

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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ΜΝΤΞΡΩΜΑΙΟΙC: Reflections on the Forms of Use  
of the 'Language of the Romans' in Late Antique Egypt.  
Textual, Archaeological and Epigraphic Sources\*

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After the renowned article of Robert Cavenaile, *Le latin dans les milieux chrétiens d'Égypte* (1987)<sup>1</sup>, the role of Latin in late antique Egypt has not ceased to be investigated from the most varied perspectives<sup>2</sup>, also due to the numerous new editions of texts, mainly literary<sup>3</sup>, which have enriched the corpus of attestations or contribu-

\* I sincerely thank G. Agosti, A. Bausi, A. Camplani and T. Orlandi for re-reading my article, providing me, as usual, with many valuable suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> R. Cavenaile, *Le latin dans les milieux chrétiens d'Égypte*, in *Miscel·lànica Papirologica* R. Roca-Puig, cur. S. Janeras, Barcelona 1987, pp. 103-110. Less efficacious is J. Kaimio, *Latin in Roman Egypt*, in *Actes du XV<sup>e</sup> Congrès International de Papyrologie*, cur. G. Bingen, G. Nachtergaele, III, Bruxelles 1978, pp. 27-33. See also J.N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 527-640.

<sup>2</sup> B. Rochette, *Le latin dans le monde grec. Recherches sur la diffusion de la langue et des lettres latines dans les provinces bellénophones de l'Empire*, Bruxelles 1997, pp. 118-139; R. Criore, *Latin Literacy in Egypt*, «KODAI, Journal of Ancient History», 13-14 (2003-2004), pp. 111-118; Ead., *Higher Education in Early Byzantine Egypt: Rhetoric, Latin, and the Law*, in *Egypt in the Byzantine World (300-700)*, cur. R.S. Bagnall, Cambridge 2007, pp. 47-66.

<sup>3</sup> Among these deserve to be mentioned at least: *Alcestis Barcinonensis. Text and Commentary*, ed. M. Marcovich, Leiden 1988; Anonimo. *L'Alceste di Barcellona. Introduzione, testo, traduzione e commento*, ed. L. Nosarti, Bologna 1992; Hadrianus. *P.Monts.Roca III*, edd. J. Gil, S. Torallas Tovar, Barcelona



uted to its better understanding. However, it is only recently<sup>4</sup>, also thanks to the conference of which this volume is the direct result<sup>5</sup>, that a systematic revision of the totality of available data has been attempted, through an effective dialogue between classicists and specialists of the Coptic tradition<sup>6</sup>.

Despite such a fervour of studies, however, it is evident that defining the relationship of Latin with Greek and Egyptian – whether the latter is to be understood, in a first phase, as what remained of Demotic, or, later on, with Coptic, which progressively transformed from a literary, and in some way artificial, language into a spoken language – remains an ‘awkward question’, and certainly far from being completely resolved.

2010; *L'Alceste de Barcelone* (P.Monts.Roca inv. 158-161). *Édition, traduction et analyse contextuelle d'un poème latin conservé sur papyrus*, ed. G. Nocchi Macedo, Liège 2014; *L'Hadrianus de Montserrat* (P.Monts.Roca III, inv. 162-165). *Édition, traduction et analyse contextuelle d'un récit latin conservé sur papyrus*, ed. T. Berg, Liège 2018.

<sup>4</sup> J.-L. Fournet, *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. See also Id., *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; 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.

<sup>5</sup> Important, of course, will be the results of the systematic survey of Latin papyri carried out by the ERC granted Consolidator project 'PLATINUM', directed by M.C. Scappaticcio and hosted by the University of Naples 'Federico II'.

<sup>6</sup> See above all the articles of Orlandi above, Scappaticcio below, and Torallas Tovar below. It should be noticed that, up to now, archaeological sources and material culture have been neglected. Although their contribution is often limited, they should not be overlooked.

The use – or rather of the uses – of Latin in Egypt between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> / 7<sup>th</sup> centuries is in fact an extremely complex phenomenon since the use of the ‘language of the Romans’ encompasses both the role of the language of the elite – or of those who aspired to be assimilated to it – and that of the language of a minority. Thus it was a powerful and unavoidable tool for certain socio-political environments, but at the same time characterised by limited opportunities of use.

There are certainly some fixed points – on which, therefore, there is no need to go back –, because it is very clear to everyone the place that Latin holds in Egypt in the field of administration, of legal practices (including the act of making a will)<sup>7</sup> and of military management<sup>8</sup>; circuits that certainly involve, at least in an initial phase, even native speakers<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Rochette, *Le latin* cit., p. 120 observes, however, that from AD 530 legal documents (minutes, procedural documents, wills) with Latin formulas are no longer attested. Unfortunately, most of the extant manuscripts of legal content – among which the work of Ulpianus stands out for the numerous attestations – are not of proved provenance. Not surprisingly, Oxyrhynchus, the *komai* of the Fayyum and Hermopolis are the most attested locations in the cases where the place of discovery is known.

<sup>8</sup> On the military organisation in Egypt, but only until Diocletian, see R. Alston, *Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt. A Social History*, London 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Cavenaile, *Le latin* cit., pp. 104-105: «Il est assuré que le IV<sup>e</sup> s. a été l'époque où le latin a connu sa plus grande expansion dans tout l'Orient grec et in particulier en Egypte, sans qu'on puisse toutefois préciser le degré de pénétration. On sait que le latin qui était déjà la langue officielle de l'armée, devint sous Dioclétien la langue exclusive de l'administration. Il était aussi la langue du droit. Enfin, avec l'extension de la *civitas Romana*, l'intérêt pour le latin, langue des maîtres, ne pouvait pas ne pas s'accroître et les papyrus latins relatifs à l'enseignement sont presque tous conçus en vue de la formation de personnes de langue grecque». Fournet, *La pratique*

Equally well established is the sporadic presence of Latin speakers gravitating around some monasteries, especially in Lower Egypt<sup>10</sup>. However, the question becomes much more complex after Diocletian, when pockets of resistance of *Latinitas* are attested in sites that are far from the centres of power and, paradoxically, the number of literary and semi-literary texts seems to increase, and mostly outside of the contexts and milieus described above<sup>11</sup>.

How is one to evaluate the surprising presence of the *Catilinae* in a library, already problematic in itself<sup>12</sup>, whose origin is strongly

cit., p. 74: «Dans ces conditions, le latin papyrologique se circonscrit à trois domaines bien délimités: (a) les textes émanant du pouvoir impérial; (b) beaucoup plus nombreux, les documents latins émanant de l'armée ou concernant des militaires; (c) les actes liés à la citoyenneté romain». *Ibid.*, p. 75 footnote 5 mentions an 'artificial' case of Latin surviving in the military administration. We do not deal in this article with the role of Latin in the Greek poets of Egyptian origin, the so-called 'wandering-poets', among which the Alexandrian Claudianus, hellenophone but well-known author of refined Latin poems, stands out for his quality, since it represents a different phenomenon compared to what is analysed here. On Claudianus, however, see P.G. Christiansen, *Claudian: A Greek or a Latin?*, «Scholia», 6 (1997), pp. 79-95; B. Mulligan, *The Poet from Egypt? Reconsidering Claudian's Eastern Origin*, «Philologus», 151.2 (2007), pp. 285-310; M.-F. Guipponi-Gineste, *Claudian: poète du monde à la cour d'Occident*, Paris 2010; C. Ware, *Claudian and the Roman Epic Tradition*, Cambridge 2012; A. Cameron, *Wandering Poets and Other Essays on Late Greek Literature and Philosophy*, Oxford 2015, pp. 113-146 (chapters 5 and 6: *Claudian and Claudian Revisited*).

<sup>10</sup> See, once more, the article of Torallas Tovar below, and Rapp, *The Use of Latin* cit., both with bibliography illustrating the previous studies on this theme. On the monks who speak Latin see also Fournet, *The Multilingual Environment* cit., pp. 428-429.

<sup>11</sup> It should not be forgotten, of course, that the whims of fate play a role in the archaeological and textual findings.

<sup>12</sup> J.-L. Fournet, *Anatomie d'une bibliothèque de l'Antiquité tardive: l'inven-*

debated, but which certainly – at least at a certain moment of its existence – has seen the coexistence of works in Greek, Latin and Coptic, united by the glue of an evolving Christianity<sup>13</sup>? How do we explain the original creation, in the same library, located very far from Alexandria and ‘Romanized’ areas (the Delta, the Fayyum, Oxyrhynchus to give some examples), of works that, although linguistically and metrically rough, are the result of an original creative action and therefore the inheritance of classical *paideia*? In what circumstances and when exactly did juridical codices of high quality such as the Latin-Coptic palimpsest London, British Library, Oriental 4717 (5)<sup>14</sup> lose their authority, both institutional and cultural, to become little more than wastepaper? What place does the unusual trilingual ‘conversation manual’ – as it has sometimes been called, whose purpose is still far from being fully understood – have in this context<sup>15</sup>? It is a fact that many of these issues remain largely unsolved<sup>16</sup>.

*taire, la faciès et la provenance de la 'Bibliothèque Bodmer', «Adamantius», 21 (2015), pp. 8-40.*

<sup>13</sup> For the codicological aspects of the ‘Bodmer Papyri’ and their nature as an evolving library see P. Buzi, *Qualche riflessione sugli aspetti codicologici e titologici dei papiri Bodmer con particolare riguardo ai codici copti*, «Adamantius», 21 (2015), pp. 47-59.

<sup>14</sup> S. Ammirati, *Frammenti inediti di giurisprudenza latina da un palinsesto copto. Per un'edizione delle scripturae inferiores del ms. London, British Library, Oriental 4717 (5)*, «Athenaeum», 105 (2017), pp. 736-741.

<sup>15</sup> Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum, Papyrussammlung, P. 10582 (P.Berol. inv. 10582). W. Schubart, *Ein lateinisch-griechisch-koptisches Gesprächsbuch*, «Klio», 13 (1913), pp. 27-38; J. Kramer in *C.Gloss.Biling.* I 15. Despite admirable efforts the interpretation of E. Dickey, *How Coptic Speakers Learned Latin? A Reconsideration of P.Berol. Inv. 10582*, «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», 193 (2015), pp. 65-77 is not convincing.

<sup>16</sup> Among the textual sources still to be explored and potentially useful for the definition of a more complete framework of the role of Latin

In these pages we certainly do not pretend to find all the answers that are missing, but we intend to propose a change of perspective: we should not look at the attestations of the role of Latin in late antique – but also late Roman – Egypt as a homogeneous phenomenon, but it is necessary to distinguish, clearly and sharply, between different levels of use, diffusion and reception, which are affected both by the chronological dimension – which is all too obvious – and by the socio-environmental one.

