

TESTI
Antichità, Medioevo e Umanesimo

Latin and Coptic

Languages, Literatures, Cultures in Contact

edited by
Maria Chiara Scappaticcio
and **Alessia Pezzella**

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Latin in the Egyptian Monasteries: A Context for Linguistic Interference*

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Modern lexicography explains all Latin terms in Coptic as adopted through Greek. While it is true that the preponderance of Greek in the linguistic landscape of Egypt can explain most borrowing, actual contact between Latin speakers and Coptic-speakers could also allow linguistic interference not necessarily mediated by the Greek language. It is not easy to ground this hypothesis, since the number of actual examples preserved in literature and documents is very scanty. I will present in this paper some evidence for the use of Latin in the monasteries and the environment in which borrowing was facilitated, followed by a sample of lexical loan exchange between the two languages.

The project ‘Database and Dictionary of Greek Loanwords in Coptic’ (DDGLC)¹ collects some 50 terms of Latin origin in Coptic, all of which are presented in the list that Sebastian Richter generously shared with me, in their Greek garb; that is, in their transliteration into Greek. The database editors consider, as does

* I am very grateful to M.C. Scappaticcio for inviting me to the stimulating conference ‘Latino e Copto: Lingue, Letterature, Culture in Contatto. Sondaggi dall’Egitto della Tarda Antichità’ in Naples in September 2019. I owe thanks to my colleagues J. Gil (Seville), S. Richter (Berlin) and D. Nirenberg (Chicago) for their help and comments which have much helped me improve this paper.

¹ The project’s site: (<https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/en/e/ddglc/index.html>).

Hans Förster, in his *Wörterbuch der griechischen Wörter in den koptischen dokumentarischen Texten*, p. xxxi, that: «words of Latin origin are included since they were obviously brought into the Coptic via the Greek language». While this is true in general, I think it worth considering, with Jürgen Horn, that direct loans from Latin into Coptic could have taken place through at least two mechanisms: 1) the massive presence of the Roman administration and the Roman army, with whose functionaries and soldiers the Coptic population would have been in contact, where the loans from Latin into Coptic did not necessarily go through Greek; and 2) the phenomenon that Horn calls «Akklimatisierung»², that is, the time it takes for a loanword to enter the language and become naturally used by the speaker and adapted to the phonetics and morphology of the language. While some of these words were adopted by Coptic when they were already ‘adapted’ into Greek, in other cases, the terms were adopted simultaneously from Latin into Greek and Coptic, within the multicultural and multilingual environment in which the lexical interference is caused.

I would like to explore in this paper one specific environment where the contact of speakers of Latin with speakers of Coptic was direct, and not necessarily mediated by speakers of Greek, an administrative organisation or any other intervening agent: I refer to the monastic communities. I am interested, to start with, in the position of Latin in the linguistic landscape of these communities, and secondly the literary context of the exchange of loanwords: Latin loanwords in Coptic monastic literature and vice versa, Egyptian / Coptic words in Latin literature. I will provide a few examples of loanwords

² J. Horn, *Latino-Coptica. Erwähnungen zu den lateinischen Lehnwörtern des koptischen Wortschatzes*, in *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia (Napoli, 19-26 maggio 1983)*, Napoli 1984, pp. 1361-1376. On gradual propagation of new terms in a speech community, see M. Haspelmath, *Lexical Borrowing: Concepts and Issues*, in *Loanwords in the World's Languages. A Comparative Handbook*, cur. Id., U. Tadmor, Berlin 2009, pp. 35-54, esp. 41.

in both contexts and make an attempt at characterising the context of linguistic interference through the prism of those examples.

By the 4th century AD, the Coptic language had risen as a literary language and (re-)occupied spaces the Egyptian language had lost in the previous centuries³. The monasteries of the Thebaid also rose as centres of Christian culture, and dedicated attention to pilgrims and visitors from other parts of Egypt and all the Mediterranean basin. These monasteries turned into multilingual spaces in a very special way. In these communities, according to the hagiographical sources, it seems that the Coptic language was the vehicular, preferred language and there was apparently some pressure to learn it⁴. But there was a multilingual dynamic, where Latin, Greek and Coptic developed some kind of balance, in which Latin had its own place⁵, albeit very marginal, as indeed was the place of Latin in

³ For the most recent and excellent monograph on the matter, J.-L. Fournet, *The Rise of Coptic: Egyptian versus Greek in Late Antiquity*, Princeton - Oxford 2020.

⁴ S. Torallas Tovar, *Linguistic Identity in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, in *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt from the Ptolemies to the Abbasids*, cur. A. Papaconstantinou, Farnham - Burlington (VT) 2010, pp. 17-43. Most recently see Fournet, *The Rise of Coptic* cit., pp. 112-113. F. Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire. Power and Belief Under Theodosius II. 408-450*, Berkeley - Los Angeles 2006, on the balance of Greek-Latin. See as a testimony of the preference for Coptic or majority of Coptic-speakers, the Letter of Dioscoros, the patriarch of Alexandria, to Shenoute about a document sent to the community in Greek: «May your Reverence make speed to have the entire *memorandum* translated into the Egyptian tongue, so that it may be read in that form and none may be ignorant of the authority of the things that are written therein». For the text, see H. Thompson, *Dioscoros and Shenoute*, in *Recueil d'études égyptologiques dédiées à la mémoire de Jean-François Champollion*, Paris 1922, pp. 367-376.

⁵ I have written on the linguistic context in the monasteries before, S. Torallas Tovar, *Egyptian Lexical Interference in the Greek of Byzantine and Early Islamic Egypt*, in *Papyrology and the History of Early Islamic Egypt*, cur. P.M.

Egypt in general. As Jean-Luc Fournet has shown⁶, Latin continued to occupy an official role in some sections of administration and the military. I am presenting here a different positioning of this language: Latin brought to Egypt by travellers and pilgrims⁷, who were interested in learning the new ascetic practice, and in translating into Latin and spreading towards the West the texts and regulations of the emerging Egyptian monastic communities.

Sijpesteijn, L. Sundelin, Leiden 2004, pp. 143-178; Ead., *Linguistic Identity* cit., and see also A. Martin, *Athanase d'Alexandrie et l'Église d'Égypte au IV^e siècle (328- 373)*, Roma 1996, pp. 662-663; A. Papaconstantinou, *Egyptians and 'Hellenists': Linguistic Diversity in the Early Pachomian Monasterie*, in *Le myrte et la rose. Mélanges offerts à Françoise Dunand par ses élèves, collègues et amis*, cur. G. Tallet, C. Zivie-Coche, Montpellier 2014, pp. 15-21 with more evidence on the Pachomian monasteries, and most recently see Fournet, *The Rise of Coptic* cit. The place of Latin in Egypt, and in particular in the monastic communities, has been studied in recent publications: J.N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 527-640, who however does not include a discussion of the monasteries. For these, see J.-L. Fournet, *The Multilingual Environment of Late Antique Egypt: Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Persian Documentation*, in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, cur. R.S. Bagnall, Oxford 2009, pp. 418-451; Id., *La pratique du latin dans l'Égypte de l'Antiquité tardive*, in *Latin in Byzantium I. Late Antiquity and Beyond*, cur. A. Garcea, M. Rosellini, L. Silvano, Turnhout 2019, pp. 73-91; Id., *The Rise of Coptic* cit.; C. Rapp, *The Use of Latin in the Context of Multilingual Monastic Communities in the East*, in Garcea, Rosellini, Silvano, *Latin* cit., pp. 93-107. See also R. Cavenaile, *Le latin dans les milieux chrétiens d'Égypte*, in *Miscel·lània Papirologica* R. Roca-Puig, cur. S. Janeras, Barcelona 1987, pp. 103-110.

