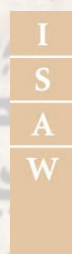


Provinces and Empires
Islamic Egypt in the Antique World
Administrative Transformations,
Pluralistic Society and Competing Memories
2nd International Conference



Multilingualism and Social Belonging
in the Late Antique and Early Islamic Near East

ISAW, June 9-10, 2014



PROVINCES AND EMPIRES
ISLAMIC EGYPT IN THE ANTIQUE WORLD
ADMINISTRATIVE TRANSFORMATIONS,
PLURALISTIC SOCIETY AND COMPETING MEMORIES

2nd conference organized by

Roger Bagnall & Robert Hoyland (ISAW)
Sobhi Bouderbala (Tunis Univ.), Sylvie Denoix (CNRS)

MULTILINGUALISM AND SOCIAL BELONGING
IN THE LATE ANTIQUE AND EARLY ISLAMIC NEAR EAST

ISAW, June 9-10, 2014

SCHEDULE

Monday, June 9th

9: 45 - Roger Bagnall: *Welcome*

1. Passages and interfaces

1.1 Decline/interferences of languages

10: 00 - Scott Johnson, Dumbarton Oaks and Georgetown University
East of Byzantium Revisited: The Status of Greek in a Multilingual Mediterranean

10: 45 - Coffee break

11: 15 - Janneke de Jong, Leiden University
The decreasing role of Greek in the documentary culture of Early Islamic Egypt

12: 00 - Christian Sahner, Princeton University
Issues of language and translation in martyrological texts

12: 45 – Lunch

1.2 Textual influences and translations: the case of legal documents

2: 00 - Robert Hoyland, ISAW
The use of Arabic and Greek in the Nessana papyri.

2: 45 - Jelle Bruning, Leiden University
*Qur'ānic Arabic and the formulary of *dhikr ḥaqq-s* from the Sufyanid period*

3: 30 – Tea

4 :00 - Mathieu Tillier , Institut français du Proche-Orient (IFPO), Beirut
*From *Isbo' bokht* to *Ibn al-Tayyib*: the Translation of Syriac Canon Law into Arabic in the Eleventh Century CE*

4: 45 - Eve Krakowski, Yale University, Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Postdoctoral Fellow, Program in Judaic Studies
Multilingualism as legal strategy in Cairo Geniza documents

Tuesday, June 10th

2. Naming places, persons and groups in multilingual contexts

9: 30 - Audrey Dridi, Université de Paris 1 - Panthéon Sorbonne,
UMR 8167 Orient & Méditerranée

The case of Fossaton and Babylon during the first century of Islamic Egypt

10: 15 - Sobhi Bouderbala, University of Tunis

ⲛⲓⲗ – *Μωαγαρίται and the Military System in Egypt in the 1st Century of Islamic Rule*

11: 00 - Coffee break

3. New approaches for an old documentation

3.1 Multilingual lexicography

11: 30 - Dylan Burns, DDGLC

On the Perils of Bilingualism in Graeco-Coptic Lexicography, with special attention to Nag Hammadi Codex VII: A Report from the Project Database and Dictionary of Greek Loanwords in Coptic

12: 15 - Sobhi Bouderbala – Audrey Dridi – Alain Delattre

PAPYVOC: a multilingual glossary of technical terms of the Islamic administration (7th-10th century)

1: 00 - Lunch

3.2 Global approach and social network

2: 30 - Alain Delattre, Université libre de Bruxelles – Sylvie Denoix, CNRS, UMR 8167

The 8th-century multilingual archive from Edfu: a networking approach

3: 15 - Marie Legendre, Oxford University – Arietta Papaconstantinou, Reading University