In short, those who produced or used the *Codex Miscellaneus Barcinonensis*<sup>17</sup> – and it seems very likely that they were exponents of two contiguous worlds, given that in terms of the quality of its production the book collection is not high quality and clearly ‘domestic’ – while still having a good classical culture, handled Latin in a different way from the readers of the Livius of Naqlun (*Ab urbe condita* 11). This fragment, although small, shows another level of literary and manufacturing care, as confirmed by the writing support that is of remarkable quality<sup>18</sup>.

in late antique Egypt is the *Martyrdom of Pansophius* – unfortunately not preserved in Coptic – where Vergil is mentioned. P. Canart, R. Pinatudi, *Le palimpseste hagiographique grec du Laurentianus 74, 17 et la Passion de s. Pansophius d’Alexandrie*, «Analecta Bollandiana», 104 (1986), pp. 5-16; Idd., *Il martirio di san Pansofio*, «Analecta Papyrologica», 16-17 (2004-2005), pp. 189-245. I owe this information to G. Agosti.

<sup>17</sup> Durham (NC), Duke University, P. 798 + Montserrat, Abadia, Roca 126-178 + Roca 292 + Roca 338 (P.Duke inv. 798 + P.Monts.Roca inv. 129-149); TM 59453.

<sup>18</sup> Cairo, Coptic Museum, 15/86 (P.Naqlun inv. 15/86); TM 61431. B. Bravo, M.T. Griffin, *Un frammento del libro XI di Livio?*, «Athenaeum», 66 (1988), pp. 447-521; R.E.A. Palmer, *A New Fragment of Livy throws Light on the Roman Postumii and Latin Gabii*, «Athenaeum», 68 (1990), pp. 5-18; G. Liberman, *À propos d’un fragment présumé de Tite-Live*, «Athenaeum», 80 (1992), pp. 192-193; M. Gigante, *Sul nuovo testo attribuito a Livio*, «Athenaeum», 81 (1993), p. 263.

Still different is the Latin of a second-generation Roman, such as the 'Arsinoitic' Claudius Terentianus (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), son of a veteran who had put down roots in the Fayyum and who very likely had the opportunity to speak the native language only in his own family context. A parallel would be a modern 'Italian', born abroad, whose parents have expatriated overseas a long time ago and who has the sporadic occasion to return to Italy only for a vacation.

In sum, it is not the role of Latin that must be investigated, but rather that of its different forms, which appear to change according to the time, place, and environment of use and which are fully understandable only if analysed in their specific context.

### 1. *The Passive Assimilation of Latin in Late Antique Coptophone Egypt*

For the purposes of a better understanding of the ways and places in which Latin was practiced in late antique Egypt, Coptic literature – it should be immediately clarified – is not of much help. With the exception of the well-known and often quoted passages of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, of the *Life of Pachomius* and some other brief references<sup>19</sup>, not devoid of ideological motifs, we can gain very little from the Coptic encomiastic, homiletic and hagiographic works, whether they are original or translated from Greek.

It is certainly evident that in the centuries of military control and juridical-administrative management, first Roman and then Byzantine, of the province of Egypt, numerous terms pertaining to the military and juridical spheres have not only circulated in their respective fields, but must have become familiar, even indirectly, to everyone who had had contact with the country's political management system<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> See above pp. 37-38 footnote 9.

<sup>20</sup> Already in 1938 C.R.C. Allberry, *Greek and Latin Words in the Coptic Manichaean Papyri*, in *Actes du V<sup>e</sup> Congrès International de Papyrologie*, Oxford,

In her article in this volume Sofia Torallas Tovar discusses and clarifies efficaciously how it happened that terms like **ΤΙΡΩΝ** / **†ΤΙΡΩΝ** (*tiro* «recruit»)<sup>21</sup>, **ΑΥΓΟΥΣΤΑΛΙΟΣ** (*augustalis*, here used to mean «governor», and not any longer a member of the famous priesthood established by Tiberius)<sup>22</sup>, **ΜΙΛΙΟΝ** (Roman mile)<sup>23</sup>, **ΤΡΙΒΟΥΝΟΣ** (*tribunus*)<sup>24</sup>, or **ΠΡΙΜΙΚΕΡΙΟΣ** (*primicerius* «commander»)<sup>25</sup> have entered into the Egyptian monastic literature. It is clearly the official and procedural documents that acted as intermediary. A similar survey had already been conducted by Jürgen Horn<sup>26</sup>, mainly in the wake of similar investigations applied by Henrik Zilliacus<sup>27</sup> and Michael McCormick<sup>28</sup> to Greek hagiography. Scarcely, however, must an Egyptian of Late Antiquity have asked himself what the origin of

30 août - 3 septembre 1937, cur. M. Hombert, Brussels 1938, p. 20 wrote: «Coptic literature contains a large number of Greek and Latin words which have never been collected and investigated».

<sup>21</sup> *Life of Pachomius*, Sahidic version 212, 9; 212, 27; 104, 35 Lefort.

<sup>22</sup> *Life of Pachomius*, Sahidic version 350, 10 Lefort.

<sup>23</sup> *Life of Pachomius*, Sahidic version 74, 2; 139, 25; 222, 16 Lefort. *Le manuscrit de la version copte en dialecte sahidique des Apophthegmata Patrum*, ed. M. Chaîne, Le Caire 1960.

<sup>24</sup> 33, 6 (*De sapientia magistratum*) Wiesmann.

<sup>25</sup> *S. Pachomii vita Sahidice scriptae*, ed. L.-T. Lefort, Parisii 1933-1934, pp. 11-22.

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> H. Zilliacus, *Das lateinische Lehnwort in der griechischen Hagiographie. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der klassizistischen Bestrebungen im X. Jahrhundert*, «Byzantinische Zeitschrift», 37 (1937), pp. 302-344.

<sup>28</sup> M. McCormick, *Greek Hagiography and Popular Latin in Late Antiquity: The Case of \*biberaticum – βιβρατικόν*, «The American Journal of Philology», 102 (1981), pp. 154-163.

these terms was, instead merely accepting them as a result of the new political management.

In a similar way, we can explain the numerous words of Latin origin that appear in the hagiographic tradition, especially the one that Coptic literature has translated from Greek, sometimes reworking and integrating it at a later time. Among the texts useful for tracing such a phenomenon is the *Martyrdom of Jiāne* (CC 0517)<sup>29</sup>, preserved only by one manuscript consisting of two palimpsest and fragmentary parchment leaves<sup>30</sup>. Even in its late re-elaboration of earlier literary material (7<sup>th</sup> / 8<sup>th</sup> century), the text preserves elements which can only originate from procedural documents. To this sphere, in particular, belongs the **ΝΑΚΕΤΩΝΑΡΙΟΣ** (for **Ν̄ΚΕΤΩΝΑΡΙΟΣ**); that is, the *quaestionarii*, the quaestors, the inquisitors who put the **ΚΩΛΛΑΡΙΟΝ**, or *collarium*, to the Christian prisoners, among whom is Jiāne.

It should be noted that the *Martyrdom of Jiāne* represents the *scriptio superior* of a codex obtained by the combination of two codicological units, the first of which, very likely from the Fayyum, contained the *Gospel of Mark*, in Greek and Coptic (although only Coptic is partially readable)<sup>31</sup>, while the second bears the *Gospel of*

<sup>29</sup> CC is the abbreviation for *Clavis Coptica* or *Clavis Patrum Copticorum*, attributed to the literary works by the *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* project directed by T. Orlandi.

<sup>30</sup> CLM 743 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 129<sup>16</sup> f. 94 *sup.* + Cairo, Coptic Museum, 3890 *sup.* (inv. JdE 44835, CGC 9239). Munnier, *Catalogue*, p. 44 n. 9239 (<https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts/743>). The siglum CLM stands for Coptic Literary Manuscript, *unique identifier* attributed by the ERC Advanced 'PAThs', coordinated by the author of these pages, to each Coptic literary codicological unit ([paths.uniroma1.it](http://paths.uniroma1.it); <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu>).

<sup>31</sup> CLM 6609 = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 129<sup>16</sup> f. 94 *inf.* (<https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts/6609>).



*John*<sup>32</sup>. It cannot be excluded that the Fayyumic origin of one of the original manuscripts played a role in accessing certain types of documents (judgments, procedural acts, etc.).

Other examples of terms borrowed from Latin, comparable with what has just been described, are the **ΒΕΡΕΤΑΡΙΟΣ** (*veredarius* «imperial courier») which appears several times on the scene of the *Martyrdom of Psote* (CC 0433)<sup>33</sup>, the great pit full of fire (**ΝΟΣ ΜΦΟССΑ ΝΚΩΞΤ**, *fossa* «pit») into which the martyr Shenoufe is thrown<sup>34</sup>, in whose hands are held incandescent spheres (**ΞΕΝΣΦΕΡΑ ΝΚΩΞΤ**, *sphaera*) – although these last are terms evidently passed to Coptic through Greek – or the screen (**ΠΟΥΗΛΟΝ**, *velum* «curtain»)<sup>35</sup> which the magistrate, who is going to sign the death sentence of Publius and Leontius, pulls in front of him to escape the glances of the angry crowd<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> CLM 3873 = Cairo, Coptic Museum, 3890 *inf.* (JdE 44835, CGC 9239) + London, British Library, Or. 5797 *inf.* (<https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts/3873>).

<sup>33</sup> CLM 241 = New-York (NY), Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum, M583 = CMCL MONB.BP (<https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts/241>). *Il dossier copto del martire Psote: testi copti con introduzione e traduzione*, ed. T. Orlandi, Milano 1978. This is the case also for terms like *tiro*, *primicerius*, *domesticus*, *signa* attested in the hexametric poem known as *Visio Dorothei*. I owe this information to Agosti.

<sup>34</sup> H. Munier, *Fragments des actes du martyre de l'apa Chnoube*, «Annales du Service des Antiquités d'Égypte», 17 (1917), pp. 145-159; *Four Martyrdoms from the Pierpont Morgan Coptic Codices*, edd. E.A.E. Reymond, J.W.B. Barns, Oxford 1973.

<sup>35</sup> For the presence of the same term in a Coptic-Syriac lexicon which contains *lemmata* to be referred to the cosmological sphere (*P.Kell. Syr.-Copt.* I 2) see *Artes grammaticae in frammenti: i testi grammaticali latini e bilingui greco-latini su papiro. Edizione commentata*, ed. M.C. Scappaticcio, Berlin 2015, p. 24.

<sup>36</sup> Severus of Antioch, *Homilia cathedralis* 027: *In Leontium* (CC 0344; CPG 7035.027). CLM 238 = New York, Pierpont Morgan Library and

It is not surprising that these are terms and expressions which, for context and use, are very similar, when not totally coincident, with those that appear in the bilingual (Greek-Latin) lexicon – in which Latin is transliterated into Greek – preserved in manuscript Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Nationale, Gr. 1173 (P.Strasb. inv. Gr. 1173), datable to the 3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> century AD: *τριβουνους μελιτουμ, καστρα, ταβερνακουλα, etc.*<sup>37</sup>.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that at the beginning of the *Martyrdom of Shenoufe* a list of prefects is incorporated<sup>38</sup>, which shows, once more, how the composition of *martyrologia* gained advantage from the consultation of official political-administrative and annalistic documents.