⁶ Fournet, *La pratique* cit.

⁷ Rapp, *The Use of Latin* cit. explores travel East and West connected to ecclesiastical matters: ecumenical councils (where Greek was the vehicular language). She points out (p. 95) that the earliest pilgrimage accounts were written in Latin, such as Egeria's *Itinerarium* at the end of the 4th century AD or Antoninus Placentinus in the 6th century AD; cfr. Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire* cit., p. 23.

Multiple strategies were developed to deal with the multilingual environment in the monastic communities: interpreters, language learning, and translations are attested. In this environment language contact took place, causing loans and linguistic interference. The sources we have for this interference are however not completely transparent. Embedded in literary texts, the traces are obscured and transformed. However, it is worth exploring the few traces, perhaps only to identify some channels of connection, or to explore a methodology to deal with texts that carry loanwords or evidence of code-switching.

1. *Linguistic Landscape in the Egyptian Monasteries: Multilingual Spaces: Travellers and Pilgrims*

The *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* (*History of the Monks in Egypt*)⁸, is a pilgrim's memoir or travelogue, written by a Jerusalem monk who visited several monasteries and hermits at the end of the 4th century AD. The *History of the Monks* is a miscellany of anecdotes, small biographical notes, and travellers' descriptions and impressions. This unsystematic description of Egyptian monastic communities was soon translated into Latin⁹ and found a large audience outside Egypt. But it was not the first work about Egyptian monasticism to reach the West. As attested in Athanasius' prologue to the *Life of Anthony*¹⁰, there was interest and eagerness to

⁸ The most recent study of this text is A. Cain, *The Greek Historia monachorum in Aegypto. Monastic Hagiography in the Late Fourth Century*, Oxford 2016. For the Greek text, *Historia monachorum in Aegypto. Édition critique du texte grec*, ed. A.-J. Festugière, Brussels 1961. For the Latin see below p. 111 footnote 9.

⁹ Tyrannius Rufinus, *Historia monachorum sive De vita sanctorum partum*, ed. E. Schulz-Flügel, Berlin 1990.

¹⁰ Athanasius in the prologue to the *Life of Anthony*; he addresses the letter to «monks in foreign parts» («ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς τοὺς ἐν τῇ ξένη

read and know about Egyptian monasteries in the East and West, and this eventually brought large numbers of pilgrims and visitors to Egypt, along with their languages. Some of these visitors would travel around, like Rufinus, whose travels to the remotest deserts of Egypt are attested in Jerome's *Epistle* 3¹¹; some would stay for longer periods of time and even join the communities. This was the case for Ammon¹² and many other pilgrims and monks¹³.

The integration of these visitors (temporary or permanent) was an important matter which undoubtedly was taken into consideration in the managing of the monastic communities. There was a provision for newcomers to the monasteries in matters of language. After all, language is an important element in the activities developed in these communities: communal reading, Bible learning, and

μοναχούς»), and states: «Ἀγαθὴν ἀμιλλαν ἐνεστήσασθε πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ μοναχοὺς ἥτοι παρισωθῆναι ἢ καὶ ὑπερβαλέσθαι τούτους προελόμενοι τῇ κατ' ἀρετὴν ὑμῶν ἀσκήσει» «You have joined a noble contest with the monks of Egypt by your purpose of either equaling or surpassing them in your practice of virtue». See Cain, *The Greek Historia monachorum* cit., pp. 80-91. See also above p. 110 footnote 7, about the earliest pilgrimage accounts in Latin.

¹¹ Hier. *epist.* 3, 1 (to Rufinus): «*Ego enim [...] audio te Aegypti secreta penetrare, Monachorum invisere choros, et coelestem in terris circumire familiam*» «I hear that you are penetrating the remotest parts of Egypt, that you are visiting the choirs of monks and going around the celestial family upon earth». In fact, Rufinus is the translator of the *Historia Monachorum* into Latin.

¹² *The Letter of Ammon and Pachomian Monasticism*, ed. J.E. Goehring, Berlin 1986, with text and English translation.

¹³ See the case of Arsenios (*Apophthegmata Patrum collectio alphabetica*), sub Arsenios, 28-29 (PG LXIV 96-97), see commentaries by Rapp, *The Use of Latin* cit., p. 103. Of senatorial rank, and with a high-class education, he is a model of renunciation and ascetic life. Simeon, in Cassian. *inst.* 5, 39, 1-2, only know Latin, no Greek nor Coptic, and earned a living in Egypt copying manuscripts.

administrative tasks. The strategies that can be reconstructed were: distribution in houses according to language, language learning, and the use of interpreters. For all of these strategies we have evidence in the Coptic hagiographies, especially in the Lives of the desert fathers, of Pachomius and of Shenoute.

1.1. *Distribution in Houses according to Language*

Pachomius' Greek *Vita Prima* or *G*¹ (94)¹⁴ gives an account of the arrival of Theodore, the reader (*ἀναγνώστης*) of the church at Alexandria, at the monastery of Pachomius¹⁵. He was welcomed and placed close to an old man who knew the Greek language until he could get along in Coptic, called here the «Theban language»¹⁶:

καὶ οὕτως ὑποδεξάμενος αὐτὸν ἐποίησεν εἶναι ἐν οἰκίᾳ παρά τινι ἀρχαίῳ ἀδελφῷ εἰδóτι τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν γλῶσσαν εἰς παραμυθίαν Θεωδώρου, ἕως μάθῃ ἀκοῦσαι τὴν Θηβαϊκὴν.

And having welcomed him he assigned him, for encouragement, in a house with an elder brother who knew the Greek language, until he learned to understand the Theban (language).

¹⁴ The edition is *Sanctii Pachomii Vitae Graecae*, ed. F. Halkin, Bruxelles 1932; see also *Le corpus athénien de Saint Pachôme, avec une traduction française*, ed. F. Halkin, Geneva 1982. The narration of the Bohairic life (89 Lefort) is more accurate. It includes the first interview in Alexandria of Theodore and the monks sent by Pachomius mediated by an interpreter. This account highlights several times the importance of the interpreters and the efforts devoted by Pachomius to learning Greek to communicate with Theodore.

¹⁵ On Theodore, see Goehring, *The Letter* cit., p. 201; Papaconstantinou, *Egyptians and 'Hellenists'* cit., pp. 16-17.

¹⁶ Halkin, *Sanctii Pachomii* cit., p. 63. On other occasions he refers to Coptic as the Egyptian language or dialect, *Letter of Ammon* 4: «τῆ Αἰγυπτίῳ διαλέκτῳ», and 29: «τῆ Αἰγυπτίων γλώσση».

Later on, Theodore was appointed head of the house (οἶκος) of the «Alexandrians», Greek speaking monks, and became himself a guide for foreigners arriving at Pbow¹⁷. These foreign monks, after a period of time, would eventually learn Coptic, since there was some pressure to learn this language in the communities of Upper Egypt¹⁸.

