the words for God, Lord, Jesus, Christ, Son, Spirit, cross, Israel, Savior, Jerusalem, Man, and Heaven. Almost the same nomina sacra exist in the liturgical Coptic books. Concerning the nomina sacra in the Sahidic dialect, see Shisha-Halevy, “Sahidic,” 194–202, and Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 95–110. The author mentions their provenance from Jewish as well as Coptic manuscripts. Kruger, *The Gospel of the Savior: An Analysis of P. Oxy. 840*, 57–60, traces many nomina sacra in this gospel.

⁹⁰ Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*, 26–34; see also Pearson, “Earliest Christianity in Egypt,” 133.

⁹¹ Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt*, 1–25, in predicting that the early Coptic history is “a puff of smoke,” looks to papyrology to locate evidence against the view of a heretical origin of the Egyptian Church.

⁹² A heretical origin could be an offensive assertion for a Church proud to be one of the oldest Christian centers (between Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome), the Catechetic of Alexandria with its Alexandrian theology (Clement of

trace the studies that claim the potential of a Jewish origin by the chronology of their publications. In 1924, Idris Bell and Walter Crum tackled the theme of Alexandrian Judaism by focusing on the translation of the Greek *Letter of Claudius to the Alexandrines* (41 CE).⁹³ (They also cite three other Coptic texts whose contents do not reflect the book title). In the book authored by Leslie Barnard, *The Apostolic Fathers and their Background* (1966), the author dedicates a chapter to Judaism in Egypt during the period of 70 to 135 CE, where he claims that the Epistle of Barnabas has been unnoticed by scholars, describing this epistle as a “piece of evidence for the understanding of Egyptian Judaism during this period.”⁹⁴ He believes that the author is an Alexandrian rabbi who converted to Christianity,⁹⁵ for the author’s division of the Epistle into Haggadah (Chapters 1–17) and Halakhah (Chapters 18–20) makes the text “strongly rabbinic,” the Pesharim method adopted by the author in interpreting the Old Testament.⁹⁶ The Epistle also describes the religious life of the Jews of that period. Barnard argues as a conclusion to this Judeo-Christian book, that the period of 70–135 CE witnessed the preparation for the triumph in Egypt of Pharisaic Judaism over Hellenistic and sectarian Judaism.⁹⁷

Martiniano Roncaglia, in *Histoire de l’Église Copte* (1969), argues the possibility of a Jerusalemite origin of Egyptian Christianity. He ties the evangelization of Egypt to James who led the Church at its early stage.⁹⁸ In 1971, Robert Wilken emphasizes the importance of Judaism

Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius), and the founder of the world’s monasticism (Anthony the Great, Macarius, Pachome).

⁹³ Bell and Crum, *Jews and Christians in Egypt*. The other texts cited in this book are: the Meletian schism, the rights of the Alexandrines, and the correspondence of Paphnutius.

⁹⁴ Barnard, *The Apostolic Fathers and their Background*, 46.

⁹⁵ Barnard, *The Apostolic Fathers and their Background*, 47.

⁹⁶ The word Hebrew word “pesharim” means “interpretation.” It became known from one group of texts, numbering some hundreds, among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The “pesharim” give a theory of scriptural interpretation previously partly known, but now fully defined. The writers of “pesharim” believe that Scripture is written on two levels: the surface for ordinary readers with limited knowledge, the concealed one for specialists with higher knowledge. This is most clearly spelled out in the Habakkuk Peshar (1QpHab). See Brownlee, *The Midrash Peshar of Habakkuk*, 26.

⁹⁷ Barnard, *The Apostolic Fathers and their Background*, 47.

⁹⁸ Roncaglia, *Histoire de l’Église Copte*, 1, 53–62; see also, Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity*, 14.

in Alexandria,⁹⁹ depicting the anti-Semitic attitude of pope Cyril (412–442 CE) towards the Alexandrian Jews.¹⁰⁰ In 1985, Aryeh Kasher outlines his thesis on Jews in Alexandria,¹⁰¹ and provides details about the condition of the Jewish community in the Egyptian “Chora” and their organization.¹⁰² He pursues two interesting topics: the Alexandrian Jewish community in the Talmud,¹⁰³ and the Alexandrian Jews in apocryphal literature.¹⁰⁴ In 1986, Birger Pearson and James Goehring edited a volume of different studies related to the roots of Egyptian Christianity.¹⁰⁵ Contributions relevant to my survey include Pearson, “Earliest Christianity in Egypt,” and Klijn, “Jewish Christianity in Egypt,” where the authors emphasize the importance of the Jewish community at the birth of Christianity in Egypt.

For the last twenty-five years, curiosity about a possible Jewish core at the heart of Egyptian Christianity has been on the rise. The monographs published between 1990 and 2010 have focused on locating this potentiality by different means. Areas where there is a general consensus include 1. the flight into Egypt (*Arabic Infancy Gospel* and *The Gospel of Pseudo Mathew*);¹⁰⁶ 2. the historical demography of Jews in Alexandria;¹⁰⁷ 3. the Christian missions

⁹⁹ Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*; see his book chapters: “Judaism in Alexandria,” 39–54, and “Cyril and the Jews,” 54–68.

¹⁰⁰ The papacy period of Cyril (412–442 CE) is far later than the era of the Coptic Church’s beginning.

¹⁰¹ Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*.

¹⁰² “Chora” (Greek word) means “a city” (“small city,” “a village”) outside of a polis. Depicting the chora(s) where the Jews were established, Kasher discloses historical and geographical details that could support future study in examining the religious development (from Judaism to Christianity) of those choras from the late Second Temple era to the time of Cyril I. Scholarship that could help to collect relevant material includes: Amélineau, *La Géographie de l’Égypte Copte*; Viaud, *Les Pèlerinages Coptes en Égypte*; Kerkeslager, “Jewish Pilgrimage and Jewish Identity,” 99–122.

¹⁰³ Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 346–56.

¹⁰⁴ Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, 208–33.

¹⁰⁵ Pearson and Goehring (eds), *The Roots of Egyptian Christianity*; see Pearson’s article, “Earliest Christianity in Egypt,” 132–161, and Klijn’s, “Jewish Christianity in Egypt,” 161–78.

¹⁰⁶ In both apocryphal sources, the child Jesus is shown as a miracle worker. The *Gospel of Pseudo Mathew* contains not only stories of miracles performed by the child Jesus but also an account of the conversion of the whole city of Hermopolis (actually, town of El Ashmunein, in Al Minya governorate). Many apocryphal stories and legends are associated with the flight into Egypt.

¹⁰⁷ According to Josephus, *The Wars of Jews II* 385, the whole population of Egypt was 7,500,00 and the Jewish Egyptians represented eight percent of the whole population, which is thought to be a proof of Josephus’ exaggeration. See, Josephus (trans. by Thackeray), *The Jewish War I–III*, 473–74.

started after the Pentecost feast (Acts 2), after which Jews have to return home with a motive of preaching the true Messiah; 4. the role of Apollos as an Alexandrian Jew in the Early Church as depicted in the New Testament;¹⁰⁸ 5. the uncertainty of who preached in Egypt: Peter¹⁰⁹ or Mark;¹¹⁰ and 6. the important papyrological finding of C. Roberts,¹¹¹ which is regularly noted throughout subsequent scholarship.

Wilfred Griggs, in his book *Early Egyptian Christianity* (1990),¹¹² demonstrates through an appraisal of the traditional elements (as mentioned above), the potential of Jewish influence for the Egyptian Church. Pearson, in *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (1990), after locating different Jewish elements in Gnosticism, finds that trying to identify the role of Gnosticism in the development of Christianity in Egypt involves a “very difficult problem of assessing just how important that role was.” He adds, “The origins of Egyptian Christianity are shrouded in obscurity, owing to a dearth of reliable evidence.”¹¹³ Christian Cannuyer, a French scholar, discusses in his article, “L’Ancrage Juif de la Première Eglise d’Alexandrie,”¹¹⁴ the link between Alexandria and Jerusalem. At the conclusion of the article, the writer explains that Occidental Christians (the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church) have learned recently how to measure the importance of the Jewish foundation in their faith: “De nos jours, les chrétiens occidentaux apprennent à mesurer l’importance de l’enracinement juif de leur foi.”¹¹⁵ Joseph Modrzejewski, in his monograph *The Jews of Egypt*, wonders about the silence of Christian origins in Egypt and argues that it is due to the Trajan oppression of the Jewish rebellion. He

¹⁰⁸ Acts 18:24, 19:1; 1 Cor 1:12, 3:4–6, 3:22, 4:6, 16:12; Titus 3:13.

¹⁰⁹ 1 Peter 5:13 shows the probability that Peter wrote from the Babylon city (Old Cairo). Evidence is not compelling according to Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 18.

¹¹⁰ The tradition first claiming that the evangelizing of Egypt was by Mark originates in the Eusebius statement in *Ecclesiastical History* 2.16.1.

¹¹¹ Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief*.

¹¹² Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity*, 4–34.

¹¹³ Pearson, *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity*, 195.

¹¹⁴ Cannuyer, “L’Ancrage Juif,” 31–45.

¹¹⁵ Cannuyer, “L’Ancrage Juif,” 45.

states: “If primitive Christianity had not left any marks on Egyptian soil until the end of the second century, it was because it had annihilated along with the entire body in which it was immersed the Jewish community in Egypt.”¹¹⁶

In 2004, Pearson, in *Gnosticism and Christianity in Roman and Coptic Egypt*, shows how the continuity of the Alexandrian Church tradition in choosing presbyters follows the model of the synagogue.¹¹⁷ He details the use of the references from the Enochic apocryphal books in the early Egyptian Church.¹¹⁸ In 2007, his article, “Earliest Christianity in Egypt: Further Observations,” summarizes the main ideas of his book *Gnosticism and Christianity*. Edwin Broadhead, *Jewish Ways of Following Jesus*, also lays out the two scholarly views about the origins of Egyptian Christianity, whether it is founded on Gnosticism or on a messianic concept from the Jewish community of Egypt. He adds new elements such as Origen’s (185–254 CE) thesis about Jewish observances in fasting and circumcision, in *The Gospel of the Hebrews* as frequently quoted by Didymus the Blind (313–398 CE).¹¹⁹ He also adds a fourth-century witness from Oxyrhynchus (p.Oxy. 6.903) where the text appears to speak of visiting both church and synagogue.¹²⁰ James Paget, in *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity* (2010), studies a vital new theme about the messianic hope in various Alexandrian apocryphal writings both Christian and Jewish, such as the *Epistle of Barnabas* (probably Alexandrian), comparing it with *Church History* of Eusebius, especially book 7 and the *Apocalypse of Elijah*.¹²¹ Paget sees in the figure of Clement of Alexandria a Jewish influence that might be reflected in his making of Jewish literature and its presence in his extant works of Jewish opinion. This strengthens Paget’s assumption that Clement has a viva voce with the Jews of Alexandria. Paget also supports the

¹¹⁶ Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt*, 227. See also Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity*, 14–15.

¹¹⁷ Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity*, 18.

¹¹⁸ Pearson, *Gnosticism and Christianity*, 132–42.

¹¹⁹ Broadhead, *Jewish Ways of Following Jesus*, 117–19.

¹²⁰ Broadhead, *Jewish Ways of Following Jesus*, 119.

¹²¹ Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity*, 137–47.

Jewish influence on Clement, by mentioning a saying from Jerome, who states that Clement was one of those earlier Christian authors who would often cite Jewish opinion when engaged in biblical interpretation.¹²² He confirms that Clement himself states that he had a Jewish teacher from Palestine (*Strom* 1.11.2), probably Pantaenus,¹²³ and asserts Clement's knowledge of Jewish sources in Greek.¹²⁴ This familiarity of Clement with the Jewish sources opens doors to further understanding about early Christian thinking in Alexandria and how the Jewish influences may have shaped the Coptic Church traditions.

3. The Authors of the Catechism Books

John Gee, in his article "Some Neglected Aspects" (2012), emphasizes the neglect of historical evidence in the mind of the Copts: "The want of historical verification does not seem to trouble Copts. If there is no evidence for the tradition, there is also no evidence against it: faith fills the gap."¹²⁵ The authors of the Coptic catechism books,¹²⁶ who undertake the study of the Church history and its liturgy, find in the homegrown religious stories a fruitful source for picturing the early stages of the Coptic Church, regardless of their legacy.¹²⁷ Coptic

¹²² Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity*, 92–93.

¹²³ This is the opinion of Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History* 5.11.1.

¹²⁴ All the Jewish writings that Clement cites in his writings are in Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity*, note 9, p. 93. Paget refers to Demetrius (*Strom* 1.141.1–2; 1.150.2); Aritobulus (*Strom* 1.72.4; 1:150:1; 5.97.7; 6.32.5); Aristaeas (*Strom* 1.148.1–149.3); Artapanus (*Strom* 1.154.2); Pseudo-Hecataeus (*Strom* 5.113); Ezekiel the Tragedian (*Strom* 1.155.1–1.156.2); and *The Assumption of Moses* (*Strom* 6.132).

¹²⁵ Gee, "Some Neglected Aspects of Egypt's Conversion to Christianity," 43.

¹²⁶ See El Masry, *Story of the Copts*; Bishop Isizoros, *Al Kharida*; Menassa, *Tarikh Al Kenissa*, 9–10, where the author mentions the probability of the existence of Christianity in Alexandria, prior to St. Mark's mission. He includes four arguments for his idea: first, the location of Alexandria which is close to Palestine; second, in that city, there were different quarters belonging to Alexandrian Jews whose relationship with the Jews of Jerusalem was interconnected; third, St. Luke wrote his Gospel to Theophilus, an honorary person from Alexandria; fourth, some who believed in Christ after Peter's preaching (Acts 2:10) were from Egypt and returned to their homeland with the new faith.

¹²⁷ The Coptic Church tradition asserts that the episode of the flight of Joseph, Mary and Jesus (Matt. 2:13–15) into Egypt is the starting point of evangelizing Egypt by Christ himself. The apocryphal narrative of the *Vision of Theophilus* (Patriarch of Alexandria 385–412 CE), recounts different miraculous stories that happened during their sojourn in many cities in Egypt. These so-called "heavenly visions" attest the primacy of the people of Egypt in the salvation process based on biblical quotations, such as Hos. 11:1, Isa 19:1, and Isa 19:25: "...Blessed be Egypt, my people..." See, *Vision of Theophilus*, transl. by Mingana; Malaty, *Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Church*, 11–

hagiographies recount episodes relevant to early apostolic missions to Egypt. For instance, despite the fact that the Coptic tradition credits Saint Mark with the evangelization of Egypt, we find in the *Synaxarium* that on the 9th of the Coptic month of Hator,¹²⁸ the Church commemorates St. Bartholomew, one of the Twelve Apostles, who also preached in Egypt in the oasis of Al-Khargah.¹²⁹ The *Synaxarium* and almost all of the Egyptian monographs elude any perception of the evangelization of Jewish circles in Egypt during the early apostolic mission. However, the apostolic mission, whether it is through Mark, Bartholomew, or James, must be considered as a possible Jerusalemite impact on the founding of the early Egyptian Church.¹³⁰ The idea of any Jewishness in the formation of the early Coptic Church seems almost excluded from the modern Arabic-speaking Coptic authors' minds, and certainly from their writings.

4. Problems with the Standard Theory

The first problem that I found, in exploring this research history was that the ongoing disagreement of scholars about the origin of the Alexandrian Church and its liturgy makes the overall view distorted. Secondly, the majority of scholars who research the initiation of Jewish tradition in the development of Christianity in Egypt through specific historical facts fail to arrive at a solution to this enigmatic problem, and end up repeating the same views. Thus, I believe that the potential for uncovering some of its origins could be brought about by focusing not on straightforward history (if history can even be considered as "straightforward"), but by studying liturgies from both traditions in order to reach some conclusive facts. Thirdly, the general

14. Crum, *Coptic Monuments*, while cataloguing Coptic manuscripts of the Cairo Egyptian Museum, mentions a parchment (# 8015) whose provenance is from Akhmin (South of Cairo) that recounts a story of Egyptian Jews who, after Christ's passion, attempted to decide on his divinity. The text is written in the Sahidic Coptic dialect.

¹²⁸ Bartholomew is commemorated on the first Thot. *Coptic Synaxarium*, 1, 1–2 states, "To this Apostle fell the lot to go [preach] to the oasis Al-Khargah."

¹²⁹ Al-Khargah Oasis is located in the Libyan Desert, about 200 km to the west of the Nile valley. It is the capital of New Valley Governorate. The oasis was known as the "Southern Oasis" to the Ancient Egyptians.

¹³⁰ Roncaglia, *Histoire de l'Eglise Copte*, 1, 53–62.

consensus that the origins of Coptic Christianity needs no investigation must be reassessed, as it is diverting scholars from seeing the existing conundrums. Fourthly, the major problem that could occur (at least for a Copt) when attempting to locate a Jewish seed in the Alexandrian Church is that this knowledge could be rejected outright by the Church leaders, due to the fragile locality of the Coptic Church in a Muslim milieu that dislikes the perception of any Jewish role played in the past in any Egyptian institution.

5. Present Possibilities

However, I consider many rewarding possibilities. The potential to even begin to understand the first two centuries of the Coptic Church requires that scholars study the late Second Temple literature, Jewish liturgy, Jewish customs, rabbinic dictums—without slipping into anachronism—in order to infer the ties between Hellenistic Judaism and the Coptic liturgy and its own surrounding customs and traditions.

I believe that the lack of available information about the Coptic Church liturgy, especially in the West, prevents the progress of such scholarship. The Coptic liturgy is immense, and is still not fully translated, annotated, commented on, or studied at academic level comparable to scholarship pertaining to the Jewish liturgy and the Qumran texts. The real movement towards translation of the massive Coptic liturgy—apart from the Euchologies—started only in the late 1960s when Copts began to emigrate from Egypt to different countries in Europe and North America. However, these translations are made for churchgoers, not for scholars. Fragments of the most valuable liturgical pieces are dispersed among many institutions around the world; unfortunately, only the ones of lesser value are what remain available in Egyptian monasteries.

I summarize my ideas regarding future possibilities by following the order of the scholarship groups mentioned above: 1. the history of the *Siyar al-Bi'ah al-Muqaddasah* (“*Biographies of the*

Holy Church”) collected by Sawirus (Severus) ibn al-Mukaffa, tenth century, needs to be studied with recognition of the common conservatism of Arabic-Christian authors, similar to that of the Jewish late Second Temple writings. 2. Davis cites a long quotation from Clement of Alexandria’s letter, where his attestation of the existence of Christians before Mark’s arrival needs more attention and updated research concerning this striking letter.¹³¹ 3. The unknown biographies about the early papacy as described by Eusebius, *History of the Church*, following the successors of Mark chronologically—Anianus, Abilius, Primus, Justus, Eumenes, Mercianus, Celadion, Aggripinus, Julian, and Demetrius—needs further investigation to determine if this enigmatic silence is due to the probability of their Jewishness origin, as it is assumed for the early bishops (patriarchs) of Jerusalem.¹³² 4. The fact that the *Epistle of Barnabas* has been overlooked or neglected by scholars as a “piece of evidence for the understanding of Egyptian Judaism during this period” also needs more attention. 5. The insights of the early Fathers and their conservatism with the Jewish late Second Temple writings leaves us to consider how this impacted not only their narratives but also their shaping of the liturgy and customs that surrounded it.

¹³¹ Davis, *Early Coptic Papacy*, 8–9.

¹³² Kohler, “Easter,” 5, 29. The author, while talking about the Easter celebration dates, states: “Under the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem, who were all Jews, no difference occurred between the Jewish and the Christian dates.”

Chapter 2 Research Method

Copts, as with many other Christians whose liturgical books encompass many early prayers, have been hesitant to embark on a new approach to understanding their own liturgy. In general, their explanation of the rituals does not move beyond personal meditations or pragmatic theories. The approach that I suggest, and believe will be profitable in the reconstruction of the origins of the Coptic Church through its liturgy, is to move towards “liturgical non-isolation,” or, better yet, liturgical collaboration. Dix discusses the problem of liturgical isolation, and implicates it in his introduction to *The Shape of the Liturgy*. In contrast, he provides an academic invitation aiming to link and integrate the Christian liturgies to the “first formation of the semi-Jewish church of the apostolic age.”¹³³ The common components in the Morning Service in both Jewish and Coptic traditions instills in me courage to build a case that may raise awareness that Coptic Church history might be reconstructed through its liturgy. Of course, this research requires a pertinent research technique.

1. Three Difficult Questions

At the outset of this chapter, I am confronted by three difficult questions: 1. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, many Jewish elements from the late Second Temple writings seem to echo throughout the Coptic tradition. Moreover, when examining the Morning Service in both traditions, striking textual, rubrical, and terminological similarities occur in this shared core daily ritual. Thus, my first main question is, how did such an impact occur and when? Primary sources to answer this question are very scanty. I ponder the oral tradition and conservatism that were fundamental aspects and common practices in both Jewish and Coptic traditions in conserving

¹³³ Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 11.

faith and prayers, and wonder if this is how the interrelations happened. Jewish prayers were transferred from generation to generation by a strict rule of oral tradition and this practice continues throughout the Coptic history. It is intriguing that the Jewish Prayers of the Morning Service are believed to have been transmitted orally up until their standardization took place by the second century CE.¹³⁴ 2. After locating striking parallels, such as are found in the Morning Service, the second main question is: What counts for evidence? For example, how does one determine that the textual correspondence, the rubrical commonality, and the resemblance in terminology count as evidence towards demonstrating the impact of the Jewish culture on Coptic liturgy? 3. The third main question is: What approaches have scholars who deal with the search for the origins of the Christian worship adopted for their studies? Unfortunately, the majority of potentially relevant scholars who emphasize tangible sources are quite vague about their actual research methods.

2. The Historical Literary Approach to Liturgy

This study will attempt to engage in a historical literary approach to liturgy. My main concern will not be with social, political, and economic factors, but with how religious ideas of Hellenistic Judaism and, more precisely, of Alexandrian Judaism, had potential impact on the Alexandrian or Coptic Church in a specific liturgical ritual: the Morning Service.

The historical period is that of the late Second Temple (200 BCE–70 CE). The religious ideas are expressed in literary forms such as canonical texts, pseudepigrapha, or dictums related to the “sages” and leaders of that time. These texts take on a particular authoritative feature when

¹³⁴ Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, 26; Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, 6–7; Hoffman, *The Canonization of the Synagogue Service*, 19. For the Coptic Church, studies focus more on the liturgical melodies than on liturgy prayers. Scholars investigate the reliability of oral tradition by comparing transcriptions of the same piece of music recorded decades apart by different scholars. These studies indicate that the simpler melodies may have remained intact for centuries. See Awadallah, *Manaret El Akdas*, 6–16; Muftah, et al., “Coptic Music,” 1715–47.

they are used liturgically or are in some way related to rituals such as the Morning Service and many other ceremonies in the Coptic Church.¹³⁵ In the Coptic Morning Service,¹³⁶ many biblical texts, non-biblical texts, pseudepigraphal thematic concepts, and liturgical practices, seem to have been inherited, sanctified, and, finally, deposited in the Alexandrian Church laudatory repertoire. These texts constitute the literary side of my research, while the historical component includes the story of the Alexandrian Jews at the time of the Church's birth in Egypt. The two cannot be separated, as Brian Stock states:

The historical is not isolated from the literary as fact and representation. The two aspects of the experience work together: the objectivity of the events spills over into the subjectivity of the records, perceptions, feelings, and observations. The transcribed experience also feeds back into the lived lives.¹³⁷

Thus my research perspective will include that of a historian of liturgy or a church historian through its liturgy. Understanding how a textually Jewish-oriented community came into being in the early history of the Alexandrian Church presupposes an assessment of some scholarly approaches in the field of late Judaism liturgy and early Christian liturgy in Egypt.

First, some understanding of the development of four major schools of thought, represented by four scholars, and as sketched by Paul Bradshaw, is required for my research.¹³⁸ Leopold Zunz (1794–1886) dealt with the evolution of the liturgy in the course of history. He focused on philological research in finding differences in the wording of prayers, as he compared different manuscripts. By comparing different forms and “peeling the layers,” his goal was to recover the original “urtext.” When the Cairo Genizah was discovered, Ismar Elbogen (1874–1943) used philological methods to analyze the history of the texts, viewing the original seed of the liturgy as

¹³⁵ Some other Coptic rituals show striking similarities: the Evening Service, Baptism, the Palm Sunday procession (corresponding to the Sukkot Jewish ritual), and many others.

¹³⁶ In Chapter 4, I will discuss the significance of the Morning Service in the Jewish liturgy and its uniqueness in the Coptic Church liturgy.