It is clear, however, that all these examples cannot be used to reconstruct the milieus in which Latin was still actively and consciously practiced in late antique Egypt, being technical terms absorbed unconsciously and passively<sup>39</sup>, mainly through Greek, and not in use any more in oral and vernacular communication.

More interesting, also due to the late dating (10<sup>th</sup> century) attributed by the editor to the manuscript found in Antinoupolis that

Museum, M585 = CMCL MICH.BM. G. Garitte, *Textes hagiographiques orientaux relatifs à Saint Léonce de Tripoli, II: L'homélie copte de Sévère d'Antioche*, «Le Muséon», 79 (1966), pp. 335-386, esp. 362.

<sup>37</sup> Kramer in *C.Gloss.Biling.* II 6. On this papyrus see the recent E. Dickey, *Teaching Latin to Greek Speakers in Antiquity*, in *Learning Latin and Greek from Antiquity to Present*, cur. E.P. Archibald, W. Brockliss, J. Gnoza, Cambridge 2015, pp. 30-51, esp. 32.

<sup>38</sup> CLM 241 = New York (NY), Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum, M583, f. 103 r = MICH.BP (<https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts/241>). Later, when the scene moves to the Fayyum, a list of the local magistrates is also provided, which is further evidence of the use of official sources.

<sup>39</sup> On this aspect see also the position of Horn, *Latino-Coptica* cit., pp. 1361-1376.

bears them, are the terms related to daily life **ΜΜΑΝΤΗΛ[Δ]** «towel» and **ΔΝΠΟΥΛ|ΛΕ** «ampoule», which appear on an account written on a little strip of re-used parchment, probably to be referred to a monastic community<sup>40</sup>.

## 2. *The Tenuous (But Not Useless) Archaeological Traces*

The modest contribution of Coptic literature, therefore, on the one side illustrates the limited use of Latin in some monastic milieus, although never after the first decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD – a fact that is meaningful in itself – while on the other side it retains fossils of terms or expressions derived from the Roman legal-political-administrative world, which act as a narrative artifice and, at the same time, constitute an involuntary but very useful historical source for the forms of power management applied by Rome.

Not much more efficacious, at least at a first look, on the other side, are the archaeological sources, even if sometimes an absence may be more important than a presence.

It is well known that the *komai* of the Fayyum were chosen by several veterans to spend the rest of their existence, once they had withdrawn from active service<sup>41</sup>. In fact, the Arsinoite *nomos* has been generous in providing documentary and literary texts that are certainly ascribable to groups that not only spoke and wrote Latin,

<sup>40</sup> PSI inv. Ant. s.n. r/v. A. Delattre, *Compte copte tardif et exercices d'écriture en copte et en arabe sur parchemin*, in *Antinoupolis III*, cur. R. Pintaudi, Firenze 2017, pp. 657-663, esp. 660-661.

<sup>41</sup> Alston, *Soldier* cit., p. 123: «Approximately 14 per cent of the population of Karanis in the tax lists of 171-174 had Roman name but not all were veterans... The actual veteran element of the population is impossible to quantify». The most recent attestations of veteran soldiers date back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.

but that certainly also appreciated the ownership of a luxury book. The literary attestations, however, fade from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, with few exceptions, among which deserves to be remembered the aforementioned parchment fragment that contains a passage of the eleventh book of Livius, datable to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, but reused as cartonnage of a late antique or mediaeval Christian codex at Deir el-Naqlun. It is reasonable to think that the person who re-used it got it in the same region.

These groups, however, left very few and tenuous traces on the field. Even the well-known house of Karanis ('House C / B167'), in the north-eastern Fayyum, under the staircase of which was found the archive of the former speculator Claudius Tiberianus and of his son, Claudius Terentianus whom I have mentioned previously<sup>42</sup>, mainly consisting of letters, in Greek and Latin, exchanged by them between Alexandria and the Fayyumic village, did not give back any artifacts that can be referred to a distinctly 'Roman' culture, if we

<sup>42</sup> *P.Mich.* VIII 467-481; 510. A. Calderini, *La corrispondenza greco-latina del soldato Claudio Tiberiano e altre lettere del II sec. d.Cr. nel recente vol. VIII dei papiri del Michigan*, «Rendiconti dell'Istituto Lombardo», 15 (1951), pp. 155-166; G.B. Pighi, *Lettere latine d'un soldato di Traiano (PMich 467-472)*, Bologna 1964; J.N. Adams, *The Vulgar Latin of the Letters of Claudius Terentianus*, Manchester 1977; S. Strassi, *In margine all'archivio di Tiberianus e Terentianus: P.Mich. VIII 510*, «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», 148 (2004), pp. 225-234; *L'archivio di Claudius Tiberianus da Karanis*, ed. S. Strassi, Berlin 2008. The identification of unpublished papyri, both in the Michigan Library and the library of Heidelberg, as attributable to the same archive is owed to S. Strassi. For the archaeological aspects see R.P. Stephan, A. Verhooft, *Text and Context in the Archive of Tiberianus*, «Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists», 42 (2005), pp. 189-201, esp. 195: «House C / B167 was eventually abandoned and covered with debris, and none of the original walls are reused in the A-level»; «We may suggest that in 1928, the Michigan team excavated House 167 as a single stratum». The house to which the archive belongs corresponds to the so-called 'level C'.

exclude the texts themselves. Nor is there a single graffito or an object used in everyday life that speaks the language of Rome, even if only iconographically. The same considerations apply to the second phase of use of the same dwelling (the so-called 'level B', dated by the archaeologists of the University of Michigan to AD 180-325), which would have been much more useful for the purposes of what is of interest here.

It is worth mentioning the reflections of Richard Alston concerning the veterans of Karanis:

Legally defined, the soldiers and veterans were Roman, but what about their culture? The vast majority of documents concerning or written by veterans from Karanis are in Greek, though two or three archives contain texts in Latin ... Army officers needed to know some Latin but it is not necessarily the case that the orders were transmitted to the troops in Latin or that the army in Egypt was a predominantly Latin-speaking institution. Apart from these letters in Latin, there is very little other evidence that connects the village with any aspect of specifically Roman culture<sup>43</sup>.

It would be of great help to have archaeological data concerning the finding of the other important bilingual archive from the Fayyum, that of the *praefectus alae* Flavius Abinnaeus, stationed in the *castrum* of Dionysias, in the north-western Fayyum, although there are only two Latin texts, one of which is a petition to Constantians and Constantius to be confirmed as *praefectus alae Quintae Praelectorum*. Abinnaeus, who was responsible for the western frontier from AD 342 to 351, once he retired to private life, moved to the eastern area of the region, to Philadelphia, where his documents are said have been found. They were purchased, however, on the antiquities market, in Medinet el Fayyum, in 1893, and later

<sup>43</sup> Alston, *Soldier* cit., p. 123. On the Latin documents from Karanis and reflections on the Latin speakers and Hellenophones who knew Latin, see Scappaticcio, *Artes grammaticae* cit., pp. 30-31.

divided mainly between the British Library and the University Library of Geneva<sup>44</sup>.

In brief, even a region characterised by a certain presence of Latin speakers, mainly belonging to the military milieu, and for a prolonged period, that goes from the Roman age to the late antique period, did not leave architectonically and artistically tangible evidence, not even referable to an early period, when one would expect that the 'Roman' identity was more marked.

Even in Oxyrhynchus, another place where the presence of Romans must have been important, the tangible evidence of *Latinitas* is labile, if one exclude remains of manuscripts. Among these deserves to be mentioned London, British Library, Pap. 2052 (*P.Oxy.* VIII 1073), a parchment fragment dated from the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD that bears *Genesis* 5:4-13, 29-31, 6:1-2<sup>45</sup>. It was found in 1914 but the precise location of its discovery is, however, unknown. Also very well-known are the letters attributable to Theon, perhaps the homonymous anchorite «trained in three languages» mentioned by the *Historia monachorum* – originally dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> / 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, but more likely to belong to the 4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup> century AD – that, although in Greek, include some Latin formulas and show that the person who composed them (a professional scribe hired by Theon?) had a solid competence in both the writing systems and the linguis-

<sup>44</sup> T.D. Barnes, *The Career of Abinnaeus*, «Phoenix», 39 (1985), pp. 368-374. *The Abinnaeus Archive. Papers of a Roman Officer in the Reign of Constantius II*, edd. H.I. Bell, V. Martin, E.G. Turner, D. van Berchem, Oxford 1962. See also T.M. Teeter, *Papyri, Archives, and Patronage*, «The Classical Bulletin», 80 (2004), pp. 27-34. C. Gallazzi, *Dove è stato ritrovato l'archivio di Abinneo?*, «Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete», 61 (2015), pp. 170-179 reasonably supposes that the provenance of the archive should be identified in Dionysias and not in Philadelphia.

<sup>45</sup> LDAB 3202. See also the description of the manuscript on the British Library site ([http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Papyrus\\_2052](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Papyrus_2052)).

tic registers; a competence which must have belonged also to the customer, that is Theon himself<sup>46</sup>.

Paradoxically, for the purpose of reconstructing the ‘Roman’ culture of late antique Egypt, the archive of the Apiones<sup>47</sup> proves to be precious. It was found in 1897 by Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt and is datable between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although entirely in Greek, it illustrates in great detail the *modus vivendi* of a high-ranking family, which was influenced by the ‘international’ fashion, even in the sphere of architecture and plan-building. The rich collection of documents referable to the archive in question

<sup>46</sup> *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2193; *P.Oxy.* XVIII 2194 and *P.Köln* IV 200. For the Latin formulas see P.J. Sijpesteijn, *Apphus and Pascentius: servo dei tempore*, «Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete», 40.1 (1994), pp. 69-70; J. O’Callaghan, *Nota sobre ‘servus Dei’ en los papiros*, «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», 106 (1995), pp. 201-202; L.H. Blumell, *A Potential Source for the Latin Preface in P.Oxy. XVIII 2194*, «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», 183 (2012), pp. 72-74. More generally on the dossier of Theon: Id., *Reconsidering the Dates of Three Christian Letters: P. Oxy. XVIII 2193, 2194, P. Köln IV 200 and a Reference in the Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, «Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete», 54 (2008), pp. 219-223; M. Choat, *Monastic Letters on Papyrus from Late Antique Egypt*, in *Writing and Communication in Early Egyptian Monasticism*, cur. Id., M.C. Giorda, Leiden 2017, pp. 17-72, esp. 40, with bibliography concerning the interpretation of the Latin passages included in the letters. See now Pezzella below, in which the author also dwells on the change in writing as the language changes.

