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THE INTERRELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN SCRIPTAL AND LINGUISTIC VARIATION
IN NOTARY SIGNATURES OF GREEK CONTRACTS
FROM LATE ANTIQUE EGYPT

1. INTRODUCTION

IT IS UNSURPRISING that the study of Roman and Byzantine Egypt as a multilingual environment[1] is increasingly attractive to researchers of papyrology and historical linguistics.[2] This is not solely based on the intensity of language contact and the longevity of multilingual administrative,

[2] E.g. J.-L. FOURNET, 'The multilingual environment of late antique Egypt: Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Persian documentation', [in:] R. BAGNALL (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, Oxford 2009, pp. 418–451; M. LEIWO, 'Multilingual military forts in Roman Egypt', *Lingue Antiche e Moderne* 7 (2018), pp. 165–190; A. PAPACONSTANTINOU (ed.), *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt: From the Ptolemies to the Abbasids*, Farnham 2010; M. VIERROS, *Bilingual Notaries in Hellenistic Egypt: A Study of Greek as a Second Language*, Brussels 2012.

legal, or everyday practices and exchanges in the area, but also due to the abundance of sources. Combined with modern-day technology, this abundance allows the collection and comparison of large amounts of multilingual phenomena.

Up to the eighth century, no other foreign language was as widely and diversely used in Egypt as Greek, as confirmed by the vast majority of papyri written in it. By contrast, Latin mostly managed to occupy a symbolic role as the language of authority and law, for a shorter period of time (mainly first to third/early fourth centuries). With its first known texts dating from the late third to the early fourth century,[3] Coptic met a slow but steady rise until the sixth century, when it even started being used in legal documents. This shift from almost exclusively Greek to Coptic documents becomes more pronounced in the seventh and eighth centuries, at least as far as documentation allows us to observe.[4] Eventually, the Arab conquest of Egypt (AD 641) led to the replacement of Coptic by Arabic and the overall establishment of Arabic as the official language of Egypt. In fact, as Tonio Sebastian Richter[5] showed, both the Hellenization and the Arabization of Egypt were clear examples of contact-induced language shifts which exhibit great linguistic interest. In the Egyptian case, these shifts could either be a result of 'top-down' interventions or merely 'bottom-up' choices. An example, on the one hand, of the first possibility is the imposition by Roman authorities[6] to compose certain legal documents, notably wills and birth certificates, in Latin. On the other hand,

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[3] S. J. CLACKSON, 'Coptic or Greek? Bilingualism in the papyri', [in:] A. PAPACONSTANTINOU (ed.), *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt: From the Ptolemies to the Abbasids*, Farnham 2010, pp. 73–104, at p. 74.

[4] J.-L. FOURNET, *The Rise of Coptic: Egyptian versus Greek in Late Antiquity*, Princeton 2020, pp. 94–97.

[5] T. S. RICHTER, 'Greek, Coptic, and the "language of the Hijra": The rise and decline of the Coptic language in late antique and medieval Egypt', [in:] H. M. COTTON, R. G. HOYLAND, J. J. PRICE & D. J. WASSERSTEIN (eds.), *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East*, Cambridge 2009, pp. 401–446, at p. 434.

[6] However, it should be kept in mind that such demands of enforcing Latin on conquered peoples did not constitute a strict and common practice for Romans (J. N. ADAMS, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, Cambridge 2003, p. 758).

complications reflected in mixed-language papyri[7] of this type, as well as the persistent dominance of Greek in documentary papyri in general, indicate the frequently met limited effectiveness of these endeavors and the perseverance of 'bottom-up' linguistic choices.[8]

Texts which use or combine more than one language or script can often provide interesting insights into the social role and status of the latter. Before focusing on the bilingual phenomenon that is more relevant to this paper, it is useful to remember James Adams'[9] typology of bilingual evidence from Antiquity, as revised by Alex Mullen:[10]

1. Bi-version bilingual texts (two versions of the same text in two languages);

2. Texts displaying bilingual phenomena (texts that appear to be in one language but exhibit evidence of bilingual phenomena);

3. Mixed language texts (texts where languages are mixed to an extent that it is difficult to assign a primary language);

4. Transliterated texts (texts written in the script of another language);

[5. Translated texts].

It is noteworthy that all of the aforementioned categories are formed on the basis of languages used, except for the fourth, which focuses on script use. Even if the study of multilingualism in Antiquity has notably contributed to shifting the focus to written evidence and its particularities, it is

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[7] For an example of a mixed-language legal document, see M. Leiwo & H. Halla-aho, 'A marriage contract: Aspects of Latin-Greek language contact', *Mnemosyne* 55.5 (2002), pp. 560–580.

[8] Adams, *Bilingualism* (cit. n. 6), pp. 562–563; Fournet, 'The multilingual environment' (cit. n. 2).

[9] Adams, *Bilingualism* (cit. n. 6).