In his *Preface* to his Latin translation of the Pachomian monastic rule, Jerome states that he had received the text from a priest by the name of Silvanus, who had received it from Alexandria. It needed to be translated into Latin for the monks of the monastery of Metanoia or Canopos, in the Delta, who knew neither Greek nor Coptic. They were probably staying at a ‘Roman house’ at the monastery:

Aiebat enim (Silvanus) quod in Thebaidis coenobiis et in monasterio Metanoee, quod de Canopo in paenitentiam felici nominis conversione mutatum est, habitarent plurimi latinorum qui ignorarent Aegypticum Graecumque sermonem, quo Pachomii et Theodori et Orsiesii praecepta conscripta sunt.

(Silvanus) told us that in the cenobia of the Thebaid and in the monastery of Metanoia (which had changed from Canopos into ‘repentance’ with a happy conversion of name) there lived many ‘Latins’ who ignored the Egyptian and Greek languages, in which the precepts of Pachomius, Theodore and Horsiesis were written.

¹⁷ For this Greek-speaking community, see also *Letter of Ammon* 7 and *Vita Prima* 95.

¹⁸ This is the case of Ammon. He was fluent in Greek, and while he required a translator when he arrived at Pbow, at a later point he indicates that he has learnt Coptic (*Letter of Ammon* 17): «καὶ λοιπὸν νοοῦντά με τὴν θηβαίων γλώτταν» «because I knew the language of the Thebans». However, there is some suspicion that he already knew Coptic, perhaps the dialect from the North –Bohairic–, and that is why he highlights he knows «Theban», see Goehring, *The Letter* cit., p. 247. See also *Vita Tertia* 146, about Theodore learning Coptic.

Monastic communities soon grew to become multilingual spaces, developing linguistic needs. Bilingual monks were a very important part of these community as instructors for the recently arrived brothers, not only in the language but also in the routines of the congregation¹⁹. The *Letter of Ammon* (4) reports Theodore's activity as an interpreter²⁰: «ταῦτα δὲ ἡμεῖς ἠκούομεν αὐτοῦ λέγοντος τῇ Αἰγυπτίων διαλέκτῳ ἑρμηνεύοντος ἑλληνιστὶ Θεοδώρου τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως» «we listen to him when he speaks in Egyptian, while Theodore of Alexandria translates it into Greek»²¹.

1.2. *Language Learning and Exposure*

Let me start with the episode of Pachomius' pentecostal miracle: a Latin-speaking visitor wanted to speak to Pachomius, but not through an interpreter: «οὐκ ἐβούλετο ὁ Ῥωμαῖος τὰ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ πλημμυρήματα δι' ἑτέρου εἰπεῖν τῷ μεγάλῳ» (27, 8 Halkin) «the Roman did not want to tell the Great (Pachomius) the sins of his heart through someone else».

Pachomius then retired for prayer and asked God for knowledge of languages so as to be able to attend to this visitor and miraculously acquired the knowledge of Greek and Latin²².

¹⁹ J. Dummer, *Zum Problem der sprachlichen Verständigung in den Pachomius-Klöstern*, «Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte», 20 (1971), pp. 46-47.

²⁰ A man named Elurion is also acting as an interpreter for the author of the *Letter* (6): «καὶ τῶν μοναζόντων τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἀλλήλοις διαλεγομένων, Ἐλουρίων τοῦνομα, ἀνὴρ τὸν Χριστὸν ἐνδεδυμένος, ἔφη πρὸς με τῇ Ἑλλήνων διαλέκτῳ» «while the monks were speaking their own language with each other, someone called Elurion, a man invested in Christ, said to me in Greek»; see Goehring, *The Letter* cit., p. 207.

²¹ Also in *Vita Graeca* 95, Halkin, *Sanctii Pachomii* cit., p. 64: «When Pachomius gave instructions to the brothers, Theodore interpreted for the brothers who did not understand Egyptian».

²² *Paralipomena Pachomiana* 27. Halkin, *Sanctii Pachomii* cit., p. 154; Halkin, *Le corpus athénien* cit., p. 89.

Καὶ ἐπὶ ὥρας τρεῖς προσευχομένου αὐτοῦ καὶ πολλὰ παρακαλοῦντος τὸν Θεὸν περὶ τούτου, ἄφνω ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατεπέμφθη ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ τῇ δεξιᾷ ὡς ἐπιστόλιον χάρτινον γεγραμμένον· καὶ ἀναγνοὺς αὐτὸ ἔμαθεν πασῶν τῶν γλωσσῶν τὰς λαλιάς. Καὶ δόξαν ἀναπέμψας τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ υἱῷ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι, μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἐκεῖνον· καὶ ἤρξατο αὐτῷ διαλέγεσθαι καὶ ἑλληνιστὶ καὶ ῥωμαϊστὶ ἀπταιστως, ὥστε τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἀκούσαντα λέγειν περὶ τοῦ μεγάλου ὅτι πάντας ὑπερβάλλει τοὺς σχολαστικούς εἰς τὴν διάλεκτον.

And for three hours he prayed and much besought God about this, and suddenly a small letter written on papyrus fell from Heaven into his right hand. Having read it he learnt to speak all languages. Glorifying the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, with great joy he went to that brother and started to speak to him in Greek and Latin perfectly, so that the brother, having heard him, said that the Great (Pachomius) surpassed all the scholars in the language.

The miraculous acquisition of languages is but an anecdote. In fact, Pachomius seems to have learned Greek with some effort (ἐσπούδασεν), as attested by another text in one of his Lives, in which Pachomius tried to learn Greek himself so as to guide Theodoros the Alexandrian personally (*Vita Prima* 95): «καὶ ἐσπούδασεν ἑλληνιστὶ μαθεῖν χάριτι Θεοῦ, ἵνα εὖρη τὸ πῶς παραμυθῆσασθαι αὐτὸν πολλάκις» «and (Pachomius) tried hard to learn Greek by God's mercy so as to be able to guide him often»²³.

These efforts attest at the very least to the necessity of speaking different languages as a means of communication with the ever-growing flow of visitors.

Less hagiographic texts, like glossaries and conversation manuals, may provide a more accurate reflection of reality, since they rep-

²³ See also *Vita Tertia* 146: «καὶ ἐσπούδασε θηβαϊστὶ μαθεῖν αὐτὸν τῇ χάριτι τοῦ Χριστοῦ» «and he made an effort to learn the Theban language – Sahidic Coptic – in the grace of Christ», referring to Theodore learning Coptic.

resent the tools used for mutual understanding among the peoples who populated the desert²⁴.

1.3. *Use of Interpreters*

In the communication with newcomers, bilingual or even trilingual monks were an asset. The *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* 6, 3 (Festugière) describes the remarkable capacity of the monk Theon to speak three languages:

ἐπεπαίδευτο δὲ ὁ ἀνὴρ τριπλῆ τῶν διαλέξεων χάριτι ἐν τε Ἑλληνικοῖς καὶ Ῥωμαικοῖς καὶ Αἰγυπτιακοῖς ἀναγνώμασιν, καθὼς καὶ παρὰ πολλῶν καὶ παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου ἐμάθομεν.

This man had been educated in reading three languages, Greek, Latin and Coptic, as we learnt from many and also from him.