¹³⁷ Stock, *Listening to the Text*, 29.

¹³⁸ Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, 1–26.

having been gradually encapsulated in layers. Therefore, Louis Finkelstein (1895–1991), in studying the Amidah, emphasized the oral transmission of prayers. Finally, Joseph Heinemann (1915–1977) suggested the possibility of locating the origin of individual Jewish liturgical texts on the basis of the particular stylistic features.¹³⁹ Heinemann’s methodology later was adopted by Lawrence Hoffmann,¹⁴⁰ Tzvee Zahavy, and Stefan Reif, who promote an integrated interdisciplinary approach, incorporating literary criticism, archaeology, history, etc.

When adopting such approaches, which I believe are applicable to my research, some other essential scholarly views are to be taken into consideration. In his studies on the importance of the social and cultural context for liturgy,¹⁴¹ Geoffrey Wainwright wonders if the synagogue’s liturgical impact on church narratives is more “rubrical”¹⁴² or more “textual”¹⁴³ in character? Or both? I would add another impact to the “textual” and “the “rubrical”: the *thematic* Jewish concepts in the Coptic liturgy, as shown for instance in the similarity of the concepts of the angelology, luminaries, sacrifices (incense, offerings), and priestly purification, as shown in *Seder Amram Gaon* and the Coptic Morning Service. Wainwright raises an astute historical question, about “liturgical continuities and discontinuities as the Church gradually defined itself over against Judaism. That question was not settled even by the close of the apostolic

¹³⁹ Texts addressed the congregation in the second person plural “you.” He argues that there never was a single “urtext.” He believes that the oral tradition creates a centralized authority that regulates worship practices.

¹⁴⁰ Bradshaw introduces Hoffman’s article, “Reconstructing Ritual as Identity and Culture,” in *The Making of Jewish and Christian Worship*, by mentioning that Hoffman advocates methodological principles in the application of the human sciences, particularly anthropology, to the interpretation of inherited texts, in order to reconstruct Jewish and Christian identity and culture (22).

¹⁴¹ Wainwright, “The Periods of Liturgical History,” 61–62. The author asks the same questions when investigating the sources of some liturgical practices mentioned in the New Testament, i.e., words spoken at Baptism (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:38; 8:16, 37; 10:48, 19:5; 22:16; Rom 10:9); and initiation including an anointing with oil (2 Cor 1:21; Eph 1:13; 4:30; 1 John 2:20, 27).

¹⁴² These include the inaudible and audible prayers recited by the congregational leader, worshipper postures (to bow, to stand, to seat), the washing of feet in both *Seder Amram Gaon* and the Coptic Morning Service, and many others.

¹⁴³ These include the Berakhot and the litanies in both Jewish and Christian Morning Service, as well as the Priestly Blessing.

age.”¹⁴⁴ Quoting from C. K. Barrett, he adds: “There was a continuing relation between Christianity and Judaism which involved both attraction and repulsion.”¹⁴⁵

Secondly, it is imperative to avoid the error of what Lawrence Hoffman calls falling into either “reductionism” or “expansionism.”¹⁴⁶ When a scholar goes beyond textual and ritual reconstruction (which is the challenge of my study), he or she needs to determine the proper field of study, which is one thing for written text (e.g. liturgical), but another for cultural context (e.g. Hellenistic Judaism). Drawing on Arthur Koestler,¹⁴⁷ Hoffman states that in the past, systems theory faced a similar problem, when trying to avoid “reductionism” on one hand and “expansionism” on the other hand. Reductionism is the error of reducing complex systems into their “atomistic bits,” and, in doing that, destroying the system. The result is that one learns a lot about the bits but nothing about the system. Expansionism is the opposite error of keeping the interrelation of the “bits” within the system, and then of that system with other systems, and so forth endlessly, which at some point becomes an unachievable task. Hoffman suggests that the “solution is to recognize that the researcher has no option but to select an arbitrary subsystem somewhere between the two extremes.”¹⁴⁸ For my study, the relevant subsystem is not to study the whole of Hellenistic Judaism with all its literary culture (expansionism) and its impact on the Alexandrian Church but rather to focus on the society of the Egyptian Jews with its relationship to Alexandrian Judaism within the context of Hellenistic Judaism.

Thirdly, as his focus is on how to interpret early Christian liturgical evidence, several of the ten research principles outlined by Bradshaw in *The Making of Jewish and Christian Worship* are directly related to my study. Principle 1 reminds me to take into consideration that Jewish

¹⁴⁴ Wainwright, “The Periods of Liturgical History,” 62.

¹⁴⁵ Wainwright, “The Periods of Liturgical History,” 62. He quotes Barrett, *The Gospel of John and Judaism*, 69.

¹⁴⁶ Hoffman, “Reconstructing Ritual as Identity and Culture,” 35.

¹⁴⁷ Hoffman takes the conception of “reductionism” and “expansionism” from Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine*, 45–58.

¹⁴⁸ Hoffman, “Reconstructing Ritual as Identity and Culture,” 35.

worship of the first century CE, from which Christian worship took its departure, was not fixed or uniform. Principle 5 asserts that when a variety of explanations are sophisticated for the origin of a liturgical custom, its true source has almost certainly been forgotten. Bradshaw gives the example of Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria (fourth century), who apparently introduced baptismal chrism into Christian usage in response to the instruction of an angel to bring balsam trees from Jericho, plant them, and cook the spices.¹⁴⁹ Principle 6 cautions one about Christian ancient sources that are robed in “apostolic dress.”¹⁵⁰ My thesis will deal with recognized authoritative documents in the Coptic traditions, such as *The Apostolic Constitutions*, *The Egyptian Church Order* and *The Alexandrian Synodus*. They contain directions for the conduct of worship as well as the words of prayers and other formularies to be used in the ritual. These documents are, as Bradshaw describes it, “masquerading in apostolic dress to lend themselves added authority—a judgment that is still not always fully appreciated by all contemporary scholars.”¹⁵¹ Thus studying early Coptic liturgical texts needs a new look.

Fourthly, it is important to find a scholarly approach that deals with liturgical texts that have a pseudepigraphal source. Many explicit biblical quotations (Hebrew or Septuagint) and non-biblical sections exist textually in the texts (written in Greek) of the early Alexandrian Morning Service and many other Coptic rituals. This interweaving of sources was a popular entity during the Greco–Roman period. Frances Young describes this feature:

Early Christianity had its matrix among Jews. This obvious fact has to assume importance in considering the character and environment of early Christian literature, if only because an examination of its “intertextuality” shows a deep acquaintance with the literature of the Jewish community, at least in its Greek form.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Bradshaw, “Ten Principles,” 11–12.

¹⁵⁰ Bradshaw, “Ten Principles,” 12–13.

¹⁵¹ Bradshaw, “Ten Principles,” 12–13.

¹⁵² Young, “Introduction,” 7. For instance The Prayer of Azariah (also the Prayer of Manasseh) exist textually in the Coptic Midnight Psalmody known as Ode 3 or the Third *Hos*. For the Greek text and its textual correspondence with the Coptic version, see Horst and Newman, *Early Jewish Prayers in Greek*, 181–215.

3. The Textual Correspondence

The purpose of studying with this view to textual correspondence is to demonstrate the possibility that the early Alexandrian Church leaders, or the first converted Jews, took over or transferred the literature of the Jews, claimed it as their own and, subsequently built liturgical explanations for its existence in the Coptic Church liturgy. Appropriately, the methodological approach in investigating the Christian transmission of Greek Jewish Scriptures used by Robert Kraft asks scholars to be sure that they have “re-evaluated and reformulated.”¹⁵³ He suggests studying why the Judeo-Christians were motivated to transmit them, embellish them, and reshape them in the Greco-Roman world into the new faith liturgy.

Also, comparing Jewish and early Coptic texts must draw on the work of Anton Baumstark¹⁵⁴ and Gregory Dix,¹⁵⁵ who do textual comparison of some early liturgical texts. Scholarly interest in comparative liturgies in early Christian literature remains as intense as ever in early Jewish and Christian writings, but it continues in fragmented forms,¹⁵⁶ and has not been applied methodically within a Jewish Coptic framework.

The undertaking of a textual comparison between the Jewish and Coptic Morning Services will emphasize the common ritual patterns, which, in the case of the Coptic liturgy, can be seen

¹⁵³ Kraft, *Exploring the Scripturesque*, 81. The author devotes a full chapter to investigating the methodology in dealing with this transmission in early Christianity. He concludes that “it is easy to criticize the way things have been done (by other scholars), but difficult to propose satisfactory alternatives,” chapter 3, pp. 61–82.

¹⁵⁴ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*.

¹⁵⁵ Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*.

¹⁵⁶ For instance, Bouyer, *Eucharist*. He argues that the Eucharistic favoritism between the members of Christ is the basis of the past conflict between Byzantines and Latins. This leads him to state, “No one was any longer able to reread the ancient (liturgical) formularies in accordance with their co-ordinates.” Targeting the main contradictory views, Bouyer extends his study to compare the Alexandrian Anaphoras with familiar (the Berokat) and unfamiliar Jewish material (Amram Gaon book). Eucharist is not an *ex nihilo* Christian creation but it was born from the Jewish home and synagogue. Bouyer mentions in passing the tie between the Alexandrian Anaphoras with *Amram Gaon Seder Order of Sabbath Prayer* (ninth century CE).

to emerge from the Jewish urtext. The advantages of such scrutiny are highlighted by Dix, whose appreciation of the analysis of the ritual pattern is worth quoting here:

The analysis of such a [liturgical] pattern and the tracing of its evolution opens for the historian and the sociologist the most direct way to the sympathetic understanding “from within” of the mind of those who practice that religion, and so to a right appreciation of the genius of their belief and the value of their ideas and ideals of the human life.¹⁵⁷

4. Theological Content in Liturgical Texts

Stephan Wahle describes some important reflections on the exploration of Jewish and Christian liturgies where he mainly focuses on a systematic theology of liturgy.¹⁵⁸ This methodology, in observing theological dimensions in the field of Judeo-Christian prayers, needs some attention while I am discussing different research methods. I will summarize the most relevant remarks to my research. The scrutiny of considering certain theological proportions in these prayers of the Jewish Morning Service could be of great help in understanding the relevant Halachic knowledge for similar prayers in the two repertoires.

Wahle sees that the main likenesses of Jewish-Christian liturgy are the research in concepts regarding the origin, the development, the influence, and the differences between the liturgies. He recommends that with these, the “theological” relevance must be considered as an “important supplement to ‘historical’ liturgical studies of the interrelations between Jewish Christian liturgy.”¹⁵⁹

He also considers Christian liturgy as neither a “prayed dogma” nor an obvious source of revelation. His view is that “the linguistic and the symbolic acts within the liturgy only lead directly to ‘theo-logy’ when other theological, philosophical, and cultural disciplines are

¹⁵⁷ Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 9.

¹⁵⁸ In general, systematic theology draws on (but is not limited to) the foundational sacred text of Christianity, while simultaneously investigating the development of Christian doctrine over the course of history, particularly through philosophy, science, and ethics.

¹⁵⁹ Wahle, “Reflections on the Exploration,” 169.

included.”¹⁶⁰ Wahle shares the definition of the task and the self-conception of systematic theology, which according to him (quoting from Helmut Hoping and Jan-Heiner Tück):

It is determined by the scripture, the apostolic Creed, its teaching and the place of liturgy in which the “Symbolum” originates.¹⁶¹ Its purpose is the hermeneutic development of the tradition of faith which depends on the historical reconstruction of respective evidence without restricting itself to this aspect.¹⁶²

Indeed as Wahle sees, in Judaism, liturgical-theological reflections often hold a philosophical feature.¹⁶³ This philosophy implicates the large number of Second Temple writings belonging to the Jewish liturgy. Thus the dilemma is not to locate a theology beyond the Morning Jewish Service prayers and assimilate it to the Coptic Morning Service in order to understand the Halakhah, but how to understand a Jewish theological core of meaning within the liturgical Coptic text. For example, does one perceive the rabbinic dictums concerning the eighteen Berakah within the actual form of the Coptic Morning Service? Consequently, to some degree, I will consider the rabbinical literature as a coherent Halakhah for the contemporary Coptic worshipper. Wahle writes, “My theory is that without ascertaining the theological ‘content’ of the developed forms of Jewish liturgy, one cannot reach the liturgical-theological goal of understanding the theological core of meaning of the Christian liturgy.”¹⁶⁴

It would be beneficial to mention here an important example in observing theological content in the Morning Service. Wahle explains that the doctrine of God the Creator, his revelation to the humankind (as demonstrated in Exodus and the offering of the Torah) and his promise of covenant constitute the core of the Jewish theology. Is this divine dogma seen in the

¹⁶⁰ Wahle, “Reflections on the Exploration,” 170.

¹⁶¹ Symbolum Apostolorum is the Apostles’ Creed, which first appeared in the sixth century in the writings of Caesarius of Arles and in Ruffenus Rufinus’ Commentary on the Apostle’s Creed (407 CE) and in Pope Julius I (340 CE).

¹⁶² Wahle, “Reflections on the Exploration,” 170. The author quotes from Hoping and Tück, “Thesen zur inhaltlichen Bestimmtheit des Glaubens,” 26.

¹⁶³ Wahle, “Reflections on the Exploration,” 171.

¹⁶⁴ Wahle, “Reflections on the Exploration,” 171.

Jewish liturgy and particularly in the Jewish Morning Service? Wahle refers to Jacob Petuchowski who points out that the relative image of God (in creation, in revelation, and in redemption) “is the basis of the Jewish liturgy as a theological content.”¹⁶⁵ Petuchowski indicates that in the daily Morning Prayer, these three images of God are in the “theological structure of Shema’ Yisra’el with its benedictions.”¹⁶⁶

5. Conclusion

It remains to repeat that the majority of scholars, including Dix,¹⁶⁷ Baumstark,¹⁶⁸ and even Bradshaw,¹⁶⁹ focus more on discussing ancient sources (that could help in understanding the origin of the liturgy), and the works of the other scholars in the field, than they do on delineating the methods that they have adopted.¹⁷⁰ It seems that researchers who undertake the study of the Jewish Christian liturgy have not yet defined the most appropriate methods. Therefore, as this current Judeo–Coptic study unfolds, and as others join the field, hopefully, further studies will help to shape some effective research methods.

¹⁶⁵ Wahle, “Reflections on the Exploration,” 178.

¹⁶⁶ Wahle, “Reflections on the Exploration,” 178.

¹⁶⁷ Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*.

¹⁶⁸ Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*.

¹⁶⁹ Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*.

¹⁷⁰ Reif, *Problems with Prayers*, devotes a chapter to methodology when studying the liturgy in the Second Temple era, but he raises more questions (which he attests at his chapter’s conclusion, p. 31) about methodology than he provides answers.

Chapter 3

Parallels of the Morning Service in the Jewish and Coptic Liturgies

1. Introduction

The fact that Alexandrian Judaism existed for at least two centuries before the common era, combined with innumerable late Second Temple writings that deal with the Jewish worship, would suggest that the potential of finding a Jewish impact on the early stage of the Alexandrian Church would be an *ipso facto*. However, as mentioned above, many Coptic scholars who have pursued the roots of the Egyptian Church through historical facts or literary evidence have not equally pursued its Jewish origin. In the present and following chapter (Chapters 3 and 4), I will examine a substantial common ritual existing in both Jewish and Coptic liturgies: the Morning Service (Heb. “Schacharit”; Arabic: “Raf Bukhur Bakir”). In both Jewish and Coptic traditions, the Morning Service holds nearly identical texts and order of prayers. In this chapter, after describing the unique features of the Morning Service in the Coptic Church, I will focus on the textual similarities, the common rubrics, and the familiar terminology in both Jewish and Coptic traditions. In Chapter 4, I will deal with the major thematic interrelations existing in different prayers in the Coptic Morning Service and their potential source from the Second Temple writings.

2. Primary and Secondary Resources

In this chapter, it is my intention to show where there are shared elements existing in the Jewish liturgy and the early Egyptian Church’s Morning Service. Such investigation demands accurate and reliable sources from both sides. My research will emphasize the textual correspondence of the two rituals, as well as the main liturgical common practices (including

customary postures of kneeling, standing, position of left and right feet, etc.) that occur during this long daily service. Similarities are noteworthy on several levels: the order of the prayers is almost the same, the biblical concepts are alike, and the meticulous details in the rubrics correspond to each other. The primary texts, which will be examined from both perspectives, have credibility and legacy in both traditions. R. Amram Gaon compiled the prayers in his book after a long oral tradition of conserving the liturgy. The book is known by his name, *Seder R. Amram Gaon*.¹⁷¹ It was published by D. Hedegård after having been translated from the Hebrew text and is dated from the ninth century CE.¹⁷² From the Coptic tradition, I will base my study on *The Holy Euchologion*,¹⁷³ which was compiled by the scholar Hegemon Abdel Massih Saleb Al Massoudy Al Baramoussy.¹⁷⁴ Before he published the *Holy Euchologion* at the beginning of the twentieth century, he studied many manuscripts while he was librarian of the Coptic papal library for many years.¹⁷⁵ Also important to this study is Al Makary's book, *Salwat Raf' Al Bokhour fi Asheya wa' Baker (Office of Evening and Morning Incense)*, who investigates many

¹⁷¹ Head of the Sura Academy, he died about 875. He was a pupil of Naṭronai II, Gaon of Sura, and was exceptionally honored with the title of Gaon within the lifetime of his teacher. Upon Naṭronai's death, about 857, the full title and dignities of the gaonate were conferred upon Amram, and he held them until his death. He is the author of about 120 responsa touching almost every department of Jewish jurisprudence. But the most important work of Amram, which marks him as one of the most prominent of the geonim before Saadia, is his "Prayer-Book," the so-called "Siddur Rab Amram." Amram was the first to arrange a complete liturgy for use in synagogue and home. See, Ginzberg, "Amram Ben Sheshna," 536–37.

¹⁷² Hedegård, *Seder R. Amram Gaon*, Part 1.

¹⁷³ The texts and rubrics belonging to the Offering of Incense Morning and Evening Services as well as for the three liturgies are found in the *Euchologion* (Arabic: *al-khulajī*), which prescribes the order of the various prayers, hymns, lections, versicles, petitions, and responses. Today these are sung in Greco-Coptic, Coptic, and Arabic. The texts are written in the Bohairic dialect (in Upper Egypt the Sahidic dialect may be heard), and are accompanied by a line-by-line translation in Arabic, with the rubrics all being in Arabic as well. The last section of the *Euchologion* contains the texts of many chants and hymns proper to the various liturgical seasons. For more details on the *Euchologion*, see Ragheb Muftah, et al., "The Coptic Music," 1715–45; A. Basilios, "Euchologion," 1066–67.

¹⁷⁴ He was born in 1848 in a city called "Tahta" in the Sohag Governorate at Upper Egypt. He was known for his multilingual erudition (English, French, Hebrew, Amharic and Greek) and added to his proficiency in Arabic and Coptic. He was the librarian of the papal library for about thirty years. He wrote a massive monograph in Arabic *Al Tohfa Al Baramousseya [The Masterwork of Al Baramous]*, the *Holy Euchologion* (which I refer to in this dissertation as "Massoudy,") and hundreds of articles in different periodicals. He died in 1935 after spending more than 60 years in the ascetic life. See *Massoudy*, 11. When using the same *Euchologion* in its English version, I will refer to it as "DL," *The Divine Liturgy* (Cairo, 2007).

¹⁷⁵ See the introduction of the *Holy Euchologion*, *Massoudy*, 3.

manuscripts¹⁷⁶ in order to examine ritual discrepancies occurring in different versions. An important Coptic–Arabic manuscript, *Al Tartib Al Taksi*,¹⁷⁷ compiled by the Pope Gabriel V Ibn Turaik,¹⁷⁸ is also invaluable for its meticulousness in describing the Morning Service rubrics.

One must not conclude prematurely that because these resources are dated between the tenth and fourteenth centuries that there must have been significant modifications in both liturgies. As discussed above, both faiths preserved meticulously the inherited tradition in different forms: the word of God (Oral Torah), prayers, rubrics, and customs. The faith itself was transferred as a trust from the Apostles to the neophytes.¹⁷⁹ Paul, in different epistles, outlines the importance of the tradition.¹⁸⁰ Both institutions admit that the conservatism of those who inherited and passed on the liturgy created a strong and largely unchanging oral tradition, not only in the spoken liturgy, and but also in the singing that accompanies it. There is no reason to assume that any element in the Morning Service ritual in either faith was an innovation or an addition before the time of Ibn Al-Muquaffa¹⁸¹ or Ibn Siba'.¹⁸²

3. The Morning Service in *Seder R. Amram Gaon* and *The Divine Liturgy*

In the Jewish liturgy, with the exception of the benedictions, the SAG is somewhat abridged, but Hedegård's footnotes add detail to the individual parts of the service. The Jewish liturgical text is accompanied by rubrics, explanations, and multiple rabbinical dictums. The

¹⁷⁶ For the list of manuscripts, see Al Makary, *Salwat*, 586–88.

¹⁷⁷ Abdallah, *L'Ordinamento Liturgico by Gabriel V [Al Tartib Al Taksi]*.

¹⁷⁸ For Gabriel V's life and works, see Khalil, "Gabriel V," 1130–33.

¹⁷⁹ 2 Tim 2:2.

¹⁸⁰ 2 Thess 2:15; 2 Thess 3:6; Phil 4:9; 1 Cor 11:7.

¹⁸¹ Ibn Al-Muquaffa' was bishop of Ashmunayn, well known for his colossal work *Tarikh Batarikat al-Iskandariyyah al-Quib*, the History of Patriarchs of Alexandria, the Copts. For more information about the author, see Kanawaty, *Christianity and the Arabic Civilization*, 255–58; also see Atiya, "Copto-Arabic Literature," 1460–67.

¹⁸² Ibn Siba' was a scholar, well known by his book printed in Cairo 1902, Latin version *Pretiosa Margarita de scientiis ecclesiasticis*, translated by Vincent Mistrih, Cairo, 1966. For more information about the author, see Kanawaty, *Christianity and the Arabic Civilization*, 255–58; also see Atiya, "Copto-Arabic Literature," 1460–67.

service starts with “what is said [in order to] prepare to meet [thy] God,”¹⁸³ involving a sort of physical ablution by washing hands, feet and face. The order of prayers is as follows:¹⁸⁴ it starts with “Pseuqe de Zimra” (“Passages Songs”),¹⁸⁵ followed by the “Shema” (Deut 6:4–9),¹⁸⁶ then the “Tefilla” (“Prayers”),¹⁸⁷ and finally the “Birkat Kohanim” (“The Priestly Blessing”).¹⁸⁸

In the Coptic tradition, there is a pre-Morning Service ritual amassed in two different books: the *Book of Canonical Hours*¹⁸⁹ and the *Holy Psalmody*.¹⁹⁰ Thus the order of the morning Service in the Coptic tradition starts with Psalms of the First Hour,¹⁹¹ then the Doxology Adam Baker, First Hour,¹⁹² “The Prayer of Thanksgiving,”¹⁹³ “The Verses of Cymbals,”¹⁹⁴ “Litanies” (petition prayers, Coptic ⲉϣⲭⲏ¹⁹⁵ for “Departed,” “Sick,” “Travelers,” “Sacrifices”),¹⁹⁶ followed by “Let Us Praise with the Angels,”¹⁹⁷ the “Trisagion,”¹⁹⁸ “The Doxologies,”¹⁹⁹ “The Orthodox

¹⁸³ Amos 4:12.

¹⁸⁴ For a description of the Jewish Morning Service as a daily public liturgy, see Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development*, 73–122. See also a detailed description of the ritual of the Coptic Morning Service in Burmester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*.

¹⁸⁵ Passages from the Book of Psalms, 1 SAG, 26–35.

¹⁸⁶ 1 SAG, 36–69.

¹⁸⁷ 1 SAG, 70–121. The “Tefilla” consists of 18 (19) prayers called Blessings or “Berakhot.” They are supplicatory prayers.

¹⁸⁸ 1 SAG, 122–37.

¹⁸⁹ *Book of Seven Canonical Hours* (Arabic: *Ajbiyah*) is a book containing the offices for the seven canonical hours. It includes all the prayers, Psalms, Gospel readings, and petitions to be said at the various hours by day and night. This book counts seven canonical hours to be recited daily. The pre-Morning Service hour is the Prayer of the First Hour, also called morning or dawn prayer, to be recited just before the beginning of daylight. See, Basilios, “Book of Canonical Hours,” 446–49.