[10] A. Mullen, 'Introduction: Multiple languages, multiple identities', [in:] A. Mullen & P. James (eds.), *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*, Cambridge 2012, pp. 1–35, at p. 16. An earlier attempt of listing and analyzing the various types of 'graphic' bilingualism using epigraphic evidence from Italy can be found in M. Leiwo, 'From contact to mixture: Bilingual inscriptions from Italy', [in:] J. N. Adams, M. Janse & S. Swain (eds.), *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text*, Oxford 2002, pp. 168–194.

safe to say that Egyptian texts with transliterations or other bilingual phe-
nomena pertaining to script use are less studied[11] compared to texts with
multiple languages. Yet, the study of written evidence is by no means com-
plete if such phenomena are neglected; more importantly, in cases where
they add social meaning to their linguistic content.

Even if sociolinguistics has traditionally focused on studying linguistic
rather than scriptal phenomena, many researchers have acknowledged the
importance of script in sociolinguistic research.[12] Peter Unseth[13] identifies
parallels between the study of language and script and provides a categori-
zation for the motivations in choosing a script, extending Ralph Fasold's[14]
list of motivations in choosing a national language. In particular, script
choice may be influenced by the following factors:[15]

  1. Identifying with another group;
  2. Creating distance from another group;
  3. Participating in developments on a broader scale;
  4. Linguistic considerations.[16]

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[11] However, there has been an increase in relevant systematic studies in recent years,
e.g. M.-H. Marganne & B. Rochette (eds.), *Bilinguisme et digraphisme dans le monde gréco-
romain: l'apport des papyrus latins*, Liège 2013.

[12] F. Coulmas, 'The future of Chinese characters', [in:] R. L. Cooper & B. Spolsky (eds.),
*The Influence of Language on Culture and Thought: Essays in Honor of Joshua A. Fishman's Six-
ty-Fifth Birthday*, Berlin – New York 1991, pp. 227–243; J. Fishman, 'Language and ethnicity:
the view from within', [in:] F. Coulmas (ed.), *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, Oxford 1997,
pp. 327–343.

[13] P. Unseth, 'Sociolinguistic parallels between choosing scripts and languages', *Written
Language and Literacy* 8.1 (2005), pp. 19–42; P. Unseth, 'The sociolinguistics of script choice:
An introduction', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 192 (2008), pp. 1–4.

[14] R. Fasold, *The Sociolinguistics of Society*, New York 1984, p. 248.

[15] Unseth, 'Sociolinguistic parallels' (cit. n. 13), p. 22.

[16] Unseth, 'Sociolinguistic parallels' (cit. n. 13), p. 28: 'Linguistic factors in choosing a
script are basically negative; these are most often used to prevent a script from being cho-
sen. Sometimes, a script is rejected because it is not suited for marking all of the distinct
sounds of a language, including consonants, vowels, or tones. In some cases, this excuse
has been egregiously invoked in cases where it was not insurmountable, but there are some
clear cases where the limitations of a script have strongly directed against the choice of
a particular script for a particular language'.

This paper investigates variation in the so-called *di emu* / δι᾽ἐμοῦ signatures, written by notaries at the end of legal documents from the fourth through the seventh century. These subscriptions are viewed in relation to the multilingual and multiscriptal environment notaries acted in, as they appear not only in Greek, but also in Latin characters. Two examples of the two cases can be found in the following images.[17]

Fig. 1. Detail from *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67109 (recto), l. 50:
✝ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Κύρου νομικοῦ ἐγράφη (marks)[18]
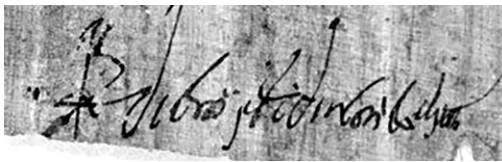(© Photographic Archive of Papyri in the Cairo Museum, CG67109)

Fig. 2. Detail from *P. Oxy.* I 134 (recto), l. 32:
⳨ di emu Iust(u) diacon(u) etelioth(e)[19]
(© Photographic Archive of Papyri in the Cairo Museum, CG10053)

Variation in *di emu* / δι᾽ ἐμοῦ signatures is treated here in three successive steps, corresponding to two different levels of analysis (i.e., script and language), and their combination. Different script and language choices are examined, with the ultimate objective of explaining how the two can

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[17] Such signatures can also be found in Coptic documents, but this research is limited to Greek documentation.

[18] Improved reading of J. M. DIETHART & K. A. WORP, *Notarsunterschriften im Byzantinischen Ägypten*, Vienna 1986, p. 29.

[19] For the improved reading, see *BL* VIII 232.

be connected. In other words, can script choice encourage or discourage linguistic variation, and, vice versa, can linguistic variation provide insights about familiarity with the script used? While variations in both the language and the script of these signatures are considered important, and are taken into account, the ultimate objective of this article is to identify potential links between the two.

