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# DOKTORI DISSZERTÁCIÓ

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## **Coptic noun phrases**

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## **Kopt főnévi szerkezetek**

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ἸΤΑΜΑΑΥ

*to my Mother*

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## *Preface*

When I was awarded the State Scholarship for PhD studies, I was aiming to summarize and analyze everything that can be known and said about the structure of the Sahidic noun phrase, but my aims gradually changed in the course of time – which can hardly be surprising when one begins to work on such an enterprise as compiling a dissertation.

Originally, I was interested in the possessive and attributive constructions in Sahidic, and also started to investigate the diachronic development of their distributional characteristics. My participation at a conference in Leipzig (Linguistic Borrowing into Coptic, Inaugural Conference of the DDGLC project. 26-28 April 2010. Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig), however, pushed me to study the dialectal variation in Coptic. During the subsequent three months I spent in Berlin at the Ägyptologisches Seminar (Freie Universität), I had access to various text editions that are not available in my home country so I was able to collect the required material to start such a new research direction. Even a superficial investigation made it clear to me that a remarkable variation can be observed in the inner structure of noun phrases if one compares the various dialects, and no description or comprehensive studies have been carried out about these phenomena. Parts of the thesis, observations and conclusions that appear at different points of this study, were presented at conferences and published in scholarly journals or edited volumes.

While completing the thesis I was working in a research group (*Hungarian Generative Diachronic Syntax*) located at the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and funded by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA grant No. 78074). Although this project is concerned with Old and Middle Hungarian, I profited from this work in many respects: first of all, my research topic in Hungarian linguistics slightly overlaps with that in Egyptology, since I study nominal constructions, determination and their developments in the history of Hungarian. Moreover, the Research Institute for Linguistics did not only provide me with a place to work at, but also with excellent colleagues to work with, who are always ready to listen to my “exotic” Egyptian data and to discuss the problems I am struggling with. I wish to thank especially Vera Hegedűs for all the talks we had on the subject and for her occasional help in English phrasing. The institute supported me financially as well through travel grants I applied for and successfully won. Thereby I could attend the 10th International Congress of

Egyptologists (22-29 May 2008, Rhodes, Department of Mediterranean Studies of the University of the Aegean) and I will be able to give a talk at the 10th International Congress of Coptic Studies to be held in Rome this September. In 2010, I could spend three months at the Freie Universität of Berlin, thanks to the support of the Hungarian State Eötvös Fellowship.

I owe special thanks to Sebastian Richter, who has organized excellent conferences in on the Egyptian language Leipzig and who also invited me to take part at the above mentioned inaugural conference of the DDGLC project. Similarly, I am indebted to the Ägyptologisches Seminar in Basel for inviting me to give a talk at the *Crossroads IV* conference. These occasions were essential in my academic curriculum because of the personal acquaintance of many excellent scholars who are concerned with Egyptian from a linguistic point of view and because of the valuable feedbacks I could get at these meetings regarding my work.

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Ulrich Luft who introduced me to the Egyptian language and from whom I learnt Coptic for numerous semesters at the University. I am also particularly grateful to Andrea Hasznos, whose MA thesis first directed my attention to the linguistic aspects of the contact between Greek and Coptic, and who never hesitated to help me to obtain rare items of the Coptological literature.

Last but not least, I wish to thank my parents for their never-ceasing patience, encouragement, and faith in my work as well as for the support (both material and emotional) without which this thesis would never have been completed.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 What is this thesis about?

This thesis is concerned with the noun phrase structure in Coptic with a special concentration on definiteness and possessive constructions as well as on attributive patterns insofar as these latter are related to the possessives in form. The thesis has both a diachronic and a comparative dialectological perspective, and this duality will be present throughout the chapters. The methods, however, will accurately be kept apart: while a diachronic study may compare data from different stages, spanning over centuries or even millennia, to get as close as possible to the understanding of language change, the study of a synchronic grammar must strictly concentrate on the system of opposition which is in operation in the actual use of the language, without considering where the various patterns come from.

The thesis does not aim at being exhaustive in listing all kinds of elements (modifiers, quantifiers, pronouns, etc.) that may come up in a noun phrase. Only those phenomena will be discussed that have relevant features either from a dialectal or from a diachronic perspective. It must be established as well that focus is on the *inner* constructional properties of the Coptic noun phrase rather than on how it appears in the sentence structure; reference to its behavior in the sentence will be made only if it is necessary for the discussion.

The dissertation is organized as follows. The second section of this introductory chapter offers a definition of the Coptic language positioning it in a cultural, historical and diachronic setting. A short presentation of the dialects follows for the readers who are not so familiar with the different Coptic varieties. Chapter two has multiple goals: it aims to provide background information both about the main properties of the Coptic nominal category and the structures that can be built on it and about the linguistic concepts and theoretical assumptions which are required for a good understanding of the rest of the thesis.

Chapter three takes some unsteady steps on the shaky grounds of determination. Although both the origin and the synchronic system of the Sahidic determiners are quite well understood, other dialects seem to exhibit alternative systems with multiple definite

articles in seemingly overlapping functions. The research here is limited to case studies and is further encumbered by the fact that not only do the dialects diverge from one another but there can be a variation among manuscripts claimed to have come from the same language variety.

All Coptic dialects have two different possessive constructions, but the conditions on their distribution seem to vary. In Sahidic, the distribution can be argued to be syntactically motivated, while in Bohairic semantic and lexical features also influence the choice between the patterns. This is the subject of chapter four, in which a long discussion of the Sahidic situation will be followed by a comparative study: the possessive structures of early Biblical manuscripts from various literary dialects will be examined systematically with a special focus on varieties which have not been extensively analyzed in this respect. (The observations already present in the literature will also be revised when necessary.) The result of this comparative syntactic method will hopefully add some useful linguistic facts to the debated issue as to how closely certain Coptic dialects are related. The last chapter focuses on attributive constructions: on the one hand, the formal likeness of the attributive and possessive constructions is discussed in a detailed analysis of their common sources and functional separation; on the other hand, a proposal will also be put forth about the grammaticalization of a generalized modifier marker in Coptic.

Considering that dialectal studies are involved, it must be emphasized that the present dissertation is not concerned with phonological questions. Morphology will be treated to the extent that it has any relevance to syntax. The thesis is concerned neither with text criticism, nor with the relation between the manuscripts in terms of literary tradition or Bible translation. The influence of translation in the appearance of these texts cannot be denied but it hardly affects the linguistic phenomena investigated in this thesis.

Examples cited in Coptic will be not only translated into English, but, for a better understanding, words will be accompanied by glosses - in line with the efforts recently present in linguistic work within the field of Egyptology, for instance in the volumes of the scholarly journal *Lingua Aegyptia*. Glosses throughout the manuscript generally follow the Leipzig Glossing Rules,<sup>1</sup> complemented by a few labels specific to Egyptian. The list of the abbreviations used in the glosses can be found at the end of the thesis.

An effort has been made to take the Sahidic examples from the early corpus described at the beginning of section 2, but considering accidental occurrences of certain linguistic

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<sup>1</sup> The rules can be downloaded from the page of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology: <http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/resources/glossing-rules.php>

phenomena citing examples from other authors' works turned out to be inevitable. The research is almost entirely confined to Biblical texts; the manuscripts I used are listed in section 1.4. Finally, the thesis is supplied with a bibliography with all the works to which reference was made.

## **1.2 Coptic and the relevance of its research**

### 1.2.1 The definition of Coptic

Coptic is by definition the last stage of the Egyptian language. According to the written evidence, it was spoken roughly between the third and the eleventh centuries in Egypt. The boundaries of this time-span are difficult to plot. The first and regular appearances of Egyptian records in Greek characters even date back to the first centuries of the modern era, but sources of this kind are grouped together under the term Old Coptic.<sup>2</sup> The standardized Coptic alphabet, which was developed from the Greek one but with additional special characters to satisfy the need of putting Egyptian in writing properly, appeared in the third century only.

It is nearly impossible to tell when it died out as a spoken variety. After the Arab conquest of Egypt in the seventh century, the Arabic language gradually replaced Coptic in many fields of use and bilingualism must have increased rapidly. By the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries it was probably used by a minority only and it survived as a living language in isolated communities, if at all. The decline of Egyptian as a spoken language is reflected first of all in the increasing number of translations into Arabic and the production of bilingual (Bohairic-Arabic) texts. Word-lists and Coptic grammars in Arabic from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries suggest that Coptic was hardly understood any more and had to be learnt from books. Its legacy, however, survived through the Christian-Egyptian culture: Coptic literature continued to be read, understood and transmitted even if no more original works were composed in the second millennium. The Bohairic variety is, however, still in use as a liturgical language in the Coptic Church.

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<sup>2</sup> These texts are considered to form a group in terms of their non-Christian origin, otherwise they can vary considerably in date and nature, their common feature being the experiments they make in rendering the Egyptian language in Greek transcription (Orlandi 1986: 54-55). For a general overview and a survey of the material, see Satzinger (1991); Kahle (1954: 252-256).

It might be somewhat misleading that nowadays the term “Coptic” is used in a religious and/or ethnical sense to denote the “Christian-Egyptians” without reference to language, thus the history of the use of this expression deserves some attention. The meaning of the word is ‘Egyptian’ the Greek *αἰγύπτιος* being as its source (this latter deriving from an ancient name of Memphis, *ḥwt-k3-ptḥ*), but the expression of *cophiti*, *cophitiae* arrived in Europe by Arabic transmission (*qubti/qibti*). Originally, the term was used by the Arabs to distinguish Egyptians from the Greek-speaking population with no religious connotation at all: it simply denoted native inhabitants who were speaking Egyptian (Orlandi 1990: 595). Later with Islam becoming more dominant in the country the term started to apply to people belonging to the Christian community, and language became secondary in this respect. Finally, as the language disappeared in favor of Arabic, it could not be linked any more to a linguistic identity and the term acquired the use we mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph. In this study, of course, Coptic is used in the sense of and as the abbreviated form of *the Coptic language*, which is the direct successor of Egyptian, and, at the same time, the latest stage of the native language of ancient Egypt.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.2.2 Vocalization, dialects and the Greek-Egyptian contact

The study of Coptic within Egyptological linguistics is particularly relevant for several reasons. Coptic writing is an alphabetic script based on Greek writing, which for the first time in the history of Egyptian makes the vocalization directly accessible.<sup>4</sup> Not only does it facilitate the synchronic understanding of the language, but it also makes possible the reconstructions of earlier stages. Without Coptic, Hieroglyphs would hardly ever have been deciphered, and the study of Coptic often advanced the linguistic analysis of the pre-Coptic stages, it is enough to refer to the seminal work of Hans Jacob Polotsky.

Another important feature of Coptic is that dialects become visible for the first time in the history of this language. It is in sharp contrast with the earlier periods, for the Egyptian sources of the previous three millennia always reflected the standardized, normalized variety of the given period. The fact that the Coptic literature is preserved in various

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<sup>3</sup> For a good summary and an introduction to Coptic studies, one may consult Depuydt (2010a) or Polotsky (1970).

<sup>4</sup> Attempts to put Egyptian language in an alphabetic system have a long history back to the Hellenistic era, but these efforts are confined to the problem of how to transcribe Egyptian names in Greek. Signs of coherent writing systems appear with various magical and astrological texts in the Roman period only (Quaegebeur 1982). For the texts and glosses in Old Coptic, see my note 2 above.

written varieties is quite extraordinary not only from a diachronic point of view. In the literature of the other oriental Christian churches, such as the Armenian, Ethiopian, Georgian, and Syriac ones, texts are typically preserved in one prestigious variety selected for this purpose (Depuydt 2010a: 740).

As a matter of fact, Coptic is not a uniform language. It survived in several literary varieties side by side, also reflecting in a sense the variety that must have been present in the spoken language. No doubt, each dialect is a standardized written form of a given set of local varieties, accordingly a sort of abstraction, but the mere fact that the co-existent dialects become visible in writing allows us to consider Coptic to be much closer to the colloquial reality than any other linguistic record of ancient Egyptian.<sup>5</sup>

The status of the various dialects is not the same of course. Some of them are definitely local idioms, others might function as regional vernaculars, and in the case of Sahidic we clearly have a supra-regional literary language, also reflected by the salient number of the sources in this dialect. It is not surprising therefore that detailed linguistic investigations have been carried out mainly on Sahidic, as it can also be observed in the following chapters.<sup>6</sup>

The dialects differ mainly in pronunciation and spelling, in addition to the slightly different vocabulary. Grammar does not seem to vary a lot. As a matter of fact, the majority of grammatical elements that apparently differ in their representations are conditioned by general phonological rules, thus do not represent true grammatical divergence among dialects. Even in the cases where the morphological variation of a certain grammatical element (e.g. a conjugation base) is independent of the overall phonological principles that differentiate the various idioms, the phenomenon still remains in the domain of morpho-phonology and has nothing to say about the grammatical systems, which are assumed to be basically the same (cf. Funk 1991 on this issue).

But it should be remembered that except for Sahidic and (classical) Bohairic, there are no coherent syntactic descriptions for the other dialects. Fine editions of texts belonging to

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<sup>5</sup> As Wolf-Peter Funk points it out in a footnote (1988: 184 n4), not even the minor, less-documented varieties can be considered as random transcripts of speech. On the contrary, almost all of the literary manuscripts are carefully written norms with a controlled use of language. There are only a few manuscripts from the early period whose language may be described as rather inconsistent, or hesitating between other written standards giving the impression of being “mixed” varieties (Cf. V4 below in table 4 and the Akhmimic *Apocalypse of Elijah*). The relationship between spoken and written language is extensively discussed by Sebastian Richter (2006) in connection with non-literary Coptic texts, and the problem is touched upon in the introduction of Andrea Hasznos’ dissertation (2009) as well.

<sup>6</sup> About the Coptic dialects the fundamental references are the followings: Worrell (1934: 63-82); Kahle (1954: 193-278); Vergote (1973: 53-59); Funk (1988); Kasser (1991a).

minor dialects usually provide an introductory chapter with detailed linguistic observations about the manuscript they publish, but these hardly ever deal with such micro-syntactic phenomena as the inner structure of nominal constructions. Just to cite an example, all Coptic dialects have two different possessive constructions, but the conditions of their distribution seem to vary. In Sahidic, the distribution can be argued to be purely syntactically motivated, while in Bohairic, semantic and lexical features also influence the choice between the patterns. Moreover, in some dialects, possessives cannot be analyzed separately from the determination system. The possessive structures of early literary dialects have not been extensively analyzed in this respect, thus a comparative syntactic study is not only needed in order to fill some descriptive gaps, but might result in a useful device to clarify the issue of how closely certain Coptic dialects are related as well.

Another characteristic of Coptic is its abundance of loan words coming from Greek. On a rough estimate, the proportion of words of Greek origin in Coptic is about 20 percent (Kasser 1991b: 217) admitting that his ratio may vary considerably depending on the register in which the individual texts were written or on the dialect involved (e.g. Bohairic is noticeably more reluctant to borrow than Sahidic).

At this point it is appropriate to say some more about the nature of Coptic at the time of its emergence. There is a widespread assumption that Coptic was primarily developed to translate the Bible, i.e. the New Testament and the Greek Version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint into the language of the Egyptian population (see e.g. Lambdin 1983: vii; Bowman 1986: 157-158). Accordingly, the creators of this literary idiom must have been fluent in Greek (Lefort 1950; Bagnall 1993: 238) and the high proportion of Greek vocabulary in Coptic might be the consequence of the translated nature of the sources. Greek words in the translated texts could be retained for various reasons, not only because of the lack of Christian technical terms in Egyptian, but also because of the translators' hesitation as to how to reproduce specific concepts, ideas or nuances of the original text (Depuydt 2010a: 740).

Before presenting my approach to the issue of the Coptic word-stock and its development, two alternative opinions must be mentioned at least. Leo Depuydt (2010: 733-734, essentially following Lefort's proposal from 1948) argues for a Jewish origin of the Coptic language and script: these were invented to translate the Old Testament first.<sup>7</sup> Daniel McBride (1989) claims that Coptic is a "pagan" phenomenon: the language and the

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<sup>7</sup> But see Kahle (1954: 263-264) for a rejection of this hypothesis

the script did exist before its wide-spread use by Christians in Egypt, also taking into consideration that Christian conversion of the masses did not occur until well into the fourth century. McBride offers a socio-historical model, in which the need for the Egyptian language to be transcribed into Greek characters was generated by a Greek-Egyptian cultural and economic interaction that goes far back to the Demotic era.<sup>8</sup> The so-called Old Coptic records might reflect one aspect of this interaction with their observable demand for the exact pronunciation of the Egyptian words. This need has sense only in a Graeco-Egyptian community as native speakers hardly needed any transcription for vocalizing Demotic words.

Even if one considers the Coptic language in a Christian milieu, it is difficult to imagine any other reason for a translation to be created if not the need for making the Bible (or any other texts) accessible to those who had only limited or no understanding of Greek at all. Considering this purpose, the enterprise would not have made much sense if a great part of the translated texts had been simply uninterpretable for the majority of the audience. A considerable part of the Greek words must have been integrated into the Egyptian language previously.<sup>9</sup> It must be kept in mind that translations of the Scriptures were probably read out in the Christian communities (Till 1957: 231), so the educational level of the audience was rather irrelevant with respect to the reception of the content.

The proportion of Greek vocabulary is similar in translations from Greek and in original compositions. After comparing 20 pages from the Gospel of Matthew with 20 pages from the texts of Pachomius (who is said to have been ignorant of Greek), Louise Théophile Lefort (1950: 66) points out, that the native composition has 25 percent more Greek words than the translated text. Furthermore, there are cases when the Egyptian translator makes use of a Greek expression in his work but not the one that the original source has (Hopfner 1918: 12-13),<sup>10</sup> which means that the lexeme of Greek origin was not inserted directly from the source text, but it was an active element of the translator's mental lexicon.

Another argument against the overestimation of the role of translation activity might be the nature of the lexical categories involved. Borrowing from Greek concerns not only nouns and verbs related to Christian culture and concepts, but verbs with neutral meaning

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<sup>8</sup> See also Kahle (1954: 255 and also 265-266) who suggests that Sahidic was the principal written and spoken dialect of the more educated pagan Egyptian. Consider also Satzinger's note dealing with the origin of Sahidic (1985: 311). He also claims that Sahidic acquired its rank as a native upper Egyptian *koine* much earlier than Christianity arrived.

<sup>9</sup> Hasznos (2009: 8) shares this view, citing the arguments of Nagel (1971: 333)

<sup>10</sup> I owe this reference to Andrea Hasznos (2000: 21)

and, what is more remarkable, functional elements as well, *viz.* discourse particles, prepositions and conjunction words (e.g. **κατα, παρα, δε, αλλα, γαρ, επειδη**, (Ray 1994a: 256). Loan words therefore cover practically all types of word classes.<sup>11</sup> Undoubtedly, Pre-Coptic spoken language had already absorbed Greek on an increasing scale by the time Coptic script emerged even if it was successfully hidden in the preceding period's written culture (see below).<sup>12</sup>

What remained almost completely untouched is the grammar of the Egyptian language. No considerable syntactic influence can be detected, to put it differently, the structural consequences of the contact are minimal.<sup>13</sup>

From a linguistic point of view, the relationship between Egyptian and Greek on the one hand, and between Demotic and Coptic on the other is an extremely complicated issue for several reasons. It is a well-known fact that Coptic cannot be considered as the direct successor of Demotic. Although the former succeeds the latter in time, an unexpected number of lexical and grammatical differences may be detected between the two stages: new constructions and elements appear in Coptic seemingly without any precedent, but the most striking feature is definitely the extremely large number of Greek loanwords in the Coptic vocabulary – a feature which is almost completely absent in Demotic. Foreign lexical influence, on a larger scale than ever before, can be dated back to the Ptolemaic period in Egypt, the time when Greek started to gain a comparatively great importance. The need for Greek-speaking administrators by the new ruling class for the successful centralized control, and the advantages ensured for the existing scribal class in exchange for their collaboration – as mutual interests – reinforced each other. Knowledge of language (in other words Greek literacy) was the key to social status and career for the Egyptians, so a bilingual social stratum gradually evolved, primarily in the northern part of the country. But Demotic, the written form of Egyptian language at the time, was characterized by a strong conservatism and a stiff resistance to foreign influences. The

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. a series of articles (in *BSAC* from 1986 to 2001) of W. A. Girgis, who extensively studies the question according to the different lexical categories and word classes.

<sup>12</sup> The fact that Coptic should be viewed as a parallel development to Demotic rather than as a successor was already pointed out by Sethe (1925).

<sup>13</sup> It is virtually impossible to differentiate between translated and original composition in Coptic, but Andrea Hasznos, observing clause types, such as final clauses, consecutive clauses, object clauses vs. infinitive constructions after verbs of exhorting, etc. in her dissertation (2009), demonstrated that the Greek influence was different in certain syntactic patterns in translated and original texts. This way she also offered a criterion that might help to decide whether a given text is a translation or not. It is worth mentioning that Siegfried Morenz (1952) observed a similar asymmetry with respect to the use of **ἄν**-constructions: in original compositions the particle is used to express emphasis or to introduce a heavy subject, while the translators made a more extensive use of it in order to imitate the Greek word order more faithfully.

evident contact between the two languages remained nearly invisible till the Coptic era.<sup>14</sup> Therefore the actual circumstances under which the borrowing of Greek words took place remain mostly unrevealed. How Greek words got integrated into the Egyptian grammatical system can only be inferred from the patterns in which they are used in Coptic.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, the case of Greek-Egyptian bilingualism may offer an instructive case of contact linguistics.<sup>16</sup> As a matter of fact, one of the chapters below will deal with the integration of loan words into Coptic with respect to the nominal category and the nature of sentence structure in general. There I will also argue against the classification of Coptic as a mixed language variety on the grammatical level (as it is claimed by Reintges (2001: 233) and also (2004)), providing arguments that the integration of loan words was completely conditioned by the syntactic structure of the adopting language system, that of Egyptian in this case. At the same time, I admit that, for quite evident reasons, the Greek of the Scriptures could, and in fact did, have a linguistic influence on the Coptic translational activity, but this influence must have appeared on the grammatical level in terms of quantity rather than in quality.

The contact with Greek did not change the essential character of Egyptian, only caused a quantificational shift in favor of certain patterns and structures. Here I would like to borrow the words of Sebastian Richter, with whose conclusion I absolutely agree in this regard but could not have expressed my view so exquisitely as he does: “Biblical Coptic was shaped by intentional imitation of stylistic registers of Biblical Greek as well as by unintentional choice of certain means of expression which would not – at least not in the same frequency and distribution – be found in non-translated written texts, let alone in spoken Coptic” (Richter 2006: 313)

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<sup>14</sup> Demotic seems to ignore Greek language entirely. Greek loanwords are rare and limited to a few predictable categories. For a detailed description of the problem with respect to the written registers of Demotic and its relation to linguistic reality, see Ray (1994a: 253-261), Ray (1994b: 59-64), Clarysse (1987). That the widely used written register was subject to such a strong diglossia cannot be considered an abnormal phenomenon, it characterizes every stage of the Egyptian languages (Loprieno 1996 and Vernus 1996)

<sup>15</sup> Analyzing the nature of the contact between the two languages and its sociolinguistic aspects in the Ptolemaic and Roman Period does not fall within the scope of this thesis, but the reader is referred to *inter alia* Bagnall (1993: 236-237), Thompson (1994: 70-82), Verbeeck (1991: 1166), Fewster (2002), Lewis (1993: 276-280), and Sidarus (2008) for a summary thereof. See also the present author’s related works in the references.

<sup>16</sup> Arabic only had a minor influence on Coptic but mostly technical vocabulary was adopted. Borrowing seems to have intensified in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century (Richter 2006a and 2009). Nevertheless, Arabic-Coptic contact ended up in a quite different scenario, since this time a complete *language shift* occurred. The speakers gradually abandoned their native language in favor of Arabic. What had not happened for four millennia, happened in a century or so; a phenomenon which is exceptionally worth studying from a socio-linguistic perspective.

### 1.2.3 Prehistory

The thesis has a diachronic perspective with several references to the prehistory and development of certain Coptic phenomena as well, so a table of reference is provided here with the main subdivisions (Table 1) used when dealing with the history of the Egyptian language. I follow here the division offered by Antonio Loprieno (1995: 5-8), with slight modifications. On the one hand, the rough definition of the stages as presented in the table below is sufficient enough for the purposes of the thesis; on the other hand, the partition into two major stages adequately represents the contrast between the two periods. The change from synthetic to analytic patterns in syntax had a great effect on nominal structures as well. For a more sophisticated subdivision of the language history complemented with a classification of parallel register varieties, see Junge (1984: 1189-1191), Schenkel (1990: 2 and 7-10).

*Table 1. Major stages of the Egyptian language*

Old Egyptian	3000-2000 BC Old Kingdom, First Intermediate Period	EARLIER EGYPTIAN
Middle Egyptian	2000-1300 BC From the Middle Kingdom to Dyn. 18.	
Late Egyptian	1300-700 BC New Kingdom, Third intermediate Period	LATER EGYPTIAN
Demotic	7 <sup>th</sup> c. BC – 5 <sup>th</sup> c. AD Late Period	
Coptic	3 <sup>rd</sup> c. – 11 <sup>th</sup> c. Coptic / Christian Era	

Late Middle Egyptian (Neo-Mittelägyptisch, égyptien de tradition), as a product of diglossia, survived next to Later Egyptian in the religious and monumental registers preserving the grammar (and more or less also the orthography) of the classical language to the fourth century.

## 1.3 The Coptic dialects

### 1.3.1 How many dialects are there and how are they related?

The research of the Coptic dialects vivified in the second half of the 20th century due to the discovery of several new manuscripts. Rodolphe Kasser's article in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* (1991: 97-101) about the grouping of major dialects provides an overall picture of the history of research and the methodology, but more specific references will be, of course, provided at the individual descriptions of the dialects below. The most important literary dialects and their *sigla* are the following:

*Table 2. Dialects and their sigla*

Sahidic	S
Bohairic	B
Fayyumic	F
Akhmimic	A
Lycopolitan (Subakhmimic)	L (A2)
Mesokemic	M

In the second half of the 19th century only three major dialects were distinguished, Sahidic, Bohairic and Fayyumic as it appears in the *Koptische Grammatik* of Ludwig Stern (1880). The fact that these dialects were the first to be studied is not so surprising, considering that they were the longest in use and therefore the best attested. The *Coptic Dictionary* by Walter E. Crum (1939) already has five dialects (S, B, F, A, A<sub>2</sub>). Paul Kahle, in his monograph about the Coptic Texts from Deir el-Bala'izah (1954), identified the sixth major literary dialect, the so called Mesokemic or Middle-Egyptian. From the sixties Rodolphe Kasser, aiming to complement Crum's dictionary, wrote a series of articles, in which he identified more and more dialects reaching to fifteen in one of his papers (1973). Later he abandoned five and was satisfied with the distinction of ten varieties as true dialects. *Table 3* below is provided to help the reader to follow the history of recognizing and "canonizing" the dialects.

Table 3. *Literary dialects in the literature*

Stern 1880	[= <i>Koptische Grammatik</i> ]	S, B, F
Crum 1939	[= <i>Coptic Dictionary</i> ]	S, B, F, A, A2
Kahle 1954	[= <i>Bala'izah</i> ]	S, B, F, A, A2, M
Kasser 1964	[= <i>Compléments</i> ]	+ P (and G? )
Kasser 1966a	[= <i>BIFAO 64</i> ]	+ H
Kasser 1973	[= <i>BIFAO 73</i> ]	+ D, K, I, N, C, E
Kasser 1981	[= <i>Muséon 94</i> ]	five (D, K, N, C, E) abandoned

The inter-relationship among the dialects (historically, geographically and linguistically) is still a matter of debate to the present day, only a few aspects of dialectology attained a general consensus among Coptic scholars.<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that one or another of the texts shows some idiosyncretic traits, namely irregular or apparently non-systematic phenomena, and there are also dialectal (or better *idiolectal*) varieties that are known from one text only.

The distinction and identification of dialects is based primarily on phonology; in fact, on a comparison of different orthographic systems, since we have only written sources and no speakers. The consonantal differences do not seem to be as relevant as the comparison of vocalic systems, especially the phonology of the tonic vowels (Kasser 1991a: 99). Somewhat exceptional is the approach of Wolf-Peter Funk (1988, 1991) who also uses individual morpho-syntactic features as variables in his classification of early Coptic dialects.

The status of Sahidic was more prominent with respect to the other idioms, at least as long as Coptic was a spoken language. Out of the surviving literary works, more than 90% were composed in this dialect. Moreover, Sahidic seems to have grasped this supra-regional function over the whole of the country from the very beginning of the Coptic era or even before (cf. Kahle 1954: 265, Satzinger 1985: 311, Funk 1988: 149). In the fourth and fifth centuries, however, other local literary varieties were in use, these for their part practically disappeared from sight by the 6th century and their role was taken over by Sahidic. There are only two exceptions from this overall tendency, one is Fayyumic, which survived for a few more centuries despite the Sahidic supremacy, the other is Bohairic

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<sup>17</sup> This overall uncertainty is largely due to the lack of information about the provenance of manuscripts in most of the cases as well as about their dating. Many manuscripts were purchased or rediscovered in a museum. Others were found as part of a larger collection of books or in monastic libraries so the site of the find is not necessarily identical with the place of their origin. The site can provide reliable information about the geographical home of a given dialect only in a few special cases (cf. Funk 1988: 184 n.3).

which, for some reason, was chosen as the liturgical language of the Coptic Church when Coptic started to decline at the end of the first millennium (and at the same time fell into a complete disuse). Interestingly, these two long-lived and better documented dialects were only known from late manuscripts until recently. However, by the recognition of early Fayyumic and Bohairic manuscripts and fragments new prospects opened up to relate the various dialects as contemporaneous varieties of the same language, as it is pointed out by Wolf-Peter Funk (1988: 150).

### 1.3.2 Names and sigla, the Kasser-Funk Agreement

In the eighties a convention was born with an explicitly practical goal: to facilitate the dialogue among Coptic scholars working on dialectology. This convention, the so-called “Kasser-Funk Agreement”, after many years of discussion, was first presented in public in 1986 in Paris. Rodolphe Kasser summarizes the problem in his paper in the first issue of *Journal of Coptic Studies* in 1990 (pp.141-151) and offers their proposal for the standardization of *sigla*. It must be noted, however, that although the need for defining dialectically significant Coptic texts is a common goal for both scholars, they slightly diverge as to how to perform it. According to Wolf-Peter Funk, merely orthographical distinctions are irrelevant when identifying dialects, therefore he rejects the existence of *subdialects*, a term of classification readily used by Rodolphe Kasser for minor varieties that show systematic orthographic differences with respect to other closely related texts. Kasser himself admits (1990: 150) the inadequacy of the traditional method of distinguishing dialects primarily by means of orthographical and phonological criteria, and states that these “superficial criteria” must be “supplemented by morpho-syntactical criteria, touching a deeper layer of the language.” Still, the *Agreement* is supposed to equip the scholars with practical means for sharing their views and avoiding eventual misunderstandings.

It is remarkable to note, that although the methodological requirement is well recognized and even worded in this paper, the generally used criterion in grouping idioms into one dialectal group is still the identification of a large number of consonantal and vocalic isophones in common.

### 1.3.3 The major literary dialects, dialectal groups from the south to the north

In this section I list the major literary dialects (or rather dialectal groups in terms of Kasser 1991a) as well as some of their subdialects or varieties which seem to be generally accepted by a large number of Coptic scholars. To provide some basic information for non-specialists, I give a short description about them with further references. (The concrete sources and list of text editions that I used in the dissertation can be found in section 1.4). The inter-relationship among the dialects is not symmetrical: some of them are definitely local variants, typical to one specific minor region only, while others, provably or presumably, were regional or supra-regional vernaculars. (Note that the names of dialects may appear in the literature with minor differences in their spellings. The forms presented here and throughout the dissertation follow the use as it appears in the *Coptic Encyclopedia*.)

#### *Akhmimic (A)*

Akhmimic is a local dialect in Upper Egypt, limited to a smaller territory in Thebes and around, between Aswan and Akhmim. It was used in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, side by side with Sahidic, which probably also had a Theban origin. The functional prestige of the latter caused Akhmimic to disappear as a literary written norm in the course of the 5th century. It survived, however, as a spoken variety, traces of which can be found in Theban non-literary texts from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries (Nagel 1991a: 19). According to Paul Kahle (1954: 199), the influence of Sahidic was so strong in this region, that the spoken dialect was a mixture of Akhmimic and Sahidic already in the early Coptic period.

It is to be noted that Akhmimic texts are highly standardized; they are all literary in nature and translated from Greek or Sahidic (Nagel 1991a: 26). The textual basis of my linguistic research was one of its earliest manuscripts, the Akhmimic *Proverbs* (Böhlig 1958), but for a list of other manuscripts as well as for an overview of Akhmimic, see Peter Nagel's article in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* (Nagel 1991a), and Kahle (1954: 197-203). There are also two descriptive grammars on Akhmimic: a dissertation by Friedrich Rösch (1909) and a text-book by Walter Till (1928).

#### *Lycopolitan (L)*

The previous name of Lycopolitan was *Subakhmimic* and its siglum A2, and this designation is still not completely out of use contrary to the fact that the dialect(group) has

long been recognized and generally accepted as independent from Akhmimic. Formerly it was also called Asyutic.<sup>18</sup> In the last decades, following Wolf-Peter Funk's research, the integrity of the Lycopolitan dialect has been heavily questioned. That the language of the texts this dialect comprises is anything but uniform was, of course, already noticed and pointed out by several scholars who had any closer contact with the sources. The different types were formerly named after the main manuscripts in which they manifested, but according to the "Kasser-Funk Agreement" (see above) today numerical indices are used for the main branches or standards: the Manichaean dialect (L4), the John dialect (L5), the non-Sahidic Nag-Hammadi dialect (L6).<sup>19</sup> To these three main groups a fourth has been added by the excavations carried out in Kellis, a late antique village in Dakhleh Oasis, and by the subsequent publications of the literary and documentary texts found at the site. The variety found in the documentary corpus of Kellis is described in the edition (Gardner – Alcock – Funk 1999: 90-91) as a regional language of written communication, a kind of *koine*, which cannot (yet) be identified with an existing literary dialect. Thus for the time being, it bears the provisional label L\*.

L4 is the dialect of the corpus of Coptic Manichaean manuscripts found in Medinet Madi in the Fayyum (*Kephalaia*, *Homilies* and *Psalms*). L5 is conventionally the dialect of the London manuscript of the *Gospel of John*, dated to the 4th century and published by Sir Herbert Thompson in as early as 1924. Two other (still unpublished) fragments are associated with this variety, the Dublin fragment of the *Gospel of John* (Chester Beatty Collection, end of 3<sup>rd</sup> c.), and the Geneva fragment of the *Acta Pauli* (also referred to as AP Bod. since it is kept in the Bibliotheca Bodleriana), which is reported to date to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. L6 is the dialect that can be found in three of the Nag Hammadi codices (NHC I, X and XI). These are mainly Gnostic texts coming from the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The apocryphal text of *Acta Pauli* from the Heidelberg Papyrus Collection (Schmidt 1904 and 1909) may also be grouped together with the Gnostic Nag Hammadi texts from a linguistic point of view.

Peter Nagel's article in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* (1991b) provides a detailed survey of the manuscripts, and the history of research, but for a better understanding of the classification and the composition of the group as a whole (and with respect to the Akhmimic manuscripts) Funk's paper in *ZÄS* (1985) is indispensable.

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<sup>18</sup> This term was introduced by Chaîne (1934) because of geographical assumptions.

<sup>19</sup> These numerical symbols were originally proposed by Rodolphe Kasser and accepted by Wolf-Peter Funk, as it is faithfully reported by Funk (1985: 135 n23).

### *Sahidic (S)*

Sahidic, as it was already mentioned, is the standard variety used all along the Nile valley, practically in the whole country, as a supraregional literary vernacular. Its origin and geographic localization is a much debated issue, since not only does it share many characteristics with the southern dialects, but also has vocalic isophones with Bohairic (o and a where the other dialects have ʌ and e respectively).<sup>20</sup> Thus the question has been raised as to whether Sahidic emerged as one of the natural members of the dialect-continuum (and then its home is to be identified), or it is the result of a neutralization or normalization among more regional varieties.

When the manuscript of Papyrus Bodmer VI. came to light, half of the problem has been solved, as the idiom found in this text shares the Bohairic vowels but otherwise features as a southern variety and it is also safely located in the Theban region (Nagel 1965). This dialect P of the *Proverbs* perfectly fits the way a reconstructed proto-Sahidic (\*pS) should look like, thus the southern origin of Sahidic seems to be justified by this fact.<sup>21</sup> Now the similarities between Sahidic and Bohairic can hardly be explained on geographical ground. An alternative, and influential explanation has been proposed by Helmut Satzinger (1985), according to whom the phenomenon may be due to socio-linguistic factors, namely to the aspiration of certain strata of Upper-Egyptian speakers to assimilate their language to that of the ruling class in Memphis, some time in the pre-Coptic (probably in the Persian) period. Sahidic, accordingly, would be the outcome of a linguistic situation of diglossia again.

Within Sahidic, one must distinguish several varieties: at least early (or classical) Sahidic, postclassical literary Sahidic of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (e.g. *Shenoute*), late Sahidic and non-literary texts also of a later date (by and large contemporaneous with literary late Sahidic). For this classification and references of text editions, the reader is advised to look through the *Encyclopedia* article of Ariel Shisha-Halevy on Sahidic (1991b). The linguistic investigation of the present dissertation is only concerned with the early or classical group, especially the Scriptural translations (see the next section about the sources used).

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<sup>20</sup> This made some of the scholars propose a more northern homeland for Sahidic (e.g. Alexandria by Kahle 1954: 256-257). For the problem of the Sahidic homeland, see also Polotsky (1970) and Shisha-Halevy (1991b: 195); see further Funk (1988: 152-154) for a survey of the issue this section deals with.

<sup>21</sup> Dialect P is extraordinary not only because of its early date (3<sup>rd</sup> c. also called as Palaeo-Theban), but because it also shows orthographic peculiarities that are absent from other dialects of Coptic. The text was published by Rodolphe Kasser (1960).

Time and again, Sahidic was also influenced by other local idioms, such as Lycopolitan and Akhmimic, and even by Fayyumic or Bohairic, as can be witnessed *inter alia* in the Nag Hammadi corpus (sometimes resulting in texts with a rather inconsistent grammatical system), in Shenoute (cf. Shisha-Halevy 1976), as well as in non-literary documents.

### *Mesokemic (M)*

It is also called Middle-Egyptian, as distinguished and so named by Paul Kahle (1954: 196, 220-227). Formerly it had been confused with Fayyumic, but this classification was quickly abandoned after Kahle's monograph and the publication of the first longer Mesokemic manuscripts (a Milan fragmentary papyrus codex and Codex Scheide) in 1974 and 1981. The dialect is further called Oxyrhynchite as well, it being the literary dialect of the region of Oxyrhynchos. Luckily enough, it exemplifies one of the rare cases in which the geographical assignment of a dialect is safe.<sup>22</sup>

The fragmentary P. Mil. Copti V (published by Orlandi in 1974) contains the *Epistles of Paul* and shows preclassical features as does the *Psalms* of Mudil-Codex of the Coptic Museum in Cairo (published by Gawdat Gabra in 1995). Rodolphe Kasser (1991a: 99) suggests that these might comprise the variety M4. Furthermore, we have well preserved codices from the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries: the versions of the *Gospel of Matthew* in Codex Scheide (Princeton University Library, Schenke 1981) and in Codex Schøyen (Schenke 2001). Finally, Codex Glazier in the Pierpont Morgan Library holds the first half of the *Acts of the Apostles* and was also published by Schenke (1991a). An account of the phonological and morphological peculiarities of the dialect appeared already in *Enchoria* (1978), by Hans-Martin Schenke, editor of most of the Middle Egyptian manuscripts. A linguistic analysis was also provided by Hans Quecke in the above mentioned edition of Tito Orlandi (pp. 87-108).<sup>23</sup> This section does not undertake to provide a grammatical description of the individual dialects, but it seems important to me to note that Mesokemic is the only dialect which, by the regular use of the perfect conjugation base  $\mathfrak{z}\mathfrak{a}$ -, makes a complete differentiation between Perfect I ( $\mathfrak{z}\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{q}$ -), Circumstantial Present I ( $\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{q}$ -), and Present II ( $\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{q}$ -).

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<sup>22</sup> The Mudil-codex was found in 1984 in the cemetery of el-Mudil not far from Oxyrhynchos.

<sup>23</sup> For a survey of the main characteristics, see the related article in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, again by Hans-Martin Schenke (1991b: 162-164)

### *Fayyumic (F)*

Fayyumic, as it is also shown by its name, can be geographically linked to the region of the oasis of the Fayyum. The name itself already appears in Ludwig Stern's *Grammatik* (1880), but texts belonging to this idiom were often described as Middle-Egyptian (NB. not in the sense of Mesokemic) before the term was fixed.

The Fayyumic dialect includes a considerable number of varieties. The central body comprises F4 and F5. The early Fayyumic texts (F4) are short and fragmentary: some Biblical texts were published at the beginning of the twentieth century, such as certain parts from the *Gospel of John* and from the *Acts of the apostles*. Both manuscripts are kept in the British Museum (Crum-Kenyon 1900; Gaselee 1909). Other fragments from the *Psalms* and from *The epistle to the Romans* were found by Anne Boud'hors (1998). Classical Fayyumic (F5), which is considered to be the chief subdialect of this group due to the fact that its sources amount to the four-fifth of the whole material, has manuscripts from a later period between the 6th and the 8/9th centuries. Unfortunately, it has no comprehensive description, Till's account from 1930 being short and far from being satisfactory. The publications of single texts are scattered around in the most varied places, and F5 has many subdivisions which are difficult to even follow (F5, F56, F58, etc).<sup>24</sup>

Besides the central dialects, there is a further variety which is worth mentioning: a somewhat archaic version of Fayyumic, which was given the *siglum* F7. It is known from a single bilingual manuscript of a very early date, now in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg (P. Hamb. Bil. 1). It contains parts of the Old Testament (*Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes*) and was published by Bernd Jørg Diebner and Rodolphe Kasser in 1989.

Fayyumic, together with Mesokemic (M) and two minor dialects (W and V), is considered to form the so called "Middle Coptic major group" (Kasser 1991a and 1991c). Their inter-relation is not entirely clear, but they are closely related. The dialect W is attested in a single fragmentary papyrus (P. Mich 3521. published by Elinor Husselmann (1962)), which holds chapters from the *Gospel of John*. It has Fayyumic characteristics in orthography, though without lambdacism, but its morphosyntax is closer to Middle-Egyptian. Sometimes it is also described as "Crypto-Mesokemic".<sup>25</sup> The dialect V4 looks more like Fayyumic, without lambdacisms again. It is also called South Fayyumic, and

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<sup>24</sup> Although according to the restricted time-interval of this study the sources of this variety can easily be ignored, it would be undeniably useful if a grammatical analysis existed to help the investigation of early Fayyumic fragments, as it is, for instance, in the case of Bohairic.

<sup>25</sup> Note that formerly it was labeled as V by Rodolphe Kasser (1981: 115).

sometimes considered a subdialect of F4. Biblical texts (*Ecclesiastes, 1 John, 2 Peter*) in this dialect can be found in P. Mich 3520, which was published only recently by Hans-Martin Schenke and Rodolphe Kasser (2003). Because of its neutral phonology, Rodolphe Kasser (1991a: 99) hints to the possibility that it functioned as a regional vernacular. The whole group is said to be subject to a strong influence of Sahidic.<sup>26</sup>

### *Bohairic (B)*

Bohairic is traditionally accepted as the dialect of northern Egypt. Its functional significance changed a lot between the two endpoints of the Coptic era. Originally, it was only a local dialect of the western Delta (even its literary status is often questioned because of the scarcity of evidence), but during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries it gradually replaced Sahidic in its privileged position, and as the official liturgical language of the Coptic Church it was the sole variety that effectively survived even after the loss of the language. As for this later stage of Bohairic, it is very well documented mostly in the form of Biblical, hagiographical, patristic and liturgical texts.

The early Bohairic dialect (B4) is preserved in one longer manuscript and in a few more short ones. The main source is P. Bodmer III. from the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana in Geneva, which contains the *Gospel of John* and parts of the *Genesis*, and was published by Rodolphe Kasser in 1958. Minor texts are the *Biblical School texts* of P. Mich. Inv. 926 (Husselman 1947), and fragments of the *Epistle of James* in P. Heid. Kopt 452 (Quecke 1974). Another early variant (usually labeled as B74) is attested in a papyrus from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, now kept in the Bibliotheca Vaticana (P. Vat. copto 9.). The text is unfortunately still unpublished but it is reported to contain the *Minor Prophets*. Some information concerning the manuscript, its content and main characteristics is provided in Kasser (1992) and Kasser et al. (1992).<sup>27</sup>

B5 is the classical Scriptural Bohairic, or Bohairic proper, but, as it was already mentioned, hardly any texts can be dated before the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century. Linguistic studies about this variety are extensive thanks, first of all, to the work of Ariel Shisha-Halevy. Most recently he published a whole monograph about its syntactic features (2007a). The

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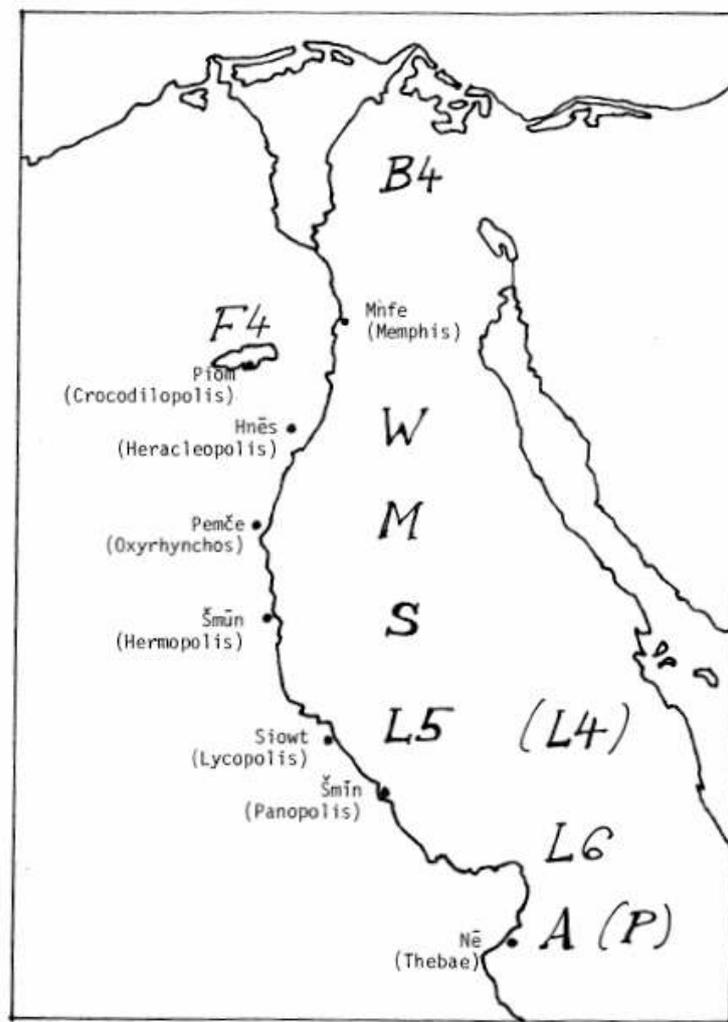
<sup>26</sup> For other minor varieties that can be related to this group, see Kasser (1990: 147). For Fayyumic in general, the main reference is the article of Rodolphe Kasser in *The Coptic Encyclopedia* (Kasser 1991c).