<sup>47</sup> TM Arch ID 15 ([https://www.trismegistos.org/arch/detail.php?arch\\_id=15](https://www.trismegistos.org/arch/detail.php?arch_id=15)). R. Mazza, *L’archivio degli Apioni. Terra, lavoro e proprietà senatoria dell’Egitto tardoantico*, Bari 2001; G. Azzarello, *Neue Papyruszeugnisse zur Apionenfamilie*, in *Von Noricum nach Ägypten: Eine Reise durch die Welt der Antike*, cur. K. Strobel, R. Lafer, Klagenfurt 2007, pp. 251-261; Ead., *Vecchi e nuovi personaggi della famiglia degli Apioni nei documenti papiracei*, in *Proceedings of the 25<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Papyrology*, cur. T. Gagos, Ann Arbor 2010, pp. 33-46.

allows us not only to trace the economic life of this illustrious senatorial family of Egyptian origin, though resident in Constantinople, but also to reconstruct the appearance of its suburban Oxyrhynchite villa, which has been compared, not inappropriately, to the Villa del Casale, in Piazza Armerina (Sicily)<sup>48</sup>.

Clearly the Apiones, although they cannot be defined properly as Roman, at least in the strict sense, had the lifestyle of the Latin-Roman world; we would say an 'imperial' lifestyle. Private baths, manned by a doorman, and a triclinium, appear in the documents as prominent elements of their house. The Apiones did not limit themselves to owning only the villa of Oxyrhynchus but had large funds in the Oxyrhynchite and Arsinoite *nomoi* and dealt with numerous ecclesiastical and monastic institutions (of various kinds) – the names of religious people with whom they were in correspondence and business contact are numerous – and had founded baths in the village of Takona. It is highly unlikely that the Apiones did not know any Latin, but apparently they did not use it, at least as far as we know. In short, it was not only through the use of Latin that 'Roman culture' manifested itself.

On the other hand, remaining in Oxyrhynchus, the discovery by the Catalan mission active in the site of the stela of a freedman written in Latin is an interesting fact<sup>49</sup>. Re-used in the 'upper necropolis' in a building that was certainly Christian, it concretely confirms the presence of Latin speakers in the town, at least until the end of the imperial period. No less useful is the fragmentary mummy label, in Latin – as *unicum* as far as I know – kept in the Metropolitan Museum<sup>50</sup> and unearthed by Grenfell and Hunt during the exca-

<sup>48</sup> R. Alston, *The City in Roman and Byzantine Egypt*, London 2002, pp. 313-316.

<sup>49</sup> The exact dating of the stela is not known to me.

<sup>50</sup> New York (NY), Metropolitan Museum of Art, 06.4.188. I owe the information on the stela of the freedman and of the mummy label to



vation campaign of 1904-1905, which suggests that Latin, even in the Roman period, was not necessarily a linguistic tool of a given ethnic group, but rather a mean to attest one's own *status*, one's own socio-cultural prestige. It was uncommon for a Roman to decide to be embalmed, as also anthropological analysis of the mummies with Fayyum portraits also demonstrated. For the most part, they were revealed to belong to autochthonous people who decided to be portrayed as 'Romans'.

Going more southern, a recent interesting study of the Greek and Latin inscriptions written by pilgrims on the Colossi of Memnon<sup>51</sup>, that were notoriously objects of cult and a must-see of the touristic-religious *grand tour* that pushed pilgrims from different ethnic, cultural and social extraction to Thebes and beyond, shows that the Latin graffiti stop in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD<sup>52</sup>.

To the category of pilgrims – maybe of soldiers-pilgrims – is probably also to be ascribed the case of Hermas (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD?), who on the rocks of the Theban Mountain – and more precisely in the Valley of the Rope, sub-sector of the Valley of the Queens – inscribed various graffiti, proofs of his passage, using both Greek and Latin characters, demonstrating at least a basic digraphia<sup>53</sup>. More

L. Mascia, who is carrying out, at Hamburg University, the PhD project *The transition from traditional cults to the affirmation of Christian beliefs in the city of Oxyrhynchus* under the supervision of A. Bausi and the author of these pages. As for the mummy label, although it has not yet been dated with precision, the presence of the *praenomen* Aurelius suggests that it is later than the institution of the *Constitutio Antoniniana*.

<sup>51</sup> P.A. Rosenmeyer, *The Language of Ruins: Greek and Latin Inscriptions on the Memnon Colossus*, New York - Oxford 2018.

<sup>52</sup> For other inscriptions in Latin from Upper Egypt, cfr. J. Bingen, *Épigraphie grecque et latine: d'Antinoé à Edfou*, «Chronique d'Égypte», 59 (1984), pp. 359-370.

<sup>53</sup> A. Delattre, *Le dossier bilingue d'Herma: Graffites grecs et latins de la montagne thébaine*, «Latomus», 67.3 (2008), pp. 714-720, with bibliography.

difficult to evaluate is the graffito, in Greek, of a certain «Latina from Rome», referring to a woman who is said to be originally from Rome, which appears below one of the many attestations of the name of Hermas<sup>54</sup>.

Yet, crossing the Nile and reaching the eastern bank of Thebes, what remains of the paintings of the chapel dedicated to the imperial cult in the temple of Amun, in Luxor, reminds us that from the reign of Diocletian the Thebaid became an autonomous province, garrisoned, at least for a certain period, by two legions. Military *fulcrum* of this province was the temple of Luxor, which was transformed into a *castrum* (where the *legio III Diocletiana* was perhaps stationed), whose walls and doors are still partially legible on the ground, and which remained in use at least until the threshold of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD<sup>55</sup>. There must therefore have been a good number of Romans – or Romanized people – in Thebes. Once again, however, the material culture does not help to trace their physical location, since there is only one extant official inscription, datable to AD 308-309<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 720.

<sup>55</sup> R.S. Bagnall, *Egypt from Alexander the Great to Early Christians*, Los Angeles 2004, pp.188-192; M. El-Saghir, J.-C. Golvin, M. Reddé, el-S. Hegazy, G. Wagner, R. Migalla, L. Gabolde, J. Leclant, *Le camp romain de Luqsor, avec une étude des graffites gréco-romain du temple d'Amon*, Le Caire 1986; K. Vandorpe, *City of Many a Gate, Harbour for Many a Rebel. A Historical and Topographical Outline of Greco-Roman Thebes*, in *Hundred-Gates Thebes. Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period*, cur. S.P. Vleeming, Leiden 1995, pp. 203-239.

<sup>56</sup> *I.Camp Louqsor*, p. 122 n. 2: *Iuuentutis auctorem et pacis | aeternae conseruatore* | *d(ominum) n(ostrum) Fl(auium) Val(erium) Constantinum nob(ilissimum) | Caesarem Aur(elius) Maximinu[s] | v(ir) p(erfectissimus) dux Aeg(ypti) et Theb(aidos) utrarum[q(ue)] | Libb(yarum) devotus n(umini) m(aiestati)q(ue) eorum*. LSA (Last Statues of Antiquity) 2623; TM 220341. To the influence of the Roman military world is to be attributed a peculiar object, unfortunately

Remaining in the military context, it is well known that in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD Kharga Oasis was dotted with a series of forts (Umm el Dabadib, el-Deir, Qasr el Sumayra, Qasr el-Gib, etc.)<sup>57</sup>, apparently

decontextualised, but certainly from Edfu, consisting of a relief depicting Horus who, riding a horse and dressed in Roman armor, pierces Seth, in the form of a crocodile, with a long spear. A frequently recurring iconographic motif, but which, on closer inspection, has something exceptional in this artefact – datable to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD and probably part of the screen of the window of a temple – since everything – the posture, the attributes, the armor, the pose of the horse – recalls the iconographies of the holy knights, St George *in primis*, who had so much success in the hagiographic cycles which (also) Coptic literature inherited from the Christian tradition of the Greek language. As is known, there are no knight gods in the Egyptian *pantheon* but, in an age of mutual contamination and flourishing iconographic osmosis, everything becomes possible. It is evident that the Horus knight of the Louvre is the product of a syncretic artistic language, which links the Egyptian religious tradition, to which this relief was destined, with the Roman-Latin military one, both profane and Christian. M.-H. Rutschowskaya, *La sculpture copte*, Paris 1990, p. 5; A. Brahim, J.-P. Digard, *Chevaux et cavaliers arabes dans les arts d'Orient et d'Occident*, Paris 2002, p. 20; D. Bénazeth, *La sculpture copte*, «Dossiers d'archéologie», 226 (1997), pp. 28-29.

<sup>57</sup> C. Rossi, *Umm el-Dabadib, Roman Settlement in the Kharga Oasis: Description of the Visible Remains. With a Note on 'Ayn Amur*; «Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts», 56 (2000), pp. 235-352; S. Brones, C. Duvette, *Le fort d'El-Deir, oasis de Kharga: 'État des lieux' architectural et archéologique*, «Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale», 107 (2008), pp. 5-41; C. Rossi, *Controlling the Borders of the Empire: The Distribution of Late-Roman 'Forts' in the Kharga Oasis*, in *The Oasis Papers 6. Proceedings of the Sixth Conference of the Dakhla Oasis Project*, cur. R.S. Bagnall, P. Davoli, C.A. Hope, Oxford 2013, pp. 331-336; G. Tallet, J.-P. Bravard, R. Garcier, *Leau perdue d'une micro-oasis. Premiers résultats d'une prospection archéologique et géoarchéologique du système d'irrigation d'El-Deir, oasis de Kharga (Égypte)*, in *Les Réseaux d'eau courante dans l'Antiquité Réparations, modifications, réutilisations, abandon, récupération*, cur. C. Abadie-Reynal, S. Provost, P.

built for the defence of the western border and for the protection of the local, probably very profitable, productive activities. If, however, there cannot be any doubt about the Roman imprint of the defensive building strategy and the centralised management of the occupation of the territory, the presence of Latin speakers is still to be proven. A fragmentary scratch inscription found in 'Ayn Gib, of which only the word *ALAE* remained at the time of discovery, is in fact all that has so far been found in Latin<sup>58</sup>. On the contrary, the funerary practices, the material culture and even the linear units of measurement used in construction are local, fully Egyptian<sup>59</sup>.