The structure of the article follows this reasoning. After briefly introducing the linguistic (multilingual) environment of notaries and their signatures, as well as basic concepts of the theoretical framework (Section 1), it is necessary to clarify what is meant by the terms *digraphia* and *transliteration*, and reflect on their relevance to the topic (Section 2). Information about the history and the features of *di emu* / δι᾽ἐμοῦ signatures is provided in the following section (Section 3), along with a short summary of previous research on the subject. The next step (Section 4) is to treat variation first on the scriptal (4.1) and then linguistic (4.2) levels. Observations from examining them separately lead to a discussion of the relationship between variation in script and language (Section 5). The conclusions of this investigation can be found in the final section, along with some final remarks and a few suggestions for future research on the variation of *di emu* / δι᾽ἐμοῦ signatures (Section 6).

The focus of this paper is socio-linguistic, since it examines the possibility of certain social meanings and motivations being conveyed through different scripts. Insights and concepts from multilingualism and language contact studies are also used where they are relevant and helpful, in order to explain the bilingual phenomena of Greek-Latin digraphia and transliteration, as well as more or less limited (competence for) linguistic variation. Moreover, concepts of social semiotics facilitate the analysis, as signatures are viewed and explored not only as linguistic (in the traditional, restricted sense of the term), but also, through writing, as visual products. This theory also supports distinguishing between language and script as distinct, though potentially interacting, carriers of meaning with different meaning-making potential.[20]

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[20] G. KRESS, *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*, London 2010; T. D. ROYCE, 'Intersemiotic complementarity: A framework for multimodal

2. DIGRAPHIA AND TRANSLITERATION

Before examining the *di emu* / δι᾽ ἐμοῦ signature, it seems necessary to discuss the phenomena of *digraphia* and *transliteration*. This section begins with a discussion of these terms (their values and usage by different scholars), and continues with specifying their meaning in this work. Finally, some possible motivations behind these phenomena are briefly presented.

The terms digraphia or bigraphism have been used before in a papyrological context. Most notably, Jennifer Cromwell[21] has written about bigraphism to refer to the use of two different scripts by a scribe within the same document. Denis Feissel[22] and Sophie Kovarik[23] call such documents digraphic (*digraphe* and *digraphisch* respectively). Similarly, Fournet,[24] in his discussion of Coptic legal documents before the Arab conquest of Egypt, characterizes scribes who use both Greek and Coptic writing as digraphic. Digraphia (which is preferred to bigraphism here) in a linguistic society means that this society makes use of two scripts at the same time for a certain period; when digraphia refers to the writing of a scribe, it indicates that this specific scribe has composed texts in two writing systems; and, finally, digraphia in a text implies that two scripts have been employed within the same text (potentially by one and the same writer, but not necessarily). Special attention should thus be paid to the use of the term by Kovarik when she describes signatures that appear in both Latin and Greek script,[25] for example:

discourse analysis', [in:] T. D. Royce & W. L. Bowcher (eds.), *New Directions in the Analysis of Multimodal Discourse*, Mahwah 2007, pp. 63–109.

[21] J. Cromwell, 'Greek or Coptic? Scribal decisions in eighth-century Egypt (Thebes)', [in:] J. Cromwell & E. Grossman (eds.), *Scribal Repertoires in Egypt from the New Kingdom to the Early Islamic Period*, Oxford 2017, pp. 251–273, at p. 262.

[22] D. Feissel, 'Écrire grec en alphabet latin: le cas des documents protobyzantins', [in:] F. Biville, J. C. Decourt & G. Rougemont (eds.), *Bilinguisme Gréco-Latin et Épigraphie*, Lyon 2008, pp. 213–230.

[23] S. Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat. Kanzleipraxis des 4.–8. Jh. n. u. Z. am Beispiel des Arsinoites (Mittelägypten)* (PhD diss, unpubl.), Vienna 2014.

[24] Fournet, *The Rise of Coptic* (cit. n. 4), pp. 82–89.

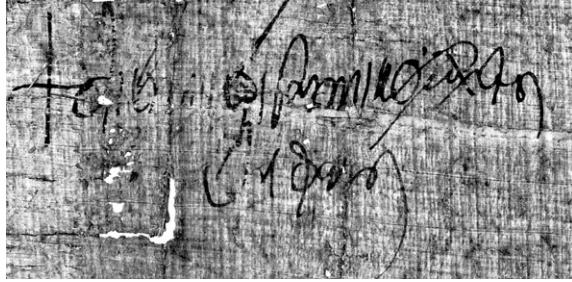[25] Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23), esp. p. 434 ff.

Fig. 3. Detail from *CPR* X 24 (Arsinoiton Polis, 522/3), ll. 10–11:
✝ di emu Epifaniu (marks) δι' ἐμοῦ | Ἐπιφανίου
(© Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung –
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,
Scan: Berliner Papyrusdatenbank, P. 2617)

In this paper, such signatures are described as composed of one transliter-
ated part (where we find Greek in Latin characters) and a purely Greek one,
to facilitate the analysis.

