

Linguistic Symptoms of Shenoute's Authorship

Ariel Shisha-Halevy, Jerusalem

Speaking metaphorically, the array of distinctive linguistic traits is a portrait or profile, not a check-list or catalogue. This means that we are considering, not a list but systemic co-occurrence and/or combination and/or hierarchy of features that is distinctive. This, however, is difficult or near-impossible to depict in a simple presentation, and in the following lines I will also particularize or list after all. Twenty-five years ago, in the *Coptic Grammatical Categories* (Rome, 1986), I attempted to present a system of systems, focusing on adverbials, that might serve as basis for identification. It goes without saying, that a precise, sensitive high-delicacy descriptive work is a *sine qua non* in authorship studies, with the central query being to what extent we can detect the typical, and to what extent can the typical be misleading. Authorship statements are not infallible,¹ and can only be as confident as the linguistic description is sensitive and broad-based. The difficulty of authorship proof in a dead language, and, besides, one which we are still trying to get the measure of, should not be underestimated. And yet, ideally and with careful and considered application, I would suggest linguistic attribution is even more conclusive than explicit "philological" one.

¹ The present writer's own confidence in the *Coptic Grammatical Categories* has proved not entirely justified (cf. the "spurious" category in Stephen Emmel's *Shenoute's Literary Corpus* (2004, p. 457ff.). Still, none of the statements made for Shenoute seems to be invalidated by this error, and the danger of too sweeping authorship attribution is clearly illustrated.

Not unlike forensics in general, the logic of cumulativeness is based on systemic configurativity. (This logic is exponential: the more numerous and high-ranked the symptoms, the exponentially higher the certainty of attribution.) Few of the features here presented by themselves are exclusively Shenoutean, but any of them in combination with others are conclusively so. The number of features “necessary” for establishing a Shenoutean “identikit” depends on their critical value, which is scalar (lexical features differ in indicativity from phraseology, from morphology, micro- and macro-syntax); on the other hand, the greater the number of traits, the more confident the attribution. An instance of a very high criterion is the rich syntactic range of quotation manipulations; low-value traits are morphological features, including morphophonological ones such as “Akhmimoid” (or Southern) α for “normal Sahidic” ϵ , or unreduced prenominal infinitive allomorphs (e.g. ΟΥΩΜ-), or unreduced thematic pronouns in the Interlocutive Nominal Sentence (e.g. ΝΤΩΤΝ-).

The theoretical aspects of authorship studies (familiar especially from study of Biblical corpuses), as against the practical aspect, on which I shall focus here, regards internal relations, such as those between ΩΑΤΝΑΥ and ΩΑΝΤΕ-ΟΥ ΩΩΠΕ , or between the jussives ΜΑΡΕΥ- and ΕΦΝΑ , the positions of ΕΤΒΕΟΥ and ΝΑΩ ΝΞΕ , also such issues and calculi as the cumulative probability of a specific authorship, the absence of occurrence as an identifying factor, statistical features and scales of typicality. The practical angle concerns features occurring in the texts, and aims at assessing them cumulatively, with rising confidence of attribution. While less-than-typical characteristics are ubiquitous, they are usually interspersed with features of diacritical value. A practical principle, of the type of “the

dog that did not bark at night”, would conclude *non-Shenoutean authorship* from a consistent and total absence (in a text of considerable length) of Shenoutean traits, or absence in Shenoute of specific features (cf. Crum, *Dictionary* 544a, ⲟⲩⲁⲓ “festival” not found in Shenoute). Of course, this “identity kit” is as *dynamic* as it is systemic, in the sense that new texts introduced into the canon, texts removed from the canon, new forms and interpretations, all may modify the critical syndrome.

The stylistic tones of Shenoute’s work are familiar, mostly summed-up as passionate rhetoric, and have been pointed out in various, often (but not always) more or less derogatory descriptions, since Johannes Leipoldt, De Lacy O’Leary, K. H. Kuhn and Bell. This biased and impressionistic view of Shenoute at his most typical, which, however, is of limited use in less than typical, less rhetorical, texts or passages in texts, is simplistic; Shenoute, who can be quite pedestrian, occasionally surprises us with gentle, emotional, even poetic turns as well as register changes. But his consummate rhetorical craftsmanship is much more sophisticated than that, and his authorial fingerprint accordingly very complicated.

