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ARIEL SHISHA-HALEVY

**SHENUTEAN IDIOM.** "Shenutean Coptic" is the term applied to the idiom, including the grammatical norm and stylistic-phraseological usage, observable in the corpus of writing by the archimandrite Apa Shenute (334-451), outstanding among Coptic literary sources in that it constitutes the single most extensive homogenous and authentic *testo di lingua* for Sahidic and Coptic in general. This corpus provides the linguist with a precious opportunity to achieve a consistent and complete description of a grammatical system. The other extensive corpus, that of the Scriptures, although somewhat earlier and so enjoying the prestige of a "classical" *état de langue*, has the disadvantage of being translated from the Greek; its native Coptic constituent element can be properly determined only after a complete structural description of the grammatical system of its *Vorlage*, precise knowledge of the quality and degree of its dependence upon this *Vorlage*, and diacritical-contrastive application of an independent, untranslated grammatical system such as that abstractable from Shenute's works. The desirability of such a grammar makes an early analysis of this corpus of paramount importance.

### Compilation of the Corpus

Although only slightly more than half of all known or surmised Shenute sources have been edited to

date (1982), there is no great difficulty about compiling most of the extant corpus: the task of isolating unattributed Shenute fragments from the host of homiletic and rhetoric-epistolary ones is largely technical. Linguistic (grammatical and stylistic-phraseological) data extractable from the unambiguously Shenutean sources in the three major editions (Amélineau, 1907-1914; Leipoldt and Crum, 1908-1913; Chassinat, 1911) and the many minor ones—mostly in catalogic collections (by Crum, Munier, Pleyte-Boeser, Rossi, Wessely, and Zoega) and occasionally in special publications (e.g., by Guérin, Lefort, Teza, Young, and the present writer), as well as unpublished sources—serve as probes for locating other sources. Identification on the basis of stylistic impression alone, although certainly unavoidable as a practical guide, is not always adequate, especially when the style is untypically pedestrian rather than in the usual powerful, involved vein. The main unedited collections of Sinuthiana are those in Paris and Vienna repositories and in British libraries (Oxford, Cambridge, and Manchester).

### Linguistic Characterization

Shenute's dialect is what is conventionally conceived of as high-standard literary Sahidic, albeit with distinct Akhmimoid traces (Shisha-Halevy, 1976a), which are probably due to his native Akmimic background and consist mainly of (morpho)phonologic, morphologic, idiomatic, and lexical features, with more elisive syntactic affinities. (Present-day knowledge of Akhmimic syntax is notoriously inadequate, because of insufficient evidence.) Some of the more striking phenomena in Shenute's grammatical usage are the idiosyncratic use of the conjunctive and of object constructions and the favoring of one of the "mediators" or lexeme premodifiers (Ⲣⲟⲩⲉ-, Ⲣⲛⲕⲉ-, ⲟⲩⲢⲓ (ⲛ)-). Note two (of several) distinctive nominal-sentence patterns, namely # ⲟⲩⲛⲉ # (e.g., Leipoldt, 1908-1913, IV, 23.22, Ⲣⲛⲕⲁⲛⲉ Ⲣⲛⲉⲩⲟⲩⲛⲉ ⲛⲉ ⲟⲩⲢⲓ ⲉⲛⲉⲓⲟⲩⲛⲉ; Amélineau 1907-1914, I, 228, ⲟⲩⲟⲩⲛⲉ ⲛⲉ ⲟⲩⲟⲩⲛⲉ ⲟⲩⲢⲓ ⲉⲣⲟⲟⲩⲛⲉ) and a hyperbatic construction with a demonstrative subject (Chassinat, 1911, 150.3ff., Ⲣⲛⲟⲩⲩⲛⲉ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ Ⲣⲛⲧⲁⲩⲟⲩⲛⲉ, "These are 'the cords which broke'"); ⲛⲉ, used adnominally (ibid., 125.38ff., Ⲣⲛⲛⲉ ⲃⲉⲛⲓⲥⲧⲓⲥ, Ⲣⲛⲛⲉ ⲃⲉⲛⲉⲗⲛⲓⲥ Ⲣⲛⲟⲩⲛⲉ Ⲣⲁⲗⲁⲑⲟⲩⲛⲉ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲧⲟⲩⲟⲩⲛⲉ ⲛⲁⲥ ⲁⲛ, "There is no faith, there is no hope of goodness that does not belong to it").