The characterization 'transliterated' is used here to refer to the use of a
script which is considered as the 'non-default' or 'non-standard' script for
a specific language, such as, the use of Latin (and not Greek) characters
to render a Greek text. This is often the case for the Greek signatures in
question, many of which are written in Latin script, despite their language.
Transliterated signatures thus include signatures like the one of *CPR* X 22
(Arsinoiton Polis, 6th c.) below:

Fig. 4. Detail from *CPR* X 22, l. 11: ✝ di emu Epifaniu (marks)
(© Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, G 25607 Pap)

Feissel[26] and Kovarik[27] also use the term transliteration in their above-mentioned works to refer to Greek notarial signatures rendered in Latin characters. Similarly, in the categorization of bilingual phenomena in ancient documents displayed in the introduction, Adams[28] and Mullen[29] list texts where an 'inappropriate' alphabet is used for the writing of a language as 'transliterated'. These texts can be of two types: (a.) the ones consisting in transliterating a text into the writer's language but with a different script (e.g., *di emu* = δι' ἐμοῦ), and (b.) the ones which consist in transliterating a text of another language with the script of the writer's language (e.g. σκριψι μη αккηπισσε = *scripsi me accepisse*).[30] The notarial signatures in question belong to the first type, as the main language of use of the notaries was not Latin, but Greek and/or Egyptian.

The two terms discussed above are undoubtedly related. On the one hand, historically, transliterated texts occur in the context of digraphic societies. Transliterated passages, on the other hand, may result in digraphia within a document. This is the case when they co-occur with the use of a different script within the same document; otherwise, this text can only be characterized as purely transliterated and not digraphic, as only one writing system is employed, even if it is the 'non-default' one.

In order to investigate the function of Greek-Latin digraphia in notarial signatures, one must first consider the presence and diffusion of transliterated evidence from the Roman and Byzantine empires, and especially from Egypt. In spite of the fact that the Greek and Latin alphabets are 'closely related',[31] knowledge of one did not automatically guarantee knowledge of the other. In certain cases, even a good level of knowledge in both languages did not result in the ability to write in both scripts. As Adams stresses in his discussion about 'transliterated texts',[32] that would

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[26] Feissel, 'Écrire grec en alphabet latin' (cit. n. 22).

[27] Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23).

[28] Adams, *Bilingualism* (cit. n. 6).

[29] Mullen, 'Introduction: Multiple languages' (cit. n. 10).

[30] From *SB* III 6304 (Ravenna, found in Arsinoites, *c.* 151), ll. 3–4. See discussion of the text in Adams, *Bilingualism* (cit. n. 6), pp. 53–63.

[31] Adams, *Bilingualism* (cit. n. 6), p. 41.

[32] Adams, *Bilingualism* (cit. n. 6), pp. 40–67.

simply imply confusing language learning with literacy learning, a very useful distinction for the interpretation of digraphia. He continues by offering a number of scenarios potentially explaining the use of a script that is non-default for a language, where two key points are relevant: necessity and choice. For example, transliterated texts may be a result of imperfect literacy or illiteracy, but they can also be a conscious decision of the writer. This writing strategy might, for instance, be preferred in order to make a text more or less accessible to its readers or even because writers have associated certain scripts with certain values (e.g. their cultural or religious identity). These and many more reasons led to a significant amount of texts in which Greek is written in Latin script or Latin is rendered in Greek letters. Adams claims that the latter is much more common, citing Michael Donderer,[33] Johannes Kramer,[34] and Pieter Johannes Sijpesteijn,[35] but I would leave this question open in the case of late antique Egypt. Feissel[36] offers a discussion focused on this phenomenon, exploring several instances of Greek late antique documentary texts written in the Latin alphabet, from the fourth to the seventh century, when this combination seemed to have become a writing trend. Writers of *di emu* / δι' ἐμοῦ signatures, the so-called *tabelliones*, largely followed this trend. Of course, other combinations of languages and scripts, which fall beyond the scope of this paper, were possible and are attested in Egypt, such as in examples of Greek in Coptic characters (which can also be found in notarial signatures), in religious invocations found in seventh and eighth century documents from Thebes, Djeme and the surrounding monasteries,[37] or Arabic in Coptic script.[38]

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[33] M. DONDERER, 'Merkwürdigkeiten im Umgang mit griechischer und lateinischer Schrift in der Antike', *Gymnasium* 102 (1995), pp. 97–122.

[34] J. KRAMER, 'Testi greci scritti nell'alfabeto latino e testi latini scritti nell'alfabeto greco: Un caso di bilinguismo imperfetto', [in:] *Atti del XVII Congresso Internationale di Papirologia*, Naples 1984, pp. 1377–1384.

[35] P. J. SIJPESTEIJN, 'Wiener Mélange', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 40 (1980), pp. 91–110.

[36] FEISSEL, 'Écrire grec en alphabet latin' (cit. n. 22).

[37] CROMWELL, 'Greek or Coptic?' (cit. n. 21).

Another factor potentially relevant to digraphia and transliterated passages is the concept of *diglossia*, introduced by Charles A. Ferguson.[39] This refers to the distinction between two linguistic varieties found in a bilingual society, that can be assigned a H(igh) and a L(ow) prestige value and are functionally compartmentalized.[40] Extending diglossia to the graphic representation of different languages within one linguistic environment, Cromwell[41] also uses the term *diglossic bigraphism*. This refers to texts where different scripts are used for different purposes, because they are associated with different functional values. The use of a 'non-standard' script implies that the use of the 'standard' one has been avoided. In case this choice constitutes a deliberate strategy, diglossic motivations are still a possibility that needs to be assessed.

