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ORIENTALIA LOVANIENSIA

ANALECTA

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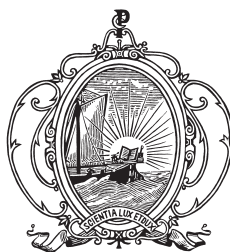
# COPTIC SOCIETY, LITERATURE AND RELIGION FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO MODERN TIMES

Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of  
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Volume II

edited by

PAOLA BUZI, ALBERTO CAMPLANI and  
FEDERICO CONTARDI



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RE-EDITING “THE CORRESPONDENCE OF PETER III MONGUS,  
PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA, AND ACACIUS,  
PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE”  
(CODEX VATICAN COPT. 62, FF. 62R-89R)  
A PRELIMINARY REPORT\*

Matthias MÜLLER

The Coptic text of the correspondence between Peter III. Mongus, Patriarch of Alexandria and Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople (clavis 0313 [CG5499]), was edited in the early days of modern Coptology by Émile Amélineau in the first part of his *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> siècles* in 1888.<sup>1</sup> Amélineau himself had not been able to consult the original manuscript, as he notes in his introduction but had to use a copy made by Rafael Tuki. Since then, however, the text has not attracted much scholarly interest. This was, on one hand, possibly due to the general suspicion over the accuracy of Amélineau's editions, especially given his reliance upon the copy of Tuki. On the other hand the general refusal to accept the text as real historical letters by Peter and Acacius, as proposed by scholars such as Amélineau,<sup>2</sup> Bardenhewer<sup>3</sup> or Cramer & Bacht,<sup>4</sup> will have added to the almost complete neglect. Only recently, the text resurfaced in the scholarly discussion as exemplified by the works of Phillippe Blaudeau<sup>5</sup> and Alberto Camplani.<sup>6</sup>

\* The author would like to express his gratitude to Jennifer Cromwell/Sydney and Sami Uljas/Uppsala for their helpful comments on drafts of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> E. AMÉLINEAU, *Monuments pour servir à l'histoire de l'Égypte chrétienne aux IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> siècles (Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission Archéologique Française au Caire IV/1)*, Cairo, 1888, p. 196-228. Amélineau's work was a reaction to a French translation published without the Coptic text by Eugene Revillout (*Le premier schisme de Constantinople. Acace et Pierre Monge*, in *Revue des Questions Historiques* 22 [1877], p. 83-134). Earlier still, the titles of the separate letters had been cited in Zoëga's catalogue, see G. ZOËGA, *Catalogus codicum Copticornum manu scriptorum qui in Museo Borgiano Velitris adservantur*, Rome, 1810, p. 97-99, sub LIII.

<sup>2</sup> AMÉLINEAU, *Monuments*, p. LXXI-XLVI.

<sup>3</sup> O. BARDENHEWER, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur IV: Das 5. Jahrhundert mit Einschluß der syrischen Literatur des 4. Jahrhunderts*, Freiburg i. Brg., 1913, p. 82-83.

<sup>4</sup> M. CRAMER, H. BACHT, *Der antichalkedonische Aspekt im historisch-biographischen Schrifttum des koptischen Monophysiten (6.-7. Jahrhundert). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Entstehung der monophysitischen Kirche Ägyptens*, in A. GRILLMAIER, H. BACHT (eds.), *Das Konzil von Chalkedon II: Entscheidung um Chalkedon*, Würzburg, 1953, p. 324.

<sup>5</sup> Ph. BLAUDEAU, *Alexandrie et Constantinople (451-491). De l'histoire à la géo-ecclésiologie (Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 327)*, Rome, 2006, p. 375-379.

<sup>6</sup> A. CAMPLANI, in *Adamantius* 14 (2008), p. 578-585.

Occasional reference to our text as it appears in Amélineau's edition can be found in Crum's *Coptic Dictionary* (sub *Miss 4* followed by a reference to the respective page between the numbers 196 and 228). This seems to point to the fact that Crum apparently had no access to the original as well, as when he did he quotes Va plus codex number followed by the page number. I am unaware of any discussion of features from our texts specifically in any of the — few as there are — grammatical treatments of Bohairic. The reason behind this lies certainly in the objections expressed against Nitrian Bohairic by Coptological grammarians, such as Ludwig Stern's infamous note 1 on pages 408 and 9,<sup>7</sup> which were prevalent until only recently when Ariel Shisha-Halevy argued for contrastive studies of Nitrian Bohairic.<sup>8</sup>