The 8th-century multilingual archive from Aphrodito: new perspectives

4: 00 - Tea

4 : 30 - General discussion, Roger Bagnall

Abstracts

1. Passages and interfaces

1.1 Decline/interferences of languages

Scott Johnson, Dumbarton Oaks and Georgetown University

East of Byzantium Revisited: The Status of Greek in a Multilingual Mediterranean

The growth of the field of late antique studies has brought with it the greater legitimization of eastern Christian languages as part of the historical fabric, not just of Late Antiquity but of the medieval world as a whole. In the epochal volume *East of Byzantium* (1982), the proceedings of a Dumbarton Oaks Symposium under the same name, specialists in different eastern Christian cultures and languages came together to offer a status quaestionis on research happening at the time outside Byzantine Studies proper and on regions also (largely) outside historical Byzantium. The subsequent absorption of these extra-Byzantine topics into Byzantine Studies as a discipline followed in the footsteps of Late Antiquity. However, in recent years some late Roman historians, especially Sir Fergus Millar, have questioned the value of non-Greek language traditions in the narrative of the fourth through sixth centuries, thereby casting cold water on the dynamic, pluralist vision of Late Antiquity and Byzantium. What, then, in the midst of this debate, can we say was the real status of Greek? What is at stake today when Greek is claimed as the sole *Rechtssprache* (or *Reichssprache*) of the eastern Roman empire? This paper argues that the emergent model of a “big tent Byzantium” (an elaboration of Obolensky’s concept of the Byzantine Commonwealth) can help defend the multilingual and multicultural Late Antiquity against detractors such as Millar. In the fourth to ninth centuries Greek was viewed by Christians in the Near East as both an imperialist language of the Byzantine state and also a powerful vehicle for artistic endeavor, education, and translation. Moreover, it is impossible to separate the question of “what Greek was” from the many languages that interacted with it and extended its cultural patrimony long after the Arab conquest.

Janneke de Jong, Leiden University

The decreasing role of Greek in the documentary culture of Early Islamic Egypt

In recent years the study of Greek papyri from Egypt has gained wider scholarly attention in chronological sense. Whereas it was already recognized long ago that Greek continued to be used as documentary language after the Islamic conquest and in spite of the existence of several volumes of Early Islamic Greek texts, the study of this corpus and the historical context within which they originated has received relatively little scholarly attention. However, especially since a decade or so this situation has been changing rapidly.

The Greek documents constitute a valuable source of information on Early Islamic Egypt, first and foremost for the administration of the province, but also for its multilinguistic landscape. Next to Greek and Coptic, immediately after the Islamic conquest Arabic appears in papyri.

One of the consequences of Islamic conquest was the disappearance of the Greek language from the documentary record. However, given the numbers of Greek documents this was a long-term process rather than an immediate consequence of the domination by a new foreign group with a distinct culture and language. In this paper, I propose to look at the corpus of (dated) documents from Early Islamic Egypt, analyzing the documents by looking at the quantity, typology and the contexts of use of Greek in relation to Coptic and/or Arabic, in order to get a clearer view on the position of Greek in Early Islamic Egypt.

Christian Sahner, Princeton University

Greek, Arabic, Georgian, and Syriac: Notes on the Language of Martyrology in the Early Islamic Period

Christian martyrologies constitute some of our richest sources for understanding relations between Muslims and Christians in the early Islamic period. Less acknowledged is their value for studying language change and translation at the time. This paper aims to profile the languages of the martyrological texts (Greek, Arabic, Latin, Georgian, Armenian, and Syriac), and what these languages tell us about shifts in culture among Christians in the post-conquest period. The paper will investigate specifically why Syriac declined as a language of martyrological production, while Greek, Arabic, and Georgian flourished. It will also attempt to explain what this disparity tells us about varying levels of persecution among different churches of the early medieval Middle East.

1.2 Textual influences and translations: the case of legal documents

Robert Hoyland, ISAW

The use of Arabic and Greek in the Nessana papyri

Excavations in the village of Nessana, in southern Israel/Palestine, by the American Colt Expedition in the 1930s brought to light a corpus of papyri that comprise almost 200 documents as well as a number of literary and theological items. They were found in two caches in two separate churches, that of the Theotokos in the south of the village and that of Saints Sergius and Bacchus to the north. The texts span the sixth and seventh centuries and so are able to reveal to us aspects of the life of this community both before and after the Arab conquests. There are about forty papyri pertaining to the Islamic period, dealing with taxation, compulsory service, farming, provisioning of the army and personal matters. Some of these forty documents use both Arabic and Greek, but in different ways. In a number of cases there is an Arabic text on one side and a Greek one on the other, with no direct connection between the two. A few are single documents using both languages, but are often written by different scribes and are not usually fully bilingual (i.e. the Arabic and Greek texts do not fully correspond). This paper will discuss this phenomenon and announce the imminent digitization of this corpus by ISAW after a wait of some eighty years.

