

Gardner, Iain; Alcock, Anthony; Funk, Wolf-Peter: *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis Volume 2. P. Kellis VII. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014 (Dakhleh Oasis Project Monographs 16). 320 Pages. ISBN 978-1-78297-651-6. £ 75,00.*

Fifteen years on, we now have the second volume of fourth-century documentary texts – mainly letters – from Kellis (present-day Ismant el-Kharab, in the Dakhleh oasis), editing seventy-five new documents, added to the forty-five published in 1999.¹ In fact, these are “two halves of a single work” (p.4).

Given the syntactical and dialectal peculiarities of “dialect L*”, we by now have a corpus well worthy of its own systemic grammar, with the impressive second installment also serving as control, to evaluate the impressions given by the first.² Here too we have an admirable edition, textual apparatus, translation and commentary – this reviewer would be grateful for a more intensive *grammatical* annotation. The edition, classified mainly by provenance and sender, follows an introduction (a brief one; that of Kellis I serves both volumes), including dating of texts (p.5f.), and is followed by exhaustive reasoned indices.

I shall dwell here briefly on syntactical highlights, remarkable or striking constructions, taking up a few points of grammar, as well as a few critical comments on analysis and translation. This elegant work and the rare privilege of “discovering” a “new”, extensively documented dialect, and at the same time a rich trove of grammatical features in so early a source are any linguist’s and philologist’s wistful vision – to say nothing of such enviable collaboration of leading scholars.

The translations, with their underlying analysis, are sensitive and acute, never ignoring or evading difficulties – and there are many *loci* that tax the competence of the three collaborating editors, pronouncing on texts and background as one, in the first person plural. The grammatical interpretation of the letters is often heavy going, and the syntax in need of sensitive handling. Still, the problems posed by this instance of the epistolary texteme and its pragmatic obscurities are more than compensated for by the challenge of sub-dialectic idiom and its syntactic idiosyncrasies.

A word on the texts themselves, and the hidden everyday world they open up. Far from being merely (p.5, on epistolary conventions) “mundane and formulaic”, they are as a rule vigorous and idiomatic (occasionally reminding one of Demotic letters). They integrate various registers. Always of high syntactic and phraseological interest, a true *embarras de richesse*, in a blend of literary, “Manichaean” and conversational (probably colloquial) registers. Not rarely, the texts challenge in patches of obscurity or grammatical surprise (the form ⲙⲁⲗⲉϥ for “he said/says”; the major morphophonemic and phonological issue, and a central difficulty, of arguable (partial) neutralization of ϵ - and λ -, throughout,³ albeit

¹ Kellis I (*Coptic Documentary Texts From Kellis, Vol. I.* Iain Gardner, Anthony Alcock, Wolf-Peter Funk, eds., Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1999), documents nos. 1-52; Kellis II has nos. 57-131:.

² See Shisha-Halevy 2002. Ideally, we ought to aim at a comprehensive “epistolary grammar” of Coptic.

³ Certainly, cases like 89.2 ⲧⲓⲥⲉⲓ ⲁⲓⲱⲛⲉ or 122.11 ⲗⲧⲁⲧⲛⲟⲣⲓ or 122.26 ⲟⲩⲧⲁⲟⲩⲁ ⲁⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩϥ are hard to account for other than as a symptom of free variation.

with distributional restrictions;⁴ two perfect forms, both historically founded, one with initial morphemic 2-, and so on). Non-trivial issues begin to emerge, making this inevitably a first-rate source of epistolary Coptic syntax.

The letters, rich in content and often sophisticated, are economically (trade and finance), technically (textile: spinning, weaving, woolwork, dying, cutting and tailoring), socially (and sociolinguistically), culturally and religiously revealing, and, I find, deeply satisfying for the reader. The rich vocabulary, grammatical and phraseological usage are a scholarly challenge. Almost all well-preserved letters are rich in some aspects of linguistic interest. Among those I personally find fascinating – prime examples are documents 79, 80, 81, 84, 90, 92, 94, 102, 103, 105. These (and other) letters would, I believe, demand more detailed annotation in the Commentary as well as a more detailed Subject Index.