¹⁹⁰ *The Holy Psalmody* (Arabic: *al-absalmudiyyah* or *al-tasbihah*) is a choral service that is performed immediately before the Evening Offering of Incense, at the conclusion of the Prayers of the Midnight Hour, and between the Office of Morning Prayer and the Morning Offering of Incense. Muftah, et al., “Coptic Music,” 1715–45.

¹⁹¹ *Book of Seven Canonical Hours*, 6–40

¹⁹² *Holy Psalmody Arabic*, 267–82.

¹⁹³ DL, 3–7. Daily Doxology (Arabic, “tamjid”), a species of Coptic ecclesiastical hymnic compositions, in stanzas, usually addressed to the Virgin, to the angels, to individual saints, or to a particular category of saints. See Cody, “Doxology,” 923–24.

¹⁹⁴ DL, 7–19.

¹⁹⁵ Daoud, *Dictionary of Coptic Language*, 845. This a Greek word frequently used by the Coptic scribes.

¹⁹⁶ DL, 19–28.

¹⁹⁷ DL, 32–33.

¹⁹⁸ DL, 33–34.

¹⁹⁹ DL, 36–51.

Creed,”²⁰⁰ Litany for the Gospel,”²⁰¹ then reading the Gospel. There are “Five Short Litanies”²⁰² (for “The Peace,” “The Patriarch and Bishops,” “The Place,” “Three Seasons,” “The Assemblies”) to be recited, then comes “The Absolution,”²⁰³ and finally, “The Short Blessing (The Priestly Blessing).”²⁰⁴

The similarity of the order of prayers is not immediately apparent, because the Jewish texts are dispersed throughout the different sections of prayers of the Coptic Morning Service. However, examination of the Jewish rabbinic dictums that are included in Amram’s book regarding the reason behind the order of the prayers will make more transparent the setting of the Coptic Morning Service and its significance according to the Jewish tradition.

It is noteworthy here to mention that the frankincense burning in the Coptic Morning Service is a unique characteristic that accompanies the priestly prayers. This includes invocations for the Blessing of the Incense,²⁰⁵ the inaudible Prayer of Incense, the Three Short and Long Litanies (ⲉⲩⲭⲏⲛ), and the petition of the Gospel. This topic needs to be studied separately to cover the large quantity of material regarding the incense as a burnt sacrifice, which entails many theological and liturgical subjects.²⁰⁶

4. Uniqueness of the Coptic Morning Service

Muftah and the other contributors to the article “Coptic Music” indicate the uniqueness of the Evening and Morning Service. They call them: “two special services unique to the Coptic

²⁰⁰ DL, 58–60.

²⁰¹ DL, 60–63.

²⁰² DL, 70–84.

²⁰³ DL, 86–88.

²⁰⁴ DL, 89–91.

²⁰⁵ The incensing follows different rubrics regarding the blessing of incense, a specific protocol if other priests are partaking the service with him or higher clergy rank. For more details, see Burmester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, 36–37.

²⁰⁶ The study of the incense in both Jewish and Coptic traditions is considered as one my future research projects. See Chapter 5.

Church.”²⁰⁷ Al Makary²⁰⁸ confirms the historical legacy of the Morning and Evening Services by listing several decrees from the Coptic version of the *Canons of Hippolytus*,²⁰⁹ where the regulations of these daily services are strictly promulgated. He also sees that their origins (as both services hold almost identical texts) are concealed in the role of the incense burning and their related processions during those services. Al Makary states: “The ritual of Raising Incense²¹⁰ in every evening and morning, it is a liturgy that its origins have been long practiced since the incense was first burnt in the Tabernacle, the tent of God’s gathering with his people – the kernel of the church – then in the Jerusalemite Temple.”²¹¹

The church archives do not show the actual practice that the Morning Service is often incorporated into the liturgy of the mass.²¹² This ritual was performed daily as a congregational prayer at the church.

5. Locating Jewish Segments in the Coptic Morning Service (Texts and Rubrics)

In this section, I will survey Jewish ritual prayers, and identify their parallels in the Coptic liturgy, as well as determining which extant Jewish texts exist in the Coptic Service.

²⁰⁷ Muftah, “Coptic Music,” 1715–47.

²⁰⁸ Al Makary, *Salawat*, 66–68, lists the Hippolytus’ canons 21:1–3, 26:1, 27:1. See also, Mettaous, *Rouhaniet Taks Al Kodass* [*The Spirituality of the Mass*], 30–81.

²⁰⁹ The *Canons of Hippolytus* is a Christian text composed of 38 decrees known as canons. The work has been dated to between 336 and 340 CE. Egypt is regarded as the place of origin. The author is unknown, though the work is a pseudo-Hippolytus, bishop of Rome, written “according to the instructions of the Apostles.” See also, Bradshaw, *The Search of the Origins of Christian Worship*, 90–91. Bradshaw sees the Canons of Hippolytus, a part of the corpus of the ancient church orders, as an enigma in offering apostolic prescriptions in liturgical practice. See also, Coquin, “Les Canons d’Hippolyte,” 273–443.

²¹⁰ The “Raising Incense” is an alternative name of the Coptic Morning Service, reflecting the essential goal of this service.

²¹¹ Al Makary, *Salawat*, 20.

²¹² Examples of Arabic manuscripts regarding Morning and Evening Services that do not indicate their inclusion in the liturgy of the mass are noted in Macomber, *Catalogue of Christian Arabic Manuscripts of the Franciscan Center* (in Cairo): manuscripts 179 (1); 221 (1) evening only; 243 (147a); 298 (31). See also the overall inventory of Crum in, *Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum*.

A. A Preparation to Meet God

Amram Gaon in 1 SAG did not start his Siddur with the “Pseuque de Zimra.” Rather, he highlights the legacy and the necessity of the daily ablution: an “obligation,” a “preparation prior to meeting thy God.”²¹³ His prelude is to understanding the common Jewish and Coptic concept of this segment of prayers, blessings that are said during the washing procedure prior to the Morning Service ritual. This preparation holds many interwoven themes that reach their momentous significance during the ritual itself (The Shema and the Tefillah). They correlate the fixed time (early morning) with the cock crowing time as the time to pray the early Berakot, which is recited in connection with the ablution. The correlation connects the resurrection of the “neshama” (the soul) after being dead (during the sleep) with blessing and thanksgiving prayers to the “Lord of all souls,”²¹⁴ who is the Creator and “the king of the universe.”²¹⁵ All is interlaced with the theme of the order of nature (as God provides light),²¹⁶ which also is well interlocked with “the law and light” as referred to in Psalm 119.²¹⁷ These interwoven liturgical themes in this segment of the prayers prior to the start of the Jewish Morning Service clearly exist in the Coptic Morning Service liturgy. Here, I will focus on the requirement of the individual purity and its importance before encountering with God in the synagogue or the church.

1. The Requirement of Cleansing

Amram pictures the washing of the body, and specifically the hands, face, and feet as an important preparation step to “prepare to meet thy God, Israel.” The priests were commanded by

²¹³ Amos 4:12.

²¹⁴ 1 SAG, 9.

²¹⁵ 1 SAG, 9.

²¹⁶ 1 SAG, 47–49.

²¹⁷ 1 SAG, 50–51.

God to wash their hands and feet before entering the tent of meeting.²¹⁸ In the Jewish liturgy, this stage is obligatory prior to the start of the reciting of the *Berakoth*. The ablutions before prayer are mentioned in the pseudepigraphical writings. Hedegård includes examples, such as²¹⁹ Judith, who performs her absolution before reciting her prayers,²²⁰ and the Letter of Aristeas, which states that it is the custom of all Jews to wash their hands in order to prove that they have done no evil.²²¹

The Coptic bishop Ibn Al Muquaffa' says: "About the order of the office (Morning Service) which compels the priest, (and the deacon) holders of the Service... he is urged to wash his feet before ascending the altar (called in Arabic *Heikal*) because it is the place of the dwelling of the Holy Spirit, the place of the body of the Son of God and his blood, and the place where angels reside."²²² Furthermore, like Amram,²²³ he lists the obvious reasons for the purification: the dusty and dirty conditions of the region, and the wearing of sandals. Ibn Al Muquaffa' follows Exodus 30:17–21 in requiring that priests wash their feet in a bronze basin. We see that he incorporates the Jewish ritual of "Prepare to meet thy God" throughout the Coptic liturgy, not only by washing but also by reciting inaudible prayers during this process.

In Coptic tradition, both clergy and all worshippers have to be concerned with their physical purity before entering the church and more specifically before receiving the communion. The holiness of the Church is traditionally tied scripturally with the Jerusalem Temple;²²⁴ sexual intercourse is prohibited the night before communion. Such regulations are characteristic in the

²¹⁸ Exod 30:17.

²¹⁹ Hedegård, 1 SAG, note 6.

²²⁰ Hedegård, 1 SAG, note 7 (Judith 12:7).

²²¹ Hedegård, 1 SAG, note 7 (Arist 306).

²²² Al Makary, *Salwat*, 202.

²²³ 1 SAG, 6.

²²⁴ *The Book of Khedmat Al Shamas*, 11 (Guidelines no. 4, 5). The deacon is required to recite Psalm 83 once he arrives at the church portal and until he reaches the altar; kneeling then, he says, "But I, by your great mercy, will come into your house; in reverence will I bow down toward your holy temple," Ps 5:7.

Coptic tradition and traceable in some Qumranic texts. Harrington notes that during the Second Temple era, the sanctity of the Temple was extended to embrace the entire city of Jerusalem as prescribed in the Dead Sea Scrolls 4Q399 (frg. 3, lines 10–13). Also, the *Temple Scroll* describes a three-day process with baths before the impure can enter the Temple city and sexual intercourse is prohibited: 11Q 19 45:11–12; CD 12.1–2.²²⁵ The rabbinic literature, the Tohorot section in the Mishna, details the laws that address ritual purity. Further study would be required to describe adequately in detail the importance of this ritual of physical readiness to celebrate a new day and to meet God, as illustrated through rabbinical dictums and the sayings of medieval Coptic liturgists.

B. “Pseuke de Zimra,” “*Psalmodia*,” and *Matins Psalms*

In Jewish tradition, the “Pseuke de Zimra” is considered as an individual “warm up,” a sort of spiritual readiness²²⁶ prior to the beginning of praying the core of the Morning Service (the Amidah, the Shema and the Tefillah). This warm up consists of singing the Hallel and reciting different passages of selected psalms. It appears that this custom existed before the second century CE.²²⁷ Hofmann cites a dictum from Yose bar Chalafta, who reports: “May my lot be among those who complete a Hallel everyday.”²²⁸

The Jewish liturgical tradition seems to be undecided about which psalms constitute the Hallel. Usually the Jews recited the Psalms of the Egyptian Hallel (Pss. 113–118) and other

²²⁵ Harrington, “Purity and Impurity,” 1122.

²²⁶ The physical readiness is obtained by washing and the spiritual readiness is by singing the Hallel and reciting specific psalms. For the rabbinic dictums and Halachic importance of the sense of a spiritual readiness, see Hoffman, “Introduction to the Liturgy,” 3–6.

²²⁷ Hofmann mentions a Mishnaic quote (c. 200 CE): “the pious ones of old used to tarry an hour and then pray, so as to focus themselves on God.” The rabbinic works prior to that date do not discuss anything called “Pseuke de Zimra;” see Hoffman, “Introduction to the Liturgy,” 5.

²²⁸ Hoffman, “Introduction to the Liturgy,” 7. Hedegård sees in this quotation that the practice “cannot have been a new one in the times of R. Jose (a distinguished disciple of R. Aqiba, a rabbi of the later part of the first century CE), it must have been known at least as early as in the first century CE.” 1 SAG, 26, notes 9–14.

passages (Ps 115:18; Ps 145:21) or specifically Psalms 145–150.²²⁹ Therefore, Hoffman notes that the Talmud identifies the “Great Hallel” as Psalm 136.²³⁰ As in the Jewish tradition, the Coptic repertoire preserves the singing of two particular Hallel sets: Psalm 136 (Ode 2), and Psalms 148, 149, and 150 (grouped under Ode 4) as part of the midnight psalmody, which usually are sung before the dawn and prior²³¹ to the Morning Service.²³²

Also reciting of different passages or selected Psalms exists in the Coptic tradition. I believe that the passages that have survived are in “The Morning Doxology”²³³ where we find excerpts from different psalms (136:6; 28:2; 133:1). Most likely, these are the psalms that constitute The First Hour (the Matins) prayer.²³⁴ These sets of psalms thoroughly echo the interwoven praying elements in the segment of “Preparation to meet God.” Several examples show the parallelism. In *Sedar Amram Gaon*, the Berakah “My God”²³⁵ emphasizes the soul and the relevant divine dynamic who “creates,” “forms,” “preserves,” “takes” (from me), restores, and “one day will take it.”²³⁶ Apparently, the theme holds a certain importance within the Jewish mindset concerning the pre-Morning Service as well in the Coptic tradition. The theme of “Neshamat” (soul) is displayed significantly in the selection of Psalms of the First Hour in the *Book of Seven Canonical Hours*. The reflection of tying the “soul” with the time of daybreak is implicit. In the selected psalms, the word “soul” is repeated 20 times: Pss 3,²³⁷ 6 (2 times),²³⁸

²²⁹ Hedegård, 1 SAG, note 6.1 SAG, notes 9–14.

²³⁰ Hoffman, “Introduction to the Liturgy,” 7.

²³¹ As part of the Psalmody book, for its place prior to the Morning Service, see Burmester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, 108.

²³² HPE, for the Second Ode (called *Hos* in Coptic), 24–30; for the Fourth Ode, 66–73.

²³³ HPE, 247–50.

²³⁴ The psalms of the First Hour (Prime) are to be found in the *Book of Seven Hours* (known as Agpeya or Agbeya). The Psalms that belong to this hour are Pss 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 25, 27, 63, 67, 70, 113 and 143 (in total 19 psalms).

²³⁵ This Berakah is recited at the beginning of the “Pseuque de Zimra.”

²³⁶ 1 SAG, 8–9.

²³⁷ Ps 3: 2.

²³⁸ Ps 6:3–4, the psalmist prays the Lord to deliver his soul as it is “sore vexed,” KJV.

13,²³⁹ 16 (2 times),²⁴⁰ 19,²⁴¹ 25 (3 times),²⁴² 63 (4 times),²⁴³ 70, and 143 (5 times).²⁴⁴ Always in the Prime Hour, we read “From the night season my soul awakes early unto you, O my God, for your precepts are a light upon the earth.”²⁴⁵ In the “Hail of Saint Mary,” the worshipper asks in her intercession that the Lord “may have mercy on our souls...”²⁴⁶

Ugo Zanetti tries to find the underlying motivation for selecting specific Psalms for each canonical hour. After examining different manuscripts, he concludes that the distribution of psalms for each canonical hour in *Agpeya* has followed the Palestinian psalter, which originates in Jerusalem. He, however, leaves room for future research.²⁴⁷

1. Commonalities

In Jewish tradition, the “Birkhot Hashashar” consists of morning prayers that usually are said privately and individually upon arising²⁴⁸ and before going to the synagogue and worship. In Coptic tradition, the notion of such Birkhot reverberates in *The Book of Khedmat Al Shamas* as a required procedure, for a spiritual readiness, before going to church.²⁴⁹

As the Coptic psalmody odes are chanted communally with a choir leader, so, also, the

²³⁹ Ps 13: The psalmist asks the Lord: “How long shall I take counsel in soul, having sorrow in my heart daily?” In verse 5, he trusts the Lord that he will restore his soul by “thy mercy” and “thy salvation,” KJV.

²⁴⁰ Ps 16 mentions the soul in verses 2 and 10. The Davidic petition targets the divine preservation of his soul by the plea to “not leave my soul in hell,” verse 10, KJV.

²⁴¹ Ps 19:7 “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul...” KJV.

²⁴² In Ps 25, David asks the Lord that he lift up his soul (verse 1), his soul shall dwell at ease (verse 13), and to keep it, i.e. to conserve it (verse 20). See also Ps 70:2.

²⁴³ In Ps 63, the prayer also targets God’s protection over David’s soul against those who seek it to destroy it (verse 9).

²⁴⁴ The petition implores the Lord to bring his soul out of trouble (verse 11) and to destroy who afflict it (verse 12).

²⁴⁵ *Book of Seven Canonical Hours*, 27.

²⁴⁶ *Book of Seven Canonical Hours*, 27.

²⁴⁷ Zanetti, “La Distribution des Psaumes dans l’Horlogion Copte,” 323–69.

²⁴⁸ Hoffman, “Introduction to the Liturgy,” 25.

²⁴⁹ *The Book of Khedmat Al Shamas*, 11 (Guidelines no.1–3). First, upon arising and before going early to the church, the deacon has to pray privately as described in Matt 6:6. Second, after leaving home, he has to repeat the following: Psalms 122, verses 4 and 5 of Psalm 27, and verse 4 of Psalm 65. Guideline 3 commands the deacon that upon entering the church, he has to picture it as he is entering heaven in order to stand before the Most High and with the angels and saints.

“Pseuque de Zimra” are recited with a prayer leader. But those two segments do not hold the same communal status as the core of the Morning Service (Shema and Tefillah). The final benedictions in “Pseuque de Zimra” are concluded by a Kaddish, for which a quorum of ten worshippers (a “myniam”) is required.²⁵⁰ Similarly, the Coptic Morning Service (and the mass liturgy) necessitates the presence of a priest, a deacon and preferably a congregation.²⁵¹

C. *The Shema*

The second part of the Service is the Shema. After reciting the “Kaddish,”²⁵² a long prayer is said by the Sheliach sibbur²⁵³ echoing many thematic similarities that exist in the Coptic Morning Service. As there are many interrelations and Jewish literature holds various biblical notions and numerous pseudepigraphal late Second Temple writings (also Qumranic sources), I will elaborate on that in Chapter 4. The most striking are the significance of the following keywords in the Jewish Morning Service and their ties with the concept of the morning time and creation, as they are also reverberated in the Coptic Morning Service: King (Creator) of the universe,²⁵⁴ the luminaries (created by God and through their cycles is fixed the times of prayer),²⁵⁵ “the hosts and the holy beings (angels), and their heavenly worship” (glorifying the

²⁵⁰ Hoffman, “Introduction to the Liturgy,” 25–26.

²⁵¹ *Massoudy*, 13, rule no. 1, adds from the book of the Church Canons of Ibn Al Assal, canon 13, that the priest should not bless the Qurban (the oblation) without the presence of a deacon who forewarns the congregation for prayer and calls them [to pray] with reverence and staidness, *Massoudy*, 16, canon 13.

²⁵² 1 SAG, 44–45.

²⁵³ Sheliach Zibbur as per the *Jewish Encyclopedia* “is a congregational messenger or deputy or agent. During the time of the late Second Temple, it was the priest who represented the congregation in offering the sacrifice, and who, before the close of the service, pronounced the priestly benediction.” See, Landsberg, “Sheliach Zibbur,” 261.

²⁵⁴ 1 SAG, 46.

²⁵⁵ 1 SAG, 47. For “the King of Universe” and luminaries, which are two closely related subjects, I will discuss briefly the biblical backbone of liturgies based on “luminaries” and especially the Morning Service, the imageries of luminaries in Chapter 4. The study will target also the subject of cosmic praise in the late Second Temple Judaism period and its perception of “luminaries” in order to understand how this concept was kept in the ritual.

Creator for making the cosmos, an ordered world),²⁵⁶ and “the law and light” (Ps 119).²⁵⁷ Those keywords lead us to visualize the patterns of the Jewish daily prayers during the late Second Temple period and especially at the beginning of the first century CE.²⁵⁸

D. *The Tefilla*²⁵⁹

After praying the Shema, the “Tefilla” has to be said. As mentioned previously, the Tefilla consists of supplicatory prayers called Berakoth (the plural form of Berakah). Bouyer has a remarkable dictum that is important to my research. He notes:

When investigating the origins of the Christian Eucharist, the element of the synagogal liturgy that immediately attracts our attention is the type of prayers called Berakoth in Hebrew, a term for which the Greek word ευχαριστια was the first translation. In English ευχαριστια is generally translated to thanksgiving, as is Berakah, although the Jewish usage would be to call the berakoth, blessing.²⁶⁰

Bouyer attempted to study the Berakoth through the three Alexandrian Church Anaphoras (Basil, Gregory, and Cyril), but apparently did not notice how the Berakhot holds a more direct similarity in many ways with the petition prayers of the Coptic Morning Service than the

²⁵⁶ I SAG, 47–49. In order to understand how the theme of “angels” shapes the liturgical pattern in the daily Jewish prayers, I will examine a Qumran text (4Q503) and its resemblance in the Morning Service in the Coptic church, a few examples from the Morning Doxology: HPA [Arabic Holy Psalmody], 265 (HPE, 341) [English Holy Psalmody]; Hail to angels and other “holy beings,” HPA, 267 (HPE, 244); the Verses of Cymbals, HPA, 284–85 (HPE, 260); The Praise of the Angels which preludes with “Let us sing with the angels,” HPA, 296 (HPE, 280–81). See also the section of Doxologies, for archangels: Michael, HPA, 318–20 (HPE, 296–97), Raphael, HPA, 322–24, (HPE 299–301); Surial, HPA 324–325 (HPE, 301–302); for Four Creatures (of the Revelation Book), HPA 325–27 (HPE, 303–304); for the “Twenty Four Presbyters” (Elders of the Book of Revelation), HPA, 327–28 (HPE, 304–305); for “All the Heavenly” (beings), HPA, 329–31 (HPE, 305–308). A worth while study of some late Second Temple hymns includes those that refer to worship of heavenly beings the “Merkabah Hymn” and “the Angelic Liturgy,” which are studied by Stone et al., *Jewish Writings Second Temple Period*, 565.

²⁵⁷ I SAG, 50–51. For the relation between law and light in the context of Psalm 19, where the psalmist states “the heavens which declare the glory of God; and the skies proclaim the work of his hands,” I will examine it also through the reciting of Shema and its echoes in the Coptic Morning Service. It is mentioned in the last paragraph of the “Praise of the Angels,” PHA, 298 (HPE, 282).

²⁵⁸ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*.

²⁵⁹ I SAG, 70.

²⁶⁰ Bouyer, *Eucharist and Spirituality*, 11.

Blessings of the Anaphoras.²⁶¹ In this part, the similarities are conspicuous, and I consider them strong evidence that the Coptic Morning Service was derived from the Jewish liturgy as compiled by Amram Gaon. I will investigate a number of pieces of evidence.

In this important segment of the ritual, first, I will include the etymology of the Hebrew word “Beraka” and “ΠΡΟCΕ” and “ΤΩΒ2,” for all three hold the same contextual meaning. Second, the examination of the Jewish features of the Berakah in the Coptic litanies may lead us to understand the reason why the Coptic litanies (as called in the *Holy Euchologion*) are shaped in a similar form. Third, the number of Berakhot in both liturgies is significant, and fourth, there is a striking textual correspondence between both forms of petitions.

1. *Etymology of Hebrew “Beraka” and Coptic “ΠΡΟCΕ”*

In both Jewish and Coptic Morning Services, the ritual consists of a group of supplicatory prayers, varying in the topic of the supplication. In the Jewish ritual, the prayer of supplication is recited after the Shema; and in the Coptic ritual, it follows the incensing of the Altar.

The word Tefilla means “supplication,” known in Aramaic as “selota.” The Greek equivalent to this word is εὐχαι.²⁶² Hedegård noted that as early “as in the LXX, the verb ‘Hitpallel’ is regularly translated to προσευχεσθαι and Tefilla is frequently translated by προσευχη.”²⁶³ Furthermore, he mentions a significant comment from Luke 11:1: the disciple of Christ was not asking for a prayer in general but for a προσευχεσθαι, a Tefilla.

Remarkably, all the supplications and responses by the deacon during the Coptic Morning Service are grouped under a title in Arabic called *Iprosat al Shammās*, which is a translation of

²⁶¹ The word “Anaphora” is normally used in the Coptic Church for the three Eucharistic liturgies: Liturgy of St. Basil, Liturgy of St. Gregory, and Liturgy of St. Cyril.

²⁶² The Greek word εὐχῇ (the same word in Coptic) means a wish, expressed as a petition to God, or in votive obligation: a prayer or a vow.