<sup>27</sup> In fact, in Kasser et al. (1992) a part of the manuscript (the second chapter of Haggai) was published to show the main characteristics of this language variety. The whole manuscript is said to be in course of edition by Rodolphe Kasser, Nathalie Bosson and Eitan Grossman, as noted in several places, *inter alia* in Shisha-Halevy (2007a: 19).

introduction of this book also provides a fine summary of the history of the research on Bohairic and is very rich in references related to the topic.

The map below (Figure 1) is the copy of the map provided by Wolf-Peter Funk (1988: 182) with his tentative plotting of ten early Coptic dialects (A, P, L4, L5, L6, S, M, W, F4, and B4) in the period between the fourth and sixth centuries. The map is the result of his investigation based on techniques of numerical seriation and cluster analysis. He calls for caution, however, with regard to his own map as it can only serve as a “vague approximation” of the linguistic reality (1988:183).<sup>28</sup>

*Figure 1. The early Coptic literary dialects (After Funk 1988: 182)*



<sup>28</sup> For a survey of three former dialectal maps, see Vergote (1973: 59.)

### 1.3.4 The current state of research

The study of the various dialects is rather inconsistent. Of course, the two prominent varieties, Sahidic and Bohairic, have been described and analyzed the most. For Sahidic, Ludwig Stern's grammar (1880) is still very useful, and numerous other works are also available, e.g. Till (1961a), Plisch (1999), Layton (2000 and 2004<sup>2</sup>), Reintges (2004). Undeniably, this can also be due to fact that Sahidic is the standard variety through which students are introduced to Coptic studies worldwide. As it was already mentioned above, Ariel Shisha-Halevy's contributions to the structure of this language variety of classical Bohairic is outstanding, but earlier works have to be referred to as well, such as *inter alia* Mallon (1907).

The Akhmimic grammars cited above (Rösch 1909 and Till 1928) are of not quite recent date, and as a matter of fact, are rather outdated. As far as the other dialects are concerned, the articles of the eighth volume of *The Coptic Encyclopedia* (Atiya 1991), and the introductory chapters and commentaries of certain text editions are the main sources of their characteristic features. Although the increasing number of text-editions opened the way for linguistic studies to be done, research in this field is still lagging behind with respect to the study of Sahidic and the earlier stages of Ancient Egyptian in general.

The state of research is maybe well exemplified by the case of Fayyumic: despite the fact that this is one of the longest documented dialects and its sources cover a great variation as well, it still does not have a sufficient grammatical description. A rather compendious and therefore defective guide to Fayyumic proper (F5) is provided by the introductory notes of Walter Till's *Chrestomathie* (1930). As for the early Fayyumic variety (F4), an unpublished list of the edited manuscripts with concordances is distributed privately among Coptologists thanks to Wolf-Peter Funk.<sup>29</sup>

As a matter of fact, there exists a dialectal grammar of Coptic, which might be a promising starting point to anyone with the intention to get a deeper insight into the grammatical structure of the minor dialects. Nevertheless, in my personal experience, as far as the nominal constructions are concerned, Walter Till's *Koptische Dialektgrammatik*

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<sup>29</sup> Here I would like to express my gratitude to Anne Boud'hors who kindly sent me the concordance after we met at a conference in Leipzig and I addressed her with my questions on early Fayyumic. About the use of early Fayyumic determiners, the only observation I have ever read can be found in a footnote of Ariel Shisha-Halevy's monograph on Bohairic (2007: 387 n28), where the author cites his personal communication with Wolf-Peter Funk in a letter from 2000.

has many superficial observations and turns out to be even controversial if its two editions (1931 and 1961) are compared.<sup>30</sup>

There is also a methodological issue that I detected many times and therefore I must highlight again. It is extremely important to notice that the comparative descriptions usually do not deal with data from the same time period. Classical Bohairic does not have sources earlier than the eighth century while the research on Sahidic is usually based on more ancient texts. As for Fayyumic, it was probably subject to considerable change throughout its history as well. Comparing the dialects without considering time intervals and the possible, what is more very probable, influence of one dialect to the other (in terms of socio-linguistics) is methodologically mistaken and must be revised. Wolf Peter Funk appears to be the only exception: he convincingly argues for a comparative research in which one must use sources of one single period and I cannot but agree with him.

## 1.4 The sources

The sources I used in this linguistic-oriented study are mostly Biblical texts. The reasons are very simple: on the one hand, I used them because of the relative stability of the content according to which the various versions can easily be compared. On the other hand, this type of texts can be found in all the dialectal varieties, even in the earliest ones, which I am the most interested in, and these manuscripts are usually carefully prepared, accurately written products.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> To my greatest regret, I had no access to the dialectal grammar of Marius Chaîne (1933) and I only have a minimal impression about it by reading the review of Crum (1933).

<sup>31</sup> Beyond Biblical books and other Christian texts (e.g. homilies, sermons, important sources related to monasticism, etc.), a considerable part of Coptic literature consists of Manichaean and Gnostic manuscripts. Furthermore, besides the highly standardized written norms preserved for literary use, communication of everyday life also appear in Coptic, in the form of documentary texts (such as administrative texts, legal documents, private letters), dating from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, thus practically covering the whole of the Coptic period. It must be noted, however, that the major part of these texts falls into the period from the later 6<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. For a general and very informative overview on the corpus of Coptic letters and the state of its research, the reader is guided to Sebastian Richter's article (2008). The present author is aware of the fact that such sources as letters may provide a language use that is closer to colloquial style, but at the moment this point of view is set aside. Letters make part of an enormous corpus of documentary texts and, what is more embarrassing, their actual content is often very difficult (or even impossible) to understand. Perhaps it is the right place to note, that I have never aimed to "reach" something like Spoken Coptic. In my view, all the written varieties, however carefully normalized they are, represent a sort of language use which is worth describing and analyzing linguistically. For a survey of literary products and text types in Coptic, consult first of all Orlandi (1978) and (1986) with further references to earlier literature, but see also Depuydt (2010a) for a less detailed but concise overview. It has to be noted, that almost all *original* Coptic literature (e.g. *Pachomius*, *Shenoute*) was written in Sahidic (Shisha-Halevy 1991b: 195)

Biblical translations comprise a special register within the Coptic literature that was influenced by the Greek language and style in a more substantial manner than it can be attested in any other registers. To anticipate the possible objections against using them when analyzing structural properties of Coptic proper, I have to expound my viewpoint on this matter: I am strongly convinced that on a micro-syntactic level, it has no effect on the phenomena I investigate. The desire for a word-to-word translation of sacred texts is a well-known phenomenon and can often be observed in Bible translations into various languages from Hebrew, Greek or Latin. Consequently, such “faithful” translations would not be the best choice for an inquiry about the relationship between information structure and word order in the given language. The original Greek text, however, can hardly have any influence on the choice between the two possessive constructions in any variety of Coptic given that the source language has only one type, which is also completely different from a typological point of view. The same is true, for instance, in the field of determination: it is rather unlikely that the distribution of these somewhat unconsciously used grammatical elements that encode semantic and pragmatic definiteness on a syntactic level would be conditioned by the content of the source text.

To formulate reliable descriptive generalizations, it is desirable to use as many data as possible, namely a corpus that contains a large number of texts. As far as I know, there is no digital database at present for any variety of Coptic, thus the empirical research in this case means collecting data and counting manually. As a consequence, a quantitative corpus survey obviously has its limits and, as it might be expected, progresses extremely slowly.

For a research to be started, one has to define and restrict the material under investigation both in time and space. Whether it is about a structural analysis of a synchronic system, or a comparison of certain linguistic phenomena in various language varieties, we should select the time-interval and the range of variants (dialects) to be investigated. Of course, both parameters will be subject to the chance as to how many and which types of texts are extant and available to study. In this dissertation, therefore, the early varieties will be treated only. It is straightforward in the case of dialects that are not attested after the 5<sup>th</sup> century, but not trivial in the case of the varieties that survived even in the Islamic period (i.e. Sahidic, Bohairic and Fayyumic). If the research requires, the corpus will be widened, involving some texts from traditions that are different from the Scriptures, keeping in mind that these translations are reported to be less standardized, with frequent inconsistencies in orthography, etc.

Besides the original manuscripts, use of certain grammar books and related articles were inevitable and, at the same time, quite instructive. For instance, Ariel Shisha Halevy's enormous work on Bohairic cannot and must not be disregarded even if the present dissertation is more interested in varieties of Bohairic that existed earlier (the dialect B4). Of course, linguistic literature on the earlier stages of Egyptian was consulted and used repeatedly when developing the sections about the history of certain Coptic patterns. However, where it is felt necessary, criticism will be expounded with regard to former analyses.

Table 4 summarizes the sources of the corpus that I have used as the empirical basis for my research, with references to their editions. The works are given according to dialects, and only those texts will be listed here that I really used during my investigation, or else, I refer to them for some reason by citing secondary literature. If a manuscript in the table is attributed to a subdialect, it is marked with the corresponding *siglum* in parenthesis. Dates are given according to the editors' conclusions (if provided).

*Table 4. Sources*

Dialect(-group)	Source	Date	Edition
Akhmimic (A)	<i>Proverbs</i> , Ms. Berol. Orient. Oct. 987.	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> c.	Böhlig 1958
	<i>Gospel of John</i> (10-13,12), Strasbourg Codex		Rösch 1910
Lycopolitan (L)	<i>Manichaean Psalm-Book</i> (L4)	4 <sup>th</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> c.	Allberry 1938
	<i>Gospel of John</i> (2:12-20:20) (L5)	4 <sup>th</sup> c.	Thompson 1924
	Documentary texts from the corpus of P. Kell. Copt (L*)	4 <sup>th</sup> c.	Gardner et al. 1999
Sahidic (S)	<i>Gospel of John</i> , PPalau Rib. Inv. 183	5 <sup>th</sup> c.	Quecke 1984
	<i>Gospel of Matthew</i> (14:28-28:20), P. Bodmer XIX	4 <sup>th</sup> c.	Kasser 1962
	<i>Proverbs</i> , Ch No. 10485	6 <sup>th</sup> c.?	Worrell 1931
	<i>Proverbs</i> (1:1-21:4), P. Bodmer VI. (P)	3 <sup>rd</sup> c.	Kasser 1960
Mesokemic (M)	<i>Epistles of Paul</i> , P. Mil. Copti V (M4)	4 <sup>th</sup> c.	Orlandi 1974
	<i>Gospel of Matthew</i> , Codex Schøyen, The Schøyen Collection MS 2650	4 <sup>th</sup> c.?	Schenke 2001
	<i>Gospel of Matthew</i> , Codex Scheide, Scheide Library of Princeton, New Jersey	5 <sup>th</sup> c.	Schenke 1981

	<i>Acts of the Apostles</i> (1–15,3), Codex Glazier, MS G 67 in the Pierpont Morgan Library (M5)	5 <sup>th</sup> c.	Schenke 1991
Fayyumic (F)	<i>Cant, Lam, Ecc</i> , P. Hamb. Bil. 1. (F7)	3 <sup>rd</sup> c.	Diebner–Kasser 1989
	<i>Psalms, Romans</i> fragments (F4)	5 <sup>th</sup> c. and ?	Boud’hors 1998
	<i>Gospel of John</i> (3,5-4,49), BM Or. 5707 (F4)	6 <sup>th</sup> c.	Crum-Kenyon 1900
	<i>Acts</i> (7,14-28 and 9,28-39), BM Or. 6948 (F4)	6 <sup>th</sup> c, or earlier	Gaselee 1909
	<i>Gospel of John</i> (...) in P. Mich 3521. (W)	4 <sup>th</sup> c.	Husselmann 1962
	<i>Ecclesiastes, 1 John, 2 Peter</i> In P. Mich 3520. (V4)		Schenke –Kasser 2003
Bohairic (B)	<i>Minor Prophets</i> , P. Vat. copto 9. (B74)	4 <sup>th</sup> c.	<i>unpublished</i> , [but cf. Kasser at al. 1992]
	<i>Gospel of John</i> , P. Bodmer III (B4)	4 <sup>th</sup> c.	Kasser 1958
	<i>Epistle of James</i> (2,15 - 3,2-6), P. Mich. Kopt. 452. (B4)	5 <sup>th</sup> c.	Quecke 1974
	<i>School text</i> , P. Mich. Inv. 926. (B4)	4 <sup>th</sup> c.?	Husselman 1947

The choice of the Sahidic manuscript is entirely determined by what type of manuscripts are available in the minor dialects. For collation, I always tried to use early versions of the New Testament instead of Horner’s editions (1911-1924). At the time he compiled his work, no such well-preserved manuscripts were known as, for instance, the Barcelona Gospels, and accordingly he used standardized versions of later periods all of them dating from after the sixth century (Orlandi 1978. 147-148). Even though Sahidic apparently did not change a lot over the centuries, I must confine myself to the strict methodological consideration already advanced to use contemporaneous manuscripts, or manuscripts coming from as narrow a time-interval as possible – in our case from the fourth or fifth centuries.

Text editions may considerably vary in their usefulness and this aspect is not necessarily in a close connection with their date of appearance. Commentaries and an index of words or even grammatical elements may be of different quality, but what is most regrettable is that certain editions have no indices at all.

## 2 The Coptic noun

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the basic formal properties of Coptic nominal expressions, while in the following chapters the discussion will be expanded with respect to certain peculiarities in both a diachronic and dialectal direction. Although the thesis is not concerned with *Formenlehre*, that is to say, with the morpho-phonological makeup of the individual lexemes, or word-classes, some basic notions will be discussed in the following sections. Lexical items generally have peculiar semantic properties they take along with themselves when they are actualized. These properties may or may not appear visibly in the morphological makeup of the word, but certainly have an effect on the syntax: they govern how the noun enters into structural relations with other elements and how these combinations behave subsequently, in higher structural components, namely in clauses and sentences. Certain sentential phenomena like compatibility constraints or word order, however, are related to the properties of the noun phrase as a whole, and cannot be derived from any lexical features of the noun.

This study is more interested in how the nominal constructions are shaped. It aims to examine the distribution and function of the components in order to understand the inner relations of the elements that build up the phrase with a noun in its centre. A further interesting issue is how these elements determine or modify the use of the noun phrase as a whole in the sentence. In accordance with our focus on the relationship between the head noun and its modifiers as well as on the properties of determination, less will be said about pronouns, which can be considered fully referential noun phrases of their own and normally are not further modified by possessive or attributive expressions. These have no complex internal structure to study and as such are uninteresting at the moment.

This chapter is structured as follows: after some preliminary thoughts on terminology, the basic morphological characteristics of the Coptic noun will be discussed with a deeper study concerning the nature of the remnant morphological plural marking. Section 2.3 addresses the old-standing dilemma of categorical classification with respect to Coptic adjectives on the one hand, and verbs on the other. In the subsequent parts a further step will be taken toward a general survey as to how the noun can be expanded by additional elements to form a more complex construction, i.e. a noun phrase. Section 2.4 deal with determination in general, while 2.5 introduces the main types of adnominal modifications. To illustrate the various grammatical phenomena, I made an effort to collect data from the

same Sahidic corpus, the early version of *Gospel of John* in the well-preserved P. Palau Ribes Inv 183 (published by Quecke 1984). In the case of some peculiar configurations, however, I was forced to cite the examples collected by other authors in lack of data in the chosen manuscript.

## 2.1 Terminology

In the thesis I tend to use a rather neutral terminology. To a certain extent, I follow the terms and expressions commonly used in Egyptology, but will turn to more general designations where there is a kind of confusion in the traditional Egyptological literature. Even in general or theoretical linguistics, scholars often use different terminology and definitions, based on the individual model they work with. Within the field of Egyptology one cannot speak about a particular linguistic model that is commonly used to describe and explain the Egyptian phenomena either. Researchers arrive from different schools which determine their technical vocabulary. Some of them, either in lack of a sufficient terminology or because they do not accept the one already in use, willingly create a new one, which might fill a few gaps in the field, but has an obvious disadvantage as well.

Categories used in this thesis will be determined by morphosyntactic distributional criteria, but, as it will be seen as early as in section 2.3, a clear categorization of certain elements is sometimes almost impossible. Not every item associated to a category display all the syntactic or semantic properties ascribed to their class, that is to say, some members of the class may be ‘better’ or more prototypical than others, and the unstable elements may even change category in time. Furthermore, the boundaries between categories are usually fuzzy and some properties of different categories may converge. These phenomena are recently discussed as aspects of synchronic ‘gradience’ which is also closely related to theory of ‘gradualness’ in diachronic change.<sup>32</sup>

According to current syntactic models, a bare noun taken out from the lexicon cannot refer to an entity; it behaves more like a predicate, and in order to function as an argument in the sentence (i.e. subject, object or other complement of the verb), its referential properties must be anchored by suitable devices. More formal syntactic approaches

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<sup>32</sup> Discussion about linguistic gradience and its relationship with gradualness in diachronic processes and with grammaticalization can be found in Traugott and Trousdale (2010). For the notion of synchronic gradience, and its subtypes, see Aarts (2007).

propose that the noun (just the same way as other types of lexical elements) always project a phrase with the appropriate functional layers, in which specificity, definiteness and related phenomena can be grammatically encoded. Accordingly, the noun phrase is a constituent that is headed by a noun and is optionally modified by additional attributive elements as well as functionally extended by quantifiers and/or determiners. Recently, in generative syntactic frameworks, noun phrases are conceived to rather be determiner phrases (DP), in which the determiner (D) is the head which selects for a noun phrase as its complement.<sup>33</sup> Without being engaged to any syntactic theory in this thesis, the central role of determiners in the inner organization of nominal constructions must be taken into consideration and also be remembered constantly. The functional aspects of determination will be discussed in section 2.4.

## 2.2 Morphology

### 2.2.1 Gender, number and case

Coptic nouns have inherent grammatical gender but normally are not marked morphologically for these categories, contrary to earlier stages of Egyptian, where the ending *-t* unambiguously encoded the feminine grammatical gender.<sup>34</sup>

The morphological structure of the Coptic nouns may also show the traces of a formal difference between masculine and feminine lexemes, but from a synchronic point of view, there is no indication to find out the gender of nouns like **ⲡⲟⲙⲉ** ‘man’ and **Ⲙⲟⲩⲉ** ‘field’ that have similar syllable-structure and vowel qualities and yet differ in gender specification (1). Lexemes ending in an atone *-ⲉ* are generally feminine, but this ending may be as well the consequence of the loss of a final consonant different from *-t*, cf. *ntr* > **Ⲣⲟⲩⲉ** ‘god’. (For more about the interrelationship between syllable-structure and gender, see Vergote’s classification of all types of Coptic noun lexemes according to their phonological (syllabic) constitution: Vergote 1973: §§96-99)

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<sup>33</sup> For the DP hypothesis, see: Abney (1987), and for a good summary thereof Bernstein (2003). Although I am in full agreement with this approach, I will use the more general term ‘noun phrase’ throughout the thesis for any kind of phrases whose lexical nucleus is a noun.

<sup>34</sup> There is some evidence that the ending *-t* was much longer kept in orthography (as a kind of graphical gender-marker) than spelled out in spoken language.

The grammatical category of gender usually becomes visible only by means of the agreeing determiners such as, for instance, the definite article (2), or cross-reference performed by personal pronouns.

- |     |  |  |
|-----|--|--|
| (1) | <b>ⲡⲟⲙⲉ</b><br>'man'                       | <b>ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b><br>'field'                         |
| (2) | <b>ⲡ-ⲡⲟⲙⲉ</b><br>DEF.SG.M-man<br>'the man' | <b>ⲧ-ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b><br>DEF.SG.F-field<br>'the field' |

There are, however, a few nouns that have two related forms corresponding to male and female biological sex, e. g. **ϥⲟⲩ** ~ **ϥⲟⲩⲉ** 'brother/sister' **ⲡⲣⲟ** ~ **ⲡⲣⲟⲩ** 'king/queen' (for a list thereof, see *inter alia* Layton 2000: §107; Reintges 2004: 52-53). Others are underspecified for this feature and can co-occur with both sets of determiners, that is to say, they can denote both masculine and feminine members of the set described by the common noun: e.g. **ϩⲏⲗⲁⲗ** 'servant/maid' (See more examples at Layton 2000: §106).<sup>35</sup>

Normally, Coptic nouns are not marked morphologically for number either. The singularity and plurality of a noun phrase – like in the case of gender specification – become visible by means of determiners (see exx. 3 and 4), or cross-reference.

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| (3) | <b>ⲡ-ⲡⲟⲙⲉ</b><br>DEF.SG.M-man<br>'the man'     | <b>Ⲛ-ⲡⲟⲙⲉ</b><br>DEF.PL-man<br>'the men'      |
| (4) | <b>ⲧ-ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b><br>DEF.SG.F-field<br>'the field' | <b>Ⲛ-ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b><br>DEF.PL-field<br>'the fields' |

Nevertheless, there is a relatively large set of exceptional nouns exhibiting a remnant plural form, e. g. **ϥⲟⲩ** ~ **ϥⲟⲩⲏⲩ** 'brother/brothers' (Layton 2000: §108(b); see also Vergote 1969; Vergote 1983: §§113-114 on number of Coptic nouns in general Vergote 1983: §§115-120

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<sup>35</sup> I must note that there is fundamental difference between the view of Ariel Shisha-Halevy and mine concerning gender specification. Shisha-Halevy (1986: Chapter 5 and 2007: 341) when arguing for the nuclearity of the determiner (determinator in his terminology) claims that lexemes do not have an inherent gender in Coptic, and "the article is the concord motivant" (1986: §5.1.1. But see the criticism of this chapter by Polotsky 1989). I would also argue for the nuclear function of determiners, but from a syntactic (structural) point of view supporting the so called DP-hypothesis (see note 33), according to which the projection of a noun (i.e. the noun phrase) is part of a larger functional complex (the DP), in which the determiner has a central role and D-head has a nominal complement. But the gender of the phrase as a whole is inherited from the noun lexeme. As for the gender feature that appears on the determiners, it is the result of a mere agreement operation, just the same way as other modifiers (adjectives, numerals) agree with the head noun in gender, independently of determination.

with dialectal variations). Remnant plurals correspond to three different morphological patterns, as it is summarized by Chris Reintges (2004: 53-54): they are formed (i) by adding a plural suffix (-**ⲗ**γ , -**ⲏ**γ , -**ⲟⲟ**γ, -**ⲟⲟ**γ**ϵ**, etc.),<sup>36</sup> (ii) by the alteration of the syllabic structure (so called *broken plurals*, e.g. **ϵ**ⲱ**ⲧ** ~ **ϵ**ⲓⲟ**ⲧ**ϵ ‘father/fathers’), or (iii) by the combination of these two strategies (e.g. **ϣ**ⲱ**Ⲗ** ~ **ϣ**ⲏⲏ**ϣ**ϵ ‘thing/things’). As it is already pointed out by Vergote (1983: §114), the remnant plural forms are used in parallel with the synchronically more regular singular forms to express plurality (5). In Crum’s dictionary (1939) these nouns are marked with the “& sg as pl” annotation.<sup>37</sup>

(5)	<b>ⲡ</b> - <b>CON</b>	<b>Ⲛ</b> ϵ- <b>Ⲙ</b> ⲏⲏ	<b>Ⲛ̄</b> - <b>CON</b>
	DEF.SG.M-brother	DEF.PL-brother	DEF.PL-brother
	‘the brother’	‘the brothers’	‘the brothers’

In Coptic, there is no inflection for case: the grammatical function of a noun (or better a noun phrase) is indicated by distinct sentence positions and functional morphemes.<sup>38</sup>

Greek nouns were borrowed in their singular, nominative case form with their original gender if they were masculine or feminine. Neuter Greek nouns were re-classified as masculine ones (Girgis 1971-73: §91; Hopfner 1918: 14). As I will argue later in this chapter in a more detailed way, loanword integration was obviously conditioned by inner Egyptian structural constraints. Accordingly, the integration strategy of Greek nouns perfectly fits to the conditions of the Coptic grammatical system lacking morphological case distinction on the one hand, and making use of two grammatical genders only. As for the expression of plurality, Coptic needed only a singular lexical entry of the foreign word, leaving the work of plural-forming to the syntax.

Occasionally, Greek nouns were adopted apparently in accusative or genitive case, but this phenomenon may be equally explained by language change in certain varieties of Greek itself, where a “tendency of simplification and unification” can be observed in the

<sup>36</sup> Reintges mentions -**ⲟⲟ**γ**ϵ** only, while Layton (2000: §108(b)) lists more suffixes, seemingly all that have the element -γ in common. However, he fails to mention the alternation (-**ⲟ** ~ -**ⲟ**ⲓ) attested in **ϣ**ⲗⲗⲟ ~ **ϣ**ⲗⲗⲟⲓ, and lists another ending type -**ⲗ**ⲧ**ϵ**, -**ⲟ**ⲧ**ϵ** which is probably not a proper suffix but part of the stem after having been reshaped in a plural form (see the second group of Reintges). Vergote (1983: §114) also mentions the use of the collective ending -**ⲏ** that sometimes can serve as a plural marker (e.g. **ⲧ**ⲟⲟ**γ** ~ **ⲧ**ⲟⲟ**γ**ⲏⲏ ‘mountain/mountains’, **ⲙ**ⲟⲟ**γ** ~ **ⲙ**ⲟⲟ**γ**ⲏⲏ ‘water/waters’).

<sup>37</sup> For gender and number of the noun in general, see also: Stern (1880: §§199-207), Steindorff (1951: §§92-94), Till (1961: §75-86), Vergote (1973: §81) and Lambdin (1983: 1.1-1.2). For the various appearances of the article in the examples, see Chapter 3 on determination.

<sup>38</sup> The only structural case is the nominative (for a possible formal syntactic analysis of its structural position, see Reintges 2001: 100), the object of the verb can be expressed either by a prepositional phrase, or by its forming a construct state with the verb (for an analysis of the ‘differential object marking’ in Coptic, see Engsheden (2006 and 2008)). All other relations within the sentence, i.e. the relation between the verb and its arguments, are expressed by prepositions.

nominal morphology, such as the fusion of certain declension classes or the tendency of re-categorization of inanimate nouns to be neuter instead of masculine. It might be the case that Coptic borrowed these “new” forms directly from Greek, thus there is no need for looking for an inner Egyptian logic in order to account for such deviant or nonstandard forms (cf. Girgis 1971-73: §§80-81; for further cases of genitive loans: §§82-85; for Greek plural form used as singulars in Coptic: §§86-89).<sup>39</sup>

## 2.2.2 The remnant morphological plural – some considerations

The question naturally arises what these remnant plurals are for? Can we assign a special function to their appearance or it is mainly a relic from the past? Are they productive at all? As for the frequency, Layton (2000: §108b) speaks about a hundred of lexemes, while according to Shisha-Halevy (2007a: 345 Obs.4) in the Sahidic New testament, only 28 lexemes are attested with “morphematic plural” half of which also appear in regular plural construction (i.e. as a singular noun with some determiner in plural).

The phenomenon is reported to be a “feature almost entirely unresearched” (Shisha-Halevy 2007a: 345 Obs.3). Still, there are attempts to its description: According to Bentley Layton (2000: §108b) morphological plural was selected to express “individual concrete plurality”, which seems to contradict to what Ariel Shisha-Halevy suggests (2007a: 342) that they express “set collectives”. The issue definitely deserves a closer examination, but the present author is not in the position of judging between the two opinions and will rather deal with the question of productivity. Shisha-Halevy claims elsewhere (1986: §4.0.4) that the morphological plural is “more or less regular, widespread but unpredictable (subject to regulation as yet obscure)”. In my view, a phenomenon which is unpredictable cannot be considered *regular*. But let us observe the facts from a diachronic perspective.

In the earlier stages of Egyptian plural was marked by the endings *.w/.wt* in writing.<sup>40</sup> When discussing the progressive fall of the plural endings, Antonio Loprieno (1995: 61) claims that the loss of final vowels and semiconsonants in the later Egyptian stages favored

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<sup>39</sup> For special forms of loanwords that were created in Coptic and are unknown in the source language (hypercorrections, false Greek nominatives, etc.) see: Girgis (1971-73: §§77-79) who admits that these irregular forms may have existed in the colloquial Greek used in Egypt. It sometimes also happened that the gender of a Greek noun simply changed from masculine or neuter to feminine for unknown reasons, maybe merely based on analogy, i.e. on the similarity of the Greek noun’s vocalic pattern to that of typical Coptic feminine nouns (Girgis 1971-73: §91; Hopfner 1918: 14)

<sup>40</sup> About the plural ending and its omission in Middle and Late Egyptian, the basic facts are provided in Gardiner (1957: §§72-73) and Junge (1996: §2.1.1). For the vocalic reconstruction of the plural endings, see Callendar (1987: 27-37).

the emergence of new oppositions based on internal apophonic alternations between singular and plural forms. Nevertheless, there is no reason to suppose that the ablaut did not exist even before.<sup>41</sup> Loprieno (1995: 61-63) also assumes that, in certain cases, the three strokes in the hieroglyphic writing might have been the ideographic rather than phonetic indication of the plural, which implies that the apophonic alternation may have been sufficient in these cases to mark the singular vs. plural opposition already in earlier Egyptian. The question that has to be raised, therefore, is *how long* the inflection of morphological plural was productive. According to the written evidence, Demotic still had a real, systematically used plural ending, which is in a striking contrast with the Coptic data. As it has been observed above, morphological plural is restricted to a closed set of Coptic nouns, thus, on a synchronic level, it can hardly be considered regular, neither the plural forming systematic<sup>42</sup>.

Rather unexpectedly and interestingly enough, some frequently used nouns that were borrowed from Greek can be combined with Egyptian suffix.

- (6) a. **ϕγχοοϑε** ‘souls’, plural of **ϕγχη**  
 b. **επιστολοοϑε** ‘letters’ plural of **επιστολη**

According to Walter Till (1961: §86) this operation is available for feminine Greek nouns only, and exclusively with the suffix **-οοϑε**. With the help of the more extensive list provided by Girgis (1971-1973: §90), it is clearly observable that the form of the ending varies among the dialects (**-οοϑε** (S), **-αϑε** (A<sub>2</sub>), **-ηοϑ** (F)) to which **-ωοϑι** may be added for Bohairic (cf. **γραϕωοϑι** in John 5:39 of P. Bodmer III). Rodolphe Kasser (1991b: 219) also considers the dialectal variants in his examples, and, what is more remarkable, he points out that the plural suffix can only link with Copto-Greek words ending in tonic ‘-η’ such as **ϕγχη** ‘soul’, on the analogy of Coptic nouns like **τβνη** ~ **τβνοοϑε** ‘cattle’.

As it was indicated above, Greek substantives are borrowed invariably in singular nominative form, as there is no Greek-like declension in Coptic. Similarly, for the same reason, originally neuter Greek nouns become re-classified as masculine, which perfectly confirms the assumption that it is the grammar of the borrower language that conditions in

<sup>41</sup> For the proposal of a special plural stem see Schenkel (1983: 177-178), whom I have to cite after Satzinger (1999: 365-374) since I had no access to the original publication.

<sup>42</sup> It must be noted that Helmut Satzinger (1999) proposes a systematic derivation for the plural formation of nouns ending in tonic syllable. He assumes that a kind of metathesis is responsible for the diphthongs which can be found in the plural forms. He, however, basically treats the subject from a diachronic point of view, and does not touch on the question of productivity.

what form a loanword is to be integrated.<sup>43</sup> That is why the combination of the  $\Phi\Upsilon\chi\eta$ -type Greek words with an Egyptian remnant suffix is so surprising: was this plural suffix still productive?

The Demotic data are far from being conclusive: Demotic writing marks the plural ending by a vertical sign that follows feminine ending and any other determinatives, contrary to former hieroglyphic usage (Johnson 2003: §14, Simpson 1996: 49). This may suggest that the sign itself transcribed as  $-w$  is a mere determinative that signals the plurality of the noun. It is to be noted, however, that the 3rd person plural pronominal suffix was written with the same sign and it was certainly and necessarily pronounced (cf. its Coptic successor  $-\omega\Upsilon$ ). In addition, Simpson observes (1996: 50) that, as far as the text corpora of the decrees are concerned, the regular omission of the plural marker is much less frequent than that of the feminine ending.<sup>44</sup> A possible scenario that I have already proposed in my paper for the ICE conference on Rhodes (Egedi *forthcoming*) is that when the Greek nouns that can be combined with Egyptian plural marking were eventually borrowed in Pre-Coptic, the suffix must have been still productive. It must have been limited to certain nominal classes only, characterized by the type of their vocalism or syllable structure, but a group of Greek loanwords, having a quasi similar syllabic make-up, was able to pick up the appropriate suffix. Unfortunately, it is impossible to define the exact time of borrowing for the already mentioned effects of diglossia (cf. section 1.2.2), but it certainly happened in a period when Egyptian plural forming was still a productive inflectional strategy.

Finally, closely related to the issue discussed so far, let me expand on the notions of regularity and productivity. The morphological process of inflection (in comparison with derivation) typically shows an unrestrained productivity since inflected forms have syntactic functions and do not create new words or concepts (Koefoed – Marle 2000: 303). Unproductive forms, at the same time, *can* be regular, provided that they can be described by means of a rule not distinct from other rules of grammar. Yet, they remain historic relics for being unproductive by nature (Kiefer 2000: 298). It might happen that an accurate phonological investigation will manage to derive all the apparently irregular plural forms in Coptic and provide a systematic explanation for each and every morphological

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<sup>43</sup> About this theoretical point of view more details will be given in section 2.3.3 in connection with loan verb integration into Coptic.

<sup>44</sup> Demotic grammars in general take it for granted that plural marking was systematically realized, in spite of the fact that its productivity all of a sudden disappears in Coptic. Ronald J. Williams admits in his dissertation about the Papyrus Insinger (1948: 12-13) that “it is likely that in many cases this consonant ( $-w$ ) had disappeared from speech in this position.”

occurrence. The inflectional process, however, cannot be considered productive any more, if it does not operate on every possible input that corresponds to the formal requirements of the rule. Therefore, plural forming is supposed to exhibit certain regularity and productivity in Pre-Coptic (producing Greek nouns with Egyptian plural ending), but ceased to be productive at an indefinable point in time, since there are numerous Greek loans in Coptic ending in tonic ‘-η’ without the corresponding plural forms.

## 2.3 On the edge of nominality

### 2.3.1 Is there an adjectival category in Coptic?

The overall nominal character of native Coptic ‘adjectives’ has already been observed and serious doubts have been expressed whether there actually existed a separate word-class of adjectives in Coptic.<sup>45</sup> Although raising this question is absolutely reasonable, I will show in this section that there are syntactic criteria to distinguish a subset of nouns, which behave more like adjectives, and the distinction thereof is not unnecessary or autotelic.

Lexical categories are better demarcated on structural grounds rather than being described by obscure semantic definitions, thus a distributional approach is the most appropriate way to achieve the goal. Functional definitions such as adjectives primarily express properties and therefore appear as modifiers within a noun phrase are too general for the separation of a lexical category. There are special and universal syntactic environments in which only adjectives can appear (Baker 2003: 191 and see also the criteria for differentiation of adjectives in chapter two of Bhat (1994)). These syntactic environments, however, are practically absent in Coptic (e.g. comparison), or what happens is that the two categories (nouns and adjectives) become neutralized in the given context and show the same distribution – as it is the case in the predicative use. Another generally accepted criterion for an adjective is that it can be directly adjoined to a head-noun as an attributive modifier. In Coptic, however, one hardly finds any constituent that adjoins *directly* to another, with *no* linking element. Actually, attributive constructions require a morpheme **ⲛ-** between the noun and its modifier (See section 2.5.2). Finally, Coptic adjectives are not marked morphologically either.

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<sup>45</sup> Shisha-Halevy (1986: 129-131), Reintges (2004: 90). The title of the relevant chapter in Ariel Shisha-Halevy's monograph from 1986 is actually a question: *The adnominal modifier: A definable 'adjective' category in Coptic?*



Keeping this exceptional class apart, the other rather confusing fact that makes scholars assume that the overall category of ‘adjectives’ is missing in Coptic dwells in the structural properties of the attributive construction itself. According to Chris Reintges (2004: 90 §3.1.3.1), “property-denoting expressions like **ΝΟΣ** ‘big’ or **САВЕ** ‘intelligent’ cannot be distinguished syntactically from referring expressions like **ΡΩΜΕ** ‘man’, since both types of nominals can be used as the head or the modifier of an adjectival construction”. (A more detailed discussion of attributive construction with references will be given in section 2.5)

Indeed, the lexical members of the phrase seem to be freely interchangeable, whereas the place of the linking element is fixed as it is illustrated in a pair of examples below (9)<sup>47</sup>. Put differently, the linking element does not necessarily join the adjective-like modifier, but invariably the second of the two members of an attributive construction, independently of its supposed status as a semantic modifier or modified. In Bentley Layton’s terms (2000: §99, §102), example (9a) is a *mediated attributive construction*, while (9b) is an *inverted attributive construction*:

- (9) a. **Π-ΡΩΜΕ**      **Ν̄-ΑΤΜΟΥ**  
DEF.SG.M-man    ATTR-immortal  
‘the immortal man’
- b. **Π-ΑΤΜΟΥ**      **Ν̄-ΡΩΜΕ**  
DEF.SG.M-immortal    ATTR-man  
‘the immortal man’

This type of word order variation is a remarkable and partly unsolved syntactic problem that can be analyzed in terms of placement opposition as proposed by Ariel Shisha-Halevy (1986: 132–138). The main issue is whether the syntactic nucleus coincides with the semantic nucleus or not. If the placement opposition is not suppressed by some lexically motivated condition (there are quantifiers that prefer the first place, while certain individual lexemes choose the second), adjective-like nouns may occur in both first and second place position, that is to say, on both sides of the linking element. The inverted pattern is used to express an affective or emotive charge or a distinctive, contrastive role, and as such it seems to be motivated primarily by pragmatic factors. For instance, ‘pejorative or disapproving attributes’ are observed to be common with the inverted construction.<sup>48</sup> It is probably a secondary phenomenon developed only in the Coptic phase of the Egyptian language (or directly before Coptic), and is most likely to have emerged

<sup>47</sup> The examples are from a fifth century Gnostic papyrus (BG 121,14 and 121,2, published by Till (1955)); but cited here after Till (1961: §117). Additional examples *inter alia* in Layton (1990 & 2000: 83–84 §102), Reintges (2004: 90–91 §3.1.3.1).

<sup>48</sup> The affective character is reinforced by the frequent co-occurrence of the inverted pattern with the **π**-determination, the emphatic form of the definite article, cf. Polotsky (1957: 229)

only after the *noun N-noun* pattern had already been fully established and grammaticalized for the attributive construction (see Chapter 5).

The statement of Chris Reintges (2004: 90) cited above is, however, an over-generalization. There *are* syntactic and even morpho-syntactic strategies for separating the class of adjectives, or at least a subclass of nouns that are typically used as modifiers. As for the morpho-syntactic criterion, the lexemes in question have no inherent grammatical gender. While some of them still have a morphological masculine or feminine (or even a plural) form (e.g. **ϸΑΒΕ/ϸΑΒΗ** ‘wise’, cf. the list of Layton: 2000: §114b), the use of these forms entirely depends on the gender of the head-noun – that is to say, the suitable form is selected by the nucleus of the attributive construction and the modifier simply agree with it. Bentley Layton describes this class of lexemes as ‘genderless common nouns’ (2000: §§113–117).<sup>49</sup>

Although the number of such ‘genderless common nouns’ is quite low in the native word-stock, the category still proves to be an open word class as it is justified by the vast quantity of Greek loan-adjectives which entered this category. Greek adjectives are usually borrowed in their singular, masculine, nominal case form, but in Coptic these become genderless, and appear to modify both masculine and feminine nouns. Interestingly, in the case of loan-adjectives an animateness split also developed, a phenomenon entirely unattested in Egyptian before: the endings vary according to the agreement with animate vs. inanimate nouns, as illustrated in (10):<sup>50</sup>

(10) a. **ΟΥ-ΦΥΧΙΚΟΣ ΔΕ Ν-ΡΩΜΕ** [1Cor 2:14]  
INDF.SG-natural PRT ATTR-man  
 ‘a natural person’

b. **ϸΩΜΑ Ν-ΦΥΧΙΚΟΝ** [1Cor 15:44]  
body ATTR-natural  
 ‘(a) natural body’

The other important criterion for distinguishing the adjectival sub-class may be formed in syntactic terms, namely in that of the placement opposition problem. Adjective-like

<sup>49</sup> In his earlier paper on noun phrases (1990: 84–87) two sets of nouns are distinguished. Set (a) consists of simple Completers and is a set of morphs that always express qualification and never denotation as well as do not show a stable, associated gender (= ‘genderless common nouns’ in Layton 2000). Set (b) contains all other nouns that can have a denotative as well as a qualifying actualization (being indifferent to gender only in the latter case). This latter class corresponds to ‘gendered common nouns’ in his grammar of 2000.

<sup>50</sup> Girgis (1976-78: §96); Shisha-Halevy (1986: §4.2.2.1); Layton (2000: §114a and §117c). Occasionally feminine endings also can be attested, cf. Girgis 1976–78: §97; especially with non-human items in a few lexically fixed expressions (Layton 2000: §117c); See also Shisha-Halevy (1986: 137 obs.11). The examples cited here are from Layton (2000: §117c).

genderless common nouns can appear in both mediated and inverted constructions without giving up their modifier function, that is to say, they remain the semantic satellite even if becoming the syntactic nucleus. As for the gendered common nouns, however, they can function as modifiers only in the second (syntactically satellital) position; if they appear in the first position of the construction (as the syntactic nucleus or the head-noun), they must also be interpreted as the semantic nucleus and the other member of the construction will fulfil the modifier function (Cf. Shisha-Halevy 1986: 132-135). To sum it up, the combination of formal and semantic criteria will bring out a class of words that admittedly does not behave as prototypical adjectives in other languages but is systematically demarcated within the class of nominals and, accordingly, might as well be called *adjectives*.<sup>51</sup>

The problem of the adjectival category has also been discussed with respect to the earlier language stages. It was addressed in an early paper by Wolfgang Schenkel (1967: 77–79), who suggested abandoning the adjectival category from the morphology, and applying the term only for a syntactically defined group of words, whose function was only partly identical. Whatever can appear as an attribute must be called adjective.

Sami Uljas, in a paper of 2007, summarizes the earlier approaches and cites further references from both general linguistics and the Egyptological literature. He critically analyses the previous approaches (such as the grammar of adjectives as part of the nominal syntax, the supposed participial nature of adjectives both in modifier and predicative use, the attributive constructions as appositive constructions, etc.), and also points out the overlap of adjectival syntax and verbal expressions (e.g. in negated predicative use). Instead of establishing word-classes, Sami Uljas proposes a use- and construction-specific approach, according to which the so-called ‘property concept’ words “represent functionally unspecified lexical items that can enter into various construction templates where they are assigned a function as some of the traditionally identified parts of speech”, and claims that “in Earlier Egyptian expressions describing ‘property concepts’ should be seen as ‘adjectives’, ‘verbs’ etc. *in construction* only and that function arises from the latter” (2007: 247). Solving the problem of the adjectival category either for earlier language stages or for Coptic is beyond the scope of this chapter. Nevertheless, in

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<sup>51</sup> As it is also noted in the second edition of Layton’s grammar (2004: §113). Ariel Shisha-Halevy (1986: 133) concludes in a similar way: “An adjective will be defined below as a modifier for which a shift in placement (...) does not bring about an internal semantic reversal of that order (...) the inter-constituent relationship remains constant”. He defines “adjective as any specific noun lexeme (N<sup>x</sup>) featuring in both following paradigms: (a) ‘N → n-N<sup>x</sup>’ (b) ‘N<sup>x</sup> → n-N’, i.e. having the privilege of both first- and second-place positions.” (1986: 135).

reconstructing the process of grammaticalization, which is the main topic of Chapter 5, it will be of significance that a subset of nouns can still be distinguished from ordinary substantives in Coptic by their specific features and syntactic behaviour.

### 2.3.2 No verbs in Coptic? Once more on a problem of categorization

As it has emerged with respect to Polotsky’s transpositional model for Middle Egyptian, sometimes Coptic is also claimed to be a language entirely lacking in verbs. As Ariel Shisha-Halevy put it (2007a: 340): “verbality and verbhood are in Coptic first of all a matter of rhematicity and occurrence privilege in specific nexus patterns, and not of a specific lexico-morphological subsystem (...) nominality and nounhood are not lexemic, but are a matter of pattern compatibility”. I can see no fundamental contradiction between this statement and the existence of a verbal category in Coptic. In modern linguistics, lexical categories are usually demarcated by distributional rules. In a language with a rich morphology, categorial definitions are naturally generated in terms of a lexeme’s compatibility with certain affixes (for instance, case marking can only appear on nouns while tense-aspect markers on verbs, etc.). But in a language like Coptic, in which morphology has such a modest employment and functional charge, distributional criteria must be established with reference to syntax. If we take a closer look at recent grammatical descriptions, this is what we actually find.

Following the widely used Polotskian terminology the Coptic Tripartite Conjugation Pattern is composed of the so-called conjugation base (the distinctive element of any conjugation), the actor expression (noun or pronominal suffix) and the verb in the infinitive.<sup>52</sup>

*Table 5. The Tripartite Conjugation Pattern (after Polotsky 1960: 393)*

1	2	3
Conjugation Base	Actor expression (noun/pronoun)	Verb (infinitive)
ⲁ-	ⲡ-ⲣⲟⲙⲉ Ⲓ-	Ⲫⲟⲧⲙ

<sup>52</sup> Note that the expression ‘actor’ has to be interpreted loosely here. The better description would be ‘subject’ to avoid any allusion to the semantic role of the constituent since, evidently, it does not need to be an agent.

The verb form in question is undeniably derives from an infinite historically since Coptic patterns originate from various periphrastic constructions that involved the infinitival form of the verbs (cf. *jr=f-sdm* > **ⲁ-ⲓ-Ⲙⲟⲩⲧⲏ**). But this fact is quite irrelevant on a synchronic level when one can no longer detect a true finite vs. non-finite opposition from a morphological point of view. What relevance can the expression ‘infinitive’ bear in a language in which there is no corresponding finite verb form?

According to Hans Jacob Polotsky (1960: 393) “a verb in Coptic is a word which is capable of filling the last position in the Tripartite Conjugation Pattern”, so he himself stresses that this is the criterion of the verb in general and not that of a special verb form. Bentley Layton (2000: 125) puts something very similar: “The main actualisation form of the verb is called the ‘infinitive’. Syntactically, the infinitive can be identified as the class of morphs which occurs as the third essential constituent of non-durative conjugation.” Noticeably, Layton identifies the class ‘infinitive’ on a syntactic distributional ground as well, rather than by morphological criteria.