Jelle Bruening, Leiden University

Qur'ānic Arabic and the formulary of dhikr ḥaqq-s from the Sufyanid period

This paper deals with the formulary of a small corpus of legal documents that date from the A.D. 660s and 670s. These documents give direct information on legal practices current among Egypt's seventh-century Arab community. Beside formulary and scribal traditions, it will address developments in the relationship between legal practices and the policies of political and religious authorities. A close study of those documents shows that seventh-century Arabic legal documents of the dhikr ḥaqq type followed to a considerable extent a fixed formulary. The paper's main argument will be that, the common formulary notwithstanding, only some documents contain an elsewhere unattested validation clause. This paper will analyze this clause in detail and argues that the clause bears strong influences of Qur'ānic Arabic. The documents offer a valuable contribution to modern discussions on the use of Arabic in seventh-century legal contexts.

Mathieu Tillier, Institut français du Proche-Orient (IFPO), Beirut

From Ishoʿbokht to Ibn al-Ṭayyib: the Translation of Syriac Canon Law into Arabic in the Eleventh Century CE

Canon law of the East-Syrian church was mainly written in Syriac during the first centuries of Islam – Synodicon Orientale, treaties by the catholicos Timothy I, Ishoʿ bar Nun, etc. Syriac was used as a lingua franca among Oriental Christians, and even Ishoʿbokht’s Book of Judgments, originally composed in Pahlavi in the late eighth century CE, was immediately translated into Syriac in Baghdad.

Syriac soon loosed ground as the Church’s language, however. Already in the tenth century, Arabic canonical collections began to appear. This tendency was confirmed in the eleventh century, especially in the work of the Baghdadi Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043). This important East-Syrian canonist, who was also a priest, a philosopher and a physician, wrote an important two-volume compendium, *Fiqh al-naṣrāniyya*, in which he proposed partial translations of previous Syriac legal books. The consequences of this linguistic shift in canon law literature, which probably responded to the expectations of Iraqi Arabicized Christians, need yet to be addressed. In this paper, I will examine a series of examples related to procedural law in order to show how Ibn al-Ṭayyib’s translations of Syriac canon law – with a special stress on Ishoʿbokht’s legal treaty – resulted in an adaptation of previous texts to a new historical and linguistic context. I will especially focus on the following issues:

- Terminological choices: How does Ibn al-Ṭayyib translate into Arabic concepts pertaining to Syriac canon law? When does he keep Syriac words in the Arabic text? In what field does he look for Arabic equivalents for Syriac words? What is the impact of these choices on the final text?
- Construction of identities: How does this translation/adaptation of Syriac canon law reveal the way Christians represented themselves in a dominant Muslim context? What did they adopt from their Arabic linguistic environment? To what extent did their legal thought and institutions belong to the Islamic surrounding society? How did Christian scholars try to distinguish themselves?

Eve Krakowski, Yale University, Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Postdoctoral Fellow, Program in Judaic Studies

Multilingualism as legal strategy in Cairo Geniza documents

This paper examines language switching between Judeo-Arabic, Hebrew, and Jewish Aramaic in eleventh- and twelfth-century legal documents from the Cairo Geniza. The Geniza corpus, an enormous collection of discarded documents and literary manuscripts preserved in a synagogue in Fustat, Egypt, contains as many as 3,000-4,000 contracts and records of testimony produced by and for use in rabbinic courts in Fatimid and Ayyubid Egypt and Syria. This is one of the largest collections of legal documents to have survived from the medieval Islamic Near East, as well as the most diverse. It not only contains an unparalleled range of document genres, but the documents themselves are remarkably variable and flexible compared to surviving Islamic documents from the same period, a feature that renders them unusually valuable evidence for legal practice. This paper draws on research conducted for a larger collaborative project funded by the ACLS, which aims to develop a scholarly framework for analyzing Geniza legal and administrative documents in the context of the broader history of Near Eastern documentary production. I will argue that Jewish scribes deliberately used both Hebrew/Aramaic and Arabic legal clauses and technical terms that carried legal meaning in both Jewish and Islamic courts, in order to render Jewish documents usable in either legal arena—but that they drew on these two linguistic repertoires in somewhat different ways. Attention to the legal import of linguistic choices in these documents can yield clues to their social and political uses for litigants and court officials alike.