There is evidence of interpreters in the monastic environment, who specialised in communication with the newcomers, visitors and the faithful. Saint Anthony, according to some sources, apparently did not speak Greek, but only Coptic: «τῆ Αἰγυπτιακῆ φωνῆ» (Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 16, 1), and often made use of interpreters in his relationship with disciples and other monks. Athanasius also explains that he spoke through interpreters: «ἔλεγε δι' ἑρμηνέως» (*Vita Antonii* 74, 2; see also 77, 1)²⁵. Visitors would also

²⁴ For a trilingual (Greek-Latin-Coptic) conversation manual, see Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum, Papyrussammlung, P. 10582 (P.Berol. inv. 10582), edited by W. Schubart, *Ein lateinisch-griechisch-koptisches Gesprächsbuch*, «Klio», 13 (1913), pp. 27-38; A. Bataille, *Glossaires greco-latins sur papyrus*, «Recherches de Papyrologie», 4 (1967), pp. 161-169; J. Kramer in *C.Gloss. Biling.* I 15; E. Dickey, *How Coptic Speakers Learned Latin? A Reconsideration of P.Berol. Inv. 10582*, «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», 193 (2015), pp. 65-77. See also the contribution of Orlandi above.

²⁵ Palladius (*Historia Lausiaca* 21, 15) provides the name of one of his interpreters, Kronios: «τῶν λόγων τούτων ὄλων ἑρμηνεὺς γέγονα, τοῦ

have recourse to the service of interpreters. Palladius is an example, when he visited John of Lycopolis (*Historia Lausiaca* 35, 6). We may imagine similar interpretive services when visitors were Latin-speaking.

There also existed the practice of simultaneous translation in communal reading in the monasteries as an internal service to brothers who were not familiar with Coptic (see above). Anthony sent epistles to monasteries, which were written in Coptic but that would eventually be translated into Greek²⁶. This was clearly done in writing but we also have evidence from the *Letter of Ammon* (29)²⁷ for oral translation. He reports that a letter of Anthony was addressed to the monks at Pbow, the central monastery in the Pachomian order. The letter was read out loud by one of the monks while another monk translated it.

μακαρίου Ἀντωνίου ἑλληνιστὶ μὴ εἰδότης· ἐγὼ γὰρ ἠπιστάμην ἀμφοτέρας τὰς γλώσσας, καὶ ἠρμήνευσα αὐτοῖς μὲν ἑλληνιστί, ἐκείνῳ δὲ αἰγυπτιστί» «of all these words I have been interpreter, since Anthony did not know Greek. I know both languages, and I have translated for them into Greek and for him into Egyptian». In his *Vita Hilarionis* 25, Jerome says that Anthony's interpreter was Isaac.

²⁶ Hier. *vir. ill.* 88: «*Antonius monachus [...] misit aegyptiace ad diversa monasteria apostolici sensus sermonisque epistolas septem, quae in graecam linguam translata erunt, quorum praecipua est ad Arsinoitas*» «Anthony the monk sent seven epistles in Egyptian with apostolic sense and content to various monasteries. These were translated into Greek. Of them the most important is the one addressed to the Arsinoites».

²⁷ Goehring, *The Letter* cit., pp. 200; 207.

2. *Exchange of Loanwords*

As has been mentioned, among the thousands of Greek loanwords attested in Coptic²⁸, both in documents and in literature from all times, the presence of Latin loanwords is very limited. It is already difficult to characterize the use of loanwords, and to understand the process of adoption, and their integration in the target language, when the evidence is so scarce. In order to extract the most from this linguistic contact, I would like to present a few examples of both Latin loanwords in Coptic, and Coptic loanwords in Latin, as the last token of this interesting and fruitful interaction. The body of examples is so reduced that it is impossible to know whether these words were just the product of code-switching, were ‘incipient loans’, or were adopted terms²⁹. We have already mentioned the question of the Greek language as intermediary in the loan, and the general belief that Latin loans entered Coptic through Greek³⁰. While I do not pretend to solve this question – which, by the way, I think cannot be answered – I do believe that there was direct contact, as suggested above, between speakers of Latin and speakers of Coptic, and that direct borrowing could in fact happen. As reduced as this corpus of loanwords between these two languages may be, it stands as evidence for the linguistic environment mentioned above.

²⁸ See T.S. Richter, «*Whatever in the Coptic Language is not Greek, Can Wholly Be Considered Ancient Egyptian*»: *Recent Approaches Towards an Integrated View of the Egyptian-Coptic Lexicon*, «*Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies*», 9 (2017), pp. 9-32, and E. Grossman, *Greek Loanwords in Coptic*, in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, cur. G.K. Giannakis, Leiden 2014, pp. 118-120, both with bibliography on the topic.

²⁹ For a full definition of these phenomena of borrowing, see Haspelmath, *Lexical Borrowing* cit.

³⁰ See Förster, p. xxxi.

2.1. *Latin in Coptic*³¹

Among the few Latin loanwords in the early monastic literature we can distinguish different sources: 1) administration and military; 2) Coptic translations of biblical and patristic texts; 3) contact in the everyday life of the monasteries. Latin vocabulary could have reached the monastic environment through any of these sources. Hagiographic literature, especially martyrologies, include many terms related to the administration of justice, the military and prisons in the description of the judicial process suffered by the martyrs³², and of course monasteries also had contact with the administration for reasons of taxation and census.

As for the first source, terms coming from administration, there are a number of examples in Coptic monastic texts. The term **ⲧⲓⲣⲟⲩ** or **ⲧⲓⲣⲟⲩ**, «recruit», appears in the life of Pachomius³³, referring to his conscription to the Roman Army before his conversion. Other terms like **ⲁⲅⲣⲟⲩⲥⲧⲁⲗⲓⲟⲥ**, *Augustalis* «governor»³⁴; **ⲙⲓⲗⲓⲟⲩ**, «Roman mile»³⁵;

³¹ Latin loanwords in Coptic documentary texts were part of a lexicographical enterprise that was unfortunately discontinued: I.M. Cervenka-Ehrenstrasser (and J. Diethart) started publishing a *Lexikon der lateinischen Lehnwörter in den griechischsprachigen dokumentarischen Texten Ägyptens mit Berücksichtigung koptischer Quellen*, two decades ago. Only two fascicles saw the light: fasc. 1 covers letter Alpha, and fasc. 2 covers from Beta to Delta.

³² Horn, *Latino-Coptica* cit., pp. 1371-1372 gives the term **ⲙⲉⲧⲁⲗⲟⲥ** as an example (TLA lemma n. C9767, Förster, p. 517) cfr. Latin *damnatio in metallum*, condemnation to the mines.

³³ TLA lemma n. C10745 (**ⲧⲓⲣⲟⲩ**), *Life of Pachomius*, Sahidic version 212, 9; 212, 27 and 104, 35 Lefort.

³⁴ *Life of Pachomius*, Sahidic version 350, 10 Lefort, not included yet in the CD, Förster, p. 122. Cervenka-Ehrenstrasser, pp. 119-122.

³⁵ TLA lemma n. C9791 (**ⲙⲓⲗⲓⲟⲩ**), *Life of Pachomius*, Sahidic version 74, 2; 139, 25; 222, 16 Lefort. *Apophthegmata Patrum Alph. Benjamin* 5 (6 Chaîne).

ΤΡΙΒΟΥΝΟΣ, *tribunus* «tribune»³⁶; ΠΡΙΜΙΚΕΡΙΟΣ, *primicerius* «head of an administration»³⁷; and ΤΙΤΛΟΣ, *titulus* «title»³⁸, which appear in hagiography, clearly belong to this area too. Many of these terms were adopted probably through their use in documentary texts, but also through the translations of the Bible³⁹.

Perhaps also connected to the military terminology, and also adopted in Greek at the same time, is the term ΖΑΡΜΑ for the monastic habit used in the Coptic text for the Pachomian regulations (98): «ΠΝΕΛΑΔΥ ΩΒΛΑΔΥ ΠΕΙΔΟΣ ΕΠΕΦΖΑΡΜΑ ΔΧΜΠΕΦΡΜΗΗΙ» «no one will alter the shape of his habit without (the permission) of the head of his ‘house’»⁴⁰.