Generally speaking, finite verb forms indicate an action that has a particular tense, aspect, mood or voice, while the infinitive verb forms are used to refer to an action without any specific reference to these properties. As a matter of fact, the Coptic infinitive *can* have some kind of aspect information as clearly observable in the infinitive vs. qualitative opposition – although in the Bipartite Conjugation Pattern only.<sup>53</sup> On a closer inspection, the qualitative doesn’t seem to be more finite than the ‘infinitive’. Hardly any other opposition in the morphological system of the Coptic verb exists, with the exception of a few irregular imperative forms.

The finite vs. non-finite distinction is owing to the descriptive approach originating from the Indo-European linguistic tradition characterized by a rich verbal morphology, which was transferred to the description of other languages, too (Bisang 2001: 1400). In the case of the Coptic verb that appears in various sentence patterns, the label ‘infinitive’ is rather traditional than linguistically motivated, as it cannot be opposed to a real finite verb form. The finite vs. non-finite opposition can rather be related to the sentence level: an embedded clause may be infinitival if it lacks an overt subject. The referent of its subject is

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<sup>53</sup> Reintges (2004: 205) characterizes this opposition in terms of *situation aspect*, which concerns the internal temporal structure or inherent dynamism of the situation described by the verbal predicate: an eventive or dynamic reading opposed to a non-dynamic (static) reading. For further details see Reintges (2004: 211-217).

‘empty’ and is controlled by one of the arguments of the matrix sentence (in (11) by the second person plural personal pronoun).<sup>54</sup>

(11) **ἄ-τετν-οὔωσ** **ἀν** **ε-ει** **ωαρο-ι** [John 5:40]  
 NEG-2PL-want NEG.PRT to-come to-1SG  
 ‘You do not want to come to me’

Moreover, if the Coptic verbal slot in the Tripartite Conjugation Pattern were reserved for infinitives, one would expect the Greek verbs, which were borrowed in a great quantity, to have been adopted in their infinitival form as well. Instead, what we find is that Sahidic seems to adopt the imperative form (see below). In Bohairic the Greek verbs appear in the infinitive, but always combined with the *status nominalis* form of the Coptic verb **ἰπἰ** (**εἶπ-**) ‘to do’. If the native verbal position is preserved for an infinitive, the use of an auxiliary seems quite redundant. At this point let me open a new section about the integration strategies of loan verbs into Coptic for two reasons: first, because a considerable variation can be observed among the dialects beyond the two main strategies mentioned above. This is an issue that has been reconsidered and analyzed only recently and the present author also contributed to the discussion with some considerations (2010 and *forthcoming*), which will be repeated here.<sup>55</sup> The second reason for advancing a deeper insight into this question is the strong claim made by Chris Reintges (2001, 2005) according to which Copto-Greek verbs have the morphological structure of nouns and, as a consequence, bear a purely nominal syntax. This claim is closely related to the topic of this section of the thesis and thus deserves further analysis.

### 2.3.3 How nominal are the Copto-Greek verbs?

In this section my aim is, on the one hand, to determine the model form of the borrowed verbal elements, which is a matter of old-standing debate in Coptic studies (the infinitive vs. imperative discussion); and on the other hand, to revise the assumption that the dialectal variation that has long been observed with respect to the borrowing strategies might reflect a diachronic change or a kind of grammaticalization process. The analysis, at several points, will be based on the conviction that it is the grammar of the target language that conditions in what form the loanword is to be integrated into the new linguistic

<sup>54</sup> The categorial problem discussed here was one of the topics addressed in Egedi (2007)

<sup>55</sup> The issue has been first examined in a shorter form in my paper for the *10th International Congress of Egyptologist* (22-29 May 2008, Rhodes).

environment. Accordingly, looking at the other side of the question, the strategy (or strategies) may provide us with clues as to how *nominal* the verbal slot can be considered within the Coptic grammatical system.

Before turning to the borrowing strategies an argument for the nominal character of Copto-Greek verbs must be mentioned and immediately rejected as well: the fact that these loan verbs (contrary to native verbs) only appear in the absolute state form may have an independent and quite natural morpho-phonological reason. The vocalisation and syllabic-structure of Greek verbs is completely different from that of Coptic verbs, thus the former cannot take part of the native ‘root-and pattern’ game. Loan verbs cannot perform a *status nominalis* or *pronominalis* but, of course, can easily have an object making use of the alternative strategy of differential object marking by means of a prepositional complement.

Borrowing from Greek concerns all the lexical categories as well as some functional elements, but verbal borrowing is of particular interest since the morphological system of the two languages in contact is fundamentally different. As a consequence of the analytic nature of Coptic sentence patterns, Greek loan verbs can occur only in a single and unvarying form, but as it was already pointed out, this chosen form and the way it is integrated into Coptic is not necessarily the same in the various dialects. The difference between the two main integration strategies (that may be dubbed Sahidic and Bohairic strategy<sup>56</sup> after the two major literary dialects in which they have long been observed) has been generally recognized, but opinions differ concerning the form of the loan verbs in Sahidic. In the Sahidic dialect, the morphological form of the loan verbs seems to be the *imperfectum imperativi activi* both in *verba vocalia* and *contracta* (Lefort 1950: 68; see also Stern 1880: §331). Verbs ending in *-μι* are integrated into the thematic inflectional classes,<sup>57</sup> while deponent and middle verbs are treated as active ones.<sup>58</sup>

(12) ΠΙΣΤΕΥΕ	πιστεύειν	‘believe’
ΠΛΑΝΑ	πλανᾶν	‘lead astray’
ΑΙΤΕΙ	αἰτεῖν	‘ask’
ΣΤΑΥΡΟΥ	σταυροῦν	‘crucify’
ΠΑΡΑΔΙΔΟΥ	παραδιδόναι	‘deliver’
ΑΣΠΑΖΕ	ἀσπάζεσθαι	‘greet’

<sup>56</sup> As far as I know, these appellatives are used for the first time in the paper of Eitan Grossmann’s (2010)

<sup>57</sup> The disappearance of the athematic conjugation in Greek is one of the basic characteristics of the Hellenistic period (Papanastassiou 2007: 615). For the remodeling of the verb stem in general see Gignac (1981: 271-319).

<sup>58</sup> This is true as long as the New Testament is concerned. In documentary texts they can have middle infinitive forms (Girgis 2001: 69-70 §188; Förster 2002: xviii).

The Bohairic dialect adopts the Greek infinitival form (as clearly manifested by the endings **-IN**, **-AN**, **-OIN** and **-ECΘE**), but always combined with the *status nominalis* of the Coptic verb **IP** ‘to do’ (**EP-**):<sup>59</sup>

(13) <b>EP-EPHΘYMIN</b>	ἐπιθυμῆν	‘desire’
<b>EP-ETIN</b>	αἰτεῖν	‘ask’
<b>EP-ASPASZECΘE</b>	ἀσπάζεσθαι	‘greet’

According to many authors, the loan verbs in Sahidic only have the *appearance* of imperatives but in reality they are infinitives too. Steindorff (1951: §284) proposes that the infinitives were adopted in their late form. In this period the word final *-ν* was easily dropped, and the ending *-ειν* could be replaced by *-εν*. The same view is held by Alexander Böhlig (1954: 46-47).<sup>60</sup> Not only is this explanation problematic from a phonological point of view,<sup>61</sup> but there are also some additional arguments for the forms to be imperative. Irregular (and as such, unmistakable) imperative forms appear in Sahidic (e.g. **xpw** for the verb *χρησθαι* ‘use’), which hardly fits into a theory of infinitive-insertion. In addition, there exist a few exceptional texts where word accent is marked in writing. These data confirm that accentuation of the borrowed verbs corresponds to that of the 2nd person imperative form in Greek (Till 1951: 18-19). For a summary and general discussion of the problem one may consult the introductory chapter of Hans Förster’s *Wörterbuch* (2002: xv-xxi.). He himself tends to prefer the infinitive theory (in favour of Alexander Böhlig), but the arguments he adds to the discussion do not seem to be strong enough. For instance, he argues against the imperative form by raising the following question: considering that the Coptic derivational affix **AT-** normally combines with the infinitive of the Coptic verb, why should one assume that in case of a Greek loan verb it is followed by an imperative (Förster 2002: xx)? This line of reasoning leads us back to the issue already mentioned in the previous section. The so called ‘infinitive’ in Coptic is a kind of citation form rather than an infinitive. The native verb form appearing after **AT-** is the same form that appears in the verbal slot of any conjugation. Once a Greek verb got integrated into the Egyptian lexicon, it behaved the same way as the verbs of Egyptian origin in all the syntactic contexts. When debating the form of a Greek loan verb, it is more about the morphological shape of the *model verb* in the source language than the function it fulfils in the system of

<sup>59</sup> For a sample of loan verbs in both dialects, consult first of all Böhlig (1954: 129-140); see also Stern (1880: §331); Hopfner (1918: 20-23); Steindorff (1951: §284), and Girgis (2001).

<sup>60</sup> But see the review of Böhlig’s monography by Lefort in *Muséon* 67 (1954) 400-403.

<sup>61</sup> According to Gignac (1981: 330-331), in the Roman and Byzantine Period the ending of the Greek infinitive could be *-ει’-ι*, *-εν* but never *-ε*.

the target language. Last but not least, one ought to account for the systematic correlation between Greek inflection classes and the endings that appear in Coptic. Contracted verbs in  $-\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  show the ending  $-\epsilon\iota$  in Coptic, while non-contracted verbs in  $-\omega$  have the ending  $-\epsilon$ , which perfectly correspond to the imperative present active endings in Greek. Simply dropping the final  $-\nu$  of the infinitive would not have distinguished these classes, and similarly, a hypothetical change of the infinitival ending from  $-\epsilon\iota\nu$  to  $-\epsilon$  ( $-\epsilon\iota\nu > -\epsilon\nu > -\epsilon$ ) would have confused these inflectional groups.

An alternative solution has been provided recently by Ariel Shisha-Halevy in his review article (2003:457): “in Sahidic, unlike many other dialects, we have (...) not the Greek morphological infinitive, but a Greek zero-affix form for the Coptic structural (syntactic) infinitival entity”. A similar view is held by Chris Reintges (2004:39), who claims that Greek verbs are borrowed into Coptic as ‘bare’ (i.e. uninflected) stems. He rejects the imperative approach since “imperative verb forms have an intrinsic addressee-related reference, and are therefore construed with an implicit or explicit second person subject pronoun.” (Reintges 2005:§5.3) Typological research, however, demonstrated that imperatives as model verbs in borrowing are not unusual (Wichmann – Wohlgemuth 2008: 99 and Wohlgemuth 2009: 79-80). In many languages, imperatives are short and morphologically not complex. The typological studies cited above also point out that the input forms show a great variation across languages, in some special cases they can even be verbs inflected for person or tense/aspect. What seems to be more relevant in the course of form selection is the high frequency and the relative prominence of the possible candidates in the sense that they should be easily identified.

As it was already mentioned, Chris Reintges (2001: 1976-207 and 2005: §5.3) claims that Copto-Greek verbs have the morphological structure of nouns and, as a consequence, bear a nominal syntax. That is why they must be inserted in the complement position of a light verb meaning ‘to do’. Light verbs have minimal semantics, and it is their nominal complement that imports the lexical meaning. According to Reintges, in Bohairic this light verb is overt, while in Sahidic it is a covert one.<sup>62</sup> A weak point of this explanation is that loan verbs were not equally felt as nominal in the two dialects. One should not ignore the difference between the input forms. In Bohairic, loan verbs were always treated syntactically as nouns and an auxiliary was needed to accommodate them in all the

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<sup>62</sup> The term ‘light verb’ is used by Reintges in terms of Grimshaw – Mester (1988), which is not to be confused with the light verb strategy of Wichmann – Wohlgemuth (2008). They declare to employ the term in a more traditional way (2008: 91), which excludes a hidden or covert light verb in their analysis, the latter being a theoretical construct in generative syntax.

possible environments and sentence patterns. This was not the case, however, in Sahidic, which proves to be consistent in not applying a light verb, and this fact is supposedly not independent of the form this dialect borrowed. It should be noted that in some cases Sahidic adopted the Greek *aorist* (both as imperative and as abstract forms).<sup>63</sup> Forms deriving from a Greek aorist are far more unusual in Bohairic, which seems to confirm that the Bohairic dialect really treated the loan verbs as nouns.

The adoption of an imperative form is not entirely unnatural if we look at the phenomenon from an Egyptian point of view. Assuming that the structure of the borrowing language is more likely to determine how loan verbs are integrated, the Greek imperative as a model verb is not less eligible than the infinitive if we consider the morpho-syntactic properties of Coptic. In this language, one and the same verb form occurred in all the analytically structured conjugation patterns. In the absence of real finite vs. non-finite opposition, however, a verb in Coptic was no longer perceived by the speakers as a genuine *infinitive* but rather as a sort of basic (lexical) form of the verb which also appeared sentence initially (with no conjugation base or personal pronoun attached) when it functioned as an imperative.<sup>64</sup> In the period directly preceding the Coptic era, not independently of the prevalence of periphrastic constructions, the imperative as a morphological category had also started to decline, as it is clearly shown by cases in Roman Demotic: the morphologically marked imperative forms (mistakenly) also appear in positions reserved for ‘infinitives’.<sup>65</sup> In view of these facts, Coptic speakers might easily have considered the imperative (a morphologically simple and sentence initial form in Greek as well) as an ideal basic form of the verb when borrowing new words from a foreign language.

The possibility of the borrowing of a *root-like form* or *abstract form* (cf. Wohlgemuth 2009: 76) rather than an imperative is not to be discarded. Nevertheless, it must be kept in mind that since the ‘abstract form’ is claimed to be a stem that actually never occurs in the grammatical system of the donor language, its shape being a mere abstraction, this mechanism of borrowing requires a full understanding of the morphological structure of the source language on the part of the speakers and thus presumes an intensive language contact and a high degree of bilingualism.

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<sup>63</sup> For a good selection of examples, see Girgis (2001: 75-79 §§197-198).

<sup>64</sup> The ‘infinitive’ was the usual form to express the imperative except for a few irregular verbs, which are marked morphologically as imperatives. These verbs are listed in Layton (2000 §366).

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Edgerton (1932: 64). The fuzziness of category boundaries can be observed in Greek as well, where the infinitive was used to express an imperative function occasionally (Mandilaras 1973: §756).

In what follows, further dialects will be examined to see the distribution of integration strategies, and I will argue that some kind of correlation may be observed between the input forms and the accommodation strategies. This correlation will, however, be unidirectional, i.e. if loan verbs are perceived as nominal elements (e.g. as infinitives in the donor language), the direct insertion strategy is not available for them to function as Coptic verbs. Nevertheless, it does not mean that a more verb-like element rejects a light verb strategy when borrowing takes place. In some dialects, loan verbs look like the Greek imperative but are inserted with the help of an auxiliary. Two main features must be considered when observing the variation: i) whether the dialect needs an auxiliary to accommodate the loan verb (light verb strategy vs. direct insertion), and ii) the systematic difference in the form of the borrowed items (infinitive vs. imperative). Put differently, the distinction between what we borrow (the form of the model verb) on the one hand, and how we borrow (integration/accommodation strategy) on the other.

In Till's *Dialektgrammatik* (1961b: §187) the following distribution is offered:<sup>66</sup>

Table 6

Dialect	Example	Pattern
S	πιστευε	Ø imperative
A, A <sub>2</sub>	πιστευε	AUX + imperative
B	επιστευ(ε)ιν	AUX + infinitive
F	επιστευιν	AUX + infinitive

Walter Till's list of dialects is far from being complete; neither does he mention the variation that can be observed *within* a dialect. A more fine-grained classification can be found in the encyclopedia article of Rodolphe Kasser (1991: 220):<sup>67</sup>

Table 7

Dialect	Description
S, M, W, F56	Copto-Greek verbs are fully felt as verbs
A, L, B	Copto-Greek verbs are preceded by an auxiliary
V, P	Variation: a majority of cases with auxiliary
F	Variation: 50% with auxiliary, 50% without

Summarizing the data available so far, logically four possible patterns arise along two parameters. The parameters are the input form on the one hand, and the integration strategy

<sup>66</sup> The arrangement in the table and the description of the patterns in the third column are mine. Note that the form of the auxiliary verb εP- varies among dialects: in Akhmimic and Lycopolitan (here labeled as A<sub>2</sub>) its shape is P-, in Fayyumic ελ-.

<sup>67</sup> Again, the table format is my conversion.

by means of which this form was borrowed on the other. In reality, only three types of combination are attested throughout the textual sources, the infinitival form apparently is not accessible without a light-verb.

Table 8

	Infinitive	imperative
Light verb strategy	AUX + infinitive	AUX + imperative
Direct insertion	* $\emptyset$ infinitive	$\emptyset$ imperative

However, more than one pattern will turn up in a significant number of dialectal varieties.

The insightful work of Eitan Grossmann on dialectal variation (2009)<sup>68</sup> encouraged me as well to have a closer look at these interesting data. The text editions I consulted to check the distribution of patterns both among and within the dialects had been chosen according to the general considerations explained in Chapter 1, so I ignored classical Fayyumic (F5) and classical Bohairic (B5).<sup>69</sup> My results were slightly different from those in Grossmann (2009) with respect to the data in two dialects (F4 and V4) and this fact, consequently, modified the overall picture as to which patterns can co-occur in the same language variety (see *Table 9* below). I also collected a number of examples myself, but of course in most of the cases I used the comments and indices of the editors in the cited publications if there was any indication how the loan verbs appeared in the given text. My knowledge of the relevant data has grown considerably wider by the accurate statistics and analysis of Mathew Almond (2010), who also provided a nice presentation of parallel Nag Hammadi manuscripts showing the inconsistent variation in the use of the auxiliary that can be observed in them. I rely on his figures when acknowledging the variation (even though there is only a minimal one) in the Akhmimic *Proverbs*. It must be noted, however, that he only records the presence or absence of the auxiliary without considering the possible combinations of the types listed in *table 8*. According to my research, the following language varieties existed in Coptic between the 3rd and 6th century (*table 9*). Variety 1 adopts the imperative-like form with a ‘direct insertion’ strategy. This method has been introduced as the so called Sahidic strategy, but Mesokemic (M) and Crypto-Mesokemic (W) share the same properties in borrowing. In variety 2 the input form is clearly an

<sup>68</sup> Eitan Grossmann kindly provided me with his manuscript already before it became public on his website, for which I am very grateful.

<sup>69</sup> The *Proverbs* in Akhmimic, the London *Gospel of John* (L5) and the Kellis corpus (L\*), P. Bodmer VI (P), C. Scheide and C. Schøyen (M), early Fayyumic texts (Diebner – Kasser 1989, Boud’hors 1998, Crum-Kenyon 1900) P. Mich 3521 (W) and P. Mich 3520 (V4), and P. Bodmer III (B4). For precise references see Table 4 in section 1.4.

infinitive and a light verb is needed to accommodate the new lexical element. This strategy, named after the Bohairic dialect, is characteristic of the early Fayyumic texts as well as of the corpus of ostraca coming from Narmouthis (N).<sup>70</sup> Variety 3 is similar to variety 2 but allows more than one accommodation strategy at the same time. Variety 4 is remarkable for its consistency in the input form: it mixes the strategies (to various extent in the individual dialects), but always adopts the imperative form.

Table 9

	Pattern(s)	Dialect
1	Ø imperative	S, M, W
2	AUX + infinitive	B4, F7, F4, N
3	AUX + infinitive    var.    Ø imperative	V4
4	AUX + imperative    var.    Ø imperative	P, L, A, S <sup>NH</sup>

It is very important to recognize that there seem to be no varieties in which ‘AUX + infinitive’ varies with ‘AUX + imperative’. As we mentioned earlier, the hypothetical fourth pattern ‘Ø infinitive’ does not arise at all. In the texts, where more than one strategies can be observed, no syntactic or semantic factors condition the choice between the light verb strategy and direct insertion, as it is pointed out by Almond (2010: 23).<sup>71</sup>

Finally, I have to examine the possibility that behind this variation a diachronic change can be detected according to which loan verbs were uniformly treated as nouns in an earlier period and they became ‘more verbal’ only at a later point in the history of Coptic. The related studies of Eitan Grossmann (2009) and Sebastian Richter (*forthcoming*), expanded and supported by Mathew Almond (2010) introduce a diachronic perspective in both the interdialectal and the intradialectal variation of integration strategies. Richter treats the question from a typological point of view (based on Wichmann – Wohlgemuth 2008), and is the first to examine how the ‘loan verb accommodation patterns’ apply to the Coptic borrowing strategies. He agrees with Grossmann in viewing the difference between these strategies as a process of development. According to Grossmann (2009) the Bohairic strategy is diachronically earlier and “reflects a lesser degree of influence than the ‘direct insertion’ strategy characteristic of Sahidic”. The dialects that appear to mix the patterns and perform more than one strategy are “in the midst of a diachronic process” representing

<sup>70</sup> I follow Grossmann (2009) in using the *siglum N* for this corpus. The ostraca are written in Demotic script but from a linguistic point of view are very close to Coptic. Unlike other Demotic sources, they contain a relatively large number of Greek words, and Greek verbs in the infinitive are combined with the Egyptian auxiliary *ir*, the ancestor of the light verb used in Coptic.

<sup>71</sup> But consider the lexically motivated exception of  $\chi\alpha\iota\pi\epsilon$  (Almond 2010: 24).

different stages of grammaticalization.<sup>72</sup> For this theory to hold, they need to assume that the input form was the Greek infinitive in *all the language varieties*, and that, in course of time, this infinitival form dropped the word-final **-n** for economical reasons to avoid the double encoding of the same function – as it is argued for by Grossmann.

Without aiming to refute the suggestion as a whole, I must invite caution in a few points of the question. The typological study of Wichmann and Wohlgemuth (2008: 109) also suggests that direct insertion tends to be a later development (at least with respect to the light verb strategy) as it means a complete integration where the loan verb is treated as if it were native. Nevertheless, considering the analytic structure of Coptic, once the input form has been established, transition of verbs from the source to the target language may not have raised serious difficulties. Morphologically speaking, Coptic lacks a real conjugational system, thus the grammatical environment specifically favors the ‘direct insertion’ of a chosen input form the same way as native verbs are inserted directly from the lexicon to the various sentence patterns.<sup>73</sup> It must be admitted that the light verb strategy preceded the direct insertion strategy in the history of the Egyptian language (as it is well attested for instance with Late Egyptian borrowings), but it should be kept in mind that the structural properties of the earlier stages (cf. the ‘root and pattern morphology’) did not give a chance to any other accommodation method to apply.

The suggestion, however, that the input forms with the appearance of imperatives are secondary in Coptic and were always preceded by a supposed infinitival form with a final **-n** can be seriously debated. The above mentioned phonological and additional factors definitely do not support this view. Unfortunately, there is not much hope to get a better insight into the real language situation in Egypt of the first centuries A.D., but the possible existence of pre-Coptic varieties that directly chose to adopt the imperative form cannot be dismissed theoretically. The frequently cited case of the Narmouthis ostraca, as the earliest evidence for verbal borrowing from Greek into Egyptian, is not suitable to verify the correlation of diachronic change with the strategies. The site, also known as Medinet Madi, is located in the Fayyum, and the dialect is probably subject to an areal convergence with the neighboring varieties. Dialects of the same region but from later periods are equally satisfied with the infinitival input form and the light verb strategy. At the same time, the

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<sup>72</sup> Reintges (2005) also speculates about the possibility of a scenario in which Sahidic represents a further development of a grammaticalization process.

<sup>73</sup> To make a contrast, languages with a rich inflectional morphology (like the mother tongue of the present author) would never allow a ‘direct insertion’ strategy since verbs never appear as bare, stem-like forms in the conjugation paradigms.

very early dialect of P. Bodmer VI from the Theban area (dialect P) consistently adopts and uses the imperative form. The change in borrowing strategy can be defended only in the group of the dialects in which the ‘AUX + imperative’ varies with the ‘Ø imperative’ pattern (cf. Variety 4 in *Table 9*). In those dialects where the ‘AUX + infinitive’ varies with the ‘Ø imperative’, it seems more plausible to suspect the influence of the prestige dialect (Sahidic) on the local vernacular.<sup>74</sup> This latter influence cannot be excluded in either of the mixed varieties. Borrowing may have taken place *between dialects* rather than directly from Greek, and in such cases the target language obviously did not bother with reconstructing the Greek input form to look like the one regularly used in that idiom. In view of this lengthy discussion, co-occurring integration strategies can be taken as evidence for language change only with a great caution. The mixed varieties of Coptic may just as well be the result of interdialectal borrowing and even that of borrowing of the borrowing strategy itself, motivated not only by geographical contact but by sociolinguistic factors<sup>75</sup> that easily cause synchronic interferences between standard varieties and local idioms.

## 2.4 Determination

A noun may be (and usually is) accompanied by constituents of various nature and category to form a more complex nominal construction whose semantic nucleus remains the same noun these elements were added to. It is worth, however, to make a distinction between various adnominal modifiers and determiners, since these latter rather have a grammatical function than a lexical meaning. In Bentley Layton’s terminology (2000: Ch. 2), the class of ‘determinators’ comprise not only the articles but the corresponding pronouns as well. He admits that determination is a “complex grammatical category, which cannot be described simply” and confines himself to elaborate the contrast between the use of definite and the indefinite article. This thesis is not concerned with all the semantic aspects of determination either, but rather focuses on the notion of definiteness (as opposed to non definiteness) as a syntactic device for referential identification, and on the properties

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<sup>74</sup> In *Table 9* only the dialect V4 is placed in this variety, but I tentatively suggest that texts of later Fayyumic (F5) will belong to this group. The editors of P. Mich 3520 also ascribe the variation in V4 to the influence of either Mesokemic or Sahidic (Schenke – Kasser 2003: 39).

<sup>75</sup> One of these factors could be a conscious standardization (‘Sahidicization’) during the transmission of certain texts, cf. Almond (2010: 28-29) with references.

that are related to the presence of a possessor expression. Additionally, a remarkable variation can be observed in certain Coptic dialects with respect to simple definiteness marking, so special attention will be paid to the function of  $\pi$ -determination (see below) in some of the early dialects.

As it was already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, an undetermined bare noun cannot refer to an entity. Its referential properties must be anchored by some way or other, the use of an article being a default anchoring device. The basic function of the definite article (or any other grammatical strategy that encodes definiteness) is to *identify* the referent of the noun phrase. According to this property, the speaker signals that the hearer is able to assign a referent for a certain noun phrase. Another related interpretative component of definite noun phrases is *familiarity*, when the entity referred to is assumed to be part of the speakers' shared knowledge of the world.<sup>76</sup> To put it differently or rather to summarize it in a single practical definition, definiteness means that the entity to which the noun phrase refers is either accessible in the context, or familiar to the hearer based on his/her general knowledge of the world.

The semantic and pragmatic notion of definiteness seems to be universal, only its grammatical realization is a language specific property and is not necessarily realized by a definite article. Interestingly, there are languages which exclusively grammaticalized the article for anaphoric use (when the context in which the referent is found is purely linguistic), while others distinguish two sets of articles, one for anaphoric use and one for non-anaphoric use, *viz.* for extra-linguistic, situational identification, or else, for an identification based on general knowledge (Lyons 1999: 53-54 and 158-159). There are languages in which the split lies in the opposition between inherently unique nouns (i.e. semantically unique) vs. non-inherently unique nouns (i.e. pragmatically unique) and the use of the articles is sensitive to this distinction. I found extremely interesting this latter phenomenon because, as far as I can judge, something very similar may be proposed for the multiple Bohairic determination system, where the choice between the two series of definite articles can hardly be accounted for merely on syntactic grounds.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> There are many further approaches to account for the concept of definiteness, a good summary of them can be found in Alexiadou et al. (2007: 51-157). For a more detailed pragmatic account of the use of the definite article, see Hawkins (1991), who claims that the existence and uniqueness of a definite description must hold within the universe of discourse or a subset of it, which can be inferred by the hearer through specific pragmatic parameters. The basic notion of referential identification presented here follows first of all Lyons (1999).

<sup>77</sup> For the notion of semantic and pragmatic uniqueness, see Löbner (1985), but this issue will be evoked in Chapter 3 in connection with Bohairic determination.

The use of the Coptic article, as far as standard Sahidic is concerned, covers all the mentioned semantic and pragmatic contexts where definiteness may apply. As we are informed by Layton (2000: §45), a noun phrase determined by a definite article is “known to or anticipated by both speaker and listener because the entity term is either mentioned in the preceding text (retrospective referential linkage) or heralded as coming in what follows (prospective referential linkage)<sup>78</sup>” or it is “the general name of a class”, “a type par excellence”, “the general totality of a class” (what is commonly referred to as the generic reading of a noun phrase), and finally the definite noun is “the most typical or essential instance of a class”. This latter type of Layton seems to correspond to the inherently unique reference. Chris Reintges (2004: 60-62) also summarizes the main uses of definite article, by terms more familiar to general linguistics. He lists and explains the main functions as follows: anaphoric use, general knowledge (inherently unique nouns), generic definites, and non-specific definites. His latter group, based on the examples he provides, seems to mainly comprise generics as well.<sup>79</sup>

It has also been assumed that, in line with recent formal syntactic accounts, referential noun phrases, which can function as arguments of the verb, are headed by the determiner itself and better to be described as determiner phrases. A similar approach has been advanced by certain scholars in Coptology as well, for instance Helmut Satzinger (1992: 75) notes that “the article may be regarded as the nuclear element of a nominal syntagma and the following noun as the expansion of this nucleus” referring to the monograph of Ariel Shisha-Halevy on Coptic grammatical categories (1986) where the core of the idea appears and also receives an extensive explanation. The same line of reasoning is present in the works of Bentley Layton, who first speaks about a determinator syntagm (1990) and later in his grammar about an article phrase (2000: §43).

Although Coptic nouns are not marked morphologically for gender and number (see section 2.2.1), the determiners represent these grammatical features. Actually, the grammatical gender and number of the nouns often become visible by means of this agreement (or concord) phenomenon. Determiners are the definite article, the demonstrative article, the possessive article, and the indefinite article, as they are commonly labelled in the Egyptological linguistics. Some special cases of determination will also be discussed separately in Chapter 3. It must be noted that the bundle of articles

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<sup>78</sup> The more widely-accepted terms for these uses are perhaps the anaphoric and cataphoric distinction.

<sup>79</sup> The obligatory use of definite article with vocatives is of course mentioned in every grammatical description, which is a fact worth noting but irrelevant for the topics discussed at the moment. For Coptic vocatives, see also Shisha-Halevy (1989).

that are considered determiners in this study is only a subset of the morphemes that are labelled as ‘determinators’ in Bentley Layton’s grammar (2000).

The determination system may vary according to dialects (this issue will be given a detailed discussion in chapter 3), but for simplicity sake, at this point only the Sahidic system is provided. The group of articles that appear in *Table 10* will be complemented later by special allomorphs and special uses (e.g. the **π**-determination). Below the table, the combinations of these articles with masculine and feminine nouns are illustrated from (14) to (17).

*Table 10. Determiners in Sahidic*

	SG.M	SG.F	PL
Definite article	<b>π-</b>	<b>τ-</b>	<b>̄ν-</b>
Demonstrative article	<b>πει-</b>	<b>τει-</b>	<b>νει-</b>
Possessive article	<b>πεϙ-</b>	<b>τεϙ-</b>	<b>νεϙ-</b>
Indefinite article	<b>ογ-</b>		<b>ζεν-</b>

- |      |   |  |  |
|------|---|--|--|
| (14) | <b>π-ρωμε</b><br>DEF.SG.M-man<br>‘the man’                | <b>τ-ρωφε</b><br>DEF.SG.F-field<br>‘the field’           | <b>̄ν-ρωμε/ρωφε</b><br>DEF.PL -man/field<br>‘the men/fields’         |
| (15) | <b>πει-ρωμε</b><br>DEM.SG.M-man<br>‘this man’             | <b>τει-ρωφε</b><br>DEM.SG.F-field<br>‘this field’        | <b>νει-ρωμε/ρωφε</b><br>DEM.PL -man/field<br>‘these men/fields’      |
| (16) | <b>πεϙ-ρωμε</b><br>POSSART.SG.M.3SG-man<br>‘his man’      | <b>τεϙ-ρωφε</b><br>POSSART.SG.F.3SG-field<br>‘his field’ | <b>νεϙ-ρωμε/ρωφε</b><br>POSSART.PL.3SG-man/field<br>‘his men/fields’ |
| (17) | <b>ογ-ρωμε/ρωφε</b><br>INDF.SG-man/field<br>‘a man/field’ |  | <b>ζεν-ρωμε/ρωφε</b><br>INDF.PL-man/field<br>‘men/fields’            |

The definite and the demonstrative articles show three distinct forms: in the singular they have a masculine as well as a feminine form, while in the plural no such morphological distinction can be found. The indefinite article has a singular and a plural variant only. Not only does the possessive article agree with the number and gender of the possessed noun but it also marks the person, the number and in certain cases (in the second and third person singular) the gender of the possessor. Accordingly, the items appearing in the table (**πεϙ-**, **τεϙ-**, **νεϙ-** ‘his’) only encode a third person singular masculine possessor but are meant to stand for the whole paradigm.

Demonstratives encode directly accessible reference and imply referentiality, and as a consequence they are necessarily definite. They differ from the simple article in that they combine definiteness with some extra semantic content. This is commonly described in terms of *ostension* and *deixis*. The deixis these elements express can be temporal as well as spatial: they locate the entity referred to in relation with some reference point in the extralinguistic context.<sup>80</sup> The distance from the speaker within this spatio-temporal deixis is often expressed in various languages by the contrast between proximal and distal demonstratives.

In Coptic, proximal demonstrative determiners are those indicated in the table above, while distal deixis is expressed by the combination of a simple definite noun phrase with a lexicalized relative clause (Ⲉⲧ-Ⲛⲓⲙⲁϥ ‘which is there’) attached to it:<sup>81</sup>

(18)    ⲧ-ⲡⲐⲘⲓϢ            Ⲉⲧ-Ⲛⲓⲙⲁϣ                                    [John 4:39]  
           DEF.SG.F-city        REL-there  
           ‘that city’

Although demonstratives and the definite article share the property of referential identification, it is important to notice that articles can be used in certain semantic and pragmatic contexts in which demonstratives must not be used, such as the larger situation use (i.e. the first mention of entities that are considered to be unique, hence generally identifiable, in a given speech community), or the associative-anaphoric use (i.e. the first mention of an entity that is not unique per se but with respect to a previously mentioned referent (Himmelman 2001: 833-834).

Languages may be classified into two major types with respect to pronominal possessors. Some of them permit the co-occurrence of articles and possessive determiners (e.g. Italian), while others do not (e.g. English). These two types are commonly referred to as adjectival-genitive (AG) languages and determiner-genitive (DG) languages following the proposal of Lyons (1986). Coptic is an interesting case in this respect. Synchronically speaking, it embodies a perfect DG type language, with the possessive article and the definite article mutually excluding each other. However, if one considers from which construction the possessive article series derives, it is well observable that originally the

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. Lyons (1999: 20), who refers ‘matching constraint’ established by Hawkins (1978): the hearer is instructed to match the referent of the noun phrase (or rather the DP) with some object which is either identifiable/visible in the context, or which is known on the basis of previous discourse. For a longer discussion of this topic, see Lyons (1999: 17-21) and see also Alexiadou et al. (2007: 93-130) concerning the syntax and semantics of demonstratives.

<sup>81</sup> It is called ‘the farther demonstrative’ in Layton’s description (2000: §57)

pronominal element (the so called ‘suffix’ pronoun) and the determiner were independent morphemes which only merged in a structural configuration. This led, at a certain point in the history of the language, to the grammaticalization of a complex possessive article (a *portmanteau* morpheme). It is to be noted, however, that this change must have taken place rather early, as with the emergence of the definite article in Late Egyptian the suffix pronoun preferred to be attached to the determiner rather than to the noun where it had been situated for centuries. The transitory pattern  $p^3 \text{ } p^r=f$  was instable and only sporadically attested.<sup>82</sup>

As for proper names, they are nouns with special lexical properties, being rigid designators in the sense of Kripke (1972). Unlike common nouns, proper names are inherently referential; they refer directly to single individuals (not in virtue of an associated descriptive content), and as such usually resist definiteness marking. For an extensive analysis of Coptic proper names, one may consult Shisha-Halevy (1989).

In a generic noun phrase, reference is made to the entire class of entities of which the denotatum of the noun is a member.<sup>83</sup> Simple generic nominals are often claimed to be rigid designators of some sort, hence they may behave and be interpreted similarly to proper names. Languages vary with respect to the use of the article with generic readings, but Coptic seems to systematically employ the simple definite article with generic readings as well. It is to be noted that the use of deictic markers with generics is not felicitous for a semantic incompatibility.

There is a universal observation that in many languages certain syntactic environments do not admit (or, conversely, require) a definite noun phrase. These environments, after having been recognized, provide excellent test-contexts to decide whether a given noun phrase is to be regarded as definite or not (cf. Lyons 1999: 16). In Coptic there are two contexts in which definiteness can safely be tested (cf. Satzinger 1992: 74-75):

- i.) The subject position of the so called Bipartite Conjugational Pattern (otherwise Durative Sentence or Adverbial Sentence) is always definite. In case of an indefinite subject the use of an existential pattern is obligatory.
- ii.) Relative clauses introduced by the relative converter **-ET/-ENT** can only expand definite noun phrases. If an attributive clause is to be attached to a non definite

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<sup>82</sup> Cf. Junge (1996: 60 *Anm*); and for further examples, see Wentz (1966: 47 (f)).

<sup>83</sup> Alexiadou et al. (2007: 175); Lyons (1999: 179-198). For a general discussion of genericity, see Carlson & Pelletier (1995).

antecedent, the circumstantial pattern is used. (This does not mean, however, that definite expression cannot be followed by a circumstantial clause.)

In (19) both contexts can be observed in the same sentence: as the subject is indefinite, the Bipartite Pattern is introduced by an existential particle (**ΟΥΝ**) and the attributive clause is expressed by a circumstantial perfect (**Ε-Α-Γ-**) instead of a relative conversion. The test is trivial if the definite or the indefinite articles are present. Therefore, I have chosen a few more examples from the Barcelona Gospel in which there is no determiner at the beginning of the noun phrase so the test contexts may be more informative in their characterization with respect to definiteness. In (20) the subject of the Bipartite Conjugation Pattern does not need to be introduced thus must be definite. The occurrence of the word Messiah in this context, without a definite determiner, confirms that the lexeme was treated as a proper name. What we can observe in (21) is that the quantified noun phrase ('six water-pots of stone') without a determiner cannot be definite. And finally, the antecedent of the relative clause introduced by the relative converter in (22) must be definite, which means that the quantifier attached to the noun (**ΝΙΜ**) can be interpreted in its universal quantifier function (*every, all*).

(19) **ΟΥΝ ΟΥ-ΡΩΜΕ ΝΗΥ ΖΙ ΠΑΖΟΥ ΜΜΟ-Ι**  
 EXIST INDF.SG-man come.Q behind-me  
**Ε-Α-Γ-ΦΩΠΕ ΖΑ ΤΑ-ΖΗ** [John 1:30]  
 CIRC.PF.3SG.M-become before-me  
 'there is a man coming after me who became before me'

(20) **ΤΝ-ΚΟΟΥΝ ΧΕ ΜΕΣΣΙΑΣ ΝΗΥ** [John 4:25]  
 1PL-know that Messiah come.Q  
 'We know that Messiah comes'

(21) **ΝΕ-ΥΝ ΚΟ ΔΕ Ν-ΖΥΔΡΙΑ Ν-ΩΝΕ Ε-Υ-ΚΗ**  
 IMPF.EXIST six.F PRT ATTR-waterpot ATTR-stone CIRC.3PL-put.Q  
**ΕΖΡΑΙ ΜΜΑΥ** [John 2:6]  
 down there  
 'there were six water-pots of stone put down there'

(22) **ΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ ΕΤ-ΠΙΣΤΕΥΕ ΕΡΟ-Γ** [John 11:11]  
 one every REL-believe to-3SG.M  
 'everyone who believes him'

As it was claimed above, definite determiners signal that the referent of the noun phrase can be identified. On the contrary, the indefinite determiner signals that the referent of the noun phrase is not yet identified, but it is a new entity just directly introduced into the

discourse. Zero-determination or absence of article also has an important function. It marks that the noun phrase does not refer to any identifiable entity of the discourse.

The contexts where bare nouns can occur in Coptic are listed by several authors (Satzinger 1992: 77; Layton 2000. §47; Reintges 2004: 66-67).<sup>84</sup> These lists do not perfectly coincide but more or less overlap. Considering that bare nouns are claimed to be non-referential, it is not surprising that in Coptic they typically appear in predicative contexts, for instance, as complements either of the (locative-identificational) preposition  $\bar{n}$ - (23), of the comparative preposition  $\mathfrak{z}\omega\mathfrak{c}$ , or incorporated into verbs with a relatively little semantic content (e.g.  $\epsilon\mathfrak{p}$ -,  $\mathfrak{t}$ -,  $\mathfrak{x}\mathfrak{i}$ -) (24). They also appear in negative contexts, where the existence of any entity described by the noun phrase is actually negated (25). Finally, they appear in comparison and enumerations.

(23)  $\chi\epsilon\kappa\alpha\mathfrak{c}$   $\epsilon\text{-}\gamma\text{-}\epsilon\text{-}\lambda\lambda\text{-}\mathfrak{q}$   $\bar{n}\text{-}\bar{\mathfrak{p}}\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{o}$  [John 6:15]  
 so that FUTIII-3PL- FUTIII-do-3SG.M as-king  
 ‘so that they make him king’

(24)  $\pi\text{-}\mathfrak{o}\gamma\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{n}$   $\mathfrak{q}\text{-}\bar{\mathfrak{p}}\text{-}\mathfrak{o}\gamma\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{n}$   $\mathfrak{z}\bar{\mathfrak{n}}\text{-}\pi\text{-}\kappa\alpha\kappa\epsilon$  [John 1:4]  
 DEF.SG.M-light 3SG-do-light in-DEF.SG.M-darkness  
 ‘the light is enlightening in the darkness’

(25)  $\mathfrak{m}\bar{\mathfrak{n}}$   $\kappa\alpha\lambda\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{c}$   $\bar{\mathfrak{n}}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{t}\text{-}\bar{\mathfrak{k}}$  [John 4:11]  
 NEG.EXIST jug with-2SG.M  
 ‘there is no jug with you’

Besides the determiners listed above, in most of the Coptic varieties a further definite determiner can be attested, sometimes as the reduced form of a demonstrative, sometimes as an affective article, and in certain grammatical systems it comprises a second series of definite article. This interdialectal variation of the  $\pi$ -determination will be discussed in a detailed way in chapter 3.

## 2.5 Adnominal modification

Nouns are determined to refer to entities, but are often accompanied by further elements that modify, specify or restrict their reference. Such adnominal modifiers can be qualitative or quantitative by nature, or similarly to the determiners they may contribute to the

<sup>84</sup> See also ‘Artikkellosigkeit’ by Stern 1880: §§235-241, Steindorff 1951: §§142-143, Till (1961: §§103-108), furthermore Vergote (1983: §126), Shisha-Halevy (1986: 141–153), Satzinger (1992: 77–78), Layton (2000: §47 and 59).

referential identification of the noun phrase by describing its locative properties (by means of a possessor expression, a restrictive relative clause or a simple prepositional phrase, cf. Rijkhoff 2001). In this section, however, only those adnominal modifications will be considered that are related to the possessive constructions either in a formal or in a semantic sense.

Possessive constructions, as it is observed cross-linguistically, express not only ownership in the literal sense of the word but several other types of semantic relationship between two (or more) entities that are involved in the construction. The linguistic notion of ‘possession’ is therefore not to be handled too rigorously, it can embody numerous types of relationships that are difficult to be characterized by a common description. To give a very basic and general definition, the linguistic possession represents an “exclusive, asymmetric long-term relation between two entities” (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001: 961). Within this vague semantic definition, it is worth distinguishing alienable vs. inalienable possession, the latter typically comprising body-part and kingship relations. Several languages have been reported to apply different strategies for the two types and this distinction turned out to be relevant in the case of Egyptian too. Another phenomenon to note is that there are adnominal relations that rather serve to characterize the head noun, specifying for instance its material or purpose (e.g. a cup of tea, a house of stone) and many language use exactly the same construction to express this relation as the one used for possession. This seems to be the case in Coptic as well, but – as I will argue in the fifth chapter – there is crucial difference between true possessive constructions and ‘*noun of noun*’ type patterns in this language, because in the latter type the second noun can never be referential and the pattern grammaticalized to express simple attributive relations as well.<sup>85</sup> Admittedly, attributive adnominal modifiers can also restrict the possible reference of a noun phrase, but instead of identifying they rather modify the descriptive content of the phrase.

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<sup>85</sup> This special use of genitives is known in several languages, even in English: In sentences like “She lives in an old people’s home / in this old people’s home” the phrase *old people* does not refer to an identifiable set of referents. Its syntax also diverge from that of true possessives, as in English pronominal genitives determiners cannot co-occur with the possessor expression (cf. *\*a/this Peter’s letter*) and the position of further adjectives within the two structures is also different. This special use is often labeled as ‘classifying genitive’, ‘descriptive genitive’ or ‘attributive genitive’. Pronominalization is a convincing test to distinguish them: pronominal possessives can only replace true genitives (Alexiadou et al. 2007: 548-549). As it will be shown below, the determination of the Coptic possessive *pattern A* is quite restricted, while attributive constructions (with a seemingly identical linking element) can freely be determined by either of the articles and can even be left undetermined.

The variety of further semantic types that can be expressed by a possessive structure seems to have no effect on Coptic syntax, thus unimportant here. (For a list of such possible relations with descriptions and examples, consult e.g. Reintges 2004: 94-96.)

Possession is closely related to determination in its function of anchoring the reference: the referent of the possessed noun is often identified via its relation of the referent of the possessor.<sup>86</sup> For instance, in a noun phrase ‘the letters of Paul’, even if the ‘letters’ in question are mentioned for the first time, their referent is anchored by the identification of Paul who is already known from the context or by a cultural background.

### 2.5.1 Possessive constructions

There are (at least) two types of possessive patterns in each variety of Coptic, but the relationship and the distribution of the patterns is not the same in all dialects. (This will be the topic of the third part of chapter 4.) For simplicity sake, the Sahidic constructions will be first introduced as the data presented here are familiar to most scholars in Egyptology and also because traditionally Sahidic is the starting point (or better the point of reference) of any syntactic investigation. The labels *pattern A* and *B* used throughout the thesis is an invention of mine in order to have a rather neutral designation of the two patterns. I introduced them for purely practical reasons and already used them in the earliest paper (2005) on this topic.