3. THE *DI EMU* / *ΔΙʹ ΕΜΟΥ* NOTARIAL SIGNATURE

As concepts like 'social role', 'social meaning' or 'functionally compartmentalized' come into play, briefly drawing the historical context of the notarial profession of *tabelliones* and the documents their signatures appear in is essential. Legal documents in Egypt were initially drawn up by state notaries. This was the norm until the fourth century AD, when, encouraged by the will of Roman authorities to limit this costly process, a shift of major importance took place; issuing of legal documents passed into

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[38] P. Casanova, 'Un texte arabe transcrit en caractères coptes', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 1 (1901), pp. 1–20. Other notable works on transliterated texts are the following: W. E. Crum, 'Coptic documents in Greek script', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 25 (1939), pp. 249–271; A. Delattre, B. Liebrenz, T. S. Richter & N. Vanthieghem, 'Écrire en arabe et en copte. Le cas de deux lettres bilingues', *Chronique d'Égypte* 87 (2012), no. 173, pp. 170–188; Kramer, 'Testi greci' (cit. n. 34).

[39] C. A Ferguson, 'Diglossia', *Word* 15 (1959), pp. 325–340.

[40] J. A. Fishman, 'Bilingualism with and without diglossia; Diglossia with and without bilingualism', *Journal of Social Issues* 23 (1967), pp. 29–38; B. Giacomelli, *Greca Italica: Studi sul bilinguismo-diglossia nell'Italia Antica* [= *Studi Grammaticali e Linguistici* 15], Brescia 1983.

[41] Cromwell, 'Greek or Coptic?' (cit. n. 21), p. 267.

the hands of private notaries, authorized by the state. They bore the title
of συμβολαιογράφος in Greek or *tabellio* in Latin. As a matter of fact, this
was only 'one stage in a long, ongoing process of 'privatization' of scribal
activity in Egypt'.[42] Documents issued by this new group of notaries were
thus neither purely public nor private, but συμβόλαια ἀγοραῖα or *instru-
menta publice confecta*, something between the two spheres, a 'Mittelweg',
as Kovarik[43] calls it.

The format primarily adopted in these documents is that of the *cheiro-
graphon*. Its characteristic element is that it documents legal agreements
in letter format. This means that there is an addresser and an addressee
(e.g., in the case of a lease contract, the lessee and the lessor respectively),
a greeting (χαίρειν), and the subjective stylization of a homology in the
first person (ὁμολογῶ) found in the body of the contract that follows the
prescript. It has been speculated that this format came from the Hellenis-
tic East, with the addition of elements that were foreign to earlier docu-
mentation traditions of Egypt (e.g., the date and its format at the begin-
ning).[44] It was used from the second century BC, throughout the Roman
period, and made it to Late Antiquity, in a modified type of the initial for-
mat, the 'new' or 'reformed' *cheirographon*.[45]

In the end, one can find the signature of the notary who issued the doc-
ument. This is the *completio* (πλήρωσις / τέλεσμα), mentioned in the *Codex
Justinianus* (4.21.17) as necessary for the *tabellio* document. It is typically
introduced by the preposition διά (δι'), followed by the genitive of the first

[42] U. YIFTACH-FIRANKO, 'The *cheirographon* and the privatization of scribal activity in early
Roman Oxyrhynchos', [in:] E. HARRIS & G. THUER (eds.), *Symposion 2007. Vorträge zur Grie-
chischen und Hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte* [= *Akten der Gesellschaft für Griechische und Hellenis-
tische Rechtsgeschichte* 20], Vienna 2008, pp. 325–340, at p. 338.

[43] KOVARIK, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23), pp. 1, 11. Her dissertation offers a more
complete discussion of the forerunners, origins and introduction of the *tabellio* docu-
ment, which largely draws on H. J. WOLFF, 'Der byzantinische Urkundenstil Ägyptens im
Lichte der Funde von Nessana und Dura', *Revue Internationale des droits de l'antiquité* 8 (1961),
pp. 115–154.

[44] KOVARIK, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23), p. 9.

[45] U. YIFTACH & K. VANDORPE, 'Immigration, globalization, and the impact on private
law: The case of legal documents', [in:] K. VANDORPE (ed.), *A Companion to Greco-Roman and
Late Antique Egypt*, Hoboken, NJ 2019, pp. 179–198, at pp. 185, 188.

singular person of the personal pronoun (ἐμοῦ). Finally, there is the name of the notary (in genitive). Sometimes the signature includes a verb which refers to the notarial process, most commonly in the past and in passive form (ἐγράφη, ἐσημειώθη, etc., where the subject would be the document itself) or a title after the name of the notary (e.g., συμβολαιογρά-φου). This subscription is very important for the validity of the document, with a function similar to that of seals found in previous Egyptian documentation, like the ones in the six-witness documents of the Ptolemaic period.