Highlights of grammar. Notelets: topics to be studied in depth – **Particles and prosody. Reference. Anacoluthia.**

(a) This is a paramount issue in the corpus. Unlike English, Egyptian and Coptic rely on “particles”, however fuzzy their definition and resolution, to signal textual articulation and bounding, tone, modulation (assertion *vs.* interrogation), style, logical relations and information structure. We find here peculiar particle “amalgams”, probably colloquial, not easy for us to fathom.

The particles in Coptic constitute a complicated and, as yet only partly transparent system.⁵ Recourse to “indeed” in rendering into English is unsatisfactory, be it only for the focalizing quality of “indeed”, entirely incommensurate with the broad and historically rooted role spectrum of ⲥⲈ (80.7, to take one instance). In the corpus, we encounter the following (note the prevalence of “Egyptian” particles over Greek-origin ones):

ⲐⲈ, ⲠⲔ (post-focal), ⲛⲧⲟⲘ, ⲟⲩⲛ (rare), ⲓⲁⲣ (rare), ⲙⲈⲛ (rare), ⲔⲈ (rare), ⲙⲙⲁⲛ, ⲁⲛ (Sah. on; broader in function than usual in Sahidic), ⲛⲧⲁⲘ;

ⲉⲗⲈ ⲥⲈ ⲙⲙⲁⲛ (64.5, 92.15f.) “so, yes indeed/very well then”, probably colloquial;

ⲁⲛ ⲙⲙⲟⲛ (102.20);

ⲉⲗⲈ/ⲁⲗⲈ (ⲥⲈ) ⲙⲙⲁⲛ (64.5-6, 92.15-16, 108.26)

ⲧⲛⲟⲩ (ⲥⲈ) *passim*: apparently two graded initial-boundary signals;

ⲙⲙⲁⲛ ⲛⲧⲁⲘ (64.7)

ⲉⲓⲥⲧⲈ ⲁⲛ (92.17)

(b) Pro-textual binary “yes” (ⲉⲗⲈ, ⲁⲗⲈ) or “no” (tensed: ⲙⲙⲁⲛ, ⲙⲡⲈ, perhaps ⲙⲙⲁⲣⲈ, see below), typically *in protasi*, correlatively, and not in dialogic response, are well-attested: 64.5, 71.12, 76.36, 77.18.22, 83.12, 105.46, etc. So of course the *augens*, alone or combined with particles.

(c) The prosodic status of pronominal ⲛⲁⲣ in the corpus seems to be non-enclitic or even colon-final: cf. 70.16-17, 103.7-9 and often *passim*; Shisha-Halevy 1981, pp.319-321.

⁴ The post-negation is here invariably Ⲉⲛ (note the particle ⲁⲛ); it’s a moot point whether the focalizing *vs.* circumstantial converters are ⲁ- and Ⲉ- respectively, and thus other morphs. My impression is that a system underlies the apparent chaos. Obviously, a precise distributional environmental examination is called for.

⁵ Shisha-Halevy 2002. See Elsa Oréal’s work, for a significant contribution on Coptic, Egyptian and Graeco-Coptic discourse particles, especially 1997, 2011, forthcoming.

(d) Probable cases of the “foreshadowed enclitic”, one twice-occurring enclitic in successive cola, in 94.58-59 and 105.43-44 (see Shisha-Halevy 2007, pp.699 s.v.).

(e) Epistolary pronominal, interlocutive/delocutive anacolutha (71.27-28 ...εσϕιμε λτεςμεϕ ηηταϕερε, εσϕιμε λτασϕμε) are well-known and attested in LE and earlier: sporadic partial neutralization of sender, recipient and 3rd person. Other cases of anacoluthon are 72.8, 81.12-13, 102.6-7.

Pragmatics, focalization, topicalization. Focalizing tenses. Modality, negation.