Vipard, Rennes 2011, pp. 173-188; G. Tallet, C. Gradel, S. Guédon, *Le site d'El-Deir, à la croisée des routes du désert occidental: nouvelles perspectives sur l'implantation de l'armée romaine dans le désert égyptien*, in *Grecs et Romains en Égypte. Territoires, espaces de la vie et de la mort, objets de prestige et du quotidien*. Actes du Colloque International de la SFAC, Paris, 15 novembre 2007, cur. P. Ballet, Le Caire 2012, pp. 75-92; C. Rossi, G. Magli, *Wind, Sand and Water. The Orientation of the Late Roman Forts in the Kharga Oasis (Egyptian Western Desert)*, in *Archaeoastronomy in the Roman World*, cur. G. Magli, A.C. González-García, J. Belomonte Aviles, E. Antonello, Cham 2019, pp. 156-166; C. Rossi, G.B. Chirico, A. Migliozi, S. Mazzoleni, *Greening the Desert at the Southern Edge of the Empire: The Irrigation System of the Late Roman Site of Umm al-Dabadib (Kharga Oasis, Egypt)*, in *Proceedings of the Mediterranean Forum on Water Sources, Matera, October 18-22, 2015* (forthcoming) N. De Troia, *On the Edge of the Empire at the End of the Late Roman Period: The Kharga Oasis Sites as a Case Study*, in *Living the End of Antiquity: Individual History from Byzantine to Islamic Egypt*, cur. S.R. Huebner, E. Garosi, I. Marthot-Santaniello, M. Müller, S. Schmidt, M. Stern, Berlin 2020, pp. 163-179.

<sup>58</sup> C. Rossi, S. Ikram, *North Kharga Oasis Survey: Explorations in Egypt's Western Desert*, Leuven 2018, fig. 17. I am grateful to C. Rossi for the very useful discussion that I had with her on the identity of the groups who managed the forts of Kharga and on the settlement strategies applied in that area.

<sup>59</sup> F. Fiorillo, C. Rossi, *Metric Analysis and Interpretation of the Unit of Measurement in the Late Roman Fort of Umm al-Dabadib (Egypt)*, in IMEKO,

Being a Roman or representing Rome – as is the case for the soldiers stationed in the various *castra* or in the various settlements connected to fortifications (Dionysias, Luxor, the just mentioned forts of Kharga), on whose consistency and location we are also informed from the *Notitia Dignitatum* – did not necessarily mean making use of Latin or leaving visible traces of one's own identity.

Despite its well-known role in rhetorical training in Greek and Latin, at least until the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD<sup>60</sup>, even at Alexandria the late antique *Latinitas* left very tenuous traces, including at a governmental level, if we consider that the latest inscription – and datable with certainty (AD 384-389) – that has been found is the dedication to the praetorian prefect Cynegius Maternus, dating back to the age of Arcadius<sup>61</sup>. After all, as Raffaella Cribiore observes, «it is very difficult

*International Conference on Metrology for Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Lecce, Italy, October 23-25, 2017* (<http://hdl.handle.net/11311/1045444>); C. Rossi, F. Fiorillo, *A Metrological Study of the Late Roman Fort of Umm al-Dabadib, Kharga Oasis (Egypt)*, «Nexus Network Journal. Architecture and Mathematics», 20 (2018), pp. 373-391.

<sup>60</sup> On the privileged role of Alexandria in the school formation in rhetoric, grammar and philosophy, see Cavenaile, *Le latin* cit., p. 105; Cribiore, *Higher education* cit., pp. 47; 51-52; 56. For poetry and the *belles lettres*, see J.-L. Fournet, *L'enseignement des belles-lettres dans l'Alexandrie antique tardive*, in *Alexandria Auditoria at Kôm el-Dikka and Late Antique Education*, cur. T. Derda, T. Markiewicz, E. Wipszycka, Warsaw 2007, pp. 97-112; G. Agosti, *Greek Poetry in Late Antique Alexandria: Between Culture and Religion*, in *The Alexandrian Tradition Interactions between Science, Religion, and Literature*, cur. L.A. Guichard, M. Paz de Hoz, Bern 2014, pp. 287-312.

<sup>61</sup> LSA 0872 (<http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/database/detail-base.php?record=LSA-872>); TM 106277; *CIL* III 19; *CIL* III Suppl. I,1, 6587. *Domini nostri, invictissimi et venerabiles | ac perpetui Augusti, Theodosius et | Arcadius, toto orbe victores, | Materno Cynegio, omnium virtutum viro et ad | insignem laudem gloriamque progenito, per | omnes honorum gradus meritorum con-|templatione provecto, praefecto | praetorio per orientem, statuam | civili habitu,*

to reconstruct the story of the law school of Alexandria, because the only evidence dates to 533, when the school was eliminated»<sup>62</sup>.

Certainly, there can be no doubt that the so-called 'Villa of the birds', found in the north-eastern area of Kom el Dikka, with its very classic layout that is typical of a *domus* of the imperial age (1<sup>st</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD), belonged to a Roman<sup>63</sup>. However, it is much less easy to define the culture of those who occupied the late antique phase of the same building (5<sup>th</sup> century AD)<sup>64</sup>, which benefitted from the proximity of the huge late antique baths, still in the course of excavation<sup>65</sup>, and the presence of the now famous *odeia*<sup>66</sup>.

This brief and non-exhaustive excursus in some Egyptian areas, where the presence of Rome and the 'Romans' was stronger in the late antique period, with some digressions in the centuries of the full

*ad petitem primorum nobilissime (sic!) | Alexandrinae urbis, in eadem splendida | urbe, ad perpetuitatis famam, loco cele-/berrimo constitui collocarique iusserunt, | per clarissimos Alexandrinae civitatis.* An exceptional case is the graffito, datable between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, discovered in 1822 by L. de Bellefonds near the temple of Musawwarat el-Sofra, located about 120 km north of Khartoum (*AE* 2006, 1636). Dedicated to *Fortuna*, it is the legacy of a pilgrim about whom we do not have any other information, since we do not know the reasons that drove him so south: *Bona Fortun[a] dominae | reginae in multos an-|nos feliciter venit | (a)b Urbe mense Apr(ili) | die XV [et(?)et]idit Acu-|tus.* TM 106297. Cfr. A. Łajtar, J. van der Vliet, *Rome – Meroe – Berlin. The Southernmost Latin Inscription Rediscovered (CIL III 83)*, «*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*», 157 (2006), pp. 193-198.

<sup>62</sup> Cribiore, *Higher education* cit., p. 57.

<sup>63</sup> W. Kolataj, G. Majcherek, E. Parandowska, *Villa of the Birds. The Excavation and Presentation of Kom el-Dikka Mosaics*, Cairo - New York 2007.

<sup>64</sup> M. Rodziewicz, *Alexandrie III, Les habitations romaines tardives d'Alexandrie à la lumière des fouilles polonaise à Kom el-Dikka*, Varsovie 1984.

<sup>65</sup> W. Kołataj, *Alexandrie VI, Imperial Baths at Kom el-Dikka*, Varsovie 1992.

<sup>66</sup> Derda, Markiewicz, Wipszycka, *Alexandria Auditoria* cit.

Imperial age, suggests that, even when in Egypt the number of Latin speakers – if not exactly Romans – must have been more consistent. It is not necessarily the case that they left visible traces of their presence and, above all, it is not necessarily true that they made use of Latin; rather, they reserved the revelation of their identity essentially to the funerary inscriptions, in this case really in Latin<sup>67</sup>.

Paradoxically, it is precisely the non-Romans who have left the most notable evidence of the use of Latin in late antique Egypt and not because of a practical need or a natural linguistic education, but by choice. It is this Latin which, in relation to Greek and Coptic, is most worth investigating, at least from the Coptological point of view.

### 3. *Latin as a Language of Status and its Range of Use*

In the karstic appearing and disappearing of Latin, in different moments and in different socio-cultural contexts, thanks to the testimony of manuscripts, which remain our most important source, it is quite clear that those who used it, especially from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, were not naturally Latin speaking. These people therefore had to face all the difficulties that handling a foreign language entails, starting from the need to have useful tools for its learning, such as lexicons and grammars<sup>68</sup>. It is to this context that

<sup>67</sup> It is the case of the re-used stela of the freedman found in Oxyrhynchus mentioned above, and also of the stela of C. Iulius Valerius who, although he died at the age of three, is called *miles* of the *Legio II Traiana*. This limestone stela, of uncertain provenance (Terenouthis?), dates back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD and is kept in the Brooklyn Museum (<https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/9362>, l.a. 16/01/2021).

<sup>68</sup> Scappaticcio, *Artes grammaticae* cit. See the interesting case dealt with by W. Clarysse, B. Rochette, *Un alphabet grec en caractères latins*, «Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete», 51.1 (2005), pp. 67-75; D. Feissel, *Deux modèles de cursive latine dans l'ordre alphabétique grec*, in *Sixty-Five*

the following manuscripts should be referred: Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, PSI 848 (*PSI VII 848*), papyrus codex from the Arsinoite *nomos* containing *Aesopica*, with Latin translation<sup>69</sup>, or the fragment of 4<sup>th</sup>-century AD papyrus codex, from Hermopolis, containing Isocrates, *Ad Nicoclem* 7-8; *Ad Demonium* 47-48<sup>70</sup>, or the slightly earlier manuscript that bears Babrius' fables<sup>71</sup>.

Cribiore reminds us that:

It was argued recently that there was no official policy at the time of Diocletian to raise the status of Latin, and this is probably true. Yet one cannot underestimate the fact that most of the Latin and bilingual papyri preserved (documents along with literary and semi-literary texts) date from the period after Diocletian. It is commonly maintained that in that period someone aspiring to enter the public administration needed to learn Latin and went through a school called *σχολή τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν*<sup>72</sup>.

Likewise, according to Jean-Luc Fournet:

*Papyrological Texts. Presented to Klaas A. Worp on the Occasion of his 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday (P.L.Bat. 33)*, cur. F.A.J. Hoogendijk, B.P. Muhs, Leiden - Boston 2008, pp. 53-64 (rist. in Id., *Documents, droit, diplomatique*, Paris 2010, pp. 541-551).

<sup>69</sup> See the description of the manuscript on PSI online (<http://www.psi-online.it/documents/psi;7;848>).

<sup>70</sup> Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum, Papyrussammlung, P. 21245 (*BKT IX 149*; *TM 61384*), classified as school exercise, although it should be referred to a very high level.

<sup>71</sup> New York (NY), Pierpont Morgan Library, Amherst Gr. 26 (*P.Amb. II 26*; *TM 59335*). B. Rochette, *Papyrologica bilingua Graeco-Latina*, «Aegyptus», 76 (1996), pp. 57-79, esp. 62 writes that: «autochtones semblent être parvenus à une bonne maîtrise du latin. Une belle illustration du caractère fragmentaire des connaissances latines des hellénophones d'Égypte est donnée par la traduction latine de trois fables de Babrios (11, 16 et 17), due à un hellénophon».

<sup>72</sup> Cribiore, *Higher education* cit., p. 58.



In the name of a very Roman type of pragmatism, the new power did not attempt to break with the previous linguistic tradition; rather, by availing itself of existing structures, it accepted that the administration continued using Greek while introducing Latin into it under certain circumstances (some documents originating in the army or concerning it, as well as those related to Roman citizenship)<sup>73</sup>.