In the two types of Coptic possessive patterns, the order of the essential constituents is the same: the possessed noun phrase is followed by a morpheme expressing the possessive relationship and finally comes the possessor noun phrase. The obvious formal difference between the two constructions is that one of them involves the element  $\bar{\mathfrak{N}}/(\bar{\mathfrak{M}})$  as a possessive marker, whereas  $\bar{\mathfrak{N}}\tau\epsilon-$  is used in the other construction. As demonstrated by the examples from (26) to (29), the possessive relationship is expressed by *pattern A* unless the possessed noun is indefinite, has a demonstrative article, or is followed by an adjective or another modifier, in which cases *pattern B* is used instead.<sup>87</sup>

#### *Pattern A*

(26)     $\pi\text{-}\Psi\mathfrak{H}\rho\epsilon$                      $\bar{\mathfrak{M}}\text{-}\pi\text{-}\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{O}\Upsilon\tau\epsilon$                     [John 1:49]  
           DEF.SG.M-son                POSS-DEF.SG.M-god  
           ‘the son of God’

<sup>86</sup> See Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001: 964) and her article in general for this issue and for earlier literature.

<sup>87</sup> Till (1961: §113); Vergote (1983: §190.1); Steindorff (1951: §150)

*Pattern B*

- (27) **ΟΥ-ΠΟΛΙΣ**      **ΝΤΕ-Τ-ΣΑΜΑΡΙΑ**      [John 4:5]  
 INDF.SG-town      POSS-DEF.SG.F-Samaria  
 ‘a town of Samaria’
- (28) **ΠΕΙ-ΩΗΡΕ**      **ΝΤΕ-Π-ΡΩΜΕ**      [John 12:34]  
 DEM.SG.M-son      POSS-DEF.SG.M-man  
 ‘this son of the man’
- (29) **Π-ΩΗΡΕ**      **Ν-ΟΥΩΤ**      **ΝΤΕ-Π-ΝΟΥΤΕ**      [John 3:18]  
 DEF.SG.M-son      ATTR-single      POSS-DEF.SG.M-god  
 ‘the only son of God’

From the *Gospel* text of P. Palau Ribes 183. no data can be cited for the construction type in (28) so this example is taken from Horner’s edition of the New Testament.<sup>88</sup>

Pronominal possessors are expressed by the so called possessive articles (see table 10), or by the suffix pronoun introduced by the corresponding *status pronominalis* of the preposition **ΝΤΕ-**, attested in *pattern B* above.

- (30) **ΤΕΦ-ΩΩΦΕ**      (31) **ΟΥ-ΩΩΦΕ**      **ΝΤΑ-Φ**  
 POSSART.SG.F.3SG.M-field      INDF.SG-field      POSS-3SG.M  
 ‘his field’      ‘a field of his’<sup>89</sup>

As for the nature of the morphemes marking the possessive relationship, I claim that the **Ν-** element in *pattern A* cannot be conceived as a preposition (against Lambdin 1983: 6). It has no pre-pronominal form as it is usually expected from a well-behaved Coptic preposition. Pronominal possessors in constructions corresponding to *pattern A* are expressed by the possessive article as it was stated just above. At the same time, the linking elements in *pattern B* and its corresponding pair with a pronominal possessor (**ΝΤΕ-/ΝΤΑ=**) are the mere context-dependent allomorphs of the same morpheme, which can be easily considered to be prepositions, contrary to Layton’s reservations (2000: §204) that it never modifies a preceding verb or verbal clause. On the one hand, I am not aware of such a criterion as to be relevant in defining the category membership of prepositions; on the other, it directly follows from the function this element fulfills that it does not appear outside the nominal domain. As a matter of fact, it appears in the predication of possession,

<sup>88</sup> At the corresponding *locus* a whole clause is missing in the Barcelona Gospel as well as in the Lycopolitan (L5) Gospel of John. The early Bohairic version (P. Bodmer III), however, has it. The corresponding section is damaged in the other dialectal versions.

<sup>89</sup> For an original example, see (75) in section 4.1.

where it is historically merged with the existential particle (cf.  $\text{OY}\bar{\text{N}}\text{T}\bar{\text{E}}$ -,  $\text{OY}\bar{\text{N}}\text{T}\bar{\text{A}}$ = and the corresponding negative forms), but from which complex it can even be dislocated.

- (32)  $\text{MH OY}\bar{\text{N}}$      $\lambda\lambda\lambda\gamma$      $\bar{\text{N}}\text{-T}\bar{\text{B}}\bar{\text{T}}$      $\bar{\text{N}}\text{T}\bar{\text{E}}\text{-T}\bar{\text{H}}\gamma\bar{\text{T}}\bar{\text{N}}$     [John 21:5]  
 QU EXIST    any    ATTR-fish    POSS-2PL  
 ‘Do you have any fish?’

The possessive marker  $\bar{\text{N}}$ - is apparently identical with the linking element in the attributive constructions (see below), but these two morphemes as well as the two types of constructions will be kept apart (and glossed differently) throughout the thesis.

The distribution of the two possessive patterns will be discussed in a detailed way in Chapter 4, as well as its development and the variation that can be attested in the various dialects. A purely syntactically based rule will be formulated to account for the distribution in Sahidic. This syntactic rule will also hold as part of a more complex system in such diverging varieties as Bohairic, in which the distribution is closely related to the marking of determination as well.

## 2.5.2 Attributive constructions

Adjectives in Coptic are not adjoined to the head-noun directly, but by means of the linking element  $\bar{\text{N}}$ -. To be exact (and without determining the relative order within the noun phrase), the two (or more) elements of an attributive construction are mediated by this linking morpheme, as illustrated by the examples below.<sup>90</sup> The examples are intentionally chosen in such a way as to show the different degrees of determination that can freely co-occur with attributive constructions.

- (33)  $\text{OY-C}\bar{\text{Q}}\text{IM}\bar{\text{E}}$      $\bar{\text{N}}\text{-C}\bar{\text{A}}\text{M}\bar{\text{A}}\text{P}\bar{\text{I}}\text{T}\bar{\text{H}}\text{C}$     [John 4:9]  
 INDF.SG-woman    ATTR-Samaritan  
 ‘a Samaritan woman’
- (34)  $\text{T}\bar{\text{E}}\text{-C}\bar{\text{Q}}\text{IM}\bar{\text{E}}$      $\bar{\text{N}}\text{-C}\bar{\text{A}}\text{M}\bar{\text{A}}\text{P}\bar{\text{I}}\text{T}\bar{\text{H}}\text{C}$     [John 4:9]  
 DEF.SG.F-woman    ATTR-Samaritan  
 ‘the Samaritan woman’
- (35)  $\text{OY-}\bar{\text{Q}}\text{T}\bar{\text{H}}\bar{\text{N}}$      $\bar{\text{N}}\text{-}\chi\bar{\text{H}}\bar{\text{O}}\bar{\text{E}}$     [John 19:2]  
 INDF.SG-garment    ATTR-purple  
 ‘a purple garment’

<sup>90</sup> For the description of this construction and further examples, see Layton (2000: §§96-103); Reintges (2004: 90 §3.1.3); Steindorff (1951: §§147-150); Stern (1880: §§185-188); Till (1961: 67-68 §114); Vergote (1983: §189).

- (36) **TE-PTHN**      **N̄-CH6E**      [John 19:5]  
 DEF.SG.F-garment ATTR-purple  
 ‘the purple garment’
- (37) **KAC**      **N̄-OYT**      [John 19:36]  
 bone      ATTR-single  
 ‘single bone’<sup>91</sup>
- (38) **OY-LITPA**      **N̄-CO6N**      **N̄-NAΔPOC**      [John 12:3]  
 INDF.SG-pound      ATTR-ointment      ATTR-nard  
 ‘a pound of ointment of nard’

Dealing with the attributive constructions two problems arise immediately: firstly, the mere existence of an ‘adjectival’ category in Coptic has been questioned, seeing that the modifier part of the construction can be filled not only by prototypical property describing lexemes (like *beautiful*, *great*, etc.) but practically by any nominal element as well, as it was demonstrated and long discussed in section 2.3.1. The second apparently confusing fact is that the linking morpheme that signals the attributive relationship seems to be identical with the one in the possessive *Pattern A*. In fact, many scholars think that the same morpheme figures in both constructions and thus they describe it by the same relatively neutral name, such as *mark of relationship* (Layton 2000: §203) or *nota relationis* (Shisha-Halevy 1986: 20).<sup>92</sup> The semantic difference, however, is obvious between the attribution/qualification on the one hand and the possession on the other. Thus, there must be one or more rules for disambiguation on the formal side of these linguistic expressions too, so that *Pattern A* and the attributive pattern may be clearly distinguished if necessary.

It is worth observing how the structural characteristics of this pattern differ from those of the possessive structures. The second element of the attributive construction, the modifier introduced by **N̄-**, cannot have any determiner (Shisha-Halevy 1988: 6–8; Reintges 2004: 90). Moreover, it is this zero-determination that contributes to the attributive reading of this type of adnominal modification (Shisha-Halevy 1986: 131 §4.1). Another crucial syntactic difference is that this *noun* + **N̄-** + *noun* sequence, for its part, can have any sort of determiner (definite, indefinite, demonstrative, or even a possessive

<sup>91</sup> This determinerless phrase is used as the subject of a negated Future III pattern where the intended meaning is “no bone at all shall be bruised of him”.

<sup>92</sup> The formal likeness of the linking morphemes is not accidental, of course. From a diachronic point of view they are really identical having the same source (see chapter 5 on this issue), but synchronically they are better to be treated separately.

article), which shows that the attributive expansion does not affect the degree of definiteness of the phrase as a whole in the way it is conditioned in possessive *Pattern A*.<sup>93</sup>

To illustrate the *syntactic* differences between possession vs. attribution, a minimal pair is provided below that contains two phrases with practically the same lexical content coming from the same text (*The Life of Apa Onnophrios*, after Till 1961: 282):<sup>94</sup>

(39) **π-ϩⲱⲃ**            **ⲛ̄-ⲛⲉⲕ-ⲉⲓⲗ**  
 DEF.SG.M-thing    POSS- POSSART.PL.2SG.M-hand  
 ‘the work of your hands’

(40) **ϩⲉⲛ-ϩⲱⲃ**    **ⲛ̄-ⲉⲓⲗ**  
 INDF.PL-thing    ATTR-hand  
 ‘handiworks’

While the first phrase is a possessive, the second is an attributive construction. In (39), the possessor by itself constitutes a full noun phrase with a possessive article of its own (**ⲛⲉⲕ-** ‘your’), and the possessed noun (actually the head of the construction) is simply definite. In (40) only a bare noun follows the linking element **ⲛ̄-**. The **ⲛ̄-**marked complex (**ⲛ̄-ⲉⲓⲗ**) literally corresponds to ‘of hand’ with the intended meaning as to assign the quality ‘made by hand’ to the head-noun. Since the whole expression (**ϩⲱⲃ ⲛ̄-ⲉⲓⲗ** ‘handiwork’) neither describes a possessive relationship nor is referential by itself, it can easily be indefinite, as it actually is in (10).

Contrary to regular possessive constructions, the members of the attributive structures seem to be more loosely connected. As far as I observed, based on the collection of data from the Gospel of John in P. Palau Rib 183, the noun and its modifier can be more easily separated, that is to say, not only do clitics intervene in the sequence of the nominal elements, but independently accented items as well.

It is to be noted that Coptic makes an extensive use of relative clauses to express an attributive modification. This might be (but is not necessarily) related to the relatively low number of native adjectives in the word-stock. What is more, a few property-denoting lexemes have irregular verboid syntax (e.g. **ⲛⲁⲛⲟϥ-** ‘to be good’) and cannot be inserted

<sup>93</sup> I cannot share Antonio Loprieno’s view (1995: 56) according to which the linking element **ⲛ-** may be a determinative pronoun similar to the one used in Hebrew attributive constructions. In Hebrew in case of a definite noun there appears another definite article (or determinative pronoun) on the adjective (*hā-’iš hag-gādōl* the-man the-great i.e. ‘the great man’), while after an indefinite noun both the article and the determinative pronoun are absent (*’iš gādōl* ‘a great man’). The Hebrew phenomenon can be explained in terms of agreement in definiteness and, accordingly, is far from being similar to the Coptic modifier marker **ⲛ-** whose appearance is independent of the definiteness of the head-noun.

<sup>94</sup> The text is from around 1000, so does not fit in the time-interval defined in the Introduction. However, I decided to cite these examples as they perfectly illustrate the matter.

into the  $\bar{n}$ -linked modifier pattern, which is restricted to nominal elements. The constructions may also vary with no relevant difference in meaning (cf. (44) and (45)).

- (41) **πε-πῖνα**      **ετ-οὔλαβ**      [John 14:22]  
 DEF.SG.M-spirit    REL-pure.Q  
 ‘the holy spirit’
- (42) **οὔ-πῖνα**      **ε-τ-οὔλαβ**      [John 1:33]  
 INDF.SG-spirit      CIRC-3SG.M- pure.Q  
 ‘a holy spirit’
- (43) **π-ψωσ**      **ετ-νανοῦ-τ**      [John 10:14 and 10:14]  
 DEF.SG.M-shepherd    REL-be.good-3SG.M  
 ‘the good shepherd’
- (44) **οὔ-μῆθηε**      **ε-ναψω-τ**      [John 4:41 and 6:2]  
 INDF.SG-multitude    CIRC-be.much-3SG.M  
 ‘A great multitude’
- (45) **οὔ-νοσ**      **ῖ-μῆθηε**      [John 6:5]  
 INDF.SG-big      ATTR-multitude  
 ‘A great multitude’

Admittedly, from a semantic point of view, the boundary of the patterns sometimes seems to be quite fuzzy, and there is certain permeability between the possessive and attributive constructions. All of the three examples cited below intend to express the notion of something being ‘living’ or ‘related to life’ but they perform three different structural configurations in one and the same Gospel text. (46) is a possessive construction in which Jesus is described as the bread of life; a few lines below, however the same notion is presented by an adnominal relative clause (47), and finally the attribute can appear in a real attributive construction where the linking element is  $\bar{n}$ - and no determiner appears on the second noun (48).

- (46) **π-οικ**      **ῖ-π-ωνη**      [John 6:48]  
 DEF.SG.M-bread    POSS-DEF.SG.M-life  
 ‘the bread of the life’
- (47) **π-οικ**      **ετ-ονη**      [John 6:51]  
 DEF.SG.M-bread    REL-live.Q  
 ‘the living bread’
- (48) **ζεν-ψαχε**      **ῖ-ωνη ψα-ενεη**      [John 6:68]  
 INDF.PL-word      REL-life for-ever  
 ‘words for eternal life’

### 2.5.3 Partitive constructions

There is a third construction that shares some formal (and partially semantic) properties with the possessive and the attributive patterns, namely the partitive construction. It expresses a relationship in which one or more items belong to a group, a “contextually specified partitioned set, from which a proper subset is taken”, as Chris Reintges (2004: 105) describes it in relation to the semantic function of the preposition  $\bar{\nu}/\mu\mu\omicron\equiv$ . Consequently, the first element is usually an indefinite expression (even if specific), while the second one is a full noun phrase. The linking element is a real preposition with two interrelated allomorphs, in *status nominalis* and *pronominalis* ( $\bar{\nu}/\mu\mu\omicron\equiv$ ), the use of which depends on the form of the complement.

(49)  $\zeta\lambda\zeta$   $\bar{\nu}\text{-}\bar{\nu}\epsilon\zeta\text{-}\mu\alpha\theta\eta\tau\eta\varsigma$  [John 6:66]  
many PART-POSSART.PL.3SG.M-disciple  
‘many of his disciples’

(50)  $\zeta\lambda\zeta$   $\bar{\mu}\mu\omicron\text{-}\omicron\upsilon$  [John 3:23]  
many PART-3PL  
‘many of them’

The confusion generated by the formal identity of the linking elements in all of the so far discussed constructions becomes evident in such brilliant works as Bentley Layton’s grammar as well. Re-examining the data he presented to illustrate the partitive relationship (2000: §203) I must conclude that some of the examples might rather be analyzed as attributive constructions.

As a matter of fact, occasionally it is quite difficult to decide which of patterns a given construction can be assigned to, since striking formal differences only emerge in pronominalization. Beyond the semantic interpretation, the only structural clue we can rely on is determination. Partitives pick out a subset of a total, and the referent of this subset is uncertain, i.e. not uniquely identifiable. The noun phrase remains indefinite, but still it is specific since the subset denoted by the first member of the phrase is claimed to belong to a well defined set of entities. Consequently, the second element of this construction is necessarily definite, usually either plural or else a collective noun (e.g. the crowd). To make a contrast, in possessive constructions of *pattern A*-type the head noun is always determined by a definite article, while in attributive constructions the modifying element must be undetermined.

It is remarkable, that the partitive relationship was not always expressed by means of the preposition **ⲛ-ⲙⲙⲟ**. A popular alternative strategy that is often attested in Sahidic is the use of the prepositional complex (**ⲉⲃⲟⲗ**) **ⲓⲛ̄-/ⲛ̄ⲓⲛ̄** lit. ‘from’ but as it will be demonstrated during the analysis of early Bohairic in Chapter 4, other prepositions could absorb this role as well. For the variation within one manuscript, observe the examples, arranged in pairs, from the Sahidic Gospel of P. Palau Ribes 183.:

- (51) **ⲟⲩⲁ ⲛ̄-ⲛ̄ⲙⲁⲧⲟⲓ** [John 19:34]  
 one PART-DEF.PL-soldier  
 ‘one of the soldiers’
- (52) **ⲟⲩⲁ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲓⲛ̄-ⲛ̄ⲙⲛⲧ̄ⲛⲟⲩⲥ** [John 6:71]  
 one out from-DEF.SG.M-twelve  
 ‘one of the twelve’
- (53) **ⲓⲟⲓⲛⲉ ⲛ̄-ⲛⲉⲓⲩⲙⲁⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ** [John 16:17]  
 some PART-POSSART.PL.3SG.M-disciple  
 ‘some of his disciples’
- (54) **ⲓⲟⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲓⲛ̄-ⲟⲩ** [John 7:44]  
 some out from-3PL  
 ‘some of them’

#### 2.5.4 Quantification

The elements that are usually labeled quantifiers in linguistics do appear in adnominal constructions but their function is to specify the lexical head rather than to modify it as an adjective does. In Layton’s grammar these constructions are treated separately as being *specifier phrases* (2000: §64).<sup>95</sup> Generally speaking they quantify and not qualify the noun lexeme.

This type of relationship is closely related to partitives in their semantics, on the one hand, and to attributes in their appearance on the other. In a formal sense, quantifiers such as the cardinal numbers and expressions like **ⲓⲁⲓ** ‘many’ oscillate between the structures: they appear either in a partitive or in an attributive-like construction. In the attributive construction, there is a linking element (**ⲛ̄-**) between the quantifier and the bare noun as it is expected. The numeral expressions agree in gender with the noun they specify (for a list

<sup>95</sup> This proposal strikingly resembles to what would be assumed in a formal syntactic framework according to which such elements can be positioned in a functional domain, below the determiner layer (cf. Egedi 2008a).

of the corresponding forms, see *inter alia* Layton 2000: §67). The construction as a whole is indefinite but can be further determined (by any of the articles).

- (55)  $\bar{\text{N}}\text{-}\Psi\text{OM}\bar{\text{N}}\text{T}$   $\bar{\text{N}}\text{-}\mathcal{Z}\text{OO}\Upsilon$  [John 2:19]  
 in-three.M ATTR-day  
 ‘in three days’

The numeral ‘two’ is exceptional with respect to its syntactic position: it directly follows the noun it quantifies without any linking element. Otherwise it behaves like usual cardinal numbers in that it agrees in gender and the construction can be freely determined.<sup>96</sup>

- (56)  $\bar{\text{N}}\text{-}\mathcal{Z}\text{OO}\Upsilon$   $\text{CNA}\Upsilon$  [John 4:40]  
 in-day two.M  
 ‘in two days’

The linking element, however, can occasionally be dropped with regular numerals as well, as it can be observed in a single *locus* in the Gospel of John (57). This exceptional case can be opposed to a dozen of regular occurrences of the type illustrated in (58):

- (57)  $\dagger$   $\text{CTO}\Lambda$  [John 5:2] (58)  $\dagger\text{O}\Upsilon$   $\bar{\text{N}}\text{-}\text{OIK}$  [John 6:9]  
 five.F porch five.M ATTR-bread  
 ‘five porches’ ‘five breads’

I noticed another interesting phenomenon in this manuscript. When the attributive pattern is composed by a derived ordinal number and a noun, the members of the construction can be contracted resulting in a kind of construct state formation, which is reflected by the altered vocalization of the involved lexical items and by the transposition of the supralinear stroke (60):

- (59)  $\bar{\text{N}}\text{-}\Pi\text{-}\text{ME}\mathcal{Z}\Psi\text{OM}\bar{\text{N}}\text{T}$   $\bar{\text{N}}\text{-}\text{CO}\Pi$  [John 21:17]  
 for- DEF.SG.M-third.M ATTR-occasion  
 ‘for the third time’
- (60)  $\text{N-}\bar{\Pi}\text{-}\text{ME}\mathcal{Z}\Psi\text{MN}\bar{\text{T}}\text{C}\Psi\text{O}\Pi$  [John 21:17]  
 for- DEF.SG.M-third.M-occasion  
 ‘for the third time’

Quantifiers can freely combine with the lexical nouns in partitive constructions as well, in which case they follow the pattern introduced above.

<sup>96</sup> Concerning these constructions in general, see Layton 2000: §§65-70; Till 1961: 82 §§162-164; Reintges 2004: 69-70. For a table of quantifier types and a detailed presentation of the quantifier system in Sahidic, see Reintges (2004: 152-161)

Last, but not least, the use of the universal quantifier **NIM** ‘every’ signals that the “entire domain of discourse entities must be taken into consideration” (Reintges 2004: 151). Its syntax, however, is exceptional, at least compared to other items in this class: it adjoins directly to the noun from the right and a so formed combination cannot have a further determiner. The function of **NIM** is twofold: it can either be a definite determiner ‘every, all’ or an indefinite quantifier ‘any’ in negative contexts. The dual nature of the noun phrase quantified by **NIM** is also reflected by the two degrees of definiteness it can display. It behaves ambiguously in our syntactic tests for definiteness: it can be expanded both by relative and by circumstantial clauses and it is attested in both types of durative sentences (cf. Layton 2000: §60), depending on its contextual function or meaning. To account for such an ambiguity, a possible theoretical approach would assume that there are actually *two* homophonous **NIM** items in the lexicon with different semantic properties. In a formal syntactic theory one might also propose that there is a single **NIM** only, and its dual character and behaviour follow from the syntactic position in which it is inserted in the functional domain of a nominal structure (quantifier/numeral layer vs. determiner layer).

Nevertheless, the present dissertation is concerned first of all with the possessive constructions and definiteness, thus a deeper analysis of quantification falls out of the scope of this study. The constructions listed in this section have been presented because of their common formal property, namely the use of a linking element  $\bar{\text{N}}$ -, and it was necessary to make as clear a distinction as possible among the various types of semantic relations and structural combinations.

## 3 Determination

“Determination – primarily conceived of as nominal determination – is one of the most difficult and least successful topics of grammatical description” – opens Ariel Shisha-Halevy his chapter about the noun syntagm with these words (2007a: 334). In a full agreement with him, I must admit that this chapter of mine will be noticeably less ambitious both in empirical and in explanatory force than the next about possessive constructions. In most of the cases, the deeper I immersed myself in the data, the more confused picture I got, and accordingly, this part will rather raise more questions and new problems than offer solutions to the older ones. Nevertheless, the empirical observations I made might contribute to our overall understanding of the semantics and syntax of Coptic determination in the early dialects and will provide a good basis for a possible future investigation.

Studying determiners raise a general methodological problem as well, first of all because of the enormous amount of data one has to deal with. Furthermore, although this thesis intends to remain within the boundaries of the noun phrase to keep the subject matter in a reasonable frame, one of my conclusions after examining a large bulk of data was that quite complex systems with multiple article-use, seemingly in the same function, can hardly be analyzed without involving aspects of the sentential level, or even of higher units of language use (I refer first of all to the information structure of the sentence).

The chapter starts with some diachronic considerations about the source of the determiners which are discussed in the thesis. This part is followed by the presentation of the Sahidic determination system, aiming to complement the more theoretical section 2.4. in the previous chapter with *Formenlehre* as well as with the discussion of a few specific cases. In the last section, attempts will be made to show how complex micro-variation can be observed in other dialects.

### 3.1 Where do Coptic determiners come from?

Coptic has a fully formed article system, that is to say, in more structural terms, it has a grammaticalized determiner slot in the sequence of elements within the noun phrase.

However, it was not always the case in earlier stages of Egyptian. The Old and Middle Egyptian predecessor of the Coptic definite articles (*p3*, *t3*, *n3*) originally exhibited a demonstrative function, and it is only by the time of Late Egyptian that these determiners can securely be claimed to function as definite articles. (NB. The present author is aware of the assumption according to which articles were already in use in colloquial Middle Egyptian, but the exact time when the phenomenon actually emerged is not relevant here).

Earlier Egyptian had no article, whereas it made use of a great variety of demonstratives. Pronominal possessors appeared in the form of the so called suffix pronoun attached directly to the noun.<sup>97</sup> These early demonstratives were more of an adjectival nature: they mostly followed the noun and could freely co-occur with possessive suffixes.

Discussing the questions why the article developed and what factors conditioned its emergence (i.e. the causes of the change in definiteness marking) falls out of the scope of the thesis. The topic, although particularly thrilling, was ignored intentionally here, since two colleagues of mine reported me to work on it as part of their graduate studies. Literature is abundant about the emergence of the definite and the possessive article in Late Egyptian,<sup>98</sup> but a detailed analysis of the process, as far as I know, is only provided by Antonio Loprieno (1980).

It is beyond doubt that one of the most important changes in the “nominal” history of Egyptian was the emergence of the definite article, which affected definiteness marking and determination in general, and – as it will be argued for – led to the complete reorganization of the possessive constructions as well. The emergence of the article is one of the most salient features of the typological change that subdivides the Egyptian language into an Earlier and a Later phase (as suggested by Loprieno (1995) and adopted here in *table 1* in section 1.2.3). The main features of this rearrangement are illustrated by the following examples:

*Earlier Egyptian*

(61)	a.	<i>pr</i>	<i>ḥm.t</i>	b.	<i>pr=f</i>	<i>ḥm.t=f</i>
		house	woman.F		house-3SG.M	wife.F-3SG.M
		‘house’	‘woman’		‘his house’	‘his wife’

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Gardiner (1957: §§110-112 and §35); Loprieno (1995: 63-64 and 68); For an insightful analysis of three series of demonstratives in the corpus of Pyramid Texts the *pn*-, *pf*- and *pw*-series, see Jenni (2009).

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Černy-Groll 1978: §3.2. and §3.5; Erman 1933: §§171-182; Gardiner 1957: §§110-113; Junge 1996: §2.1.1-3; Loprieno 1995: 69; Malaise – Winand 1999: §192 and §195.

*Later Egyptian*

- (62) a.  $p^3 pr$   
 DEF.SG.M house  
 ‘the house’
- b.  $p^3 y=f pr$   
 POSSART.SG.M-3SG.M house  
 ‘his house’
- $t^3 hm.t$   
 DEF.SG.F woman.F  
 ‘the woman’
- $t^3 y=f hm.t$   
 POSSART.SG.F-3SG.M wife.F  
 ‘his wife’

The reanalysis of the  $p^3$ -demonstratives as definite articles was accompanied by another significant innovation, namely by the use of the possessive articles. In the previous language stages, pronominal possessors were expressed by the so called ‘suffix pronouns’, which are, in fact, enclitic personal pronouns attached to the possessed noun. By the emergence of the definite article (and its derivatives, the new demonstrative  $p^3 y$ -series) the system as a whole was reshaped. Instead of the expected  $p^3 pr=f$  pattern, which is only sporadically attested in Late Egyptian, a new determiner was born to jointly encode definiteness and possessedness. This structural change a long-run consequence and caused the splitting up of the possessive sphere into two main patterns whose distribution can basically be grabbed in terms of definiteness and structural adjacency (cf. the next chapter about the nature of this distribution). The new sets of determiners, from which the Coptic system originates, are indicated in a simplified table below:

*Table 11. Late Egyptian determiners and their Coptic derivatives:*

	SG.M	SG.F	PL
Definite article	$p^3$ (> π-)	$t^3$ (> τ-)	$n^3$ (> n-)
Demonstrative article	$p^3 j$ (> πϵI-)	$t^3 j$ (> τϵI-)	$n^3 j$ (> nϵI-)
Possessive article	$p^3 y=f$ (> πϵϻ-)	$t^3 y=f$ (> τϵϻ-)	$n^3 y=f$ (> nϵϻ-)

The use of the indefinite article remained long instable and did not grammaticalize until the Coptic period, as it was pointed out by Johnson (1987) who examined specific and non-specific noun phrases in Demotic with a special focus on generics. According to her investigation, the appearance of the indefinite article in the contexts in which it is supposed to be used is still optional.

## 3.2 Forms and use of the determiners in Sahidic

### 3.1.1 Articles, demonstratives and possessives

In section 2.4, the main aspects of determination have been introduced, as well as Coptic determiners have been listed, but these are repeated here for convenience: the definite article (63), the demonstrative article (64), the possessive article (65), and the indefinite article (66). Special cases of determination will also be discussed separately in the next section. It must be noted again that these elements do not cover the set of morphemes that are considered ‘determinators’ in Layton’s Coptic grammar (2000). Nevertheless, they are chosen to be treated together (and separated from other elements) because they form a natural class: elements functioning as determiners never co-occur in any reciprocal order, that is to say, they mutually exclude each other.

(63)	<b>π-ρⲟⲙⲉ</b> DEF.SG.M-man ‘the man’	<b>τ-ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b> DEF.SG.F-field ‘the field’	<b>ⲛ-ρⲟⲙⲉ/ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b> DEF.PL -man/field ‘the men/fields’
(64)	<b>πⲉⲓ-ρⲟⲙⲉ</b> DEM.SG.M-man ‘this man’	<b>τⲉⲓ-ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b> DEM.SG.F-field ‘this field’	<b>ⲛⲉⲓ-ρⲟⲙⲉ/ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b> DEM.PL -man/field ‘these men/fields’
(65)	<b>πⲉϥ-ρⲟⲙⲉ</b> POSSART.SG.M.3SG-man ‘his man’	<b>τⲉϥ-ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b> POSSART.SG.F.3SG-field ‘his field’	<b>ⲛⲉϥ-ρⲟⲙⲉ/ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b> POSSART.PL.3SG-man/field ‘his men/fields’
(66)	<b>ⲟϥ-ρⲟⲙⲉ/ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b> INDF.SG-man/field ‘a man/field’		<b>ϥⲉⲛ-ρⲟⲙⲉ/ϥⲟⲩⲉ</b> INDF.PL-man/field ‘men/fields’

It can be observed in the examples as well as in *table 10* in section 2.4. above that the definite determiners display three distinct forms: in the singular they have a masculine as well as a feminine form, while in the plural no such morphological distinction can be made. The indefinite article has a singular and a plural variant only. As for the possessive article, it also encodes the person, the number and in certain cases (in the singular of second and third person) the gender of the possessor. The full paradigm of possessive articles can be found in any of the reference grammars.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>99</sup> An overall list of references in which these determiners are described and discussed: Definite articles: Lambdin 1983: §§1.3, 17.2; Layton 2000: §52; Steindorff 1951: §136-139; Stern 1880: §§227-230; Till 1961: §§87-91, 94-99; Vergote 1983: §§121-122, 124-125. Indefinite articles: Lambdin 1983: §§2.1-2.2;

The articles are proclitic, which means that they are attached to the noun directly from the left. Determiners all seem to be accentless and must be distinguished from their pronominal counterparts that have independent accent and form a noun phrase (or rather a determiner phrase) of their own.<sup>100</sup> As it was already stressed, this study is not concerned with pronouns, which are rarely subject to a possessive or attributive modification and are fully referential of their own. There is an interesting strategy for the pronominalization of the possessed noun in the form of the so called *possessive prefix* (e.g. **πα-πρωμε** ‘that of the man’, ‘the one related to the man’), sometimes claimed to be an article as well, but it cannot be considered to be a determiner in the sense used in this study.<sup>101</sup> These prefixes, like the demonstrative and the possessive pronouns, are referential. What makes them particular is that they never appear in isolation. It follows from their relational nature that they must always be attached to another nominal expression which denotes the possessor.

If the plural definite article **ἄ-** is attached to a noun beginning with a vowel, it may optionally take the form without the supralinear stroke, i.e. **α-** instead of **ἄ-**. For the possible contexts of this variation as well as for other phonological peculiarities that appear in orthography, see Layton (2000: §52). It is more salient that the definite articles display two forms, a shorter and a longer one (**π-**, **τ-**, **ἄ-** vs. **πε-**, **τε-**, **νε-**). The appearance of the longer forms in Sahidic is conditioned by phonological constraints: long articles are regularly attested before consonant clusters. Note that attaching the article may also cause syllable restructuring and, as a consequence, previously syllabic semi-vowels will form a consonant cluster with the subsequent sound and co-occur with the longer variant of the article. The longer forms are associated with a few lexical exceptions as well: they appear with five specific nouns denoting time expressions (**πε-γοειω** ‘the time’, **πε-ζοογ** ‘the day’, **τε-ρομητε** ‘the year’, **τε-γνογ** ‘the hour’, **τε-γψη** ‘the night’). It should be noted that Leo Depuydt (1993: 363-368) doubts that the appearance of an extra **ε** is to be analyzed as a separate set of articles and rather discusses the phenomenon in connection

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Layton 2000: §50; Steindorff 1951: §140-141; Stern 1880: §§231-234; Till 1961: §§92-93, 100-102; Vergote 1983: §§123-125. Demonstrative articles: Lambdin 1983: 4.2; Layton 2000: §56-57; Steindorff 1951: §88; Stern 1880: §§242-249; Till 1961: §202; Vergote 1983: §§128 (*le pronom demonstrative secondaire*). Possessive articles: Lambdin 1983: 4.1; Layton 2000: §54; Steindorff 1951: §§85-86; Stern 1880: §§252 (*pronom possessivum conjunctum*); Till 1961: §205; Vergote 1983: §137 (*le pronom possessif secondaire*).

<sup>100</sup> For an exhaustive list and discussion of these pronouns in the descriptive literature, one may consult the following places: Demonstrative pronouns: Lambdin 1983: 5.2; Layton 2000: §§56-57; Steindorff 1951: §88; Stern 1880: §§242-249; Till 1961: §201; Vergote 1983: §§127 (*le pronom demonstrative primaire*). Possessive pronouns: Lambdin 1983: 22.2; Layton 2000: §54; Steindorff 1951: §§85-86; Stern 1880: §§251 (*pronom possessivum absolutum*); Till 1961: §204; Vergote 1983: §136 (*le pronom possessif primaire*).

<sup>101</sup> For an extensive study of this group of grammatical elements, see Shisha-Halevy (1985), Depuydt (1985b), Polotsky (1985), and Kasser (1994). See also: Layton 2000: §54 (*possessed pronoun*), Steindorff 1951: §87; Stern 1880: §§250 (*der possessivartikel*); Till 1961: §203; Vergote 1983: §136.

with syllabification. He also provides a comprehensive discussion on the possible reasons as to why the long article consistently appears with nouns denoting time divisions (1993: 369-368-375).

The semantic aspects of definiteness have already been addressed in the previous chapter. What must be remembered here is that the determiners in (63)-(66) are all interpreted as definite, which can be easily attested by their occurrences in contexts that require definite expressions (see section 2.4. on this issue). Demonstratives have been claimed to combine definiteness with deixis and to encode directly accessible reference, while possessive pronouns contribute to the definiteness of the noun phrase by introducing the reference point of a possessor to which the lexical noun can be related. This thesis is not concerned with all the aspects of determination, but rather focuses on the notion of definiteness (as opposed to non definiteness) as a syntactic device for referential identification, and on the properties that are related to the presence of a possessor expression. Additionally, a remarkable variation will be observed in certain Coptic dialects with respect to simple definiteness marking, so special attention will be paid to the function of **π**-determination (see below) in some of the early dialects.

### 3.2.2 Special cases of determination

The special cases of determination discussed here have in common the property that all of them result in a definite interpretation, whereas the noun phrase in which they are attested is not determined by one of the standard definite determiners listed in the previous section. These special cases will be the following: i.) determination by the universal quantifier **ΝΙΜ**, ii.) the suffix-determination, iii.) the **π**-determination.

#### i. ) Determination by the quantifier **ΝΙΜ**

In a noun phrase featuring **ΝΙΜ**, reference is made to the totality of the entities that satisfy the description. As a universal quantifier, its function is similar to the plural definite article in that both signal inclusiveness (Lyons 1999: 11). What makes it to be listed here is that a noun phrase quantified by **ΝΙΜ** cannot be further determined by either of the above listed elements. Unlike standard determiners, it is enclitic, having preserved its ancient structural position through millennia. In the definiteness text-contexts, however, it behaves

ambiguously as in negative contexts its interpretation becomes indefinite (‘any X’, ‘no X at all’).<sup>102</sup>

ii.) The suffix-determination

A group of nouns preserved their *status pronominalis*, and accordingly, they always appear with a suffix pronoun attached to them. (A few of these nouns have also preserved a *status nominalis* form. For an exhaustive list of these lexemes in Sahidic, see Layton 2000: §138; for Bohairic, cf. Mallon (1907: §54).) This use of the suffix pronouns is exceptional by the time of Coptic, when the possessive articles are used to express a pronominal possessor. These bound morphs typically denote body parts or other inalienable entities which can be described as relational nouns. Relational nouns are necessarily related to another entity and are hardly ever used in an absolute state.

The reason why these irregular remnant suffixed forms are mentioned here is that they are not only bound morphs, but systematically resist being determined. As they are always related to a possessor that anchors their reference, they are definite by nature. This kind of definiteness, or referentiality, was once encoded in morphology when the nominal state formation was still a productive device in the earlier stages of Egyptian. By Coptic it became the inherent semantic property of these about twenty lexemes.

iii.) The **ⲙ**-determination

The determiner **ⲙ**- and its corresponding pronominal form **ⲙⲏ**- are discussed in most reference grammars, *inter alia* in Lambdin (1983: 30.8. *remote demonstratives*); Layton (2000: §58. *affective demonstrative*); Steindorff (1951: §89 and §136); Stern (1880: §§227); Vergote (1983: §§127-128). In earlier works it is often simply described as the reduced form of the demonstratives, but Hans Jacob Polotsky, in his review article about Walter Till’s *Koptische Grammatik* (1957:229-230), exhaustively lists the four contexts or expression types in which the **ⲙ**-series regularly appears. In the first two cases it is a fixed component in temporal and spatial expressions and its function can be derived from an earlier demonstrative meaning. It further appears in comparative expressions of the form **ⲚⲀⲈ Ⲛ-Ⲛⲏ**- ‘like’ (always in plural!) and in the expression **ⲙ-... Ⲛ-ⲀⲮⲱⲧ** ‘the same...’. Finally, he notes that it can have an affective meaning if used in various attributive

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. Reintges 2004: 153. Lambdin 1983: 16.2; Layton 2000: §60; Stern 1880: §272; Till 1961: §231; Vergote 1983: §142.5; Shisha-Halevy 1986. 143; and see section 2.5.4.

expressions (e.g. something described as admirable or horrible). In Layton (2000: §58) these contexts are likewise subsumed and illustrated by several examples. He describes the case of **π**-... **ἄ-οὐδ** as “insisting upon identification” and expands on the affective use in that it expresses “deprecation, awe, foreboding, admiration, etc.”

The use of an emotional article might seem to be an exotic feature, but not unparalleled: it is reported to be used for instance in certain Polynesian languages to convey sympathy or belittlement, to put it differently, its main function is to add information about the speakers’ attitude (cf. Himmelmann (2001: 836) with references to the relevant languages and literature).

In the corpus of P. Palau Ribes Inv 183., which I used for collecting Sahidic data, the occurrences of **π**- is relatively low. If we put aside its appearance in set phrases, such as the lexicalized possessive construction to express ‘across/beyond’ (**ε-π**-**κρ** **ἄ**-, **ζ****π**-**κρ** **ἄ**-)<sup>103</sup> corresponding to the first cases in Polotsky (1957: 230)), it can be attested twice in the whole text:

- (67) **π-εοὐγ**      **π-εβ** **ζ****π**      **π-οὐ**      **ἄ-οὐδ**      [John 5:44]  
 DEF.SG.M-glory    DEF.SG.M-out from    DEF.SG.M-one    ATTR-single  
 ‘the glory, the one which is from *this/the* only one’

In (67) the use of **π** seems to correspond to the expression described by both Polotsky and Layton, who proposed to translate it as “the same ...” In this case, however, the meaning of the whole sentence suggests a more literal translation of **οὐδ** ‘single’ and, consequently, I would rather interpret this usage as an emotive one.<sup>104</sup> (NB. The later Sahidic edition of Horner also display a **π**-, while the Lycopopolitan London Gospel has a simple definite determination at the same place)

- (68) **λ-ϥ**-**οὐ** **ω** **ω** **β**      **χ** **ε**      **π**-**ρ** **ω** **μ** **ε**      **ε**-**τ**-**οὐ**-**μ** **οὐ** **τ** **ε**      **ε**-**ρ** **ο**-**ϥ**      **χ** **ε**      **ἰ** **ϥ**      [John 9:11]  
 PF-3SG.M-answer that    DEF.SG.M-man    REL-3PL-call      to-3SG.M that Jesus  
 ‘he answered that this man who is called Jesus (is he who made clay...)’

The sentence in (68) answered a preceding question “How come your eyes opened?”. The reply is arranged in a Cleft sentence whereas the question was not about “who did it?” but more about “what happened?”. The speaker, however, wants to focalize the agent of the event and this might be the reason to use a quasi demonstrative / affective determiner.

<sup>103</sup> In these expression it entails the notion of ‘farther’ or ‘other’ side, shore, etc. compared to the one nearby (Cf. Layton 2000: §58(e)). This function in fact reminds to that of a demonstrative article.

<sup>104</sup> “How will ye be able to believe, taking glory from one another, and the glory which is from this only one ye seek not for.” (in Horner’s translation)

(NB. While the London Gospel shows **ⲙ-** here, Horner’s Sahidic and the version in dialect W have a normal demonstrative **ⲡⲈ-** at this place)

In *table 12*, the now extended set of Sahidic determiners are subsumed. Note that there is no **ⲛⲉⲛ-** form, which will be characteristic in other dialects. The spellings **ⲛ̄ⲛ-** or **ⲛⲉⲛ-** come up in non standard or incorrect texts (Stern 1880: §228).

*Table 12. Determiners in Sahidic (extended)*

	SG.M	SG.F	PL
Definite article	<b>ⲡ-</b> / <b>ⲡⲈ-</b>	<b>ⲧ-</b> / <b>ⲧⲈ-</b>	<b>ⲛ̄-</b> / <b>ⲛ-</b> / <b>ⲛⲈ-</b>
Emotive / demonstrative article	<b>ⲡ-</b>	<b>ⲧ-</b>	<b>ⲛ-</b>
Demonstrative article	<b>ⲡⲈ-</b>	<b>ⲧⲈ-</b>	<b>ⲛⲈ-</b>
Possessive article	<b>ⲡⲈϣ-</b>	<b>ⲧⲈϣ-</b>	<b>ⲛⲈϣ-</b>
Indefinite article	<b>ⲟϥ-</b>		<b>ϩⲈⲛ-</b>

### 3.3 Alternative systems: a dialectal perspective

In the other literary dialects, the above discussed determiner system practically looks the same with some phonological divergence, which is usual and, of course, is not unexpected. The distribution and use of the definite articles and the **ⲡ-**-determination, however, show some peculiarities in certain dialectal varieties. Three case studies will be presented here.

#### 3.3.1 The case of Bohairic

Bohairic has two series of definite articles, which are traditionally called ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ articles. (Stern 1880: §226, Mallon 1907: §41, Polotsky 1968: 243) The forms are indicated in the table below.<sup>105</sup> Note that the aspirated allomorphs appear before the sonorant consonants.

*Table 13. Definite articles in Bohairic*

	SG.M	SG.F	PL
‘Weak’ article	<b>ⲡ-</b> / <b>ⲡ̄-</b>	<b>ⲧ-</b> / <b>ⲧ̄-</b>	<b>ⲛⲉⲛ-</b>
‘Strong’ article	<b>ⲡ-</b>	<b>ⲧ̄-</b>	<b>ⲛ-</b>

<sup>105</sup> The form **ⲛ-**, which is fully grammatical in Sahidic and other dialects, seems to be entirely absent in Bohairic, but see Polotsky (1968) for a revision thereof.

According to Leo Depuydt (1985a: 51) the two sets “cannot be studied regardless of their syntactical links with the two ‘genitive’ particles **ⲛ-** and **ⲛⲧⲉ-**” because it is the genitive (possessive) construction that conditions the determination of the first noun in the pattern. This observation is true in a sense, viewing that one of the possessive constructions – not surprisingly the one connected by **ⲛ-** (*pattern A*) – has strict selectional criteria with respect to the head noun, both in its lexical properties and in its determination. Nevertheless, both determiners appear independently, i.e. in non possessed noun phrases, and these uses have to be examined as well. It must be noted, however, that the above statement always holds for the plural ‘weak’ article **ⲛⲉⲛ-**, which cannot be attested outside a possessive. That is to say, non possessed plural nouns can only be determined by **ⲛⲓ-**. No doubt, this asymmetry between the singular and plural forms needs to be accounted for.

The **ⲛⲓ-** series is familiar from Sahidic as well, but as it was noted, in Sahidic, **ⲛⲓ-** determination is preserved for special uses such as the affective (emotive) use, or it can be attested as a remote demonstrative in set expressions. It does not seem to be frequent altogether; the Sahidic text examined in this thesis had two occurrences beyond the ones appearing in set phrases. In Bohairic, on the contrary, they are quite frequent and the **ⲛⲓ-** series seems to be the basic definite article in anaphoric contexts.

The question to be raised is why Bohairic needed two sets of definite articles, or to put it differently, what is the functional difference between the two series. As we are informed by Mallon (1907: §42), the ‘weak’ article is placed before generic and abstract nouns and before nouns that are unique, while the ‘strong’ article “détermine avec plus de précision, il indique un individu en particulier”. He also adds rather generally that “en général on emploie l’un ou l’autre article selon le degré de détermination qu’on veut donner au nom”. It is similar to what Ludwig Stern claimed in his grammar (1880: §227). However, Leo Depuydt (1985a: 57) points it out that Mallon seems to understand the ‘strength’ of the determiner in quantitative terms, while it is better to simply treat it as a morphological symptom, as it was also done by Stern. Polotsky (1968: 243) also suggests making an ‘individual’ and ‘generic’ distinction. Depuydt (1985a: 59) further proposes to distinguish three nuances the ‘weak’ article can express: the indication of unique beings (e.g. God), the generic use (e.g. wildlife), and the use ‘par excellence’ (e.g. the river, i.e. the Nile), which, in his view, all derive from the basic notion of indicating one element of a genus as the representative of the entire genus. As far as I see, the definition he gives is better to only apply to the generic reading of the noun phrase, while the other two cases comprise the same notion of inherent uniqueness.