(a) The lexicon

Preliminary observations:

1. Crum’s exquisite *Coptic Dictionary* is now over seventy years old. It is inconceivable that texts, of all genres, idiolects and dialects, edited since 1939 would not yield new lexical items, derivations, forms and meanings; many of those are “new” fragments of Shenoute’s

works. Old texts also are being reedited, reworked and constantly reexamined, and new or modified meanings emerge. Amazingly, we have no supplement or revision of the *Dictionary*, other than Kasser's *Compléments* of 1964, which contains little of Shenoute (entries are εμμον and υοι).

2. The still entirely uncharted Greek-origin subsystem of Shenoute's lexicon and its relationships, often dynamic, often caught in a mesh of tension with the (realized or potential) "Egyptian" lexemic subsystem, are important components of the idiosyncratic picture of Shenoute's lexicon (Note, for instance, that these Greco-Coptic lexical items tend to appear in clusters or chains, in a "greek environment").

3. Exclusively or overwhelmingly Shenoutean meanings (as distinct from attestation) can be properly established only by monographic contrastive study. A *Lexicon Sinuthianum*, with finely nuanced resolution, is still a faraway goal. Meanwhile, generally and for the Greek sub-lexicon, *Sprachgefühl* is still a precious factor.

4. Striking among the exclusively Shenoutean lexemes are *hapax* instances, among which "meaning unknown" or "meaning uncertain" cases are (understandably) usual.

5. Colloquialisms and registerial distinctions in general, an important factor in Shenoute's rhetorical poetics, are a precious component of Shenoute's usage. But this too must be further studied, and includes statistical tendencies of lexical meaning (e.g. the meaning "matter' affair" of τωω).

6. The following list, based on Crum's attribution code ("Sh.", "Sh. (Besa), Sh. – S^a: see Preface, p. vii), presupposes a tightly-knit quantitative presentation. It is not affected by Crum's very few wrong or uncertain/doubtful attributions. Obviously, the weight of attestation is important, even crucial: "Shenoute only" *hapaxes*, or "once in Shenoute" 50% of attestation (so for instance ογωλπ 477b) are less indicative than sizably attested lexemes, or even two occurrences in Shenoute. My own additional gradings, still based on Crum's exemplification (and presupposing this represents his findings: see his Preface, p. vii), are: "mainly Sh." and "fav[oured by] Shenoute". "Not/never in Shenoute" listing, not presented here, is also significant, especially given the extent of the corpus.

7. The frequent coincidence, in lexicon and (?) phraseology, of Sh. and Lycopolitan and/or Akhmimic is striking, but probably cannot (yet) be used as isoglossic for dialectological definition.

8. Semantic ranging and structure of the lexicon is yet another relevant issue to be studied. For instance, the high incidence and variety of "violence"; "abusive names" (Crum) and pejorativity; agricultural and technical-professional terminology, and so on.

Abbreviations:

"Sh."

"Sh. (Sah.)"

"fav. Sh."

"mainly Sh."

“meaning uncertain/unknown/doubtful”

“*hapax*”

(a) Lexeme repertory, lexemic meaning

αλομ “bosom” fav. Sh. (6a) (Crum’s Additions and Corrections xv adds another Sh. occurrence)

βοβλ “burrow, delve, wallow” Sh. (37b) (Crum Additions and Corrections xvi adds another Sh. occurrence)

κω “idol” Sh. (*hapax*) (98b)

κωωλε εβολ “meaning uncertain” (“return, collapse [of belly]”) Sh. (*hapax*) (102b)

κλοομε “weal” Sh. (105a)

καλοπογ, σαλοπογ “kind of small dog” fav. Sh. (105b)

κωμω “mock, sneer” fav. Sh. (110b)

λαλ (nn.?) “meaning unknown” (among trades) Sh. Crum’s Additions and Corrections xviii adds another Sh. occurrence (140b)

λααλε “putrify” Sh. (141a)

λεϕε “fragment, small portion” fav. Sh. (144b)