The current project, hoping to amend the situation, started from reading the text in search for examples for the Basel *Diachronic grammar of Egyptian & Coptic* project; specifically it began by stumbling over a pattern to be discussed later on that struck me as rather un-Coptic. However, as my expertise is rather limited when it comes to ancient church history or even simply ancient history I have asked for help from more prolific colleagues. One of them will be *Philippe Blaudeau* of the *Université d'Angers* who agreed to write a chapter on the church historical issues of that text the other being *Edward Watts* of *Indiana University* who agreed to write a chapter on the historical background and implications. This collaborative project is still in its formative stages, without a projected completion date.

The text is divided into fifteen parts, being mainly letters exchanged between Peter III. Mongus, Coptic pope from 477 to his death in 490 AD and the patriarch of Alexandria in 477 and from 482 to 490, and Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople from 471 until his death in 489. Eight of the letters have been sent by Peter, six by Acacius. In addition, parts of the *Henoticon* issued by the emperor Zeno have been inserted between the sixth letter of Peter and the fifth letter of Acacius.<sup>9</sup> The incipit of our text calls them:

These are the letters between Abba Peter and Acacius, the archbishop of Constantinople when he repented,

pointing already towards the direction the story is supposed to go.

<sup>7</sup> L. STERN, *Koptische Grammatik*, Leipzig, 1880.

<sup>8</sup> A. SHISHA-HALEVY, *Topics in Coptic Syntax: Structural Studies in the Bohairic Dialect* (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 160), Leuven, Paris & Dudley/MA 2007, p. 21-22. See also E. GROSSMANN, *Worknotes on the Syntax of Nitrian Bohairic. A hitherto unnoticed circumstantial conversion*, in N. BOSSON (ed.), *Actes du Huitième Congrès International d'Études Coptes, Paris, 28 juin – 3 juillet 2004* (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 163/II), Leuven, 2004, p. 711-726.

<sup>9</sup> These parts are referred to by Roman numbers in this text (as well as in the prospective edition), while the following Arabic numeral designates the paragraph within the respective part following the textual segmentation by the manuscript itself.

It was Peter who sent the first letter. In it we are told that he is still in hiding, hence the letter would date before 482, when he receives a report by his deacon Julian that the latter had been summoned to Acacius' chambers after evenfall and had been told by Acacius to visit Peter on his behalf for he, Acacius, would be willing to repent and to renounce Chalcedon. Peter's letter now asks for confirmation of these facts by Acacius himself.

Immediately following is the second letter by Peter. Although he had received Acacius' answer he did not open it due to deprecation of the styling of the address on its outside saying:

Give it to the holy Abba Peter, the archbishop of Alexandria and patriarch, from Acacius, the archbishop of Constantinople (II.3).

Apparently mortally offended the Alexandrian cleric is enraged over Acacius' mutual designation of archbishop. The text thus seems to insinuate an involvement of Acacius into Peter's dismissal from office by the emperor in 477. In the end Peter drops a few insults himself and sends the letter back to Acacius still unopened.

Acacius' answer to this epistle of fury counted as his letter and tries to sooth Peter by affirming his wish to repent, likening himself to St Peter who had denied the Lord. He begs Peter to accept him in his repentance, even if that means that Acacius would be a layman. He copies again the text of the letter Peter had sent back unread at the end of this letter stating that the darkness of unbelief has veiled the world. He calls out to Peter to leave his refuge and plea to God to forgive those who pursued him.

Peter answers with his third letter confessing his consternation as he sees himself unable to loosen the sin Acacius and his ilk have brought upon themselves. Leaving again a few insults in passing, he advises Acacius to turn to the Lord Christ instead. He nevertheless utters the wish that the angels might appeal to the Lord

to send a drop of mercy upon you and the guileless people led astray by a vain priest (IV.18).

He ends with the words:

Now this I do not cease to counsel you as a sinner, so that you might not delay in beseeching God whom you denied, through his saints so that he may convert you, have pity on you and save you (IV.19).

Acacius now expresses his eagerness to anathematize the Tome of Leo and the Council of Chalcedon at once. He, however, tries to guilt-trip Peter, should he refuse to accept their wish for repentance.

Peter again rebuffs Acacius, yet assures him that he will indeed not requite evil with evil. He points out to Acacius that by renouncing the Tome of Leo

he would as well be anathematizing his fathers, i.e. predecessors, who subscribed it and he finally also anathematized himself so that he would be a layman now.