This is certainly true, as we have already pointed out, but it is a fact that most of the post-Diocletian attestations of Latin seem to have nothing to do with administration or law. The Latin of late antique Egypt is not only a functional language, but also and mainly the manifestation of cultural choice. To quote again Criboire:

The fact that seven of the glossaries assembled by Kramer are dated after the fourth century (in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries) is a significant testimony that the need to learn Latin continued. ... The majority of the glossaries show a peculiar feature: they are written throughout in Greek, with Latin words transliterated<sup>74</sup>.

It is therefore essentially Hellenophones (or Coptophones) who engaged at various levels with Latin.

<sup>73</sup> J.-L. Fournet, *The Rise of Coptic: Egyptian versus Greek in Late Antiquity*, Princeton - Oxford 2020, p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Criboire, *Higher education* cit., p. 59. The same observation is formulated by Rochette – who bases his reflections also on the fact that Latin orthography follows the pronunciation – and even before by A. Bataille, *Glossaires greco-latins sur papyrus*, «Recherches de Papyrologie», 4 (1967), pp. 161-169. See Rochette, *Papyrologica bilingua* cit., pp. 63; 70-74. On the absence of proper exercises in Latin, Criboire, *Higher education* cit., p. 62 observes: «I suggest, therefore, that students did a very limited amount of written work, because they aimed at acquiring only reading literacy. If we consider once again the reasons why people needed to learn Latin, that is to enter the administration and to learn Roman law, we see that insisting on writing skills was superfluous». See also Criboire, *Latin Literacy* cit.

Of all the cases of 're-emergence' of Latin in 'Coptic' Egypt, certainly one of the most significant is that of the 'library' consisting of the so-called 'Bodmer Papyri' or 'Dishna Papers', an expression by which this ancient and problematic late antique book collection is increasingly frequently referred.

The introduction to the proceedings of the conference held in Rome, in February 2014, effectively summarises the main problematic aspects relating to the constitution and composition of this set of books:

Biblical texts in Greek and Coptic, among the oldest and most important for both the Old and the New Testament studies; classical comedies considered to be lost, as Menander's *Dyskolos*; collections of classicizing poems such as those preserved in the *Codex of Visions*, where poets of the 4<sup>th</sup> century describe their religious experiences or express in their own way the biblical traditions; Coptic texts of Biblical character or of homiletic content; the *Homily on the Passover* by Melito of Sardis and the *Acts* of the martyr bishop Phileas of Thmuis, illustrious victim of the Diocletian's persecution (303-305); poetry and liturgical hymns and prayers in Greek and Latin. Exploring this set of codices means to reconstruct a significant phase of the religious and cultural transformation of the Egyptian society and the Mediterranean world between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The 'Bodmer library' is to be set within a cultural environment deeply attracted by classical *paideia*, but also open to new religious phenomena, whose impact the 'community' (in the broader sense of the term) tried to express according to its traditional forms of expression. While recognizing the importance of the Greek and Latin literary traditions, people somehow involved in the library favored the growing of Coptic, the new literary language of the most advanced classes of Hellenized Egyptians; while living in a world of social and religious tensions, such as the last persecution or the beginning of Constantinian era, they paid attention to the affirmation of the institutional Church and the birth of monasticism<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>75</sup> G. Agosti, P. Buzi, A. Camplani, *Bodmer Papyri. Libraries, Ascetic Congregations, and Literary Culture, in Greek, Coptic, and Latin, Within Late-*

Much has been said about the owners of this ancient library and, although I am personally inclined to believe that, at least initially, it did not belong to a monastic community – and certainly not to an organised one –, what matters here are the codicological, palaeographic and linguistic aspects. These define it as a set of books that reflect the needs of owners, who not only were strongly linked to classical culture, to the point of composing original works inspired by it, but were capable of materially producing, inside their own environment, the codices in question.

It is more and more evident, in fact, that some of the manuscripts attributable to the ‘Dishna Papers’ are actually more notebooks than real books. Such a state of affairs is suggested by their manufacture (often these are single quire or unbound codices and small in size), but also by the *mise en page* (the relationship between the written and unwritten area on the page) and *mise en texte* (the devices for the presentation and articulation of the text) aspects.

Notebooks are certainly Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ac. 1499 (P.Chester Beatty inv. Ac. 1499), which contains a Greek-Latin lexicon based on the Pauline Epistles, as well as conjugations in Greek<sup>76</sup>, and Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ac. 1390 (P.Chester

*Antique Egypt*, «Adamantius», 21 (2015), pp. 6-7. For a ‘census’ of the manuscripts belonging to this library, see Fournet, *Anatomie* cit.

<sup>76</sup> TM 61873. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ac. 1499 (P.Chester Beatty inv. Ac. 1499), even if it is not an unbound quire, like Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ac. 1390 (P.Chester Beatty inv. Ac. 1390), was originally a blank manuscript, sold for the purpose of receiving notes, to the point that only part of the sheets are actually written. B. van Regemorter, *Le papetier-libraire en Égypte*, «Chronique d’Égypte», 35 (1960), p. 280. A.P. Wouters, *The Chester Beatty Codex AC 1499: A Graeco-Latin Lexicon on the Pauline Epistles and a Greek Grammar*, Leuven 1988. Cribiore, *Higher education* cit., p. 49 defines Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ac. 1499 (P.Chester Beatty inv. Ac. 1499) as a learning tool: «Chester Beatty

Beatty inv. Ac. 1390), in which some accounts coexist with a passage from the *Gospel of John*.

Also the famous *Codex Miscellaneus Barcinonensis* – in which Cicero (*Catilinariae* 1-2, in Latin)<sup>77</sup>, an acrostic hymn on the Virgin (in Latin)<sup>78</sup>, an acrostic hymn on the sacrifice of Isaac (in Greek), an hexametric poem on Alcestis (in Latin)<sup>79</sup>, four prayers (in Greek), a fable on emperor Hadrian (in Latin)<sup>80</sup>, and a stenographic *commentarium*<sup>81</sup>, as well as a mythological drawing are assembled<sup>82</sup> – although in terms of content and material aspect it is more complex than the two examples already examined, in the layout it betrays its private aspect, that of a sort of notebook on which to transcribe texts of immediate interest and usefulness. As a book, it is not a high-quality product but as a personal item, it is good.

Such a state of affairs, on the other hand, is confirmed by the recent multi-disciplinary investigations carried out by Sofia Torallas

Codex AC 1499, for example, combined extensive grammatical tables and a Greek-Latin glossary of the Pauline epistles».

<sup>77</sup> Ciceró. *Catilinàries*, ed. R. Roca-Puig, Barcelona 1977; G. Nocchi Macedo, *Bilinguisme, digraphisme et multiculturalisme dans le codex miscellaneus de Montserrat*, in *Bilinguisme et digraphisme dans le monde grécoromain: l'apport des papyrus latins*. Actes de la Table Ronde internationale (Liège, 12-13 mai 2011), cur. M.-H. Marganne, B. Rochette, Liège 2013, pp. 139-168, esp. 144.

<sup>78</sup> For a list of the prayers see Gabriel Nocchi Macedo, *Bilinguisme, digraphisme* cit., p. 148; Marcovich, *Alcestis* cit.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Gil, Torallas Tovar, *Hadrianus* cit.

<sup>81</sup> *To the Origins of Greek Stenography*. P.Monts.Roca. I, edd. S. Torallas Tovar, K.A. Worp, Barcelona 2006, pp. 15-24.

<sup>82</sup> For an interpretation of the drawing as Hercules see R. Roca-Puig, *Quatre papiers inèdits*, in R. Roca - Puig *i la ciència dels papirs*, Algerri 1989, pp. 139-169. According to G. Nocchi Macedo the sketch would rather represent Perseus saving Andromeda.

Tovar and Tea Ghigo, who have analysed its inks in combination with the palaeographic<sup>83</sup> and codicological aspects:

Previous palaeographic analysis identified only one hand as responsible for the composition of the codex, both in its Greek and Latin texts. The variation in language, page set-up and contents suggested that the book was not conceived as a single product, but was probably produced in successive phases according to the needs of the scribe. Now, elemental analysis on some of the leaves has revealed and confirmed that it was written in consecutive phases. We observed that there was a difference in the composition of the inks from the several sections, and in some cases, even within the same section, thus further indicating that the production did not happen in one instance, but rather the scribe stopped, maybe produced or procured new ink, and then continued writing at a later moment. In addition, both archaeometric and textual analysis suggest that the last section, the list of Greek words connected to stenography, was written in a different environment than the other sections. Further research on samples of papyrus and parchment manuscripts has pointed out the split that remained for a few centuries in the literary and documentary use in some areas of Egypt: iron-gall inks used mostly for the former vs. carbon inks extensively used for the latter. We imagine that such traditions and customs weighed heavily in the production of ink in the scriptoria or offices where documents were produced. In conclusion, we can assume that this small codex belonged to one single person who composed it in different moments. ... The owner of the codex used iron-gall ink in the composition of the literary texts, but when he copied the words list ... – the only text in the codex which is not literary –, he used a different kind of ink, perhaps because he was at that point working in a scriptorium or office devoted to the production of documents<sup>84</sup>.

<sup>83</sup> The writing of *Codex Barcinonensis* was already associated by Lowe to that of Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ac. 1499 (P.Chester Beatty inv. Ac. 1499). Cfr. Elias A. Lowe in *CLA Suppl.* 1772.

<sup>84</sup> T. Ghigo, S. Torallas Tovar, *Between Literary and Documentary Practices: The Montserrat Codex Miscellaneus (Inv. Nos. 126-178, 292, 338) and the Material*

The interest of the *Codex Miscellaneus* is further increased by the presence of the colophon-dedication, inserted in a *tabula ansata*, addressed to a certain Dorotheus, son of Quintus, for whom evidently – whether or not it is the same Dorotheus of the ‘Codex of Visions’ – the work had been copied. This fact that reveals, at least in this specific case, a direct relationship between scribe and client<sup>85</sup>.

Recently Ágnes T. Mihálykó<sup>86</sup> has also dealt with the *Codex Miscellaneus* and its purpose. She confirms what Gabriel Nocchi Macedo<sup>87</sup> had already observed, namely that the copyist who wrote it proves to be much more at ease with Greek than with Latin, and relates it to «some sort to educational context»<sup>88</sup>. Moreover, the scholar refutes the opinion of Alberto Camplani, according to whom the purpose of this set of texts would have been, as in the case of the ‘Codex of Visions’ and *P.Crosby Schøyen*, to stimulate

*Investigation of Its Inks*, in *Coptic Literature in Context (4<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> cent.): Cultural Landscape, Literary Production and Manuscript Archaeology*. Proceedings of the Third Conference of the ERC project ‘Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature. Literary Texts in their Geographical Context’ (‘PATHs’), cur. P. Buzi, Roma 2020, pp. 99-112, esp. 108-109.

