

COPTIC LINGUISTICS 2008-2012

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1. COPTIC IN A CROSS-LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE: A NOTABLE ANNIVERSARY

Before stepping in the role of a chronicler on the most recent achievements in the field of Coptic linguistics, I want to take my run-up at a point as early as in 1862, and commemorate the 150th anniversary of an eminent, although widely forgotten achievement in that field: The appearance of the two linguistic essays *Abhandlung über den bau der thatwörter im Koptischen* [*Treatise on the formation of verbs in Coptic*], Göttingen 1861, and *Abhandlung über den zusammenhang des Nordischen (Türkischen), Mittelländischen, Semitischen und Koptischen sprachstamms* [*Treatise on the relation of the Nordic (Turkish), Mediterranean, Semitic, and Coptic language phylums*], Göttingen 1862. Their author was the Göttingen scholar Heinrich Ewald, Ludwig Stern's teacher, nowadays renowned for his work on Arabic and Hebrew, if at all.¹ In these two essays Ewald came to quite fare-reachig results.

First, Ewald challenged an article of faith of the linguists of his day — the hierarchy of languages. The “hegemonial discourse” *avant la lettre* underlying Oriental studies of the 19th century was exposed, and refused by Ewald for linguistic reasons and blamed for its ‘political’ consequences.

From the beginning of the 19th century classification of languages had rested upon a strongly hierarchical concept of language diversity, claiming the superiority of the Indoeuropean languages over all others, down to languages as incomparable with the Indoeuropean ones as insects with mammals, to quote a contemporary metaphor.² This concept was perpetuated throughout the 19th century by such influential linguists as the Schlegel brothers, Bopp, Schleicher and Steinthal, and it was shared by egyptologists such as Lepsius and Maspero. “How often”, Ewald wrote,

it has been, and is still heard, that one language, from its origins and by its unchangeable nature as it were, is more beautiful than the other, or one language family more

¹ Ewald did not receive an entry in H. STAMMERJOHANN (ed.), *Lexicon grammaticorum. Who's who in the history of world linguistics*, Tübingen 1996.

² For further details cf. T.S. RICHTER, *Early Encounters. Egyptian-Coptic and Comparative Linguistics in the Century from Schlegel to Fink*, in E. GROSSMAN – M. HASPELMATH – T.S. RICHTER (eds.), *Egyptian-Coptic linguistics in Typological Perspective (Empirical Approaches to Language Typology 55)*, Berlin-New York, de Gruyter Mouton, 2015.

perfect and more capable to higher development than the other, and that this or that language certainly deserves priority over all others.³

Against the *communis opinio* of his day, Ewald stated that

it does not seem right to praise one's own language, or one's own language family over all the others and, for instance, to agree with what is affirmed so often in our days, that the Indo-European ... languages were the most perfect ones from the beginning.⁴

Moreover, Ewald realized the ideological implications and the 'political', so to speak, consequences of such an approach:

If such an idea had firm ground, consequences would result therefrom which are both serious and sad in every respect, since language is the closest and most appropriate ... as well as most unchangeable expression of the peculiar human mind. Consequently, if a people, or an entire family of peoples, really possessed a considerably less worthy language from the very beginning, this would be the clearest evidence for the overall lesser talent of such a people, and one would be entitled to treat them accordingly; and what would result from therefrom, goes without saying.⁵

Against this, in his eyes, failing scientific approach, Ewald claims that

our recent linguistics is sufficiently advanced to reduce all these ideas into nothing. All languages and language families are completely equal in terms of their highest, and eventually their only concern: as a means of the perfectly clear expression of all thinkable thoughts of the human mind. Given the range of historical diversity, ... one language or language family may apply some of those means or matters (by which all of them eventually achieve the same goal) in a more elegantly proportioned, or more beautiful, or more perfect way; however, no single one holds all of these merits alone, and such readily despised languages as the ancient and modern African languages have, in several respects, significant merits over other, much higher esteemed ones.⁶

Ewald's example is taken from Egyptian-Coptic: "What advantages, for instance, has the Egyptian even by its most diverse but always precise and consistent ways to express what we can express only by 'and'!"⁷

³ Translated from H. EWALD, *Abhandlung über den bau der thatwörter im Koptischen* 1861, Göttingen 1861, p. 7.

⁴ Translated from EWALD 1861, p. 7; cf. also H. EWALD, *Abhandlung über den zusammenhang des Nordischen (Türkischen), Mittelländischen, Semitischen und Koptischen sprachstamms*, Göttingen 1862, p. 38-39: "Es schmeichelt heute sovielen sich schon ihrem blute nach (wie sie meinen) nur aus dem weitherrschenden stamme geboren zu fühlen dessen sprache und dessen volk weit alles überrage, mit keinem andern in einer wahren verwandtschaft stehe, und dem wohl gar noch dazu die weltherrschaft für alle zukunft sicher sei. Die sprachwissenschaft aber kann alle solche stolze vorurtheile nur in ihrer gänzlichen grundlosigkeit aufzeigen".

⁵ Translated from EWALD 1861, p. 7.

⁶ Translated from EWALD 1861, p. 7-8.

⁷ Translated from EWALD 1861, p. 8, n. 1.

Second, Ewald suggested a perspective on the comparison of languages regardless of their genealogical relation and quite different from common morphological typologies of contemporary comparative linguists. Such a perspective was spotted by him in the study of common tendencies of language change, “language forces” (“Sprachmächte”) as he called them. He argued that

everything in human language finally depends on certain forces which can be recognized and traced, and which are limited in number, ... but irresistible in their effect. Language forces is our word for those necessities that start working as soon as the mind, whatever somebody wants to express linguistically, does express by linguistic material actually. One can justly claim that a sound knowledge of these forces by means of the study and comparison of most diverse languages is the strongest lever of all linguistics; and neither a single language, nor human language as a whole can be subject to secure and fruitful knowledge without it.⁸

What Ewald, one century before Greenberg, thus claimed and tried to develop was a shared set of fundamental motivating factors working in languages and connecting them *typologically*, in other words, *universals and typological constraints of language change*, to put it in current terms.