³⁶ TLA lemma n. C10781 (ΤΡΙΒΟΥΝΟΣ), Shenoute of Atripe, 33, 6 (*De sapientia magistratum*) Wiesmann.

³⁷ *Life of Pachomius*, Sahidic version 11, 22 Lefort, not included yet in the CD. Förster, p. 676.

³⁸ TLA lemma n. C10747 (ΤΙΤΛΟΣ), A. Böhlig, *Ein Lexikon der griechischen Wörter im Koptischen. Die griechisch-lateinischen Lehnwörter in den koptischen manichäischen Texten*, München 1953, p. 203. Gospel of John 19:19.

³⁹ A glance at Latin words in the Gospel of Mark: *census* (κῆνσος «poll tax», 12:14), *centurio* (κεντυρίων «centurion», 15:39, 44, 45), *denarius* (δηνάριον, Roman coin, 12:15), *legio* (λεγιών «legion», 5:9, 15), *modius* (μόδιος, measure of volume, 4:21), *praetorium* (πραιτώριον, residence of the governor, 15:16), *quadrans* (κοδράντης, Roman coin, 12:42), *sextarius* (ξέστης, liquid measure, 7:4), *speculator* (σπεκουλάτωρ «executioner», 6:27), and *flagello* (φραγελλώ «to scourge», 15:15), show that they are all related to administration and the military.

⁴⁰ Coptic text in *Oeuvres de S. Pachôme et de ses disciples*, ed. L.-T. Lefort, Louvain 1956, p. 31. On the Pachomian monastic regulations, see introductions to *Pachomiana Latina: règle et épîtres de saint Pachôme, épître de saint Théodore et Liber de saint Orsiesius, texte latin de saint Jérôme*, ed. A. Boon, Louvain 1932 and *S. Pachomii Abbatis Tabennensis Regulae Monasticae*, ed. P.B. Albers, Bonn 1923, and *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, cur. J.

Connecting this term to the Latin *arma* has the difficulty that the Latin term is *pluralia tantum*, but it is not surprising that Greek would have adopted it into its declension of nouns in *-μα*⁴¹. Some of the Greek versions of the Pachomian regulations also use the term ἄρμα, others use σχῆμα and φόρεμα⁴², while in Latin we find the term *armatura*. One may argue that Greek preferred the abbreviated form *arma*, because it was easier to integrate into the declension of nouns in *-μα*, *-ματος*, and felt like a natural word in Greek, rather than a foreign sounding ἄρματοῦρα, attested in Greek, but much later, and with a different meaning (see *LBG*, s.v.).

A small number of terms belong to the terminology of everyday life objects and events. In some cases, with due prudence, they can be explained as a direct loan: I will start with the term ΛΙΜΗΝ «portrait, image»⁴³. Walter E. Crum (143a) notes that it is not to be confused with the Greek λίμην «harbour» but cannot point to its derivation. It seems to be a loanword thoroughly assimilated to Coptic through a vowel shift. James Drescher⁴⁴ derives it from

Thomas, A. Constantinides Hero, Washington DC 2000, pp. 32-38; S. Torallas Tovar, *La Regla monástica de Pacomio de Tabenesi*, «Erytheia. Revista de Estudios Bizantinos y Neogriegos», 22 (2001), pp. 7-22.

⁴¹ Lampe, p. 227 s.v. ἄρμα 3, monastic habit, provides as an example the Latin Pachomian regulations mentioned in the following footnote.

⁴² The *Excerpta Graeca* A 17 and 43: use ἄρμα (175, 180 Boon); B 50: σχῆμα (175 Boon). Jerome however, uses *habitus*: «in vestimenta et in habitu suo nihil novi praeter caeteros causa decori inveniet» (reg. *Pachom.* 97; PL XXIII 78; 40 Boon). And *armatura* in reg. *Pachom.* 81; Horsiesi, *Doctrina de institutione monachorum* 25, in the translation of Jerome, uses *armatura*, referring to the monastic habit (reg. *Pachom.* 81; PL XXIII 77; 37 Boon, cfr. 126 Boon).

⁴³ TLA lemma n. C1660 (ΛΙΜΗΝ).

⁴⁴ J. Drescher, *Graeco-Coptic: Postscript*, «Le Muséon», 89 (1976), pp. 307-321.

Greek λαιμός «throat», and Gérard Godron⁴⁵ derives it from Latin *lumen* «light»⁴⁶.

The *Prophecy of Charour*⁴⁷, a curious text from the corpus of *Pachomiana* (only preserved in Coptic) has a few terms that might be explained as originating in Latin. They appear in the context of a prophecy in which the monks are warned against their bad behaviour, referring to the reversal of their everyday life. Among the everyday objects, the term ΚΑΒΑΝΩ (103, 20 Lefort)⁴⁸, probably related to Lat. *campana* (in Latin this term refers originally to any object made of bronze produced in Campania, cfr. *TLL* III 208.55-66), attested in the Greek papyri as weighing device, but here it appears as an instrument of the shoemaker⁴⁹. Another term, of difficult interpretation is ΓΑΘΝ (104, 7 Lefort, *Oeuvres* cit.):

⁴⁵ G. Godron, ΛΙΜΗΝ *Image, Portrait*, «Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte», 25 (1983), pp. 1-53.

⁴⁶ In a later article, Id., *A nouveau ΛΙΜΗΝ (compléments)*, «Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte», 29 (1990), pp. 43-47 added further evidence. Y. Nessim Youssef, *La terminologie de l'icone selon les livres liturgiques coptes*, «Göttinger Miszellen», 158 (1997), pp. 101-105 shows that ΛΙΜΗΝ means «icon», that is, cult object, whereas ΕΙΚΩΝ can be a statue, physical appearance, or the concept of the image of God.

⁴⁷ Lefort, *Oeuvres* cit., edition and translation. For an explanation and context of the text, see L.S.B. MacCoull, *The Prophecy of Charour*, in *Documenting Christianity in Egypt. Sixth to Fourteenth Centuries*, cur. Id., Farnham - Burlington (VT) 2011, pp. 44-55, who deplors that it has merely been regarded as a 'philologists' playground of strange words', which is precisely what I am doing here. See also H. Lundhaug, L. Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, Tübingen 2015, p. 166.

⁴⁸ The numbers refer to pages and line numbers in Lefort, *Oeuvres* cit.

⁴⁹ LSJ s.v. κάμπανος «weighing-machine, steelyard», in Greek in the papyri *P.Cair.Masp.* III 67325 l. 37 (4th century AD, TM 36540). See also the verb *καμπαρίζω* «to weigh», in *P.Lond.* V 1708 l. 130 (6th century AD, TM 19725). Förster, p. 374.

«ΟΥΔΕ ΧΟΕΙΤ ΖΗΠΓΑΘΝ» «no olives in the *gaom*», where it might stand for Latin *cavum*, as suggested by Louis-Théophile Lefort⁵⁰, a round concave vessel, though it is not attested elsewhere. It could also be a corrupted spelling of ἀγγεῖον⁵¹. Finally, in the same text, the term **CIKEΛΛΕ** («ΟΥΔΕ ΝΕΖ ΖΗΤCIKEΛΛΕ» «no oil in the **CIKEΛΛΕ**») can mean in this case some kind of container for the oil. In this sense, it can be connected to the Latin term for a measure *sicilicus*⁵². Another interpretation might be a connection to the verb **CIKE**⁵³ «to grind, to pound» with the meaning «mill»: «there is no oil in the oil-mill». These terms refer to everyday life, but at the same time, if these interpretations are correct, they are all measures, and artefacts connected to trade, which puts the source also in administration.