λωσκ “putrify” Sh. (*hapax*) (145b)

λωωφε “be decadent” fav. Sh. (148b)

λεφλιφε “crumb, fragment” Sh. (149a)

λαζμεс “boiled food (?)” Sh. (150a)

ΜΟΥΝΚ “make, form” fav. Sh. (174-5)

ΜΟΥΖ “pay” fav. Sh. (208b)

ΜΟΥΖ “look” mainly Sh. (210b)

ΜΑΧΑΚΙΝ plur. “meaning unknown (named with embroiderers)” Sh. (*hapax*) (213b)

ΝΟΟΥΕ “meaning unknown paral. to “stinking”, of disease” Sh. (236a)

ΟΝΤΕ plural “meaning unknown: brain (?)” Sh. (*hapax*) (256a)

ΕΤΟΕΙΤ ΝΤΑΝ “meaning unknown”, = ετοι? Sh. (*hapax*) (257a)

ΠΡΑΩ “meaning unknown...relates to irrigation” “division, branch of canal (?)” Sh. (*hapax*) (269a)

ΠΑΤΑΛΑΣ “meaning unknown, ethnic (?)” Sh. (Sah.) (276a)

ΠΟΣΕ “battlefield” (?) Sh. (*hapax*) (285b) (see Crum’s Additions and Corrections, xx b) (possibly π-οσε!)

ΠΟΣΛΕ “nn as pl, meaning unknown, part or quantity of vegetable” Sh (286b) (Crum’s Additions and Corrections xx b adds Manichaean A²)

ΡΑΦΡΕΩ vb. “meaning unknown” Sh. (nn A²) (310a)

ΣΜΙΝΕ nn. “confirmation, agreement, putting together, (harmonious constrction), adornment” fav. Sh. (339a)

ΣΑΝΝΕΖ “grasshopper” Sh. (*hapax*) (345a)

ΣΩΝΤ “look” Sh.+A (346a-b)

ΣΡΟΜΡΜ “be dazed, stupefied” fav. Sh. (356a)

ΣΑΤΕ “fan” (vb) Sh. (*hapax*) (360a)

τλομ vb. intr. “meaning unknown” Sh. (*hapax*) (411a)

τω(ω)π “be accustomed, familiar” fav. Sh. (422b)

τσογτσογ “chattering, gossip” (?) (*hapax*) Sh. (457b)

τοογ “buy” Sh.+A, A² (441a)

[τεγτε] δεγτε “*sic l?* ” “meaning unknown” “Coptic?” Sh. (*hapax*) (447b)

ογητε “lightning (?), calamity” (with εχνη-) mainly Sh. (495a)

ογειτε “waste, dry up” tr., intr. mainly Sh.+A (495a)

ογωτβ εβολ meaning “surpass” Sh. (496b-497a).

ογαι “fortune, fate (?)” Sh. (544a-b)

ογωβλ “be scorched” mainly Sh. (554b-555a)

ογγωωτε “cushion (?)” mainly Sh. (573b)

ογαρε nn. “blow, stroke” mainly Sh. (583b)

οωτε “flour” fav. Sh. (595a)

ογτε “meaning doubtful” Sh. (*hapax*) (595a-b)

ογωωγ, ογωωβε “barrenness” Sh.+A (incl.quot.) (610a)

ογοωγ “meaning uncertain...spread, burrow (?)” mainly Sh.+A² (612a)

οω(ω)χε “contend, wrestle” mainly Sh.+A² (615a)

ρββε, ριβε, st. ροβε, ρβωογ “be low, short” Sh. (655b)

ρομε “cup” fav. Sh. (676a)

ρων “go aground in shallows” Sh. (688a-b)

ζορ nn “meaning unknown” Sh. (697a)

ζωρ ζωρ= ζηρ “guard oneself against” fav. Sh. (697b)

ζρα (εζρα) (εβολ) ε-, νκα-, ζν- “drive” fav. Sh. (697b-698a)

ζιτε “spend time, loiter” Sh. (720a)

(ζωφτ) ζεφτ- ζοφτ= (+εβολ) “send forth, eject” Sh. (741b)