(a) Numerous instances of unmarked – probable, but not certain – *interrogativity* might be questioned or contested. It is not easy to prove either way. This is not merely a matter of stylistic taste, but of the argumental structure of the letter, and of information structure; questions are often thematic to their responsive rheme. Cf. for instance letters 58.9, 84.16-18, 86.14-16.

(b) Topicalization, a feature of colloquial syntax, is common in the corpus, e.g. several cases in 81.38, 92.24-25, 94.38-39.

(c) Apodotics, including post-imperative status, constitute a rich paradigm: e.g. 80.21.26, 84.25-26, 94.51, 106.32-35, 120.3-4. ταρεϕ- has in the corpus both modal and apodotic, or resultative-sequencing functions (80.20.26, 84.26), but not truly *finalis*. In ηϕϕ ηξε τα-τηηαϕ (79.44), the conjunctive remarkably follows the interrogative focus; it is almost deliberative (note the editors’ translation: “how am I to send?”). We recall that the 1st sgl. is shared by the two paradigms, the conjunctive and causative conjunctive.

(d) Probable colloquialisms, a topic worth of study, are common, variously marked, e.g. 92.15-16, 122.1494.14-16 (see above, anacoluthia).

(e) η-...(*zero/λη*): see Funk 2014 and further exx. in Shenoute: a concentration of several compelling exx. make this rare construction too firmly established to be dismissed (cf. 39.31 in Kellis I, 58.14-18; 82.38-40; 70.44. See Funk 2014, pp.133-136). But does this mean that εν in our corpus is not a formal post-negation, but a pertinent negativity focuser?⁶ Given that all but two of near-50 occurrences are of εν alone, whatever the negated construction, (the exceptions are 49.3-4, negation following the relative converter, and 94.53) this is hardly probable. And yet, the grouping of four or five example does seem meaningful.

(f) “That”-forms are of the more essential phenomena of Egyptian and Coptic. Note here especially the expanding ηηρεϕ- (71.34, 79.35), ηει ηε ηηηηηϕ (97.10), 72.19, the syntax of the conjunctive.

(g) The narrative voice. The reporting narrative appears to move in the letters by fits and starts, seeming simple as regards tensing. And yet, a gamut of emotional immediacy is expressed, by particles, iconicity, focalization and topicalization, even anacoluthia. The dialogue, on the other hand, informs the letters in many ways, mainly pronominally, with a variegated repertory of forms (e.g. imperatives and jussives) and syntagmemes. The allocution – addressing the main or sub-addressee – raises the interrogativity issue: the editors opt often for an interrogative clause, even when it is unmarked (see above). After all, the letter is textemically a sub-form of the allocution subsystem of dialogue.

⁶ In Bohairic we encounter λη with various other negative forms, see Shisha-Halevy 1981, p.333, n.51. This does not occur in the Kellis corpus.

Tensing.

(a) The imperfect tense is rare in the corpus, which leaves the perfect (or preterite) a sole narrative tense – remarkable in a corpus so rich in narrative and reporting textemic components.

(b) παχε-, παχερ, (μαχε-, μαχερ) “said...”, “says...” are strikingly atemporal – dialogue-integrating, not narrative and crucial for letter and argumentation structuring. The translation varies between past and present.

Lexicon, valency.

The corpus is lexically rich, especially in technical terminology. Some points:

Ζαλλζ, ζαλλκς (39.43, 106.18), definite plural noun: -s derived substantive from Ζωλλκ “weave, plait, braid”, CD 668b, CDD 93 *hrk* “Geflecht”.

A point of diathesis (90.26): ψωλλ εβολ (CD 558a-b) is also transitive, hence in our case *passive*, as marked by the object: ογλακ ηςηαη αφαλλη “a cup of blood to be poured”.

†εαγ “glorify” (Manichaeism?), rather than “salute” (58.33).

φηηε “greet”, “ask” an important verb in the corpus, has an interesting valency matrix: (115.23) φηηηη ηηη ηοηοη αταχαης τασηη, (73.6) †φηηηη ηηηακ πασαη ηηηηη. See below.