My last example appears in a recently published text⁵⁴, the *Sermo Asceticus* of Stephen of Thebes. This Egyptian ascetic author lived in the late 4th or early 5th century AD, probably in the monastic communities from Scetis, Nitria, and Kellia. Alin Suciu suggests that the *Sermo asceticus* was originally composed in Coptic, and later translated into several other languages. The only Latin loanword in this text is interesting. The verb **CEPBΕ**, Latin *servio*, with the meaning of «to devote oneself, to worship»⁵⁵ appears in a fragmentary but clear context: «**CEPBΕ ΕΠΙΝΟΥΤΕ**» «devote yourself to God», a sense

⁵⁰ Lefort, *Oeuvres* cit., p. 107 (in the translation volume).

⁵¹ Attested in Coptic in documentary texts, Förster, p. 6, TLA lemma n. C8064.

⁵² OLD, s.v. But cfr. **CIKE**, TLA lemma n. C3423, «to grind, to pound». Perhaps it is connected to this latter term, and the term means «there is no oil in the oil-mill».

⁵³ TLA lemma n. C3423.

⁵⁴ A. Suciu, *The Sermo Asceticus of Stephen the Theban in Sahidic Coptic*, «Journal of Theological Studies», 69.2 (2018), pp. 628-673.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 649.

of the term very much connected precisely to the monastic contexts where the concept of *servus Dei* was developed⁵⁶. There is enough evidence of the borrowing of Greek verbs in Coptic, so this example should not be surprising.

2.2. *Coptic in Latin*

Let us turn to the reverse situation, which is also infrequent: that of the Coptic terms that migrated into the Latin language in the context of early monasticism. As for the source of these loanwords, they are all connected to everyday life in the monasteries and administration of the community, and they might have been transmitted through translation, but also by oral transmission, through the already mentioned contact with monks and priests, and also with the guides who accompanied them. These guides were probably native Egyptians, and it is not guaranteed that there was mutual understanding⁵⁷. This fact is important in our assessment of the sources, as I will discuss below.

The literary sources we have for these loanwords are, as mentioned above, either translations from Coptic texts into Latin – like the translation into Latin of the Monastic regulations from the Pachomian federation, mentioned above, which were crucial for the formation of ascetic communities in the West – or literature produced in Latin, or translated from Greek, about the monastic communities of Egypt by travellers and pilgrims. These texts spread rapidly in the West, transmitting within it a few Coptic words to denote new realities for which specialised terminology was felt necessary.

It must be remarked that the use of Coptic loanwords in Latin is not that of naturalised loanwords, adopted and perceived by

⁵⁶ Or *famulus*, TLL VI.1 268.27-32, referring to monks and presbyters.

⁵⁷ There is evidence of local guides for travelers from very early times. See L. Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*, Toronto 1974, pp. 104-106; 264-267.

the speakers as natural words of their language. They are instead invariably perceived as foreign by the speaker⁵⁸. As such, they are explained, and often introduced with expressions such as ‘they call this so-and-so’. They are often presented as specialised terminology of this emerging phenomenon, monasticism.

I will offer in the following pages a few examples culled from translations of monastic literature, like those of Jerome⁵⁹, or works produced in Latin, such as John Cassian. In each case, I will provide some context in order to appreciate the nature of the loanwords.

Jerome translated the regulations of the Pachomian communities through the mediation of a Greek translation, as he himself indicates in the Preface (*PL XXIII 65*; 4 Boon):

urgebant autem missi ad me ob hanc ipsam causam Leontius presbyter, et caeteri cum eo fratres, accito notario, ut erant de Aegyptiaca in Graecam linguam versa, nostro sermone dictavi ...

(Since) the priest Leontius and the other brothers who had been sent to me with him were urging me about precisely this matter, I summoned a scribe and I dictated (a translation) into our own language, as they (scil. the regulations) had been translated into Greek from Coptic.

In his translation, the *Pachomiana Latina*, Jerome keeps and indicates the terms used by Egyptians for artefacts or realities that were

⁵⁸ Haspelmath, *Lexical Borrowing* cit., p. 43, «foreignisms», «Fremdwörter», as opposed to «Lehnwörter», although it is very difficult to understand the perception of the speaker.

⁵⁹ On Jerome and his translation technique, see S. Brock, *Aspects of Translation Techniques in Antiquity*, «Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies», 20 (1979), pp. 69-87; more recently *La libertà del traduttore: l'epistola de optimo genere interpretandi di Gerolamo. Testo latino, introduzione, traduzione e note*, ed. E. Bona, Acireale - Roma 2008, among some approaches to the topic.

considered typical of the monastic communities. These included the parts of the monastic habits, and other objects that were part of everyday life in the monastery, especially in cases where they were regulated. Often these terms were of Greek origin, like the *meloté*, a goat skin used as a cloak, attested in Coptic as **ΒΑΛΟΤ** or **ΜΑΛΛΟΤ**, from Gk. *μηλωτή*⁶⁰: «*Et caprinam pelliculam quam meloten vocant*» (*praef.* 4) «And a goat skin that they call ‘meloté’».

Other terms were originally Egyptian, such as *embrimum* (Gk. *ἐμβρύμιον*, *ἐμβρίμιον* «pillow» or perhaps «mat» or «bundle of papyrus»)⁶¹, connected to the Coptic term **ΜΡΩΜ**⁶². This word is an excellent example of how the *Pachomiana Latina* would impact later production in Latin of texts related to Egyptian monasticism. It appears in the *Praecepta* 15 (16 Boon): «*In die dominica ... nullus deerit de ebdomadariis, sedens in loco embrimii, psallentique respondens*» «On Sunday none of the weekly servers shall be absent from his seating place in the place of the mats / pillows, and not responding to the psalmist».

The term is only attested in monastic literature in Greek. In Latin it is attested in Cassian, *Conferences* 1, 23, where he gives some further description of what this artefact is⁶³:

⁶⁰ Crum 38b; E. Dévaud, *Notes de Lexicologie Copte*, «Le Muséon», 36 (1923), pp. 83-99, esp. 91. S. Torallas Tovar, *El hábito monástico en Egipto y su simbología*, «Ilu. Revista de Ciencias de las Religiones», 7 (2002), pp. 163-174, esp. 170.

⁶¹ It is already a loanword in Greek, Lampe, s.v.; *LBG*, s.v.; Torallas Tovar, *Lexical Interference* cit., p. 183. It appears not only in literary texts, but also in the papyri, showing some level of integration in the language, see *DGE*, s.v.; M. Pezin, *Pour une étymologie égyptienne de ἐμβρύμιον*, «Chronique d’Égypte», 63 (1988), pp. 341-343; G. Husson, *ἐμβρύμιον, ἐμβρίμιον: à propos d’un objet mobilier égyptien*, «Chronique d’Égypte», 63 (1988), pp. 331-340. For the Latin, Du Cange, s.v.; Blaise, s.v.

⁶² TLA lemma n. C2010, Vycichl, p. 120 considers it Greek.