Shisha-Halevy (1994: 223-224) also makes a distinction between  $\mathfrak{m}$ -determination and  $\mathfrak{n}$ -determination in “the signaling system of non-specific actualization of a noun lexeme” according to which, the  $\mathfrak{m}$ -series is used for “class-forming, class-defining, class-bounding determination, class totality, class-representant in the opposition system of classes” while the  $\mathfrak{n}$ -series is “the genus or class naming determination”.<sup>106</sup> In specific uses, as he claims,  $\mathfrak{m}$ - is the unmarked definite article of Bohairic characterizing the noun as familiar and of high specificity (2007a: 389). Finally, in his system, the  $\mathfrak{n}$ -series is the “non-cohesive, pure actualization designative or naming article” and as such is non-referential.

I propose that this distinction can rather be accounted for in terms of semantic and pragmatic definiteness. The referent of inherently unique nouns (such as *sun*, *moon*, *god*, *etc.* and several abstract concepts, like *truth*, *death*, *etc.*) is always identifiable, and so does the more abstract (but universally accepted) reference to a kind what generic noun phrases can express. This type of definiteness is encoded in the use of the ‘weak’ article. On the contrary, if the referent of the noun phrase can only be identified within the given discourse, its definiteness principally depends on pragmatic factors (i.e. the entity is already mentioned or its identity is determined by its relation to other entities already present in the discourse). This is what the ‘strong’ article is assumed to encode.<sup>107</sup> Such a distinction will naturally explain why the opposition between ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ articles is neutralized in the plural forms outside the possessives. Inherently unique nouns are prototypically singular.<sup>108</sup> If they appear in a plural noun phrase, they are practically shifted to another type and are no longer unique, cf. “Students have to read the Bible”

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<sup>106</sup> I cited the definition of Shisha-Halevy literary because I did not manage to understand his line of reasoning with respect to this subcategorization, which can partly due to different meaning we assign to certain linguistic terms (e.g. specificity or referentiality), cf. (2007a: 339). An even more elaborated definition of “definite generic” article is provided in his book (2007a: 409), but this version is just more beyond my compass: “Only superficially paradoxical ‘specific and generic’, this determinator, condensing as it were the whole kind into a single class-member item, characterizes the class-set or system-of-classes or inter-genus generic.  $\mathfrak{m}$  is class-forming – class-bounding, class contrasting, intensional. The genus is presented as a sub-range or component in a structured world-of-kinds spectrum.”

<sup>107</sup> There is quite interesting phenomenon that is worth mentioning here. Investigating the early instances of the definite article in Old Hungarian manuscript (this is another field of research I have been involved for some years) I observed that the article first appear only to mark pragmatic references, while inherently unique nouns and generic resist the use of the article. It only gradually expands into more and more contexts (Egedi 2011 and *forthcoming*). There are traces in the literature on Old English and Old Portugal, that the same scenario can be detected in other languages as well. It would be an interesting endeavor to find out whether the same can be demonstrated in the history of Egyptian after the definite article emerged.

<sup>108</sup> It is to be noted that generics are not necessarily singular. In many languages plural count nouns can have a generic reading (a typical example is the use names of peoples, e.g. *the Jews*). The ‘weak’ article in Coptic, however, seems to have grammaticalized for singular uses only.

(inherently unique) vs. “All the Bibles were sold in the bookstore” (sortal).<sup>109</sup> It is to be noted that, rather disappointingly, the use of the two sets of articles is far from being consistent in singular as well, as Leo Depuydt (1985a: 60) also admits it, citing several examples from the same text and even from the same sentence (e.g.  $\Phi\text{-PH NEM NI-IOZ}$  ‘the sun and the moon’).

Keeping in mind that everything discussed so far is based on what we find in the linguistic literature on classical Bohairic, I decided to check the hypothesis in the early Bohairic manuscript of P. Bodmer III. in order to see whether the above observations hold true for this variety as well, or else, what kind of deviation can be observed in it. Due to the frequency of occurrence of articles, accurate statistics cannot be provided at present (conversely, in the case of possessive constructions precise numbers and proportions will be given in Chapter 4). Nevertheless, an overall impression of the use of the articles in early Bohairic can be summarized here.

Before going deep into the details, the frequently attested double spelling of **n-** in P. Bodmer III. has to be noted since it might be misleading. Although one does not expect a plural article in the form of **n-** in Bohairic (only **nen-** or **ni-**), it is important to demonstrate that these **nn-** sequences are mere spelling peculiarities of the text. It can be very well observed in such positions where the use of a definite article is simply excluded. **nn-** appears in many places where normally a simple **n-** is expected: as the attributive linking element; after quantifiers; as the preposition introducing a predicative complement; differential object marker, etc. In John (19:34) even three **n-**s come up in the phrase **nnn-oy-λoγkḥ** ‘with a spear’, from which two are evidently redundant.

The two sets of articles are obviously present in this early Bohairic manuscript, and their distribution shows the expected features in many respects: inherently unique nouns are assigned the ‘weak’ article, e.g.  $\tau\phi\epsilon$  ‘the sky’,  $\phi\tau$  ‘God’,  $\phi\omega\tau$  ‘the Father’, etc, while the **ni-** series appear in a more general, anaphoric use. (Note that aspiration of the articles before sonorants, or more precisely the spelling thereof, is not entirely normalized in the text, variation can be observed with the same lexemes as well). However, if classical Bohairic can be accused to be slightly inconsistent in determination, it is twice as true for early Bohairic. First, I tried to make a collection of data with nouns in absolute use, noting their unique, generic, individual, anaphoric, etc. status respectively, and collating the text with the classical Bohairic edition of the *Gospel of John*. But inconsistency was so

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<sup>109</sup> Using these concept types I rely on Sebastian Löbner’s (2011) model of the four basic conceptual lexical types of nouns: sortal nouns, individual nouns, relational nouns and functional nouns.

enormous in early Bohairic that, at a certain point of this desperate work, the possibility of classification has been given up. In long sections, for instance, where the two actor of the scene are only the Father and the Son, the former display a ‘weak’ article as it is expected, while the latter is usually π-determined (although not always). Furthermore, πε ‘sky, heaven’ λογος ‘word’ (of God) get the ‘weak’ article, while, κοσμος ‘world’ γραφη ‘writing’ (in the sense of the Scripture) usually have a ‘strong’ article.

To illustrate the situation, I cite a whole “paragraph” of verses below in which devices of determination can nicely be followed. Glosses are not given in this case, but the relevant noun phrases are highlighted by underlining. The separation of words follows the original text-edition (Kasser 1958), while the English translation is after Horner’s edition but, of course, I changed it when the lexical content differed (changes are marked by italics).

(69) εταροϋζι δε ωπι ανεφμαθητς ει ερπι εφιου · αγαλι εϋχοι αϋϋε  
επατ πιου εκαφαρναουμ νεατχεμτς ουω εσωπιπε νεπατεϊη̄ς ι  
ζαρωυπε · νεαπιου δε τωου επωπιπε ντενουχιννιϋι ντεγνιϋτ  
νοου · εταγ<ου>ει εβου νη̄ενστασιον ιε λ · αγναγ ειη̄ς ερωω  
ζιχενπιου εαφθωντ επχοι · αγερζοτ · νεου δε πεχαϋ νωου χεανοκπε  
μπερερζοτ · ναγ<ου>ω δεπε εωπιϋ ερωου επιχοι σατοτϋ απιχοι μου  
επχρο επιμα [εναγ] ναζωα ερω [John 6:16-21]

“An evening having come, his disciples came down to the sea; and having entered into a ship, they were going across the sea to Kapharnaum. And the dusk had now come, and Jesus had not yet come to them. And the sea was heaving by the blow of a great wind. Having then been distant about twenty-five stadia or thirty, they saw Jesus walking upon the sea, approaching the ship, and they feared. But he said to them: ‘It is me, do not be afraid’ They were wishing then to get him into the ship with them, and immediately the ship landed at the shore on the land to which they were to go.”

Analysis of the determined noun phrases:

<b>φιου</b>	‘the sea’ first mention, but unique reference in this context	✓
<b>ουχοι</b>	‘a ship’, introducing a new referent	✓
<b>πιου</b>	‘the sea’ unique reference, anaphoric	?
<b>τχεμτς</b>	‘the darkness’ abstract noun, unique reference	✓
<b>πιου</b>	‘the sea’ unique reference, anaphoric	?
<b>πιου</b>	‘the sea’ unique reference, anaphoric	?
<b>πχοι</b>	‘the ship’, non-unique reference, anaphoric	??
<b>πιχοι</b>	‘the ship’, non-unique reference, anaphoric	✓
<b>πιχοι</b>	‘the ship’, non-unique reference, anaphoric	✓
<b>πχρο</b>	‘the shore’, associative-anaphoric use	?
<b>πιμα</b>	‘the place’ cataphoric	✓

Question marks are used to sign that, according to the hypothesis advanced above, the use of the other article series would be expected. Observing similar sections (e.g. 14:4-6) in which the same lexeme appears more than once with different determination, I can only conclude that this version of Bohairic is probably more sensitive to the semantic boundary of anaphoricity: the noun phrase (either unique or non-unique, only situationally identified), at its first mention, has the simple definite article, while it is  $\pi$ -determined in its subsequent and repeated occurrences. The parallel text in classical Bohairic consistently uses the ‘weak’ article with all the occurrences of the lexeme *sea* and the ‘strong’ article with all the others (except for *darkness*; in the ‘weak’ determination of this word the two versions agree). This means that the classical Bohairic determination rests more upon the lexical-semantic properties of the individual words.<sup>110</sup>

I have also observed that the weak articles are common in noun phrases embedded in prepositional phrases (as opposed to subject or object positions), which might suggest that only argument positions take part in the opposition. This supposal, however, can also be debated without no difficulty, as, for instance, in verses (15:18-19) the word **KOCMOC** occurs six times, twice with the ‘weak’ and four times with the ‘strong’ article, but the variation holds both in subject position and after the preposition **πEN-** ‘in’.

To conclude, the use of the ‘weak’ article is evidently less frequent in the manuscript, its occurrences show the tendencies observed for classical Bohairic, but type-shifting seems to happen much easier than in the later standardized text version. The question naturally arises to what extent we can rely on the spelling of the articles in a text where several other inconsistencies can be observed as well (the double spelling of **n-s**, and the spelling of aspiration were already mentioned). The issue is left now for later investigation and a bigger attention will be paid to the Bohairic determination in possessive construction, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

### 3.3.2 The case of Mesokemic

At first sight, the Mesokemic determination system seems to be rather similar to the Sahidic one. On a closer inspection, however, one will find that there are some peculiarities that are specific to this dialectal variety only, moreover, there seems to be a certain variation among the individual manuscripts as well. Three phenomena will be

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<sup>110</sup> But cf. Shisha-Halevy’s description for the  $\pi$ -series, as “deictically inert, non-phoric, properizing” (1994: 235).

discussed here: the **ⲙ**-determination, the demonstrative reinforcement, and the use of **ⲛⲉⲛ**- in Codex Schøyen.

The **ⲙ**-determination in Mesokemic has already been addressed by Ariel Shisha-Halevy in a paper published in *Chronique d'Égypte* (1983), in which his observations were based exclusively on Codex Scheide. Further important manuscripts presenting this dialect only appeared after he had written this study and the new data will inevitably adjust our understanding of Mesokemic. Nevertheless, his statements are the only suggestions as to how the Mesokemic determination system can be analyzed, so I started my research in his footsteps and first examined his collection of data.

Shisha-Halevy (1983: 317) lays down that the Mesokemic determination system differs from that of Sahidic and Bohairic (he makes no comparison with the Fayyumic one as the latter has not been investigated in a required degree). Accordingly, **ⲙ**-determination in Mesokemic is “neither «affective» as in Sahidic, nor a higher-deixis article, as in Bohairic, nor is it as a rule text-anaphoric. It is mainly encountered in 3 roles: as a *categorical-notional or generic determinator* (...); as a *cataphoric* determinator, of a noun expanded by *n-ø-* or *et-* (...); thirdly, as a «paradigmatic» determinator, i.e. indicating an item in a closed set of several.”

I find the following objections to his assumptions. Although these “roles” nicely describe several contexts in which **ⲙ**-determination appears in Codex Scheide, they do not outline a consistent system of its use. The third “role” appears to be the most problematic for at least three reasons: firstly, many of the cases cited by Shisha-Halevy as cases for a cataphoric use are at the same time strong anaphoric contexts. Secondly, it has not been explained why a noun expanded by an (attributive?) *n-* is to be considered to fulfill a cataphoric role. And finally, there are numerous cases in which the noun expanded by either an attributive modifier or a relative clause has a simple definite article instead of the **ⲙ**-determination.

Moreover, I built a comparative table of the **ⲙ**-determined cases of the two codices containing the Gospel of Matthew (Codex Scheide and Codex Schøyen) and found that besides sharing many of the occurrences, the two manuscripts show several places where one or the other preferred an alternative determination. Ignoring the cases when the data in Codex Schøyen is only reconstructed, the codices agreed in 45 cases and differed in 84 cases (the numbers are not to be taken too seriously as I did not check all the individual cases, but they might give an impression about the proportion). Two kinds of conclusion can be drawn from these facts: either the above established rules of **ⲙ**-determination are

not specific enough, or the grammars of the two codices are basically divergent. Unfortunately, the shared occurrences do not seem to show a consistent systematism either. What is more, Codex Glazier apparently do not have **ⲡⲓ-** in singular (except for the fixed expression of **ⲡⲓϥϥ**), but only makes use of **ⲡⲓ-** five times in the whole manuscript, which is extremely strange viewing that the language of Codex Scheide and Codex Glazier are otherwise very closely related.

I only have a tentative suggestion for the **ⲡⲓ-**determination in Codex Scheide and Codex Schoyen: maybe it shows the affectivity of the noun phrase, but not in the Polotskian sense, i.e. because of the presence of a laudatory or a depreciative attribution but rather in terms of emphasis. It would be worth observing whether the informational status of the individual phrases are marked within the sentence (contrastive topic, focus), which resulted in an alternative prosodic realization of the phrase (or a part of it) and was reflected by the replacement of the article with a vocalized allomorph. This suggestion is, of course, entirely speculative and needs careful testing. One cannot exclude the possibility either that prosodic factors mingled with categories suggested by Shisha-Halevy. A prosodic explanation, however, would also account for the fact that otherwise closely related manuscripts are so different in the written realization of this phenomenon.

Turning to our second topic, it is remarkable that Mesokemic, at least in Codex Scheide and in Codex Glazier, has a high frequency of demonstrative reinforcement, an otherwise not too frequent phenomenon in Coptic. In this configuration a noun determined by a demonstrative article is followed by a demonstrative pronoun (**ⲡⲓⲉⲓ-... ⲡⲓⲉⲓ**). Codex Scheide has overall 13 occurrences (both in singular and plural), while *Apostelgeschichte* in Codex Glazier has 11 occurrences in total. Interestingly, Codex Schøyen never uses this reinforcing strategy.<sup>111</sup>

Although the Sahidic Gospel texts show no traces of such a strategy, and as far as I remember, I hardly ever met a construction like this in a manuscript, some of the reference grammars mention the construction, citing relevant examples for it. Layton, in his chapter about determinators, dedicates a section to the illustration of how these grammatical elements may appear in various combinations (2000: §61). Among the cases he also lists the combination of a ‘nearer demonstration plus nearer demonstration’ citing an example from the Shenoute corpus **ⲧⲈⲚⲠⲮ ⲒⲚ-ⲧⲈⲓ-ⲢⲠⲨⲈ ⲧⲌⲓ** “now in this very year”). No

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<sup>111</sup> According to the index of *P. Mil. Copto* the demonstrative article (in one of its three allomorphs) occurs 12 times in the manuscript. I checked all the cases, but found no such case of doubling. It is to be noted, however, that the context is heavily damaged practically everywhere in this fragmentary manuscript.

information is provided, however, about the frequency or degree of markedness of this construction. Shisha-Halevy (2007a: 416) also cites two examples from the Bohairic corpus he used, but without translation or additional comments.

Chris Reintges (2004: 136), discussing the functions of demonstrative pronoun **παι** (§4.1.1.2), not only mentions the existence of such a configuration, but also provides a functional description of it. He claims that this “appositional” use, when a demonstrative pronoun follows in apposition an already demonstratively determined noun phrase, appears “in the context of emphatic deictic reference”. In two out of the three examples he quotes, the translation is similar to that of Layton’s: “this very thought”, “on this very day” which seems to be a focalizing reinforcement, i.e. insisting on identification. In the third example he cites focalization seems improbable, but a contrastive topic interpretation is plausible (*viz.* “As for *this* thing, ...”).

As the frequency of this pattern is considerably high in the same text, and it is also noteworthy that two manuscripts from the same dialectal variety show this peculiarity, it is worth observing whether the claims about emphatic use can be confirmed. I checked the 13 places in Codex Scheide and tried to classify the data from this respect. I collated them with Codex Schøyen and with the Sahidic version in Horner’s edition. In the parallel texts, normally a demonstrative article can be attested or even less (e.g. in 24:14 Codex Schøyen displays a simple definite article). In many cases an explicit or implicit contrast or some sort of emphasis can be argued for, for instance in (70).

(70) **ϚΝ-ΤΕΙ-ΟΥΨΗ ΤΕΙ ϚΛΘΗ ΝΤΕ-ΟΥ-ΑΛΕΚΤΩΡ ΜΟΥΤΕ**  
 in-DEM.SG.F-night DEM.PRON.SG.F before CONJ-INDF.SG-rooster call  
**Κ-ΝΕ-ΑΠΑΡΝΙ ΜΜΑ-Ι Ν-ΨΑΜΝΤ Ν-ΣΑΠ** [Matt 26:34 C. Scheide]  
 2SG.M-FUTI-deny DOM.1SG for-three ATTR-occasion

‘In this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times’

However, in at least three of the cases (13:14, 13:53 and 19:1) this use has no obvious reason: the phrases are used anaphorically, with no special emphasis or contrast. According to the editor of Codex Scheide (Schenke 1981: 38) the ‘Pleonasmus der Demonstrative’ can be related to the fact that the text was translated from Greek, and this structure intends to reflect the original word order (definite article + noun + demonstrative). It might have been the case, but as it is also noted by Hans-Martin Schenke, in three cases, the source text had an alternative order or determination, and there are numerous other cases in the text, I suppose, when Greek showed the above configuration but Coptic failed to imitate it. To conclude, even if the construction was inspired by Greek patterns, it seems to be

reanalyzed as a reinforcement strategy within the Coptic sentence. The true question is, whether it survived independently or it remained an idiomatic construction of the translated Biblical literature.

The third mysterious phenomenon to be observed is the occasional use of **nen-** for a plural definite article in Codex Schøyen. While this manuscript is abundant in **nen-**, Codex Scheide and Codex Glazier seemingly have none. This form of the plural article is not exceptional of course, but its distribution in Codex Schøyen differs from the one in the other dialects. In Sahidic it hardly ever appears, although Bentley Layton (2000: §52f) notes that **nen-** optionally occurs before a vowel, e.g. **nenapxi** ‘the rulers’ (Luke 12:11). This form **nen-** is well-known from Bohairic and Fayyumic. In these dialects, however, it is exclusively used attached to the head noun in possessive constructions mediated by **nen-**. It forms a paradigm with **ni-** and **ni-** in this context, and its use, evidently, is syntactically conditioned.

What we see in Mesokemic, more precisely, in Codex Schøyen is the following: **nen-** appears side by side with **ni-**, as a pure variant of it, thus not forming a paradigm with the singular definite articles. (Note that the long article **nen-** and the **ni-** form are also present in the system.) I examined all the data to explore what are the conditions of the use of **nen-**, but with no positive results. Apparently no phonological or morphological constraints can be established: it appears before vowels as well as before consonants, with sonorants just as well with obstruents. The syntactic/distributional constraints, first recognized for Bohairic, are not met either: **nen-** freely occurs both in possessive constructions and in absolute use, with antecedent noun phrases of a relative clause as well as independently of any constructions it may be embedded in. The last possibility that remains as to explain its distribution is semantics. However, neither does a stronger deixis/anaphoric use, nor affectivity/emphasis seem to be involved when it appears – at least not in a systematic fashion. This strange phenomenon is either another example for lack of normalization or, which I consider more probable, we are far from fully understanding the marking of determination in this variety.

### 3.3.3 The case of early Fayyumic

Walter Till, in his *Chrestomathie für den fayyumischen Dialekt* (1930: 3) lists the definite articles **π-**, **†-**, **ν-**, **πϵ-**, **τϵ-**, **νε-**, **π-**, **τ-**, **ν-**, with the following remark: “völlig ohne Unterschied gebraucht”. He also adds that sometimes **νεν-** is used in plural. I have no information about the classical Fayyumic dialect beyond this rather general description, but working with two early Fayyumic manuscripts (BM Or. 5707. and BM Or. 6948) to explore the syntax of their possessive constructions (see section 4.3.6), it became clear that this claim does not hold true for the variety of these early manuscripts.

The longer form of the article does appear, of course,<sup>112</sup> in singular. What is more remarkable, the forms **ν-**, **νε-** are not attested at all. The simple definite **π-** and **τ-** seem to form a paradigm with **ν-** in absolute use and with **νν-** in possessive structures as the plural definite article appearing on the possessed noun.

As far as I can judge, **π-**-determination outside the plural is not used systematically, at least not in the fashion it can be observed in Bohairic. In the Gospel fragment of BM Or. 5707 **π-** occurred once (John 3:26) in the **Ϸπικρο ν-** type lexicalized expression (which was attested in the Sahidic corpus as well), and I found a few more instances with **†-** but most of the times used with the same lexeme (**†-Ϸνι** ‘the woman’). In all cases the context is anaphoric, but it is too rarely used to reconstruct a system similar to Bohairic. The texts do not agree in his respect in most of the places: early Fayyumic evidently prefers the simple **π-**-determiners in singular. **†-** is not a demonstrative as demonstrative articles are also attested several times in their regular forms (**πϵι-**, **τϵι-**). The occasional use of **π-**-determination is not phonologically required either as the other lexemes with which it appears do not begin with a consonant cluster (**πηγη**, **λωρεα**).

Table 14. Definite articles in early Fayyumic (in BM Or. 5707)

	SG.M	SG.F	PL
Definite article	<b>π-</b> / <b>πϵ-</b>	<b>τ-</b> / <b>τϵ-</b>	<b>νν-</b>
? (rare)	<b>π-</b>	<b>†-</b>	<b>ν-</b>

The picture is slightly modified by the other manuscript (BM Or. 6948, Gaselee 1909) where **π-** and **π-**-determination appear side by side in the same quantity resembling more to

<sup>112</sup> It is claimed to be only used in Sahidic, Mesokemic and Fayyumic by Depuydt (1993: 364). However, it is well observable in dialect W as well.

the Bohairic system. Simple **π-** appears mostly with possessed nouns and with inherently unique nouns (**ϕ†** ‘the God’, **π̄ō̄c̄** ‘the lord’, **π̄χ̄p̄c̄** ‘the Christ’) and in generic use (**π̄λ̄λ̄ōc̄** ‘the people’), but **π-** is preferred in anaphoric and cataphoric contexts. What is striking, while the above mentioned distribution in plural (**π-** in absolute use and **ππ-** in possessives) basically holds, I can see one example for simple **π-** in an attributive construction (Acts 9:36) and maybe one with a possessed noun (7:3, but the 3 letters before are damaged and only reconstructed by the editor). Of course, this manuscript is too short to be conclusive, but the data might be of some interest.

In addition to these empirical observations made in the two manuscripts, let me refer to a footnote in Ariel Shisha-Halevy’s monograph on Bohairic syntax (2007: 387 n.28), where he quotes from a letter of 2000 written by Wolf-Peter Funk. In his view, the dialect F4 is close to Bohairic as far as the plural article usage is concerned, while in singular the situation is similar to that of Mesokemic.

## 4 Possessive constructions in Coptic

Coptic possessive constructions have already been discussed briefly in chapter 2, but will be expanded here in a more detailed manner. The key question of the first section will be the distribution of the patterns in Sahidic. In relation to a comparison made between one of the Coptic possessive patterns and the so-called construct state phenomenon, a historical overview will also be presented to explore the possibility of a true construct state formation in earlier Egyptian language stages as well as to point out how a formal and functional opposition that was about to disappear already in the first documented stages of the Egyptian language re-emerged in the distribution of the two Coptic possessive patterns. In the last section of this chapter a comparative study will show the differences among the early dialects with respect to the rules that conditioned the distribution of the two possessive constructions.

### 4.1 The Sahidic distribution: Pattern A and B

In the two types of Coptic possessive patterns, as it was also stated in section 2.5, the order of the constituents is as follows: possessed noun phrase + a morpheme expressing genitive/possessive relationship + possessor noun phrase. The formal difference between the two constructions is that one of them involves the element  $\bar{n}$ -/( $\bar{m}$ -) as a possessive marker, whereas the preposition  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon$ -/ $\bar{n}\tau\alpha$ = is used in the other construction. The possessive relationship is expressed by *pattern A* unless the possessed noun is indefinite, has a demonstrative article, or is followed by an adjective or other type of modifier, in which cases *pattern B* is used instead.<sup>113</sup> The examples above are those cited in section 2.5.1. and are repeated here for convenience.

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<sup>113</sup> For the formulation of this description see Till (1961: §113); Vergote (1983: §190.1); Steindorff (1951: §150) as it was already referred in section 2.5.1. Georg Steindorff, however, does not mention the case of demonstratives and Ariel Shisha-Halevy (1986: 20, n.30) also expressed some criticism with respect to Walter Till's example for the type (73). In his view, the demonstrative modifies the construction as a whole. This does not contradict to my approach at all, as I assume that determiners always belong to the higher functional layer or shell of the noun phrase, and accordingly determiners *determine* the lexical noun phrase as a whole. As it will be explained below, it is the choice of the possessive pattern that conditions the determiner-types and not vice-versa.

*Pattern A*

- (71) **Π-ΩΗΡΕ**            **ᾤ-Π-ΝΟΥΤΕ**            [John 1:49]  
DEF.SG.M-son        POSS-DEF.SG.M-god  
'the son of God'

*Pattern B*

- (72) **ΟΥ-ΠΟΛΙΣ**            **ᾤΤΕ-Τ-ΣΑΜΑΡΙΑ**            [John 4:5]  
INDF.SG-town        POSS-DEF.SG.F-Samaria  
'a town of Samaria'

- (73) **ΠΕΙ-ΩΗΡΕ**            **ᾤΤΕ-Π-ΡΩΜΕ**            [John 12:34]  
DEM.SG.M-son        POSS-DEF.SG.M-man  
'this son of the man'

- (74) **Π-ΩΗΡΕ**            **ᾤ-ΟΥΩΤ**            **ᾤΤΕ-Π-ΝΟΥΤΕ**            [John 3:18]  
DEF.SG.M-son        ATTR-single        POSS-DEF.SG.M-god  
'the only son of God'

It has also been stated that pronominal possessors are realized by means of the possessive articles, but viewing that these articles are definite by nature they are incompatible with an indefinite (or rather non definite) head noun. In this case the prepositions of *pattern B* are used:

- (75) **ΟΥΤΕ** **ᾤΠΕ-Τᾤ-ΣΩΤᾤ** **Ε-ΣΜΗ** **ᾤΤΑ-Ϛ** **ΕΝΕΖ**  
neither NEG.PF-2PL-hear to-voice POSS-3sg ever  
**ΟΥΤΕ** **ᾤΠΕ-Τᾤ-ΝΑΥ** **Ε-ΖΡᾤ** **ᾤΤΑ-Ϛ** [John 5:37]  
neither NEG.PF-2PL-see to-shape POSS-3sg

'You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape'

The context in (75) is really interesting: even though the nominal expressions are cases of inalienable possession relationship, the negative existential context calls for a non specific indefinite interpretation of the noun phrase, so possessive article cannot be used here. The possessor must be introduced by the preposition in *status pronominalis*.

The frequency of the two patterns will be markedly different in the texts, which is not so unexpected if we take into account the semantic aspects of possessive relationship. (According to what has been already explained in section 2.5, the noun phrases containing a possessive expression are prototypically definite.) The pattern in (72) is uncommon because of the indefinite possessee. The type of (73) is particularly rare since noun phrases are typically determined in one way or other; if its referent is already identified by a possessor, it hardly ever happens that it is also deictically modified.

There have been more attempts to characterize the distribution between the two patterns. Although the descriptive traditions already offered the rule in a very simple and essential form, those who also aimed to *explain* the distribution, seem to be stuck in a rather vague semantic approach to the issue. Before demonstrating these analyses, I would like to anticipate that I argue for a purely syntactic formulation of the distribution between the two possessive patterns: *Pattern A* is used in the case of simple definite possessed nouns, while *Pattern B* (the historically newer construction) is applied elsewhere, i.e. practically in all other cases, such as with indefinite or modified possessed nouns and even with a possessed noun expanded by a demonstrative. In other words, *Pattern A* requires obligatory (and simple) definiteness of the possessed noun as well as strict adjacency between the possessee and the possessor. However, the distribution of *Pattern A* and *B* is not complementary: Although *Pattern B* seems to be used in all the syntactic environments from which *Pattern A* is excluded, *Pattern B* may be found also with simple determination of the possessed noun, which suggests an asymmetrical relationship between the two patterns.

Observing the Coptic data, one can find a quasi complementary distribution between the two patterns and earlier text-books had pointed out the syntactic conditions of this distribution by listing the possible environments in which *pattern B* appears rather than *pattern A*. However, Bentley Layton aims to explain the distribution on semantic grounds. In his terminology, possessive construction is a ‘restrictive expansion’, i.e. “a construction of two entity terms such that one restricts the meaning of the other by limiting the number of referents to which it applies” (Layton 2000: §146). This restrictive expansion has two types: the construction of general (possessive) relationship and the construction of appurtenance. The construction of general (possessive) relationship expresses a general, logically ambiguous restrictive relationship (‘related to, of’) between nucleus and expansion element. The construction of appurtenance “expresses the subsumed natural relationship of part to whole, component to system, offshoot to source, etc.” and is more restrictive in meaning than general relationship. (Layton 2000: §§146-148)

The problem with such semantically based definitions is that the data often escape the generalization. The examples that Bentley Layton himself listed for illustration are, as far as I can judge, occasionally inconsequent. He presents the phrase “the parts of the body” (ⲙⲙⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉ-ⲡⲥⲟⲙⲁ) as a typical example for the appurtenance, but, at the same time, one can find “the bodies of the saints” or “the souls of people” among the examples for the general relationship. A similar problem arises with his examples “as servants of God” for

the appurtenance, and “as apostles of Christ” for the general relationship. The semantic difference between these two phrases can hardly be captured in linguistic terms. His two types of relationship otherwise entirely correspond to our *pattern A* vs. *pattern B* division from a formal point of view, with the exception of the analysis he provides with respect to  $\bar{n}\tau\alpha=$ . This morpheme is functionally split in his system:  $\bar{n}\tau\alpha=$  is used for the appurtenance as well as for the general relationship, if the possessor is pronominal and the possessed noun is not a simple definite entity term (cf. his table 11 on p. 114). Thus in the case of pronominal possessors, he appeals to a syntactic distribution to account for the data.

Shisha-Halevy (1986: 20-21) suggests that the original opposition was *essential possession* vs. *incidental possession* or *appurtenance* but it usually neutralised and is maintained in isolated cases only, perhaps with a limited inventory of noun lexemes in the nucleus. As he himself notes (1986: 21, n.32), this is the case in Bohairic, but the above statement does not account for the data in Sahidic. Of course, it is not entirely impossible that semantics had its share in giving rise to the new pattern. Jan Borghouts investigates the origin of Coptic  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon-$  in a quite remarkable paper (1980). Although there is a general consensus concerning the derivation of  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon-$  from the preposition *mdj* ‘with’ (regularly attested from the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards), its genitival function before Demotic had been unnoticed until his contribution. Borghouts collected Late Egyptian data (found in colloquial texts only), in which the precursor of  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon-$  partly shows a distribution similar to the Coptic preposition: it is used when the head noun is undetermined, or has an indefinite article, or is separated from the possessor phrase. (Note, however, that its use is optional, and *n-* is still far more frequent than *mdj* in these cases.) Borghouts further points out that the occurrences he managed to collect all express some sort of appurtenance rather than possession, which suggests that the original rise of *pattern B* (the possessive construction mediated by  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon-$ ) might have been motivated on semantic grounds, but the distribution of the new pattern, finally, seems to have been highly regularized by syntactic factors and probably grammaticalized in this direction.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Apart from the observations made by Borghouts for colloquial Late Egyptian, *pattern B* seems to appear all of a sudden. As far as I can judge, no trace of it can be found either in the Old Coptic texts or in the otherwise innovative Medinet Madi corpus from the second century. Taking into account that for obvious semantic reasons *pattern B* is much less frequent even in the Sahidic texts, the absence of  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon-$  is still surprising in the Narmouthis ostraca, which are geographically associated with the Fayyum region. As it will be discussed below, early Fayyumic make a more extensive use of this morpheme than the Sahidic vernacular.

Regarding that, on a synchronic level, the choice between the two patterns in Sahidic is conditioned purely by syntactic factors, it would be more plausible to look for a scenario of reconstruction in which syntax has a decisive role. That is why I found extremely attractive the hypothesis of Leo Depuydt (2010b), who offers a purely syntactic analysis to account for the changes in the history of the Egyptian noun phrase.<sup>115</sup> According to his approach, the entire process began with the emergence of the possessive article in Late Egyptian replacing the original *noun + suffix pronoun* construction. As the possessive article necessarily entails the definiteness of the whole phrase, a new strategy was needed for the cases when the pronominal possessor has an indefinite noun as its possessee or a noun modified by a demonstrative. One of the new strategies for this configuration was to apply the preposition *mdj/mtw* to introduce the pronominal possessor. This strategy later spread over the patterns with nominal possessors as well, producing, at the end of this restructuring process, a completely split system in terms of the highly regularized distribution of possessive *Pattern A* and *B* in Coptic. In this new system, the choice between the two possessive constructions is driven by a quite basic rule: *Pattern A* is used in the case of simple definite possessed nouns, while *Pattern B* (the historically newer construction) is applied elsewhere, i.e. practically in all other cases, such as with indefinite or modified possessed nouns, and even with a possessed noun expanded by a demonstrative.

Ariel Shisha-Halevy (1986: 21) gathers together examples against the syntactically based distribution, which therefore need to be carefully examined if I intend to defend my claims. The majority of the apparent counterexamples fall under the *definite possessee*  $\bar{n}t\epsilon$ - *possessor* pattern, indicating nothing more than the fact, which I was already aware of, that the distribution is not complementary. That is to say, the relationship between the two patterns is not symmetrical: the possessed noun in *pattern A* is obligatorily definite and not compatible with any other determiner or modifier, but in *pattern B* simple determination is not excluded either. The *definite possessee*  $\bar{n}t\epsilon$ - *indefinite possessor* pattern of Shisha-Halevy does not serve as a counterexample either, since no constraints have been formulated with respect to the possessor's determination in the suggested distributional rule. Furthermore, on a closer inspection, the examples for the *indefinite*

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<sup>115</sup> The article of Leo Depuydt appeared in the 61<sup>st</sup> volume of *Revue d'Égyptologie* (2010) but I realized it only recently. When working on this chapter I used the unpublished manuscript version he kindly sent me before publishing.

*possessee*  $\bar{n}$ - *possessor* pattern all contain a lexicalised expression as their second constituent, such as  $\bar{n}$ - $\tau\epsilon\iota$ - $\zeta\epsilon$ / $\bar{n}$ - $\tau\epsilon\iota$ - $\mu\iota\eta\epsilon$  ‘such, of this sort’.

There is only one pattern, also attested by Ariel Shisha-Halevy, which might present a problem in my analysis, namely the *bare noun possessee*  $\bar{n}$ - *possessor* pattern. The noun phrase here remains undetermined contrary to the rule proposed above. Interestingly enough, the context in which this pattern arise at all (i.e. in predicative use) gives way to a great oscillation between the two linking elements,  $\bar{n}$ - and  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon$ -, an oscillation that cannot be observed elsewhere, which suggests that definiteness is somehow neutralized in this syntactic environment – as it was also proposed by Helmut Satzinger (1992: 77). Examples for this use will be provided below.

Viewing that the possessive construction is usually understood as definite, in many languages the article and the possessor expression mutually exclude each other, or else, the possessor expression occupies the same structural position that is otherwise filled by the definite article (cf. *Shenoute’s book*). Coptic presents a more peculiar kind from a typological point of view: it demands not only the obligatory (and simple) definiteness of the possessed noun in *pattern A*, but also a strict adjacency of the possessee and the possessor. These criteria evoke the ones established for the so-called *construct state* formation in certain languages; this idea however will be expanded in the next section.

Before moving ahead, the explanation that Chris Reintges provided in his recent textbook (2004: 94) for the distribution of the two patterns has to be discussed as well. In a syntactically-based approach, Chris Reintges claims that “the linkage marker  $n$ - is selected, when the possessed noun and the possessor agree in in/definiteness and consequently display the same type of determiner. (...) If there is a mismatch in definiteness, however, the competing marker  $n\tau\epsilon$  must be chosen instead”. This definition can be easily falsified by examples of type (76), in which the possessor is indefinite:

(76)  $n$ - $\beta\alpha\lambda$      $\bar{n}$ - $\omicron\gamma\lambda$      $\epsilon$ - $\alpha$ - $\gamma$ - $\chi\pi\omicron$ - $\tau$                        $\epsilon$ - $\tau$ - $\omicron$                        $\bar{n}$ - $\beta\bar{\alpha}\lambda\epsilon$     [John 9:32]  
 DEF.PL-eye    POSS-one    CIRC-PF-3PL-give.birth-3SG    CIRC-3SG-do.Q    PRED-blind  
 ‘the eyes of one who was born blind’

(77)  $\tau$ - $\mu\bar{n}\tau\mu\bar{n}\tau\mu\epsilon$      $\bar{n}$ - $\rho\omega\mu\epsilon$      $\tau\eta\alpha\gamma$                       [John 8:17]  
 DEF.SG.F-witness    POSS-man    two  
 ‘the witness of two men’

As I have previously pointed out, the choice between the linkers is absolutely indifferent to the form of the *possessor*: the second member of the construction can be indefinite, or modified in both patterns. Admittedly, nominal expressions of the type (76) may be

indefinite in a *semantic* sense. If the possessor is indefinite, the referent of the head-noun cannot necessarily be identified, but what we find in many languages is that in such cases the noun phrase as a whole is still marked morphosyntactically as definite. It seems to be, however, a privilege of the inalienable relationships. Only relational nouns can occur in such constructions, that is to say, only possessive constructions headed by a relational noun can be interpreted as indefinite and, at the same time, have a definite syntax (cf. the “relational weak definites” in Lucas (2011)).

With respect to the pronominal allomorph  $\bar{\eta}\tau\alpha=$ , Reintges claims that it “appears in a single context only, namely when an indefinite possessed noun is construed with a pronominal possessor”. This case was already exemplified in (75) in this section. However, this is not the single context in which  $\bar{\eta}\tau\alpha=$  is used. Demonstrative and possessive articles compete for the same structural position in Coptic, consequently, if the possessed noun has a demonstrative article, *pattern B* must be applied (78). Otherwise, an alternative, periphrastic structure may be used (79) where the *possessive article + noun* complex is followed by relative complementizer and an identificational nominal phrase.<sup>116</sup>

(78)  $\tau\epsilon\iota\text{-}\epsilon\zeta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\iota\alpha$        $\bar{\eta}\tau\epsilon\text{-}\tau\eta\gamma\tau\bar{\eta}$       [1 Cor 8:9]  
 DEM.SG.F-authority      POSS-2PL  
 ‘This liberty of yours’

(79)  $\eta\alpha\text{-}\psi\alpha\chi\epsilon$        $\epsilon\tau\epsilon$        $\eta\lambda\iota$        $\eta\epsilon$       [Matt 7:24]  
 POSSART.PL.1SG-word      REL      DEM.PL      COP.PL  
 ‘These words of mine’

As we already stated, *pattern A* requires the obligatory (and simple) definiteness of the possessed noun and a strict adjacency between the possessee and the possessor. *Pattern B*, which is historically the younger construction, appears in every other syntactic configuration. The relationship of the two patterns is, however, not symmetrical since simple definite head nouns are not excluded from *pattern B* either. Phrases such as (80) can easily be attested along with (81). The constraint therefore is unidirectional and only holds for *pattern A*.

(80)  $\pi\text{-}\bar{\rho}\rho\omicron$        $\bar{\eta}\tau\epsilon\text{-}\pi\text{-}\iota\varsigma\rho\alpha\eta\lambda$       [John 12:13]  
 DEF.SG.M-king      POSS-DEF.SG.M-Israel  
 ‘the king of Israel’

<sup>116</sup> The examples are taken from Layton (2000 §48 and §61, respectively) as the Barcelona Gospel has no data for the phenomena I intend to demonstrate. Glosses in the examples are mine.

- (81) **π-ῤ̄ρo**                      **Ὶ-π-ιcρaηλ**                      [John 1:49]  
 DEF.SG.M-king                      POSS-DEF.SG.M-Israel  
 ‘the king of Israel’

As I wanted to work with a carefully collected and relatively large number of data from the same corpus, which can provide the empirical basis of my research, and subsequently, as a further step, can be compared with manuscripts containing the same Gospel text, I decided to collect all of the occurrences of possessive constructions in the *Gospel of John* of P. Palau Ribes 183. First the collection itself will be provided in a chart, which will be followed by the statistics and the analysis of the distribution.

From the final form of the collection, I excluded data of the following types: **Ὶθϵ Ὶ-** ‘like’; noun + **Ὶτϵιμινϵ** ... ‘of this sort, such’ as these are lexicalized expression and not diagnostic for the syntactic rules discussed here. I also excluded the frequent expression to express “across/beyond” a certain water type (e.g. river, sea) because these too seem to be lexicalized compound propositions, which is reflected in the systematic use of the determiner **πi-** in these structures (**ϵπικρo Ὶ-** / **Ὶπικρo Ὶ-** / **ζῡπικρo Ὶ-** can be found in the following *loci*: 1:28, 3:26, 6:1, 6:17, 6:22, 6:25, 10:40).

Occasionally the cited possessive phrases have more than two members, and the linkage between the elements can even be different (as in 3:18) so these complex possessives have been counted as two. It must be noted that in the manuscript (as well as the other Gospel texts from the same collection)<sup>117</sup> before nouns starting with a semi-vowel in its consonantal value, only one syllabic **Ὶ-** is written out in cases where two are expected, for instance in combinations of possessive markers or prepositions with the plural definite article (**ῚῚ-**). This orthographic peculiarity affects all of the occurrences of the possessor phrase **Ὶ-ιογδαλi** (‘of the Jews’), which is quite frequent in the text. To avoid possible misunderstandings, I checked the relevant places in the more standardized version of Horner’s edition, and all the places turned out to be defectively written, which means that they can be safely used in my collection of possessive constructions. Finally, the possessive construction in (1:23) can also be interpreted as a dative.

<sup>117</sup> As it is noted by the editor of the texts (Quecke 1984: 54).

Table 15.

Possessive constructions in the Gospel of John P. Palau Ribes Inv 183.