Some critical remarks on translation and grammatical analysis – not quibbling, I hope, and always within the bounds of legitimate scholarly disagreement; the editors’ treatment of this often forbidding corpus is always a splendid achievement. These brief notes are more suggestive than critical, and do not usually contest the authors’ proposed interpretation.

58.24 “you are to cut them”: better “it’s you who is to cut them”; a Cleft Sentence.

58.30 “can you send”: the text has the conjunctive τετηηηη, which is not modal.

61.6-7 αηοηηηη εηρηηη: the translation “(every time) I am afar (it is) as if I am near” rather mars the two nice *Wechselsatz*-like stative rhemes, two balanced, adjoined in nexus, focalizing converted presents, (α-) and circumstantial (ε-). In fact, the “every time” is mostly reconstructed; “it is as if” is overparaphrasing and unnecessary.

64.8-9 Cleft Sentence: “It is only ours that we are seeking”.

65.35 ασηης εαγτεκο: probably “to find they are spoiled”, not “to find out whether they had perished”.

66.29 ετη-φηηη, also 69, 72 (with editors’ comments), CD 427b-428a, probably not the relative converter (“greeting”, as is the translation here), but “for greeting”, even “in greeting” – the compound preposition with infinitive, which has a broad semantic spectrum (even without the complicated variation with ητηη-); this requires further valential and adjunctal investigation.

71.20 I doubt that ηπωρ means in an English translation “do not (do that)” but “Don’t!”. However, this *is* nit-picking.

71.21 I suggest that ... ακαγ εατηκ ηηςηο. κα πογε... means “to leave them with you, the two” and not “...of the two, keep one”. The “dual apposition” with η- is commonplace.

71.33-4 ηηηε ητηηηαγ αβαλ – the “that”-form role of τηηεη- is striking, but “when I have cause to send out” deserves an explanation.

72.13 εη ηβηηε ηε ηαι εταηηεγ αηοηκ “so these are the matters I handed over to you”. The special Nominal-Sentence pattern is well attested in Shenoute and the Manichaean corpus: definite noun, demonstrative, relative clause.⁷ See also 103.24-25.

⁷ Shisha-Halevy 1984, pp.183-184.

73.6-7 Not “I greet you, my beloved brother, how is it...?” but “I ask you, ...”. The verb $\omega\iota\upsilon\epsilon$ in our corpus brings nicely home the significance of the structural statement of homonymy-by-valency: $\omega\iota\upsilon\epsilon$ (1) + λ - (+ $\lambda\alpha\lambda$) “greet” (on behalf of-), $\omega\iota\upsilon\epsilon$ (2) + λ -/ $\mu\mu\alpha\lambda$ “ask”.

75.25 $\lambda\pi\epsilon$ $\eta\tau\omega\tau\eta$ $\eta\epsilon$ – instead of: “consider “count on it, yours are the ones (i.e. letters) I shall look for”, I suggest: “consider it as if it is you (pl.) in person”, with the (zeroed) circumstantial Nominal Sentence.

78.49-50 $\mu\alpha\rho\epsilon\tau\alpha\sigma\omega\upsilon$ $\sigma\upsilon\epsilon\iota$ $\chi\epsilon$ - $\eta\sigma\chi\iota$ - $\eta\mu\eta\sigma\iota\sigma\mu\alpha$ - $\tau\iota\sigma\eta$ $\eta\eta$ $\mu\pi\epsilon$ “... whether she receives...”: I doubt the present tense, in view of the substitute pro-form $\mu\pi\epsilon$ – “whether or not she received”.

79.14 ... $\chi\epsilon$ - $\eta\mu\alpha\rho\alpha\mu\epsilon\lambda\iota$ $\epsilon\eta$ $\epsilon\mu\pi\iota\tau\eta\eta\lambda\alpha\upsilon$ translated “I will not neglect... though I have not sent”; I suggest a double negative – “I will not neglect, not sending”, lit. “without sending”.