As regards the use of the second tenses, one finds numerous distinctive figures and constellations variously combining topicalizations and foci. Striking is the cleft sentence with the circumstantial topic

(ελφ, εηφ . . . λη, ε + nominal sentence). Negative second-tense topics seem to be avoided. This list can be much extended with numerous other minutiae as well as central issues of grammar, which still await monographic study (for some discussions and exemplifications, see Jernstedt, 1949; Morenz, 1952; Rudnitzky, 1956-1957; Young, 1961, 1962, and 1969; and Shisha-Halevy, 1975 and 1976a-b). It must be stressed that idiosyncratic stylistic syntax (e.g., "rhetorical figures" [see below], typical word-order and context patterns) is at present indistinguishable from syntax *tout court*. Note also that although most of the above traits are met with elsewhere, their cumulative and pronounced reoccurrence and distribution in Shenute is syndromic, and therein lies their diagnostic value.

Shenute's "style" (between which and syntax there exists no clear-cut objective boundary) has been described, at its most characteristic, as fervent, passionately eloquent, full of pathos, and often argumentative, polemic, occasionally ironic. Still, placid and pedestrian passages are not uncommon (cf. Leipoldt, 1903, sec. 11, 13, and 15). The long, involved, occasionally convoluted sentence complexes, sometimes anacoluthic, are well known. Similarly distinctive are a number of exclusive or near-exclusive Shenutean idiomatic expressions, such as τω ετω, "how can one compare . . ."; φαντε ου φωνε, "Quousque tandem . . ."; ειχω μιλι χε, "by which I mean to say"; χε ηηαχοοο, "pour ne pas dire"; and many others. Probably the best-known typically Shenutean turn of phrase, the quintessential "figura Sinuthiana" par excellence, is the apparently tautological, often disjunctive repetition of an idea with a slight variation in this form: σερησ λγω σεροεις, πασον η ηασνηγ, †κωλυε η †ηακωλυε, λχογων η λγογων ημοσ, λ παηητ ουφωτ η λχογωφτ εραλ ηηηητ, λγημοογτφ η λγτλλγ ετοοτφ ηημογ . . .

### Vocabulary

The Shenutean lexicon—which constitutes a considerable part of the Sahidic evidence in Crum's *Coptic Dictionary* (1939) and is still in need of determination and structural-semantic resolution—is perhaps most idiosyncratic in the favoring of certain words, some of which have acquired a Shenutean flavor and association: κροσ, guile; λοιμοο, pestilence; κωμη, mock; βολεσ, burrow; λωμητ, λωμε, filth, be foul; λιβε, be mad; μογρ, look; λεφε, fragment; ωρξ, be firm, secure; ρωφε, have authority, be responsible. There are some exclusively Shenutean lexemes, a few with obscure meanings: κωφλε εβολ (Crum, 1939, p. 102b); κον (part of vine? *ibid.* p.

111b); λωπητ (*ibid.*, p. 144a); κωφφ, smoke; λλλλε, teem; μογρ, term of abuse; also some common to Shenute (the sole representative for Sahidic) and Akhmimic or Subakhmimic (Shisha-Halevy, 1976a, pp. 364ff.). There are forms and functions attested only in Shenute: εχλη, blind (fem.); ηηε, blow (trans.); ροεις ουβε-, keep watch against; ρωτ εραλ, be struck down. Some lexemes are typically Shenutean in collocation (ροεις + ρησ, ηλ + ηηγ) and some in their morphology (e.g., κτοετ, returned; μογρε ~ μοε, big; ελω, sycamore fruit; τνομ, furrow).

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