TWO NOTES ON THE COPTIC THEOTOKIAS

I. Note on a pun in a Coptic Theotokia of Sunday

The Copts love playing on words and making puns, they are in the same mentality as most of the oriental peoples. In a previous article, while studying theotokia, I highlighted a pun, based on the name of Jesus and the Ten commandments. I deduced that the theotokia were written in Coptic.

While re-reading the text, I came across another pun in the Sunday theotokia.

Here is the text

\[\text{ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΑΙ ὦ ΝΙΧΥΣΗΣ ΠΙΠΡΟΦΙΤΗΣ ΣΕΙΡ ΠΤΑΙΟ \'ΙΠΣΙΝΗ ἕΤΑΡΚΕΧΑΩΟΕ ΕΡΩΑ}\]

The translation given by the editor of the Arabic text and hence the recent English text is:

You adorned your souls, o Moses the prophet with the honour of the tent that you adorned.

Brogi, in his Italian translation, rendered this sentence thus:


(5) R. Tukhi, πιστὴν ἡτοι πνεοτοκίαν ἵππη κατὰ τὰς ῥυμοὺς πιστὸν χοίραν [The book of the Theotokias and according to the rite of the month of Kihak] (Rome, 1764) 71; K. Labib, πιστὴν ἡτοὶ ἡμῶν ἔκεῖ ἦτο προῃπιπρὸ ἐτευθαθὲς
"Consolasti le nostre anime, oprefeta Mosè, onorando il tabernacolo che tu avevi ornato."

The author of this text played on the double meaning of the verb σολασα “adorn”7 and “Comfort, encourage.”8 The Biblical and liturgical texts attest both meanings. These meanings were known even in its late stage. It is attested in the Al-Sullam al-Muqaffa wa-al-Dhahab al-Musaffa. rhymic scala of al-Mu’taman9 Ibn al-Assal10

In this article we will give some examples of the usage of these words.

Adorn

A — In the Bible

This meaning occurs in Gospel Bohairic version of Matthew 23:9 (Bohairic)

οὐοὶ ἔφυσαν τὰς ημιάς ἕνεκεν ἡμῖν προφητῶν τοὺς ἔκτασιν τῆς ἁγίας
καὶ ἡμῖν ἔφυσαν τὰς ημιάς τῆς ἁγίας τῶν προφητῶν.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and adorn the sepulchers of the righteous,
Matthew 25:7 (Bohairic)

τότε ἴσταρες καὶ ἔφυσαν τὰς ημιάς τῶν προφητῶν καὶ ἔφυσαν τὰς ημιάς τῶν ἁγίων

Then all those virgins arose, and adorned their lamps.

(6) M. Brogi, La santa salmodia annuale della chiesa Copta (Cairo, 1962) (Studio Orientalia Christiana Aegyptiaca) 42.
(8) Ibid., 332a–332b.
(10) A. Kircher, Lingua Aegyptiaca Restituta (Rome, 1648) 359–360.