²⁶³ Hedegård, I SAG, note 7.

the Greek word *προσευχη*. This word was naturalized in the Coptic language with many others, and became *ⲡⲣⲟⲥⲉϥⲭⲏ*. In the Coptic Morning and Evening Incense Service, the deacon frequently recites this word when he calls the congregation to pray, or to beseech the Lord for the supplication subject. It comes in different forms, such as *ⲡⲣⲟⲥⲉϥⲗⲁⲥⲟⲩ* (let us pray),²⁶⁴ or *ⲧⲱⲃⲉ* (Coptic, ask for).²⁶⁵ Waheeb Girgis states that some Greek religious terms entered the Egyptian language via the Jews in Egypt,²⁶⁶

Whose religious expressions must have been known centuries before the Coptic translation of the Bible took place. The Septuagint itself was made in the third century before Christ. Therefore, the Jewish religious terms must have found some hospitality among the Egyptian words, at least by way of comparison, accord, or contrast, between the Jewish and the Egyptian religions. This hospitality was warmly extended when the Old Testament became in Christian Egypt a constituent part of the Holy Scriptures i.e. ἄγγελος, angel; ἀμήν, amen; θυσία, offering; θυσιαστήριον, altar; and many others.²⁶⁷

2. Jewish Features of Berakah in Coptic Litanies

The features are, as given by Hedegård in his introduction in the Seder Amram book: a. The narrative structure of the Beraka is to follow a fixed norm. The beraka should begin with “Blessed be thou, JHWH, our God, King of the Universe.”²⁶⁸ Hedegård notes that it is not always the case that the exact word, “King of the Universe,” is used in all the eighteen Berakhot. It appears that this formula aims to praise God as the sovereign of the world. This narrative rule, which reflects the concept of the dominant God (who is in control) over the world, occurs also in many Coptic litanies.²⁶⁹ b. The Beraka is to end with a benediction known as “sealing a

²⁶⁴ *The Book of Khedmat Al Shamas*, 3–13.

²⁶⁵ In Arabic *Telbah* means “ask for.” However, the majority of the new euchologies translate the Coptic word “to pray” and not “to ask.”

²⁶⁶ Jews who lived in Egypt during the late Second Temple era.

²⁶⁷ Girgis, *Greek Words in Coptic Usage*, 18. See also, Mallon, *La grammaire Copte*, 4–5; Daoud, *The Dictionary of the Coptic Language* (Coptic-Arabic), 829–87.

²⁶⁸ I SAG, introduction, 33.

²⁶⁹ Litanies for “The Departed” (DL, 19), for “The Sick” (DL, 23), for “The Peace” (DL, 70), and, for “The Assemblies” (DL, 79). They all start with the same formula: “Let us ask God the ‘Pantocrator’ (ⲡⲓⲡⲁⲛⲧⲟⲕⲣⲁⲧⲱⲣ), the Father of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ.”

prayer,”²⁷⁰ stating: “blessed be thou.”²⁷¹ Likewise the rule of the closing prayer or sealing prayer is respected in many Coptic litanies.²⁷² c. There are both “Short” and “Long” formulas of Berakhot.²⁷³ Both could be either praise to the name of God²⁷⁴ or a petition.²⁷⁵ In the Morning Service in Jewish and Coptic traditions, both formulas are categorized under “Long Litanies” and “Short Litanies.”²⁷⁶ d. The Beraka is to express a congregational need and not an individual one.²⁷⁷

3. *Number of Berakhot in Both Traditions*

²⁷⁰ 1 SAG, introduction, 33.

²⁷¹ 1 SAG, introduction, 33.

²⁷² The concept of “sealing a prayer” occurs also in the same litanies mentioned above. It occurs once after these petitions (litanies) and after the Thanksgiving Prayer, which precedes the petitions. The sealing prayer is unvarying: “[Stanza 1] Through the grace, compassion, and love of mankind of your only begotten Son, our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. [Stanza 2] Through whom the glory, the honor, the dominion, and the worship are due unto you, with him and the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, who is of one essence with you. [Stanza 3] Now and all times and unto the age of all ages. Amen.”

²⁷³ Abu Dirham indicates two types of Berakhot regarding narrative length: “Those that are shaped according to the short formula and those which are shaped according to the long formula.” David ben Josef ben David Abudirham (1340 CE) *Sefer Hibbur Perush ha-Berakhot we-ha-Tefillot* (“Commentary on the Blessings and Prayers”) or known also as *Sefer Abu Dirham*, 2B, 3A, quoted by Hedegård, intro 1 SAG, 34. For the importance of the “blessing” in Jewish liturgy, see Millgram, *Jewish Worship*, 89, 94.

²⁷⁴ Hedegård gives some examples, such as “Blessed be thou JHWH, our God King of Universe, who hast not made me a heathen” (1 SAG, 9–10). Three Berakhot are said when the priest puts a spoonful of incense into the censor: First spoonful: “Blessed be the Father, the Pantocrator. Amen.” Second spoonful: “Blessed be his only-begotten son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” The third and last: “Blessed be the Holy Spirit the Paraclete. Amen.” (For the three blessings, see DL, 10 and *Massoudy*, 35). Many other examples exist from both traditions.

²⁷⁵ In the Coptic tradition, in the Morning Service, additional litanies to the long ones are also short litanies, in a form of petition. They are also recited during the ritual. For all the short litanies, see DL, 70–81.

²⁷⁶ See Table of Contents, DL, XIII. In the Coptic Morning Service, the litanies (petitions) are divided in two groups; the short litanies are for the Peace of Church, the Patriarch and Bishops, the Place (salvation of world and this city), the Three Seasons of the Year, and the Assemblies. The long ones are for the Departed, the Sick, the Travelers, and the Sacrifices.

²⁷⁷ The Tefilla, with its eighteen (nineteen) Berakhot, is the principle supplicatory prayer of the Jewish liturgy. Seemingly it is also the case for the litanies of the Coptic liturgy, where all rituals repeat the petition that occur in the Morning Service. Both Berakhot and Coptic litanies “are formulated in the plural to be used by the congregation, and the petitions are requests which concern the need of the whole congregation” (1 SAG, intro 36). Hedegård observes that except for a couple petitions in the Tefilla that are “national,” many others are for the good of the community of God (peace, rain, harvest). Likewise, the Coptic petitions (litanies) focus on the congregational needs, not on the individual requests. The Coptic liturgists strengthen such perception: see, for instance, Rafael, *Isnaou Hada L'Zikri*, 87.

In the Jewish liturgical tradition, the number of Berakhot contained in the “Tefillah” varies between seventeen and nineteen.²⁷⁸ Hedegård displays the traditional rabbinic view in this regard by quoting from RaMBaM,²⁷⁹ who explains that prior to Rabbi Gamaliel²⁸⁰ the number was already eighteen and he is the one who added the nineteenth (Berakhot ha-minim). Coptic liturgists also reckon that the number of litanies that belong to the Morning Service and the three known liturgies²⁸¹ are either between 17 or 18.²⁸² The striking annotation is that the liturgy of St. Cyril, which is considered the oldest in the Coptic repertoire, counts seventeen and consists of all the Coptic Morning Service litanies and many others.²⁸³

4. Textual Correspondence between Berakhot and Coptic Litanies

A brief introduction to each Berakah is necessary here before discussing the textual similarity. The first *Berakah* “Abot” (the Fathers), is about God’s covenant with the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob);²⁸⁴ the second *Berakah* “Geburot,” is about the mighty God, Lord of the Universe, who resurrects the dead and who causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall.²⁸⁵ The

²⁷⁸ I SAG, 71, Hedegård’s notes 30–60.

²⁷⁹ Moses Ben Maimon known as RaMBaM, Talmudist, philosopher, astronomer, and physician; born at Cordova, March 30, 1135; died at Cairo, Dec. 13, 1204; known in Arabic literature as Abu 'Imran Musa ben Maimun ibn 'Abd Allah.

²⁸⁰ Gamaliel is the son of Simon and grandson of Hillel. He lived in second third of the first century. He occupied a leading position in the highest court, the great council of Jerusalem. The life period of Rabbi Gamaliel was par excellence the embryonic stage of shaping the Christian liturgy through the first converted Jews in Palestine and the diaspora. Believing also that Paul was a scholar in the Gamaliel School, Hedegård’s statement holds a significant value that “At the time of Christ, then, the Eighteen Benedictions were recited in the synagogue service on weekdays and the seven Benedictions and Holy Days. But no regulations were made for the private recital of the Tefilla.” Hedegård, note 72.

²⁸¹ Again, the three known liturgies in the Coptic Church are the Liturgy of St. Basil of Caesarea, the Liturgy of St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Liturgy of St. Cyril of Alexandria.

²⁸² Bishop Mettaous states that the litanies, in particular, in the Liturgy of St. Cyril, the oldest anaphora in the Egyptian church counts seventeen. See Mettaous, *Al Thalathat Kodassat*, 120. Rafael, *Isnaou Hada L'Zikri*, 86–87, counts eighteen litanies that are spread between the Morning Service and the Eucharist mass.

²⁸³ Massoudy, 411–50.

²⁸⁴ I SAG, 83.

²⁸⁵ I SAG, 85.

third is “Quedushat Hashem” (“Sanctification of the Name”),²⁸⁶ meaning all generations will give homage to the name of God.²⁸⁷ Fourth, is the *Berakah Bina* “intelligence” called also *Berakah chokma* (“the Prayer of Wisdom”): the wisdom that distinguishes between holy and profane, and clean and unclean, but also includes the divine favoritism for man in getting knowledge from the Torah.²⁸⁸ Fifth is known as *Berakah Teshuba* (“Return” [to God]), a petition for forgiveness via repentance.²⁸⁹ The name of the sixth *Berakah* is “Selicha” (“Forgiveness”): God is always ready to receive the repentant sinner and forgive him.²⁹⁰ The seventh is called *Berakah* “Guella” (“Redemption”). This petition holds eschatological ideas about the future Messiah.²⁹¹ Eighth is *Refua* (“Healing”), a petition for the healing of the sick. Ninth, this *Berakah* starts with “Bless this Year,” called *birkat Ha-shanim* (“Prayer for the [Good] Year”); it is a request for a divine blessing for rain and dew.²⁹² Tenth is the *Quibbus Galuijot* (“Gathering Together of the Dispersed”), a petition for assembling together the scattered Jews of the diaspora.²⁹³ Eleventh, called *Berakah Mishpat* (Prayer for Justice), is a petition of the restoration of the political autonomy holding also messianic visions.²⁹⁴ Twelfth is *Berakah Ha-minim* (“Prayer against Heretics”), a petition targeting the separation of Christianity from Judaism, as a means to suppress false teaching.²⁹⁵ The thirteenth is *Berakah Saddiqin* (“Prayer for the Righteous”), a prayer for the proselytes, for a true convert to Israel.²⁹⁶ The fourteenth petition is the *Berakah Jerusalem*, God’s city, appealing for the building of the city and the continuance of the divine

²⁸⁶ The Quedusha, the Thrice Holy, is recited during this Berakah, 1 SAG, 86.

²⁸⁷ 1 SAG, 86.

²⁸⁸ 1 SAG, 87.

²⁸⁹ 1 SAG, 87–88.

²⁹⁰ 1 SAG, 88.

²⁹¹ 1 SAG, 89.

²⁹² 1 SAG, 89–90.

²⁹³ 1 SAG, 91–92.

²⁹⁴ 1 SAG, 92–93.

²⁹⁵ 1 SAG, 93.

²⁹⁶ 1 SAG, 94–95.

presence.²⁹⁷ The fifteenth is *Berakah David* (“A Prayer for David”), petition that God may cause the Messiah of the house of David to come.²⁹⁸ Sixteenth is called *Tefilla* (“A Prayer”): a petition that God may hear the entire prayer of his people Israel.²⁹⁹ The seventeenth *Berakah* is called “Aboda” (“Service” or “Worship”), a prayer for God’s graciousness to accept offerings and prayer; it was a prayer recited in the Temple of Jerusalem in connection with the daily sacrifices.³⁰⁰ Eighteenth is *Berakah Hodaa* (“Give Thanks”), giving thanks to God for his good deeds.³⁰¹ The nineteenth is *Berakah Kohanim* (“Priestly Blessing”), praying God to grant his peace.³⁰²

The reverberation of the subject of almost each *beraka* is echoed in the Coptic petitions. In this thesis, I can only outline the analogies in just a few *Berakhot*, leaving the others for a further survey. For instance, the eighth *Berakah Refua* (“Healing”), interrelates with the Coptic Litany of the Sick,³⁰³ the ninth, “Bless this year” called “*Berakah Ha-shanim*”, interconnects with the Coptic Three Seasons of the Year,³⁰⁴ and the twelfth, *Berakah Ha-minim* (“Prayer against Heretics”) is indicated as a litany with no title, and is the ending part of the Coptic Litany of Assemblies.

The Jewish *Sheliah Zibbur* (the person who prays on behalf of the congregation) recites, “Heal us, JHWH and we shall be healed, save us and we shall be saved, and grant a perfect healing to our wounds; for thou God, are a merciful Physician. Blessed be thou, JHWH, who heals the sick of the people of Israel.”³⁰⁵ Meanwhile, the Coptic Litany for the Sick is more

²⁹⁷ 1 SAG, 95.

²⁹⁸ 1 SAG, 95–96.

²⁹⁹ 1 SAG, 96.

³⁰⁰ 1 SAG, 96–97.

³⁰¹ 1 SAG, 97.

³⁰² 1 SAG, 98–99.

³⁰³ DL, 23.

³⁰⁴ DL, 78.

³⁰⁵ 1 SAG, 89.

elaborate, but still holds the main obvious keywords like “grant us, with them, health and healing” (‘ΜΠΙΟΥΧΔΙ ΝΕΜ ΠΙΤΔΛΔΟ’). The word “wounds” in the Coptic prayer may refer to more than a specific injury, but to a larger continuum such as an emotional depression, or a moral humiliation. This is seen in the Coptic text:³⁰⁶ “Those in prisons or dungeons, those in exile or captivity, or those held in bitter bondage, O Lord set them all free...” If the Hebrew text implores God for healing because Israel is God’s people, the Coptic text shows the same concept of divine covenant: “...remember, O Lord, the sick among your people, ΠΔΟΙC ‘ΝΝΗΕΤΨΩΝΙ ‘ΝΤΕ ΠΕΚΛΔΟC.” Remarkably, both petitions implore the godly “Physician” who, according to the Coptic version, is “the true physician of our souls and bodies ΠΙCΙΝΙ ‘ΜΜΗΙ ‘ΝΤΕ ΝΕΝ ΨΥΧΗ ΝΕΜ ΝΕΝCΩΜΔ.”

The Jewish *birkat Ha-shanim*³⁰⁷ interconnects even more textually with the Coptic litany, “For Three Seasons of the Year.”³⁰⁸ The rubrics are common in the timing of reciting both petitions. In both calendars, the yearly cycle is divided into three seasons, with the liturgical texts changing accordingly. And the season is changed according to the Jewish settlement in the diaspora. Hedegård emphasizes how local geographical factors impacted the prayer. He mentions,³⁰⁹ for instance, “in Babylonia, that the prayer for rain was inserted in the ninth paragraph (Berakah) of the Tefilla from the sixtieth day of the autumnal equinox, (the 3rd of December), but in Palestine it was inserted from the seventh of Marcheshvan.”³¹⁰ Hedegård, apparently, finds solid rabbinic literature behind the recitation of the appropriate part of the Berakah, according to the proper season. Amram, based on the Palestinian calendar, lists the first

³⁰⁶ DL, 23–25.

³⁰⁷ I SAG, 89–91.

³⁰⁸ DL, 74–77.

³⁰⁹ Hedegård, I SAG, note 91.

³¹⁰ Marcheshvan is the only month of the Jewish year that has no special days, neither feast nor fast. An equivalent is Coptic month, the Nasie, ΠΙΚΟΥΧΙ Ν ΔΒΟΤ, known as “the Small Month.”

of the three seasons as follows: Imploring God for dew and rain is from the sixtieth day after the autumnal day (after the autumnal equinox) until the afternoon Tefilla, including the eve of the first day of the Passover. For the other two seasons, Amram does not mention what Jews have to pray during the other two seasons; he is content in saying, “But from the afternoon Tefilla of the fourteenth of Nissan, i.e. the eve of the festival, one does not pray for dew and rain in the birkat ha-shanim until the sixtieth day after the autumnal equinox comes. And the sixtieth day itself one prays [for dew and rain].”³¹¹ Evidently, he wanted to stay out of trouble from the other Jewish teachers of the Academy, in not deciding what to address the other two seasons of the year.

In the Coptic liturgy, the priest says the appropriate prayer according to the season: the Litany of the Waters: Paoni 12 to Paapi 9 (June 19 to Oct. 19/20); Litany for the Seeds: Paapi 10 to Tobi (Oct. 20/21 to Jan 18/19); and the Litany for the Fruits: Toibi 11 to Paoni 11 (Jan. 19/20 to June 18).³¹²

The literary similarities are striking. Both texts express the main idea of the mighty God who controls the cosmic elements, such as rain, and dew. Thus, abundance will yield to prosperity, peace, and hope. Examples include SAG: “Give dew and rain for the blessing upon the face of the earth”, DL: “Give joy to the face of the earth”; SAG: “Bless the year unto us”, DL: “Bless the crown of the year with your goodness.”

Birkat Ha-minim (“Prayer against Heretics”) is found in a non-named litany, ending the Coptic Litany of Assemblies. It seems that in the past, DL 80–81, this litany was unconnected to the Litany of Assemblies. It focuses on asking God to grant the church assemblies a secured environment. God is graciously asked to demolish any “obstacle or hindrance” that may endanger the congregation. This interference is assumed to be the worship of idols, the power of Satan,

³¹¹ 1 SAG, 91.

³¹² For more information about the Coptic calendar, see Cody, “Coptic Calendar,” 433–36.

and especially heretics, heresies, instigators, and dissensions. The priest asks the Lord to disperse their counsel as he dispersed the counsel of Ahithophel.³¹³ However, in the long historical background of *Berakah Ha-minim*,³¹⁴ the word “minim” stands for any kind of heretic. The rabbinic writings,³¹⁵ and equally the Coptic ritual, varied their types: atheist, the idol worshippers, and slanderers. Both liturgies beg the Lord for a harsh, quick reaction towards them, by using the same prayer words. It is noteworthy to display both texts. SAG: “And for the slanderers let there be no hope, and let all the wicked perish in a moment and let all our enemies be speedily cut off, and the dominion of arrogance do thou speedily uproot and crush and humble in our days...” DL:

Satan with all his evil powers, trample and humiliate under our feet speedily...the enemies of your holy church...strip their vanity, show them their weakness speedily ‘NXWΛEM. Bring to naught their intrigues, their madness, their wickedness, and their slanders, which they commit against us.³¹⁶

5. Rubrics of the Tefillah

A “rubric” is a word or section of text that is traditionally written or printed in red ink for emphasis, and is written for the benefit or instruction of the priest or presenter of the material, often including directions for the congregation or worshippers. The word derives from the Latin “rubrica” meaning “red ochre” or “chalk.” In the language of liturgy, this technical term may refer to any liturgical actions customarily performed over the course of a service. In Coptic manuscripts and Coptic printed liturgical books, usually the rubric is written in red. In the Jewish Morning service, there are numerous rubrics that address physical position, posture, and attitude of the worshipper during the reciting of the “Tefilla,” which include instructions, such as, “to

³¹³ 2 Sam 17:1–23.

³¹⁴ This petition was targeting the separation of Jewish Christians from the synagogue. Later there was tension between the Jews and the Jewish Christians, such that the latter were called Christians.

³¹⁵ 1 SAG, 93.

³¹⁶ DL, 80–81.

stand up in fear,”³¹⁷ “praying towards Jerusalem,”³¹⁸ “put the worshipper’s feet in right order.”³¹⁹

Despite the numerous rubrics mentioned by Hedegård, my discussion must be limited to these three for now. In both traditions, the massive quantity of relevant literature is fascinating. It would require numerous pages to describe these rubrics properly.

a. “*To Stand Up in Fear*”³²⁰

The Tefilla is recited standing.³²¹ Amram commands that “they stand up for the Tefilla. And, a person who prays the Tefilla must concentrate his mind because the rabbis taught: A person who prays must concentrate his heart.”³²² Hedegård finds that to stand up is tied with the concentration of the mind, based on rabbinic dictums. For instance, he quotes from RaMBaM, *HT*, 4,15: “If one prayed the Tefilla without concentration of mind, he must recite it again with concentration.”³²³ This rabbi explains in his same book (16): “A man who prays the Tefilla should consider himself as if he stood before the Divine Presence, in accordance with that which is written: I have set JHWH always before me (Ps 16:8).”³²⁴

At the beginning of the Coptic Morning Service, after the priest says, “Let us pray,” the deacon calls the congregation to “Stand up for praying.”³²⁵ This ἑπιπροσεύχη ἑστᾶθε³²⁶ is repeated five times during the ritual: once at the beginning and the others at the opening of the

³¹⁷ 1 SAG, 73, 75, 79.

³¹⁸ 1 SAG, 81.

³¹⁹ 1 SAG, 82.

³²⁰ 1 SAG 73, 75, 79.

³²¹ 1 SAG, 83, Hedegård note.

³²² 1 SAG, 75–76.

³²³ Hedegård, note 75.

³²⁴ Hedegård, note 75.

³²⁵ DL, 2. In *Massoudy*, this command is based on Mark 11:25 and Ps 134:1. See p. 28, note 2.

³²⁶ Al Makary notices that in the Euchologion this deacon’s responsa is said in Greek and never translated to Coptic. He adds that the fact that the deacon calls the congregation to stand up prior to any liturgical prayer “is a unique case [compared to other liturgies], a special feature in the Coptic liturgy.” Al Makary, *Salawat*, 346, 355.

litanies.³²⁷ The symbolism is clear, that every time Jew or Copt will pray the petitions, they should concentrate on each word, as they are standing in fear in God's presence. The formula of standing or bowing in the fear of God is common in the Coptic Service.³²⁸ At the reading of the Gospel, the deacon commands the congregation to "Stand in fear and listen..." (DL 66, 67); and after the litanies, he says, "Let us attend in the fear of God." This liturgical symbol leads us to the orientation of the worshipper while he stands in God's presence.

b. *Praying towards Jerusalem, towards the East*

Apparently, both Jewish and Coptic traditions from the early centuries CE were preoccupied with the orientation of the worshipper when praying the Jewish prayers or in the Christian Church. Amram, as he composed his siddur in Babylonia, required the worshipper of the Tefilla to turn southward.³²⁹ Hedegård explains that the reason is because Jews living in that city should turn in the direction of Jerusalem when reciting the Tefilla.³³⁰

In the Euchologion, the red rubric commands the priest to face towards the East before reciting the litanies.³³¹ The Alexandrian Church favours the East and this has been the custom in its communal and private prayers from the early centuries. Basilios originates the eastward orientation from the time of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which prescribe: "All rise up with one consent and, looking toward the east . . . pray to God eastward."³³²

The orientation of the synagogue towards the East and possible correlations with the Coptic

³²⁷ Massoudy, 28, 36, 38, 45, 79.

³²⁸ DL, 85.

³²⁹ 1 SAG, 81.

³³⁰ 1 SAG, 81, Hedegård's note.

³³¹ Massoudy, 46.

³³² Basilios, "Orientation towards the East," 1846. The Coptic Church evidence is based on Mal 4:2; Matt 24:27. The Basilios adds to his article an important quotation from Saint Ephraim the Syrian (306–373), "The Jews looked to Jerusalem in their prayers, for it was their holy country. As for us, the Paradise is our country, which was in the East. Therefore we are ordered to look towards the East during our prayers."

Church may also be an area for future reflection.³³³

c. *The Obligation of Putting the Feet “in Right Order”*³³⁴

It is prominent that in the Old Testament, the “right” and “left” hands or feet hold deep theological meanings.³³⁵ But in a liturgical context, this looks uncommon. In SAG, the putting of the feet in a right position seems to have been important at the time of composing the siddur and also appears to be an ancient peculiar duty during the Morning Service. In the Coptic Morning Service ritual, the rubric specifies that the Coptic priest, while going up to the altar, must place his right foot first, and when he goes down, he places his left foot first.³³⁶

This exigency is better understood in a halachic context. Amram cites from two Amoraim (R. Levi and R. Simon) an unclear dictum, but it reverberates with the Coptic rubric:

One of them says: As the angels. The other says: As the priests. He who says: As the priests [emphasizes] that it is written: Thou shalt not go up unto my altar, that thy nakedness should not be discovered thereon, that [in walking] their heel touches the toe and the toe touches the heel. And who says: As the angels [emphasizes] that is written: And their feet were straight feet.³³⁷

In Amram’s quotation, the “putting the feet in the right order” matters when the priest “goes up into [the Lord’s] altar.” Just to highlight the importance of the correct position of the worshipper’s feet in the Jewish Morning Service, Jacobson also provides further explanation. He quotes from *Shibbole ha-Lekett*,³³⁸ that the Geonim believe that the resting of the shekinah above

³³³ The topic is also stimulating in regard to the common liturgical architectural concept of the synagogue and the Coptic Church. See Ryken et al., “East,” 225–26; Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*, 326–30; Malaty, *The Church: House of God*, 74–77 (Early Church Fathers and the Eastward orientation); Basilios, “Orientation towards the East,” 1846.