To achieve this goal, Ewald argues that “all languages, even those being most remote to ours in terms of time and space, have to be taken into account with the same due care, and especially the hitherto most overlooked ones should eventually be studied most thoroughly.”⁹ To illustrate his argument, Ewald talks about Coptic, especially about a historical development that he finds unmistakably fossilised in Coptic: the change from, what he calls, “post-structuring” (“Hinterbau”) to “pre-structuring” (“Vorderbau”).

Taking a closer look at the overall formation of Coptic, there eventually occurs to us a phenomenon most significant for language history, that possibly in no other language has taken shape as perfect as in Coptic, which is however likewise instructive for all of them. Very distinctive traces lead us ... to the confident assumption that Coptic in its primeval times preferred post-structuring [“hinterbau”] of words. ... In Coptic this has almost faded away, but if observed more thoroughly, it still left many massive traces of its former dominance, and the more isolatedly dispersed, and the less evident they are, the more undoubtedly they reveal themselves as the most ancient components of that language.¹⁰

Residual evidence for the earlier dominance of post-structuring, “Hinterbau”, is identified by Ewald (1861, 16-18) in features of the formation of words, phrases and clauses such as:

- 1) the remains of verbal endings of the Coptic stative — the very forms that 20 years later Adolf Erman would trace to the inflectional pattern of an ancient perfect conjugation shared by Egyptian and the Semitic languages;

⁸ Translated from EWALD 1861, p. 9-10.

⁹ Translated from EWALD 1861, p. 11.

¹⁰ Translated from EWALD 1861, p. 15.

- 2) the remains of suffixed gender and number markers which, although in Coptic nothing but “isolatedly dispersed and disintegrated fragments of a once productive formation” (Ewald 1861, 16), must have originally been a shared feature of Egyptian and Semitic languages where they are still extant, as Ewald concludes;
- 3) the remains of suffixed possessive pronominals, another pattern shared with Semitic languages.

Among the much more frequent, and in Coptic only productive features of pre-structuring, “vorderbau”, “according to which the elements serving to specify the verbal or nominal basic lexemes are moved to the front”, Ewald (1861, 19-24) mentions phenomena such as:

- 1) the overall SV-order in the conjugation patterns;
- 2) word formation by prefixed compound elements, such as the nominal prefix **ΜΝΤ-** to form abstract nouns, and the prefix **ΡΕϚ-** to form agent nouns, as opposed to the transposition or derivation of lexemes by endings or word-internal morphological change;
- 3) the use of prepositions to indicate functional relations otherwise marked by case endings;
- 4) prefixed articles, and prefixed demonstrative and possessive markers, leading to what Ewald calls “word chain” (“Wortkette”), as opposed to suffixed, or postposed elements taking this range of functions;
- 5) prefixed conjugation bases, leading to what Ewald calls “clause chain” (“Satzkette”).

Ewald’s thoughts about the equality of languages and his conclusions about a systemic change from “Hinterbau” to “Vorderbau” in the history of the Egyptian language were immediately refused by contemporary linguists. And still, Ewald had seen right things the right way. His suggestions made in 1861-62 have become common wisdom today, and Ewald’s approach to look at Coptic under the perspective of what is now known as language typology has only recently been readopted in Coptology — the cue to turn to *recent* approaches in Coptic linguistics.

2. COPTIC LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE TYPOLOGY

Already on the International Congress of Egyptologists in 2000 at Cairo, Antonio Loprieno diagnosed a “typological turn” in Egyptian linguistics:

As for the language features that are being studied, there has been a rather dramatic shift in the general interests of Egyptian linguists from issues of syntax to issues of typology. ... This shift ... implies that features of the Egyptian language that

were previously considered within the frame of Egyptian itself are now read in the light of general trends in the history of human language, i.e. of what linguists call universals.¹¹

This shift holds true for Coptic linguistics too, and has been indicated by my predecessor Ewa Zakrzewska on the Cairo congress in 2008.¹² Shortly after this congress, in autumn 2008, a conference on Language Typology and Egyptian-Coptic linguistics was co-organized by the Egyptological Institute of the University of Leipzig and the Department of Linguistics of the Leipzig Max Planck Institute for evolutionary anthropology.¹³ The encounter between general and Coptic linguistics, or linguists, their mutual awareness, and re-gained competence, has a double impact on Coptic language study:

First, it changes our view on Coptic which does not longer appear to us only in the focused light of a Coptic grammatical tradition based on philological expertise, but in the adventitious light of expertise in languages and human language in general. Issues arise, such as, can a certain phenomenon, or a certain change in Egyptian-Coptic better be understood by comparing functional equivalents in other languages? Can a certain analysis of a Coptic construal claim more authority than an alternative one, in the light of cross-linguistic comparison? In general, can language typology inform Coptic linguistics? To be sure, Coptic scholars who were well-acquainted with contemporary linguistic thought have much contributed to the Coptic grammatical tradition for a long time: Suffice it to call names such as Hans-Jakob Polotsky, Fritz Hintze, Wolf-Peter Funk, or Ariel Shisha-Halevy. But only recently this approach has become a more wide-spread attitude, and has given way to the rise of a young generation of Coptic scholars who are at the same time linguists. Without any claim of being exhaustive, I name the work of Barbara Egedi, Åke Engsheden, Eitan Grossman, Chris Reintges, or Sami Uljas.

Second, this encounter might change general linguists' view on Coptic, or rather, make the Egyptian-Coptic language an issue to them at all, by raising questions such as, what common, rare, or unique features are to be found in Coptic; where does Coptic, typologically, behave like any language, or where does it have its own ways, and eventually, the question that Ewald asked, what can Coptic teach us about language(s)?

However, to let linguists profit from our achievements, it is necessary to provide them data in a way comprehensible to them, that is, in a way not requiring

¹¹ A. LOPRIENO, *Egyptian Linguistics in the Year 2000*, in ZAHÍ HAWASS (ed.), *Egyptology at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century. Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Egyptologists Cairo, 2000*, Vol. 3: *Language, Conservation, Museology*, Cairo-New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2003, p. 74.