<sup>85</sup> Fournet, *Anatomie* cit., p. 13: «Faut-il en fin de compte mettre l’usage du latin en rapport avec la personnalité de Dorôthéos, dont le père s’appelait Quintus, nom rarissime en Égypte et qui trahit peut-être des origines latines?».

<sup>86</sup> Á.T. Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri: An Introduction*, Tübingen 2019, pp. 113-114; 206-209; 258-259.

<sup>87</sup> Nocchi Macedo, *Bilinguisme, digraphisme* cit., p. 162.

<sup>88</sup> Mihálykó, *Liturgical Papyri* cit., p. 207. On the other hand, G. Ammannati, *L’Hadriannus del P.Monts.Roca III*, «Materiali e Discussioni», 81 (2018), pp. 221-240 has argued that the antigraph of the *Hadriannus* was written in new cursive, a writing that would have required advanced deciphering skills.

reflection on baptism<sup>89</sup>; more reasonably Mihálykó proposes that the textual collection was aimed at mnemonic learning, thus confirming the private and ‘formative’ character of the book collection, or at least of part of it, even if, with a logical passage perhaps a little too fast, she assumes a role of priest for Dorotheus:

However, the presence of Cicero and tachygraphy in P.Monts. Roca sits uncomfortably with Camplani’s hypothesis. Thus another proposal may be advanced concerning the use of this codex: one thing some of these texts have in common is the fact that they are to be memorized. Learning a language in antiquity involved committing texts to memory, and the *Contra Catilinam* lends itself particularly well to this purpose; perhaps the acrostic hymn was also chosen because acrostics are a good mnemotechnical device. The prayers, if they were not to be read aloud from the book, could be performed by memory. Thus perhaps the scribe presented Dorotheus with a selection of texts that could learn by heart, including a selection of prayers. If this hypothesis is tenable, the Eucharist was meant to be performed by Dorotheus. This would suggest that Dorotheus served as a priest, and the scribe included the prayer texts as proposals for his liturgical office<sup>90</sup>.

<sup>89</sup> A. Camplani, *Per un profilo storico-religioso degli ambienti di produzione e fruizione dei Papiri Bodmer: contaminazione dei linguaggi e dialettica delle idee nel contesto del dibattito su dualismo e origenismo*, «Adamantius», 21 (2015), pp. 98-135.

<sup>90</sup> Mihálykó, *Liturgical Papyri* cit., pp. 208-209. Later, however (p. 258), the author affirms: «The Latin hymn (foll. 149b-153b) presents the title *Psalmus responsorius* and a four-verse strophe at the beginning, probably a refrain. This suggests actual performance of the hymn, but perhaps not in the circles where the manuscript was copied; Dorotheus, to whom the codex was dedicated, more likely used the hymn for learning Latin along with other Latin texts in the codex». Mihálykó also mentions Manchester, John Rylands Library, Gr. 472 (P.Ry)/ III 472, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD) as an example of a liturgical text of private use by a Latin-speaking family.

If Mihálykó's opinion about the circumscribed, private, and 'formative' use of the *Miscellaneus* is reasonable, this does not mean that all the texts selected for it must necessarily have a liturgical purpose. In any case, the Latin of the 'Dishna Papers', although largely limited compared to Coptic and Greek<sup>91</sup>, is certainly crucial to outline the personality of the owners of the library: the 'language of the Romans' is handled with awareness, but little dexterity, both graphic and linguistic<sup>92</sup>, and by no means represents a practical necessity, but a choice that corresponds to an intercultural formation based also on the classical *paideia* – evidently absorbed in some urban centre of the area (Panopolis?)<sup>93</sup> – and to the strong will to manifest it.

<sup>91</sup> For the proportions between the two languages see R. Kasser, *Introduction*, in *Bibliotheca Bodmeriana. La collection des Papyrus Bodmer. Manuscrits de textes grecs classiques, grecs et coptes bibliques et de littérature chrétienne, du 2<sup>e</sup> au 9<sup>e</sup> siècle; édition complète d'un des plus importants fonds de textes antiques et bibliques*, Munich 2000, p. xxiv. The parchment codices are at least five, all in Coptic. Among the papyrus codices – six of which are single-quire codices – two are in Latin (and partly in Greek), at least nine in Coptic, and at least six in Greek. Buzi, *Qualche riflessione* cit., p. 49.

<sup>92</sup> I agree with Fournet, *Anatomie* cit., p. 13 when he affirms: «On a relevé que les textes latins du Codex de Montserrat ou du *P. Chester Beatty Ac. 1499* trahissaient un manque de familiarité avec les usages de l'écriture latine et une moindre aisance en latin qu'en grec. On a donc affaire à des textes écrits par ou pour des Grécoégyptiens apprenant le latin comme on en a beaucoup d'autres pour cette période où le besoin se faisait sentir d'accéder à la connaissance d'une langue indispensable pour une carrière dans la haute fonction publique. Mais la composante majoritairement religieuse de la bibliothèque n'oriente pas nécessairement vers un tel profil – encore qu'il ne soit pas incompatible avec celui-ci».

<sup>93</sup> The role of poetry in this library is noteworthy, also in its liturgical dimension; see G. Agosti, *La poesia greca nella Biblioteca Bodmer: aspetti letterari e socio-culturali*, «Adamantius», 21 (2015), pp. 86-97, esp. 86-87: «Né è assente la poesia liturgica sia greca che latina, rappresentata dall'inno ritmico sul sacrificio di Isacco (P.Monts.Roca inv. 157ab), e dal *Psalmus*



It is precisely this kind of production that explains and justifies the proliferation of lexicons and other tools useful for learning<sup>94</sup>.

Changing region, the Manichean community of Kellis, and in particular the famous *P. Kellis* V 20 ll. 24-26, found in secondary deposition in ‘House 3’ together with other manuscripts, which mentions the way in which a certain Piene<sup>95</sup> will learn the ‘language of the Romans’, represent a completely different case, as the study of Latin appears functional to a travel. It does not seem to be something that could be learned in Kellis: «the great teacher let him (*referring to Piene*) travel with him, so that he might learn Latin (*ΜΝΤΡΩΜΑΙΟΣ, sic!*). He teaches him well».

On the other hand, as has already been noted, in Kharga there is only one epigraphic attestation in Latin, which is strictly connected to the military environment and probably not even of an official nature. Not dissimilar is the case of the ‘internal oasis’, Dakhla, where there is certainly no lack of evidence of classical cultural practices – it is enough to mention here the house of Serenos and the school connected to it, decorated with paintings of classical subjects – but which did not return any text in Latin or any other artefact attributable to the *Latinitas* or the *Romanitas*, even in a very vague sense<sup>96</sup>.

*responsorius* (P.Monts.Roca inv. 149b-153). Entrambi provengono dal medesimo codice pluritestuale greco-latino, a fascicolo unico e composto da 28 bifogli, della metà del IV secolo, che ha restituito oltre Alcesti anche Cicerone, preghiere in greco, un commentario tachigrafico e una composizione sull'imperatore Adriano».

<sup>94</sup> Kramer in *C.Gloss.Biling.* I; *C.Gloss.Biling.* II.

<sup>95</sup> *P.Kellis* XX 28-39. On the role of Latin in Kellis see also *P.Kellis* I 77; 30. *P.Kellis* I, pp. 75-76; 167.

<sup>96</sup> On the *status quaestionis* concerning the research carried out in the ‘great oasis’, by which I mean the whole of Kharga and Dakhla, related to all the historical periods, see *The Oasis Papers 9: A Tribute to Anthony J. Mills after Forty Years in Dakheleb Oasis*, cur. G.E. Bowen, C.A. Hope, Oxford 2019. On Ahmeida in particular see *An Oasis City*, cur. R.S. Bagnall, N.

As for the very few terms of Latin origin which appear in the manuscripts of the other important Manichaean finding in Egypt, that of Medinet Madi – whose exact archaeological context, however, is unknown, as it was the result of a non-authorised excavation carried out in 1929 or slightly before<sup>97</sup> – their contribution is reduced to what has already been observed in general on the lexical ‘fossils’ incorporated by Coptic literature<sup>98</sup>. Terms like **σκορδικκος**, *scordiscus* «saddle», clearly do not contribute, even minimally, to the comprehension of the uses of Latin in late antique Egypt.

One discovery deserves a final mention. It is completely eccentric with respect to what has been exposed so far – and therefore to be analysed with due caution – but I believe it has not received enough attention and it could hide more than what is apparent at first glance. It is what remains of a luxury multiple-text codex that bears various works of Augustine (among which is *De sermone Domini in monte*, *Contra Arrianos*, *Sermo* 118). Datable to the 6<sup>th</sup> century

Aravecchia, R. Criore, P. Davoli, O.E. Kaper, S. McFadden, New York 2015. Lastly, on the house of Serenos: P. Davoli, R. Criore, *Una scuola di greco del IV secolo d.C. a Trimithis (Oasi di Dakhla)*, in *Leggere greco e latino fuori dai confini del mondo antico*. Atti del I Congresso Nazionale dell'Associazione Italiana di Cultura Classica, Lecce, 10-11 maggio 2008, cur. M. Capasso, Lecce 2010, pp. 73-83; R. Criore, P. Davoli, *New Literary Texts from Ambeida, Ancient Trimithis (Dakla Oasis, Egypt)*, «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», 187 (2013), pp. 1-14.

<sup>97</sup> C. Schmidt, *Neue Originalquellen des Manichäismus aus Ägypten*, Stuttgart 1933, pp. 16-20; J.M. Robinson, *The Fate of the Manichaean Codices of Medinet Madi 1929-1989*, in *Studia Manichaica II*. Internationaler Kongress zum Manichäismus, 6.-10. August 1989 St. Augustin - Bonn, cur. G. Wiessner, H.-J. Klimkeit, Wiesbaden 1992, pp. 19-62; Id., *The Manichaean Codices of Medinat Madi (Terenouthis)*, in *XVIII International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Moscow, 8-15 August 1992*, Amsterdam 1993, pp. 950-951; Id., *The Manichaean Codices of Medinet Madi*, Cambridge 2010.

<sup>98</sup> Allberry, *Greek and Latin* cit., p. 20.