³³⁴ 1 SAG, 82.

³³⁵ On the right as opposed to the left, see Gen 48:12–20; Exod 29:22; Lev 7:32. It symbolizes also strength and weakness: Exod 15:6, 12; Isa 62:8; Ps 17:7; 44:4.

³³⁶ DL, 9. Massoudy, 43.

³³⁷ 1 SAG, 82.

³³⁸ A halakhic work by Zedekiah ben Abraham Anav (1210–1280); Jacobson, *Meditations on the Siddur*, 111.

the worshipper requires him to step back three spaces in order that “the left foot is moved back first.”³³⁹

To conclude this part, the following quotation captures the importance of a liturgical rubric: “Obviously, symbolic sets are deeds which give concrete expression to some idea or emotions. At times, the power of a symbol [a rubric] is greater than pure verbal articulation.”³⁴⁰

E. *The Priestly Blessing*

The Priestly Blessing, which is the last part in both Jewish³⁴¹ and Coptic Morning Services, manifests also a textual and scriptural analogy.³⁴² In both traditions, the “Priestly Blessing” is a mix of a petition asking God to provide peace and bestow blessings upon the community through the priest. The priestly blessing is according to Num 6:22–77. A priestly blessing in a synagogue seems odd but in Amram it is clearly stated that a priest, or one claiming priestly descent, has the legitimacy to recite this blessing over the congregation. According to Hedegård, it is at an early date that the Priestly Blessing was transferred to the synagogue, as the Mishna presupposes it to be an integral part of the synagogue service (Ber. V, 4; Meg. IV, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10). He also notes that “Since the Mishna speaks of the priestly blessing as an integral part of the synagogue service, it seems very probable that this blessing belonged to the synagogue service at the time of Christ.”³⁴³

Amram also indicates that if no priests are present, the Seliach sibbur says an alternative blessing that contains also “JHWH make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

³³⁹ Jacobson, *Meditations on the Siddur*, 111.

³⁴⁰ Jacobson, *Meditations on the Siddur*, 105.

³⁴¹ 1 SAG, 122–26.

³⁴² DL, 89. The “Short Blessing” starts with “May God have compassion upon us.” DL, 92, where the priest says the last part of his blessing, it begins: “O king of peace, grant us your peace, establish for us your peace, and forgive our sins...” *Massoudy*, 112.

³⁴³ 1 SAG, 122, Hedegård’s note.

JHWH turn his face unto thee, and give thee peace...”³⁴⁴ Remarkably, the Coptic liturgy preserves the same blessing in its Morning Service but in two parts. The first part is called “The Canon.”³⁴⁵ “May God have compassion upon us, manifest His face upon us, and Have mercy upon us.”³⁴⁶ “O Lord save Your people, bless your inheritance, shepherd them, and raise them up for ever.”³⁴⁷ The second part is called “First Baraka:”³⁴⁸ (“Blessing” in Arabic) “O King of peace,”³⁴⁹ Grant us your peace, establish for us your peace, and forgive us our sins,”³⁵⁰ which resounds with Amram’s saying that the Seliach sibbur should conclude the blessing with the words, “who makest peace.”³⁵¹

³⁴⁴ 1 SAG, 126.

³⁴⁵ *Massoudy*, 108 (the title).

³⁴⁶ Ps 67:1; Lev 6: 22–27.

³⁴⁷ DL, 89; Ps 28:9.

³⁴⁸ *Massoudy*, 112 (the title).

³⁴⁹ Isa 9: 6–7.

³⁵⁰ DL, 92.

³⁵¹ 1 SAG, 126.

Chapter 4

Thematic Interrelations in the Jewish and Coptic Cycle of Luminaries

The Coptic Morning Service appears to hold many Jewish signatures. These, I believe, are an inheritance of the Temple, and the Jewish liturgies and prayers of the first century. This worship originates in Jewish Scripture, and somehow interconnects with certain late Second Temple writings that have influenced the Coptic Church. The evidence of textual correspondences between the two traditions, as seen in Chapter 3, calls for a thematic analysis. Such scrutiny might help to clarify the Jewish influence on the arrangement of prayers in the Coptic Morning Service, as well as its connection with the whole corpus of the Coptic liturgy. One particularly important shared theme, which can be seen as a network that holds many shared Judeo-Coptic topics, is the Jewish conceptualization of the cycle of luminaries (sun, moon, stars, and seasons). Topics that are shared originate in Scripture, are well-expressed in the texts of the prayers, and even have an impact on the worship melodies, as we will see throughout this chapter.

In order to probe this conceptualization of the cycle of the luminaries and its origin in both traditions, I compare various writings. The Old Testament passages, which I include in this chapter, hold a foundational role to understanding the potential Jewish impact of the theme of luminaries on the Coptic liturgy. The episode of Creation in Genesis is the first seed that grew into a massive tree displaying numerous branches of liturgical forms. Also, the book of Psalms frequently demonstrates how the luminaries are an integral part of all creation, where cosmic praise is offered to God, the Creator and the “King of the Universe.”

My selection of texts from the literature of Qumran shows a development of the theme of luminaries in the Qumran prayers and praises. What shows in that literature is a new

understanding of structuring a corpus of liturgy based on the cycles of the moon and the sun. Apparently, different significant elements were added to this corpus, such as angels, archangels, light, and many other concepts, which illustrate an inherent perception of a tie between heaven and earth in praising the Creator. Thus, the Jewish Morning Service shows a bond between Old Testament and Qumran texts, and sheds some light on the Coptic Morning Service, where the concept of luminary cycles and cosmic elements are integral.

Despite the voluminous literature that exists regarding the conception of the account of the Creation, which entails the notion of “luminaries” and “cycles,”³⁵² it is necessary to outline the main topics that I have chosen in order to demonstrate a multifaceted thematic interrelation between the Jewish and Coptic Morning Services. The impressive array of topics that are based on the account of Creation (in the Coptic Morning and Evening Service) make a multilayered world of liturgical texts and practices. Even if these acquire new aspects with the new perceptions of early Christianity, the Jewish theme of luminaries survives distinctively through many centuries in the Alexandrian tradition. In order to complete this study, it is necessary to follow a certain chronological order in order to outline how the Coptic conservatism has retained the Jewish view of luminaries. First, the starting point is to find biblical foundations of luminary liturgies, including how the daily prayer of early Israelites is based on the luminary cycles of the heaven. Secondly, it is important to gather some facts regarding the perception of luminaries during the late Second Temple era drawing on a selection of Dead Sea Scrolls and Qumranic texts. Thirdly, it is instructive to look for the connection between late Second Temple writings and the texts regarding “luminaries” in *Sedar Amram Gaon* (1 SAG). Fourthly, the chronology then points towards uncovering which of those inherited Jewish concepts, in Scripture and in late Second Temple writings, are reflected in the Coptic liturgy, and especially where the Jewish

³⁵² Cycles also refer to time as the year, 24 hours of a day, which hold the morning and evening time of prayers.

reverberation is obvious in many aspects. Finally, I will conclude with my concern about the importance of further studies that draws on the Jewish concept of luminaries in an extensive investigation to decipher more accurately the basis for many Coptic liturgical practices.

1. Glimpses of the Biblical Foundations of Luminary Liturgies

The meaning of the word “luminary” is based on the Latin *luminarium* or *lumen*, signifying “light.” The Bible is enveloped with the imagery of light, both literally and figuratively. In Genesis 1, light was the first thing created by God.³⁵³ As the source of light, God the Creator ordered the three main luminaries: the sun, the moon, and the stars to come into existence: “And God said, ‘Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.’”³⁵⁴ While the luminaries are vital elements for life, they are just a part of the universal creation of God. The “six day realms”³⁵⁵ reflect the grandeur of this “King of the Universe” who transformed the “chaos” into “cosmos.”³⁵⁶

From the earliest time, the triad of the sun, moon and stars “etched the minds of the Bible readers through the centuries,”³⁵⁷ and, ad hoc, were implemented into their liturgical texts. These three luminaries rule the sky and mark the borderline between darkness and light. Always

³⁵³ Gen 1:3–4.


³⁵⁴ Gen 1:3–4 RSV.

³⁵⁵ Day 1 - realms of light and dark, Day 2 - realms of waters and sky, Day 3 - realm of dry land, Day 4 - realms filled with heavenly lights (sun and moon/stars), Day 5 - realms filled with fish and birds, Day 6 - realm filled with animals and humans.

³⁵⁶ The luminaries, by regulating day and night, the seasonal rotation, and the agrarian system, demonstrate the wisdom of God through his Creation (Pss 104:24, 136:5; Prov 3:19, 8:22, 8:27–28). Their role in the universe reflects the notion of “order as a result of God” that is necessary for natural stability. (**Note also here the significance of Gen 1:14 as an indication of the concept of the calendar**). Thus the Greek word “cosmos” is crucial for this study. In the Septuagint, the Greek verb κοσμεω (*kosmeo*) means: to put in proper order, to decorate (literally or figuratively), to adorn, garnish, or trim (2 Chr 3:6; Esth 1:6; Jdt 12:15; 2 Macc 9:16; 3 Macc 3:5, 5:45; 3 Macc 6:1; Eccl 7:13; Sir 16:27; 29:26; 38:28; 42:21; 45:12; 47:10; 50:9; 50:14; Mic 6:9; Jer 4:30; Bar 6:10; Ezek 16:11, 13; 23:40). This definition is also evident throughout the New Testament writings. The New Testament Greek Lexicon states that κοσμος (*kosmos*) is an apt and harmonious arrangement or constitution, order, decoration, adornment, e.g. the arrangement of the stars, “the heavenly hosts,” as the ornament of the heavens as in 1 Peter 3:3: an adorning world.

³⁵⁷ Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 10.

perceived as a daily supernatural phenomenon, pagans worshipped the supremacy of this triad. However, the Israelites³⁵⁸ were distinguished from them by blessing the transcendent Creator who brought them into existence³⁵⁹ and established their daily cycle.³⁶⁰ Multiple biblical references and specifically those in the Book of Psalms³⁶¹ that are related to this cosmic triad, and their involvements, in different accounts, influenced Jewish theology, which in turn was foundational to the development of their distinguished liturgy and worship.³⁶² This laudatory repertoire holds interplanetary and cosmic elements that aim to glorify God for his magnificent creation.

The question that must be asked is whether the daily prayer of early Hebrew people is based on the luminary cycles of the heavens? The biblical theology described above seems not to be the only main source for a liturgy that holds cosmic proportions. The theme of luminaries embraces manifold topics. The rational relationship between the cycles of the heavenly luminaries and the time of prayers was surely already in the mindset of the people of the ancient Mediterranean and the Near Eastern world. In Egypt, the evidence is obvious. Hundreds of laudatory texts attest to how the sun is revered at sunrise. The jubilation expressed by the worshippers and their symbolic metaphors about ☉  Ra, the Sun-God, mainly focused on its light and heat, are overwhelming. The prayer time and related ritual are meticulously described in

³⁵⁸ Moses warned the Israelites not to worship the sun, moon, and stars. See Deut 4:19.

³⁵⁹ Gen 1:16–18.

³⁶⁰ The daily cycle is well described in Eccl 1:5; 19:6; and Prov 7:23.

³⁶¹ The Psalms of praise (i.e. Pss 8; 19; 33; 103; 104; 145–150) celebrate and revere the worthiness of God through his creation not only for his making but also for establishing the “cosmos” as an orderly created universe in place of chaos, which is figuratively seen in the image of a formless, desolate, empty earth, as well as the darkness that was covering the deep water (Gen 1:2).

³⁶² Psalms, which express the purpose of praising God, are often called hymns of praise and often “praise God for the orderliness of his creation” (see Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms*, 146). One example, Psalm 148, summons all heavenly creatures (vv. 1–6) as well as earthly creatures (vv. 7–14) to offer a hymn of praise. The psalmist starts with the spiritual beings (angels, his heavenly host), followed by the luminaries (sun, moon, shining stars), and finally the clouds (water above the skies). Amazingly, other parts of creation are called to join this universal choir: lightning, clouds, winds, hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds, wild animals, even cattle, small creatures, and flying birds.

these Egyptian laudatory texts. Sun, moon, and stars and their effects on the daily Egyptian life were constantly a source for a vast leitmotif for praising gods.³⁶³ The Egyptian myth of the luminaries was also expressed in the Babylonian and later in the early Hebrew ceremonies in some festivals. W. O. E. Oesterley observes multiple parallels between the Spring Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Babylonian Feast of Shamas, the Sun-God. The Midsummer Feast of the Weeks was also connected with sun worship. The New Year Festival of the Tabernacles was celebrated in honor of Yahweh the King, Creator, and giver of the fruits of the earth. Oesterley (for the Jewish culture),³⁶⁴ Barucq (for the Egyptian culture),³⁶⁵ and Castellino (for the Babylonian culture),³⁶⁶ find interesting parallels between pagan hymns and Jewish psalms when dealing with rituals related to the luminaries. They note that constantly the themes of creation, light, jubilation, death (symbol of night), and resurrection (twilight), repeatedly were inserted ad hoc into the morning or evening rituals.

Penner asserts that the relationship between the cycles of the heavens and the time of prayers is “ubiquitous” in both the pagan world and within the community of the Jews.³⁶⁷ In the Old Testament, God commands the Israelite priests to offer sacrifices of animals in the morning and evening, which are considered the time of transition from light and darkness.³⁶⁸

³⁶³ Barucq, *L'Expression de la Louange Divine*, 201–19. The contextual similarity between the Pharaonic texts and Psalms is stunning.

³⁶⁴ Oesterley, *Myth and Ritual*, 111–46.

³⁶⁵ Barucq, *L'Expression de la Louange Divine*.

³⁶⁶ Castellino, *Le Lamentazioni Individuali*.

³⁶⁷ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 101.

³⁶⁸ Exod 29:38–39.

2. Second Temple Judaism Period and the Perception of “Luminaries”

Penner and many other scholars observe that prayer at the exchange of luminaries becomes a popular practice in the late Second Temple period.³⁶⁹ The significance of this epoch is that Judaism had further developed and the transition from the Judaism of the Hebrew Bible to Talmudic or Rabbinic Judaism was complete.³⁷⁰ Also, Jewish writings in various dispersed communities (Alexandria, Dead Sea, Palestine, Syria) were growing and resulted in an important corpus of literature shaping specific concepts related to biblical stories, wisdom literature, and Qumran literature. These communities even produced new extra-biblical Psalms, hymns, and prayers. In these writings, there is a growing popularity of prayer focused on the exchange of the luminaries, especially related to the morning prayers, and the impact of these Jewish writings, both directly and indirectly on the Alexandrian Church liturgy is significant.

The texts explored below will help to reassess the origin of the liturgy of the Egyptian Church. The common characteristics of these texts helps to determine to what degree the early Jews of Alexandria may have transferred their cherished praying and worshipping patterns to the new faith community of Christians. Clearly, one of the transferred patterns focuses on luminaries and their associated themes.

In order to discover similarities in the domain of luminaries, this study requires a close look at the resources of the designated period, some examination of how the rudiments of the Old Testament were combined with late Second Temple era insights, some attempt to identify and reconstruct the liturgical function of luminaries, and, finally, a textual and thematic comparison between both Jewish and Christian liturgies.

³⁶⁹ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 101; Falk, *Daily, Sabbath and Festival Prayers*, 47–49; Chazon, “When Did They Pray,” 73–75.

³⁷⁰ Schiffman, *Understanding Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism*, 3–14.

A. The Resources of the Second Temple Era

1. The Dead Sea Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls count more than two hundred prayers, including several liturgical texts that explicitly state the time of prayers to be used on a daily or weekly basis. Penner observes that the trend of the interrelation between daily prayer and the luminary cycles was a countercultural occurrence during the late Second Temple era.³⁷¹ He attributes this popularity to the abundance of Jewish writings related to the subject. He studies two corpuses of texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus, *Daily Prayers* (4Q503) and the *Apocryphon of Moses* (4Q408). The importance of his study clarifies some interrelation between luminaries and other topics. This also sheds some light on the implications for their introduction into the Egyptian Church liturgy.

Both corpuses texts (*Daily Prayers* and the *Apocryphon of Moses*) exemplify possible reasons for the practice of praying in coordination with the luminary cycle. The seed is embedded in the episode of creation in Genesis 1. Verses 14–18 state that God made the two great lights. The greater light (the sun) is to rule the day and the lesser light (the moon and stars) are to rule the night. Penner writes: “The fact that the luminaries moved with such regularity and that these movements were set according to divine law made the celestial lights ideal markers for those looking to establish a scheduled pattern of daily prayer.”³⁷² This establishes the relationship between luminaries and creation.

Later we see that some apocalyptic writings, such as *I Enoch*,³⁷³ describe the heavenly angels singing praises to God at certain times of the day,³⁷⁴ and that human beings should

³⁷¹ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 101.

³⁷² Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 101. See also the inscriptions of Beni Hassan as described by Fillion, *La Bible Commentée d'après la Vulgate*, 6.

³⁷³ 1 En 18:35; 21:16; 82:9–20; 86:1–4; 90:24. The text of *I Enoch* was circulated widely in Egypt in a Greek version. It continued in use in many of Egypt's monasteries, both in Greek and Coptic, long after it was proscribed by Athanasius in his famous paschal letter of 367. For more details, see Pearson, “Enoch in Egypt,” 216–31.

³⁷⁴ Job 38:7 reflects a similar idea: “while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”

simultaneously coordinate their time of prayers with celestial praise. In the same book of Enoch, the author adds an additional insight: the stars and angels coalesced.

This coalescence is due not only to its existence in the texts of the late Second Temple era, but, I believe, is due to an etymological issue in the Greek of the Septuagint. When the word “host” is mentioned, the Greek uses various terms and these terms invite this idea of coalescence. Several verses help to clarify this issue. For instance, in Exodus 14:41, and 14:28, the word δύναμις (*dunamis*) (“host”) means “miraculous power,” usually attributed to God: “ἡ δύναμις κυρίου” “all the hosts of the LORD.” In 1 Sam. 1:3, the Greek word is σαβαώθ (*Sabaoth*), a Hebrew word adopted by the Greek Septuagint, which means “armies,” a military epithet of God. In other passages, such as 1 Kings 22:19, the word “stratia” designates both the angels and the celestial luminaries.³⁷⁵ I believe that this etymological matter affected both Jewish and Early Christian liturgy. Furthermore, the meaning is ambiguous between “army of angels,” “stars,” and “mighty power.” The notion that angels and stars are connected may find its derivation in the Septuagint translation of the word “host,” which may be translated as “stars,” “angels,” or “powers.”

Penner contends that this angelic praise that took place in the heavenly sanctuary provides a suitable template for the Jews of the late Second Temple era: “This sanctuary was conceived as a place of worship without the blood of sacrifices.”³⁷⁶ While the expression of a non-bloody sacrifice as an offering of lips is an Old Testament term,³⁷⁷ the author of the book of Hebrews exhorts Christians to “offer continually to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that confess his name.”³⁷⁸ Here another connection between luminaries and their fixed time of worship for

³⁷⁵ Strong's' Greek Dictionary: Accordance Software 10 δύναμις.

³⁷⁶ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 102.

³⁷⁷ Lev 7:12.

³⁷⁸ Heb 13:15; Jer. 33:11; Pss 50:14, 23; 54:6; 107:22.

both angels and humans becomes apparent: angels are offering God praise without a sacrifice of blood. Does a connection exist between this kind of sacrifice and angels? Can it be traced in Alexandrian Church tradition?

The Qumran texts studied by Penner are a subject of debate, as to whether praying according to the cycle of the luminaries is a Qumran sectarian phenomenon or a common practice during the late Second Temple writings. Falk argues that this practice was non-sectarian, as different groups of Jews were praying according to fixed hours.³⁷⁹ Also Penner strongly suggests that different scribes copied some Qumran writings and especially the book of *Words of Luminaries* during different eras.

2. 4Q503, *Daily Prayer*

4Q503, *Daily Prayer*, contains communal blessings to be recited in the evening and at sunrise each day for one month of the year. The main liturgical feature is the antiphonally-arranged component of each prayer that is marked by abrupt but regular changes of pronouns. The third person is used in the opening directive of each prayer prior to every blessing: “And [they] shall bless, answer, and say.”³⁸⁰ In the prayer text, God is addressed in the second person singular (you): “And, we the sons of your covenant will praise your name.” In the closing blessing of the prayer, Israel is always addressed in the second person: “Peace be upon you, Israel.”

In 4Q503, the daily prayers are regulated according to the 364-day solar calendar. Penner notes that since this text lost its beginning and its end, he assumes that 4Q503 could include additional months of the year. He notes that the basic evidence of this fragmentary text, aside

³⁷⁹ Falk, *Daily, Sabbath and Festival Prayers*, 14–15.

³⁸⁰ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 108.

from its liturgical purpose, is to establish a calendar of prayer that is coordinated with the cycles of the sun and moon.

In the *Daily Prayers*, some technical terms are frequently used, such as “divisions of light” and “divisions of night.”³⁸¹ They reflect required exactitude in times of prayers. This pattern follows the concept of the “order” in the cosmos, the rotation between sun and moon in fixing the hourly order prayers. Esther Chazon argues that in some cases, as mentioned in fragments 7–9, and 3–4, “the sons of your covenant shall praise ... with all the divisions of light,” indicates metaphorically that the angelic host praising God is associated with the luminaries.³⁸² Angels are shining stars or, simply, they are light.

Another important feature in 4Q503 is the phenomenon of “praying with angels.” It is a very interesting style of worship, not only in that it was exceptionally connected to the divinely established order of the cosmos, but also because “it allowed the community to live in coordination with, and correspondence to, the praises of their angelic counterparts in the heaven above.”³⁸³ Within this idea, 4Q503 mentions frequently that the earthly congregation is regularly to be “praising” and “witnessing” together with angels (11, 4; 37–38, 21; 64, 5; 65, 3; 66, 1; 78, 2; 98, 1).³⁸⁴ It is remarkable that this sharing of praise between worshippers and angels is found in these morning prayers, because it is also central to the Coptic Morning Service. The angels are referred to as “witnesses,” “holy ones,” and “heavenly hosts or troop of lights.”

³⁸¹ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 113.

³⁸² Chazon, “The Function of the Qumran Prayer Texts,” 223. Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 114.

³⁸³ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 118.

³⁸⁴ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 118.

It appears that a liturgical phenomenon is recognized in the Second Temple era: on the schedule of the luminaries, angelic praise and human praise mirror each other. This is clearly reflected in early Alexandrian Christian texts.³⁸⁵

3. *4Q408, Apocryphon of Moses*

The *Apocryphon of Moses* is a short prayer. It is not meant to be a daily invocation. As it is concise, the full text can be quoted here:

5 when the ornaments of His Glory shine out from the holy abode [will answer all.]
 6 Israel Blessed is YHWH be you, O Lord, who are righteous in all your ways, who are strong in force, who are kind in your judgments, who are trustworthy
 7 in all your perceptible precepts, who are wise with all insight, who are shaking off with all (?) strength, who guide, to cause to rise the []
 8 that you have created the morning as a sign causing the appearance of the dominion of light for the area of the day at the firmament of the heavens at the beginning
 9 for their work in order to bless your holy name when they see that the light is good and when they recognized that in all []
 10 [] men that is [you] have created the evening as a sign causing the appearance of the dominion [of darkness for the area of the night]
 11 after the work in order to bless [your holy name, when] they see that good are all the stars.³⁸⁶

Common features can easily be traced between the *Daily Prayers* and the *Apocryphon of Moses*. The description of the exchange of the heavenly lights precedes the body of the prayer and shows that at the appearance of the light, Israel will bless Yahweh. The theme of coordination of the prayer with the cycles of morning and evening of luminaries is well described. The Law (“divine precepts”) is part of this cosmic prayer. The expression, “light is good,” recalls the account of creation in Genesis 1.

³⁸⁵ The bibliography listed by Penner, 119, n. 54, is an excellent resource for further study on humans and angels participating in common worship. Multiple examples of the human-angelic praise are found in different resources from the late Second Temple era.

³⁸⁶ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 132.

Chazon, in her article “When Did They Pray?,”³⁸⁷ examines various texts from the collection of the community of Qumran in order to perceive the times for prayer and the associated literature. She divides these Qumranic texts into two categories. First, category A, is the group of texts where prayer times are coordinated with the movements of heavenly lights (sunset and sunrise). In the second, category B, are prayers that follow the sacrificial time and are coordinated with the hours when the daily, Sabbath, and festival sacrifices were offered at the Temple.