¹² Cf. her report in this volume.

¹³ The proceedings of this conference are: GROSSMAN – HASPELMATH – RICHTER 2014 (see footnote 2).

readers who know Coptic morphology, syntax and vocabulary, or even Coptic script. A strategy established in general linguistics to accomplish that is to quote language examples not only in a phonetic transcription providing readers with a first analysis and division of sounds, morphemes and words of a given language, but accompanied by morphological glosses, giving them an idea of the function of those elements. A standard transliteration system for Coptic has recently been proposed by Eitan Grossman and Martin Haspelmath.¹⁴ A standard of grammatical glossing was established by the typologists of the Leipzig Max Planck institute for evolutionary anthropology, known as the Leipzig Glossing Rules.¹⁵ This standard has recently been adopted by Camilla Di Biase-Dyson, Frank Kammerzell, and Daniel Werning, and adapted to the needs of the Egyptian language.¹⁶ Grammatical glossing is becoming a common practice also in Coptic linguistic writing. I would like to encourage these attempts, and suggest a further standardization of the individual manners that usually differ not very much, at least at the level of abbreviations.

3. AREAS OF RECENT RESEARCH IN COPTIC LINGUISTICS

Phonology

For quite a while Coptic phonology seemed to be a fallow in the fields of Coptic linguistic study. The recent years however witnessed an new prosperity, and produced a rich yield. An in-depth study on the methodology of Coptic phonology and morphophonology is owed to Wolf-Peter Funk.¹⁷ Presented on the Jerusalem workshop in memory of H.J. Polotsky in 2001, it was long-awaited by those who knew of its existence. Building on the seminal article published by Fritz Hintze, his teacher, in *Enchoria* 1980, Funk enhanced Hintze's cross-dialectal trias Bohairic, Sahidic, Akhmimic by Fayyumic, Middle Egyptian, the Sub-Akhmimic dialects, and P.Bodmer VI, to get a refined set of rules underlying Coptic phonology and allophony. Another major contribution is Matthias Müllers' work on the adaptability of linguistic models to the phonological description of the Egyptian-Coptic phoneme inventory.¹⁸ Müller combines a

¹⁴ E. GROSSMAN – M. HASPELMATH, *The Leipzig-Jerusalem Transliteration of Coptic*, in GROSSMAN – HASPELMATH – RICHTER 2015.

¹⁵ <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>.

¹⁶ DI BIASE-DYSON – KAMMERZELL – WERNING 2009.

¹⁷ W.-P. FUNK, *Methodological Issues in the (Morpho)Phonological Description of Coptic*, in G. GOLDENBERG – A. SHISHA-HALEVY (eds.), *Egyptian, Semitic and General Grammar. Studies in Memory of H.J. Polotsky*, Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2009, p. 70-91.

¹⁸ M. MÜLLER, *Ägyptische Phonologie? Möglichkeiten und Grenzen linguistischer Modelle bei der Beschreibung einer extinkten Sprache*, in A. Verbovsek – B. Backes – C. Jones (eds.),

historical survey on the impact of junggrammarians, structural, and generative models of linguistic phonology on the phonological study of Egyptian with a very readable introduction to Egyptian-Coptic phonology itself. A number of contributions is owed to Carsten Peust.¹⁹ Peust's toolkit aimed at approximating Coptic phonemes includes an amazing range of approaches, such as the evidence of rhyme patterns, Arabic transcriptions of Egyptian toponyms, and typological considerations on consonant frequency. His results shed some light not only on Coptic phonology in a narrower sense, but also on the dialectal geography of Coptic literary dialects. An intriguing and challenging contribution to the phonology *and* the issue of phonetic realizations of Coptic sounds has been delivered by David Mihalyfy who made a case for allophonic voicing of Coptic obstruents in certain phonetic environments.²⁰

Morphology

Coptic morphology has been given some attention during the period under review. An exhaustive learning tool for Sahidic morphology has been provided by Gregory Sterling,²¹ in fact sometimes too exhaustive given the lacking evidence for some proposed forms. Aligned to the needs of the class room, it might have acquired some friends over the last three years. Sabrina Benjaballah and Chris Reintges dealt with the morphological pattern of reduplication in Egyptian-Coptic verbs,²² and Sami Uljas investigated the innovative form *pe* of the 2nd singular feminine pronoun.²³ A worthwhile area of morphological investigation are non-literary and de-standardized texts. Matthias Müller provided an exhaustive compilation of what he called, Future Five, the conjugation *ouaƣcwtm* exclusively attested in Theban documents,²⁴ and Carsten Peust

Methodik und Didaktik in der Ägyptologie. Herausforderungen eines kulturwissenschaftlichen Paradigmenwechsels in den Altertumswissenschaften (Ägyptologie und Kulturwissenschaft 4), München: Wilhelm Fink, p. 509-531.

¹⁹ C. PEUST, *On Consonant Frequency in Egyptian and Other Languages*, in *Lingua Aegyptia* 16 (2008), p. 105-134; ID., *Zur Aussprache des Eta im Koptischen nach dem Zeugnis spätbohairischer gereimter Texte*, in A. GIEWEKEMEYER – G. MOERS – K. WIDMAIER (eds.), *Liber amicorum. Jürgen Horn zum Dank (Göttinger Miscellen, Beiheft 5)*, Göttingen, 2009, p. 89-98; ID., *Zur Aussprache des Beta im Koptischen. Evidenz aus der Toponymie*, in *Lingua Aegyptia* 18 (2010), p. 209-215. ID., *Koptische Dialektologie anhand ägyptisch-arabischer Ortsnamen*, in *Göttinger Miscellen* 226 (2010), p. 77-90.

²⁰ D. MIHALYFY *Re-examining spelling and pronunciation in Coptic. A case for the intervocalic and post-nasal allophonic voicing of obstruents*, in *Le Muséon* 125 (2012), p. 267-306.