2. Naming places, persons and groups in multilingual contexts

Audrey Dridi, Université de Paris 1 - Panthéon Sorbonne, CNRS,
UMR 8167 Orient & Méditerranée, Islam médiéval

The case of Fossaton and Babylon during the first century of Islamic Egypt

Whether in Coptic, Greek or Arabic papyri, the toponyms “Fustāṭ” (or Fossaton) and “Babylon” are clearly distinguished, at least until the end of the 8th century. Although this double toponymy has often been noted, it has not been systematically analysed. What is certain, is that Babylon is not the Greek/Coptic equivalent of the Arabic Fustāṭ. This paper will first explore the territories – undefined in the documents – that these two toponyms refer to, according to the linguistic context in which they appear. For example, does Babylon, in Greek documents, fit with the same territorial reality as Babylon in the Coptic context? Thus, this paper will address the impact of languages, according to their context, on the way Egyptians and Muslims could picture the new capital. Seen from a wider perspective, we will attempt to understand if Fossaton was a pre-Islamic local toponym – as it has been very often assumed without systematic analysis – or rather an Arabic name hellenized or even more likely a way for the indigenous to distinguish the ancient and new territories that constituted the new Islamic capital.

Sobhi Bouderbala, University of Tunis

جند – *Μωαγαρίται* and the Military System in Egypt in the 1st Century of Islamic Rule

The analysis of the technical terms of the military and the tax system offers an interesting way for studying the interference between the two main languages of Islamic Egypt in the first century of hiġra (Greek and Arabic).

The military system in early Islam is based on the concept of dīwān al-ġund, a complex military and fiscal process which aimed to provide regular allowances to the conquest armies and their families. Pre-Fatimid sources describe the composition of the dīwān in Fustāṭ and the way the administration distributed money and food among the ġund. On the other hand, administrative documents, in Greek (the post-conquest years), in Arabic, or bilingual, show how the authority in Fustāṭ controlled the local powers (especially in the Middle Egypt) and how the fiscal system worked.

On the basis of this Egyptian documentation, this paper aims to study the question of the military system of Early Islam with a particular attention on a focal question : the representation of the two main social groups ; the ġund (môagaritai in the Greek documents) and the taxpayers. The analysis of the papyrological documentation, in confronting it with the literature written in Fustāṭ, reveals how the new élite represents itself and how the conquered people, via its administrative staff, represents the dominant group.

3. New approaches for an old documentation

3.1 Multilingual lexicography

Dylan Burns DDGLC

On the Perils of Bilingualism in Graeco-Coptic Lexicography, with special attention to Nag Hammadi Codex VII: A Report from the Project Database and Dictionary of Greek Loanwords in Coptic

From 2010 to 2012, the theoretical and technical foundations for a comprehensive lexicographical study of the use of Greek Loanwords in Coptic were developed by a pilot project led by Prof. Dr. Tonio Sebastian Richter, under the auspices of the Saxonian Department of Science and Art (Sächsisches Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft und Kunst). This project, called the Database and Dictionary

of Greek Loanwords in Coptic (DDGLC), won the long-term support of the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) in 2012, and research has since continued apace at the Institute of Egyptology -Georg Steindorff- at the University of Leipzig, with plans to move to Freie Universität Berlin in 2015. Our goal is the comprehensive documentation and analysis of 1500 years of contact-induced language change in the Egyptian lexicon, culminating in the production of a digital database and printed dictionary of Graeco-Coptic loanwords, and supplementary research on early Copto-Arabic. Bilingualism in our Egyptian sources present a special set of challenges for the lexicographer: what constitutes a language-island, as opposed to a loaned phrase? How to treat words whose context of usage is virtually known to us? Finally, how can our project's ongoing study of Graeco-Coptic contribute to the various subdisciplines of Coptology? This lecture will provide a few examples of how the DDGLC project addresses these and related questions, in the latter case focusing on the Nag Hammadi Codex VII, whose diverse and difficult contents present numerous difficulties—and opportunities—for the lexicographer and translator alike.