79.15-16 $\epsilon\tau\epsilon\mu\pi\iota\tau\eta\eta\lambda\alpha\upsilon\sigma\epsilon$ $\lambda\epsilon$ $\eta\epsilon\kappa$ η - $\eta\mu\omega\upsilon$ $\chi\epsilon$ - $\sigma\epsilon\chi\eta\eta$ – a classroom Cleft Sentence sample and precious conversion morphology: “... and it is because they are expensive that I have not sent them to you now” (as against the editors’ “But that is I did not send them to you now, for they are expensive”).

80.20-21 $\mu\eta\rho\omega$ $\epsilon\mu\pi\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\iota$ $\eta\epsilon\mu\epsilon\upsilon$: “do not refrain from coming with him”, not “do not stay, not coming with him”.

81.16 $\upsilon\tau\epsilon\eta\eta$ $\epsilon\eta$ $\eta\theta\epsilon$ $\alpha\tau\rho\alpha\epsilon\iota$ $\eta\epsilon\mu\omega\upsilon$: on the basis of the adverbial role of $\epsilon\eta\lambda\alpha\mu\omega\upsilon$ twice below (103.9.14) I believe it is not too wild a surmise to read here as adverbial $\epsilon\eta\lambda\alpha\mu\omega\upsilon$, “well, successfully”. See below.

81.37 $\epsilon\omega\gamma\eta\tau$ $\omega\gamma\eta\rho$ $\lambda\eta\lambda\alpha\kappa$ is, I believe, circumstantial, not focalizing, and thus not disjoined from the preceding text.

86.11 I would render the iconic response $\tau\omega\mu\omega\upsilon$ $\tau\omega\mu\omega\upsilon$ by “by all means” or sim. rather than “yes, yes”.

89.34 $\eta\eta\epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon$ $\tau\eta\rho\omega$: “all kinds of suffering”, rather than “nothing but trouble”.⁸

92.7 $\omega\rho\tau\iota$ $\mu\epsilon\eta$ $\epsilon\omega\iota\upsilon\epsilon$ $\lambda\rho\omega\tau\eta$: the translation “First, I am greeting you...” (as against the ubiquitous “I greet you”) is misleading, if at all meaningful. What we have here is a rare example of $\epsilon\omega\iota\upsilon\tau\eta$ as the *performative* or *Koinzidenzfall* (E. Koschmieder) form, a wholly neglected issue in Coptic and Egyptian.

92.16 $\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon$ $\sigma\epsilon$ $\mu\eta\lambda\alpha\eta$ $\eta\tau\alpha\sigma$ $\omega\upsilon\omega\pi\epsilon$: “Very well then, what happened?” misses the striking colloquialism here, doubly marked: by the particle amalgam and the rhetorical $\eta\tau\alpha\sigma$ $\omega\upsilon\omega\pi\epsilon$, German: “Was ist denn (überhaupt) schon los?!”; “Why, what’s the big deal?” or similar, in opposition to the interrogative Cleft Sentence $\omega\upsilon$ $\eta\epsilon\mu\tau\alpha\upsilon\omega\upsilon\omega\pi\epsilon$ (compare Rom.3:3, Philipp.1:18, Boh. $\omega\upsilon$ $\gamma\alpha\rho$, Gk $\tau\iota$ $\gamma\alpha\rho$).

92.23-25 $\epsilon\iota$ $\kappa\alpha\eta$ $\eta\epsilon\omega\lambda\iota\sigma\lambda\alpha\lambda\epsilon\lambda\epsilon$ $\phi\omega\beta$ $\eta\omega\gamma\alpha\eta$ $\eta\mu\eta$ $\eta\omega$ $\rho\omega$ $\eta\tau\omega$ $\eta\mu\alpha\mu\epsilon\lambda\epsilon$ $\lambda\rho\alpha\upsilon$ $\epsilon\eta$ is a fine instance of irony, combining topicalization and focusing ($\eta\omega$ $\rho\omega$), the latter by means of $\rho\omega$ (again, not “indeed”). The aorist is the core of the irony: “even if I were in the habit of neglecting...” and not as translated.