²¹ G.E. STERLING *Coptic Paradigms. A summary of Sahidic Coptic Morphology*, Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA: Peeters 2008.

²² S. BENJABALLAH – C.H. REINTGES *Ancient Egyptian Verbal Reduplication: Typology, diachrony and the morphology-syntax interface*, in *Morphology* 19/2 (2009), p. 135-157.

²³ S. ULJAS *The forms of the Coptic 2nd person feminine singular pronouns*, in *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 136 (2009), p. 173-188.

²⁴ M. MÜLLER *Futur V? Modales Futur in nicht-literarischen koptischen Texten aus der Thebais*, in *Lingua Aegyptia* 15 (2007), p. 67-92.

suggested a periphrastic construction **iwj=f r sdm* “he will come to hear” to be its etymology.²⁵ Anne Boud’hors studied the negative adverbial (consecutive, conditional) conjugation *ΜΝΤΕϚϚΩΤΜ* known from the same corpus²⁶ and she analyzed morphological variation in a 6th-century CE letter from Aphrodito.²⁷ Jenny Cromwell and Eitan Grossman dealt with the performative and the protatic *ϚϚΩΤΜ*,²⁸ and Eitan Grossman elaborated on the peculiar upper Egyptian conditional *ϚϚΩΝΤΕ* and the protatic *ϚϚΩΤΜ*.²⁹ The rewards of an intensified research in the intersection of Coptic papyrology and Coptic linguistics have been advertised already 20 years ago by Ariel Shisha-Halevy, and what he wrote by then holds true up to now: “Grammatical investigation of this area is still a future goal — perhaps the greatest challenge before Coptic linguistics today.”³⁰ While more and more scholars are getting interested in Coptic documentary texts, and thus confronted with their language, late (i.e., 10th-11th-century CE) Coptic documents are still in a blind spot, although their language gives the fullest experience of challenge. A PhD project at the University of Leipzig, Vincent Walter’s work on Coptic letters on paper, tries to open a gap not only into a still poorly known society, but also into a badly understood language that often gives us the embarrassing feeling of not knowing Coptic any more.

Higher-level linguistic structures

Syntax, pragmatics, and issues in textual linguistics have been studied mainly and appropriately in the aforementioned perspective of linguistic typology, by the aforementioned scholars. Barbara Egedi studied syntactic constraints of the distribution of different possessive constructions³¹ and the diachronic development and synchronic function, of the opposition between the expression of possessive and attributive relations³² in the Sahidic dialect. Åke Engsheden worked

²⁵ C. PEUST, *Zur Etymologie des koptischen Futur 5*, in *Göttinger Miszellen* 219 (2008), p. 7-8.

²⁶ A. BOUD’HORS, *La forme ΜΝΤΕ- en emploi non autonome dans les textes documentaires thébains*, in *Journal of Coptic Studies* 12 (2010), p. 67-80.

²⁷ A. BOUD’HORS, *Du copte dans les archives d’Apollôs*, in J.-L. FOURNET (ed.), *Les archives de Dioscore d’Aphrodité cent ans après leur découverte: histoire et culture dans l’Égypte byzantine: actes du colloque de Strasbourg (8-10 décembre 2005)*, Paris: De Boccard 2008, p. 67-76.

²⁸ J. CROMWELL – E. GROSSMAN, *Condition(al)s of Payment: P.CL.T 10 Reconsidered*, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 96 (2010), p. 149-160.

²⁹ E. GROSSMAN, *Protatic ϚϚΩΤΜ revisited*, in A. GRIEWEMEYER, G. MOERS, K. WIDMAIER (eds.), *Liber amicorum — Jürgen Horn zum Dank (Göttinger Miszellen Beihefte 5)*, Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie der Universität Göttingen, 2009, p. 47-56.

³⁰ A. SHISHA-HALEVY, entry “Sahidic”, in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol 8, New York 1991, p. 199.

³¹ B. EGEDI, *Possessive Constructions in Egyptian and Coptic. Distribution, Definiteness, and the construct state phenomenon*, in *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 137 (2010), p. 1-12.

³² B. EGEDI, *Attribution vs. Possession in Coptic. The Origin and Development of an Opposition*, in *Lingua Aegyptia* 17 (2009), p. 65-79.

on differential object marking.³³ Eitan Grossman studied Coptic preverbs, discussing their syntactic status and shedding light on the prehistory of this construction in Late Egyptian and Demotic.³⁴ He also dealt with types of arguments clauses such as ϵ -+infinitive, ϵ -+causative infinitive and others, arguing for their development from Egyptian, instead of Greek patterns,³⁵ and he investigated the periphrastic perfect $\alpha\theta\omicron\upsilon\omega \epsilon\tau\epsilon\omega\tau\mu$ in terms of the grammaticalization process underlying its rise.³⁶ Matthias Müller studied the diachronic and functional distribution of concessive constructions in Sahidic and their typological behaviour.³⁷ Chris Reintges worked on coordination and clause chaining,³⁸ on grammatical particles, as he categorized a word class consisting of what is usually treated as conjugation bases and converters,³⁹ and on morphological and syntactic properties related to the analyticity of Coptic.⁴⁰ Ariel Shisha-Halevy investigated converbs,⁴¹ conversion and clause ordination,⁴² and the usage of two particles in Shenoute's rhetorical syntax.⁴³ Sami Uljas showed

³³ Å. ENGSHEDE, *Differential Object Marking in Coptic*, in F. JOSEPHSON – I. SÖHRMAN (eds.), *Forms and Functions: Aspect, Tense, Mood, Diathesis and Valency. Proceedings of the first Colloquium on Language Typology in a Diachronical Perspective held at Göteborg University, 19th-21st November 2004 (Studies in Language Companion Series 103)*, Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2008, p. 323-344.

³⁴ E. GROSSMAN, *Nucleus-Satellite Analysis and Conjugation Mediation in Coptic and Later Egyptian*, in *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 135 (2008), p. 16-29.

