

## Copticisms in Greek Documents?\*

In his article *Egyptianisms in a Late Ptolemaic Document* (in: *Antidoron Martino David Oblatum* = PLBat. XVII, Leyden 1968, 70-76), G. Mussies states: «That Egyptian Koine Greek betrays very little influence of the vernacular tongue in the documents that have come down to us is generally acknowledged». J. Quaegebeur demonstrates, however, in his article *Dialektische Namensformen und die Lokalisierung von Urkunden*, in *ZPE* 4, 1969, 183-185 that Egyptian proper names more than once reflect the dialectal vocalisation of the Egyptian language.

During a recent visit to Vienna, I discovered possible Copticisms in two texts lodged in the Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. Both texts, which have already been published, require correction.

1) SB VI 9397: the correct reading at the end of line 7 of this papyrus is: ὁ κύρι[ο]ς Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός (the editor left ὁ before Χριστός out). It is a well-known fact that in Coptic — in contrast with Greek — the expression for «Christ» is not treated as a proper name but as an appellative and therefore has the definite article (cf. W. C. TILL, *Koptische Grammatik*, Leipzig, 1961, paragr. 96). I think that the scribe of this VIth/VIIth century letter inserted the definite article under the influence of the language which he was accustomed to use: Coptic<sup>1</sup>. W. BAUER (*Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*<sup>5</sup>, Berlin, 1963) cites s.v. Χριστός six instances of the

---

(\*) I wish to thank G. M. Browne who read through this note and corrected my English.

1) That native speakers were sometimes obliged to write (or, have written for them) documents in Greek is attested by P.Oxy. XXXIII 2673: the case of Aurelius Ammonius, lector of a village church who does not know (Greek) letters. Cf. H. C. YOUTIE, *Scriptiunculae* II, Amsterdam, 1973, 163.

2) Cf. P. J. SIJPESTEIJN, *Sammelbuch VI* 9086 and ἐκχώρησις, in *ZPE* 19, 1975, 97.



expression Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός but although Bauer states that in four cases this is the *textus receptus*, E. NESTLE (*Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine*<sup>16</sup>, Stuttgart, 1954) gives Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός as a *varia lectio* only in the case of *Acta Apostolorum* 9, 34.

2) SPP XX 65<sup>2</sup> contains abstracts of contracts and is dated by its editor to the 2nd century A.D. (probably on palaeographical grounds). Line 4 reads according to the editor Σεμπρωνία Σαβείνα δι' Ἀφρο[δισίου]. A Roman citizen (not listed by R. TAUBENSCHLAG, *Geschichte der Rezeption des römischen Privatrechts in Ägypten*, Op. Min. I 189, 36 n.), Sempronia Sabina cedes her share of land to an unknown person. A check of the original revealed, however, that the correct reading of this line is Σεμπρωνία Τασαβείνα κτλ. Since the Egyptian scribe was used to numerous cases in which the name of the father or mother of a person was given, he added the Coptic possessive prefix Τα i.e. «she of» (cf. W. C. TILL, *op. cit.*, paragr. 203) and therefore misinterpreted «Sempronia Sabina» as meaning «Sempronia the daughter of Sabina». In view of this phenomenon, I should prefer to date this papyrus later than its editor does. Years κx (line 3) and κβ (lines 9 and 14) refer in my opinion to the 21st (A.D. 212/3) and 22nd (A.D. 213/4) year of the reign of Caracalla and this papyrus should be dated in the first quarter of the 3rd century A.D.

P. J. SIJPESTEIJN

*Amsterdam*