Chazon demonstrates the prayer of category A by selecting a certain hymn that has no title. It is preserved in 1QS, 4QS, and in 1QH.³⁸⁸ This hymn shows the commitment of the hymnist to praise God during the course of the day, the course of the year, and according to the sabbatical cycles. The opening lines of the hymn include several examples:

At the times ordained by Him: at the beginning of the dominion of light, and its coming round when it retires to its appointed place; at the beginning of the watches of darkness when He unlocks their storehouse and spreads them out, and also at their coming round when they retire before the light.³⁸⁹

The cycle of the luminaries between night and day is easily recognized in this part of the hymn by use of words “beginning,” “coming round,” and “retire.” The hymn also emphasizes the divinely-appointed time for prayers for evening and morning.

Chazon illustrates the prayer of category B with a prose inset known as *David's Compositions*, which comes near the end of the large Psalms scroll from Cave 11 (11 QPS a XXVII, 4–8):

And he [David] wrote 3,600 psalms; and songs to sing before the altar over the whole-burnt *tamid*³⁹⁰ offering every day, for all the days of the year, 364; and for

³⁸⁷ Chazon, “When Did They Pray,” 43.

³⁸⁸ Chazon, “When Did They Pray,” 43.

³⁸⁹ Chazon, “When Did They Pray,” 44.

³⁹⁰ Sanctuary lamp.

the *qorban* [offering] of the Sabbaths, 52 songs; and for the *qorban* [offering] of the New Moons and for all Solemn Assemblies for the Day of Atonement, 30 songs.³⁹¹

In this inset, David is credited with having created a liturgical accompaniment to the Temple sacrifices. This quotation shows that there are a specific numbers of songs for each occasion (*qorban* of the Sabbath: 52 songs; for New Moons and other festivals: 30 songs). The diversity of the laudatory texts according to the daily offering and feasts suggests this might be the practice during the period in which it was composed. This inset reflects on 1 Chron 23:30–31 and Sir 50:18. The arrangement of specific songs related to a certain festival and even just for a weekday is a phenomenon that seems to be continued later in the Early Egyptian Church. This can be seen not only in the divergence of texts for each day's praise as they occur in the Coptic book of Psalmody,³⁹² but also in the changing of melody for these same texts according to the seasons. *David's Compositions* invites the angels to praise God in the heavenly Temple. These angels are also described as angelic priests, who, by their singing, participate in the heavenly Temple.

As noted by David Flusser,³⁹³ the importance of the *Songs of David* for the history of Jewish worship is undeniable. He adds that not only do they attest actual liturgical practices of circles close to the Essenes, but they also contain liturgical phrases that reappear in rabbinic prayers. He mentions that verses 2:20 and 4:11–12 are relevant for the history of *Kaddish*.

³⁹¹ Chazon, "When Did They Pray," 47.

³⁹² The *Book of Psalmody* (known also as *The Holy Psalmody*) is the main book of hymns in the Coptic Church. It contains different forms of praise, such as "Hos" (Coptic: means praise), "Psali" (Greek: means singing), "Theotokion" (Greek, means to venerate the Theotokos, the mother of God), and "Doxology" (Greek: means to glorify). The hymns labeled "doxology" exalt God for his incarnation. Other doxologies are prescribed for use on the greater feasts, on Lenten weekdays, on the Saturdays and Sundays of Lent, and in the Coptic month of Khiak. The *Book of Psalmody* is divided into two parts; the first part, the "Annual Psalmody," is to be sung during the whole liturgical year, except the month of Khiak, which precedes Christmas. The second part, the "Khiak Psalmody," is to be sung during the Advent month of Khiak. For more details about the *Book of Psalmody*, see Cody, "Doxology," 923–24; Muftah, "Coptic Music," 1715–47; Mettaous, *Rouhaniet Al Tasbeha*, 34–37.

³⁹³ Flusser, "Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers," 569.

The liturgical terms used in *David's Compositions* occur in abundance in the Coptic liturgical books. The “whole-burnt *Tamid*” is still the lamp that exists in the altar of any Coptic church. It is also known as the “Kandil of al sharqiyyah”³⁹⁴ (the lamp of the Eastward).³⁹⁵ The “altar” is known in Hebrew as “Masbeh.” Copts still designate the sanctuary with the same Hebrew word, and for Copts, the term still holds the Jewish concept of the place where sacrifices are slaughtered.³⁹⁶ Concerning the word “qorban,” this is also a frequent liturgical term in the Coptic liturgical books, and, again, it is the Hebrew word that is used, with the same Jewish concept of a sacrifice of any kind, whether bloody or bloodless.³⁹⁷

4. *The Book of Words of Luminaries, 4Q504, 4Q506*

In Cave 4 at Qumran, fragments of three copies of a collection of prayers were found. Scholars believe that this collection holds great importance for understanding the history of the Jewish liturgy. The oldest manuscript dates from the early Hasmonean period (about 150 BCE).³⁹⁸ Falk and Chazon reject the idea that this book belonged to a sectarian community (the Qumran), which suggests that the content of this book was sufficiently popular that it was known to the Jewish worshipper.

The Book of Words of Luminaries is a book of hymns that is intended not for personal use but as a collection of community prayers. Its liturgical features can be summarized by the following characteristics. First, each prayer includes a superscription correlating to a specific day of the week. Second, the use of the third person plural as well as addressing God with second person demonstrates a communal recitation. Third, the content of each of the weekday petitions is

³⁹⁴ Still used in Coptic monasteries, the lamps are lighted with oil.

³⁹⁵ For more details about the Eastward and the lamp, see Malaty, *The Church House of God*, 74.

³⁹⁶ For more details about the altar, see Malaty, *The Church House of God*, 15; and Grossman, “Altar,” 105–107.

³⁹⁷ For more details about qorban, see Kohler, “Korban,” 561; Hammond and Brightman, *Liturgies, Eastern and Western*, 569; Viaud, *Les Coptes d’Egypte*, 106.

³⁹⁸ Flusser, “Psalms, Hymns and Prayers,” 566–68.

thematically connected so that each prayer is integral to the whole of the liturgy, which in total communicates the history of God in dealing with Israel, by use of a portion from the Bible. Fourth, the themes that are recounted for each weekday are significant. Penner includes more information about specific days:³⁹⁹ the prayer for Sunday begins with “Adam;” Friday recounts Israel’s exile and restoration; for the Sabbath, the hymns of praise replace the petitions, which include an invitation to join the praise of the angels. Each of these is distinctively mirrored by the Coptic liturgical directions for these same days.

The concept of each prayer including a superscription correlating to a specific day of the week in *The Book of Words of Luminaries* echoes with the daily structure in the Coptic *Book of Psalmody*. Every Coptic liturgical day consists of a “Psali of the day,” a “Theotokion of the day”⁴⁰⁰ (known also as “Tazakia”),⁴⁰¹ and a “Tafsir of the day.”⁴⁰² The Psali tends to repeat the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ in almost each quatrain. The Theotokion recounts the story of salvation from the Old Testament time with its prophecies to Christ’s incarnation in the womb of Mary. The “Tafsir” paraphrases the main ideas mentioned in the “Psali” and the “Theotokion.”

The liturgical feature of using the third person plural as well as addressing God with second person in *The Book of Words of Luminaries* resounds also in the “Psali,” the “Theotokion,” and the “Tafsir” in the Coptic *Book of Psalmody*.

By examining this sample of late Second Temple writings, we see common features that tie the luminaries and the time of prayers together in two liturgies. Two further examples from the Jewish Morning Service also help to clarify this link.

³⁹⁹ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 104.

⁴⁰⁰ “Theotokion” is a hymn in praise of the Blessed Virgin, also known as “Theotokia” in the Coptic Church. For more details, see Ishaq, “Theotokion,” 2254–55.

⁴⁰¹ I am not able to find a suitable English translation.

⁴⁰² “Tafsir” is known also as “Tarh.” “Tarh” (pl. “turuhat”) usually denotes a paraphrase used to explain a “Theotokion,” or Gospel reading. See Muftah, “Coptic Music,” 1728.

B. Sedar Amram Gaon (1 SAG): The Shema and Its Blessing, Amidah

In the liturgy of the Jewish Morning Service as described by Amram Gaon, it is easy to recall the Qumran concept of luminaries. Two main parts will help to clarify where the theme of luminaries directly and indirectly emerges: the Berakah, “My God,”⁴⁰³ and the reciting of the Shema.

1. Berakah “My God”: Luminaries, Soul, and Resurrection

My God, the soul thou gavest me is pure, thou didst create it into me, thou didst form it into me, thou preservest it within me, and thou hast taken it from me, thou hast restored it in me, and thou wilt one day take it from me, and thou will restore it in the time to come. And so long, as my soul is within me I give thanks unto thee, JHWH, my God, Lord of souls. Blessed be thou, JHWH, who restores souls to the dead corpses.⁴⁰⁴

This short Berakah is said at the beginning of the Jewish Morning Service. According to the Talmud,⁴⁰⁵ “My God” should be recited when awakening in the morning, before a man has said or done anything. Here, in this prayer, the theme of creation is referenced by the “soul thou gavest to me.” The description of the divine dynamics of the soul is significant: “create,” “form,” “preserve” (into me), “taken (from me),” “restore it (in me),” “one day will take it from me.”

The “*neshama*,” the soul, which is pure when given to the human, relates the text to Genesis 2:7, when “God breathed into his nostrils their breath of life, and the creature became a living being.” But in the text quoted above, the journey of the soul that is gifted to the individual goes through different phases throughout the day. God preserves it for the continuance of life (symbolically during the day);⁴⁰⁶ in sleep, God takes it from the person (at night); in the moment of death, “will one day take it;” and finally in the resurrection, “will restore it” again. Thus,

⁴⁰³ 1 SAG, 8–9.

⁴⁰⁴ 1 SAG, 8–9.

⁴⁰⁵ 1 SAG, 8. Hedegård does not mention the Talmudic reference.

⁴⁰⁶ Ps 97:10; 121:7.

offering a thanksgiving prayer to God for his power as Creator, as “Lord of Souls,” or “King of the Universe,”⁴⁰⁷ is obviously attached to the creation of human beings.

As seen in Chapter 3, the theme of “*neshama*” occurs also in the Prime Hour prayer of the Coptic *Book of Hours*⁴⁰⁸ where the prayed psalms reflect the theme of beseeching God to keep and restore the human soul against any dangerous circumstances. In various parts of this canonical hour, we find a tie between the “*neshama*,” the night (death), and the daylight (life or creation).

2. The Reciting of the Shema

The Shema consists only of the one verse, Deut. 6:4. However, the “liturgical Shema” in the Jewish Morning and the Evening Services consists of three portions: Deut. 6:4–9, 11:13–21, and Num. 15:39–41.

Through a long narrative,⁴⁰⁹ Amram outlines the importance of the exact time for praying the Shema in the morning, as debated by the rabbis and the sages. The same concern has been described previously when he mentions the Berakah, “My God.” The rabbis have a rich literature concerning the time of reading the morning Shema. They specify that it should begin at daybreak, “when there is sufficient light to distinguish between purple and white, or to recognize a person, after a short acquaintance, at a distance of four ells,⁴¹⁰ and to last until the sun’s rays are seen.”⁴¹¹

The Shema, which is recited during the Morning Service, holds the common formulas of the Qumran texts. I will summarize the most important ones. First, the creation episode is shown in the *chazzan* recitation of the *Kaddish* (“Holy”) and is linked to universal ascendant blessings,

⁴⁰⁷ This term is the beginning of the Berakah, 1 SAG, 9.

⁴⁰⁸ The word, *Agpeya*, is a Coptic word meaning “Book of Hours,” based on the Coptic root word, “Ti Agp,” which means “hour.”

⁴⁰⁹ 1 SAG, 36–39.

⁴¹⁰ Ell is a unit of measurement, originally a cubit, i.e., approximating the length of a man’s arm.

⁴¹¹ For literature on the time of reciting, see Eisenstein, “Shema,” 286–87.

hymns and praises to the throne of God, who is known within the Shema section as the King of the Universe:⁴¹²

Magnified and sanctified⁴¹³ and praised be his great name in the world which he has created according to his will... Praised and glorified and exalted and honored and magnified and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He. Amen. Thou be high above all blessings and hymns and praises and consolations which are uttered in the world...⁴¹⁴

After the *Kaddish*, the *Sheliach sibbur*⁴¹⁵ recites a prayer, which connects directly to the topic of this chapter. The full section is long,⁴¹⁶ but contains important perceptions relevant to the luminaries: i.e. creation, light, angels, and the angelic praise. I will cite some excerpts, and provide some comments:

Blessed be thou, JHWH, our God, King of the Universe, who formest light created darkness, who makest peace and createst all things: Who in mercy givest light to the earth and to them that dwell thereon and in his goodness renewest the creation every day continually. How manifold are thy works, JHWH. In wisdom hast thou made them all... The blessed God, great in knowledge, prepared and formed the rays of the sun: it was a boon he produced as a glory to his name. He set the luminaries round his strength. The chiefs of his hosts are holy beings, they exalt the Almighty, continually declare the glory of God and his holiness... Creator of ministering spirit, and all of his ministering spirits stand in the height of the universe, and with awe proclaim aloud in unison the words of the living God and everlasting King...

This is a eulogy describing the goodness of God in his creation, and, in his mercy, he gives light. Hedegård notes that starting with “the blessed God,” the Hebrew text has an alphabetical arrangement, that is, an acrostic. Hymns of praise in Coptic tradition are frequently composed as acrostics. Creation is also linked to the “glory of his name.” “The chiefs of his hosts” in this passage would be the archangels, especially Michael and Gabriel.⁴¹⁷ The celestial praise is

⁴¹² 1 SAG, 46.

⁴¹³ Kaddish text is based on Ezek 38.

⁴¹⁴ 1 SAG, 41–42.

⁴¹⁵ A celebrant in the synagogue, his rank is higher than the Chazzan, who is a singer.

⁴¹⁶ 1 SAG, 46–51.

⁴¹⁷ 1 SAG, 47, note. A detailed study of the rabbinic sayings belonging to this subject would be beneficial in understanding the setting of the archangels as described in various liturgical texts.

ceaseless, which reflects a day and night cycle of worship.

After a striking description of the angels (the hosts), the text continues that “With holy melody they all respond in unison in fear, and say with awe: Holy, Holy, Holy is JHWH of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory... Give thanks to him that makes the great lights for his grace endureth forever. Blessed be thou, JHWH, Creator of luminaries.”⁴¹⁸

The “ministering spirits” is mentioned in the same portion of the text in which “they take upon themselves the yoke of the kingdom of heaven in chanting the “Quedusha.”⁴¹⁹ Hedegård observes that they both—the angels and the Israelites—take upon them the yoke of praising with the “Quedusha.” This doxology is based on Isaiah 6:3 and will be discussed in further detail below.

In the same section of the reciting of the Shema, there are two benedictions where the light ties with the Law.⁴²⁰ This invocation is based on Psalm 19, where the psalmist praises the Creator of the sun and the heavenly declaration of the glory of God and later emphasizes the Law as light: “The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.”⁴²¹

C. Luminaries and Related Topics in the Coptic Liturgy

1. Links between “Mazkeerim” and “Ozkor” in the Coptic Morning Service

The Jewish tradition of reciting aloud some significant biblical themes is seen by Simcha Cohen as an opportunity to observe the biblical mitzvah,⁴²² and to remember the deeds and the

⁴¹⁸ 1 SAG, 48–49.

⁴¹⁹ The “Quedusha” or “Kedusha” (“holiness”) is the third blessing of the Amidah. The blessing’s full appellation is *Kedushat ha-Shem* (Sanctification of the Name) to distinguish it from “Kedushat ha-Yom” (“Sanctification of the Day”), the central blessing of the Sabbath and festival. Popularly, however, the term *Kedushah* refers to the additions and responses recited by the cantor and congregation in the third benediction during the repetition of the *Amidah*. The word “kadosh” is the main theme of this doxology, hence the name “Kedushah.”

⁴²⁰ 1 SAG, 50–51.

⁴²¹ Psalm 19:8.

⁴²² Hebrew word means “commandment” of the Torah.

wonders of God.⁴²³ He emphasizes it with the reciting of the last portion of the Shema in a loud voice. The last phrases of the Shema contain the remembrance of God's deliverance of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt.

Cohen recounts that the Mishnah (in Berachot 12b) states that the target of this liturgical rubric is "Mazkeirim yetziat mitzrayim balaylot," which means, "We make others remember the Exodus in the evening time." He notices that this "Mazkeirim" is different from the word "zochrim," which means that one should remember the Exodus. The Mishnah states "mazkeirim," which means that one is obliged to make others recall the Exodus. Praying, singing, and or reciting are a means of awareness of the wonders of God.

It is remarkable that this word "zochrim" or "mazker" is similar to the Arabic word "Ozkor," which means "remember," for it is ubiquitous in both prayers and worshipping (singing) texts in the Coptic liturgical books. This "remembrance" seems to have a deeper meaning within the Jewish and Coptic liturgical texts. Future research may reveal to what extent the Copts understand this Jewish connotation and how it is implicated in their liturgy.

In the *Divine Liturgies*,⁴²⁴ we find the word "Remember" (ⲁⲓⲣⲓⲕⲙⲏ) in all the seven petitions that are recited during the mass. This word occurs in the petition of the Church Peace,⁴²⁵ of the Church Fathers,⁴²⁶ of Church Presbyters,⁴²⁷ for the Mercy,⁴²⁸ for the Place,⁴²⁹ for the Seasons,⁴³⁰ and for Oblations.⁴³¹

⁴²³ Cohen, *Timely Jewish Questions: Timely Rabbinic Answers*, 192–93.

⁴²⁴ The *Divine Liturgy* is a book of the three liturgies (Saint Basil, Saint Gregory, and Saint Cyril). They are currently the only ones used by a Coptic priest.

⁴²⁵ DL, 199.

⁴²⁶ DL, 200.

⁴²⁷ DL, 201.

⁴²⁸ DL, 202.

⁴²⁹ DL, 202.

⁴³⁰ DL, 203–207.

⁴³¹ DL, 208.

Before examining the impact of the Jewish writings and the Amram's Morning Service liturgy, I will recapitulate the ubiquitous prayer patterns during the late Second Temple regarding the luminaries and associated subjects. This summary merely hints at the extent of their existence in the Alexandrian Church liturgy.

Scripture is the backbone of liturgies that are based on the cycle of the luminaries. The concepts of the power of God in creating a cosmos, that is, order instead of chaos, the manifestation of his wisdom in governing the whole universe, and the stability of the universal system, all entail cosmic thanksgiving praise from all creatures.

The late Second Temple period formed particular patterns to the prayers. Some of these relate directly to the Alexandrian Church liturgy, particularly to the Morning Service and the hymnic texts included in the *Book of Psalmody*.

Although the Septuagint is believed to provide the key to understanding the coalescence of angels, stars, and powers in the liturgical texts, this subject merits extensive etymological survey of the massive Coptic liturgical corpus.

The Qumran texts discussed above show specific liturgical forms. In 4Q503, *Daily Prayers*, we examined several features: blessings for evening time, blessings for sunrise, and the liturgical calendar of prayers that is coordinated with cycles of the sun and moon. The text mentions "divisions of lights," which are connected to the time of prayer during the day; it also expresses an idea of "praying with the angels" who "witness" the human praise while they are rising to God.

In 4Q408, *Apocryphon of Moses*, the pattern of the coordination between the cycle of luminaries and time of prayers is also perceived. Other Scriptural concepts added to the text include the Law with its precepts as the light.

In IQS, 4QS and IQH (untitled text), the hymnist shows commitment in praising God during the course of the day, the year, and the sabbatical cycles. *David's Compositions*, 11QPS a XXVII, 4–8 suggests a liturgical arrangement of specific songs for festivals and weekdays.

In *The Book of Words of Luminaries*, each prayer includes a superscription to a specific day of the week. Also, there is a fast exchange of pronouns between the third person “they,” when the community is designated, and “you,” when addressing God.

In *Seder Amram Gaon* 1 SAG, the liturgy of Morning Service frequently mentions the expression, “King of the Universe.” The term is used specifically when the text demonstrates the concept of thanking God for creating the “neshama,” “the soul.” In the section that includes reciting the Shema, we see again the angelic praise in two forms the *Kiddush* and the *Quedusha*. In the Jewish Morning Service, angels and archangels, “the chiefs of hosts,” praise the Creator. Luminaries and light are two frequent themes in that Service. Each of these mentioned have a clear parallel in the Coptic liturgy, and provide numerous threads that appear to clearly tie the two liturgies intrinsically together.

Similarities between the late Second Temple Jewish and Alexandrian liturgies are striking. In some cases, this analogy is seen through liturgical texts, such as parallelism in the Jewish and Coptic Morning Service. Sometimes the influence of the luminary cycles is shown, as in the Coptic *Book of Psalmody*, in an entire corpus of prayers, such as those labeled as “Psalis,” “Theotokion,” and “Tafsir” for each weekday or feast. The challenge to collect all of the different liturgical pieces from both Jewish and Alexandrian liturgical books is overwhelming. However, I will examine some similarities of topics in several relevant Alexandrian and Jewish sources.

2. The Exchange of Luminaries and Types of Prayer

The luminaries move in a regular pattern by following the divine law. This makes the

celestial lights the ideal marker for the divinely scheduled times of prayer. These ideal markers are the basis of the Alexandrian liturgy.

In the Egyptian Morning Service, the notion of creation, lights, and angels and archangels are embedded in the “Doxologies” of this service.⁴³² The Evening Service deals with other themes related to the night, such as the sunset, sleep, and human death. The Evening Service also displays different invocations asking the Lord to grant his peace and his protection against committing sins during the night. These same themes are also recurrent in the Coptic *Agpeya*: the daily fixed-hours collection.

On a weekly arrangement, the *Book of Psalmody* contains fixed “Doxologies,” “Theotokions,”⁴³³ and “Psalis”⁴³⁴ for every weekday. On an annual scale, seasons and festivals have their fixed Doxologies and hymns. The striking point is not only that the laudatory texts change according to the praying time (night, day, weekday, or seasons) but the melodies also vary accordingly. Melody is *lahn* in Arabic.⁴³⁵ The melody changes according to the weekdays, using two melodic tones, named “Adam” and “Batos.” For seasons, the tones are multiple: tones *lahn al-huzn*, “of grief” for Holy Week; *lahn al-farah*, “of Joy” for feasts”; *lahn al-ma'ruf*, “familiar”, for non-feast seasons; *lahn Khiak*,⁴³⁶ for the Advent; and *lahn-al-Sayam*, for the Lent period.

Thus, the rotation of sun and moon are the foundation of not only the establishment of a huge corpus of Coptic prayers and hymns but of their musical components as well. The Coptic

⁴³² Also known as “Doxologia” (Arabic, *Tamjid*). The Coptic Doxology is a type of hymnic composition, written in stanzas, and usually addressed to the Virgin, to the angels, to individual saints, or to a particular category of saints. For more details, see Cody, “Doxology,” 923–24.

⁴³³ Again “Theotokion” is a hymn in praise of the Blessed Virgin, plural “Theotokia.” See Ishaq, “Theotokion,” 2254–55.

⁴³⁴ “Psali” is a hymn, usually consisting of twenty-four strophes. They are acrostics; each strophe begins with the successive letter of twenty-four letters of the Geek or Coptic alphabet. For more details, see Kuhn, “Poetry,” 1985–86.

⁴³⁵ For more details about the melodies, see Muftah, “Coptic Music,” 1745–47.

⁴³⁶ “Khiak” is a Coptic month; on the 29th of Khiak, the Copts celebrate Christmas.

calendar also specifies Scripture and non-Scriptural readings for every day, and for each season, as laid out in the Coptic lectionary.⁴³⁷ Unsurprisingly, the solar calendar has a strong connection with the agriculture in Egypt and farmers are extremely dependent on it.

This liturgical system has numerous aspects that could reveal further Jewish influences. However, here I will focus on the two frequent melodies, named “Adam” and “Batos.” Hymns labeled “Adam” are to be sung Sunday through Tuesday, and also on certain specified festival days, while hymns labeled “Batos” are reserved for Wednesday through Saturday. The common explanation for these two labels is that the names of the two tunes are derived from the first word of two different “Theotokions.” “Adam” ⲁⲗⲁⲙ derives from Monday’s “When Adam became of contrite spirit,” and “Batos” ⲃⲁⲧⲟⲥ (bush) is from the Thursday’s “Theotokion” for “the bush which Moses saw.” “Batos” and “Adam” are distinct from each other in verse structure, length, and mood.