Locus	P. Palau Rib. Inv. 183	Translation
1:5	ΠΟΥΟΙΝ ἸΡΡΩΜΕ	the light of the men
1:12	ΩΗΡΕ ἸΤΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ	children of God
1:13	ΠΟΥΩΩ ἸΡΡΩΜΕ	the wish of men
1:14	ΠΕΟΥ ἸΟΥΩΗΡΕ ἸΟΥΩΤ	the glory of an only son
1:18	ΚΟΥΝῆ ἸΠΕΦΕΙΩΤ	the bosom of his father
1:19	ΤΜἸΤΜἸΤΡΕ ἸΩΖΑΝΝΗC	the witness of Iohannes
1:23	ΤΕCΜΗ ἸΠΕΤΩΩ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙ ΠΧΑΙΕ	the voice of him who cries out in the desert
1:23	ΤΕΖΙΗ ἸΠΧΟΕΙC	the road of the Lord
1:27	ΠΜΟΥC ἸΠΕΦΤΟΥΕ	the latchet of his shoe
1:29	ΠΕΖΙΕΙΒ ἸΠΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the lamb of God
1:29	ΠΝΟΒΕ ἸΠΚΟCΜΟC	the sin of the world
1:34	ΠCΩΤΠ ἸΩΗΡΕ ἸΤΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the chosen Son of God
1:36	ΠΕΖΙΕΙΒ ἸΠΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the lamb of God
1:40	ΠCΟΝ ἸCΙΜΟΝ ΠΕΤΡΟC	the brother of Simon Petros
1:42	ΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΩΖΑΝΝΗC	the son of Iohannes
1:44	ΠΠΟΙC ἸΑΝΔΡΕΑC ἸΜ ΠΕΤΡΟC	the city of Andreas and Petros
1:45	ΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΩCΗΦ	the son of Ioseph
1:49	ΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΠΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the Son of God
1:49	ΠΡΡΟ ἸΠΙCΡΑΗΛ	the king of Israel
1:51	ΝΑΓΓΕΛΟC ἸΠΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the angels of God
1:51	ΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΠΡΩΜΕ	the Son of the man
2:1	ΚΑΝΑ ἸΤΓΑΛΙΛΑΙΑ	the Kana of Galilaia
2:1	ΤΜΑΛΥ ἸἸC	the mother of Jesus
2:3	ΤΜΑΛΥ ἸἸC	the mother of Jesus
2:6	ΠΤΒΒΟ ἸΠΟΥΔΑΙ	to the cleansing of the Jews
2:11	ΚΑΝΑ ἸΤΓΑΛΙΛΑΙΑ	Kana of Galilaia
2:13	ΠΠΑCΧΑ ἸΠΟΥΔΑΙ	the Paskha of the Jews
2:15	ΝΖΟΜἸΤ ἸΡΡΕΦΧΙΚΟΛΥΜΒΟΝ	the money of the changers
2:16	ΠΗΕΙ ἸΠΑΕΙΩΤ	the house of my father
2:17	ΠΚΩΖ ἸΠΕΚΗΕΙ	the zeal of thy house
2:21	ΠΕΡΠΕ ἸΠΕΦCΩΜΑ	the temple of his body
2:23	ΠΦΑ ἸΠΠΑCΧΑ	the feast of the Paskha
3:1	ΟΥΑΡΧΩΝ ἸΠΟΥΔΑΙ	a ruler of the Jews
3:3	ΤΜἸΤΕΡΟ ἸΠΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the kingdom of God
3:4	ΖΗΤC ἸΤΕΦΜΑΛΥ	the womb of his mother
3:5	ΤΜἸΤΕΡΟ ἸΠΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the kingdom of God
3:10	ΠCΑΖ ἸΠΙCΡΑΗΛ	the teacher of Israel
3:13	ΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΠΡΩΜΕ	the Son of the man
3:14	ΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΠΡΩΜΕ	the Son of the man
3:18	ΠΡΑΝ ἸΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΟΥΩΤ ἸΤΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the name of the only Son of God
3:22	ΠΚΑΖ ἸΤΟΥΔΑΙΑ	the land of Iudaia

3:25	ΜΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΝΙΩΖΑΝΝΗΣ	the disciples of Johannes
3:29	ΠΕΨΩΗΡ ΜΠΑΤΨΕΛΕΕΤ	the friend of the bridegroom
3:29	ΤΕΣΜΗ ΜΠΑΤΨΕΛΕΕΤ	the voice of the bridegroom
3:34	ΝΨΑΧΕ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the words of God
3:36	ΤΟΡΓΗ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the anger of God
4:5	ΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΤΕ ΤΣΑΜΑΡΙΑ	a city of Samaria
4:6	ΟΥΠΗΓΗ (...) ΝΤΕ ΙΑΚΩΒ	a fountain of Iakob
4:10	ΤΔΨΡΕΑ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the gift of God
4:34	ΠΟΥΨ ΜΠΕΝΤΑΨΤΑΟΥΟΕΙ	the wish of him who sent me
4:39	ΠΨΑΧΕ ΝΤΕΣΖΙΜΕ	the word of the woman
4:42	ΠΣΩΤΗΡ ΜΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ	the saviour of the world
4:46	ΚΑΝΑ ΝΤΓΑΛΙΛΑΙΑ	the Kana of Galilaia
5:1	ΠΨΑΑ ΝΙΟΥΔΑ	the feast of the Jews
5:25	ΤΕΣΜΗ ΜΠΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the voice of the Son of God
5:27	ΠΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ	the Son of the man
5:30	ΠΟΥΨ ΜΠΕΝΤΑΨΤΑΟΥΟΕΙ	the wish of him who sent me
5:37	ΣΜΗ ΝΤΑΨ	voice of his,
5:37	ΖΡΒ ΝΤΑΨ	shape of his
5:42	ΤΑΓΑΠΗ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the love of God
5:43	ΠΡΑΝ ΜΠΑΙΩΤ	the name of my father
5:44	...	<i>the glory of the One alone</i>
5:47	ΝΕΣΖΑΙ ΜΠΕΤΗΜΑΥ	the writings of that (one)
6:1	ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ ΝΤΓΑΛΙΛΑΙΑ ΝΤΙΒΕΡΙΑΣ	the sea of Galilaia of Tiberias
6:4	ΠΨΑ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	the feast of the Jews
6:8	ΠΣΟΝ ΝΣΙΜΟΝ ΠΕΤΡΟΣ	the brother of Simon Petros
6:22	ΜΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΝΙΣ	the disciples of Jesus
6:27	ΠΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ	the Son of the man
6:28	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the works of God
6:29	ΠΖΩΒ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the work of God
6:33	ΠΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the Son of God
6:35	ΠΟΕΙΚ ΜΠΩΝΖ	the bread of the life
6:38	ΠΟΥΨ ΜΠΕΝΤΑΨΤΑΟΥΟΕΙ	the wish of him who sent me
6:39	ΠΟΥΨ ΜΠΕΝΤΑΨΤΑΟΥΟΕΙ	the wish of him who sent me
6:40	ΠΟΥΨ ΜΠΑΙΩΤ	the wish of my Father
6:42	ΠΨΗΡΕ ΝΙΩΣΗΦ	the son of Ioseph
6:48	ΠΟΕΙΚ ΜΠΩΝΖ	the bread of the life
6:51	ΠΩΝΖ ΜΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ	the life of the world
6:53	ΤΣΑΡΖ ΜΠΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ	the flesh of the Son of the man
6:62	ΠΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ	the Son of the man
6:69	ΠΕΧΣ ΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΝΤΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ	the holy (one) of God
6:71	ΠΨΗΡΕ ΝΣΙΜΟΝ	the Son of Simon
7:2	ΠΨΑ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	the feast of the Jews
7:13	ΘΟΤΕ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	the fear of the Jews
7:14	ΤΜΗΤΕ ΜΠΨΑ	the midst of the feast
7:18	ΠΕΟΟΥ ΜΠΕΝΤΑΨΤΗΝΟΟΥΨ	the glory of him who sent him
7:23	ΠΝΟΜΟΣ ΝΜΨΥΣΗΣ	the law of Moyses
7:35	ΤΔΙΑΣΠΟΡΑ ΝΝΖΕΛΛΗΝ	the dispersion of the Greeks
7:37	ΠΖΑΕ ΝΖΟΟΥ ΝΟΒ ΝΤΕ ΠΨΑ	the last great day of the feast

7:42	ΠΕΣΠΕΡΜΑ ΝΔΑΥΕΙΔ	the seed of David
8:12	ΠΟΥΟΙΝ ΜΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ	the light of the world
8:12	ΠΟΥΟΙΝ ΜΠΩΝΖ	the light of the life
8:17	ΤΜΝΤΜΝΤΡΕ ΝΡΩΜΕ ΣΝΑΥ	the witness of two men
8:28	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ	the Son of the man
8:33	ΠΕΣΠΕΡΜΑ ΝΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ	the seed of Abraham
8:34	ΖΜΖΑΛ ΜΠΙΝΟΒΕ	servant of sin
8:37	ΠΕΣΠΕΡΜΑ ΝΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ	the seed of Abraham
8:39	ΝΩΗΡΕ ΝΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ	the sons of Abraham
8:39	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ΝΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ	the works of Abraham
8:41	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ΜΠΕΤΝΕΙΩΤ	the works of your father
8:44	ΝΕΠΠΟΥΜΙΑ ΜΠΕΤΝΕΙΩΤ	the lusts of your father
8:47	ΝΨΑΧΕ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ	the words of God
9:3	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ	the works of God
9:4	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ΜΠΕΝΤΑΪΤΑΟΥΟΕΙ	the works of him who sent me
9:5	ΠΟΥΟΙΝ ΜΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ	the light of the world
9:7	ΤΚΟΛΥΜΒΗΘΡΑ ΜΠΣΙΛΩΑΜ	the pool of Siloham
9:18	ΝΕΙΟΤΕ ΜΠΕΝΤΑΪΝΑΥ ΕΒΟΛ	the parents of him who saw
9:28	ΠΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΜΠΕΤΝΗΜΑΥ	the disciple of that (one)
9:28	ΜΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΜΜΩΥΣΗΣ	the disciples of Moses
9:32	ΝΒΑΛ ΝΟΥΑ ΕΛΥΧΠΟΪ ΕΦΟ ΝΒΛΛΕ	the eyes of one who was born blind
9:35	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ	the Son of the man
10:1	ΠΟΖΕ ΝΝΕΣΟΟΥ	the fold of the sheep
10:2	ΠΩΦΣ ΝΝΕΣΟΟΥ	the shepherd of the sheep
10:5	ΤΕΣΜΗ ΝΝΩΜΜΟ	the voice of the strangers
10:7	ΠΩΦΣ ΝΝΕΣΟΟΥ	the shepherd of the sheep
10:21	ΝΒΒΑΛ ΝΒΒΛΛΕ	the eyes of the blinds
10:23	ΤΕΣΤΟΑ ΝΣΟΛΟΜΩΝ	the porch of Solomon
10:25	ΠΡΑΝ ΜΠΑΕΙΩΤ	the name of my Father
10:29	ΤΟΙΧ ΜΠΑΙΩΤ	the hand of my father
10:35	ΠΨΑΧΕ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ	the word of God
10:36	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ	the Son of God
10:37	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ΜΠΑΕΙΩΤ	the works of my father
11:1	ΠΤΜΕ ΜΜΑΡΙΑ ΝΗ ΜΑΡΘΑ	the town of Maria and Martha
11:4	ΠΕΟΟΥ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ	the glory of God
11:9	ΠΟΥΟΙΝ ΜΠΕΙΚΟΣΜΟΣ	the light of this world
11:13	ΠΕΝΚΟΤΚ ΜΠΩΒΨ	the sleep of unconsciousness
11:27	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ	the Son of God
11:37	ΝΒΒΑΛ ΜΠΒΛΛΕ	the eyes of the blind
11:39	ΤΣΩΝΕ ΜΠΕΝΤΑΪΜΟΥ	the sister of the dead
11:40	ΠΕΟΟΥ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ	the glory of God
11:52	ΝΩΗΡΕ ΝΤΕΠΠΟΥΤΕ	the sons of God
11:55	ΠΠΑΣΧΑ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	the Paskha of the Jews
12:3	ΝΟΥΕΡΗΤΕ ΝΙΣ	the feet of Jesus
12:3	ΠΨΩ ΝΤΕΣΑΠΕ	the hair of her head
12:3	ΠΕΣΤΟΙ ΜΠΣΟΒΝ	the odour of the ointment
12:7	ΠΕΖΟΥ ΝΤΑΚΑΕΙΣΕ	the day of my embalming
12:13	ΠΡΑΝ ΜΠΧΟΕΙΣ	the name of the Lord

12:13	πῤῥο ἄτε πικραῆ	the king of Israel
12:15	τῳεερε ἄσιων	the daughter of Sion
12:21	βηδσαιδα ἄτγαλιλαια	Bethsaida of Galilee
12:23	πῳηρε ἄπρωμε	the son of the man
12:31	τεκρισις ἄπεικοσμος	the judgment of this word
12:31	παρχων ἄπεικοσμος	the ruler of this word
12:34	πῳηρε ἄπρωμε	the son of the man
12:36	ῳηρε ἄτε ποῶιν	son(s) of the light
12:38	πῳαχε ἄησαιας	the word of Esaias
12:38	πεβοει ἄπχοεις	the arm of the lord
12:41	πεοοῦ ἄπνοῦτε	the glory of God
12:43	πεοοῦ ἄπρωμε	the glory of the men
12:43	πεοοῦ ἄπρωμε	the glory of God
13:1	πῳα ἄππασχα	the feast of the Paskha
13:2	πῳητ ἄιουδας	the heart of Judas
13:2	πῳηρε ἄσιμον	the son of Simon
13:5	ἄοῦερητε ἄμμάθητῃς	the feet of the disciples
13:14	ρατοῦ ἄνετνερηῦ	the feet of each other
13:23	κοῦνῳ ἄις	the bosom of Jesus
13:25	τμεσῳητ ἄις	the breast of Jesus
13:26	πῳηρε ἄσιμον	the son of Simon
13:31	πῳηρε ἄπρωμε	the son of the man
14:2	πῳη ἄπαιῳτ	the house of my father
14:17	πεπῳα ἄτμε	the spirit of the truth
14:30	παρχων ἄπεικοσμος	the ruler of this world
15:10	νετολη ἄπαιῳτ	the commands of my father
15:26	πεπῳα ἄτμε	the spirit of the truth
16:11	παρχων ἄπεικοσμος	the ruler of this world
16:13	πεπῳα ἄτμε	the spirit of the truth
17:2	τεζοῦσια ἄσαρξ ἄνιμ	the authority over (lit. of) all flesh
17:12	πῳηρε ἄπτακο	the son of the perdition
17:24	τκαταβολη ἄπκοσμος	the foundation of the world
18:1	επικρο ἄπχιμαρος ἄπκεδρος	across the torrent of the Cedar
18:10	πῳμῳα ἄπαρχιερεῦς	the servant of the chief priest
18:10	πραν ἄπῳμῳα	the name of the servant
18:12	ἄζῳπηρετῃς ἄιουδαι	the officers of the Jews
18:13	πῳομητ ἄκαϊφας	the father-in-law of Kaiphas
18:15	ταῦλη ἄπαρχιερεῦς	the court of the chief priest
18:17	ἄμμάθητῃς ἄπειρωμε	the disciples of this man
18:26	ἄζῳμῳα ἄπαρχιερεῦς	the servants of the chief priest
18:26	οῦςῳγγενῃς ἄπενταπετρος σαππερμααχε	a kinsman of him whose ear Petros cut off
18:33	πῤῥο ἄιουδαι	the king of the Jews
18:39	πῤῥο ἄιουδαι	the king of the Jews
19:3	πῤῥο ἄιουδαι	the king of the Jews
19:7	ῳηρε ἄτε πνοῦτε	son of God
19:12	πεῳβηρ ἄπῤῥο	the friend of the king
19:14	τπαρασκεῦη ἄππασχα	the preparation of the Paskha
19:19	πῤῥο ἄιουδαι	the king of the Jews

19:21	ΝΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥΣ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	the chief priests of the Jews
19:21	ΠΡΡΟ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	the king of the Jews
19:21	ΠΡΡΟ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	the king of the Jews
19:25	ΠΕΣΦΟΣ ΝΙΣ	the cross of Jesus
19:25	ΤΣΩΝΕ ΝΤΕΦΜΑΥ	the sister of his mother
19:25	ΤΦΕΡΕ ΝΚΛΩΠΑ	the daughter of Klōpa
19:31	ΠΕΖΟΥ ΜΠΣΑΒΒΑΤΟΝ ΕΤΜΜΑΥ	the day of that sabbath
19:32	ΝΟΥΕΡΗΤΕ ΜΠΦΟΡΤΙ ΝΜ ΠΚΕΟΥΑ	the feet of the first and the other
19:38	ΟΥΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΝΤΕ ΙΣ	a disciple of Jesus
19:38	ΘΟΤΕ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	the fear from (lit. of) the Jews
19:38	ΠΣΩΜΑ ΝΙΣ	the body of Jesus
19:40	ΠΣΩΜΑ ΝΙΣ	the body of Jesus
19:40	ΠΣΩΝΤ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	the custom of the Jews
19:42	ΤΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	the preparation of the Jews
20:12	ΠΣΩΜΑ ΝΙΣ	the body of Jesus
20:19	ΘΟΤΕ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	the fear from (lit. of) the Jews
20:25	ΝΕΨ ΝΕΙQT	the prints of the nails
20:31	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ	the Son of God
21:1	ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ ΝΤΙΒΕΡΙΑΣ	the sea of Tiberias
21:2	ΚΑΝΑ ΝΤΓΑΛΙΛΑΙΑ	Kana of Galilaia
21:2	ΝΩΗΡΕ ΝΖΕΒΕΔΑΙΟΣ	the sons of Zebedaios
21:8	ΠΕΦΝΕ ΝΝΤΕΤ	the net of the fishes
21:15	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΙΩΖΑΝΝΗΣ	the son of Johannes
21:16	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΙΩΖΑΝΝΗΣ	the son of Johannes
21:17	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΙΩΖΑΝΝΗΣ	the son of Johannes
21:20	ΤΕΦΜΕΣΤΖΗΤ ΝΙΣ	the breast of Jesus

The text has 215 possessive constructions overall, out of which 199 can be characterized as *pattern A*, while the remainder 16 occurrences correspond to *pattern B*.<sup>118</sup>

Table 16

*Proportion of the possessive constructions in the Gospel of John of PPalau Ribes 183.*

Possessive constructions in the corpus	215
Pattern A	199
Pattern B	16
Proportion of <i>Pattern B</i> in the text	7,4%

The proportion of the constructions that belong to *pattern B* is observably moderate (7,4%). However, this result is not so surprising considering the fact that from a semantic point of view prototypical possessives appear in *pattern A*. The number of their

<sup>118</sup> It would be more adequate to value these data in the knowledge of the number of tokens in the text (or proportioned to the number of noun phrases in general), but without digitized text corpora, this kind of statistics can hardly be provided. I made the survey twice to get as precise data as possible, but I have to admit that one or two cases might have escaped my eye.

occurrences is sensibly much higher. Out of the 16 hits for *pattern B*, two belong to the type illustrated in (80) above,<sup>119</sup> thus in reality there are only twelve such syntactic environments in the text in which the use of *pattern B* is grammatically motivated. These environments are the followings:

i.) The possessed noun is indefinite / non-definite:

- (82) **ΟΥ-ΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΤΕ Τ-ΣΑΜΑΡΙΑ** [John 4:5]  
 INDF-city POSS DEF.SG.F-Samaria  
 ‘a city of Samaria’ (8)
- (83) **ΝΕ-ΥΝ ΟΥ-ΠΗΓΗ ΔΕ ΞΜΑΥ ΝΤΕ ΙΑΚΩΒ** [John 4:6]  
 IMPF-EXIST INDF-fountain PRT there POSS Jacob  
 ‘there was a fountain there of Jacob’
- (84) **ΟΥ-ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΝΤΕ ΙΪ** [John 19:38]  
 INDF-disciple POSS Jesus  
 ‘a disciple of Jesus’
- (85) **ΟΥΤΕ ΞΠΕ-ΤΝ-ΣΩΤΗ Ε-ΣΜΗ ΝΤΑ-Ϛ ΕΝΕΖ**  
 neither NEG.PF-2PL-hear to-voice POSS-3SG.M ever  
**ΟΥΤΕ ΞΠΕ-ΤΝ-ΝΑΥ Ε-ΖΡΒ ΝΤΑ-Ϛ** [John 5:37]  
 neither NEG.PF-2PL-see to-shape POSS-3SG.M  
 ‘Neither heard ye ever voice of his, nor did ye see shape of his’

ii.) The possessed noun is modified; adjacency broken

- (86) **Π-ΣΩΤΤ Ν-ΩΗΡΕ ΝΤΕ Π-ΝΟΥΤΕ** [John 1:34]  
 DEF.SG.M-chosen ATTR-son POSS DEF.SG.M-god  
 ‘the chosen Son of God’
- (87) **Π-ΡΑΝ ΞΠ-ΩΗΡΕ Ν-ΟΥΩΤ ΝΤΕ Π-ΝΟΥΤΕ** [John 3:18]  
 DEF.SG.M-name POSS-DEF.SG.M-son ATTR-single POSS DEF.SG.M-god  
 ‘the name of the only Son of God’
- (88) **ΠΕ-Χ̄C ΕΤ-ΟΥΑΑΒ ΝΤΕ Π-ΝΟΥΤΕ** [John 6:69]  
 DEF.SG.M-Christ REL-pure.Q POSS DEF.SG.M-god  
 ‘the holy Christ of God’
- (89) **Π-ΖΑΕ Ν-ΖΟΥΥ ΝΟC ΝΤΕ ΠΩΑ** [John 7:37]  
 DEF.SG.M-last ATTR-day large POSS DEF.SG.M-feast  
 ‘the last great day of the feast’<sup>120</sup>

<sup>119</sup> The other occurrence is at John (11:52): **ΝΩΗΡΕ ΝΤΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ** ‘the sons of God’.

<sup>120</sup> NB. The Sahidic version in Horner’s edition has a linking element before **ΝΟC** ‘large’ as well.



Nevertheless, there are also two *loci* (see (94) and (95)) where the text escapes the rules established for the syntactic distribution of the patterns, and an indefinite noun appears in both cases as the head of a *pattern A* construction:

- (94) **ΟΥ-ΣΥΓΓΕΝΗΣ** **Ἰ-Π-ΕΝΤΑ-ΠΕΤΡΟΣ** **καῖ-ΠΕΦΜΑΑΧΕ** [John 18:26]  
 INDF.SG-kinsman POSS-DEF.SG.M-REL.PF-Petros cut-POSSART.SG.M.3SG.M-ear  
 ‘a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off’

Interestingly, although Horner’s version uses **ἸΤΕ** in this place, the Lycopolitan *Gospel of John* (see below) also uses this “irregular” construction.

- (95) **ΟΥ-ΑΡΧΩΝ** **Ἰ-ΙΟΥΔΑΙ** [John 3:1]  
 INDF.SG-leader POSS-DEF.SG.M-Jew  
 ‘a leader of the Jews’

As in the preceding case, the Lycopolitan *Gospel of John* agrees here with the Sahidic version. What is more, so does the later collection in Horner’s edition. Both perform two syllabic nasals (**ἸἸ-ΙΟΥΔΑΙ**), which excludes the attributive interpretation of the structure. It might be, however, a partitive (‘a leader from the Jews’).

As for the direct adjacency of the members in *pattern A*, it must be noted that some elements can seemingly break the close connection between them. This intervention is, however, virtual: all the elements in question are enclitic function words or discourse particles, which do not break the grammatical juncture within the noun phrase, but rather obey to post-lexical phonological rules that positions them in the second place of the sentence, more precisely after the first phonological word. They cliticize to the first element of the clause that has an accent of its own, from the right, whatever the category or function of this element might be. If this element happens to be the first member of a possessive construction, then the clitic virtually intersect the sequence of the possessed noun and the possessor, but as this operation is post-syntactic phonological adjustment it does not affect the inner structure of the noun phrase.

- (96) **ΝΕ Π-ΡΑΝ** **ΔΕ Μ-Π-ΣῪΖΑΛ** **ΠΕ ΜΑΛΧΟΣ** [John 18:10]  
 IMPF DEF.SG.M-name PRT POSS-DEF.SG.M-servant COP Malkhos  
 ‘The name of the servant was Malkhos’

- (97) **Α-Υ-ΜΕΡΕ** **Π-ΕΘΟΥ** **ΓΑΡ Ἰ-Ἰ-ΡΩΜΕ** [John 12:42]  
 PF-3PL-love DEF.SG.M-glory PRT POSS-DEF.PL-man  
 ‘For they loved the glory of the men’

In (97) the particle **Ⲅⲁⲡ** appears to be quite behind in the line of words, but still it occupies the second position: the verb for ‘love’ is in *status constructus* and it forms a single prosodic unit with the object, more precisely with the first member of the possessive construction that functions as the object of the clause. (The reader must not be misled by the artificial word separation of modern typesetting.) Considering the total number of the possessive structures, this phenomenon (i.e. the concurrence of second place particles with *Pattern A* type possessives) turns out to be rather infrequent since subjects in the translated Bible text often appear right-dislocated by means of **ⲛⲓ**. The other possible noun phrase positions in the sentence are that of the object or the complement of a preposition, which are always more to the right.

Last but not least, a special subtype of *pattern A* must be mentioned and explained. With a closed set of lexemes, the nouns occurring in the construction seem to be doubly possessed as they are endowed with both a suffix attached to them and a nominal possessor expression introduced by **ⲛ-** (98). Suffixes normally are not used in this function for the time of Coptic since possessive articles took over their role from Late Egyptian onward. The lexemes in question are exceptional having survived in their bound morph variants only. (Out of the twenty nouns listed in Layton (2000: §138), ten preserved both a pronominal and a pre-pronominal form. Some of them are mainly used to build complex prepositional expressions). These irregular remnants are all *relational nouns* (e.g. body parts) which means that they are necessarily related to another entity and as such hardly appear without a possessor. This property of them, *viz.* they were hardly ever used in an absolute state, can be the reason that they survived in this special form. These lexemes were also discussed with respect to determination (in section 3.2.2) in that the suffixed head noun never get an article. (Similar constructions can be found at John 1:18, 13:14 and 13:23)

(98) **ⲉ-Ⲓⲏⲧ-Ⲙ**      **ⲛ-ⲧⲉⲓ-ⲛⲁⲁⲓ**      [John 3:4]  
to-womb-3SG.F    POSS-POSSART.SG.F.3SG.M -mother  
‘to the womb of his mother’

The phrase cited in (99) is a hybrid formation: the head noun can take an article, as it is also shown by the fact that instead of a remnant possessive suffix, a regular possessive article is used, which is, however, redundant here. This construction might have been created on the analogy of the type in (98).

(99) **TEQ-MECT2HT**                      **Ḳ-iḲ**  
POSSART.SG.F.3SG.M-breast    POSS-Jesus  
'the breast of Jesus'

[John 21:20]

## 4.2 Aspects of obligatory definiteness

In the following part of this chapter I intend to examine whether this particular distribution between *pattern A* and *pattern B* in Coptic had any historical precedent – even if not in a formal but in a functional sense. As I already mentioned the constraints that condition the use of *pattern A* (the obligatory definiteness and the direct adjacency) are reminiscent of the ones required to form the so called *status constructus* in certain languages, and the existence of a construction of this kind has also been proposed for the early history of the Egyptian language. After a brief survey of what the term *status constructus* covers in linguistics, the following section deal with the possessive constructions in the language stages preceding Coptic with the aim of exploring their distributional and formal properties as compared to Coptic.

### 4.2.1 The construct state phenomenon

The term *status constructus* or *construct state* was originally introduced in Semitic linguistics. Practically, the term refers to the special form of the first member in a possessive construction as opposed to the absolute state or absolute use of the same noun.<sup>121</sup> The possessive construction is realized by the juxtaposition of two or more nouns in a sequence on the one hand, and by the altered state of the possessed noun on the other. The juxtaposition does not necessarily cause the morphophonological alteration of the possessee, which is, however, the case in Hebrew: the two parts of construct chain become closely linked with respect to the accentuation as well. The main stress shifts to the *nomen rectum*, and the *nomen regens* becomes proclitic. As a consequence of this deaccentuation (the loss of stress), the *rectum* often undergoes other morphophonological changes, especially vowel shortening or vowel reduction (McCarter 2004: 338). A similar

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<sup>121</sup> There are synthetic and analytic types of possessive constructions according to the degree of morphosyntactic bondedness of the construction markers. Within the synthetic type there are more techniques: head-marking, dependent-marking or double-marking (with the construct state constructions evidently falling within the first group). For this typological classification and further structural types of possessive noun phrase, see Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2001: 961-963).

construction can be found in classical Arabic, though the possessed noun is not subject to such a radical change in form. The rule of strict adjacency, however, holds true since any modifier, referring to either of the nouns, must follow the construction as a whole. (Cf. Wright 1951<sup>3</sup>:198-234) In both languages, as a general rule, the first member (the possessed noun in the construct state) cannot have a definite article or any determiner, but the presence of the possessive expression implies the obligatory definiteness of the head noun.

The incompatibility of the article and the possessive expression, which has been demonstrated in several languages, may have a functional explanation: as it has already been pointed out, possessors are able to serve as an anchoring device, a reference point for the head noun. In other words, the referent of a noun can be identified via its relation to the referent of its possessor. Thus the marking of definiteness in the presence of a possessor expression is to some extent redundant, and economic motivations may result in the complementarity of article and possessor in certain languages (cf. Haspelmath (1999) for a typological perspective). In Coptic, the definite article on the head noun and the possessive expression are not incompatible, but it is only the article encoding simple definiteness that can appear in *pattern A* as a default exponent of definiteness. The strict adjacency also holds in Coptic, although without causing the morphophonological alteration of the possessed noun. Nevertheless, traces of an earlier construction that did have inner morphological changes as well can be clearly detected, so going back in time to earlier language stages might be enlightening in our understanding of the Coptic phenomena.

#### 4.2.2 The direct and indirect genitive constructions of Earlier Egyptian

Construct state, as far as I know, has never been associated with the Coptic *pattern A*, but is often used for compounds such as ⲒⲠⲙⲓϥ ‘birthday’ and for their presumed predecessor, the direct genitive construction of Earlier Egyptian.

In the earliest documented stages, in Old and Middle Egyptian, there were two types of possessive constructions. In the so called direct genitive construction, the possessor follows the possessed noun directly, without any linking element, and the term *construct state* is generally used for this pattern by Egyptologists. In the indirect genitive construction, the two members are connected by a so-called *genitival adjective* that agrees

with the head noun in number and gender (Gardiner 1957: 65-66, §85-86; Callendar 1975: 66. §4.2.7). Pronominal possessors are expressed by a series of suffix pronouns.

The distribution of the two patterns is far from being understood. According to Gardiner (1957: 65), direct genitive construction was usual “wherever the connexion between governing and governed noun is particularly close, as in titles, set phrases, etc.” In these cases, an attribute modifying the possessed noun normally follows the whole construction, as it can be observed in (100), where the adjective belongs to the head noun, or to the noun phrase as a whole, rather than to the second member (‘house’) of the construction:

(100) *jmj-r pr wr* [Peas. B 1,47]<sup>122</sup>  
 overseer house great  
 ‘great overseer of the house’

If an element interrupts the sequence of the head noun and the related possessor expression, the indirect construction must be used (Gardiner 1957: 66). This may be observed in (101), where the second person singular suffix pronoun intervenes, and, instead of the direct genitive that requires strict adjacency, the less restricted pattern, the indirect genitive, is used.

(101) *jmjw-r=k nw rwy.t* [Ptahhotep 442. L1]  
 overseer.PL-2SG.M POSS.PL portal  
 ‘your overseers of the portal’

The productivity of the construct state-like direct genitive pattern is highly questionable – as also hinted at in Gardiner’s above-cited definition. Wolfgang Schenkel (1991: 122) believes the pattern is partially productive, and so does Ariel Shisha-Halevy (2007b: 239). The latter considers the unmediated nominal expansion as mainly compounding, which “are often, but certainly not always, terminological, phraseological or idiomatic”. John B. Callendar (1975: 66; §4.2.7) suggests that in Middle Egyptian the direct genitive is no longer productive and “seems best to be considered as compounding rather than a genuine genitive construction”. Antonio Loprieno (1995: 57) claims that direct genitive was still a productive device in classical Egyptian, admitting that it was “not as frequent as in Akkadian, Hebrew or Arabic, and tended to be replaced by the analytic construction with

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<sup>122</sup> Pre-Coptic data are usually cited from secondary literature, so the sources of the examples are to be checked at the authors to whom I referred. In case of examples from my own collection, reference to text editions is specified of course.

the determinative pronoun *n(j)*” (which is the term he uses for the *genitival adjective*). It should be noted, however, that the trial for productivity is not necessarily frequency. It would be definitely more adequate to find out and formulate the rules that condition the distribution between the two patterns. For a better understanding, it seems reasonable to go back to the earliest occurrences of such constructions in order to see whether productivity can be justified. Elmar Edel (1955-64: §§318-319), unconvinced of the existence of such a general rule, summarizes and evaluates the previous attempts as to formulate one with respect to the distribution between direct and indirect genitive constructions in Old Egyptian: Sander-Hansen’s (1936) statistic investigation into the corpus of Pyramid Texts resulted in a kind of accent-rule: direct genitive construction is preferred when the last syllable of the *nomen regens* is unaccented. According to Hermann Junker (1938: 94), the direct genitive must be used when the *regens* owns the *rectum* as in *nb pr* ‘the lord of the house’, i.e. ‘the lord who owns the house’, otherwise a free variation can be observed. Elmar Edel, however, presents several counterexamples against both analyses. He also notes (1955-64: §324) that direct genitive is preferred with body parts in plural and dual. (In spell 539 of the Pyramid Texts, direct genitive occurs ten times with duals/plurals, and indirect genitive is used ten times with body-part nouns in singular). This observation is challenges Shihsa-Halevy’s claim (2007b: 239), according to which “plurality practically selects the mediated construction, and reduces inalienability”.

Abd el-Mohsen Bakir (1966: 36), making a comparison between Egyptian and Arabic, claims that the head noun of an indirect construction must always be regarded undefined. In reality, the indirect genitive was used with indefinite possessors because these are *ab ovo* excluded from construct state-like direct genitive constructions. It does not follow, however, that the possessor of an indirect construction could not be definite at all. Frank Kammerzell (2000: 102) suggests an opposition, according to which head marking was used for expressing the inalienable possession, whereas dependent marking (*nj*-marked possessives) for the alienable one. While alienability split will play a major role in Later Egyptian, evidence from Middle Egyptian is not conclusive: there are several instances of direct genitive constructions where the relation of the two members is obviously not inalienable.

In his outstanding paper (2000), Karl Jansen-Winkeln critically analyzes the previous approaches – including the above-mentioned ones – concerning the distribution and difference in meaning between the two genitives. He points out that the most acceptable contribution to this question is that of Schenkel’s (1962) who argues that the unity of the

*rectum* and *regens* is faster in the direct genitive than in the indirect one, and this fastness is basically influenced by the lexical meaning of the head noun (Jansen-Winkel 2000: 31). Syntactically speaking, only those cases can be listed in which the direct genitive *should not be used*, and the indirect genitive is obligatory; otherwise they seem to be free variants. The only restriction that can be stipulated is that the lexeme-type (e.g. nouns denoting body parts) and the form (e.g. monosyllabic masculine nouns) may have influenced the choice between the two constructions. Jansen-Winkel (2000: 29) has come to the conclusion that in Old and Middle Egyptian the direct genitive was not a mere compound but a free operation of combining words, admitting that in several individual cases the given construction had become lexicalized as a compound noun.

In support of his view, it is worth considering that the (partial) productivity of the direct genitive construction in the earliest documented language stages does not necessarily exclude the claim that such constructions were no longer the outcomes of a true *syntactic* process. It might also be supposed that direct genitive was a morphological process, *viz.* a productive pattern of lexical compounding. Morphological operations of this sort can be productive and, at the same time, optional (cf. “the handle of the door” vs. “the door-handle”).

Even though the discussion so far could not conclude with certainty whether the direct genitive construction was still a syntactic operation in classical times, the question may be raised from another point of view: can the direct genitive construction be equated with the *construct state* pattern in a formal sense? The strict adjacency is obvious, thus the other two criteria, namely the obligatory definiteness and the stem alteration should be examined.

Unfortunately, there is little to elaborate on the morphological properties of a possible *construct state* in lack of vocalization before Coptic times. As noted by Gardiner (1957: §85 OBS), the direct genitival relation in Middle Egyptian led to the loss of accent and vowel reduction in the first of the two members, which left no trace in hieroglyphic writing, but is still visible in Coptic compounds (102) :

(102) ⲉⲓⲱⲗⲉ ‘field’ ~ ⲉⲓⲉⲗ-ⲉⲗⲟⲟⲗⲉ ‘vineyard’ (< field of vines)

Evidence from Coptic is always taken for granted, even if one has to skip two thousand years of language history to get relevant data. Nevertheless, the majority of grammars presume the morphological change of the possessed noun in earlier language stages (cf.





## II. The pattern A p3 B

This is the pattern that resembles the most a productive *construct state* formation, as both the linking element *n-* and the definite article on the head noun are missing.

- (105) 𓄏.wy p3 ntr [LRL 1,8. Černý – Groll (1978: 75) Ex 229.]  
hand.DU DEF.SG.M god  
'God's hands'

In these constructions, however, only a well-defined closed set of nouns occurs, which are practically the same nouns that still co-occur with pronominal suffixes, contrary to the standard Late Egyptian grammatical standard that makes use of possessive articles. These nouns are characterized in Late Egyptian text-books as *nouns that cannot take an article*. In Friedrich Junge's description (Junge 1996: §2.1.3(2)), these are designations for inalienable objects ("Bezeichnungen unveräußerlicher Gegenstände"), such as body parts, terms related to persons (e.g. name, condition), kinship terms, certain topographic designations, etc. A shrinking subset of these nouns behaves likewise in Demotic and Coptic (Simpson 1996, 81-82; Till 1961: §188; Layton 2000: §138.). So these nouns are unable to take an article, but they are probably better to be characterized as lexically marked for forming *status constructus* (or *pronominalis*) with their possessor, instead of undergoing the productive analytic operation.

If the Egyptian construct state was similar to the Semitic one the absence of article may be accounted for in a natural way. The false impression that it is the head noun itself that does not tolerate the article rather than the whole construction as a whole follows from the fact that these nouns never appear independently outside the possessive. They are *relational nouns*, i.e. they usually require an additional argument, a possessor expression, to be related to. It is this semantic (and consequently syntactic) boundness that made them be conserved and become irregular remnant in later Egyptian. Leo Depuydt also pointed out (1999: 281-282) that the resistance to the analytic constructions on behalf of nouns denoting body parts and a few other inalienables may be due to fact that nouns denoting body parts are frequently used, and, at the same time, they are often used with suffix pronouns. He also examined the strange "split" genitives in Demotic and Coptic, in which synthetic and analytic designs co-occur, and explained the data by the conflicting forces of the analytic shift and the resistance by the surviving synthetic forms to analysis. As a result, when construct state formation definitively disappeared as a productive mechanism, the absolute forms of this range of resistant nouns were no longer available, which gave



Egyptian, and the construction was gradually replaced by the analytic pattern of the indirect genitive. What is really interesting to see is that the Coptic *pattern A*, which is the successor of the analytic type formally, functionally got reduced to the syntactic environments in which the possessed noun must be definite and strictly adjacent to its possessor, This distribution is strikingly similar to the supposed distribution of the earlier direct genitive construction. For the cases where these requirements are not met, an alternative structure emerged involving the prepositional phrase  $\bar{\text{N}}\text{T}\epsilon\text{-}/\bar{\text{N}}\text{T}\lambda\text{-}$  (*Pattern B*). Again, we are extremely fortunate to know Egyptian, i.e. a language documented through millennia, and thus able to follow such an interesting linguistic cycle: a formal and functional opposition first neutralized, quasi disappeared, and later functionally re-emerged in the distribution of the two Coptic possessive patterns. Furthermore, in the northern dialectal varieties of the language, the equivalent of *pattern A* began to decline again, at least became far more restricted in its usage, bringing about an alienability split within the possessive system along the same lines with what was observed in the earlier stages.<sup>125</sup>

### **4.3 Possessive constructions in the early Coptic dialects – a comparative study**

All Coptic dialects have two possessive constructions, but on a closer inspection their distributional properties seem to vary. Just to illustrate how drastic difference there might be, the proportion of the linking element  $\text{N}\text{T}\epsilon\text{-}$  within the possessive constructions is 7,4 % in Sahidic, while it is 76,4 % in Bohairic if we compare two early text versions, the translations of the *Gospel of John*. The divergence can be due to the fact that rules behind the distribution are basically different. In Sahidic, distribution of possessive constructions is purely syntactically motivated while in Bohairic semantic and lexical features also influence the choice between the patterns as it is the case in the system of determination (see chapter 3). In the comparative study that follows the possessive structures of early biblical manuscripts from various literary dialects will be examined mostly based on empirical research but also taking into consideration the observations already present in the literature.

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<sup>125</sup> The topic discussed in section 4.2 was published in a paper of mine in *ZÄS* (2010). For a proposal on how to formalize the derivation of Coptic possessive constructions in a generative framework, see an earlier paper (Egedi 2005).

How would such an investigation begin if not by opening Walter Till's manual on dialectal grammar with the promising title *Koptische Dialektgrammatik* (1931)? The topic of possessive construction ('Genitivverbindung' §21) is summarized in about a page. According to this survey, the linking element in such constructions is normally  $\bar{\mathfrak{n}}$ -, the other linking morpheme  $\bar{\mathfrak{n}}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{e}$ - being quite frequent in Bohairic and Fayyumic. In the second edition of the same book (1961: §77)  $\bar{\mathfrak{n}}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{e}$ - is claimed to be frequent in the Subakhmimic dialect as well. This latter assumption is surprising, since the author rightly observes (already in the first edition) that, in Sahidic and Subakhmimic,  $\bar{\mathfrak{n}}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{e}$ - occurs in well-defined cases only: if the *regens* has an indefinite article or is divided from the *rectum* by another expression – as he words it. As regards Akhmimic, he reports that  $\bar{\mathfrak{n}}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{e}$ - appears only in isolated cases. There is, however, a third linking element ( $\mathfrak{t}\bar{\mathfrak{n}}$ -) in this dialect, which seems to be specific to this variety only. It is not too frequent but its distribution is similar to that of  $\bar{\mathfrak{n}}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{e}$ - in Sahidic and Subakhmimic (interestingly, it is only mentioned in the first edition). The *Koptische Dialektgrammatik* does not discuss Mesokemic, since at the time of its compilation (at least that of the first edition) it was not acknowledged as an independent literary dialect. Till offers the following example for Bohairic:  $\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{h}\mathfrak{i}\ \bar{\mathfrak{n}}\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{t}$  'das Haus meines Vater' (1961: §75), which according to Ariel Shisha-Halevy's insightful studies on Bohairic noun phrases (see below) is hardly occur in this dialect, there being a close relationship between the use of possessive morphemes and the determiners: the linking element  $\mathfrak{n}$ - co-occurs with the  $\mathfrak{p}$ - determination, while  $\mathfrak{n}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{e}$ - preferably with the  $\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{i}$ -determination. The straightforwardness with which Fayyumic is aligned to Bohairic in the use of possessive constructions is, in my view, another case of oversimplification. The correlation between  $\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{i}$ -determination and  $\mathfrak{n}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{e}$ -possessives has not been convincingly shown in Fayyumic. Moreover, classical Fayyumic texts come from the sixth century onward (claimed to have been heavily influenced by both Sahidic and Bohairic), and according to the guidelines settled in the *Introduction*, this thesis aims to explore the grammatical variation attested in early dialects, which means that being strict in the time-span defined in section 1.4. only data drawn from early Fayyumic texts should be taken into account.

The essential information that can be obtained on the basis of the short summary of Walter Till is that there *is* a variation, and while at least in two dialects the distribution seems to be motivated by syntax, not much is known about the situation in the rest of the dialects. Further research is therefore very desirable. The main aspects of such an investigation will be as it follows:

- i) how frequent is *pattern B* ?
- ii) do the syntactic requirements hold (obligatory definiteness and adjacency)?
- iii) if *pattern B* is frequent, are the occurrences of **NTĒ-** motivated by some kind of lexical or semantic factors?

The *Gospel of John* has been chosen intentionally as the corpus in which the grammatical phenomena are introduced and discussed for Sahidic. Many literary dialects preserved manuscripts or fragments that contain parts of the same text. The comparison of the syntactic relevant contexts is evidently much more unambiguous if texts with almost identical content are used.

#### 4.3.1 Lycopolitan

The account of Walter Till as to how the linking element **NTĒ-** was used in Lycopolitan (Subakhmimic) seems to be a bit confusing, so it may be plausible to start with this dialect. There is no comprehensive description about Lycopolitan and, as it was told in the *Introduction*, it is highly probable that one has to deal with three or four distinct dialects rather than with a single one. Here only the possessive constructions of one variety (L5) will be discussed in a detailed fashion, furthermore, some observations will also be made concerning L4, and finally the L\* variety of the Kellis texts will be touched upon as well. Nothing will be said, however, about the Gnostic corpus (L6).<sup>126</sup> Before turning our attention to the London Gospel, it must be mentioned that Walter Till in his grammatical description of Akhmimic (1928: §85) took a note concerning the Subakhmimic **NTĒ-** claiming that it is much more frequent if the expression **π-ΝΟΥΤΕ** ‘God’ stands for the possessor. This claim is debatable of its own, but the examples he cites for illustration are all such configurations in which the use of **NTĒ-** is required independently of the lexical content of the structure (due to the indefinite or modified possessee).

The variety L5 is represented by an excellent edition (Thompson 1924) of the Lycopolitan version of the Gospel of John. The text is almost complete (2:12 – 3:21 and 4:5- 20:27), although there are several damaged parts. An obvious merit of the edition is its index that includes grammatical elements as well. In this way it was quite uncomplicated to check the occurrences of **NTĒ-**. Nevertheless, through collation with the Sahidic version

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<sup>126</sup> The codices in question are Nag Hammadi I, X, XI from the fourth century. Whenever I see a reference to the language of this corpus, I become discouraged because of the heterogeneity of this variety. For instance, as Ariel Shisha-Halevy puts it “the Nag Hammadi grammatical systems, which vary from one text to another, often seem inconsistent even in one and the same text” (1991b: 198).

I used as reference text throughout the thesis (Quecke 1984) I found extra data which could not have been discovered based on Thompson's index only. According to my reading of the text, three more cases can be added to the nine that appears in the index (7:37, 11:52 and 18:12).

This research justified the commonly accepted view that Lycopolitan morphosyntax is fairly close to that of Sahidic. The distribution of the possessive constructions is practically corresponds to the syntactic constraints established for Sahidic. Divergence when attested is either because the use of  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon$ - was unmotivated in Sahidic (cannot be considered more than a stylistic variant) or because the context is predicative, in which case oscillation is somewhat legitim, as it was demonstrated above.

There are altogether 12 occurrences of  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon$ - in the text so the proportion of this pattern with respect to the total number of possessives is practically the same as in Sahidic. There we had 14 occurrences but the text of the Barcelona Gospel is more complete. The Lycopolitan occurrences of  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon$ - are often parallel to the Sahidic version because of the similar syntactic contexts: the possessed noun is indefinite or modified by an attributive expression or clause. In four cases (John 4:10, 6:28, 6:29, and 10:2) where Sahidic has *pattern A*, the London Gospel perform  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon$ -, but all these cases are of the syntactically unmotivated type.<sup>127</sup> It is interesting to note that in (11:52) both Sahidic and Lycopolitan display an unmotivated  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon$ -, and in (4:10), although  $\bar{n}$ - is attested in the Barcelona Gospel, an  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon$ - can be found in Horner's Sahidic edition.

Such cases are strange: these unmotivated stylistic variants are only used in a few phrases as opposed to more than hundred 'more regular' patterns. The concordance might be accidental but it is more probably that the redactions are somehow related. I can even suppose that in a more original version these apparently unmotivated cases were actually motivated, for instance, that they had a demonstrative or indefinite article rather than a simple definite one or they had an extra modifier that disappeared in course of time (cf. P. Bodmer III (B4) has  $\bar{n}\kappa\epsilon\omega\eta\rho\iota$  as opposed to the Sahidic and Lycopolitan simple definite  $\bar{n}\omega\eta\rho\epsilon$  in (11:52)).

An interesting divergence from the Sahidic version can be found in John (5:42):

- (107)  $\bar{n}\bar{n}\tau\eta\text{-}\bar{n}\bar{n}$   $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$   $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon$   $\pi\text{-}\nu\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$   $\text{z}\bar{n}\text{-}\tau\eta\eta\epsilon$  [John 5:42]  
 have.not-2PL love POSS DEF.SG.M-God in-2PL  
 'You have not (the) love of God in you'

<sup>127</sup> At the same time, in (12:13) cited under (80) above, where Sahidic has unmotivated  $\bar{n}\tau\epsilon$ -, Lycopolitan prefers to use *pattern A*.

Interestingly, while both Sahidic and early Bohairic make use of the *pattern A* at this place, the Lycopolitan translator (or copyist) felt the definiteness (referentiality) of the noun phrase suppressed by the negative existential context. That is why no article appears before the head noun and, accordingly, the simply definite possessive *pattern A* cannot be used either. Finally, it is worth citing the phrase in (11:13) as it exemplifies the rare case of the combination of a demonstrative article with a possessor.

- (108) **ϵ-ϣ-ⲭⲉⲣⲁ**      **ⲡⲈϸⲒ-Ⲛ̄ⲔⲁⲧⲕⲈ** **Ⲛ̄ⲧ[ϵ]** **ⲡ-ⲠⲮⲠ**                      [John 11:13]  
 CIRC-3SG-mean    DEM-sleep            POSS    DEF.SG.M-oblivion  
 ‘(Jesus speaks it of his death, but they think that) he referred to this taking rest in sleep’

After a presentation I held in this topic, a colleague of mine drew my attention to the fact that the *Manichaean Psalm-Book* (Allberry 1938) has evidently more **Ⲛ̄ⲧⲈ-** than it would be supposed to display based on what has been claimed so far.<sup>128</sup> Driven by curiosity, I decided to make a survey of the first twenty pages of the *Psalms of the Bema* in Allberry’s edition to see the data myself. It must be noted that some pagas are very fragmentary, and the content, of course, was not always as clear to me as in the case of Biblical texts.