³⁵ E. GROSSMAN, *Argument Clauses in Sahidic Coptic*, in *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 136 (2009), p. 19-33.

³⁶ E. GROSSMAN, *Periphrastic Perfects in the Coptic Dialects. A Case Study in Grammaticalization*, in *Lingua Aegyptia* 17 (2009), p. 81-118.

³⁷ M. MÜLLER, *Contrast in Coptic I. Concessive Constructions in Sahidic*, in *Lingua Aegyptia* 17 (2009), p. 139-182.

³⁸ C.H. REINTGES, *A descriptive analysis of the Coptic conjunctive conjugation*, in S. VÖLLMIN – AZEB AMHA ET AL., *Converbs, Medial Verbs, Clause Chaining and Related Issues*, in *Frankfurter Afrikanistische Blätter* 19 (2007), p. 163-184; C.H. REINTGES, *Coordination, Converbs and Clause Chaining in Coptic. Typology and structural analysis*, in I. BRIL (ed.), *Clause Linking and Clause Hierarchy. Syntax and Pragmatics (Studies in Language Companion Series 121)*, Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2010, p. 203-265.

³⁹ C.H. REINTGES, *High analyticity and Coptic particle syntax. A phase-based approach*, in *The Linguistics Review* 28 (2011), p. 533-599.

⁴⁰ C.H. REINTGES, *Macroparametric change and the synthetic-analytic dimension. The Case of Ancient Egyptian*, in C. GALVES – S. CYRINO – R. LOPES – F. SANDALO – J. AVELAR (eds.), *Parameter Theory and Linguistic Change*, Oxford: OUP, 2011, p. 132-156 and also C.H. REINTGES, *High analyticity and Coptic particle syntax. A phase-based approach*, in *The Linguistics Review* 28 (2011), p. 533-599.

⁴¹ A. SHISHA-HALEVY, *A note on converbs in Egyptian and Coptic*, in CH.G. HÄBERL (ed.), *Afroasiatic Studies in Memory of Robert Hetzron*, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2009, p. 95-105.

⁴² A. SHISHA-HALEVY, *On Conversion, Clause Ordination and Related Notions. Some Reflections on General and Polotskian Models*, in G. GOLDENBERG – A. SHISHA-HALEVY (eds.), *Egyptian, Semitic and General Grammar. Studies in Memory of H.J. Polotsky*, Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2009, p. 92-105.

⁴³ A. SHISHA-HALEVY, *Work-notes on Shenoute's rhetorical syntax: $\epsilon\omega\chi\epsilon$ and $\lambda\pi\alpha$ — suspension of disagreement, irony and reductio ad absurdum*, in A. GIEWEKEMEYER – G. MOERS –

how left dislocation of adverbials could serve to disambiguate meaning, by including them in, or excluding them from the scope of an operator.⁴⁴ More suggesting than concluding, Anne Boud'hors and Ariel Shisha-Halevy offered examples from non-literary and Shenoutian Sahidic and other dialectal varieties for “unexpected” occurrences of the stative (in adnexal extension and in a deverbal adjective role) and of the element $\tau\epsilon$ (as non-referential copular element in nominal sentences).⁴⁵ Ewa Zakrzewska and Ariel Shisha-Halevy contributing to a volume on Narratives in Egypt and the Ancient Near East, dealt with the narrative language of Bohairic martyrdoms,⁴⁶ and Shenoute's rhetorical narratives.⁴⁷

Lexicography

Several aspect of the Coptic Lexicon have been studied: An plain onomasiological approach is taken in Sohair Ahmed's list of Coptic professions and titles.⁴⁸ Semantic and/or etymological investigation into single lexical items has been conducted by several scholars.⁴⁹ Lexicographical approaches to the loan

K. WIDMAIER (eds.), *Liber Amicorum: Jürgen Horn zum Dank* (Göttinger Miszellen Beihefte 5), Göttingen 2009, p. 113-129.

⁴⁴ S. ULJAS, *On adverbial ante-position and operator scope in Coptic*, in *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 139 (2012), p. 93-102.

⁴⁵ A. BOUD'HORS – A. SHISHA-HALEVY, *Two Remarkable Features of Coptic Syntax. (I) The Circumstantial Stative. (II) The Neutric Copular $\tau\epsilon$ in Nominal Sentence patterns*, in *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 139 (2012), p. 105-112.

⁴⁶ E. ZAKRZEWSKA, *Masterplots and Martyrs. Narrative Techniques in Bohairic hagiography*, in F. HAGEN – J. JOHNSTON – W. MONKHOUSE – K. PIQUETTE – J. TAIT – M. WORTHINGTON (eds.), *Narratives of Egypt and the Ancient Near East (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 189)*, Leuven: Peeters 2011, p. 499-524.

⁴⁷ A. SHISHA-HALEVY, *Rhetorical narratives, tableaux, and scenarios: work-notes on narrative poetics in Shenoutean Sahidic Coptic*, in F. HAGEN – J. JOHNSTON – W. MONKHOUSE – K. PIQUETTE – J. TAIT – M. WORTHINGTON (eds.), *Narratives of Egypt and the Ancient Near East (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 189)*, Leuven: Peeters 2011, p. 451-498.

⁴⁸ SOHAIR S. AHMED, *Professions, Trades, Occupations, and Titles in Coptic (Alphabetically), part 1*, in *Journal of Coptic Studies* 12 (2010), p. 115-148; SOHAIR S. AHMED, *Professions, Trades, Occupations, and Titles in Coptic (Alphabetically), part 2*, in *Journal of Coptic Studies* 13 (2011), p. 183-212.