(ζ)χοπχπ “grope, feel” Sh. (+Besa), (A² “tread”) (743a)

χωωλε “be hindered (?)” Sh.+A² (766b)

χωлк (εζογν ε-) “sow” Sh.+Besa (767b)

χοπ “dish, bowl” fav. Sh. (+S^a) (778a)

χται “ripen (of grain)” Sh. (*hapax*) (792a)

χιω “meaning unknown” Sh. (*hapax*) (795a)

χααχε “clap hands” Sh.+A (799b)

σεςσιβ, σιβσιβ “fragments, shreds (?)” Sh. (*hapax*) (806a)

το (σoβσβ) σβσoβ= “tread to pieces or sim.” (*hapax*) (806a)

σααμε “meaning unknown” Sh.+A (σoοομε Sah.) (818a)

σοπε “small vessel, quantity” fav. Sh. (825b)

σρη “dig” fav. Sh. (828a)

σαγλε “meaning unknown...bodily defect or despised trade” Sh. (*hapax*) (835b)

σοογρε, σαγρε “slave (as term of contempt)” Sh. (836a)

(b) Word Formation, derivation, compounding

Shenoute's originality and creativity in this area must be further examined. It's difficult always to be sure about exclusive Shenoutean usage, meanings or specialty. Here are a few probable items:

ΜΝΤ-ΡΕΥ-ΘΝ-ΔΡΙΚΕ Sh. (15b)

ΜΝΤ-ΡΕΥ-ΚΩΜΩ Sh. (110b)

ΜΑC-Ν-ΡΩΜΕ Sh. (295a)

ΜΝΤ-ΡΩΜΕ “male company” (295a)

ΧΙ-CΝΟΥ “take blood, bleed, be blooded” Sh. (348b)

ΝCΝΟΥΥ “last year” (adv.) mainly Sh. (348b)

CΙC-ΤΗΗΒΕ “half a finger” Sh. (397b)

CΙΝ-ΤΑΝΞΟΥΤΥ Sh. (422a)

Ρ-ΤΩΡΕ “stamp with feet” Sh. (425a)

ΜΝΤ-ΡΕΥ-ΤΩΞ “confusion, disturbance” mainly Sh. (454b)

ΞΡΑΙ ΟΥΤΕ- Sh. (495a)

†-ΩΙ Ε- Sh. (548b)

article+ξΟΥΕ+noun mainly Sh. (735b)

Ρ-ΞΟΥΟ ΞΝ- mainly Sh. (737a)

(c) Phraseology, collocations, clichés (token selection)

ΤΩ ΕΤΩ Ν- ...ΜΝ-, ΑΛΛΟ-... ΑΛΛΟ-..., ΕΙΣ-... ΕΙΣ-... (forms of distinctions)

ΕΙΜΕ + ΟΟΟΥΝ

ΡΑΝ + ΟΧΗΜΑ

ΖΑΠ + ΝΑ

ΕΚΝΑ ΕΚΝΗΥ

ΤΝΩΩ ΔΥΩ ΤΝΩΩΤΜ

ΜΠΙΜΑ ΤΕΝΟΥ

ΧΙΝΤΑΡΧΗ ΜΠΩΩΝΤ ΩΔΤΣΥΝΤΕΛΕΙΑ ΜΠΑΙΩΝ

ΚΑΝ + imperative/jussive

ΖΑΤΗΝ ΔΥΩ ΖΑΤΝΤΗΥΤΝ

(d) Verb valency. Phrasal verbs. Verb phraseology

A Shenoutean dictionary of valency and adverbial/prepositional government is an urgent desideratum. Meanwhile, here are some relevant example entries from Crum's *Dictionary*:

ΕΙΩ ΕΒΟΛ “wash out” intr. Sh. (75b)

ΛΙΒΕ, ΛΟΒΕ ΝΟΑ- Sh. (137a)

ΠΩΛΟ ΝΤΝ- “satisfy” Sh. (262a)

ΠΩΝΚ ΕΧΝ- “pile upon” Sh. (266a)