Acacius confirms to Peter in his third letter that he is fully aware of the self-anathematizing. He then urges Peter to liken himself to Moses and cry to the Lord on his behalf. He ends with the words:

For now again I anathematize the Council of Chalcedon and in repenting I shout: “I sinned, O Lord, I sinned! Forgive me, this sinner!” (VII.19).

In his answer, Peter admits to be in distress for if he does not accept the repentance he would be

liable to be cast into the impious heresy of the Valentinians who do not accept repentance (VIII.3).

He then goes on to say:

Now then, listen to a dispensation of God: Accept a punishment from me in forty days of repentance. And take an excuse of an illness whilst not meeting anyone but fasting and strenuously repenting for yourself and all the people. I however will fast likewise and I also will repent on your<sup>P</sup> behalf. Let us fast then, you and me, secretly for the body of the whole church, whilst not eating bread out of desire and not anointing with oil and not drinking wine and liquor, but by the seeds of the earth nourishing our sinful bodies with tears day and night whilst we beseech God who shows mercy to everyone to look upon our repentance and receive you<sup>P</sup> to him and purify you<sup>P</sup> from the defiled heresy of the two natures of the Council of Chalcedon. And after the forty days of fasting, God will then reveal and inform to us what we shall do. And he will reveal to us his mercy and his graciousness (VIII.4–7).

Acacius then answers expressing his joy over the acceptance of his wish for repentance assuring Peter that he accomplished everything he assigned to him. He suggests to have clerics, monks, and laymen sent to beseech the emperor while he himself will do the same so that

whilst we casts out the Council of Chalcedon the disposition of the reconciliation of the churches takes place (IX.9).

Peter tells Acacius, whom he from now on designates as archbishop of Constantinople that he fasted the forty days as well and that God persuaded him to absolve Acacius. He tells him that he has sent out men as suggested by Acacius and urges the latter to approach the emperor as well. In addition, he announces to Acacius that God has told him that he has forgiven Acacius and will reveal himself to him once the reconciliation of the churches in the orthodox faith is accomplished.

Upon this letter follows a longer part of the *Henoticon* issued by emperor Zeno, leaving aside all the bits unpleasant for the see of Alexandria. This is followed by Acacius' fifth letter, apparently sent after the distribution of the

*Henoticon*, excusing himself for not being able to write earlier. He asks Peter to accept, approve and sign the *Henoticon* and praises him for guiding the ones who erred back from the paths of disbelief to those of the true faith.

Peter himself tells us in his seventh letter that he received the *Henoticon* brought to him by the clerics and laymen returning from Constantinople. He assures Acacius that he

found it in agreement with the orthodox faith of the 318 fathers who gathered in the town of Nicaea and with the 150 fathers that gathered in Constantinople and the gathering that took place in Ephesus and with the holy Cyril (XIII.3).

Therefore, he subscribes to it. He closes his letter expressing his faith in the Lord and says:

Through his mercy I received my throne, the one of Mark the Evangelist upon which I sat as well as my holy spiritual bride, i.e., the catholic apostolic holy church, on the 15<sup>th</sup> day in the month of Pashons and on the sixth day of the week (XIII.7).

Now the sixth day of the week would be *Friday* although the latter is usually designated as  $\Upsilon\text{ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ}$  in Bohairic. What is more of an issues here, however, is that the 15<sup>th</sup> of Pashons equals May 10<sup>th</sup> (*Jul.*), which, however, fell in 482 AD on a Monday.<sup>10</sup> Hence, it might not be the date of Peter's new ascension to the see of Mark. However, neither does it match the calculation for the year 477, i.e. Peter's first ascension to the episcopal throne, as that would have been a Tuesday.<sup>11</sup>

Acacius sixth and last letter narrates how he experienced a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ during the service on a Sunday after he had sent out the *Henoticon*. He explicitly mentions "the third hour on the 15<sup>th</sup> day in the month Paopi" being October 12<sup>th</sup>, falling as it seems on a Tuesday in 482 AD, according to Bagnall & Worp.<sup>12</sup> He goes on to tell that

then when we chanted the Trisagion of God, a great indescribable light shone down on me the like of which I had never seen, and it covered me and the whole place of sacrifice. And truly, I saw our Lord Jesus Christ as a young man clad in a white linen garment for I saw the marks of the nails on him, and he reclined on the dish and the chalice that were upon the place of sacrifice like on a bed. And he at once took my fear and disturbance away and filled me with joy, for I thought that I was not on earth at all. I heard him speaking thus according as he knows

<sup>10</sup> Using the list and the chart in R. BAGNALL, C.A. WORP, *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt*, Leiden, 2004, p. 159-165 and p. 171. However, in the year 882 the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Pashons was, based on the cited calculation device, apparently a Friday.