⁴⁹ A. BOUD'HORS, *Le «scapulaire» et la mélote: nouvelles attestations dans les textes coptes*, in A. BOUD'HORS – C. LOUIS (eds.), *Études coptes XI, Treizième journée d'études (Marseille, 7-9 juin 2007) (Cahiers de la Bibliothèque copte 17)*, Paris: De Boccard, 2010, p. 65-79; M. BROSE, *Der koptische Ausdruck $\tau\eta\alpha=\tau\eta\epsilon$ - «wollen»*, in *Göttinger Miszellen* 225 (2010), p. 27-37; J. KRAMER, *Zur Wortgeschichte von Gummi*, in *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 57 (2011), p. 62-64; J. MONTERRAT-TORRENTS, *Voies de travers ($\mu\alpha\lambda\chi\iota\omicron\pi\epsilon$) dans les textes manichéens coptes*, in A. BOUD'HORS – C. LOUIS (eds.), *Études coptes X, Douzième journée d'études (Lyon, 19-21 mai 2005) (Cahiers de la Bibliothèque copte 16)*, Paris: De Boccard, 2008, p. 285-292; M. MÜLLER, *Spatial frames of reference in Egyptian. Diachronic evidence for Left/Right patterns*, in E. GROSSMAN, S. POLIS – J. WINAND (eds.), *Lexical semantics in Ancient Egyptian (Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica)*, Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie, 2012, p. 347-378; N.A. PEDERSEN, *The term $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$ in Manichaean texts*, in C.H. BULL ET AL. (eds.), *Mystery and Secrecy in the Nag Hammadi Collection and Other Ancient Literature: Ideas*

vocabulary of Coptic failed three times during the 20th century. Since April 2010, a project named *Database and Dictionary of Greek Loanwords in Coptic (DDGLC)* is hosted by the Egyptological Institute of the University of Leipzig.⁵⁰ The DDGLC project aims at a systematic, comprehensive and detailed lexicographical compilation and description of Greek loanwords as attested in the entire Coptic corpus through all dialects and types of text. Its outcome is intended to be provided both in an online database and in a printed dictionary. Since autumn 2012 the DDGLC project is funded by the *German Research Foundation* as a long-term project with a foreseen lifetime up until 2024. In fall 2015 the upmost layer of the DDGLC database, the Greek lemma list, included more than 5.300 Greek words borrowed into Egyptian instantiated by ca. 58.000 tokens. This project on loanword lexicography eventually leads me to:

Contact linguistics

This field was in fact the most productive area in Coptic linguistics during the period under review; more than 20 bibliographical entries, among them several volumes, are concerned with Coptic as a language in contact mainly with Greek, but also with Arabic. In the most of them a sociolinguistic approach is taken, explicitly or implicitly asking, who used which language to speak, or write, to whom in what situation? Handbook entries on the topic have been delivered by Sofia Torallas Tovar⁵¹ and Jean-Luc Fournet⁵². A volume on *The multilingual experience [in] Egypt from the Ptolemies to the 'Abbāsids*, edited by Arietta Papaconstantinou, contains a number of articles concerning Coptic in contact with other languages, authored by Anne Boud'hors,⁵³ Sarah Clackson,⁵⁴ Arietta

and Practices. Festschrift for Einar Thomassen, Leiden: Brill, 2011, p. 133-143; J.-M. ROSENSTIEHL, *Brève remarque sur un hypothétique mot gréco-copte*, in *Journal of Coptic Studies* 11 (2009), p. 151-155; H. SATZINGER, *The Etymology of Coptic 'Ashes': Chadic or Nostratic?*, in G. TAKÁCS (ed.), *Semito-Hamitic Festschrift for A. B. Dolgopolsky and H. Jungraithmayr*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2008, p. 265-271; K.Th. ZAUZICH *Eine folgenreiche Etymologie: demotisch hwtn > koptisch ροοϣτν*, in H. KNUF – CH. LEITZ – D. VON RECKLINGHAUSEN (eds.), *Honi soit qui mal y pense. Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heinz-Josef Thissen*, Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010, p. 617-627; Id., *Was bedeutet das koptische Wort ΜΑΝΚΑΡΕΝΙΤΕ?*, in *Enchoria* 32 (2010/2011), p. 142-143.

⁵⁰ Cf. <<http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~ddglc/>>. In fall 2015 the DDGLC project moved to Berlin to the Egyptological Seminar of the Free University.

⁵¹ S. TORALLAS TOVAR, *Greek in Egypt*, in E. BAKKER (ed.), *Blackwell's Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, Oxford, 2009, p. 253-266.

⁵² J.-L. FOURNET, *The multilingual environment of Late Antique Egypt: Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Persian documentation*, in R.S. BAGNALL (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, Oxford: UP, 2009, p. 418-451.

⁵³ A. BOUD'HORS, *Toujours honneur au grec? À propos d'un papyrus gréco-copte de la région thébaine*, in A. PAPACONSTANTINO (ed.) *The multilingual experience: Egypt from the Ptolemies to the 'Abbāsids*, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010, p. 179-188.

⁵⁴ S. CLACKSON, *Coptic or Greek? Bilingualism in the Papyri*, in A. PAPACONSTANTINO (ed.), *The multilingual experience: Egypt from the Ptolemies to the 'Abbāsids*, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010, p. 73-104.

Papaconstantinou,⁵⁵ Sofía Torallas Tovar,⁵⁶ and the present author⁵⁷. Jean-Luc Fournet edited the proceedings of an international colloquium on Dioscorus of Aphrodito,⁵⁸ the famous Greek-Coptic bilingual notary and protagonist of bilingual practice in the field of legal documents. Ian Rutherford scrutinized the famous 2nd-century demotic ostraca of Narmouthis with regard to the evidence they bear for an advanced stage of linguistic borrowing into pre-Coptic Egyptian and for the issue of bilingualism in 2nd-century Egypt.⁵⁹ Arietta Papaconstantinou worked on the archive of Dioscorus under the perspective of bilingualism in 6th-century Egypt⁶⁰. Based on his PhD at Macquarie University on loanword integration in 4th-century Coptic texts, Mathew Almond delivered a groundbreaking article on the integration of Greek loaned verbs in early Coptic literary dialects.⁶¹ Everybody working on Greek loanwords in Coptic knows the series of articles published by Anba Gregorius in the *Bulletin de la Société d'archéologie copte* over a period of 40 years until his death in 2001. The source of these articles was a PhD which he had done with Walter Till at Manchester in 1955. This work has been edited recently, the original English version being accompanied by an Arabic translation.⁶² Another book, Andrea Hasznos' PhD on Greek and Coptic Clause Patterns,⁶³ appeared just a few weeks before the Rome congress. Hasznos enters a debate that started as early as in 1871 with Gaston Maspero's pioneering study on the diachrony of Egyptian conjugations,⁶⁴

⁵⁵ A. PAPACONSTANTINO, *The multilingual experience: Egypt from the Ptolemies to the 'Abbāsids*, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company 2010.