AD, its fragments (of which there are more than fifty both big and small) were found at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Cairo *genizah*. The codex in question, which was very likely imported from Italy, as its palaeographic features suggest, was re-used four centuries later, rotated 90 degrees, to transcribe a Masoretic text<sup>99</sup>. It is of course possible that the codex was brought to Egypt just before the genesis of its second life<sup>100</sup>, but we cannot exclude that it remained in Egypt a long time before being re-used. If, on the one hand, it is true that Fustat<sup>101</sup>, the settlement from which Cairo would have devel-

<sup>99</sup> TM 59328; LDAB 426. Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 4320 a-c. H.A.G. Houghton, *New Identifications Among the Sixth-Century Fragments of Augustine in Cambridge University Library*, «*Sacris Erudiri*», 58 (2019), pp. 171-179, esp. 171: «The ‘Cambridge Fragments’ have been known since 1916, when details of the three largest pieces were published by Francis Crawford Burkitt. 1 These were found in the Cairo Genizah at the end of the nineteenth century and acquired by Cambridge University Library in 1899. The Augustine texts, written on parchment in a fine Italian uncial hand of the sixth century, had been palimpsested in the ninth or tenth century with a set of Hebrew masoretic lists on books including Joshua, 1 Samuel and Isaiah. Pages of the original manuscript were simply folded in half to create the new document and some of the undertext remains relatively legible to the naked eye, although it is often obscured by the overwriting and there is extensive decay to the parchment». See also F.C. Burkitt, *Augustine-Fragments from the Cairo Genizah*, «*The Journal of Theological Studies*», 17 (1916), pp. 137-138.

<sup>100</sup> It is not useless to recall that the most ancient texts found in the Cairo *genizah* date back exactly to the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>101</sup> P. Casanova, *Essai de reconstitution topographique de la ville d'al Fostat ou Miṣr*, Le Caire 1913; G.T. Scanlon, *Preliminary Report: Excavations at Fustat, 1964*, «*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*», 4 (1965), pp. 6-30; Id., *Preliminary Report: Excavations at Fustat, 1965. Part I*, «*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*», 5 (1966), pp. 83-112; Id., *Preliminary Report: Excavations at Fustat, 1965. Part II*, «*Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*», 6 (1967), pp. 65-86; Id., *Prelimina-*

oped, had not yet been funded in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD<sup>102</sup>, on the other hand, it is worth recalling that it was created close to the fortress of Babylon<sup>103</sup> (ΒΑΒΥΛΩΝ ΝΧΗΜΗ «Babylon of Egypt» or ΒΑΒΥΛΩΝ

*ry Report: Excavations at Fustat, 1966*, «Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt», 10 (1973), pp. 11-25; Id., *Preliminary Report: Excavations at Fustat, 1968. Part I*, «Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt», 11 (1974), pp. 81-91; Id., *Preliminary Report: Excavations at Fustat, 1968. Part II*, «Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt», 13 (1976), pp. 69-89; Id., *Preliminary Report: Excavations at Fustat, 1972. Part II*, «Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt», 19 (1982), pp. 119-129; Id., *Preliminary Report: Excavations at Fustat, 1978*, «Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt», 21 (1984), pp. 1-38; R.-P. Gayraud, S. Björnesjö, S. Denoix, *Istabl 'Antar (Fostat) 1985. Rapport de fouilles [avec 12 planches]*, «Annales Islamologiques», 22 (1986), pp. 1-26; R.-P. Gayraud, S. Björnesjö, S. Denoix, M. Tuchscherer, *Istabl 'Antar (Fostat) 1986. Rapport de fouilles [avec 16 planches]*, «Annales Islamologiques», 23 (1987), pp. 55-71; R.-P. Gayraud, S. Björnesjö, J.-M. Muller-Woulkoff, V. Miguët, V. Roche, M. Saillard, *Istabl 'Antar (Fostat), 1987-1989. Rapport de fouilles [avec 15 planches]*, «Annales Islamologiques», 25 (1991), pp. 57-87; R.-P. Gayraud, X. Peixoto, *Istabl 'Antar (Fostat) 1990. Rapport de fouilles*, «Annales Islamologiques», 27 (1993), pp. 225-232; R.-P. Gayraud, S. Björnesjö, P. Speiser, *Istabl 'Antar (Fostat) 1992. Rapport de fouilles*, «Annales Islamologiques», 28 (1994), pp. 1-27; R.-P. Gayraud, S. Björnesjö, P. Gallo, J.-M. Mouton, F. Paris, *Istabl 'Antar (Fostat) 1994. Rapport de fouilles*, «Annales Islamologiques», 29 (1995), pp. 1-24; W.B. Kubiak, *Al-Fustat: Its Foundation and Early Urban Development*, Le Caire 1987; A.F. Saiyid, *La capitale de l'Égypte jusqu'à l'époque fatimide, al-Qabira et al-Fustat. Essai de reconstitution topographique*, Beirut - Stuttgart 1998; *The History and Religious Heritage of Old Cairo: Its Fortress, Churches, Synagogue and Mosque*, cur. C. Ludwig, M. Jackson, Le Caire 2013.

<sup>102</sup> Traditionally, the foundation of Fustat is dated to 641 / 642, but clearly the settlement at the beginning must have been little more than a military camp.

<sup>103</sup> P.J. Sheenan, *Babylon of Egypt: The Archaeology of Old Cairo and the Origins of the City*, Le Caire 2010.

ΦΟΥΣΤΑΤΩΝ «Babylon (of) *fossatum*»<sup>104</sup> which had been representing for centuries, since the Trajan's reign to be more precise, an important Roman – later, Byzantine – outpost. In addition to including a residential district, which is a feature common to all Roman fortifications, and which certainly also saw the presence of high-ranking soldiers, at least from the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, Babylon was also an episcopal see<sup>105</sup>, since the presence of a bishop from this centre is attested in the Council of Ephesus (AD 431). Furthermore, the first church in the area was built not far from the fortress, already in the seventies of the 7<sup>th</sup> century<sup>106</sup>.

It does not seem to me that the hypothesis that this codex might originate from the environment of the fortress and its residential district and bishopric, later physically incorporated in Fustat, has ever been advanced; it is a hypothesis which, although not verifiable, cannot be excluded *a priori*.

From Fustat (or from Babylon? – the confusion between the two contiguous archaeological sites is very easy), on the other hand, seems

<sup>104</sup> É. Amélineau, *Géographie de l'Égypte à l'époque copte*, Paris 1893, p. 224.

<sup>105</sup> I sincerely thank A. Camplani for informing me that Eulogius, Melkite patriarch of Alexandria, was a friend of Gregory the Great and certainly handled the works of Augustine. Before him, Liberatus consulted the archives of the diocese around AD 530. This is of course only a hypothesis, at least for the moment.

<sup>106</sup> A. Dridi, *Christians of Fustat in the First Three Centuries of Islam: The Making of a New Society*, in *A Cosmopolitan City: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Old Cairo*, cur. T. Vorderstrasse, T. Treptow, Chicago 2015, pp. 33-40, esp. 33: «...a native Christian population numerous enough to need a church was living in the city. These Christians are among the first in Egypt to have had – in a likely situation of numerical minority – interreligious and intercultural contacts with Muslims. The majority of these Christians must have lived in the pre-Islamic city of Babylon – widely mentioned in papyri before and after the Islamic conquest – located in the immediate vicinity of the new capital».

to come a peculiar amulet in Latin, also dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, which contains quotations from Psalms 15 and 20 and appeals to Christ as *medicus caelestis*<sup>107</sup>. This is a document which, among the other values, has that of documenting the pronunciation of Latin in Late Antiquity<sup>108</sup>. It is interesting to stress that the editors comment:

it is clear that the papyrus reflects the north Italian-African tradition ... one cannot rule out, for example, that a traveller from northern Italy left this amulet in the sands of Egypt<sup>109</sup>.

This is a track, that of the importation from Italy toward Fustat / Babylon – even if the editors never use this term – which would be worth following for both cases just described.

In the light of what has been exposed, it is clear that to understand fully the role of Latin in late antique Egypt, every single attestation and each individual environment of use must be considered as a case in itself. It is necessary to distinguish the spontaneous uses – practiced by first- or second-generation Latin-speakers (to which not only the handwritten attestations of imperial age can be referred, but probably also what remains of late antique luxury codices) – from the functional ones – necessary and obligatory, due to the role covered or the purpose of a specific message. And, finally,

<sup>107</sup> The text of the papyrus fragment, which was lost during the second world war, survives in the transcription of K. Preisendanz thanks to edition of R.W. Daniel, F. Maltomini, *From the African Psalter and Liturgy*, «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», 74 (1988), pp. 253-265. See also T.S. de Bruyn, J.H.F. Dijkstra, *Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements: A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets*, «Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists», 48 (2011), pp. 163-216, esp. 175.

<sup>108</sup> J. Kramer, *A Linguistic Commentary on Heidelberg's Latin Papyrus Amulet*, «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», 74 (1988), pp. 267-272.

<sup>109</sup> Daniel, Maltomini, *From the African Psalter* cit., p. 259.

from those that imply a cultural choice, a manifestation of status, of prestige, which are the most interesting<sup>110</sup>.

It is also clear that, while the transition from Greek to Coptic (and vice versa) seems to correspond to a rather widespread linguistic fluidity and therefore becomes somehow natural, this is not the case for the transition from Greek to Latin and even less, obviously, for that from Coptic to Latin. The ‘language of the Romans’ required a much greater learning effort than that demanded of an Egyptian who wanted to express himself in Greek, even in written form. The attestations of the use of Latin in Egyptian Late Antiquity, consequently, reflect a very clear choice: the desire to communicate one’s own status, one’s own belonging to a social and cultural upper class.

Lastly, it is necessary to keep always in mind the difference that exists between those who were actually Roman – therefore Latin-speaking by birth or by induced culture (this is certainly the case of the Apiones) –, those who were Romanized by frequenting environments that could not fail to involve Roman-Latin linguistic-cultural assimilation – the military, above all of medium-high rank, and the jurists –, and finally those who, Egyptian by birth and naturally bilingual, while handling Greek and Coptic (at different levels of dexterity), made use of Latin and participated of *Latinitas* by choice, thus determining the formation of those cultural circles, sometimes with tenuous outlines, for which the ‘language of the Romans’ is above all a manifestation of prestige.

<sup>110</sup> Concerning the use of Latin, I do not completely agree with Mihálykó, *Liturgical Papyri* cit., p. 255 when she affirms that: «in Christian milieus of the fourth and fifth centuries, Latin was needed to maintain contacts with the Western pilgrims attracted to the fame of Egyptian ascetics». There is much more than a necessity in the choice of using Latin in late antique Egypt.

This volume is the first work devoted to the contacts between Latin and Coptic in late antique and Byzantine Egypt. It follows in the footsteps of a renewed interest in this multilingual and multicultural area, but it approaches an untapped theme aiming to show that it can profitably be explored. The papers examine different type of evidence on the basis of a multi-perspective approach. Some of them deal with wide-ranging issues, such as the presence of Latin in monastic or scholastic contexts alongside local varieties, some others deal with specific subjects, such as the use of Latin in a certain milieu or in specific documents. All papers show that the contact between languages, scripts and cultures took many forms depending on various factors.

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