⁶³ Other terms that might be Egyptian in Cassian: *athera*, a cereal porridge (*conl.* 15, 10, 1; cfr. Hier. *quaest. hebr. in gen.* 45, 21), with a contro-

Iisdem ipsis, quibus insidebamus psiathiis admonens incubare, embrimiis pariter capiti nostro cervicalium vice suppositis, grossioribus papyris in longos gracile-sque fasciculos coaptates.

Advising us to lie down on the same mats on which we were sitting, and to put our bundles under our heads instead of pillows, as these being tied evenly to thicker leaves of papyrus collected in long and slender bundles.

To complete the context of this term, there is an anecdote from an Apophthegma of Abba Macarius, in which he entered a pagan tomb, full of mummies. Taking one of these mummies, as a sign of contempt for pagan realities, he put it under his head, and used it as a «pillow» (Coll. Alph. Macarius 13, 44-45 = Coll. Syst. 7, 15):

Ἀνέβη ποτὲ ὁ ἀββᾶς Μακάριος ἀπὸ Σκήτεως εἰς Τερενοῦθιν· καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν κοιμηθῆναι. Ἦσαν δὲ ἐκεῖ σκηνώματα Ἑλλήνων παλαιά· καὶ λαβὼν ἓν, ὑπέθηκε τῇ ἑαυτοῦ κεφαλῇ, ὡς ἐμβρίμιον.

Once Abba Macarios went up from Scetis to Terenouthis, and he entered a sepulchre to sleep. There were old mummies of pagans. Taking one, he placed it under his head and used it as a pillow.

The translation into Latin keeps the Egyptian term: «*Erant autem ibi vetera ethnicorum cadavera; e quibus unum acceptum posuit sub capite suo, velut embrimum*» «There were old corpses of pagans. Taking one of those, he placed it under his head as if it were a pillow».

I will conclude this survey with two texts, one by Jerome, the other text by Cassian⁶⁴. Jerome's twenty-second epistle is addressed

versial etymology, Torallas Tovar, *Lexical Interference* cit., p. 178; *baucalis*, some kind of bottle (*inst.* 4, 16, 1), *Ibid.*, p. 182. Both probably through Greek ἀθήρα and βαυκάλις.

⁶⁴ Much has been written on these two texts. For a full study of the terms and the bibliography, see M. Blanchard, *Sarabaitae and Remnuoth*.

to Eustochium, a young girl who was about to enter a community of virgins. In this letter, Jerome gives her some basic training about monasticism in general, detailing among other things the three kinds of monks to be found in Egypt (*epist.* 22, 34):

Tria sunt in Aegypto genera monachorum: coenobium quod illi sauhes gentili lingua vocant, nos 'in commune viventes' possumus appellare; anachoretas, qui soli habitant per deserta et ab eo quod procul ab hominibus recesserint nuncupantur; tertium genus est, quod dicunt remnuoth, deterrimum atque neglectum.

Three are the kinds of monks in Egypt: the cenobites, who are called sauhes in the local language, and we can call them 'those who live in community'; anchorites, who live alone in the desert areas and who receive their name from the fact that they withdraw far away from people; the third kind is the one called remnuoth, the worst and to be neglected.

Two of these kinds of monks are given with their denominations in the Egyptian language: *saubes* and *remnuoth*. There is a very similar passage with a tripartite typology of monks in John Cassian's *Conferences* 18, 4, 7:

Tria sunt in Aegypto genera monachorum, quorum duo sunt optima, tertium tepidum atque omnimodis euitandum. Primum est coenobitarum, qui scilicet in

Coptic considerations, in *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity. Language, Literature and Social Context*, cur. J.A. Goehring, J.A. Timbie, Washington 2007, pp. 49-60. See also A. Alcock, *Two Notes on Egyptian Monasticism*, «Aegyptus», 67 (1987), pp. 189-190; Horn, *Latino-Coptica* cit.; A. Guillaumont, *Les remnuoth de Saint Jérôme*, in *Christianisme d'Égypte: Hommages à René-Georges Coquin* = «Cahiers de la Bibliothèque copte CGC», 9 (1995), pp. 87-92; C. Cannuyer, *L'identité des sarabaïtes, ces moines d'Égypte que méprisait Jean Cassien*, «Mélanges de Science Religieuse», 58 (2001), pp. 7-19; M. Choat, *Philological and Historical Approaches to the Search for the 'Third Type' of Egyptian Monk*, in *Coptic Studies on the Threshold of a New Millennium*. Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Coptic Studies, cur. M. Immerzeel, J. van der Vliet, II, Louvain 2004, pp. 857-865.

congregatione pariter consistentes unius senioris iudicio gubernantur: cuius generis maximus numerus monachorum per universam Aegyptum commoratur. Secundum anachoretarum, qui prius in coenobiis instituti iamque in actuali conversatione perfecti solitudinis elegere secreta: cuius professionis nos quoque optamus esse participes. Tertium reprehensibile sarabaitarum est.

Three are the kinds of monks in Egypt, from which two are best, and the third is weak, to be avoided in every possible way. The first is that of the coenobites, who certainly live together as equals in a congregation and are governed by the single direction of an elder monk: and of this kind there is the largest number of monks dwelling together throughout all of Egypt. The second is that of the anchorites, who having been trained in the congregations and then made perfect in active monastic life, chose the privacy of solitude: we also wish to take part in the latter order. The third is the reprehensible one of the sarabaites.

Three Egyptian / Coptic terms are used to define the types of monks in these texts. The cenobites are the sauhes in the text of Jerome. This term can be immediately connected to the Coptic ⲪⲟⲟϩⲄ, which means «congregation»⁶⁵ (Ⲫⲟⲟϩⲉ «to gather») rather than «monk». The third type of monk, of which both Jerome and Cassian coincide in their characterisation as a disreputable kind, receive two completely different names which have been widely discussed by scholars. The names are the remnuoth «lonely man» = μονάζων,

⁶⁵ TLA lemma n. C3894, Crum CD 373b. This Coptic term has the general meaning «congregation», corresponding to Greek ἐκκλησία or συναγωγή. It is found with the meaning of «monastic congregation», rather than «cenobite monks», as in Jerome, in monastic literature: e.g., Apoph. Anon. N126, *Le manuscrit de la version copte en dialecte sahidique des Apophthegmata Patrum*, ed. M. Chaîne, Le Caire 1960, pp. 28-29; *Life of Onnophrios* 11, *Coptic Martyrdoms in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, ed. E.A.W. Budge, London 1914, p. 210. For further discussion and bibliography, see Blanchard, *Sarabaitae and Remnuoth* cit., p. 49.

μοναχός, from a reconstructed Coptic *P̄M̄NOȲWT (from P̄OM̄E «man» and OȲWT «single, one») not attested anywhere⁶⁶. It might be a calque of Greek μονάζων, using a nominal derivation construction in Coptic. The terms OYA OȲWT or OYA NOȲWT «single one»⁶⁷ are attested in the Gospel of Thomas (compare log. 16 and 23)⁶⁸.

The third term presents more complications than the first two. Some⁶⁹ have understood *sarabaitae* as a corruption of the existing Coptic term CAPAK̄OTE / CAPAK̄OTE, meaning «wanderer, pilgrim, vagrant»⁷⁰. There is no Coptic word in our sources which matches the Latin transcription *sarabaita*, and proposals are not completely satisfactory. I will summarise some of them⁷¹; Alcock and Horn propose CA «man (of)» and PAȲH «community, neighbourhood», thus *CAPAȲH «man belonging to a community»⁷². Monica Blanchard⁷³, discusses the use of the prefix CA-, used for offices and trades, with the meaning «maker of» or

⁶⁶ For variants of the term in the manuscripts, see Vycichl, p. 173. Vycichl also credits this identification to P.E. Jablonski, *Opuscula*, Leiden 1804-1813, p. 229. See Blanchard, *Sarabaitae and Remnuoth* cit., p. 50.