92.28-29 $\eta\mu\epsilon\eta$ $\chi\epsilon$ $\eta\eta\mu\epsilon$: the brilliant note in the commentary (p.168), does not fully focus on the metalexical role of the zero article as *Nennform*.

94.52 $\epsilon\omega\omega\pi\epsilon$ $\lambda\eta$ $\mu\pi\epsilon$ $\eta\upsilon\epsilon$ “and if there is no way”: I am at a loss to understand this – $\mu\pi\epsilon$ is a past negator pro-form, and also cannot be simply adjoined to $\eta\upsilon\epsilon$.

⁸ Shisha-Halevy 1986, p.172.

94.52-54 $\eta\text{-}\epsilon\text{τε}\eta\eta\tau\epsilon\text{-}\sigma\alpha\gamma\eta\epsilon\ \chi\epsilon\text{-}\sigma\epsilon\eta\alpha\gamma\iota\tau\varsigma\ \epsilon\eta\ \eta\eta\mu\alpha$ is translated here “you cannot know whether (or not) they will carry it from here”. This difficult passage⁹ speaks for itself: a focalizing conversion of $\eta\eta\tau\epsilon\text{-}\sigma\alpha\gamma\eta\epsilon$ (a rare modal periphrase). $\eta\text{-}\dots\ \epsilon\eta$ is a full nexal negation (very rare in the corpus). The negation is here double: in the topical $\eta\eta\tau\epsilon\text{-}\sigma\alpha\gamma\eta\epsilon$ as well as the nexus. Frankly, I cannot reach a plausible translation.

94.57-59 $\epsilon\omega\omega\pi\epsilon\ \lambda\eta\ \epsilon\kappa\omicron\gamma\eta\gamma\ \lambda\eta$ is a probable instance of the “foreshadowed enclitic”, one and the same enclitic occurring twice under special prosodic circumstances (Shisha-Halevy 2007, p.699 s.v.). Another instance seems to be 105.43-44. A note would be helpful.

102.13 $\eta\eta\text{-}\rho\omega\beta\ \eta\tau\omicron\tau\gamma\ \eta\eta\lambda\epsilon\ \eta\eta\text{-}\pi\iota\sigma\epsilon$: “There is nothing from him”. I suggest, very tentatively, that $\eta\eta\lambda\epsilon$ is nothing but the negative pro-form of the imperfect, in the negative paradigm also including $\eta\eta\mu\omicron\eta$, $\eta\eta\epsilon$, $\eta\eta\omicron$, and the phrase should mean something like “nay and yea” (the affirmative is definite). The sequel $\chi\epsilon\ \rho\omega\ \eta\tau\omicron\tau\gamma$ is difficult, for the particle $\rho\omega$ cannot to my knowledge occur adjacently to the conjunction; this syntagm and problem are ignored in the edition.

102.17-18 $\epsilon\omega\omega\pi\epsilon\ \lambda\sigma\epsilon\ \tau\epsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\ \eta\eta\eta\ \eta\eta\omicron\gamma\omega$ “If yes, you write to me the news quickly”. The verb form may be either the present or the conjunctive. I assume the authors take it as a conjunctive, but then an apodotic injunctive should have been explained in a note.

103.7-9, 13-14 $\epsilon\eta\lambda\eta\omicron\gamma\gamma$ occurs here (and, I suggest, above, 81.15-16) in the adverbial role of “well” or sim. with an invariable pronominal element; or (103.14), substantivized, in direct-object status, as “a good one”, with an endocentric nucleus.¹⁰ All possible antecedents in line 9 ($\sigma\alpha\tau\tau$, $\mu\eta\alpha$, $\chi\eta\sigma\epsilon$) are feminine or not masculine.

103.45 $\eta\tau\epsilon\kappa$ cannot simply mean “for you”. A note is called for.

103.49 $\kappa\eta\eta\ \rho\omega\kappa\ \eta\eta\epsilon\gamma$: “you too are supposed to see” rather than “you yourself”.