Sobhi Bouderbala – Audrey Dridi – Alain Delattre

PAPYVOC: a multilingual glossary of technical terms of the Islamic administration (7th-10th century)

The PAPYVOC project, though and presented in the 1st Conference of “Provinces & Empires: The Islamic Egypt in the Antique World”, in Cairo last year, aims to provide scholars an instrument to a better knowledge of the administrative system in early Islam, based on multilingual documentation. In a first step, we'll focus on fiscal and juridical terms found in the papyrological documentation, in connection with literary sources. The complexity of the administrative system, and the difficulty of working on a papyrological documentation written in three languages (Arabic, Greek and Coptic), invite us to gather the skills of specialists to define the various terms relating to that system, to estimate the interferences between the languages regarding tax system and jurisdiction, to study the nature of the various institutions as well as their evolution.

3.2 Global approach and social network

Alain Delattre, université libre de Bruxelles –

Sylvie Denoix, CNRS, UMR 8167 Orient & Méditerranée, Islam médiéval

The 8th-century multilingual archive from Edfu: a networking approach

The very famous “Jarre d’Edfou” unearthed during the 30’s Polish-French excavations contained papyri in Coptic and Greek languages.

If each document is monolingual, the proximity of both documentations in the same archive witnesses a multilingual context. The Social History of Edfu at the very beginning of the 8th c. concerns a local elite dealing on one hand with the new hierarchy of the capital of the Thebaïde province, the dux of Antinoe, and the Muslim governor of all the country of Egypt, resident in the capital of Fustāṭ, and on an other hand, with the local Christian Coptic speaking population, under the rule of the new regime. This well known situation deals obviously with a multi confessional, multi cultural and multi linguistic environment. Reading this documentation, translated and published by Rémondon for the Greek part, and unedited for the Coptic part, we plan to investigate, thanks to the networking studies method, the relationship linking the different actors of this population.

The networking studies will allow us to understand which kind of society, in terms of relationship, we are dealing with.

Marie Legendre, Oxford University – Arietta Papaconstantinou, Reading University

The 8th-century multilingual archive from Aphroditô: new perspectives

The best known multilingual dossier of Umayyad Egypt is of course the early 8th-century archive of Aphroditô. The publication of the bulk of Greek and Coptic documents appeared in 1910 under the hand of H.I. Bell and W.E. Crum. The Arabic documents were for the most part published by C.E. Becker in 1906 and N. Abbott in 1938, but are regularly augmented by the publication of new isolated documents. Despite the very good visibility of those documents among scholars of the early Islamic period up till now, the most complete studies about them were written by those early 20th-century scholars who edited them, especially H.I. Bell and N. Abbott. They focused for the most part on their contribution to our knowledge of the Umayyad fiscal system and administration and this topic still largely dominates researches on the entire archive, as well as on Umayyad Egypt in general. To a large extent, this is due to the fact that the focus of scholars has mainly been on the documents emitted in Greek and Arabic by the chancery of the governor Qurra b. Sharîk (in office 709-714), which, however, only forms less than half of the archive. Moreover, the edited documents themselves remain only partially translated, the Greek account books and the Coptic documents being the main victims of this selective translation. In this paper, we will question the present state of research on the archive of Aphroditô as revealing a separation of linguistic expertise and research interest among scholars. We will present our ongoing project on the necessary re-edition and translation and annotation of this archive, to be accompanied by a thorough study of the global contribution of those documents to a social and economic history of later Umayyad Egypt. In reviewing our knowledge of the documents in each language, we will also attempt to reassess the socio-linguistic, but also institutional factors that informed language use in the archive.