<sup>11</sup> Again using the list and the chart in BAGNALL, WORP, *Chronological Systems*, p. 159-165 and p. 171.

<sup>12</sup> According to the list and chart in BAGNALL, WORP, *Chronological Systems*, p. 159-165 and p. 171. In 882 however, the data still would not fit as the 15<sup>th</sup> of Paopi has been a Friday in that very year.



God: “Have courage my priests, have courage all the people! I have taken away from you<sup>p</sup> the shame of the book of denial which you wrote in the impious Tome of Leo which<sup>13</sup> is cursed and the Council of Chalcedon” (XIV.6–10).

Afterwards, the Lord disappears leaving him awestruck.

In his final letter, Peter tells Acacius that he had the same revelation at the same time during the service. And he saw and heard the same things as Acacius. He urges Acacius to keep the orthodox faith firmly from now on. He ends with the words:

All this shall happen for us to be worthy of it through the grace and the mercy and the benevolence of our Lord and our God and our saviour Jesus Christ, through whom all glory, all honour and all adoration will be appropriate for the father and him and the Holy Ghost, live-giving and consubstantial with him now and at all times and forever and ever. Amen! (XV.9–11).

The only Coptic version of the text that survived is part of codex 62 in the Vatican collections. The codex contains texts of various contents such as *The Life of Macarius the Egyptian*,<sup>14</sup> of *Daniel of Scetis*,<sup>15</sup> the *Martyrdoms of Apatil*,<sup>16</sup> of *Peter of Alexandria*<sup>17</sup> or encomia such as *Evodius’ of Rome’s On the Virgin Mary*,<sup>18</sup> *Theophilus of Alexandria’s On the three men in the furnace at Babylon*<sup>19</sup> as well as *The letter by Severus of Antioch to Anastasia*.<sup>20</sup> The folios focused upon here carry page and quire numbers starting from 1. The page numbers appear usually on the even pages only. Exceptions to this rule are pages carrying the quire numbers in which the pagination appears on both sides of the folio. As with the page numbers, the first written quire number is  $\bar{\alpha}$  on f. 76v/16 and  $\bar{\beta}$  on f. 77r/17 the second being on f. 84v/32 ( $\bar{\beta}$ ) and f. 85r/33 ( $\bar{\gamma}$ ).<sup>21</sup> In addition, the

<sup>13</sup> Although the antecedent of the relative clause (whether the tome or the pope Leo) is not grammatically unambiguously coded it will be the Tome rather than the person.

<sup>14</sup> On ff. 1F-37B, edited in E. AMÉLINEAU, *Histoire des Monastères de la Basse-Égypte. Vies des Saints Paul, Antoine, Macaire, Maxime et Domèce, Jean le Nain, &<sup>a</sup>, Texte copte et traduction française (Annales du Musée Guimet 25)*, Paris, 1894, p. 45-117 (used as a variant to the main text from Cod. Vat. 64); cf. A. DE VOGÜÉ, *Palladiana IV. La version copte de l’Histoire Lausiaque*, in *Studia Monastica* 34 (1992), p. 7-28.

<sup>15</sup> On ff. 38F-55F, edited by I. GUIDI, *Texte copte*, in L. CLUGNET, *Vie (et récits) de l’Abbé Daniel le Scétiote (Bibliothèque Hagiographique Orientale I)*, Paris, 1901, p. 83-114.

<sup>16</sup> On ff. 55B-68B, edited in I. BALESTRI, H. HYVERNAT, *Acta Martyrum I (CSCO 43, Scriptores Coptici 3)*, Paris, 1907, p. 89-109 (used as a variant to the main text from Cod. Vat. 66).

<sup>17</sup> On ff. 199F-211B, edited by H. HYVERNAT, *Les Actes des Martyrs de l’Égypte tirés des manuscrits coptes de la Bibliothèque Vaticane et du Musée Borgia*, Paris, 1886, p. 263-283, a single leaf originating from another copy of this martyrdom is bound as f. 157 into the codex.