⁶⁷ TLA lemma n. C5191 (OYA NOȲWT).

⁶⁸ A.F.J. Klijn, *The 'Single One' in the Gospel of Thomas*, «Journal of Biblical Literature», 81 (1962), pp. 271-278; Blanchard, *Sarabaitae and Remnuoth* cit., p. 51.

⁶⁹ Crum CD 354-355, H.G. Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrûn*, II, New York 1926-1933, p. 15.

⁷⁰ TLA lemma n. C3702. Crum 354b; Černý, p. 161.

⁷¹ For more details and full bibliography, see Blanchard, *Sarabaitae and Remnuoth* cit., pp. 51-60.

⁷² Alcock, *Two Notes* cit.; J. Horn, *Tria sunt in Aegypto genera monachorum: die ägyptischen Bezeichnungen für die 'dritte Art' des Mönchtums bei Hieronymus und Johannes Cassianus*, in *Quaerentes Scientiam: Festgabe für Wolfhart Westendorf zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, cur. H. Behlmer, Göttingen 1994, pp. 63-76.

⁷³ Blanchard, *Sarabaitae and Remnuoth* cit., pp. 53-54.

«dealer in», such as **ϩⲁⲛⲧⲃⲧ** «fishmonger»⁷⁴, which should not be confused with the use of **ⲡⲙ-**, **ⲡⲙ-ⲛ-** and **ⲡⲞ-**, «man of», or «man from». The term **ⲡⲙⲡⲁⲮⲬ** «man of the neighbourhood» is attested in Coptic texts, but with the meaning of «neighbour». As Blanchard⁷⁵ points out, the term **ⲡⲁⲮⲬ** does not have the monastic connotations that a word like «community» might have in English. Malcolm Choat, on his part, suggests that the terms *remnuoth* and *sarabaitae* were both some kind of term of abuse, disqualifications of these despicable types of monks, rather than real characterisations. I will not linger on this discussion any longer, I refer to the bibliography cited for further details.

I would like to highlight that the ‘Egyptian terms’ that appear in Latin monastic literature do not seem always to have a counterpart in Coptic literature. This fact may be due to a number of reasons. The first that comes to mind is the corruption to which these terms have been submitted, not only by the authors who first heard them, perhaps through native guides, and included them in their works, but also in the process of textual transmission⁷⁶. Alternatively, these terms could have existed and were never recorded in the literary texts that have been transmitted to our day. If we agree with Choat’s suggestion that these were terms of abuse, this alternative suddenly seems plausible⁷⁷. Richter has already posed

⁷⁴ Se Vycichl, p. 181 for a list of compounds with **ϩⲁ-**.

⁷⁵ Blanchard, *Sarabaitae and Remnuoth* cit., p. 54.

⁷⁶ W. Spiegelberg, *Koptische miszellen XXXIII: Zwei koptische Mönchsamen bei hieronymus*, «Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l’archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes», 28 (1906), pp. 211-212 collects the evidence from five different manuscripts, from the 8th to the 12th centuries. The variation: *saubes* – *hauses* – *sauses*; *remnuoth* – *rennuo* – *remeboth* shows an extra obstacle to finding a clear connection with an Egyptian etymology.

⁷⁷ The practice of using disqualifications in the realm of religion can be used as parallels to the Egyptian example. In the Latin Mozarabic texts, Muslims and Christians called each other *canes* «dogs». A common term for Jews in Medieval Spain was *marrano* «pig».

the question of the distance between the literary and the spoken variants of the Coptic language⁷⁸. Probably a combination of both the textual corruption or the miscomprehension on the part of the Latin speakers, and the possibility of the singularity of spoken Coptic lurks behind these examples.

In this vein, I would like to offer one more example, in a text of Saint Augustine, to show the complexity of the interpretation of these rare terms. In his sermon On Resurrection Augustine describes the desiccation and treatment of bodies, in accordance with the Egyptians' belief in resurrection. He adds that the Egyptians call these (the mummified bodies?) *gabbaras* (*serm.* 361, 12; PL XXX-IV 1605):

Ægyptiū ergo soli credunt resurrectionem, quia diligenter curant cadavera mortuorum: morem enim habent siccare corpora, et quasi aenea reddere, gabbaras ea vocant.

Thus, the Egyptians alone believe in resurrection, since they diligently take care of the bodies of the dead. Indeed, they have the tradition of desiccating the bodies, and rendering them as bronze. They call these *gabbaras*.

There have been multiple attempts to explain the term⁷⁹, connecting it to Egyptian or Semitic roots, and it has entered the glossaries with some spelling variations, as *mortuorum corpora condita*⁸⁰. However, that short sentence, *gabbaras ea vocant*, seems to have been a marginal note in the manuscripts and not part of the text of the

⁷⁸ T.S. Richter, 'Spoken' Sahidic. *Gleanings from non-Literary Texts*, «Lingua Aegyptia», 14 (2006), pp. 311-323.

⁷⁹ See e.g., Jablonski, *Opuscula* cit., vol. I pp. 59-61.

⁸⁰ See du Cange, s.v. 4, col. 003a (accessed online). The *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum* (CgL IV 240, 46) refers to eight attestations of the word collected in different glossaries, all from a common source.

sermon of Augustine. Some scribe or scholar must have added it at some time, perhaps with a text of Pliny in mind (*nat.* 7, 16, 74-75), which describes the body of a giant, also desiccated or mummified, brought from Arabia, and exhibited in the Sallustian gardens for being remarkably tall (nine feet). This giant, Pliny explains, bore the name Gabbara. At this point one wonders whether it is productive to try and explain this term in the context we have proposed for this paper.

3. *Conclusion*

The knowledge of some Egyptian terms in the monastic literature produced outside Egypt is an artefact of the interaction of these monastic establishments with the rest of the Mediterranean through travellers and pilgrims. The Coptic language, spoken and promoted in these monastic communities might also have received some interference from Latin in different contexts: one, through Greek in administrative documents that featured Latin loans from the administration and the military; two, through literature, such as, for example, the few loans appearing in the New Testament, including also Latin literature read in the monasteries; and three, through direct contact with travellers and pilgrims. The very few lexical tokens of this linguistic contact, words that most often appear only once in the corpus of literature, is very difficult to assess as a whole, since the individual cases present so many doubts and problems of interpretation. The sources are also not completely reliable, since many of these texts have been transmitted into the Middle Ages in manuscripts which often include corruptions and misinterpretations.

But one thing seems clear: there was linguistic contact and there was exchange between speakers of Latin and speakers of Coptic. The sources describe the linguistic context of the early monasteries in some detail. Texts were translated, even in both directions,

sometimes with the mediation of Greek, and sometimes perhaps without it. Travellers returned home to the West carrying a treasure of ascetic knowledge, ready to found their own communities and produce their foundational texts. Among that treasure, some lexical terms in Egyptian managed to slip into the Latin language of these monastic authors, either as specialised terms for monastic realities, which could have been learned during their visits, or as other terms read in translations. Often their knowledge of Egyptian ascetics was acquired through ways that are now lost to us, such as the language of the native guides who accompanied the pilgrims or the spoken Coptic of their fellow monks. This would explain the fact that many of these terms are otherwise unattested.