⁵⁶ S. TORALLAS TOVAR, *Linguistic Identity in Greco-Roman Egypt*, in A. PAPACONSTANTINO (ed.), *The multilingual experience: Egypt from the Ptolemies to the 'Abbāsids*, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010, p. 17-43.

⁵⁷ T.S. RICHTER, *Language choice in the Qurra papyri*, in A. PAPACONSTANTINO (ed.), *The multilingual experience: Egypt from the Ptolemies to the 'Abbāsids*, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010, p. 189-219.

⁵⁸ J.-L. FOURNET, *Les archives de Dioscore d'Aphrodite cent ans après leur découverte: histoire et culture dans l'Égypte byzantine: actes du colloque de Strasbourg (8-10 décembre 2005)*, Paris: De Boccard 2008.

⁵⁹ I. RUTHERFORD, *Bilingualism in Roman Egypt? Exploring the Archive of Papyrus of Narmuthis*, in T. EVENS – D. OBBINK (eds.), *The Language of the Papyri*, Oxford UP, 2010, p. 198-207.

⁶⁰ A. PAPACONSTANTINO, *Dioscore et le bilinguisme dans l'Égypte du VI^e siècle*, in J.-L. FOURNET (ed.), *Les archives de Dioscore d'Aphrodite cent ans après leur découverte. Histoire et culture dans l'Égypte byzantine. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg (8-10 décembre 2005)*, Paris: De Boccard, 2008, p. 77-88.

⁶¹ M. ALMOND, *Language Change in Greek Loaned Verbs*, in *Lingua Aegyptia* 18 (2010), p. 19-31.

⁶² GIRGIS, WAHEEB ATALLA, *Greek Words in Coptic Usage*. Ed. by Monier Atia. Cairo: Egyptian Printing Co 2010.

⁶³ A. HASZNOS, *Graeco-Coptica. Greek and Coptic Clause Patterns* (*Göttinger Orientalforschungen* IV/52), Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2012.

⁶⁴ G. MASPERO, *Des formes de la conjugaison en égyptien antique, en démotique et en copte*. Paris 1871, p. 123: "L'affaiblissement progressif et la chute de l'auxiliaire préformatif produisent même, dans le copte, des formes apocopées où le pronom personnel, placé en affixe, joue le rôle

and went on through the 20th century with contributions by Lefort,⁶⁵ Polotsky,⁶⁶ Nagel,⁶⁷ Reintges,⁶⁸ Grossman⁶⁹ and others: The issue to what extent language contact with Greek had an impact on the syntax of Coptic. Hasznos made her argument on the basis of a comparison of clause sentences from translated Coptic texts and from original Coptic compositions. Her conclusion is that such an influence is actually traceable, although it does not exceed the constraints of Coptic syntax.⁷⁰ More intensely than in previous times, Coptic language contact with Arabic has been dealt with recently. Co-authored by two Coptologists and two Arabists, bilingual Coptic-Arabic private letters have been edited and discussed the first time.⁷¹ My own work on Arabic loanwords in Coptic led me to studies on language choice in the Qurra papyri⁷² and on the arabization of Egypt⁷³. The latter topic has been dealt with also by Jason Zaborowski,⁷⁴ and Arietta Papaconstantinou.⁷⁵ A case of grammatical borrowing from Coptic into Egyptian Arabic has been proposed by Christopher Lucas and Elliott Lash.⁷⁶

d'une véritable flexion. *La nécessité de traduire en langue égyptienne des textes grecs où la distinction des modes est généralement marquée, amène même les auteurs coptes à choisir certaines formes de leur langue pour rendre certains modes du Grec et prépare ainsi les voies à la création des modes*".

⁶⁵ L.-TH. LEFORT, *Gréco-Copte*, in M. MALININE (ed.), *Coptic studies in honor of Walter Ewing Crum (The Bulletin of the Byzantine Institute 2)*, Boston, 1950, p. 65-71.

⁶⁶ H.-J. POLOTSKY, *Modes grecs en copte?*, in M. MALININE, *Coptic studies in honor of Walter Ewing Crum*, Boston: The Byzantine Institute 1950, p. 73-90.

⁶⁷ P. NAGEL, *Die Einwirkung des Griechischen auf die Entstehung der koptischen Literatursprache*, in F. ALTHEIM – R. STIEHL (eds.), *Christentum am Roten Meer*, Berlin-New York, 1971, p. 327-355.

⁶⁸ CH. REINTGES, *Code-mixing strategies in Coptic Egyptian*, in *Lingua Aegyptia* 9 (2000), p. 193-237; ID., *Coptic Egyptian as a Bilingual Language Variety*, in P. BÁDENAS DE LA PEÑA – S. TORALLAS TOVAR – E.R. LUJÁN (eds.) *Lenguas en contacto: el testimonio escrito*, Madrid, 2004, p. 69-86.

⁶⁹ E. GROSSMAN *Argument Clauses in Sahidic Coptic*, in *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 136 (2009), p. 19-33.

⁷⁰ A. HASZNOS, *Graeco-Coptica. Greek and Coptic Clause Patterns (Göttinger Orientforschungen IV/52)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2012, p. 78.

⁷¹ A. DELATTRE ET AL., *Écrire en arabe et en copte. Le cas de deux lettres bilingues*, in *Chronique d'Égypte* 2012, p. 170-188.