<sup>18</sup> On ff. 90F-119v, edited by P. DE LAGARDE, *Aegyptiaca*, Göttingen, 1883, p. 38-63.

<sup>19</sup> On ff. 143F-155B & 159F-165B, edited by H. DE VIS, *Homélies coptes de la Vaticane II (Coptica V)*, Hauniæ, 1929, p. 121-157.

<sup>20</sup> On ff. 244F-252B, edited by M. CHAÏNE, *Une lettre de Severe d’Antioche a la diaconesse Anastasie*, in *Oriens Christianus* 3 (1913), p. 32-58.

<sup>21</sup> See H.G. EVELYN WHITE, *The Monasteries of the Wadi ‘n Natrûn I, New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius (Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Egyptian Expedition 2)*, New York, 1926, p. xlvi, for the pattern of pagination.

scribe marked the last page of a quire with an ornamental decoration (knotted rope forming a cross with arms of even length) and the words  $\text{IHC}$  'Jesus' and  $\text{PX}\hat{\text{C}}$  'Christ.' The first page of a quire shows similar ornaments and the words  $\text{NAI}$  'mercy' and  $\text{NAN}$  'for us' thus creating the wish "Jesus Christ, have mercy on us!"<sup>22</sup> As has been noted by others these features show that our text must have originally been part of a separate codex rebound at a certain point with the other texts that today comprise codex 62. Other manuscripts from the Library of the Monastery of St Macarius show similar features of rebinding.

The handwriting of our text displays the following features:<sup>23</sup> the writing is in a thick and thin style (vertical vs. horizontal strokes) with a three-stroke  $\text{M}$  (one each for the verticals plus one for the connective stroke), wide  $\text{EOC}$ , a tall  $\text{P}$  and  $\text{Q}$ , but a short  $\text{Y}$ . The initials are enlarged and differ in some cases from the 'normal' signs but show no ornamental decoration. Paragraph signs are absent, but the end of paragraphs may be marked by a space-filler dot-&-stroke pattern. The same marking is employed for headings, including the titles of the individual letters as well as the initial epistolary formulae. The super-lineation takes the form of a short stroke rather than a dot, usually set above the right upper part or — in the case of  $\text{I}$  — directly above the character. It follows the old system but shows certain irregularities.<sup>24</sup> In the catalogue of Hebbelynck & van Lantschoot the handwriting has been dated to the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>25</sup> On top of the initial page, a note has been written saying: *4<sup>th</sup> day of Athor, if you have need for this on a last Sunday of either Paopi or Athor, read it!*

Due to the lack of another Coptic copy the quality of the existing one can only be surmised, though mistakes seem rare. Once one finds  $\text{ETEMMMAY}$  for expected  $\text{ETEMMAY}$  (XV.4; f. 88F27),  $\text{PICTPICA}\text{G}\text{I}\text{O}\text{N}$  instead of  $\text{PI}\text{T}\text{P}\text{I}\text{C}\text{A}\text{G}\text{I}\text{O}\text{N}$  (IV.17; f. 74F22) or  $\text{ANAKKH}$  (VII.9; f. 77B9–10) for  $\text{ANAKKH}$ . The scribe wrote  $\text{AE IC}\text{E}\text{BA}\text{CTOC}$  for an expected  $\text{AE IC}\text{E}\text{BA}\text{CTOC}$  (XI.1; f. 82F3–4),  $\text{MP}\text{E}\text{Q}\text{W}\text{QAI}$  instead of  $\text{MP}\text{E}\text{Q}\text{WAI}$  (IV.12; f. 73B33), and  $\text{AQ}\text{BI}$  instead of an expected  $\text{AY}\text{BI}$  (XII.6; f. 85F8). Usually, the name of the imperial city appears as  $\text{KW}\text{CTAN}\text{TINOY}\text{POLIC}$  while once he wrote  $\text{KW}\text{ON}\text{CTAN}\text{TINOY}\text{POLIC}$  (XIII.3; f. 86F13). At the beginning of the second letter of Peter, the scribe wrote  $\text{EQ}\text{C}\text{HAI}\text{ NAKAKI}$  already after the numbering header. In addition the distribution of certain phrases occurring in the *Henoticon* looks strange (XI.2; f. 82F):

<sup>22</sup> EVELYN WHITE, *Monasteries Wadi 'n Natrân I*, p. XLVII note 3, describes a similar pattern.