I collected the possessive constructions in these twenty pages, taking into consideration the secure cases only (phrases either partially broken, or with obscure meaning were ignored). In this randomly chosen text unit, I found 145 possessive constructions in total, out of which 31 is connected with **Ⲛ̄ⲧⲈ-**. This means that the proportion of **Ⲛ̄ⲧⲈ-** with respect to the total number of possessives is 21,4 %, which is three times as much as it was observed in Sahidic.<sup>129</sup> It is remarkable, that when I separated the cases in which the use of **Ⲛ̄ⲧⲈ-** can be motivated by the syntactic rules established above, the proportion of these cases to the total number (7,5 %) is practically corresponds to the proportion attested in Sahidic. There remained, however, twenty occurrences of **Ⲛ̄ⲧⲈ-** (of unmotivated pattern B) that need to be explained. I found no traces of any lexemic constraint in this distribution; certain lexemes freely occurred in both constructions. In addition, I also discovered four “irregular” uses of *pattern A*: in three cases the linking element **Ⲛ̄-** was used after a modified head noun, and once the construction was split and still, the possessor expression was introduced by **Ⲛ̄-** instead of **Ⲛ̄ⲧⲈ-** (Allberry 1938: 8:23).

<sup>128</sup> Special thanks to Gábor Kósa for this observation as well as for kindly sending me a copy of Allberry’s *Psalm-Book*.

<sup>129</sup> This proportion will be counted in other dialects as well, in case it seems to be relevant.

Although the unmotivated cases appear to me as instances of a mere stylistic variation, in lack of expertise in the Manichaean corpus I do not want to insist too much on this topic. The only tentative suggestion I would make is that, beyond stylistics, some rhythmic or metrical factors could also have influenced the choice between the shorter and the longer forms viewing that the psalms were performed singing.

As far as the language variety of the texts found in Kellis is concerned, a short comment in the text edition can be cited (Gardner et al. 1999: 260) that addresses the problem of  $\bar{\text{n}}$ - vs.  $\bar{\text{n}}\text{t}\epsilon$ - in the documentary texts: “The exact sense of the various  $\bar{\text{n}}$ - and  $\bar{\text{n}}\text{t}\epsilon$ -constructions (arguably ‘of’ or ‘for’ or even ‘from’  $\bar{\text{n}}\text{t}\bar{\text{n}}$ ) is somewhat tricky, but we have supposed them all to indicate possession. The pattern of  $\bar{\text{n}}$ - between definite nouns and the name, and  $\bar{\text{n}}\text{t}\epsilon$ - with indefinites, is almost perfect (excepting 1.8 where the one case of  $\bar{\text{n}}$ - following an indefinite is probably a dative as ‘possessive’) Thus, it seems most likely that they are syntactically complementary.”<sup>130</sup> The introductory chapter on the language of the texts does not deal with this question at all.

### 4.3.2 Akhmimic

Beyond the two most extensively studied dialects (Sahidic and Bohairic), Akhmimic is the only idiom that has longer grammatical descriptions in the form of grammar text-books. Nevertheless, these rather outdated monographs deal with the possessive constructions in a few lines only. What is more striking is that the two works contradict each other even in their laconic accounts. According to Friedrich Rösch (1909: §73) the Akhmimic connection of the possessor is similar to that of Bohairic (reference is made to Stern 1880: §294), *viz.* only the morpheme  $\bar{\text{n}}\text{t}\epsilon$ - is used. He cites a single example:  $\bar{\text{n}}\text{-}\alpha\bar{\text{n}}\text{g}\epsilon\lambda\omicron\text{s } \bar{\text{n}}\text{t}\epsilon\text{-}\bar{\text{n}}\text{-}\chi\alpha\epsilon\iota\text{s}$  ‘der Engel der Herrn’. This claim suddenly arouses suspicion, as the Bohairic system is much more complicated with its double series of definite articles and their combination with possessives. As far as I know, Akhmimic has no  $\bar{\text{n}}$ -series for definite articles; this form may only appear as the reduced variety of the demonstratives.

Walter Till (1928: §86), on the contrary, claims that  $\bar{\text{n}}\text{t}\epsilon$ - is rather rare in Akhmimic, it actually appears in one text only, in the *Apocalypse of Elijah* (published by Steindorff 1899). It must be noted that the single example Friedrich Rösch cited for illustration is

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<sup>130</sup> Ariel Shisha-Halevy in his review article (2002: 307) expresses his disappointment of such a spare analysis describing the treatment as “over-simplifying”.

taken from this text. Otherwise, Till points out that occasionally the preposition **ṯṯ̄-** is used if the *regens* has a modifier, which means that it appears in the same environments as those in which **ṯṯ̄ṯ̄-** is used in Sahidic, although not so frequently.<sup>131</sup> Till's proposal seems to be much closer to the reality, but both frequency and the precise distribution is to be checked and studied in a more systematic way.

I was very pleased to realize that more than three chapters (10:1-13:12) of the *Gospel of John* are preserved in the Strasbourg Codex (Rösch 1910). Unfortunately, when I started to work with the text edition, it turned out to be practically unusable to my purposes: the manuscript is heavily damaged, not even continuous; it is even difficult to find a whole, unbroken sentence in it, except for a few pages that are in a relatively better condition. Estimated after the numbers in Sahidic and Bohairic, approximately fifty possessive constructions were expected to occur in this section of the Gospel, which might be even promising for a basic inquiry. Due to the bad condition of the text, however, I found two certain cases only: these follow the Sahidic norm with **ṯ-** (contrary to Bohairic where **ṯṯ̄ṯ̄-** is attested in one of two *loci*.)

There is another Biblical manuscript much more suitable to an investigation of possessives: the Ms. Berol. Orient. Oct. 987. published by Alexander Böhlig in 1958. It is claimed to be an early manuscript (3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> c.) but its disadvantage is, as far as my methods are concerned, that it does not contain the *Gospel of John*, but the *Proverbs*. Luckily enough, I found an early Sahidic redaction of the *Proverbs* to collate (a nearly complete manuscript of the Haskell Oriental Museum of the University of Chicago, published by Worrell 1931), but much regrettably, neither of the editions has an index. As reading a few chapters did not result anything but the abundant use of *pattern A*, I turned to a sort of trickery to gain data from the text more effectively: using the index of P. Bodmer VI. written in dialect P, which is claimed to be close to a kind of proto-Sahidic. This papyrus contains a relatively large part of the *Proverbs* (1:1-21:4), and with the help of its index I could quickly test, whether Akhmimic really uses an alternative linking element in *pattern B*. All the places were checked in Worrell's Sahidic edition as well and the claim was justified. The three *loci* for **ṯṯ̄ṯ̄-**, according to the index of P. Bodmer VI., are *Proverbs* 3:9, 7:16 and 16: 14.

In 3:19 Sahidic also has an **ṯṯ̄ṯ̄-**, because the head noun is already modified by a possessive article. The Akhmimic version differs by displaying a *pattern A*, but with an

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<sup>131</sup> The corresponding pronominal form is **ṯṯ̄ṯ̄ṯ̄-** since the Akhmimic linker comes from the preposition (**ṯ̄**)**ṯ̄ṯ̄-**.

unmodified, simple definite head noun, which is correct. In the other two places the head noun is indefinite and while Worrell’s Sahidic edition has an **ⲛⲧⲉ-**, the Akhmimic *Proverbs* use **ⲧⲛ̄-/ⲧⲛ̄-** as it was expected.

### 4.3.3 Bohairic

Bohairic possessive constructions received a larger attention thanks, first of all, to the research work made by Ariel Shisha-Halevy on classical Bohairic nominal syntax. He dedicated long sections to this topic both in a paper that deals with three case studies in Scripture Bohairic (1994: 2333-246) and in his recently published monograph about structural studies in the Bohairic syntax (2007a: 430-447). Another source that will be used here to understand the Bohairic distribution of the patterns is the paper by le Leo Depuydt on Bohairic articles (1985a). First, I will consider the claims they made with respect to the grammar of the nominal phrases in this dialect, then I will analyze the comparative table that has been compiled to compare quasi contemporaneous Sahidic and Bohairic data (B4). Finally, minor early Bohairic texts will be taken into consideration as well.

As it was already discussed in the previous chapter, Bohairic has two series of definite articles, which are traditionally called ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ articles. The forms have already been given in Table 13. It has also been claimed that there is a strong correlation between the use of the articles and the distribution of possessive constructions. As it was already pointed out by Mallon (1907: §§159-160) **ⲛⲧⲉ-** is used with the **ⲙ**-series, while with the **ⲡ**-series both linking elements can appear.<sup>132</sup> For a better understanding, the possible patterns are summarized in Table 17 below:

*Table 17. Possessive patterns in Bohairic*

Pattern		Name
Article type	Linking element type	
<b>ⲙ</b> - / <b>ⲧ</b> ⲛ̄- / <b>ⲛ</b> ⲧⲉ-	<b>ⲛⲧⲉ-</b>	~ <i>Pattern B</i>
<b>ⲡ</b> - / <b>ⲧ</b> -	<b>ⲛⲧⲉ-</b>	?
<b>ⲡ</b> - / <b>ⲧ</b> - / <b>ⲛⲉⲛ</b> -	<b>ⲛ</b> -	~ <i>Pattern A</i>

<sup>132</sup> See also (Depuydt 1985a: 52), Shisha-Halevy (1994: 235) and (2007a: 431)

The basic correlation that can be observed immediately is that there is no **mi-** / **ti-** / **ni-** ... **n-** pattern.<sup>133</sup> With the **mi-** series one expects normally the linking element **ntɛ-**. As for the distribution of the three existing patterns it needs a more detailed explanation.

First of all, there is a clear syntactic distributional rule in Bohairic as well that corresponds to the criteria established for Sahidic: *pattern B* is used when the possessed noun is indefinite (non definite) or modified by additional constituents. The problem is that in the remainder of the cases, where no such specific conditions hold, the proportion of Bohairic *pattern B* is much higher than in any other dialects. It is due to the fact that the use of Bohairic *pattern A*, or putting it more adequately the use of the linking element **n-**, is limited to such constructions in which the possessed noun satisfies certain lexical-semantic requirements. Shisha-Halevy (1994: 236-237) speaks about “a half-closed lexeme list of ‘relative’ or ‘relational’ concepts”, which enter into an “inalienable association” relation. He also provides a supposedly exhaustive list of lexemes that are “inalienably associated” (1994: 237-239): these are (in his terminology) organs and parts of the body; personal and numinous attributes; kinship terms, social/religious order, status or association terms; distinctive personal effects, possessions, rights etc.; essential equipment, components or attributes, broad topo-/geographical/temporal categories and terms of reference; and quantitative attributes. For an alternative (but of course overlapping list) see Depuydt (1985: 61), and Shisha-Halevy (2007a: 436-438), which provides a selection from the list of his earlier paper. On the one hand, these categories more or less correspond to the concept of inalienability (as it was pointed out by the authors cited above) and on the other hand, to the conceptual lexical type of the so called inherently relational nouns. This means that their referents are characterized by a particular relation to some other entity usually specified by means of a possessive construction (cf. Löbner 2011: 2-4).<sup>134</sup> Of course, there are nouns that prototypically enter into this p-...n- pattern (being statistically connected with this construction as Shisha-Halevy (2007a: 435) puts it), but for most of the lexemes, permeability between the patterns is possible and well attested.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Contrary to the example provided by Till (1961b: §75), as Depuydt (1985a: 62 n. 14) pointed it out.

<sup>134</sup> In Sebastian Löbner’s model (2011), the semantic theory of determination is based on the distinction of four basic conceptual lexical types of nouns: sortal nouns (which are neither unique, nor relational, e.g. *book, stone*), individual nouns (which are inherently unique, e.g. *moon, weather*), relational nouns (which are non unique relational, e.g. *leg, part, sister*) and functional nouns (which are both inherently unique and relational, e.g. *father, head, age*). All nouns are assigned lexical type in the lexicon that constitutes their meaning, if they are still used in contexts that seem to contradict the basic type assignment, they are assumed to undergo a type shift.

<sup>135</sup> Shisha-Halevy himself stresses in a note (1994: 236 n.34) that “the fuzziness of the semantic distinctions, the hesitant predictability, the fluctuation in construction reflect flexibility in usage, due to variation in

The pattern **π- ... nTE-** which stands in the middle row in our table 17 is a further challenge to the distributional issue and “the mystery is still anything but cleared up” Shisha-Halevy (2007: 431). Depuydt, based on the corpus he used, claims (1985a: 53) that this pattern is almost entirely absent, but my experience is just the opposite and Ariel Shisha-Halevy (1994: 233 n28) also criticized this inconsiderate statement.

According to Shisha-Halevy (1994: 239-241 and 2007: 440-442) the nouns attested in this pattern can be classified in two sub-groups: i.) inalienable nouns that are “depersonalized” or loosened” in this construction: they become “more general, less specific and less intimately associated” as he explains; ii.) lexemes “echoing” or “mirroring” inalienables. Reviewing the lists he provides for illustration, one can hardly comprehend this fuzzy semantic distinctions and the way it operates in syntax. But which I really cannot agree with is Shisha-Halevy’s final conclusion (1994: 239) in that he claims that **nTE-** is not a real possessive marker, but a preposition expressing neutral or incidental association, while **n-** signals essential or inherent association. These are really the two extremities of the semantics of possessives, but I would rather approach the question in a more formal way.

In what follows, a detailed study of the early Bohairic possessives will be presented. First, I provide a comparative table with the collection of all the possessive constructions that can be found in P. Bodmer III. (Kasser 1958). These data are compared with the Sahidic corpus (Quecke 1984) on the one hand, and with classical Bohairic (Horner 1898), on the other. As far as I know, this early Bohairic text has not been analyzed in this respect, as the authors cited above only used late manuscripts as the basis of their research.<sup>136</sup>

P. Bodmer III. is too fragmentary till the second half of the fourth chapter, so the Bohairic data only begin to appear from John (4:34). Data from Horner’s edition before this *locus* were not taken into consideration either, as the later text version is only used here for collation with the early Bohairic text and for a better understanding of this latter one.

If the parallel *locus*, either in Sahidic or in classical Bohairic, has another structure, it is indicated in parenthesis. I used the expression “other”, if in the parallel text there was a completely different solution, *viz.* there is no modification at all, or the phrase is missing. If

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semantic (pragmatic, situational, contextual...) reference, but also to those of socio-cultural attitude and even sheer “meaningless” variation”.

<sup>136</sup> See Shisha-Halevy (2007: 11-12) for the sources he used in his monograph on Bohairic syntax; the manuscripts are dated to the tenth and fourteenth centuries.

the Bohairic version has a possessive-like construction where Sahidic used another sort of structure, the translation of the Bohairic phrase is also given in italics since this place was not listed in *table 15* in section 4.1. Intervening clitics (ΓΑΡ, ΔΕ, ΠΕ, etc.) are ignored in the citation form of the examples.

Again, set expression and lexicalized compound prepositions have been excluded according to the method used in the case of the Sahidic collection of data. Three times in the whole text, the possessive structure is complex displaying three members instead of two; these constructions therefore are counted as two. The table is followed by the statistics and the analysis.

*Table 18*  
*The Early Bohairic Gospel of John – a contrastive table (with S and B5)*

Locus	S	P. Bodmer III.	B5
4:34	ΠΟΥΩΦ ἸΠΕΝΤΑϞΤΑΟΥΟΕΙ	[ΦΟΥ]ΩΦ ΝΤΕΦΗ ΕΤΑϞΤΑΥΟΙ	ΦΟΥΩΦ ἸΦΗ ΕΤΑϞΤΑΟΥΟΙ
4:39	... (partitive)	ΛΥΜΗΦ)(...) ΝΤΕΝΙϞΑ[ΜΑΡΙΤΗΣ] <i>many (...) of the Samaritans</i>	...
4:39	ΠΩΛΧΕ ΝΤΕϞΖΙΜΕ	ΠϞΑΧΙ ΝΤΕ†[ϞΖΙΜΙ]	ΠϞΑΧΙ Ν†ϞΖΙΜΙ
4:42	ΠϞΩΤΗΡ ΜΠΚΟϞΜΟϞ	[ΠϞΩΤΗΡ] ΝΤΕΠΚΟϞΜΟϞ	ΠΙϞΩΤΗΡ ΝΤΕΠΚΟϞΜΟϞ
4:46	ΚΑΝΑ ΝΤΓΑΛΙΛΑΙΑ	†ΓΑΝΑ Ν[ΤΕ]ΤΓΑΛΙΛΕ[Α]	ΕΤΚΑΝΑ ΝΤΕ†ΓΑΛΙΛΕΑ
5:1	ΠΩΑΑ ΝΙΟΥΔΑ	ΠΩΑΙ ΝΤΕ[ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ]	ΠΩΑΙ ΝΤΕΝΠΟΥΔΑΙ
5:25	ΤΕϞΜΗ ΜΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΠΠΟΥΤΕ	ΤϞΜΗ ΝΤΕΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΠΡ[ΩΜ]Ι	ΤϞΜΗ ΜΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦ†
5:27	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ
5:29	... (attributive)	ΟΥΑΝΑϞΤΑϞΙϞ ΝΤΕΠΩΝḢ	... (attributive)
5:29	... (attributive)	ΟΥΑΝΑϞΤΑϞΙϞ ΝΤΕΟΥΖΑΠ	... (attributive)
5:30	ΠΟΥΩΦ ἸΠΕΝΤΑϞΤΑΟΥΟΕΙ	ΠΟΥΩΦ ΝΤΕΦΗ ΕΤΑϞΤΑΥΟΙ	ΦΟΥΩΦ ἸΦΗ ΕΤΑϞΤΑΟΥΟΙ
5:37	ϞΜΗ ΝΤΑϞ	]ḢΡΩΟΥ ΝΤΑϞ	ϞΜΗ ΝΤΑϞ
5:37	ΖΡΒ̄ ΝΤΑϞ	ϞΜΟΤ ΝΤΑϞ	ϞΜΟΤ ΝΤΑϞ
5:42	ΤΑΓΑΠΗ ἸΠΠΟΥΤΕ	ΤΑΓΑΠΗ ΜΦ†	†ΤΑΓΑΠΗ ΝΤΕΦ†
5:43	ΠΡΑΝ ἸΠΑΙΩΤ	ΠΡΑΝ ἸΠΑΙΩΤ	ΦΡΑΝ ἸΠΑΙΩΤ
5:44	... (appositive)	ΠΩΟΥ ΝΤΕΠΟΥΑΙ ΜΑΥΑΤϞ <i>the glory of the One alone</i>	ΠΩΟΥ ΝΤΕΠΟΥΑΙ ἸΜΑΥΑΤϞ
5:47	ΝΕϞΖΑΙ ΜΠΕΤḢΜΑΥ	ΝΙϞḢΑΙ ΝΤΕΦΗ	ΝΙϞḢΑΙ ΝΤΕΦΗ ΕΤΕΜΜΑΥ
6:1	ΘΑΛΛΑϞϞΑ ΝΤΓΑΛΙΛΑΙΑ ΝΤΙΒΕΡΙΑϞ	ΦΙΟΜ ΝΤΕ†ΓΑΛΙΛΕΑ ΝΤΕ†ΧΙΒΕΡΙΑϞ	ΦΙΟΜ ΝΤΕ†ΓΑΛΙΛΕΑ ΝΤΕΤΙΒΕΡΙΑΔΟϞ
6:4	ΠΩΑ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	ΠΩΑΙ ΝΤΕΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	ΠΩΑΙ ΝΤΕΝΠΟΥΔΑΙ
6:8	ΠϞΟΝ ΝϞΙΜΟΝ ΠΕΤΡΟϞ	ΠϞΟΝ ΝϞΙΜΟΝ ΠΕΤΡΕ	ΠϞΟΝ ΝϞΙΜΟΝ ΠΕΤΡΟϞ
6:27	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ
6:28	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ	ΕΡΖΒΗΟΥΙ ΝΤΕ Φ†	ΝΙΖΒΗΟΥΙ ΝΤΕΦ†
6:29	ΠΖΩΒ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ	ΠΙΖΩΒ ΝΤΕΦ†	ΠΙΖΩΒ ΝΤΕΦ†
6:33	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ	... (other)	... (other)
6:33	... (other)	ΠΙΩΙΚ ΝΤΕΦ† <i>the bread of God</i>	ΠΙΩΙΚ ΓΑΡ ΝΤΕΦ†
6:35	ΠΟΕΙΚ ἸΠΩΝΖ	ΠΙΩΙΚ ΝΤΕΠΩΝḢ	ΠΙΩΙΚ ΝΤΕΠΩΝḢ
6:38	ΠΟΥΩΦ ἸΠΕΝΤΑϞΤΑΟΥΟΕΙ	ΦΟΥΩΦ ΝΤΕΦΗ ΕΤΑϞΤΑΥΟΙ	... (other)

6:39	ΠΟΥΩΦ ἸΠΕΝΤΑΓΤΑΟΥΟΕΙ	... (pronominal)	ΦΟΥΩΦ ἸΦΗ ΕΤΑΓΤΑΟΥΟΙ
6:40	ΠΟΥΩΦ ἸΠΑΙΩΤ	... (pronominal)	ΦΟΥΩΦ ἸΠΑΙΩΤ
6:42	ΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΩΣΗΦ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ἸΩΣΗΦ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ἸΩΣΗΦ
6:48	ΠΟΕΙΚ ἸΠΩΝΖ	ΠΙΩΙΚ ΝΤΕΠΩΝῆ	ΠΙΩΙΚ ἸΤΕΠΩΝῆ
6:51	ΠΩΝΖ ἸΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ	ΠΩΝῆ ΝΤΕΠΙΚΟΣΜΟΣ	ΠΩΝῆ ἸΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ
6:53	ΤΣΑΡΖ ἸΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΠΡΩΜΕ	ΤΣΑΡΖ ΝΤΕΦΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ	ΤΣΑΡΖ ἸΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΕ
6:62	ΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΠΡΩΜΕ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ
6:68	... (attributive)	ΖΑΝΣΑΧΙ ΝΤΕΥΩΝῆ ΝΝΕΝΕΖ <i>words of an eternal life</i>	... (attributive)
6:69	ΠΕΧ̄Σ ΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ἸΤΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ	ΠΕΘΟΥΑΒ ΝΤΕΦ̄Τ	ΠΧ̄Σ ΠΕΘΟΥΑΒ ΝΤΕΦ̄Τ
7:2	ΠΨΑ ἸΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	ΠΨΑΙ ΝΤΕΝΙΟΥΙΔΑΙ	ΠΨΑΙ ἸΤΕΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ
7:13	ΘΟΤΕ ἸΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	ΤΖΟ̄Τ ΝΤΕΝΙΟΥΙΔΑΙ	ΤΖΟ̄Τ ἸΝΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ
7:18	ΠΕΟΟΥ ἸΠΕΝΤΑΓΤἸΝΝΟΥΟΥ	ΠΨΟΥ ΝΤΕΦΗ ΕΤΑΓΤΑΟΥΟ	ΠΨΟΥ ἸΦΗ ΕΤΑΓΤΑΟΥΟ
7:23	ΠΙΝΟΜΟΣ ἸΜΩΥΣΗΣ	ΠΙΝΟΜΟΣ ΝΤΕΜΩΥΣΗΣ	ΠΙΝΟΜΟΣ ἸΤΕ ΜΩΥΣΗΣ
7:35	ΤΔΙΑΣΠΟΡΑ ἸΝΖΕΛΛΗΝ	ΝΙΜΑΝΧΩΡ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΤΕΝΙΟΥΙΝΙΝ	ΠΙΧΩΡ ΕΒΟΛ ἸΤΕΝΙΟΥΕΙΝΙΝ
7:37	ΠΖΑΕ ἸΖΟΥΟΥ ΝΟΒ ἸΤΕ ΠΨΑ	ΠΙΕΖΟΥΟΥ ΝῆΑΕ ΝΤΕΠΙΝΙΩ̄Τ ΝΨΑΙ	ΠΙΕΖΟΥΟΥ ΝῆΑΕ ἸΤΕΠΙΝΙΩ̄Τ ΝΨΑΙ
7:42	ΠΕΣΠΕΡΜΑ ἸΔΑΥΕΙΔ	ΠΙΧΡΟΧ ΝΤΕΔΑΥΙΔ	ΠΙΧΡΟΧ ἸΔΑΥΙΔ
8:12	ΠΟΥΟΙΝ ἸΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ	ΦΟΥΩΙΝΙ ΝΤΕΠΙΚΟΣΜΟΣ	ΦΟΥΩΙΝΙ ἸΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ
8:12	ΠΟΥΟΙΝ ἸΠΩΝΖ	ΠΙΟΥΩΙΝΙ ΝΤΕΠΩΝῆ	ΦΟΥΩΙΝΙ ΝΤΕΠΩΝῆ
8:17	ΤΜΗΤΜΗΤΡΕ ἸΡΩΜΕ ΣΝΑΥ	ἸΜΕΤΜΕΤΡΕ ΝΤΕΡΩΜΙ ΣΝΑ	ΘΜΕΤΜΕΘΡΕ ἸΡΩΜΙ Β
8:28	ΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΠΡΩΜΕ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ
8:33	ΠΕΣΠΕΡΜΑ ἸΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ	ΠΙΧΡΟΧ ΝΝΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ	ΠΣΠΕΡΜΑ ἸΑΒΡΑΑΜ
8:34	ΖΜΖΑΛ ἸΠΝΟΒΕ	ΟΥΒΩΚ ΝΤΕΠΝΟΒΙ	ΟΥΒΩΚ ἸΤΕΦΝΟΒΙ
8:37	ΠΕΣΠΕΡΜΑ ἸΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ	ΠΙΧΡΟΧ ΝΝΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ	ΠΙΧΡΟΧ ἸΑΒΡΑΑΜ
8:39	ἸΩΗΡΕ ἸΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ	ΝΕΝΩΗΡΙ ΝΝΑΒΡΑΑΜ	ΝΕΝΩΗΡΙ ἸΑΒΡΑΑΜ
8:39	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ἸΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ	ΝΙΖΒΗΥΙ ΝΤΕΑΒΡΑΑΜ	ΝΙΖΒΗΥΙ ἸΤΕΑΒΡΑΑΜ
8:41	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ἸΠΕΤἸΕΙΩΤ	ΝΙΖΒΗΥΙ ΝΤΕΠΕΤΕΝΙΩΤ	ΝΙΖΒΗΥΙ ἸΤΕΠΕΤΕΝΙΩΤ
8:44	ΝΕΠΙΘΥΜΙΑ ἸΠΕΤἸΕΙΩΤ	ΝΙΕΠΙΘΥΜΙΑ ΝΤΕΠΕΤΕΝΙΩΤ	ΝΙΕΠΙΘΥΜΙΑ ἸΤΕΠΕΤΕΝΙΩΤ
8:47	ἸΨΑΧΕ ἸΠΝΟΥΤΕ	ΝΙΣΑΧΙ ΝΤΕΦ̄Τ	ΝΙΣΑΧΙ ΝΤΕΦ̄Τ
8:56	... (other)	ΥΕΖΟΥΟΥ ΝΤΑΙ <i>a day of mine</i>	ΟΥΕΖΟΥΟΥ ἸΤΗΙ
9:3	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ἸΠΝΟΥΤΕ	ΝΙΖΒΗΟΥΙ ΝΤΕΦ̄Τ	ΝΙΖΒΗΟΥΙ ΝΤΕΦ̄Τ
9:4	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ἸΠΕΝΤΑΓΤΑΟΥΟΕΙ	ΝΙΖΒΗΟΥΙ ΝΤΕΦΗ ΕΤΑΓΤΑΟΥΟΝ	ΝΙΖΒΗΟΥΙ ΝΤΕΦΗ ΕΤΑΓΤΑΟΥΟΝ
9:5	ΠΟΥΟΙΝ ἸΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ	ΟΥΩΙΝΙ ΝΤΕΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ	ΦΟΥΩΙΝΙ ἸΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ
9:7	ΤΚΟΥΜΒΗΘΡΑ ἸΠΣΙΩΑΜ	ἸΚΟΥΜΒΗΘΡΑ ΝΤΕΠΙΣΙΩΑΜ	ἸΚΟΥΜΒΗΘΡΑ ΝΤΕΠΙΣΙΩΑΜ
9:18	ΝΕΙΟΤΕ ἸΠΕΝΤΑΓΤΑΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ	ΝΕΝΙΟ̄Τ ΝΤΕΦΗ ΕΤΑΓΤΑΟΥ ΜΒΟΛ	... (pronominal)
9:28	ΠΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ἸΠΕΤἸΜΑΥ	... (pronominal)	ΟΥΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ἸΤΕΦΗ ΕΤΕΜΜΑΥ
9:28	ἸΜΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ἸΜΩΥΣΗΣ	ΝΕΝΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ἸΜΩΥΣΗΣ	ΖΑΝΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ἸΤΕΜΩΥΣΗΣ
9:32	ΝΒΑΛ ἸΝΟΥΑ ΕΛΥΧΠΟΦ ΕΦΟ ΝΒΛΛΕ	ΝΕΝΒΑΛ ΝΝΟΥΒΕΛΛΕ ἸΜΙΣΙ	ΝΕΝΒΑΛ ΝΟΥΒΕΛΛΕ ἸΜΙΣΙ
9:35	ΠΩΗΡΕ ἸΠΡΩΜΕ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ
9:39	... (other)	ΟΥΖΑΠ ΝΤΕΠΙΚΟΣΜΟΣ <i>judgment of the world</i>	ΟΥΖΑΠ ἸΠΚΟΣΜΟΣ
9:40	... (partitive)	ΖΑΝΟΥΟΝ ΝΤΕΝΙΦΑΡΙΣΣΕΟΣ <i>some of the Pharisees</i>	ΖΑΝΟΥΟΝ ἸΤΕΝΙΦΑΡΙΣΣΕΟΣ
10:1	ΠΟΖΕ ἸΝΕΣΟΟΥ	ἸΤΑΥΗ ΝΤΕΝΙΕΣΩΟΥ	ἸΤΑΥΗ ΝΤΕΝΙΕΣΩΟΥ
10:2	ΠΩΟΣ ἸΝΕΣΟΟΥ	... (compound)	ΟΥΜΑΝΕΣΩΟΥ ΠΕ ΝΤΕΝΙΕΣΩΟΥ

10:5	ΤΕΣΜΗ ΝΝΩΨΗΜΟ	†ΣΜΗ ΝΤΕΝΙΨΕΜΜΩΥ	ΤΣΜΗ ΜΠΨΕΜΜΟ
10:7	ΠΩΨΟC ΝΝΕCΟΟΥ	ΠΙCΒΕ ΝΤΕΝΙΕCΩΟΥ <i>the door of the sheep</i>	ΠΙCΒΕ ΝΤΕ ΝΙΕCΩΟΥ
10:9	... (other)	ΠΙCΒΕ ΝΤΕΝΙΕCΩΟΥ <i>the door of the sheep</i>	ΠΙCΒΕ ΝΤΕ ΝΙΕCΩΟΥ
10:21	ΝΒΒΑΛ ΝΒΒΛΛΕ	ΝΕΝΒΑΛ ΝΝΟΥΒΕΛΛΕ	ΝΕΝΒΑΛ ΝΖΑΝΒΕΛΛΕΥ
10:23	ΤΕCΤΟΑ ΝCΟΛΟΜΩΝ	†CΤΟΑ ΝΤΕCΟΛΟΜΩΝ	†CΤΟΑ ΝΤΕCΟΛΟΜΩΝ
10:25	ΠΡΑΝ ΜΠΑΕΙΩΤ	ΠΡΑΝ ΜΠΑΙΩΤ	ΦΡΑΝ ΜΠΑΙΩΤ
10:29	ΤΒΙΧ ΜΠΑΙΩΤ	†ΧΙΧ ΝΤΕΦΙΩΤ	ΤΧΙΧ ΜΠΑΙΩΤ
10:35	ΠΨΑΧΕ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	ΠCΑΧΙ ΜΦ†	ΠCΑΧΙ ΜΦ†
10:36	ΠΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	ΠΨΗΡΙ ΜΦ†	ΠΨΗΡΙ ΜΦ†
10:37	ΝΕΖΒΗΥΕ ΜΠΑΕΙΩΤ	ΝΙΖΒΗΥΙ ΝΤΕΠΑΙΩΤ	ΝΙΖΒΗΟΥΙ ΝΤΕΠΑΙΩΤ
11:1	Π†ΜΕ ΜΜΑΡΙΑ ΝΜ ΜΑΡΘΑ	Π†[†ΜΙ] ΝΤΕΜΑΡΙΑ ΝΕΜ ΜΑΡΘΑ	Π†ΜΙ ΜΜΑΡΙΑ ΝΕΜ ΜΑΡΘΑ
11:4	ΠΕΟΟΥ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	ΠΙΩΟΥ ΝΤΕΦ†	ΦΩΟΥ ΜΦ†
11:4	...	ΠΨΗΡΙ ΝΤΕΦ†	ΠΨΗΡΙ ΜΦ†
11:9	ΠΟΥΟΙΝ ΜΠΕΙΚΟCΜΟC	ΦΟΥΩΙΝΙ ΝΤΕΠΙΚΟCΜΟC	ΦΟΥΩΙΝΙ ΜΠΙΚΟCΜΟC
11:13	... (other)	ΠΙΕΝΚΟΤ ΝΤΕΠΕΡΜΟΥ <i>the sleep of his death</i>	ΠΙΕΝΚΟΤ ΝΤΕΠΕΡΜΟΥ
11:13	ΠΕΝΚΟΤΚ ΜΠΩΨ	ΟΥΕΝΚΟΤ ΝΤΕΥΖΙΝΙΜ	ΠΙΝΚΟΤ ΝΤΕΠΙΖΙΝΙΜ
11:27	ΠΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	ΠΨΗΡΙ ΜΦ†	ΠΨΗΡΙ ΜΦ†
11:35	... (other)	ΝΕΝΒΑΛ ΝΙΗC <i>the eyes of Jesus</i>	... (pronominal)
11:37	ΝΒΒΑΛ ΜΠΒΛΛΕ	ΝΕΝΒΑΛ ΜΠΙΒΕΛΛΕ	ΝΕΝΒΑΛ ΜΠΙΒΕΛΛΕ ΜΜΙCΙ
11:39	ΤCΩΝΕ ΜΠΕΝΤΑΡΜΟΥ	ΤCΩΝΙ ΝΤΕΦΗ ΕΤΑΡΜΟΥ	ΤCΩΝΙ ΜΦΗ ΕΤΑΡΜΟΥ
11:40	ΠΕΟΟΥ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	ΠΙΩΟΥ ΝΤΕΦ†	ΠΩΟΥ ΜΦ†
11:52	ΝΨΗΡΕ ΝΤΕΠΝΟΥΤΕ	ΝΙΚΕΨΗΡΙ ΝΤΕΦ†	ΝΙΚΕΨΗΡΙ ΝΤΕΦ†
11:55	ΠΠΑCΧΑ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	ΠΠΑCΧΑ ΝΤΕΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	ΠΠΑCΧΑ ΝΤΕΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ
12:3	... (attributive)	ΟΥΛΙΤΡΑ ΝCΟΧΕΝ ΝΤΕΥΝΑΡΔΟC ΜΠΙCΤΙΚΗ <i>a pound of ointment of pistic nard</i>	ΟΥΛΙΤΡΑ ΝCΟΧΕΝ ΝΤΕΥΝΑΡΔΟC ΜΠΙCΤΙΚΗ
12:3	ΝΟΥΕΡΗΤΕ ΝΙC	ΝΕΝΒΑΛΛΑΥΧ ΝΙΗC	ΝΕΝΒΑΛΛΑΥΧ ΝΙΗC
12:3	ΠΨΩ ΝΤΕCΑΠΕ	...	ΠΨΩΙ ΝΤΕΤΕCΑΦΕ
12:3	ΠΕCΤΟΙ ΜΠCΟΒΝ	ΠΙCΘΟΙ ΝΤΕΠΙCΟΧΕΝ	ΠΙCΘΟΙ ΝΤΕΠΙCΟΧΕΝ
12:7	ΠΕΖΟΥ ΝΤΑΚΑΕΙCΕ	ΠΙΖΟΥ ΝΤΕΤΑΚΑΙCΙ	ΠΕΖΟΥ ΜΠΑΚΩC
12:11	... (attributive)	ΥΜΗΨ ΝΤΕΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ <i>many of the Jews</i>	... (partitive)
12:13	... (partitive)	ΖΑΝΒΑΙ ΝΤΕΖΑΝΒΕΝΙ <i>branches of the palm-tree</i>	... (partitive)
12:13	ΠΡΑΝ ΜΠΧΟΕΙC	ΠΡΑΝ ΜΠΘC	ΦΡΑΝ ΜΠΘC
12:13	ΠΡΡΟ ΝΤΕ ΠΙCΡΑΝΑ	ΠΟΥΡΟ ΝΤΕΠΙCΡΑΝΑ	ΠΟΥΡΟ ΜΠΙCΑ
12:15	ΤΨΕΕΡΕ ΝCΙΩΝ	ΤΨΕΡΙ ΝCΙΩΝ	ΤΨΕΡΙ ΝCΙΩΝ
12:21	ΒΗΔCΑΙΔΑ ΝΤΓΑΛΙΛΑΙΑ	ΠΙΡΕΜΒΗΔCΑΙΔΑ ΝΤΕ†ΓΑΛΙΛΕΑ	ΠΙΡΕΜΒΗΘCΑΙΔΑ ΝΤΕ†ΓΑΛΙΛΕΑ
12:23	ΠΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ	ΠΨΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ	ΠΨΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ
12:31	ΤΕΚΡΙCΙC ΜΠΕΙΚΟCΜΟC	ΟΥΖΑΠ ΝΤΕΠΙΚΟCΜΟC	ΠΖΑΠ ΝΤΕΠΑΙΚΟCΜΟC
12:31	ΠΑΡΧΩΝ ΜΠΕΙΚΟCΜΟC	ΠΑΡΧΩΝ ΝΤΕΠΑΙΚΟCΜΟC	ΠΑΡΧΩΝ ΝΤΕΠΑΙΚΟCΜΟC
12:34	ΠΨΗΡΕ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ	ΠΨΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ	ΠΨΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ
12:34	... (other)	ΠΑΨΗΡΙ ΝΤΕΦΡΩΜΙ <i>this son of the man</i>	ΠΨΗΡΙ ΜΦΡΩΜΙ
12:36	ΨΗΡΕ ΝΤΕ ΠΟΥΟΙΝ	ΨΗΡΙ ΝΤΕΠΙΟΥΩΙΝΙ	ΨΗΡΙ ΜΠΙΟΥΩΙΝΙ
12:38	ΠΨΑΧΕ ΝΗCΑΙΑC	... (relative clause)	ΠCΑΧΙ ΝΗCΑΙΑC
12:38	ΠΕΒΘΟΕΙ ΜΠΧΟΕΙC	ΠΨΩΨΩ ΝΤΕΠΘC	ΠΨΩΨΩ ΜΠΘC
12:41	ΠΕΟΟΥ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	ΠΩΟΥ ΜΦ†	ΠΩΟΥ ΜΦ†
12:43	ΠΕΟΟΥ ΝΡΡΩΜΕ	ΠΙΩΟΥ ΝΤΕΝΙΡΩΜΙ	ΠΩΟΥ ΝΝΙΡΩΜΙ
12:43	ΠΕΟΟΥ ΝΡΡΩΜΕ	ΠΩΟΥ ΜΦ†	ΠΩΟΥ ΜΦ†

13:1	πψα μππασχα	πιψαι ντεπιπασχα	πψαι ντεπιπασχα
13:2	πζητ νιουδας	πζητ νσιμον	πζητ μη εναφναθησ
13:5	νουερητε νμμαοητης	νενφατ ντενεφμαοητης	νενβαλαυχ ννεφμαοητης
13:14	ρατου ννεντηνηυ	νενφατ ντενετηναρηου	ρατου ννεντηνηυ
13:23	κουνη νις	κενη νιης	κενη νιης
13:25	τμεσθητ νις	τμεσθητ ντειης	φμεστηνητ νιης
13:26	πψηρε νσιμον	ιουδας ντεσιμον	... (other)
13:31	πψηρε μπρωμε	πψηρι μφρωμι	πψηρι μφρωμι
14:2	πιη μπαιωτ	πιη ντεπαιωτ	πιη μπαιωτ
14:17	πεπνα ντμε	πιπνα ντεφμη	πιπνα ντετμεομη
14:30	παρχων μπεικοςμος	παρχων ντεπαικοςμος	παρχων ντεπαικοςμος
15:10	νεντολη μπαιωτ	νιεντολη ντεπαιωτ	νιεντολη ντεπαιωτ
15:26	πεπνα ντμε	πιπνα ντεφμη	πιπνα ντετμεομη
16:11	παρχων μπεικοςμος	παρχων ντεπικοςμος	παρχων ντεπαικοςμος
16:13	πεπνα ντμε	πιπνα ντεφμη	πιπνα ντετμεομη
17:2	τεζουσια νσαρξ νιμ	... (prepositional phrase)	... (prepositional phrase)
17:12	πψηρε μπτακο	πψηρι ντεπτακο	πψηρι ντεπτακο
17:24	τκαταβολη μπκοςμος	τκαταβολη ντεπκοςμος	τκαταβολη μπκοςμος
18:1	επικρο μπχιμαρος μπκεδρος	ζημηρ μπχιμαρος ντεπιφενσιφι	εμηρ μπμουνσωρεμ ντε νιφενσιφι
18:10	πζμζαλ ηπαρχιερευς	πβωκ μππαρχιερευς	φβωκ μππαρχιερευς
18:10	πραν μπζμζαλ	πραν μπβωκ	φραν μπβωκ
18:12	νηυπηρετης νιουδαι	νιυπηρετης ντενιουδαι	νιυπηρετης ντενιουδαι
18:13	πψομητ νκαιφας	πψομ ντεκαιφα	πψομ νκαιφα
18:15	ταυλη ηπαρχιερευς	ταυλη ντεπαρχιερευς	ταυλη ντεπαρχιερευς
18:17	νμαοητης μπειρωμε	νενμαοητης μπαιρωμε	νενμαοητης μπαιρωμε
18:22	... (partitive)	ουαι ντε νιυπηρετης <i>one of the officers</i>	ουαι ντε νιυπηρετης
18:26	νηζμζαλ ηπαρχιερευς	νιεβιαικ ντεπαρχιερευς	νιεβιαικ ντε παρχιερευς
18:26	ουσυγγενης μπενταπετρος σαππεφμααχε	... (prepositional phrase)	ουσυγγενης ντεφη εταπετρος χωχι μπεφμααχε εβολ
18:33	πρρο νιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι
18:39	πρρο νιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι
19:3	πρρο νιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι
19:7	ψηρε ντε πνουτε	ψηρι ννουτ	ψηρι ντεφτ
19:12	πεψηρ μπρρο	πηρ ντεπουρο	πψηρ μππουρο
19:14	τπαρσκειη μππασχα	τπαρσκειη ντεπιπασχα	τπαρσκειη ντεπιπασχα
19:19	πρρο νιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι
19:20	... (partitive)	ουμηψ ντενιουδαι <i>many of the Jews</i>	ουμηψ ντενιουδαι
19:21	ναρχιερευς νιουδαι	... (other)	νιαρχιερευς ντενιουδαι
19:21	πρρο νιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι
19:21	πρρο νιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι	πουρο ντενιουδαι
19:25	πεσφος νις	πιφθε ντειης	πισταυρος ντειης
19:25	τσωνε ντεφμααυ	τσωνι ντεφμααυ	τσωνι ντεφμααυ
19:25	τψερε νκλωπα	τογι ντεκλωπα	οη ντεκλεοπα
19:31	... (other)	πιεζου ντεπιαμβαοη <i>the day of the sabbath</i>	...
19:31	πιεζου μπιαββατον ετημαυ	πιεζου ντεπιαμβαοη ετημαυ	πιεζου ντεπιαββατον ετημαυ
19:32	νουερητε μπψοριπ νη πκεογα	νενφατ ηπιζουιτ νενπιχετ	... (pronominal)
19:36	... (other)	ουκας νταφ <i>a bone of his</i>	ουκας νταφ

19:38	ΟΥΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΝΤΕ ΙC	ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΝΙΗC	ΟΥΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΝΤΕΙΗC
19:38	ΘΟΤΕ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	ΤΖΟΤ ΝΝΙΟΥΙΔΑΙ	ΤΖΟΤ ΝΝΠΙΟΥΔΑΙ
19:38	ΠCΩΜΑ ΝΙC	ΠΙCΩΜΑ ΝΤΕΙΗC	ΠΙCΩΜΑ ΝΤΕΙΗC
19:39	... (attributive)	ΟΥΜΟΥΡ ΝΤΕΥΦΑΛ ΝΕΜΟΥΑΛΟΗ <i>a bundle of myrrh and aloe</i>	... (other)
19:40	ΠCΩΜΑ ΝΙC	ΠΙCΩΜΑ ΝΤΕΙΗC	ΠΙCΩΜΑ ΝΤΕΙΗC
19:40	ΠCΩΝΤ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	ΤCΕΝΕ† ΝΚΩC ΝΤΕΝΙΟΥΙΔΑΙ	†ΚΑΖC ΝΤΕΝΝΠΙΟΥΔΑΙ
19:42	†ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	†ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ ΝΤΕΝΙΟΥΙΔΑΙ	†ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ ΝΤΕΝΙΟΥΙΔΑΙ
20:12	ΠCΩΜΑ ΝΙC	ΠΙCΩΜΑ ΝΤΕΙΗC	ΠΙCΩΜΑ ΝΤΕΙΗC
20:19	... (other)	ΝΙΡΦΟΥ (..) ΝΤΕΠΙΜΑ <i>the doors (...) of the places</i>	ΝΙΡΦΟΥ (..) ΝΤΕΠΙΜΑ
20:19	ΘΟΤΕ ΝΙΟΥΔΑΙ	ΤΖΟΤ ΝΤΕΝΠΙΟΥΔΑΙ	ΤΖΟΤ ΝΤΕΝΠΙΟΥΔΑΙ
20:25	ΝΕΨC ΝΕΙϞΤ	ΠΙΤΥΠΟC ΝΤΕΝΠΙϞΤ	ΠΤΥΠΟC ΝΤΕ ΝΠΙϞΤ
20:31	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΝΤΕϞ†	ΠΩΗΡΙ ΜϞ†
21:1	ΘΑΛΑCΣΑ ΝΤΙΒΕΡΙΑC	ΦΙΟΜ ΝΤΕ†ΧΙΒΕΡΙΑC	ΦΙΟΜ ΝΤΕΤΙΒΕΡΙΑΔΟC
21:2	ΚΑΝΑ ΝΤΓΑΛΙΑΙΑ	ΤΓΑΝΑ ΝΤΕ†ΓΑΛΙΔΕΑ	...
21:2	ΝΩΗΡΕ ΝΖΕΒΕΔΑΙΟC	ΝΙΟΥΟΝ ΝΤΕΖΕΒΕΔΕΟC	ΝΕΝΩΗΡΙ ΝΖΕΒΕΔΕΟC
21:6	... (attributive)	ΠΑΨΑΙ ΝΤΕΝΙΤΕΒΤ <i>the abundance of the fishes</i>	ΠΑΨΑΙ ΝΤΕΝΙΤΕΒΤ
21:8	ΠΕΨΝΕ ΝΝΤΕΤ	ΠΨΝΕ ΝΤΕΝΙΤΕΒΤ	ΠΨΝΕ ΝΤΕΝΙΤΕΒΤ
21:12	... (partitive)	ΖΑΙ ΝΤΕ ΝΙΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ <i>none of the disciples</i>	... (partitive)
21:15	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΙΩΖΑΝΝΗΣ	CΙΜΟΝ ΝΤΕΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ	... (pronominal)
21:16	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΙΩΖΑΝΝΗΣ	СΙΜΟΝ ΝΤΕΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ	... (pronominal)
21:17	ΠΩΗΡΕ ΝΙΩΖΑΝΝΗΣ	СΙΜΟΝ ΝΤΕΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ	... (pronominal)

The early Bohairic version of the *Gospel of John* has 174 possessive constructions overall, out of which in 133 the members of the construction are connected by the **ΝΤΕ-**. This means that the proportion of the **ΝΤΕ-**constructions is 76,4 %.