- ΡΩΞΤ ΕΡΡΑΙ “be struck down, fall” mainly Sh. (311a-b)
 ΣΜΜΕ ΕΡΡΑΙ “appeal to” mainly Sh. (336b)
 ΩΩΤ Ε- “return, repeat” fav. Sh. (360a)
 ΩΩΞΕ ΕΞΟΥΝ Ε- “weave on to” Sh. (381a)
 ΩΩΞΠ ΕΞΟΥΝ/ΕΡΡΑΙ Ε- “sink in, be swallowed”, “suck in, drink”
 (intr., tr.), mainly Sh. (386a)
 ΤΩΚ Ε- “throw at” Sh.+A (404a)
 †-ΤΩΝ ΕΡΡΝ- “fight against” Sh. (649b)
 ΤΩΠΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ- “taste of” mainly Sh. (423a)
 ΟΥΑΖΜ= Ε- reflexive “repeat doing” mainly Sh. (509b)
 ΟΥΩΣΠ ΕΡΡΑΙ ΕΧΝ-. ΖΙΧΝ- Sh. (513a)
 ΑΞΕ Ν-/ΝΑ= “require, be in need of”, mainly Sh. (538b)
 ΩΟΧΝΕ Ν-/ΝΑ= Sh. (616a)
 ΨΙ ΝΤΜΗΤΕ fav. Sh. (Sah.) (621a)
 ΧΠΟ ΖΑ- “replace” Sh. (779b)

(e) Morphology, “form” (selection)

- ΕΧΩ= “without” Sh. (26a)
 ΜΕΩΑ= full inflection, as opposed to invariable ΜΕΩΑΚ “mainly Sh” (201b)
 ΝΟΥΣΤΕ (=ΝΟΣ) Sh. (250-1)
 ΣΑΝΤΕ “resin” Sh. “S^a” (346b)

σρμρομτ (stative) Sh. (356a)

σοτϙ (σοτβϙ) Sh. (363b)

τααμε (stative) Sh. (414a)

ογοει convertible Sh (472a-b)

ωαι for ωα “festival” NOT Sh. (544a-b)

ωοογε by-form of ωοογ “perfume, incense” Sh. (601a)

βο “canal” Sh. (Sah. ϙο)

εζνα= αν Sh (?) (690b)

variation: ο/α, χ/σ?, doubling/no doubling (laryngal environment)

(f) Syntax

Here even selection is difficult, as will agree any reader or student of Shenoute: this is Shenoutean grammar, pure and (not) simple. Some features: (see also further below)

νιμινε ν- Sh (172b)

αρλ-σε mainly Sh (802b)

εβολ των δε-εϙνα-

Nominal Sentence patterning (Shisha-Halevy 1984),² adverbial syntax and Focalizing Conversion patterning, direct-object syntax, Conjunctive syntax, juncture profiles, prosody contours, *augens* syntax (Shisha-Halevy 1986).

The occurrence of -τρῆϣ- following Greek-origin prepositions (παρά-, ἀντι-, κατά-).

(g) Rhetorical poetics (selection)

Alliteration, punning and rhyming:

ϑΜΠΝΔΥ ΜΠΡΗ ΕΦΝΑΠΡΕ (Leipoldt III 87)

Distinctive constructions and configurations

“Disiunctio Sinuthiana” (several varieties) – “ἀϣωωλε η ἀϣωωτϣ”, “νετϣι η νετναϣι” “ΝΙΜ ΠΕΝΤΑϣΝΟΥϩΜ Η ΝΙΜ ΠΕΝΤΑϣΝΑϩΜΕϣ” and so on.

Hermeneia discourse signals: “εἰϣω μπαἰ ϣε-,” “[...] πε ϣε-,” “ετεπαἰ πε ϣε-“ etc.

Argumentative discourse signals (especially metaphrastic ones): distinctive εωϣε- patterns¹, εἰωανϣοοϣ ϣε-, εϣοοϣ ϣε-, ϣε-νναϣοοϣ ϣε- etc.

Rhetorical narratives of different types.³

2 The ‘RHEME πε παἰ (+ rheme expansion)’ type (e.g. Chassinat 144 ΝΚΙΒΕ ΝΕ ΝΑΙ ΕΤΤΩΒϣ ΜΜΟΝ...) is typical of Shenoute, but seems to occur frequently in Manichaean Lycopolitan (“L4”) (W.-P. Funk).