<sup>23</sup> Following the paragon of B. LAYTON, *Catalogue of Coptic Literary Manuscripts in the British Library Acquired Since the Year 1906*, London, 1987, p. LXIII-LXIV.

<sup>24</sup> See H.J. POLOTSKY, *Une question d'orthographe bohairique*, in *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 12 (1949), p. 25-35 = *Collected Papers*, Jerusalem, 1971, p. 378-388.

<sup>25</sup> A. HEBBELYNCK, A. VAN LANTSCHOOT, *Codices Coptici Vaticani Barberiniani Borgiani Rossiani I*, Vatican City, 1937, p. 435.

ḿ<N>ΑΡΑΚΟϚ ΝΕΜϚΛΥΒΗ ΝΕΜΝΑ	<i>to the inhabitants of Alexandria, Lybia, and</i>
ϚΠΕΝΤΑΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣ	<i>Pentapolis, the bishops</i>
ΝΕΜΝΙΛΑΟΣ ϚΑΡΧΗ ΝΕΜΠΙ	<i>and the people. The origin and the</i>
ΤΑΧΡΟ	<i>strength,</i>
ϚΧΟΜΔΕ ΝΕΜΝΙΖΟΠΛΟΝ ḿΑΤΩ	<i>the power and the irresistible arms</i>
ϚΟΥΒΗΚ ḿΤΕΤΕΝΜΕΤ{ΟΥΗΒ}<ΟΥΡΟ>	<i>of our empire</i>
ΕΝḿΜΙ ΕΡΟϚ ΧΕϚΩΠ ḿΒΟΛ	<i>knowing that it exist only ...</i>

As mentioned already above, the text is written in Bohairic, specifically in Nitrian Bohairic a variety of the language mainly found in hagiographical texts from the, actually, Scetian monasteries, which are considered to be translations from a Sahidic source. Of the diagnostic features listed by Shisha-Halevy,<sup>26</sup> we only encounter the fluctuation between ḥ and ʒ in the word ΕḥΡΗΙ (f. 79F11 vs. f. 78F23) and between σ and χ in the abstract morpheme <sup>σ</sup>σΙΝ/<sup>β</sup>ΧΙΝ (e.g., in σΙΝΖΩΤΠ f. 70F22 vs. ΧΙΝΖΩΤΠ f. 75B13–4) as well as a definite relative clause (εἶτε-) after an indefinite antecedent, as in II.4 ΑΝΟΚ ΟΥΑΡΧΗΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΣΓΑΡ ΕΤΕΜΠΕΖΛΙ ΕΡΚΑΘΕΡΙΝ ΜΜΟΙ “For I am an archbishop whom no one could degrade!”<sup>27</sup>

However, our text does contain several features suggesting that Bohairic was not the original language. Various of these features definitely speak in favour of a Greek text as origin: e.g., in III.1, three parts of the sentence have been fronted (ΝΙΣΟΦΟΣ ΝΤΕΝΙΧΙΝΙ ΝΙΜΕΛΟΣ ΕΤΑΥΤΑΚΟ ḥΕΝΟΥΒΕΝΙΠΙ ΕϚΩΕΒΩΠ ΤΟΥΚΑΡΣ ΤΕ ΕΧΟΧΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ “The skilled physicians — the destroyed parts, with a sharpened iron it is their custom of cutting them away”) thus creating a syntactic chain rather uncommon for Coptic, even though Bohairic generally favours the use of fronting patterns. In II.4, the construction ΚΑΝ ΧΟΥΩΨ ΚΑΝ ΧΟΥΩΨ ΑΝ “whether you like it or not”, showing a full repetition of the opposite alternative, is unusual for Coptic which normally employs ΨΑΝΜΜΟΝ ‘or not’, as in I.3. Yet, it seems not to be a singular instance in Coptic.<sup>28</sup> Now, in Greek this expression is attested in the form

<sup>26</sup> In A. ΑΤΙΥΑ (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, VIII, New York 1991, p. 58.

<sup>27</sup> Unless one would be inclined to reckon with an influence of the Sahidic use of εἶτεπε-ete-mpe to mark the negated Perfect II here, for which see H.J. Polotsky, *Collected Papers*, p. 192–193. Yet, this use seems unattested otherwise in Bohairic. In addition, Bohairic versions of quoted Sahidic examples having recourse to this form employ different patterns.