3. Creation and Sabbath Themes in the Coptic Liturgy

God’s creation of the heavy luminaries on the fourth day of the creation provides for two main domains of prayers, day and night. His instigation of the Sabbath on the seventh day provides one of the foundational pieces of Christian liturgy. In the Coptic liturgy, in particular, creation is built into its very structure.

In *Seder Amram Gaon*, the episode of creation is related to the Morning Service.⁴³⁸ The rabbinic sayings link Sabbath to creation. They believe that “on the eve of first Sabbath the creation took place, and on Friday, on the sixth of the month, at the sixth hour of the day, Israel

⁴³⁷ Werner, in his book, *The Sacred Bridge*, vol. 2, compares the lectionary of the synagogue and the Qumran lectionary. His findings are interesting, but also provide a possible model for comparison between Coptic and the synagogue lectionaries. For more details, see Basilios, “Lectionary,” 1435–37.

⁴³⁸ 1 SAG, 8–9.

received the commandments.”⁴³⁹ From this Jewish conception, we see some corresponding elements in the context of the Alexandrian Church. The earliest Alexandrian Fathers maintained the relationship between creation and Sabbath, and to this day, the Fathers of the Egyptian Church articulate a particular reverence for this connection.

a. Singing the Genesis 1 Account

Before I describe the relationship between creation and Sabbath as maintained by the earliest Alexandrian Fathers, I raise a question about whether early Jewish worship sustained the idea of singing Genesis 1. Frank Polak advocates a poetic reading of the Hebrew creation account in Genesis 1. He approaches this account not only to reveal its powerful image as poetry, but also as a hymn. He argues that “The purpose of hymnic poetry (in Gen. 1) is to praise and celebrate the mighty deeds of God. The creation account fulfills this function in a distinctive way, since it presents the divine praise of the world as created by God.”⁴⁴⁰ Polak’s statement implies that it is not surprising if both the Jewish community and the Early Church intended to praise God—and, possible, musically—with the words of this first chapter of the Bible. The reason for mentioning Polak’s advocacy is that if the Genesis text is not textually incorporated in the Coptic laudatory repertoire, it may still be seen in the *Psalmody Book* in its two main parts: The Morning (“Baker”) and the Midnight Praise (“Nesf-al-leil”).

In the Alexandrian Church’s Morning and Midnight Praise (“Tasbeha”), one focus is on how the whole creation and specifically the cycle of the luminaries reveal and reflect the divine order by which they have been created. The Coptic Church seems to cherish the biblical conception of this account in Genesis 1. The creatures reflect the glory of the Creator. The

⁴³⁹ For this link between the creation account and the weekday liturgy, see Dugmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue*, 26–42.

⁴⁴⁰ Polak, “Poetic Style and Parallelism in the Creation Account,” 5.

luminary cycles reflect the harmony in creation.⁴⁴¹ The ordered universe or cosmos reverberates the ultimate harmony eternally pre-existent in the Trinity: Father to Son to Holy Spirit. They live in perfect, united, eternal harmony with one another, from which all other “harmonies” gain their existence and to which all other harmonies reflect and find their purpose. This harmony creates the accord between all the cosmic creatures for praising their Creator. Clearly the early Alexandrian Church cherished the concept of cosmic praise and inserted it at the heart of its liturgy.

In the *Psalmody Book*, this cosmic praise, which magnifies God as Creator and displays the reverential attitude of “all” creation to the “One,” is sung during the Midnight Praise, which is daily between 4 A.M. and 7 A.M., followed by the Morning Praise, just before the Morning Offering Incense.

The core of every nightly praise in the *Book of Psalmody*⁴⁴² is the chanting of the Four Praises (*Hos*, ⲁⲟⲘ, in Coptic: praise, or ode). The First *Hos* is the Song of Mariam (Exodus 15) where the Creator established a road in the Red Sea. The Second *Hos* is Psalm 136 [135], a *Todah* to God, for he created heaven and earth (sun, moon, stars) with σύνεσις, intelligence and knowledge (v. 5). It is also a praise of deliverance of the Israelite from the yoke of the Egyptians (vv. 10–15). The Third *Hos* consists of the praise of the Three Hebrew Children after their divine deliverance from the furnace, taken from the Apocryphal Greek version of the book of Daniel. In each quatrain, the creatures are summoned to praise. This *Hos* is well-known as the Azariah Prayer, which was Second Temple praise. Some extracts are included here:

Bless the Lord, all you powers of the Lord, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.
 Bless the Lord, O Sun and Moon, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.
 Bless the Lord, all you Stars of heaven, Praise Him and exalt Him above all forever.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴¹ Gen 1:26; John 1:3; Col. 1:15–17.

⁴⁴² See the *Book of the Holy Pascha*, 519–56.

⁴⁴³ HPE, 33–34.

In the “Psali Batos” for “The Three Saintly Children,” it also says:

The heavens declare the glory of God until this day, O you angels whom He has made,
Praise Him and exalt Him above all.

Now you powers of the Lord, bless His honored name, O sun and moon and the stars,
Praise Him and exalt Him above all.⁴⁴⁴

You also, O nights and days, light and darkness and lightning, glorify the Lover of
mankind, Praise Him and exalt Him above all.⁴⁴⁵

The Fourth *Hos* is a joint doxological praise from Psalms 148, 149, and 150, centered by Psalm 148 where all creatures join the heavenly and the earthly choir.

Moses warned the Israelites not to worship the sun, moon, and stars,⁴⁴⁶ lest the people begin to believe that these luminaries are gods. However, the concept of singing in the Four *Hos* in the *Psalmody Book* is different: the luminaries are not getting worship from any worshipper, but they are the ones who worship and glorify their Creator.

b. *The Eve of Sabbath: The Creation in the Alexandrian Liturgy*

This section aims not to study the Sabbath and its impact on the Early Church,⁴⁴⁷ nor to discuss the debate between Western and Eastern practices in observing it, but to trace briefly the episode of creation in the Alexandrian liturgy. Emile Ishaq’s article, “Saturday,” stresses how the Alexandrian Church observes this day: as the day of Creation. For instance, he draws on *The Apostolic Constitutions* (circa 375–380), which states:

But keep the Sabbath and the Lord’s Day festival, because the former is the memorial of the creation, and the latter of the resurrection. But there is one only Sabbath to be observed by you in the whole year, which is that of our Lord’s burial, on which men ought to keep a fast... Not that the Sabbath-day is a day of fasting, being the rest from the

⁴⁴⁴ HPE, 42.

⁴⁴⁵ HPE, 43.

⁴⁴⁶ Deut 4:19.

⁴⁴⁷ The universal church had to wait until the Council of Laodicea (343–381) to legislate in Canon 29 that “Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honoring the Lord’s Day, and if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be Judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ.”

creation, but because we ought to fast on this one Sabbath only, while on this day the Creator was under the earth.⁴⁴⁸

He also quotes from Pope Christodoulus (1046–1077 CE), displaying how the church continued to follow the same rule of *The Apostolic Constitutions*: “And it is not allowed to any of the faithful to fast on a Saturday, except on one Saturday in the whole year, and this is the Great Saturday which is the end of the fast.”⁴⁴⁹

This impacts the liturgical rubrics concerning Saturday. It should be noted here that the Coptic Church nowadays observes Saturday as a festal day and prostrations are prohibited all the year round. The exception is for Holy Saturday, on which fasting is to be observed because Christ was still in the tomb. As indication of a celebratory day, the Litany of the Dead is not to be said on Saturday in the Morning Service. Hence, the prayer for the sick is to be said instead.

c. *Creation and Light*

The *Psalmody Book* and *The Agpeya* both share the same texts where creation is tied to the “light.” In both books, for this morning time, the theme of creation emerges with light: “The night has passed; we thank You, O Lord, and we ask You to keep us this day away from sin and deliver us.”⁴⁵⁰ The liturgy continues with:

O the true Light Who gives light to every man coming into the world, You came into the world through Your love for mankind, and all creation rejoiced in Your coming. You saved our father, Adam, from the seduction, and delivered our mother, Eve, from the pangs of death, and gave us the spirit of sonship. Let us, therefore, praise You and bless You saying...

As the daylight shines upon us, O Christ Our God, the true Light, let the luminous senses and the bright thoughts shine within us, and do not let the darkness of passions hover over us, that mindfully we may praise You with David saying, “My eyes have awakened before the morning watch, that I might meditate on Your sayings.

⁴⁴⁸ Ishaq, “Saturday,” 2099.

⁴⁴⁹ Ishaq, “Saturday,” 2100.

⁴⁵⁰ *Book of Seven Canonical Hours*, 5.

Even the “Light” is added to the invocation to Mary the Theotokos:

You are the honored Mother of the Light; from the risings of the sun to its settings praises are offered to you, O *Theotokos*, the second heaven, as you are the bright and unchanging flower...

Once the troparion is sung, the “Let us praise with the angels” is recited.⁴⁵¹ We will discuss this angelic company in our praises later in this chapter.

D. Angelology and the Luminaries

This section will concentrate on the angelology and its connection with the Coptic Morning Service. As I will demonstrate below, the insertion of angels into the Alexandrian liturgy seems to be transferred from the first Judeo-Christians to the newborn Alexandrian Church. The number of examples that demonstrate the similarity of types and roles is significant.

1. The Angel of the Blessed Day

At the closing of the Coptic Morning Service and the Eucharist liturgy, the celebrant raises his voice and recites the priestly blessing:

May God have pity upon us and have mercy upon us. Lord, save thy people and bless Thine inheritance, pasture them, raise them up unto the age. Exalt the horn of the Christians through the power of Life-giving cross. Through the prayers and the intercessions of the *Theotokos*... (and of many saints),

and he adds, “of the angel of this blessed day” (if it be the time of the Divine Liturgy) or “of the angel of this blessed sacrifice,” closing his priestly blessing with, “May their blessing and their grace and their might and their favor and their love and their help be with us all unto the age. Amen.”⁴⁵² In the *Divine Liturgy*,⁴⁵³ the priestly blessing shows two different angels: ΠΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

⁴⁵¹ This Angelic Praise is recited two times: in Prime (Book of *Agpeya*) and the Morning Service.

⁴⁵² Burnester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, 340.

⁴⁵³ *Divine Liturgy*, 250.

‘ΝΤΕ ΠΑΙΕΖΟΟΥ ΕΤ’CΜΑΡΩΟΥΤ (the Angel of this Blessed Day) and ‘ΠΑΓΓΕΛΟC ‘ΝΤΕ ΤΑΙΘΥCΙΑ ΕΤ’CΜΑΡΩΟΤ (the Angel of this Blessed Sacrifice).

2. *The Angel of Sacrifice*

This angelic praise that took place in the heavenly sanctuary was suitable for the Jews of the late Second Temple era: “This sanctuary was conceived as a place of worship without the blood of sacrifices.”⁴⁵⁴ The angels were offering a sacrifice of praise that seemingly could be praise or a qorban. The presence of this “angel of sacrifice” is believed to be present during the whole Eucharistic Service. The liturgy itself does not mention when the angel arrives during the service, but the celebrant, after washing the vessels, asks him to go back to heaven, to the throne of God and intercede for the congregation. Archbishop Basilios calls him the “guardian angel.” Burmester rightly calls him the “angel of the sacrifice,” which is the Arabic appellation in all the Euchologions.⁴⁵⁵ The article of Basilios states:

The Coptic Church believes in the particular guardianship of a certain angel to the oblations offered in the liturgy. Accordingly, the last words said after washing the vessels and while sprinkling a little water on the altar are, “O angel of this oblation ascending unto the Highest with our praise: remember us in the presence of the Lord, that He may forgive us our sins.”⁴⁵⁶

Various tales and anecdotes have been created around these two angels. Some hagiographical writings claim that these two angels could have been visible for some saintly priests or bishops.

3. *Archangels and Luminaries*

⁴⁵⁴ Penner, *Patterns of Daily Prayer*, 102.

⁴⁵⁵ Burmester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, 79, 341.

⁴⁵⁶ Basilios, “Guardian Angel,” 1186; Cf. Basilios, “Liturgical Instruments,” 1448. For the Coptic version of this invocation, see DL, 246.

In the Coptic *Book of Psalmody*, archangels and angels represent a significant part. In “Doxologies,” the angels and archangels are a subject of praise during the Morning and Evening Service. The “Doxologies,” as mentioned, are highly poetic compositions, characterized by their many stanzas and formulaic structure. They usually are addressed to the Virgin, to the angels, to individual saints, or to a particular category of saints. Such “Doxologies” are for everyday liturgy in the Coptic Church.⁴⁵⁷

The Archangels, in the “Heavenly Doxology,”⁴⁵⁸ demonstrate many elements tied to the late Second Temple writings. Archangels are luminaries. Some excerpts from this doxology clarify this:

Stanza 1	Seven Archangels, always praising as they stand, before the Pantocrator, serving the hidden mystery.
Stanza 2	Michael is the first, Gabriel is the second, Rafael is the third, a symbol of Trinity.
Stanza 3	Souriel (and) Sedakiel, Sarathiel and Ananiel, the luminous and holy, asking him for the creation.

These four luminaries—for Coptic tradition considers that Michael, Gabriel, Rafael, and Souriel are the only four archangels—might reflect the creatures as seen in Ezekiel 1:4–21. However this verse does not mention the names of the four archangels. The Gnostic literature describes the archangels as sources of light. In the *Apocrypha of John*, Birger Pearson talks about a number of emanations that originate from the supreme God. These creatures are the “Thought”

⁴⁵⁷ Cody, “Doxology,” 923–24.

⁴⁵⁸ HPE, 305–306.

of God (*Enonia*) being the chief among them, *Autogenes* (“Self-begotten”), and also the four “Luminaries” whose names are different from those that are included in the Bible: Armozel, Oriel, Daveidthai, and Eleth.⁴⁵⁹

4. Praise with the Angels

In the Coptic Morning Service, there is an interesting hymn called the “Hymn of the Angels” or “Praise of the Angels.” The prelude to this hymn consists of the following words:

Let us praise with the angels, saying, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. We praise you, we worship you, we confess you, we glorify you, we give thanks to you for your great glory, O Lord heavenly king, God the father, the Pantocrator. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit...⁴⁶⁰

This Angelic praise with its prelude is reminiscent of the liturgical feature in 4Q503, *Daily Prayers*. This imperative of “Let us praise with the angels” shows the counterparts and the unison between the angels and the human beings, a resonance of the Second Temple concept that allows the assembly of the worshippers to live in coordination with, and to be correspondent to, the praises of their angelic counterparts in the heaven above.

The witnessing angel in 4Q503 is also present in the text of the Coptic Midnight Praise (before the starting of the Morning Service). The celebrants cry out to the angel of the day (in singing): “O Angel of the day, flying up with this praise. Remember us before the Lord, that he may forgive us our sins.”⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ Pearson, “Jewish Sources in Gnostic Literature,” 462.

⁴⁶⁰ DL, 32.

⁴⁶¹ HPE, 241.

3. Conclusion: Luminaries in Second Temple Writings and Future Coptic Interrelations

The theme of luminaries that I have presented in this chapter is clearly multifaceted. The primary resources, which are the liturgical books, and the secondary resources, which are the rabbinic sayings and the sayings of early Alexandrian Fathers, hold abundant evidence that this topic is cherished in both Jewish and Coptic traditions. Further exploration of rabbinic literature and the scarce of sayings of the Fathers would certainly further confirm their similarities and would also, I believe, help to decipher many enigmatic topics in the Coptic liturgy that may have connection to the Jewish liturgy.

In the elements that I have been able to explore in this chapter, I have shown significant correspondence between the Qumran writings, the *Seder Amram Gaon* Book, and the liturgy of the Alexandrian Church. This section decodes some of the origins of the massive liturgical corpus in *The Book of Psalmody* where prayers (“Doxologies,” “Psalis,” and “Theotokions”) are arranged in a particular sequential structure and large passages are sung just before and during the Coptic Morning Service, all pointing to Jewish influence, patterns, and precedents.

The arrangement of the Coptic *Psalmody Book* alongside everyday laudatory texts is analogous to that of 4Q408, 1QS, 4QS and 1QH. The angelology of the Alexandrian Church tradition has particular liturgical features that tie closely to 4Q503, 4Q504 and 4Q506 and the Morning Service in *Seder Amram Gaon*.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Possibilities for Future Research

This present, and I believe, unprecedented study, which further illustrates “the Jewish anchorage of the early Church of Alexandria”⁴⁶² through its liturgy, strengthens the scholarly consensus⁴⁶³ that has attempted to find the linkage between the traditions in spite of the scarcity of the historical primary resources. Their findings opened one’s eyes to consider the potentiality, but these scholars did not effectively demonstrate concrete conclusions. My findings as illustrated in the previous chapters (specifically in the Introduction, and in chapters 3 and 4) provide further insights and observations in relation to the theoretical body of knowledge concerning the history of the Jewish liturgy—starting from the late Second Temple era (200 BCE–70 CE) to the Period of the Tannaim (10–220 CE)⁴⁶⁴—and its survival in the shaping of the Alexandrian Church liturgy during the first centuries. Subsequently, historians and liturgists who are engaged in re-constructing the origins of the Coptic Church and its liturgy should take into greater consideration the massive Jewish liturgy and the writings of the Second Temple era that undoubtedly influenced it.

Throughout the restricted scrutiny of this thesis, at least I could confirm that the reverberations of many Jewish sources were not found just in marginal areas in the Coptic tradition but are deeply embedded in the most fundamental Coptic rituals: the Morning Service (as well as the Evening Service), and the Holy Psalmody, the Coptic Synaxarium. Undoubtedly

⁴⁶² The title of an important article by a French scholar, “L’Ancrage Juif de la Première Eglise d’Alexandrie.” See Chapter 1, note 114.

⁴⁶³ See Chapter 1, Research History.

⁴⁶⁴ The Tannaim Period is important for further researches on reconstructing the early Coptic liturgy. It is during that time that the rabbis organized and elucidated the Jewish oral law. Their dictums are contained in the *Mishnah*, *Baraita*, *Tosefta*, and various Midrash compilations.

there are others. Further constraints prevented me from examining many of the early church documents, such as *the Apostolic Constitutions*,⁴⁶⁵ *Didascalia Apostolorum*, and the *Apostolic Church Order*,⁴⁶⁶ and how the early Jewish liturgy and rabbinic works impact them. Such investigational projects are important to pursue in the future because the Coptic Church, from its early era, considers these early texts as authoritative sources for the legislation of many canons and regulations.

Here, I will outline the paucity of Alexandrian Patristics in explaining the Church liturgy and its effects, and will argue that the Halakah is critical for Copts.

1. Early Alexandrian Church Fathers on the Liturgy

One possible, even likely, reason for the paucity of writings by Alexandrian Fathers about the worship of their time is that the Jewish liturgy survived with its entire legacy during the early days of the Alexandrian Church. It regally imposed itself on the church leaders of Alexandria. Its authority was so strong that before the settlement of the Coptic Church, Jews of Alexandria who believed in the Messiah (some of whom may have been promoted to lead the church) continued to carry on worshipping with the same familiar laudatory texts. These Jewish prayers were always considered in their tradition as authoritative while holding strong legacy in Scripture and have been strengthened and nurtured by a sturdy corpus of rabbinic dictums.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁵ Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to be Jewish*.

⁴⁶⁶ Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, describes these three pseudo-apostolic texts: “they are potentially valuable sources of evidence for the thoughts and practices of the periods in which they are composed.” See pp. 80–84. It is important to note that the *Apostolic Church Order* comprises an important document called *The Egyptian Church Order*, which deserves dedicated meticulous study.

⁴⁶⁷ On this point, Heinemann, in *Prayer in the Talmud*, attests that the strong Jewish attachment to the Scripture-like created prayers and hymns followed the model of the book of Psalms, which served as stylistic, formal, and linguistic sources for the new forms of prayers. He even sees that the members of the Dead Sea sect “who began the formulation of the fixed prayers take it upon themselves to compose completely new and original hymns and prayers

The tradition of Jewish abstention from any new creation and their preference for existent formulae also comes from the Jews' ultimate choice of a biblical pattern in the core of their liturgy, which, I believe, serves as a terminus a quo for the Alexandrian Church Fathers in not investigating, arguing, or explaining its features in any detail. This, then, would not be for lack of interest, but because of their tendency to save the tradition as it was orally or textually received. Through the massive writings of the Alexandrian Church Fathers, we find that they made just a few allusions to the liturgy, as noted by Srawley.⁴⁶⁸ Assuming each author's awareness, a brief illustration of their sayings about worship is beneficial for understanding the necessity of locating a better resource for interpreting the origin of the Coptic liturgy and its structure.

Srawley finds that Clement of Alexandria (c.150–215 CE), instead of describing the liturgy, “was more concerned with prayer as an inner converse of the heart with God than its public expression in worship.”⁴⁶⁹ Apparently, his excessive use of allegorical language in explaining liturgical segments does not shed any light on its setting and its legacy. Origen (c. 184–254 CE) only briefly speaks of liturgical formulas such as gifts to Christ, kiss of peace, offering of the gifts of bread and wine.⁴⁷⁰ On the other hand, Dionysius (died 264 CE), bishop of Alexandria, has a few passing allusions to liturgical customs such as the saying of “Amen” and of the communicant standing at the altar, putting forth his hands to receive the holy food.⁴⁷¹

in the classical style of psalms. They limited themselves instead to much more modest and simple prayers, which however, made use of biblical prayer motifs and employed biblical phraseology and formulae” (Heinemann, pp. 17). Heinemann illustrates his concept with patterns of the Berakah (supplications) that are prayed during the Morning Service (Heinemann, pp. 90–103).

⁴⁶⁸ Srawley states in *The Early History of the Liturgy*, 41: “The vague and scanty references contained in the Christian writings of Alexandrian origin, and the comparatively late date of our earliest manuscripts of the liturgies connected with the Church of Egypt, rendered the task of reconstructing the course of liturgical development in this part of Christendom extremely precarious.”

⁴⁶⁹ Srawley, *The Early History of the Liturgy*, 41. As an example, the author mentions a passage from *Stromates*, VI, 14.

⁴⁷⁰ Srawley describes Origen talking about prayers to God “that may be worthy to offer Him gifts, which he may restore us in Christ Jesus heavenly things in exchange for earthly” (*Luc Homily*, XXXIX).

⁴⁷¹ Srawley mentions *Ep. ad Fab.* (Ed. Feltoe, 58).

Athanasius (296–373 CE) describes a vigil service that preceded the communion, and mentions the reading of lessons (*Hist. Arian*, 81; *De Fuga* 24). From a monastic setting, Macarius (c. 300–391 CE) similarly refers to the lessons and psalmody, which precedes the celebration of the mass (*De Caritate*, 29). Meanwhile, Synesius (c. 411 CE) talks in detail about the altar veil.

By the time of Cyril of Alexandria (378–444 CE), it is noticeable that many Jewish elements are revealed in the Alexandrian Church but the uttering of their legacy remains unspoken. Cyril, for example, refers to the deacon's various proclamations concerning binding to stand for prayer at the beginning of any congregational service,⁴⁷² and makes some allusions to prayers to the emperor (*de Ador., in Spir. et Verit*, XII).⁴⁷³ He further refers to the salutations, "Peace with you all." On the other hand, in *The Sacramentary of Sarapion*,⁴⁷⁴ which Srawley considers "the most important discovery of recent times for the knowledge of the early liturgy in Egypt,"⁴⁷⁵ the author traces many elements that are revealed in 1 SAG (some of which I noted in Chapter 3): the deacon's proclamation "to arise and pray,"⁴⁷⁶ many petitions related to the Tefilla: a prayer for the people, a "benediction" (Berakah) of the people, a prayer and a benediction for the sick,⁴⁷⁷ a prayer for fruitfulness,⁴⁷⁸ for the Church, and for the Bishop and the church; and, finally, a "prayer for bending of the knee."

The result of such limited comments from the Alexandrian Fathers is that their writings have not adequately revealed the unacknowledged legacy of Jewish liturgy in the Egyptian

⁴⁷² See chapter 3, 1 SAG, 73, 75, 79.

⁴⁷³ A possible reverberation of *Birkat Mishpat* ("Justice"), where the worshipper asks God to restore righteous judges as in the days of old. See 1 SAG, 92.

⁴⁷⁴ Sarapion becomes bishop between 337–339 CE.

⁴⁷⁵ Srawley, *The Early History of the Liturgy*, 50.

⁴⁷⁶ 1 SAG, 73, 75, 79, a replicate from Cyril's writings.

⁴⁷⁷ 1 SAG, 89.

⁴⁷⁸ 1 SAG, 89–90.