⁷² T.S. RICHTER, *Language choice in the Qurra papyri*, in A. PAPACONSTANTINO (ed.), *The multilingual experience: Egypt from the Ptolemies to the 'Abbāsids*, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010, p. 189-219.

⁷³ T.S. RICHTER, *Greek, Coptic, and the 'Language of the Hijra'. Rise and Decline of the Coptic Language in Late Antique and Medieval Egypt*, in H. COTTON – R. HOYLAND – J. PRICE – D.J. WASSERSTEIN (eds.), *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East*, Cambridge: CUP, 2009, p. 402-446.

⁷⁴ J.A. ZABOROWSKI, *From Coptic to Arabic in Medieval Egypt*, in *Medieval Encounters* 14 (2008), p. 15-40.

⁷⁵ A. PAPACONSTANTINO, *Why did Coptic fail where Aramaic succeeded? Linguistic developments in Egypt and the Near East after the Arab conquest*, in A. MULLEN – P. JAMES (eds.), *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*, Cambridge: CUP, 2012, p. 58-76.

⁷⁶ C. LUCAS – E. LASH, *Contact as catalyst: The case for Coptic influence in the development of Arabic negation*, in *Journal of Linguistics* 46 (2010), p. 379-413.

Coptic-Arabic language Contact involves two philologies that used to work separately. Scholars such as Ofer Livne-Kafri⁷⁷ and Marie Legendre⁷⁸ who are fully competent in both of them started looking at Arabic-Coptic linguistic interference from either side. Last, but not least, a conference held at the University of Leipzig in spring 2010 was dedicated to *Linguistic Borrowing into Coptic*.⁷⁹

4. OUTLOOK

It has become common practice in the plenary reports not just to review work that has recently been done, but also to address, or to suggest work that ought to be done. I already mentioned my opinion about grammatical glossing, my impression that documentary Coptic very much deserves, and late documentary Coptic desperately needs some more linguistic investigation. There is one further issue that, as I feel, should be brought up.

In future linguistic work, digital corpora will apparently play an increasingly important role. Not only allow digital text corpora to address issues that used to be dealt with before, on a broader and more regular basis of evidence, they also allow to address a range of issues that could not properly be dealt with by traditional means, in particular issues connected with token frequency. Also for Coptic linguistics, coherent searchable electronic data will become more and more important, and we should seriously envisage the development of a full text database of Coptic. I am not in doubt about the impossibility to create such a thing in a single stroke. But I am also aware of already existing efforts to create tagged electronic language data of Coptic single texts or sub-corpora:

⁷⁷ O. LIVNE-KAFRI, *A note on the energicus in a Coptic-Arabic translation of the Pentateuch*, in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 62 (4) (2009), p. 405-411; ID., *Some notes on the vocabulary in a Coptic-Arabic translation of the Pentateuch (Al-Karmil. Studies in Arabic Language and Literature* 30), 2009, p. 17-28; ID., *Between Arabic and Coptic in a bilingual ms. of the Pentateuch. The case of La'alla*, in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 64 (2), 2011, p. 201-208.

⁷⁸ Cf. M. LEGENDRE, *Perméabilité linguistique et anthroponymique entre copte et arabe: Exemple de comptes en caractères coptes du Fayoum fatimide, en Annexe: Répertoire des anthroponymes arabes attestés dans les documents coptes*, in A. BOUD'HORS – A. DELATTRE – C. LOUIS – T.S. RICHTER (eds.), *Coptica Argentoratensia, Conférences et documents de la 3e université d'été en papyrologie copte (Bibliothèque d'Etude Coptes)*, Paris (in press).

⁷⁹ <<http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~egyptol/borrowing/main.html>>. The proceedings will be published soon: P. DILS – E. GROSSMAN – T.S. RICHTER – W. SCHENKEL, *Greek Influence on Egyptian Coptic. Contact-Induced Change in an Ancient African Language*. DDGLC Working Papers 1 (*Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica*).

- Tito Orlandi's *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* provides not only the most comprehensive list of Coptic literary texts available by now, but offers a stock of electronic editions of Sahidic texts.
- In his admirable editorial and lexicographical work over the last decades, Wolf-Peter Funk accumulated a wealth of Coptic electronic data from almost all dialect corpora.
- Two academy projects in Germany will include the compilation of digital Coptic language data at large scale: the successor of the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* project of the Academies of Berlin and Leipzig,⁸⁰ and the Göttingen Coptic Septuagint project⁸¹.
- The Münster Institute for New Testament Text Research with Siegfried Richter as Coptologist in-charge started to digitalize New Testament texts.
- An initiative called SoSol invites and encourages scholars to enter Coptic documentary texts into the Duke database.⁸²
- In general, whenever somebody types a Coptic text in a coherent way, a little step towards the direction of a Coptic full text corpus has been done, given that exchangeable formats are used.
- Eventually there are endeavors towards optical character recognition (OCR) for Coptic under way that could facilitate such work tremendously.

My question, rather than suggestion, is: How far is it possible to integrate all these approaches, big and small ones, into one structure, given the range of different technical and conceptual standards, and the limited resources of time and money?

Post scriptum

A brainstorming on issues relating to this future task, the first *Workshop on Digital and Computational Scholarship in the Coptic language*, was organized by Carolyne Schroeder and Amir Zeldes and has taken place on 14 May 2013 at Berlin: Carolyne Schroeder and Amir Zeldes also started the digital project *Coptic Scriptorium* (<http://coptic.pacific.edu>) which provides a platform for interdisciplinary and computational research in texts in the Coptic (Sahidic) language and is by now the technically and conceptually most advanced approach to the generation of Coptic electronic text.

⁸⁰ This project, named *Strukturen und Transformationen des altägyptischen Wortschatzes*, has got approval shortly after the Rome congress and started working on 1 January 2013.

⁸¹ The Union of German Academies has principally given approval to this project in April 2014; in all probability it started working in 2015.

⁸² <www.papyri.info/dbdp>, the Coptic branch being supervised by Alain Delattre, Jenny Cromwell and Maria Jesus Albaran.

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