105.80 $\eta\tau\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\text{-}\tau\epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\eta\ \epsilon\eta\lambda\eta\eta\iota\alpha\gamma\epsilon\ \omega\sigma\gamma\omicron\ \lambda\chi\omega\varsigma$ is a prime example of a Circumstantial Conversion focalized by a Focalizing Conversion in a Cleft Sentence: “It is while my tears were running down on it that I wrote this letter”, rather than “God can testify for me that I have written this letter, my tears flowing over it”, which loses sight of the essential information structure.¹¹

106.13-15 $\eta\eta\pi\sigma\omega\ \epsilon\eta\eta\kappa\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\ \eta\eta\eta$, translated “do not remain not having written to me”. Better: “do not go on not writing to me”. $\sigma\omega$ is an auxiliary.

106.20-25 $\eta\eta\pi\lambda\eta\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\ \lambda\lambda\alpha\gamma\epsilon\ \eta\eta\omega\beta\ \lambda\gamma\omega\ \lambda\tau\epsilon\kappa\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\ \eta\eta\eta\ \chi\epsilon\text{-}\epsilon\omega\ \tau\epsilon\ \theta\epsilon\ \epsilon\tau\alpha\kappa\tau\omega\omega\ \lambda\epsilon\varsigma$, translated here “Do not neglect any (aspect) of the matter, and you must write to me how you have decided to do it”. Better: “Do not neglect any matter, and to write to me...” in a zeugmatic construction.

107.14 $\epsilon\pi\iota\lambda\eta\ \lambda\gamma\omega\tau\tau\epsilon\ \pi\tau\omega\beta\ \epsilon\tau\eta\eta\tau\eta\eta\eta\tau\epsilon$ translated “since the matter between us has been fixed”. I am at a loss to understand this.

111.11 $\tau\eta\mu\omicron\gamma\ \pi\epsilon\ \omicron\gamma\alpha\omega\pi\epsilon\ \lambda\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\ \eta\tau\epsilon\tau\tau\alpha\varsigma$ translated “Is it now to stop writing the tetras”. The rhetorical interrogativity is once again unmarked, as usual in the corpus; the Nominal

⁹ The two $\lambda\eta$ on lines 52-53 may be a case of “foreshadowed enclitic”, discussed here ad lines 58-59.

¹⁰ See Shisha-Halevy 2007, pp.586ff., §§4.5.1.2, 4.5.2; 2015, §14, pp.39ff.).

¹¹ In $\eta\tau\alpha\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\text{-}\tau\epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\eta$ we encounter another feature typical of the corpus, in need of study, namely the sporadic absence of the object marker, with certain verb-lexeme forms.

Sentence with “now” for rheme and the immutable situational theme πε “it’s” is not attested elsewhere, to my knowledge;¹² I suggest “Is it the time of stopping to write the tetras?”, rather than “now”.

114.1 †ΩΙΝΕ ΑΠΑΣΑΝ ΦΙΛΑΜΜΩΝ ΑΧΟΟΦ ΝΕΚ ΧΕ... The editors translate “I am greeting... to say” with a brief note. This is a remarkable valential construction, combining “greet” with the performative “(I) say” – “I greet you and tell you”.

115.28-29 ΜΗ ΕΡΕ-ΝΤΑΣ ΠΕ ΝΟΥΑΕΤΣ ΑΛΛΑ ΝΚΕΩΗΡΕ ΝΝΟΝΝΑ ΑΥΜΟΥ. “It is not only her; but Nonna’s children also have died.” The translation as it stands is barely acceptable, for ΜΗ- can hardly be the non-existence form (so Index, p.314), unless it be a unique case of “it isn’t that” “that”-form.

115.35-36 ΕΩΩΠΕ ΠΕ ΠΕΙ ΔΙΝΑΣΩ ΕΙΣΜΑΝΤ: while the translation is apt (perhaps better “If this is so”), the construction, with πε in colon-second position and apparently preceding its rheme, merits comment.