<sup>28</sup> Although completely unattested otherwise in Sahidic, see M. MÜLLER, *Contrast in Coptic I: Concessive Constructions in Sahidic*, in *Lingua Aegyptia* 17 (2008), p. 171, a similar construction can be found in the Bohairic translation of the *Sermon on the Patriarch Abraham* by Amphilochius of Iconium, see C. DATEMA, *Amphilochii Iconiensis Opera: Orationes, pluraque alia quae supersunt, nonnulla etiam spuria* (CC.SG 3), Turnhout – Leuven 1978, p. 275, 5–7 “Everyman is subject to the law of his nature, and, being a slave of it (the nature), whether he agrees or not (ϚΟΥΩΨ ϚΟΥΩΨ ΑΝ), he performs whatever his nature wants”. A further possible example from Cyril of Alexandria’s sermon *De hora mortis* survived only badly preserved, see AMÉLINEAU, *Monuments*, 166,6–8 “He must die and forget all this by the death that will pursue him, whether he wants or not (ϚΟΥΩΨ ϚΟΥΩΨ ΑΝ).”

κᾶν θέληι κᾶν μὴ θέληι. In passing, it might be noted here that most of the instances in Greek literature are quotes from Euripides' tragedy *Cyclops*.<sup>29</sup> Whether this is coincidental or not will need further investigation.

In favour of a *Sahidic* original is the use of the verb  $\chi\epsilon\gamma$  ( $^S\chi\omicron\omicron\gamma$ ) instead of the common  $^B\omicron\gamma\omega\rho\pi$  as elsewhere in the text (f. 70v4). In II.5 (f. 71r19), the text shows  $\chi\epsilon\kappa\omicron\iota\ \nu\omicron\gamma$  where one might expect a focus marking construction (thus  $\chi\epsilon\alpha\kappa\omicron\iota\ \nu\omicron\gamma$ ). This points apparently to an (at least) graphic apocopation of the second  $\epsilon$ . However, whether this was present already in a possible *Sahidic* version or has been introduced by the *Bohairic* writer/copyist is, again, impossible to decide at the moment. The feature seems less common in *Bohairic*, though than it is in *Sahidic*.

Whether the common inconsistency between  $\flat$  and  $\zeta$  in the writing of  $\epsilon\flat\rho\eta\iota$  'downward' (cf. VII.13  $\omega\psi\ \epsilon\zeta\rho\eta\iota\ \zeta\alpha\pi\hat{\omicron}\zeta\ \epsilon\zeta\rho\eta\iota\ \epsilon\chi\omega\eta$  "cry up to the Lord on behalf of us") can be traced back to the *Sahidic* graphemic invariance between 'upward' and 'downward' (both  $\epsilon\zeta\rho\alpha\iota$ ) must be left undecided, as this feature is attested also outside *Nitrian* texts. Similarly, the variation between  $\psi\chi\epsilon\mu\chi\omicron\mu\ \nu$ - and  $\epsilon$ - might go back to an incomplete translation of the syntactic differences between *Sahidic* and *Bohairic*, but a definite decision seems impossible at the moment. Finally, it seems impossible to say whether the  $\epsilon\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\eta\text{-}$  (IV.12; f. 74B2) for an expected  $\epsilon\tau\alpha\rho\epsilon\tau\epsilon\eta\text{-}$  is just a mere slip of the copyist or is influenced by a *Sahidic*  $\epsilon\eta\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\bar{\nu}$ -.

Out of this, one might surmise that the initial language our text was written in was indeed Greek, which was later translated into *Sahidic* Coptic and from there into *Bohairic* Coptic. Whether the manuscript as we have it has been the direct outcome of this translation seems impossible to say. The only other version published so far, in *Armenian*,<sup>30</sup> originates from a slightly different recension.

As mentioned in the introduction, the text has aroused suspicion as being a later forgery. On text-internal bases, one might point out that the two explicitly mentioned dates never seem to fall on those weekdays that the text gives within the same year. Whether this is further evidence of the assumed fraud or just a sign of sloppy textual transmission remains undecided for the moment.

<sup>29</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Rebecca Lämmle/University of Basel for help and advice in the matter.

<sup>30</sup> F.C. CONEYBEARE, *Anecdota Monophysitarum: The Correspondence of Peter Mongus, Patriarch of Alexandria, and Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople, together with the Henoticon of the Emperor Zeno and the Rescript of the Emperor Anastasius, now first translated from the Old Armenian Text*, in *The American Journal of Theology* 9/4 (1905), p. 719-740.