Christian rituals nor have they helped scholars⁴⁷⁹ or faithful churchgoers to understand the unobserved wisdom and historical legacy that stands behind the Coptic liturgical worship texts and rubrics. This paucity of patristic information directly affects the most important aspect of the Copts' spirituality: their communal worship. It is also the cause of a widespread mythology and mistaken ideas,⁴⁸⁰ which constitutes theories and fantasies that circulate in Coptic religious circles without appreciating the genuine grandeur of the textual spirituality, or the liturgical reasoning that is related to its core prayers.

If the core of the Coptic liturgy, such as I have shown exists in the Morning Service, has this kind of connection with the Jewish prayers texts, their similarities and textual and thematic correspondences (as demonstrated in Chapters 3 and 4), it is reasonable to consider the rabbinic Jewish literature of the late Second Temple period, which explains, exegetes, and clarifies their own liturgy, as a primary resource for genuinely understanding and deciphering many of the incomprehensible elements of the Coptic liturgy. I believe that in the twenty-first century, the Copt catechist should leave parochialism behind and look more broadly for answers to some of the enigmas of the Coptic liturgy. Dix discusses the pitfalls of liturgical segregation and invites academics to link the Christian liturgies together to create the "first formation of the semi-Jewish church of the apostolic age."⁴⁸¹ The common similitudes in the Morning Service in both Jewish and Coptic traditions provides compelling motivation for further Halakhic study of the Coptic prayers and services that will validate a strong correlation with the early Jewish liturgy, but will attempt to avoid unscientific conclusions or skeptical emotional inferences

⁴⁷⁹ Usually, for Egyptian scholars such as Athanathius Al Makary in *Salawat Raf Al'Bekhor*, when their specific research into some aspect of Alexandrian patristics is unsuccessful, they focus on the Middle Age Arabic writers, such as Ibn Al Muquaffa, Ibn Sebaa, and Ibn Kabar.

⁴⁸⁰ The mythology includes the notion that these liturgical elements and worship music are directly inherited from the Old Egyptian Civilization.

⁴⁸¹ Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 11 (Introduction).

2. Could the Jewish Halakah Dissipate the Cloud over the Coptic Liturgy?

A. Definition of Halakah

The Hebrew word “Halakah” means “a way of acting,” “habit,” “usage,” “custom,” and especially “guidance” and the norm of practice. “Halakah” stands also for the whole legal part of Jewish tradition, in contrast with the Haggadah,⁴⁸² comprising thus the whole civil law and ritual law of rabbinical literature.⁴⁸³ Regarding these canons, I will be concerned to uncover how the Halakah is critical to understanding the Coptic liturgy, especially the Halakah related to the Morning Service. The following Halakhic excerpts resonate clearly with the Coptic mindset concerning the setting of the liturgy.

B. The Talmudic Liturgical Halakah

In *To Worship God Properly*, R. Langer devotes part of her first chapter, “The Principles of Talmudic Liturgical Halakah,” to many segments that echo with the Coptic liturgical reasoning. For instance, the author mentions that the obligation for Jews is not just to pray but also “to pray properly.”⁴⁸⁴ This is very important to the Coptic worshipper. Praying properly is to distinguish between “acceptable” and “unacceptable” prayers. Consciousness of the best way of worshipping is known, according to Langer, by accessing the “hundreds of laws” generated by the Tannaim (10–220 CE) and Amoraim (230–500 CE). The fundamental source of these Halakhic liturgical principals is derived from the Babylonian Talmud.

⁴⁸² The Hebrew noun “Haggadah” usually means a tale, a narrative, and a homily. It contains stories and legends bearing upon the lives of biblical and post-Biblical Jewish saints. Such topics as astronomy and astrology, medicine and magic, mysticism, and similar topics, falling mostly under the heading of folklore, pass also under the name of “Haggadah.” Thus the text of the Haggadah is considered as the non-legal part of the old rabbinical literature. When applied to the Scriptures in order to indicate interpretation, the word used is “Midrash.” See, Jahvist, “Haggadah,” 141.

⁴⁸³ Jahvist, “Halakah,” 163.

⁴⁸⁴ Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, 19.

The common principles of the Talmudic liturgical Halakah shared between Jewish and Coptic liturgies are striking. Furthermore, they seem to validate this approach as a source of insights into the many Coptic liturgical principles. Some examples relating to the Coptic Morning Service follow.

C. Halakah for the Communal Nature of Prayer: Some Talmudic Principles

As seen in the petitions of the Tefilla,⁴⁸⁵ the prayers must always be composed in the first person plural.⁴⁸⁶ A “*davar shebikedushah*”⁴⁸⁷ or “holy matter” requires a quorum of ten, as discussed in Mishnah Megillah 4:3. This is a strong principle for any Coptic Church service, even today.⁴⁸⁸ This Mishnaic passage decrees that certain rituals such as reciting the Kaddish in the “Pseuque de Zimra,”⁴⁸⁹ the repetition of the Amidah (the Eighteen Berachot), and the Priestly Blessing and many other rituals may not be recited without the presence of such a quorum. The spirituality and Jewish perception of these principles has great bearing on the deeper understanding of the Coptic liturgy.⁴⁹⁰

An important notion for modern Copts, which is well-explained and discussed in the Halakah, is that “prayer requires intentionality.”⁴⁹¹ Obviously, both traditions are dependent on fixed prayers that are accompanied with permanent rubrics. The interesting point is that the rabbis of the late Second Temple period established a scheme in an attempt to remediate undesirable

⁴⁸⁵ Chapter 3, note 277.

⁴⁸⁶ This principle is discussed in B. Berakhot 29b–30a; see Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, 20.

⁴⁸⁷ See Levin, *With All Your Heart*, 43.

⁴⁸⁸ See Chapter 3, note 251.

⁴⁸⁹ See its reverberation in the Coptic liturgy in Chapters 3 and 4.

⁴⁹⁰ Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, 188–24.

⁴⁹¹ Intentionality is a philosophical concept defined as “the power of minds to be about, to represent, or to stand for, things, properties and states of affairs.” Langer, p. 23, mentions this term.

attitude during attendance at any synagogue service. It is also called “Kavannah.”⁴⁹² Resources on this are found in B. Berakhot 13a, B. Eruvin 95b, and Pesahim 114b.⁴⁹³

D. The Blessings in Rabbinic Prayer

Langer’s work also draws attention to the genuine legacy of many specific Jewish prayer structures that survive in the Coptic framework; in recognizing this, the rabbinic concept of “acceptable” and “unacceptable” prayers clarifies a Coptic perspective. There are many specific Jewish structures for the composition of early prayers and hymns. For instance, the rabbinic literature explains why and how the blessings should be arranged (replicating Langer’s framework): a liturgical blessing must begin with the word “*barukh*,”⁴⁹⁴ must mention God’s name,⁴⁹⁵ must mention God’s sovereignty,⁴⁹⁶ and must not include multiple topics in one blessing.⁴⁹⁷ This clarifies the features of many Coptic texts, where Copts need to find the Scriptural reasoning that stands behind the rule of their own prayers and blessings.

E. Specific Liturgical Principles

Both Jewish and Coptic traditions hold a regulated system of prayers, blessings and hymns “that would preclude response for the needs of the moment...”⁴⁹⁸ Usually these Talmudic

⁴⁹² Jacobson in *Meditations of the Siddur*, 46–48, also refers to many rabbinic dictums. Jacobson states: “The essential meaning of Kavannah is that man should realize before Whom he is standing and pouring out the meditations of his heart; he should realize that in his Tefillah, insignificant man stands in the presence of the Infinite, Omnipotent God,” p. 47.

⁴⁹³ Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, 23, note 93.

⁴⁹⁴ Sources for this principle: Tosefta Berakhot 1:9, B. Berakhot 46a; B. Pesahim 104b. This is a common feature in the numerous Coptic blessings. See DL, Evening Service, 31. Three successive Coptic Berakhot start with “Blessed are you O Lord.” The Third Ode counts many others with the same beginning; see *The Holy Psalmody*, 31–32, also 283.

⁴⁹⁵ B. B. Berakhot 40b.

⁴⁹⁶ B. Berakhot 40b; P. Berakhot 9:1, 12d; Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, 25. She mentions several studies that could further support investigation of similar features in the Coptic texts.

⁴⁹⁷ This is characteristic of Ode 3. Langer includes a long list of scholars who tackle this topic. See, Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, 27–28, note 13.

⁴⁹⁸ Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, 23, note 93.

principles, according to Langer, “are developed to allow the liturgical texts [as for the Coptic tradition hymns, deacon responses, etc....] to incorporate appropriate timely themes into the regular cycle of holidays.”⁴⁹⁹ For example, how should the requirements of two overlapping systems, such as when a holiday falls on Shabbat, be settled? In such a liturgical question, many rules, rabbinic dictums, and regulations are plenteous in the Talmudic principles.⁵⁰⁰ The same questions and requirements exist regularly at the beginning of each Coptic Euchologion and *Khedmat Al Shamas* book that contains instructions for prayers, which strongly resonates with this type of liturgical overlapping. The vast regulated system in *Khedmet Al Shamas* provides many parallels.⁵⁰¹

Thus, considering the Talmud as a source for more fully understanding the unusual features of the Coptic liturgical regulations could constitute a useful Halakah or guidance for the Copts, for Copts still wonder why they have this ritual setting and why there is such a strictness in following these rules. One logical reason is provided in Langer’s following passage:

Because Jews [and, I insert, Copts] understand worship to be one of the key pillars supporting their covenantal relationship with God, they want to be certain that their prayer is acceptable, that it reaches God and has beneficial effects, and that it does not transgress divine commandments and cause offense or worse in Heaven. To these ends, rabbis have struggled to define the details of proper worship, encoding these details in Halakhah.⁵⁰²

F. Model of a Jewish Dictum Related to the Morning Coptic Service

It is impossible here to deal even superficially with what the Halakah has to say about the different parts of the Jewish Morning Service that could be valuable to study of the Coptic liturgy. Perhaps it is enough to cite one profound Jewish aphorism that personally, as a Copt who has practised for many years the prayers of the Morning Service, has helped me to understand

⁴⁹⁹ Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, 31.

⁵⁰⁰ See Langer’s list of primary sources and related studies, in *To Worship God Properly*, 31–36.

⁵⁰¹ *Khedmet Al Shamas* 9–11; see also the three volumes of *Tartib Al Bayaa*, compiled by Bishop Samuel; also Liturgical Seasons in DL, preface 8–9.

⁵⁰² Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, 245.

more about the specific program of preparation that is required before attending the Morning Service, as well as to visualize the connection between all parts of the Service:

When one rises from his bed, he should not occupy himself with any mundane activity whatever. He should not even talk of anything else. He should attend his bodily needs, wash his hands and think of the Creator of the world, focusing his thoughts on the fact that He is the One, the only unique Unity, that he is the supreme King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He. He is the Sovereign, the Ruler, the Source and Root of all worlds. One should contemplate the heaven and the earth, and meditate on this verse (Isa. 46:26): “Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who has created all these?”...Then he should contemplate the greatness of God’s work in creating earth and all it contains... And the wonders of the ocean and all it contains... And all of these are but as tiny seeds as compared with the world of spheres... And all of them are nothing in comparison with the angels... And all together are as non-existent in comparison with the exalted and elevated throne is nought as compared with His Divine Glory which is the ultimate cause and ground of all existence. There is none beside Him. Then the person will be filled with the awe and love of God... And the desire to cleave to Him will enter his Heart. With these thoughts the worshipper begins his Berakah: “Blessed are You O God...”⁵⁰³

3. Possibilities for Further Research

A. *The Embryonic Stage of a New “Judeo-Coptic” Scholarship*

The Jewish literature in general, to my knowledge, has not yet been fully used, exploited, or even linked with the Coptic tradition on a significant scale. My thesis is about a new orientation towards studying the Coptic Church’s liturgical origins through a new perspective on Jewish primary sources from the late Second Temple period. More concrete evidence could completely change many theories and assumptions related to the early age of the Alexandrian Church and the domain of Coptology in general (including Jewish influence on Coptic art, patristics, hagiography, and, of course, its liturgy).

I consider the present thesis as simply a brief preview for future Judeo-Coptic studies. I have showed many examples where numerous Jewish elements, rituals, rubrics, and writings

⁵⁰³ Jacobson, *Meditations on the Siddur*, 51–52 (excerpt from Habarith Shelah, *Sha’ar Haothioth*, *Oth Aleph*), page number is not mentioned by Jacobson.

reverberate in the Coptic liturgical tradition, as they were undoubtedly active in Jewish liturgies and prayers during the time of the Alexandrian Church's advent. The potential of locating many ties between the two traditions should fuel the excitement of liturgical scholars for ongoing productive research in this new academic field.

Also, as mentioned previously, identifying the liturgical roots of the Christian Church of Egypt is not only beneficial for Coptic history, but also an important element for the history of Early Christianity. Researchers in this new field of Judeo-Coptic studies should not think that the findings of such scholarship would be inadequate. From the results of my initial investigation, I believe that "the harvest is plentiful" and I pray that the workers shall not be few.⁵⁰⁴ For example, areas that would require deeper knowledge of the Jewish traditions and more advanced knowledge of Hebrew and Greek languages, would provide a great opportunity to engage in semantic comparisons of Septuagint texts in both Koine Greek and Coptic, as well as comparisons of Hebrew and Arabic Old Testament texts.

B. Network of Scholars for the New Scholarship

My future vision towards a collective Judeo-Coptic study would involve a network of professors and scholars of Jewish studies (specifically the ones mentioned in my Research History, Chapter 1),⁵⁰⁵ as well as some Coptologists. A connection between them could provide research interests and shared commitments and purposes. The goal of such a network would be to nurture this embryonic scholarship for developed research and shared intellectual practices and expertise. Documentation of this shared learning would be available to others through publishing

⁵⁰⁴ Matt 9:37–38.

⁵⁰⁵ Scholars who consider a potential Jewish seed in the Alexandrian Church, such as Griggs, Pearson, Cannuyer, Broadhead, and Paget.

the conference presentations, and blog posts, and would provide a basis for future scholars to build their studies.

C. Academic Projects

Throughout many parts of this thesis, I mentioned that several topics need further study. Some would be major projects, and some minor, although not necessarily less important. Major projects would refer to studies that call for specific requirements: such as working on manuscripts that are dispersed in different worldwide libraries, collaborating with other scholars in examining the semantics of different texts (Greek/Hebrew/Coptic/Arabic); translating and publishing the massive literature of Christian Arabic and/or Jewish Arabic texts into English. Minor projects would not be on such a large and international scale.

1. Major Projects

The following is a summary of what I believe could be a very productive study.

a. The Midnight Praise⁵⁰⁶

Several years ago, I began to compile many notes on this core worshipping piece in the Coptic liturgy. Many pieces of evidence adhere to my contention that this Coptic text is a survival from the Jewish liturgy. One major part, such as the third Ode (*Hos*), is directly derived from Greek Jewish texts, while both the Coptic and Greek forms have similar features.⁵⁰⁷ Nickelsburg observes that the two texts, “Prayer of Azariah” and the “Hymn of the Three Young

⁵⁰⁶ This nocturne service consists of four odes, two of which are from the psalter. As described earlier, the four praises are also known in Coptic *Hos*. First and third *Hos* are biblical canticles (Exod 15: 1–21 and Greek Dan 3:1–67); the second and fourth *Hos* are Ps 136 and Pss 148, 149, 150.

⁵⁰⁷ For the Greek text, see Horst and Newman, *Early Jewish Prayers in Greek*, 181–215; Oegema, “Reception of the Book of Daniel in the Early Church,” 243–52.

Men,” are in accordance with the synagogal Hellenistic prayers of the late Second Temple era.⁵⁰⁸ Common features include that they appear to be antiphonal, they have a repetitive refrain, and they imitate the repetitive refrain of Psalm 136, which is the Second Ode or *Hos*, preceding this Danielic Hymn in the Coptic *Holy Psalmody*.⁵⁰⁹

This project would deal also with the lengthy Midnight Praise recited at The Bright Saturday (which occurs at the beginning of Saturday of Easter Eve), which also includes many Jewish apocryphal prayers,⁵¹⁰ including the apocryphal Psalm 151. To reach adequate conclusions, this assignment would necessitate study of the earliest Greek and Coptic manuscripts that contain the Midnight Praise.

b. Early Coptic Church Sources and the Jewish Cachet

In this thesis, I have compared Amram’s text (l SAG) with the Coptic-Arabic Euchologion (Massoudy) and its English version (the *Divine Liturgy*). It is my intention to work further on the early Jewish and Coptic prayers that date from the first four centuries.

These texts are believed to originate in Egypt. In 1967, Deiss published the following sources:⁵¹¹ the *Sacramentary of Serapion* (c. 350 CE), the *Strasbourg Papyrus* (fourth to fifth century), and *The Euchologion of Deir Belyzeh* (a Greek papyrus that dates from the sixth century but, according to Deiss, preserves very ancient elements).⁵¹² Another important colossal Euchologion, titled by E. Lanne, *Le Grand Euchologue du Monastère Blanc*,⁵¹³ also needs close attention and sturdy erudition in order to analyze it and compare it to the Jewish repertoire.

⁵⁰⁸ Nickelsburg, “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded,” 149–52.

⁵⁰⁹ HPE, 554.

⁵¹⁰ Many prayers that are alleged to different prophets, such as Prayers of Manasseh, of Azariah, of Jacob, and many others. For that, see Azmy, *The Book of Holy Pascha*; van der Horst and Newman, *Early Jewish Prayers in Greek*; and Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*.

⁵¹¹ Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy*.

⁵¹² Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy*, 243.

⁵¹³ “The Colossal Euchologion of the White Monastery,” text edited and translated by E. Lanne, “Le Grand Euchologue du Monastère Blanc,” 270–406.

Finally, the Liturgy of Saint Mark (Greek text) as well as the Anaphora of Saint Cyril (also called Saint Mark) should not be omitted, as the petitions of this liturgy are clearly tied with the Tefillah of the Jewish Morning Service. Both liturgies have been translated, and were first published in English by Brightman in 1965 in Oxford.

c. The Coptic-Arabic Synaxarium and the Pseudepigrapha

I started to work on the Arabic Christian literature in 1996, under the supervision of father Samir Khalil, a well-known Orientalist and a specialist in the domain of the literature written by Christians after the conquest of Islam in Egypt in 639 CE. The majority of this massive production is still unknown to western academia due to slowness in translating these texts. A simple reading through these works shows that there is a potential to trace many Jewish Pseudepigrapha throughout it, where many Coptic hagiographies represent Old Testament figures that can be paralleled in the Jewish Apocrypha. Also, many stories that recount the conversion of some Jews to Christianity could be tied to and compared with some Arabic and Judeo-Arabic manuscripts in the Cairo Genizah collections.⁵¹⁴ Also, the writings of converted Jews, such as al-Wadih ibn Raga, and the Jew Abd al-Masih al-Isra ili, who wrote three works intended to convert Jews to Christianity, are still unknown to the non-Arabic speaking world.⁵¹⁵

2. Minor Projects

a. Conclusion of the Morning Service (1 SAG)

Many minor projects must be completed in order to assemble all the pieces, including further puzzles in the Morning Service in both traditions. These puzzling liturgical elements are

⁵¹⁴ Shvitiel and Niessen, *Arabic and Judeo-Arabic Manuscripts*. See manuscripts nos. 4205, 4598, 5782, 7385, 7901, 8741, 7901, 7902, and 8741.

⁵¹⁵ Hamilton and Ebrary, *The Copts and the West*, 28.

mentioned here as per their liturgical order in 1 SAG, Morning Service, starting with the leadership of the Chazzan in reciting the prayers,⁵¹⁶ and the Seliach Zibbur in the Synagogue as a primitive form of prayer leaders in the Coptic Church. The *Beraka*, “My God: luminaries, soul, and resurrection,”⁵¹⁷ needs more enquiries and gathering of information. The “Pseuqe de Zimra,” reciting Pss 146–150 or Pss 145–150, and other passages from the Book of Psalms, also needs to be compared and tied to the Palestinian Psalter, which originated in Jerusalem.⁵¹⁸ The same goes for the reciting of the Shema,⁵¹⁹ and the prevalent use of key words and phrases: luminaries, Lord of hosts, King of the Universe, and the Quedusha: “Holy, Holy, Holy is JHWH of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.” Details in Chapter 4 above were necessarily restrained due to thesis restrictions. The Quedusha needs to be studied separately and in detail, for it is a major hymn in both Jewish and Coptic traditions. Studies of the rubrics in both liturgies related to the Shema and the Tefilla could benefit from further investigation of resources from the Christian Arabic literature of the Middle Ages, such as those that deal with the act of covering or uncovering the head,⁵²⁰ whispering to God,⁵²¹ and many others. Each of these has potential to shed more light on the origins of the Coptic liturgy.

b. Judaism and Further Coptic Observances

As shown in the Introduction, the survival of some Jewish concepts in the Coptic Church tradition strengthen the evidence of a Jewish cachet that may lead to further investigation. These

⁵¹⁶ 1 SAG, 6.

⁵¹⁷ 1 SAG, 8–9.

⁵¹⁸ In that, see Zanetti, “La Distribution des Psaumes dans l’Horlogion Copte,” 323–69.

⁵¹⁹ 1 SAG, 46–50.

⁵²⁰ 1 SAG, 64.

⁵²¹ 1 SAG, 120.

customs include circumcision, menstruation, dietary patterns, keeping the Sabbath, and many others that strictly comply with the Mosaic Law, are also required and legislated by the Copts.

c. *Letter of Aristeas*⁵²²

The *Letter of Aristeas*, a letter believed to be a composition of an Alexandrian Jew from between 170–100 BCE, and concerning the translation of the Torah from Hebrew to Greek, is found in the Coptic Synaxarium in different forms, and deserves serious study from a Judeo-Coptic perceptive.

d. *Hellenistic Jewish Writings and Early Alexandrian Patristics*

As discussed above, Hellenistic Jewish writings and Early Alexandrian Patristics were quoted by some early Church Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Didymus the Blind. Paget reckons and asserts Clement's knowledge of Jewish sources in Greek.⁵²³ Clement's familiarity with the Jewish sources may open doors to further investigation into early Christian Alexandrian thought and to which extent Jewish sources may have influenced the Alexandrian liturgy and Church tradition.

e. *The Incense*

In an earlier paper on liturgy, I discussed how the concept of incense in the Jewish tradition in many ways is paralleled in the Coptic practice, especially in the Morning and Evening Service, as well as in the Eucharist. However, much more detail needs to be added to my primary research.

⁵²² See my Introduction Chapter. See Thackeray, *The Letter of Aristeas*. Nickelsburg, "Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times," 75–80; and Atiya, "Copto-Arabic Synaxarion," 2171–90.

⁵²³ All the Jewish writings that Clement cites in his writings are in 93, note 9. Paget refers to Demetrius (*Strom* 1.141.1–2; 1.150.2); Aristobulus (*Strom* 1.72.4; 1:150:1; 5.97.7; 6.32.5); Aristeas (*Strom* 1.148.1–149.3); Artapanus (*Strom* 1.154.2); Pseudo-Hecataeus (*Strom* 5.113); Ezekiel the Tragedian (*Strom* 1.155.1–1.156.2); and *The Assumption of Moses* (*Strom* 6.132).

4. Conclusion

My last word for this thesis is that we must not overlook the Torah as the foundation of the entire Jewish liturgy. Many of the Jewish Morning Service liturgical practices were in use before, during, and after the time of Christ. This feature should constantly influence the understanding of the transfer of Jewish liturgical customs to the newborn Church of Alexandria during the first century CE, via the early Christian missionaries. The Halakhic details provide an essential source in explaining the strictness of the Coptic Church in following its liturgical rules. This also benefits the contemporary Coptic Church, for it would help the Copt to pray with more understanding (1 Cor 14:15), to better evaluate their spiritual heritage, and to reasonably credit the origin of their laudatory corpus to a genuine source.

I completely agree with Bradshaw: “There is in fact much more than is often assumed,”⁵²⁴ commenting on James Charlesworth’s catalogue of what he “describes as an abundance of unexamined data” relating to forms of Jewish hymns and prayers that predate 70 CE.⁵²⁵ In order to assure a connection between Alexandrian Judaism and Egyptian Christianity, it is necessary to synthesize this data, and to explore the relationships of shared themes, perceptions, symbols, and metaphors held in common in Jewish and Coptic traditions.

⁵²⁴ Bradshaw, *Search for the Origins*, 15.

⁵²⁵ Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. The Scriptural references listed in these two volumes strengthened Steve Delamarter’s resolve to publish a book just to index the 7897 references. Cf. Delamarter and Charlesworth, *Scripture Index*.

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