What makes notarial signatures even more important is that they carry the legal prestige and trustworthiness of their writer. Compared to other means used in the *impositio fidei*, the legal process with which the authenticity or falsehood of a document was determined in cases of dispute, the notary was considered the most reliable witness. In Justinian's Novels (44.1.4), we see the first mention of the αὐθεντία (*auctoritas*) of notaries.[46] As a consequence, notarial signatures are a written testimony of the presence and approval of the notary, and function as a warrant for the validity of the document. Their evidential value and importance should hence not be disregarded in their study.

An early important and systematic work exclusively concentrating on notarial signatures is that of Johannes M. Diethart and Klaas A. Worp.[47] It is a careful documentation of the signatures of different notaries who were active in different parts of Egypt from the fourth to the eight centuries. Part of their introduction is dedicated to the use of the Greek and/or Latin script in signatures from different regions, whereas another section additionally groups titles of notaries, verbs and signature formulas largely based on the alphabet used, but following a primarily geographical categorization. This illustrates the belief of the authors that variation should mostly be attributed to different notary office practices and traditions followed in different nomes, rather than to the personal style of individual notaries. This study prioritizes collecting signatures and organizing them to facilitate future research. Another approach is found in the dissertation

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[46] Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23), pp. 32, 282.
[47] J. M. Diethart & K. A. Worp, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18).

of Kovarik,[48] which, even if not having these subscriptions as its sole topic, but rather examining the notarial office in the fourth to eight-century Arsinoite altogether, devotes significant attention to them. Notwithstanding her noteworthy treatment of linguistic and scriptal variations, she largely maintains a paleographic viewpoint and concentrates on covering documentation from one broader region. Rather than describing their chronological or geographical distribution, the primary focus of this article is to reconstruct, as much as possible, the motivation behind scriptal and linguistic choices, as two sides of the same coin.

4. VARIATION
IN NOTARIAL SIGNATURES

A total of 562 Greek documents with *di emu* / δι᾽ ἐμοῦ signatures could be detected with the help of the database of the EVWRIT project.[49] This number includes not only contracts, but also other document types (primarily receipts), and not only papyri, but also a few texts written on parchment, leather, and ostraca. During the detection process, finding signatures in contracts had already been prioritized, which means that the investigation was more or less exhaustive for this particular text type, but maybe less precise for others. In order to account for variation that could have occurred on the basis of material or text type, which is not the topic of the present work, this article focuses on contracts written on papyrus, limiting the corpus to 469 documents with notarial signatures. This is not meant to neglect the importance of such parameters, but, on the contrary, aims at respecting their potential impact. The contracts of the final corpus mainly come from the Arsinoites, Hermopolites, Oxyrhynchites, Herakleopolites, Panopolites, and Aphrodito, and date to the fourth to seventh centuries. The rich and diverse paleography of signatures, including their flourishing elements, is beyond the scope of this study and its linguistic orientation, and at the same time has, to a satisfying degree, been

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[48] Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23).

[49] For more on the project, see above, n. 1.

studied by other researchers, as mentioned above. What is of inter-est here is how findings and reflections of the present research can be related to already existing claims from a more strictly papyrological and paleographical point of view, i.e., whether the two approaches contradict or complement one another, and in which ways.

After their collection, signatures were annotated in various respects, with the help of the database. First, they were annotated in terms of their script:

- Greek;
- transliterated (Greek in Latin characters);
- double (both a transliterated and a Greek version of a signature);
- mixed (Greek and Latin characters in the same signature).[50]

Annotations also included comments pertaining to linguistic organiza-tion and content. Further linguistic variation was also taken into account, with the annotation of varying elements and additional components. By using the database, it was possible and easier to measure and com-pare numerical data corresponding to these different kinds of variation between the two scripts.

4.1. *Scriptal variation*

In terms of script, notarial signatures are, as expected, most commonly written in Greek characters, and therefore their script matches their lin-guistic content. This possibility can be found throughout the centuries examined, namely from the fourth to the seventh centuries. From the end of the fifth century until the middle of the seventh,[51] Latin script was additionally used by notaries in their signatures. Nevertheless, the two scripts were not necessarily mutually exclusive. The use of the Latin script

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[50] What is meant by signature here is *di emu* / δι'ἐμοῦ + name of notary (+ title) (+ verb) and not the whole *completio*, which might consist of two signatures ('double').

[51] Feissel, 'Écrire grec en alphabet latin' (cit. n. 22), p. 223.

for writing Greek was a common or even the standard practice in some areas in Egypt, while in others Greek seems to have been used almost exclusively.