120.1-6 †ΩΙΝΕ ΑΡΑΚ ΤΟΝΟΥ ΠΧΩΝ ΕΤΗΤΟΥ ΝΛΑΜΩΝ ΤΑΡΕ-ΝΙΠΡΑΞΕΙΣ ΖΡΙΦ ΝΤΑΦ ΠΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΤΡΟΥΝΤΥ ΝΗΙ ΝΤΟΥΤΥ “I greet you warmly. (About) this book that Lamou has: Let the Acts be copied. But the *Gospel*: Let them bring it to me from father Pabo”. Editors’ note, p.254: “The causative conjunctive (I.3) and the causative infinitive (I.5) both seem to be used here as imperatives, i.e. instead of ΗΑΡΕΥ-.” p.256 (to ΖΡΙΦ) “We understand ΧΙ ΖΡΒ ‘take a likeness’ i.e. ‘copy’ CD 701b”.

I beg to differ with both comments: whereas ΤΡΟΥ- may, rather uneasily, like infinitives, be injunctive – although the generic 3rd plur. hardly supports this, ΤΑΡΕΥ- in the 3rd person/noun (the Acts) is here, as often, apodotic. Strikingly, there is no imperatival protasis, other than perhaps †ΩΙΝΕ. As for ΖΡΙΦ, had the scribe wanted to say “take shape” he would use ΧΙ- or Ρ-, but we just may have here the *verb* corresponding to the substantive ΖΡΒ (CDD, under *H*, p.69).

122.19.24 ΔΜΙ-ΚΟΥΣ ΣΝΟ ΝΗΖ ΜΝΤΑΤΝΑΞΩ ΖΑΡΕΤΥ ΜΠΒΑΡΒΑΡΑΣ... ΕΙ ΜΕΝ ΜΝΤΑΤΝΗΗΥ ΖΧΕΕΙ: translated here “Bring 2 *choes* of oil. You (pl.) can not remain under the foreigner”, “Even if you can not come, write to us...”. I see these as two cases of the ΜΝΤΕ- negative protasis, discussed by A. Boud’hors (2010), which still leaves two difficulties, *viz.* a contextual one in l.19, and a syntactical one – the Stative in a non-durative slot in l. 24. However, the latter problem is attenuated in view of the sporadically attested instances of adverbial and relatively unbound Stative (Boud’hors and Shisha-Halevy 2012). All this is speculative, not critical, but illustrative of the tentative analysis and the struggle with syntactic difficulties (see the editors’ comments, pp.269-270).

It is befitting to end my review with a rather lengthy note on 122.29-30, as it were iconic of the Kellis syntactic predicament – lexicon seemingly familiar, idiom hovering about, grammar all-possible (almost), yet meaning obscure: ΑΡΑΠΤΝΗΗΤΝΤΟΝΟΥΖΝΠΑΖΗΤ.

I find the editors’ analysis and translations (“This is a tentative free translation of a rather unusual and difficult sentence”) unconvincing. “I am yours from the bottom of my heart”, literally “The ground be to you very much in my heart”. Now we cannot even be sure about the modulation – interrogation, rhetoricity, exclamation, assertion. ΑΡΑ, taken by the editors as prenominal allomorph of the Focalizing Converter (ερε-; but ΑΡΑ- is never used like this elsewhere in the corpus), may well be one of the several entities subsumed under ΑΡΑ, e.g. the Greek rhetorical signal for *reductio ad absurdum* argument. I doubt

¹² Shisha-Halevy 1986, 38-89.

that ⲙⲏⲣⲏ “the ground, the soil” can be as metaphorical as our “bottom (of heart)”; I could find no parallel in Coptic or Demotic. In brief, nothing warrants confidence in this short textual section; and the question pops up, whether we must at all cost translate, or resign ourselves to (provisional) inscience.

Here I end my account, repeating my words of unreserved admiration for this impressive scholarly achievement. We cannot evade any longer the task of compiling a grammatical, phraseological and lexical description on the excuse of insufficient material, and, who knows? More evidence may turn up to join this fascinating collection.

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