Table 19

Proportion of the possessive constructions in the *Gospel of John* of P. Bodmer III.

Possessive constructions in the corpus	174
Patterns with <b>ΝΤΕ-</b>	133
Proportion of patterns with <b>ΝΤΕ-</b> in the text	76,4 %

In the Sahidic corpus, the proportion of the constructions that belong to *pattern B* was (7,4%) so the difference is striking.<sup>137</sup> Working on the text it was impossible not to notice that the early Bohairic version seems to be more abundant in **ΝΤΕ-**construction than the standardized classical edition. It appeared to me useful to carry out a calculation similar to

<sup>137</sup> It is to be noted that the semantic field the preposition **ΝΤΕ-** can cover is somehow broader in Bohairic than in Sahidic: in several places, Bohairic used **ΝΤΕ-** when the other dialect has an attributive or partitive construction.

the the one done for P. Bodmer III. on the later version as well. Observe the results in the following table:

Table 20

*Proportion of the possessive constructions in Horner's Gospel of John.*

Possessive constructions in the text	163
Patterns with <b>ΝΤΕ-</b>	90
Proportion of patterns with <b>ΝΤΕ-</b> in the text	55,2 %

In view of these data, it can be concluded that in late Bohairic about half of the constructions display the Bohairic “pattern A”, while in the early text of P. Bodmer III. only the one third of the patterns can be characterized as “pattern A”. As a matter of fact, I was very interested in the details of this divergence and attempted to make an order in the chaotic inventory of mismatching data.

Why do the data give the impression of being chaotic? Of course, there are example-pairs in which the opposition of the two main patterns indicated in *table 17*, **Π-... Ν-** and **Π-... ΝΤΕ-**, is well observable and supports the rules that were established for Bohairic in general. In (109) the possessed noun is clearly relational, while in (110) it is not necessarily so. In (112), it is the plurality of the head noun that might be responsible for the loosening of the construction.<sup>138</sup> (NB. The lexeme **ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ** ‘disciple’ always seems to be strictly relation in plural as well, and it is hard to imagine what can be the different in the lexico-semantic properties of these two nouns: a *servant* presupposes the existence of a *lord* just the same way as a *disciple* implies that of a *master*.)

(109) **ΝΕΝ-ΩΗΡΙ**      **ΝΝ-ΑΒΡΑΑΜ**      [John 8:39]  
 DEF.PL-son      POSS-Abraham  
 ‘the sons of Abraham’

(110) **ΝΙ-ΖΕΗΥΙ**      **ΝΤΕ-ΑΒΡΑΑΜ**      [John 8:39]  
 DEF.PL-thing.PL      POSS-Abraham  
 ‘the works of Abraham’

(111) **Π-ΒΩΚ**      **Μ-ΠΙ-ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥΣ**      [John 18:10]  
 DEF.SG.M-thing.PL      POSS-DEF.SG.M-chief.priest  
 ‘the servant of the chief priest’

(112) **ΝΙ-ΕΒΙΑΙΚ**      **ΝΤΕ-ΠΙ-ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥΣ**      [John 18:26]  
 DEF.PL-servant.PL      POSS-DEF.SG.M-chief.priest  
 ‘the servants of the chief priest’

<sup>138</sup> As Shisha-Halevy (2007: 434) puts it, plurality „reduces in degree the Constituence Association”.



I also compiled a list for the lexeme types that appear in “pattern A” in P. Bodmer III. The most frequent nouns were: **ϠΗΡΙ** ‘son’ (14 times), **ΡΑΝ** ‘name’ (4 times), **ΒΑΛ** ‘eye’ (4 times), **ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ** ‘disciple’ (2 times), **ΧΡΟΧ** ‘seed’ (2 times), **ϠΟΥ** ‘glory’ (2 times), and the following nouns only occurred once in this construction: **ϠΕΡΙ** ‘daughter’, **CON** ‘brother’, **CONI** ‘sister’, **ΖΗΤ** ‘heart’, **ΒΑΛΛΑΥΧ** ‘foot’, **ΦΑΤ** ‘foot’, **САΧΙ** ‘word’, **ΒΩΚ** ‘servant’, **ΑΡΧΙΕΡΕΥΣ** ‘chief priest’, **ΖΟΥ** ‘fear’, **ΑΓΑΠΗ** ‘love’. The nouns nicely correspond to the lexical lists provided in the above cited literature for inalienable and relational concepts typical for this construction in classical Bohairic. The problem is that many words with similar lexico-semantic features do not appear in this pattern, but in either of the two alternative configurations. What is more remarkable, a few of these 17 lexemes can be attested in both of the other constructions (even the lexeme **ϠΗΡΙ** ‘son’).

I am not sure if any more can be concluded based on this extensive and comparative analysis of the data than the mere fact that the grammar of the possessive constructions in this variety is either very enegdékeny to stylistic variations or else it is too far from being understood at this point of the research. Nevertheless, there is one aspect of the results that is worth considering, namely the remarkable difference in the proportion of the patterns what has clearly been confirmed by mere numerical data and percentage. Even if one gives credit to the systematicity of the rules established for classical Bohairic that are mainly based on semantics and probably highly influenced by the actual pragmatial setting of the utterance (in which the noun phrase is used), the proportional divergence observed in the two dialectal varieties with respect the use of **ΝΤΕ-** in the same text is striking and undeniable.

As it is commonly recognized by virtue of typological studies and historical linguistics, if a language has two competing constructions for more or less the same grammatical function and the choice between the two are conditioned by individual lexemic/lexical labels (either formal properties or semantic features such as inalienability), it is usually the older and withdrawing construction that is subject to these lexical constraints. Viewing that the **ΝΤΕ-**construction is evidently the younger in the history of Egyptian, the question naturally arises how come its use is more prominent in a language variety of the fourth century than in manuscripts of the same dialect from the tenth century or even later.

There at least two answers that can be tentatively suggested: on the one hand, it might be supposed that the two versions (the one attested in P. Bodmer III. and the classical one in Horner’s edition) are not directly affiliated varieties; although they probably derive from the same proto-Bohairic dialect. On the other hand, if the direct relationship between the

two varieties is preferred to be sustained, than one has to account for a rather exceptional diachronic process: based on the data in the early Bohairic version the proportion of the lexically restricted radically decreased in favor of the new constructions mediated by **NTĒ-**. The process, however, stopped at a certain point and a core group of relational nouns in the lexicon started to systematically appear in *pattern A* and (almost) exclusively in *pattern A*, causing a much sharper grammatical split in the distribution of the possessive noun phrases. This reanalysis could even result in a proportional increase of the older pattern, as lexemes with similar lexico-semantic properties to “the core members” also started to prefer the construction grammaticalized for relational and functional conceptual types. Such a reconstructed process is undeniably strange, but is not impossible at all. It is particularly acceptable if one takes into consideration that the process could be reinforced by the influence of Sahidic, the prestigious dialect of the first millennium, in which more than 90 % of the possessive constructions were mediated by **Ń-**. Even if the distribution was conditioned on different grounds in Sahidic, the mere quantity of the data (the high frequency of **Ń-**) could advance the consolidation of *pattern A* in Bohairic.

Besides P. Bodmer III. there are other minor Biblical manuscripts or fragments that are reported to belong to one of the early Bohairic dialects, presumably to those labeled as B4 and B74 respectively. I made a survey of some of these sources as well:

The fragments in the school texts of P. Mich. Inv. 926 (Husselman 1947), with details from the *Epistle to the Romans* and from the *Book of Job*, contain seven possessive constructions, out of which only two are of *pattern A* type (and one of these is reconstructed). Unfortunately, in two of the five constructions with **NTĒ-** the first half is broken thus the article is not visible. From the remaining three cases two display the **π-... NTĒ-** pattern and finally there is a single **π-... NTĒ-** construction.<sup>139</sup>

As it was mentioned in the *Introduction*, there is another Biblical manuscript from the 4<sup>th</sup> century (P. Vat. copto 9.) which contains an early Bohairic variety (B74), but most regrettably the text is still unpublished. However, a small part of it, the second chapter of Haggai appeared in a paper by Rodolphe Kasser, Hans Quecke and Nathalie Bosson (1992), which allows us to have at least a superficial look on the possessive structures of this dialect. I found 27 possessive construction in total in this text. Out of which 17 are of pattern A-type, and 8 of pattern B. From the latter group, three are syntactically motivated. Furthermore, we have two **π-... NTĒ-** constructions, but in fact the two occurrences

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<sup>139</sup> P. Mich. Kopt. 452. (Quecke 1974), which contains fragments from the *Epistle of James* (2,15 - 3,2-6) unfortunately had no valuable data.



already cited article on Codex Scheide (1983: 317-318).<sup>140</sup> He observes that “the interplay of «*pi- nte-*» and «*p- n-*», so characteristic of Bohairic is absent here (indeed, only *p- nte-* occurs in M – a typically Fayyumic construction).” He also claims with respect to the “expansion of the noun syntagm” that “(*p-/ou-/ø-/... nim*) *nte-* signifies appurtenance and affiliation rather than possession “admitting that “after *ou-*, *ø-* and... *nim*) this is non-pertinent, since *nte-* is conditioned” thus the “opposition with *n-* is maintained only after a *p-*-determined noun”. For this semantically based account of the distribution (appurtenance and affiliation vs. possession) he cites various loci, which I checked of course. I am not completely sure what he meant with listing “agentive *nte-*“ but all the examples he cited turned out to be syntactically motivated in view of the fact that it is not only the degree of definiteness that conditions the choice between the patterns. According my observations **NTĒ-** is used when the head noun is already possessed by a possessive article (e.g. 26:28), has a demonstrative (what is more a reinforced demonstrative as in 24:14), is modified or quantified in an attributive construction (e.g. 19:28) or by a relative clause (e.g. 10:6) or simply split, i.e. the members of the construction are separated by other elements of the sentence (23:35). One of the examples he cites is used as a predicative complement (23:15), which can also be the source of the appearance of **NTĒ-**. In Shisha-Halevy’s **NTĒ-** definition expresses affiliation, location, consistence, which is true for some of the examples he quotes, but the same type of relationship characterizes phrases displaying *pattern A* as well. It is difficult to see what the essential semantic difference is between (117) and (118) if one follows his line of reasoning:

(117) **ΤΠΕΡΙΧΩΡΟΣ**                      **ΤΗΡC**    **NTĒ-Π-ΙΟΡΔΑΝΗC**                      [Matt 3:5]  
 DEF.SG.F-country.around    all-3SG-F    POSS-DEF.SG.M-Iordanes  
 ‘all the country around (lit. of) the Iordanes’<sup>141</sup>

(118) **ΠΜΑΥ**                                      **Π-Π-ΙΟΡΔΑΝΗC**                      [Matt 3:6]  
 DEF.SG.M-water    POSS-DEF.SG.M-Iordanes  
 ‘the water of the Iordanes’

It is remarkable that there are only 20 occurrences of **NTĒ-** in the whole text, which is an extremely low proportion (note that the manuscript is much longer than the Sahidic Gospel

<sup>140</sup> At the time of his paper, Codex Scheide was the only manuscript published so far from the four well-preserved codices. This is the reason of the remark he made, that the feminine determiner **†** does not exist in Middle-Egyptian. This can be due to a mere accident, as the other codices perform more instances of this definite determiner.

<sup>141</sup> One may wonder whether the use of **NTĒ-** in (117) is motivated by the the presence of the quantifier **ΤΗΡC**. Actually, I checked this possibility, but I found many examples in which the same configuration can figure in a *pattern A* (e.g. 4:8, 28:18).

of John used in this study).<sup>142</sup> Out of these 20 cases, 13 are motivated according to my observations. It is highly improbable that the remaining seven cases should be explained by complex semantic characterizations that Ariel Shisha-Halevy proposes. Codex Schøyen displays a similar proportion of **NTĒ**-constructions, but the unmotivated cases occur elsewhere in the text. Otherwise the two manuscripts agree, except for the predicative contexts (e.g. 23:15) in which oscillation can be observed – as it is usual.

The use of *Pattern A* in the two codices is absolutely regular with respect to the syntactic rules originally established for Sahidic. What is more, while Sahidic texts always present one or two counter-examples, no such “irregularity” has been found in the Middle-Egyptian Gospels. For instance, at Matthew (24:14) In Horner’s Sahidic one of the rules is violated, since the linking element **Ḣ-** is used after a deictically determined noun (119). In the corresponding phrase in Codex Scheide an **NTĒ-** can be attested. (P. Bodmer XIX has *pattern A*, but there is no demonstrative on the head noun.)

(119) **Ḣ-ḤḤ-ṬḤḤḤḤ Ḣ-ḤḤ-ḤḤḤḤḤ Ḣ-Ṭ-ḢḢṬḤḤ** [Matt 24:14, Horner]  
 CONJ.3PL-preach DOM-DEF.SG.M-gospel POSS-DEF.SG.F-kingdom  
 ‘and will be preached this gospel of the kingdom’

(120) **ḤḤ-ḢḤ-ḤḢḢḤḤ Ḣ-ḤḤ-ḤḤḤḤḤ ḤḤḤ**  
 3PL-FUTI-preach DOM-DEM.SG.M-gospel DEM.PRON.SG.M  
**NTĒ-Ṭ-ḢḢṬḤḤ** [Matt 24:14, C. Scheide]  
 POSS-DEF.SG.F-kingdom  
 ‘and will be preached this gospel of the kingdom’

In a similar case (Matthew 26:29) both Sahidic version use *pattern A* with a deictically marked possessed noun, while Codex Scheide is more “regular” in using *pattern A* but dropping out the demonstrative.

#### 4.3.5 Dialect W

The manuscript of P. Mich 3521. contains parts of the *Gospel of John* from the chapters between (6:11) to (15:11), but with numerous lacunae or entirely missing lines at several places; sometimes half or even larger portion of a given chapter is missing. In the contrastive table, in which I collected the possessive constructions from the manuscript, only the relevant (pralell) text sections will be indicated from Sahidic and early Bohairic.

<sup>142</sup> I did not count the occurrences registered in the index of the edition but the total number of **Ḣ**-possessives must be around 4-500.

As the editor of the text explains (Husselman 1962: 3), the text has no prototype, and sometimes it agrees with the Sahidic version, sometimes with the Bohairic or the Subakhmimic, and it may even happen that it does not agree with any of them. The dialect of the codex was described by Kahle (1954: 224-227) as Middle Egyptian with Fayyumic influence, but Husselman (1962: 11) prefers to consider it Fayyumic since the dialect in her view is closer to the later standardized literary Fayyumic than to Sahidic or Bohairic. The main reason for this classification is that the vocalization of this variety generally corresponds to that of Fayyumic except for the lack of lambdacisms and the rarity of double vowels. The use of perfect conjugation base  $\zeta\alpha-$ , a major characteristic of Mesokemic codices, is to be noted.

The text has been collated by Husselman herself, *viz.* with the Sahidic of Horner's edition, with the Lycopolitan of Thompson's edition and with Bohairic, both Horner's version and P. Bodmer III. But she focused on phenomena that basically differ from those investigated in this thesis, so I had to collate it myself and make this comparative table of the possessive constructions for my own purposes.

Many of the words are partly reconstructed but I only used data where I could safely rely on the reconstructions of the text-editor due to the physical context (i.e. the lacuna is not on the edge, and accordingly the length of the missing part is informative).

Table 21

The Gospel of John in dialect W – a contrastive table (with S and B4)

Locus	S	W	P. Bodmer III.
6:27	πῶνρε ἡπρωμε	πῶνρι ἡπρωμι	πῶνρι μφρωμι
6:28	νεζβηγε ἡπνουτε	νεζ[βη]ογι ἡφ†	ερζβηογι ντε φ†
6:29	πζωβ ἡπνουτε	[πζωβ] ἡφ†	πζωβ ντε φ†
6:39	πογωφ ἡπενταρταογοει	π ογωφ μ[πετεζαρταγαι	φογωφ ντε φη εταρταγοι
6:42	πῶνρε ἡωσχηφ	πῶνρι ἡι ωσχηφ	πῶνρι ἡωσχηφ
6:62	πῶνρε ἡπρωμε	πῶνρι ἡπρωμ[ι	πῶνρι ἡπρωμι
6:71	πῶνρε ἡσιμον	πῶνρι ἡ[σι]μον	<i>No data</i>
7:35	τδιασπορα ἡἡζελλην	τδιασπο]ρα ἡἡιζελλ[ην	ἡιμανχωρ εβολ ντε ἡιογινιν
7:37	πζαε ἡζοογ νοβ ντε πφα	πζαε] ἡζαογ ντε πναβ [ἡφει	ζρη δε ἡεν πιεζοογ ἡζαε ντε πἡιωφ† ἡφαι
8:39	νεζβηγε ἡαβραζαμ	νεζβηγι ἡαβραζαμ	ἡιζβηγι ντε αβρααμ
8:44	νεπιθυμια ἡπετἡειωτ	νεπιθυ]μια ἡπετἡιω[τ	ἡιεπιθυμια ντε πετεἡιωτ
9:18	ἡειοτε ἡπενταρταγ εβολ	ἡ[ια]† ἡπετε[...]	ἡεἡιο† ντε φη εταρταγ μβολ
9:28	πμαθητης ἡπετἡμαγ	πμαθητη[ς μ]πετἡμεγ	... (pronominal)



missing in P. Bodmer III. thus these texts could not be contrasted, except for the last two *loci*. It is marked, however, if the classical Bohairic version of Horner's edition displays **̄ντε-** in the given locus.

Table 22

*The Gospel of John in dialect F4 – a contrastive table (with S and B)*

Locus	S	BM Or. 5707 (F4)	B4
3:5	τμ̄ντερο̄ μ̄πνουτε̄	τμετρη̄α ντεφ̄†	... (B5: ̄ντε-)
3:10	πσᾱζ μ̄πισρᾱηλ	πσε̄ζ [μ̄πῑς]ρ̄λ	...
3:13	πω̄ηρε̄ μ̄πρω̄με̄	πω̄ηλῑ μπλω̄μι	...
3:14	πω̄ηρε̄ μ̄πρω̄με̄	πω̄ηλῑ μπλω̄μι	...
3:18	πρᾱν μ̄πω̄ηρε̄ ̄νο̄υω̄τ ̄ντε̄ π̄νο̄υτε̄	πλε̄ν μπω̄ε̄λνο̄υω̄τ ντεφ̄†	... (B5: ̄ντε-)
3:22	πκᾱζ ̄ν̄̄φο̄υδᾱια	πκε̄ζῑ ντε̄ †ο̄υῑδε̄α	... (B5: ̄ντε-)
3:25	̄μ̄μᾱθη̄της̄ ̄νω̄ζαν̄νης̄	̄ν̄̄μᾱθη̄της̄ ̄νω̄ζαν̄νης̄	... (B5: ̄ντε-)
3:29	πε̄ω̄βη̄ρ μ̄πᾱτω̄ε̄λε̄ε̄τ	πε̄ω̄βη̄λ ντε̄π̄πᾱτω̄ε̄λη̄η̄τ	...
3:29	τε̄ςμη̄ μ̄πᾱτω̄ε̄λε̄ε̄τ	τε̄ςμη̄ ντε̄π̄πᾱτω̄ε̄λη̄η̄τ	... (B5: ̄ντε-)
3:34	̄νω̄ᾱχε̄ μ̄πνο̄υτε̄	̄νω̄ε̄χῑ ν[τεφ̄†]	... (B5: ̄ντε-)
3:36	το̄ρη̄ μ̄πνο̄υτε̄	ο̄ῡβ̄ων̄τ ντεφ̄†	...
4:5	ο̄ῡπο̄λῑς ̄ντε̄ τσᾱμᾱριᾱ	ο̄ῡπο̄λῑς ντε̄τσᾱμᾱριᾱ	... (B5: ̄ντε-)
4:6	ο̄ῡπη̄γη̄ (...) ̄ντε̄ ιᾱκω̄β	ο̄ῡπη̄γη̄ (...) ντε̄ιᾱκω̄β	... (B5: ̄ντε-)
4:10	τᾱω̄ρε̄α μ̄πνο̄υτε̄	τᾱω̄ρε̄α ντεφ̄†	... (B5: ̄ντε-)
4:34	πο̄ῡω̄ μ̄πε̄ντᾱρ̄τᾱο̄ῡο̄εῑ	... (dative)	[φο̄υ]ω̄ ντε̄ φ̄η̄ ε̄τᾱρ̄τᾱο̄ῑ
4:46	κᾱνᾱ ̄ν̄̄γᾱλῑᾱιᾱ	τκᾱνᾱ ντε̄ †γᾱλῑε̄ᾱ	†γᾱνᾱ ν[τε̄] τγᾱλῑε̄[ᾱ]

The text has 16 possessives constructions altogether (with two linking elements in (3:18)), out of which 11 display an **ντε-**. The proportion of its occurrences in the text is therefore 68,75 %, which approximates the one attested in P. Bodmer III. Out of these eleven cases, three are syntactically motivated, so in neutral (definite) context the ratio between the π...-ν... and the π...-ντε-... patterns is 5:8.

It can be well observed that the F4 text rather follows the distribution that characterizes Bohairic, as it was expected of course. The high proportion of pattern π...-ντε-..., however, relates this variety more to early Bohairic, which is remarkable. The lexemes occurring in *pattern A* are nearly the same as those attested in P. Bodmer III. (ω̄ηλῑ ‘son’, λ̄εν ‘name’, μᾱθη̄της̄ ‘disciple, and finally σε̄ζ ‘teacher’).

To complement the data of this rather small fragment, it might be useful to have a look on another manuscript (BM Or. 6948, published by Gaselee 1909) with two short passages from the *Acts of the Apostles* (7:14-28 and 9:28-39). In this text I found ten possessive

constructions, six of which display the  $\pi\dots - \mathbf{n}\dots$  pattern and four present the  $\pi\dots - \mathbf{n}\tau\epsilon\dots$  pattern. It is to be noted that no  $\pi\dots - \mathbf{n}\tau\epsilon\dots$  pattern is attested in this manuscript (which can even be due to chance).

Some further manuscript still remain to be examined, first of all P. Mich 3520, which contains Biblical texts (*Ecclesiastes, 1 John, 2 Peter*) in dialect V4. This idiom is sometimes considered to be a subdialect of F4, although it is reported to have heavily been influenced by Sahidic (Schanke – Kasser 2003). I had only partial access to this edition, but based on the index, the text has surprisingly low occurrences of  $\mathbf{n}\tau\epsilon$ -. I hope to be able to work on this manuscript in the near future as it seems to promise interesting results.

## 5 Attributive constructions – a diachronic perspective

### 5.1 Attribution vs. possession

In this last chapter I recur to the attributive constructions, this time, however, from a historical point of view. The formal relatedness of Coptic attributive constructions to one of the possessive patterns (*pattern A*) is obvious and therefore needs some considerations. This chapter aims to explore their common source as well as to reconstruct the process that led to their formal opposition in Coptic.<sup>143</sup>

Attributive structures have been discussed in section 2.5, where the formal and functional opposition between possessive and attributive constructions was an essential issue in order to understand the grammatical mechanism of adnominal modification.<sup>144</sup> We have seen that practically any nominal element can appear in the attributive constructions, not exclusively property describing lexemes (section 2.3.1) and that normally the adjectives are not adjoined directly to the noun they modify but by means of a linking element  $\bar{\text{n}}$ -. These features suggest a close relationship between the possessive and attributive structures; one might even suppose that these two patterns in fact are the same. It was already mentioned that the linking elements appearing in the two constructions are also considered to be identical by many authors. Ariel Shisha-Halevy (1986: 130) describes this *nota relationis* as the “modifier and relator signal *par excellence*”. It is remarkable to note that he himself draws attention to the difficult theoretical problem of identity vs. homonymy at the beginning of his book (1986: 6 n.19). In my view, the case of *nota relationis* serves as a very good example of the dilemma: the linking element in the possessive and attributive constructions is apparently the same, but the formal identity can be defended only in historical terms. On a synchronic level, because of the different syntactic environments in which the two morphemes occur, it is a matter of mere homonymy.

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<sup>143</sup> The discussion presented in this chapter was partly published in a paper in *Lingua Aegyptia* (2009)

<sup>144</sup> Only Sahidic data were discussed in chapter 2, but as far as I can judge, no remarkable variation can be attributed to the other dialects in this respect. Occasional absence of the linking element in certain varieties can be archaic traits preserving some properties of a preceding system. For instance, in dialect W, the modifier  $\text{ⲟϣⲱⲣ}$  ‘single, only’ appears twice in the text and is directly adjoined to the head noun in both of its occurrences. According to the editor (Husselmann 1962: 45 n28. citing a note in Crum’s *Dictionary*) this phenomenon can be attested in archaic Sahidic as well.

The structural differences of the two patterns have been demonstrated: on the one hand, the second element of the attributive construction, the modifier introduced by  $\bar{n}$ -, cannot have any determiner; on the other hand, however, the construction as whole is not constrained with respect to definiteness, contrary to what was claimed for the possessive *patter A*. The phenomenon of ‘placement opposition’ (when the members of the constructions are freely interchangeable to express pragmatic features such as an affective charge or pejorative meaning, see section 2.3.1) is characteristic of the attributive construction only. This word order variation is most probably a secondary phenomenon that developed only in the Coptic stage of the Egyptian language (or directly before Coptic), and is most likely to have emerged only after the *noun n-noun* pattern had already been fully established and grammaticalized to express an attributive relationship.

At this point, the following questions may be raised: what is the source of the formal likeness between the two patterns; how did this system develop, and what were the syntactic and semantic preconditions for the grammaticalization process; and finally, if the two constructions really have a common source, why do the two patterns still differ and do not show a complete formal identity?

## **5.2 Reconstruction of the diachronic process: origin and development**

The formal likeness of the linking element in the two constructions is obviously not a matter of chance. From a diachronic point of view, the two morphemes are one and the same, since the source of the attributive construction is the possessive one. In the following sections, the following aspects of this process will be investigated: the possible reasons why the change took place as well as the syntactic and semantic preconditions for the change. Furthermore, it is reasonable to ask how this development can be explained if the two constructions in Coptic originate from the same pattern indeed.

### **5.2.1 Motivation**

The need for a new construction might be related to the decline of the adjectival category – if there ever was one. The well-known fact that the agreement on adjectives (i.e. the feminine and plural endings) gradually disappears in Late Egyptian is merely a question of

morphology rather than syntax. At the same time, however, two other important phenomena can be observed. Firstly, nisbation, a productive device in Earlier Egyptian for deriving adjectives from nouns and prepositions, ceased to be productive by Late Egyptian where the remaining representatives are lexicalized items.<sup>145</sup> Due to the lack of a productive adjectival derivational method, new strategies were needed to relate two nouns in such a way that one of these nouns did not referred to an entity but rather classified or characterized the other. Secondly, important changes are to be observed in the predicative use of the adjectives as well. The old *nfr sw* construction, whereas still present in LE texts (in the more conservative registers), is gradually replaced by other strategies: by nominal sentence patterns and Cleft Sentence on the one hand, and later also by a new set of adjective-verbs derived by means of the *n3-* prefix, on the other hand. At the end of this process, Coptic has the following devices to express adjectival predication: the nominal sentence (121), the *n3-nfr* > **ⲛⲁⲛⲟϥ=ϥ** type verboids (122), and the stative constructions.<sup>146</sup> This overall process must have concurred with a gradual deflation of the word-stock performing the traditional property-assigning adjectival functions.

- |       |    |   |                  |                       |   |                  |
|-------|----|---|------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|
| (121) | a. | <b>ⲡⲁ-ϥⲚⲞⲛ</b><br>POSSART.SG.M.1SG-brother<br>'it/he is my brother' | <b>ⲡⲉ</b><br>COP | b.                    | <b>ⲟϥ-ⲁⲒⲁⲑⲟϥ</b><br>INDF.SG-good<br>'he/it is (a) good' | <b>ⲡⲉ</b><br>COP |
| (122) |    | Demotic <i>n3-nfr=f</i>   | >                | Coptic <b>ⲛⲁⲛⲟϥ=ϥ</b> |   |                  |
|       |    | Demotic <i>n3-<sup>c</sup>=f</i>                                    | >                | Coptic <b>ⲛⲁⲗ=ϥ</b>   |   |                  |
|       |    | Demotic <i>n3-<sup>c</sup>š3y=f</i>                                 | >                | Coptic <b>ⲛⲁϣϣ=ϥ</b>  |   |                  |

### 5.2.2 Syntactic and semantic preconditions for the **n**-marked attribution

The syntactic and semantic preconditions for the development of the **n**-marked attribution were present in earlier language stages since an alternative strategy to express attributive relationship had already existed from the very beginning. The so-called *indirect genitive* was occasionally used to express a relationship between two nouns that was more like attribution than possession.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Junge (1996: 67), Černý–Groll (1978: 83).

<sup>146</sup> By stative constructions basically two configurations are meant: the stative of intransitive verbs whose infinitive expresses process or entry into a state, e.g. **ϥ-ⲟϥⲟⲩⲱ** 'it is white'; and the stative construction of the **ⲟ n̄-** type, e.g. **ϥⲟ-ⲛ̄ⲛⲟⲩ** 'it is great'; cf. Layton (2000: §168b and §179). For Late Egyptian, see Junge (1996: 182–183). For the *n3-nfr* type adjective verbs in Demotic, consult Spiegelberg (1925: §117), Johnson (1976: 29–30), Simpson (1996: 127–128). A list of Coptic adjective verbs is provided *inter alia* by Shisha-Halevy (1988: 196) and Layton (2000: §376).

Alan Gardiner states in his Middle Egyptian grammar (1957: §94.2) that the adjective may “follow its noun as an indirect genitive”. His example is cited as (123) below, along with further examples illustrating the same phenomenon.<sup>147</sup>

(123)  $\epsilon$  *n* *tbwt* *n* *ḥd*  
 pair of sandal of white  
 ‘(a) pair of white sandals’

(124) *jt.f* *wj* *r* *s.t=f* *n.t* *snḏm* [Sh.S. 77–78]  
 carry-3SG.M me to place.F-3SG of.F resting  
 ‘he carried me to his resting-place’

(125) *m dp.t* *n.t* *mḥ* *120 m 3w=s* *mḥ* *40 m wsh=s* [Sh.S. 25–26]  
 in boat.F of.F cubit 120 in length-3SG.F cubit 40 in width-3SG.F  
 ‘in a boat of 120 cubits in length and 40 cubits in width’

(126) *ḥr* *n* *rmt* [Ham. 191,6]  
 face of man  
 ‘human-faced’

(127) *nh3w* *n* *mfk3t* [Westcar 6,5–6]  
 jewelry of turquoise  
 ‘jewelry of turquoise’

The qualifying-adjectival nature of this usage of the indirect genitive has been noted by several authors with special regard to Late Egyptian where the fully developed determiner-system makes it more detectable: the absence of an article before the second element of the construction and thus the non-referential use of these nouns become ‘visible’ in this language stage.<sup>148</sup> Adolf Erman and Friedrich Junge offered a typological classification of the cases in which this construction is used (see (128)–(131)). It is to be noted that many of the Middle Egyptian examples can be grouped under the same categories:

– Material or composition

(128) *p3* *ḥtm* *n* *nbw* [HorSeth 6,1]  
 DEF.SG.M signet-ring of gold  
 ‘the signet-ring of gold’

– Measure, size and content

(129) *w<sup>ε</sup>* *tbw* *n* *ḥnq.t* [pD’Orb 8,6]  
 one jar of beer  
 ‘a jar of beer’

<sup>147</sup> The examples (124)–(125) are mine from the story of the Shipwrecked Sailor (Blackman 1932), while (126)–(127) are borrowed from Shisha-Halevy (2007b: 240).

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Erman (1933: 93–95 §§209–212), Junge (1996: 65, beschreibende Näherbestimmung = descriptive specification). See also Korostovtsev (1973: 102 §85) for the phenomenon of ‘translation’.

– Nature and origin

- (130) *qs n rmt* [Lansing 7,8]  
bone of man  
'human bone'

– Abstract nouns, infinitives

- (131) *p3y=j ʕnh n m3ʕ.t* [Amarna Boundary Stela S, 13]  
POSSART.SG.M.1SG oath of truth  
'my true oath'

This listing, however, is not exhaustive. Adolf Erman himself noted that the construction can simply indicate the *general relatedness* of an entity to something.

As opposed to the verbal patterns, the demotic noun phrase structure has never been thoroughly examined. Notable exceptions to this overall picture are Simpson's grammar based on the Ptolemaic sacerdotal decrees (1996: Part 1) and the insightful observations made by Shisha-Halevy (1989: §3) in describing the language of P. Vandier (the latter papyrus is written in Hieratic, but its language is claimed to be rather close to Demotic). Demotic shows a considerable progress towards the Coptic system: the traditional way of attribution (i.e. adjectives positioned directly after the head-noun, with no mediation, showing some traces of gender-number agreement) becomes extremely restricted. As Simpson demonstrates (1996: 50–52 §2.2), the decrees – in accordance with the data from other demotic texts – provide evidence for a small number of lexemes only that are able to appear in the classical direct attributive construction.<sup>149</sup> At the same time, there are several *n*-marked attributives attested in the corpus, which resemble those of the earlier patterns in Middle and Late Egyptian (examples are provided by Simpson 1996: 51–52).

However, the interpretation of the demotic data raises some serious problems: apart from the fact that the *n*- morpheme is functionally overloaded – and as such, sometimes ambiguous even in the other language stages – in several cases the linking element is simply not written out in Demotic, which may lead to confusion with either apposition or co-ordination.<sup>150</sup>

As far as the semantic preconditions for the functional extension (and subsequent spreading) of the *n*-marked pattern are concerned, the following two points are worth mentioning: as it was pointed out in section 2.5, possessive constructions in general are used not only to express the possessive relationship proper, but readily encode other types

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<sup>149</sup> Cf. also Spiegelberg (1925 §67) and Shisha-Halevy (1989: §3.3.1).

<sup>150</sup> Viewing that in such cases only the syntactic environment may be decisive in distinguishing the patterns (cf. Simpson 1996: 72), these data can hardly be used for testing.

of semantic relationships as well, such as appurtenance, relationship of part to whole, component to system, specification of material, source, origin, quantity, place, time, or simply relatedness to another entity – just to mention a few of the possible relation-types that are not formally distinguished in several languages of the world.

Furthermore, both possessive and attributive relationships share a kind of restrictive function. Possessors can typically serve as an anchoring device: a reference point by which the referent of a noun can be identified and restricted. At the same time, attributes are comparable to relative clauses in that they restrict the possible referents of the head noun by classifying it as a member of a group or a category. (For instance, the expression *qs n rmt* ‘a human bone’ restricts the potential referents to a narrower set of possible *denotatums*, in this concrete example, to the bones that belong to a human creature.) Of course, such qualified or classified nouns do not need to refer to an actual individual or item. This is why an attributive construction may have any kind of determiner including zero-determination as it was demonstrated for Coptic.<sup>151</sup>

It has been established for the nouns appearing in the pseudo-genitive constructions in pre-Coptic stages that they typically denote materials and abstract notions; they are kind-referring, class-referring, etc. Comparing this list with the (selective) semasiological sub-grouping proposed by Shisha-Halevy (1986: 134 §4.2.1.2.1) for the ‘gendered common nouns’ that can take the second-place position in attributive constructions as modifiers, the categories turn out to be to be more or less identical. In view of the continuity of this type of construction, there is nothing remarkable in the practice that certain ‘gendered common nouns’ may appear in Coptic attributive constructions, since these types of nouns could always appear in qualifying-genitive constructions. In fact, the earlier pseudo-genitive pattern with classifying, categorizing function provided the structural prototype for an alternative way of attribution. What was a true innovation is that the semantic features shared by property-assignment and classification led to a new grammatical system in which prototypical adjectives (or one may call them ‘genderless common nouns’) also entered this pseudo-genitive pattern, with the old regular unmediated attributive patterns becoming irregular remnants. My claim is that as soon as the *n*-marked construction

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<sup>151</sup> Simpson (1996: 71–72) points out that the *pʒ A n wʿ B* possessive pattern in demotic is an interesting intermediary form between the two types (i.e. attribution and possession). E. g. *tʒ šr.t n wʿ mr-mšʿ* ‘the daughter of a general’ [I Setne 3:1] or *tʒ s-ħm.t n ky* ‘the wife of another’ [Insinger 7:22] where the *rectum* does not contain an identifiable phrase, and the genitive is thus not relational. In fact, this type corresponds to the Coptic data I cited in (76) and in (77) in section 4.1. to illustrate that this type of construction can be semantically indefinite, but at the same time syntactically definite. This effect seems to emerge exactly with relational nouns only.

became open for *both* gendered and genderless common nouns, it finally and definitely detached from the possessive pattern, and, as a consequence, the *nota relationis* started a new career as a generalized modifier marker.

### 5.2.3 Generalized adnominal modifier-marker

A further argument for the *generalized modifier marker* nature of the linking element **n-** in attributive constructions is that it may have a prepositional phrase complement as well. A prepositional modifier within a noun phrase is not a frequent phenomenon in Coptic, and was never so in earlier stages of Egyptian either. It might be due to the fact that a ‘noun phrase + prepositional phrase’ sequence can constitute an independent sentence in Coptic, the so-called First Present or adverbial sentence (there is no need for a copula). In Earlier Egyptian, prepositions were normally converted to a corresponding *nisbe* adjective when used to modify a noun (e.g. *ntrw jmjw pt* instead of *ntrw m pt* ‘the gods in the sky’):<sup>152</sup>

- (132) *ntr.w m pt* > *ntr.w jmjw pt*  
 god.PL in sky god.PL NISB.in.PL sky  
 ‘gods in the sky’

In Coptic prepositional modifiers within a noun phrase might be introduced by a relative converter or else by the mediation of **n-** (see (133) and (134) below), which is most probably the same linking element as the one attested in the attributive construction. Admittedly, this operation remains optional, as in (135).<sup>153</sup>

- (133) **π-ΕΓΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ Ν-ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΝ** [title of the Gospel]  
 DEF.SG.M-gospel ATTR-according.to John  
 ‘the gospel according to John’

- (134) **ΟΥ-ΩΝ̄ Ν-ΩΛ ΕΝΕΩ** [Matt 25:46]  
 INDF.SG-life ATTR-till eternity  
 ‘an eternal life’

<sup>152</sup> The only apparent exception is the partitive construction. After presenting this paper at a conference in Basel, Jean Winand drew my attention to an expression also appearing in the Story of Sinuhe, where a possessive marker is followed by a prepositional phrase: *jw=j hr ḥs.wt n.t hr nswt* ‘I was in the favor of the king’ (Sin B309-310). Alan Gardiner (1957: §158) had mentioned it among other similar phenomenon considering *hr nswt* as an idiomatic phrase, which serves as a noun (§158.2) rather than as a true PP complement. The honorific transposition in both versions of the above mentioned Sinuhe locus as well as the fact that in the ostracon version (BM 5629) an ending *-t* is added to *hr* may support Gardiner’s view against the prepositional analysis.

<sup>153</sup> For prepositional phrases appearing as bare adnominal modifiers without the linking element, see Layton (2000: §124 and 103b); cf. also Till (1961: §116).

(135) π-ΩΝ2 ψΑ            ενε2  
 DEF.SG.M-life till    eternity  
 ‘eternal life / Living forever’

[Marc 10:17]

#### 5.2.4 Problems with defining the exact time of the grammaticalization

At this point a natural question arises: when did this **N**-marked pattern grammaticalized in such a way that adjective-like elements could also enter the construction?

Attempts to define the relative date of the grammaticalization have to face the following problems. The change must obviously have taken place some time before Coptic, but the majority of Coptic lexemes to which the term ‘adjective’ can be applied at all is made up of Greek loan adjectives. The extremely high number of Greek loanwords in the Coptic vocabulary suggests that they probably entered the spoken language on an increasing scale in the pre-Coptic stage, but it is not reflected in written Demotic, which can be characterized by a strong resistance to foreign influences – as it was also outlined in the introductory chapter of the thesis (in section 1.2.2). Demotic not only ignores the Greek language entirely, but its purist nature also manifests itself by not revealing several grammatical and lexical changes that can be attested in Coptic but seemingly without any precedent (the systematic use of the linking element **ⲛⲧⲉ** in *pattern B*- type possessive constructions being just one of these innovations). It is quite possible that the **N**-marked attributive construction was one of the colloquial constructions suppressed and hidden by the conservatism of written Demotic and by an overall effect of diglossia.

I found reference to an inverted attributive construction in Old Coptic (the inverted construction presupposes the grammaticalization of the generalized modifier marker), but the Paris Magical Papyrus, which Haardt cites (1949:81), is of rather late date (3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> c.). I carried out a general survey in the corpus of the Medinet Madi ostraca archive as well, but most regrettably with no conclusive results.<sup>154</sup> These texts can be dated to the the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, and to some extent, seem to reveal the contemporary spoken variety of the language with a considerable amount of Greek loan words. I was looking for the traces of

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<sup>154</sup> See Bresciani – Pinaudi (1987) for a general description of the corpus, and Pernigotti (1984: 788–789) for the observable dialectal peculiarities of the Fayyumic dialect in the texts. Greek nouns can have a Demotic definite article and Greek verbs in the infinitive are combined with the Egyptian auxiliary *ir* (‘to do’) in a series of periphrastic tenses according to the later practice of certain Coptic dialects. Previously invisible grammatical constructions and sound changes are observable as well. For further examples, see Ray (1994: 257–258). Major editions are Bresciani et al. (1983), Gallo (1997), Menchetti (2006), but unfortunately I had access only to two of them.

such constructions in which either a loan adjective is inserted into Egyptian by the help of the generalized adnominal modifier or a native ‘true’ adjective appears in similar context. The problem with the Medinet Madi ostraca is similar to that of Demotic in general: the linking elements in the form of *n-* are randomly omitted in writing (even in dative or partitive expressions). The problem of defining the date of the grammaticalization can hardly be solved at the present state of research.

### 5.3 Concluding remarks on the Coptic construction types

The possessive *Pattern A* is distinguished by the obligatory definiteness of its head-noun. When explaining how this obligatory definiteness developed, I will rely on Leo Depuydt’s theory (2010). According to his line of reasoning, the whole process began with the emergence of the possessive article in Late Egyptian. As a consequence, a new strategy was needed to express a pronominal possessor with indefinite possessed nouns and with nouns modified by a demonstrative. In the beginning, more strategies were used (e.g. independent pronouns; relative clauses of the type ‘a house which is mine’), but after all, the preposition *mdj/mtw* ‘with, at’, originally used only to express sentential possession, absorbed the function of introducing pronominal possessors with non definite head nouns. However, this use of the preposition long remained limited to the pronominal possessors and only spread into patterns with nominal possessors much later, directly before Coptic. By the time of Coptic a completely split system developed within possessives (*Pattern A* and *B*), with a highly regularized use of the *n*-mediated *Pattern A*: this now required a strictly adjacent and obligatorily definite possessed noun. The new syntactic opposition between *pattern A* and *pattern B* might have a share in the reanalysis of the attributive constructions as well, since the semantically vacuous *nota relationis* in the attributive patterns did not take part in the definiteness opposition and had to step on an independent path of grammaticalization: it became a generalized modifier-marker.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that certain Coptic dialects display a probably more advanced state of the distribution of the patterns in that the use of the new construction mediated by **NTG-** further spreads to the unmarked possessive contexts, where no syntactic constraints would require its use. The decrease of *pattern A*-type constructions in these varieties can be due to the fact that the occurrences of the older pattern becomes lexically conditioned and limited to express inalienable possessive relationship.

## 6 Conclusion

The dissertation has several conclusions. As for the diachronic aspects of the investigation, it has been proposed that the distributional properties of Coptic possessive constructions are closely related to the changes that can be observed in the overall system of determiners. With the emergence of a new series of determiners and by the grammaticalization of the determiner slot to encode definiteness on a syntactic level, the notion of (non)definiteness became a crucial factor in the reorganization of the patterns. The descendant of the more ancient *indirect genitive construction* continued in the syntactically constrained *pattern A* in Sahidic: it can only be used in the environments in which obligatory definiteness and direct structural adjacency hold. At the same time a new prepositional possessive is used in the remainder of the contexts. The younger construction mediated by  $\bar{n}t\epsilon$ - also appears as the stylistic variant of the older one, what is more, in certain literary dialects of Coptic it spreads to the syntactically unmarked contexts as well resulting in an alternative distribution in these varieties. The choice between the two patterns is influenced by the lexico-semantic features of the possessed noun.

It has also been demonstrated that the formal likeness of the attributive and the possessive constructions can be due to their common source in the qualitative genitive pattern, but as soon as “true” property-assigning adjectives started to appear in the *n*-marked attributive constructions, this linking element definitely left the possessive sphere and grammaticalized as a *generalized modifier marker*.

As far as the comparative dialectal results are concerned, the investigation of the possessive constructions in the early dialectal varieties turned out to be fruitful: it has been demonstrated that the research of such a seemingly insignificant phenomenon as the micro-variation in the use of the linking elements ( $\bar{n}$ - vs.  $\bar{n}t\epsilon$ -) may contribute to our understanding of how closely certain dialects or idioms are related. The investigation of determination did not prove to be conclusive in the same manner. The empirical research I carried out merely reinforced the already suspected fact that the divergent systems of determination-marking cannot be studied in isolation: beyond the basic concepts of specificity, referentiality, etc. further aspects of the grammatical system (which present themselves on the sentential or even on higher levels) must be taken into consideration. The study of information structure, however, as it is commonly recognized, is extremely

difficult in a language that is only attested in written sources. Judging the informational status of a noun phrase within a given discourse is ambiguous if it is not encoded by a specific structural configuration, such as, for instance, the Cleft-sentence or the Second Tense in Coptic. Moreover, in varieties where more than one definite article is used, the degree of normalization in writing might also have influenced the evidence we have; that is to say, the manuscripts may differ as to how consistently these alternates are reflected in writing.

# List of abbreviations

## *Abbreviations used in the glosses*

ATTR	attributive construction marker
CAUSINF	causative infinitive
CIRC	circumstantial (converter)
COP	copula
CONJ	conjunctive
DEF	definite article
DEM	demonstrative
DOM	differential object marker
DU	dualis
EXIST	existential
FUTI	First Future
FUTIII	Third Future
IMPF	imperfect (converter)
INDF	indefinite article
NEG	negative
PL	plural
POSS	possessive marker
POSSART	possessive article
PF	perfect
PRT	particle
Q	qualitativus
QU	question particle
REL	relative (converter)
SG	singular

## *Some frequently used abbreviations in the references*

CE	The Coptic Encyclopedia
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
HSK	Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft.
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur

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