Variation in the choice of script(s) for notarial signatures is summarized in Fig. 5 below.
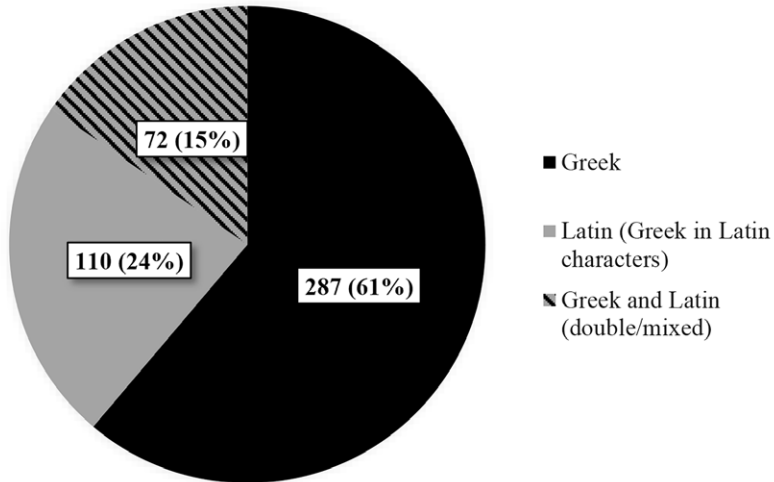

Fig. 5. Overview of script choice in notary signatures of the corpus

Overall, Greek is the most common practice followed by notaries, matching the language of the signatures. In fact, out of the total of 469 signatures collected here, a little more than 60% (287) are exclusively written in the Greek alphabet, e.g., *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67303 (Aphrodito, 553):

Fig. 6. Detail from *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67303, l. 26: ✝ δι᾽ἐμοῦ *Πιλάτου νομικ(οῦ) ἐγράφ(η)* (marks) (© Photographic Archive of Papyri in the Cairo Museum, CG67303). Improved reading of Diethart *&* Worp, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), p. 31

Nevertheless, the use of Latin script is by no means an exception, as a significant proportion of signatures (up to 39%) are written either fully (in the case of purely transliterated signatures), as is more common, or partially (in the cases of double or in the few cases of mixed signatures) in Latin characters. Therefore, using transliterated notarial subscriptions seems to be a common practice, deserving further attention. The three nomes where Latin (in addition to Greek) writing was used were the Arsinoites, Herakleopolites, and Oxyrhynchites. Places where no Latin signatures were found include the Hermopolites, Panopolites, and Aphrodito.[52] A representative example of geographical differences is offered by the Hermopolite and Arsinoite nomes, which offer comparable corpora of signatures (146 and 116 respectively).
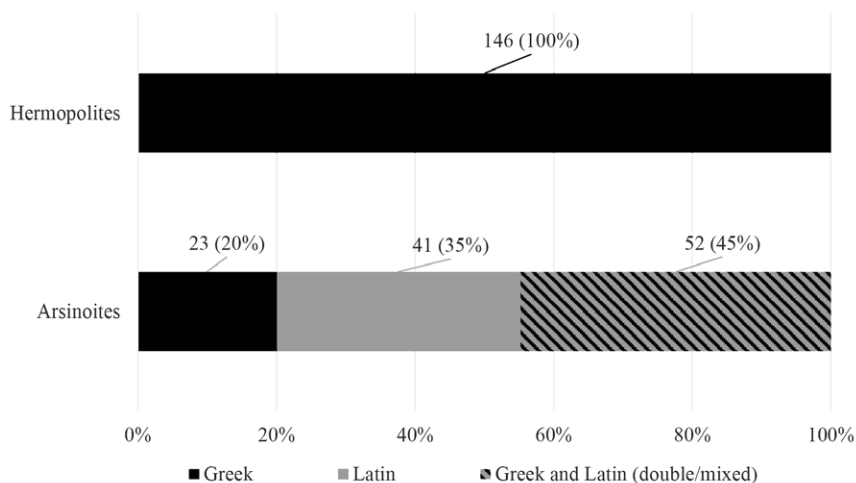

Fig. 7. Script choice in notarial signatures
found in Hermopolite and Arsinoite contracts

As is illustrated by Fig. 7, Hermopolite notaries strongly prefer the use of the Greek alphabet for their signatures. No fully or partially transliterated signature from this nome could be found in our corpus. By contrast,

[52] Cf. findings of DIETHART & WORP, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), pp. 12–13.

Arsinoite *tabelliones* include Latin characters in most of the cases (80%), with a small preference for the use of both scripts, rather than just the Latin one (45% over 35%). Here, purely Greek signatures seem to be the exception rather than the norm. Hermopolite and Arsinoite practices constitute two rather extreme cases, where script preferences are very clear.[53] What is of interest for this research is that, despite its (not so restrictive) chronological limitations or differences in its geographical distribution, it is still evident that writing Greek in Latin characters seems to have played an important role in the composition of these signatures, requiring further investigation.

As suggested above, script choice in the signatures is very diverse and intriguing. Although they are fully written in the Greek language and appear in official documents, they are not characterized by the homogeneity one would expect. There is often a discrepancy between their script and, not only their language, but also the script used in the rest of the text. In total, almost 40% (182), consists of *di emu* subscriptions rendered in or containing Latin script to a lesser or greater extent. The difference between the two is probably smaller than one would assume, enabling us to understand that the use of Latin script was by no means a marginal phenomenon in this specific case.