3 A. Shisha-Halevy, “Rhetorical Narratives: Notes on Narrative Poetics in Shenoutean Sahidic Coptic”, Forthcoming, in: *Literary-Linguistic Approaches to Narrative: the Ancient Near East (including Egypt), and Neighbouring Regions*, Leuven:Peeters (OLA) 451-498.

Configurations of *εἰχε*-.⁴

Combinatory constructions (selected examples):

- Chass. 13 ΝΤΟΚ ΖΩΩΚ ΤΣΟΜ ΜΠΕΚΩΜΑ ΩΟΟΠ ΝΖΗΤΚ ΜΜΝΩΩΝΕ ΜΜΝΤΚΑΣ ΜΜΝΝΠΕΙΡΑΣΜΟΣ ...ΝΓΤΜΕΩ†-ΟΥΒΕ- (extended repeated asyndesis of existentials [also of conjugation bases), sequelling conjunctive)

- Chass. 61 ΕΧΟΟΣ ΔΕ ΧΕ-ΑΩ ΝΕ ΜΜΑ ΝΕΙ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΜΝΜΜΑ ΜΒΩΚ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΑΥΩ ΧΕ-ΕΦΚΩΤΕ ΜΜΟΦ ΝΑΩ ΝΖΕ ΕΦΕΙ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΖΜΠΕΙΕΒΤ ΑΥΩ ΕΦΒΩΚ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΕΠΕΜΝΤ ...ΟΥΑΤΣΟΜ ΠΕ ΕΕΙΜΕ ΕΠΑΙ (metaphrastic topicalization management, object-verb inversion, chiasm, generic non-actual present, anaphoric reference to textual stretch)

- Chass. 26 ΕΙΩΑΝΧΟΟΣ ΧΕ-ΝΤΑΥΣΝΤ-ΤΕΒΔΕΛΛΗ ΧΕ-ΕΥΝΑΤΝΤΩΝΓ ΕΡΟΣ ΤΑΙ ΕΤΕΜΠΟΥΤΣΙΟΣ ΝΣΙ-ΝΕΣΩΗΡΕ ΟΝΤΩΣ ΚΟΥΩΤΒ ΜΜΟΣ ΕΒΟΛ ΑΥΩ ΚΡΖΟΥΟ ΕΡΟΣ ΑΥΩ ΝΣΝΑΩΤΑΖΟΚ ΑΝ ΖΝΤΜΝΤΑΤΣΙ (metaphrastic topicalization management, object-verb inversion, rhematic relative clause (appositive to proper-name equivalent), triadic rhetorical coordination)

- Chass. 125 ΜΜΝΣΕΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΜΜΝΣΕΖΕΛΠΙΣ ΝΖΩΒ ΝΑΓΑΘΟΝ ΧΕ-ΝΦΩΟΟΠ ΝΑΣ ΑΝ (asyndesis; special double-negation and adnominal *χε*-totalization pattern: “there isn’t...that ...not” = “absolutely all...”

- Leipoldt III 96 ΖΝΟΥΩΣΝΕ ΔΕ ΖΩΣ ΕΩΧΕ-ΝΤΑΥΠΩΩΣ ΝΖΗΤ - ΝΤΑΥΠΩΩΣ ΓΑΡ (special clause patterns; repetitive nexus focusing)

4 A. Shisha-Halevy, “Work-Notes on Shenoute’s Rhetorical Syntax: *εἰχε* and *ἀρα* - Suspension of Disagreement, Irony and *reductio ad absurdum*”, in: *Liber Amicorum: Jürgen Horn zum Dank*, Göttinger Miszellen Beiheft, 5, 2009, 113-129.

- Paris BN copte 131.6 f.44 ⲉϣⲁⲉ-ⲁⲓⲣⲛⲟⲃⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ⲛ ⲁⲕⲕⲣⲛⲟⲃⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ
ⲕⲱ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲛⲉⲛⲉⲣⲛⲏⲅ (inclusive non-hortative interlocutive imperative)