It is possible to distinguish three main categories of scriptal variation when it comes to signatures that are not purely Greek graphically: (i) transliterated, (ii) double, and (iii) mixed.[54]

i. The first category refers to Greek signatures entirely and solely written in Latin script, for instance:

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[53] For a more detailed documentation of signatures by region and notary (alphabetically by region and name of notary), see DIETHART & WORP, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), pp. 21–97, and for signatures of individual notaries (also displayed alphabetically by name of notary) from the Arsinoite, see KOVARIK, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23), pp. 563–726.

[54] A relevant list and discussion of different 'hybrid' writing strategies employed in notarial acts can be found in J.-L. FOURNET, 'La pratique du latin dans l'Égypte de l'Antiquité tardive', [in:] A. GARCEA, M. ROSELLINI & L. SILVANO (eds.), *Latin in Byzantium*, vol. I: *Late Antiquity and Beyond* [= *Corpus Christianorum. Lingua Patrum* 12], Turnhout 2019, pp. 73–91.
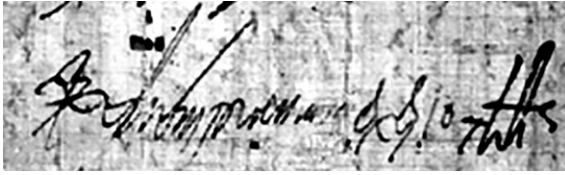
Fig. 8. Detail from *P. Oxy.* I 139 (recto), l. 33: ⚕ di em(u) Ioannu eteliothħ
(© Photographic Archive of Papyri in the Cairo Museum, CG1049).
The initial reading of *P. Oxy.* I 139 is followed, with the addition of
a horizontal stroke on the final *h*, as found in the reading of Diethart *&*
Worp, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), p. 82. This horizontal stroke ends
with a flourishing mark (*s*)

In this corpus, 51% (93) of the signatures containing Latin script are of this type. An additional 9% (17) includes instances exclusively transliterated with less certainty, due to their fragmentary condition. These examples usually start with Latin characters, but it is not clear whether they are completed as such or if they were followed by a Greek version that has been lost.

ii. This brings us to the second group, which contains subscriptions with two versions; a Latin (transliterated) version, and a Greek one. This strategy is used slightly less often (37%, 67 occurrences) compared to composing purely transliterated signatures. The order of the Latin and the Greek writing seems to vary from place to place. Latin preceding Greek is by far more popular and reaches 91% of the cases (and interestingly, this also largely holds for the mixed type). Among the contracts in question, only six are signed first in Greek and then in Latin,[55] all coming from the Oxyrhynchites, for example *P. Oxy.* XX 2270 (Oxyrhynchus, 5th/6th c.), l. 21: ⳨ δι᾿ ἐμοῦ Φ[οι]βάμμωνος συμβολαιογράφου ἐτελιώ́θη ⚕ di emu Foebammonos ete[l(iothe)]. Based on the relationship and degree of similarity between the two versions of these signatures, three cases can be detected. To begin with, twenty-eight are identical, which means that the

[55] *P. Oxy.* I 136 (583), 138 (610/1), XX 2270 (5th–6th c.), LVIII 3952 (before 610), LXIII 4397 (545); *SB* VI 8987 (644/5).

content of both the Latin and the Greek versions is exactly the same, and the only thing that differs is the script. An example can be found in the signature of *BGU* III 725 (Arsinoiton Polis, 618), l. 27: ☩ di emu Petru (marks) δι' ἐμοῦ Πέτρου.
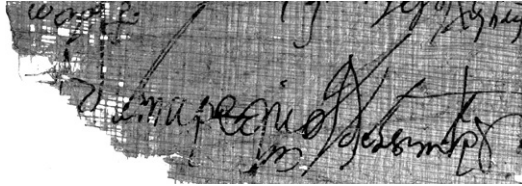

Fig. 9. Detail from *BGU* III 725 (recto), l. 27
(© Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung – Staatliche Museen
zu Berlin, Scan: Berliner Papyrusdatenbank, P. 8789)

This is not merely a linguistic observation, as it also produces a symmetrical visual result, where it would probably be possible to identify this relationship between the two parts. Except for copying the exact same text, writing two similar versions seems to be a little more common for notaries (36 occurrences). These slightly differ in terms of length, as one or more of their linguistic components are omitted in one of the two versions, for example the verb: *SB* VI 9589 (Arsinoiton Polis, 2nd half of the 6th c.), l. 20: [☩ di]emu M̅h̅n̅a̅ esemioth (marks) δι' ἐμοῦ Μηνᾶ ☩.[56]

Fig. 10. Detail from SB VI 9589 (recto), l. 20
(© Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, G 25526 Pap.)

It can also be the case that one part is considerably longer than the other with the addition of new, not very standardized components. This is

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[56] Improved reading based on Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23), p. 649. The horizontal stroke of *t* in *esemioth* ends with a flourishing mark (*s*).

almost always the case for the Greek part of the signatures (more on this in 4.2). The relationship found in three double occurrences[57] could not be classified in this way due to poor preservation, resulting in a third 'sub-category' (double with uncertain relationship between the two versions).

iii. Finally, there are seven occurrences where both Latin and Greek scripts occur within the same clause, creating a small group of mixed-script signatures:

– *P. Prag.* I 41 (Herakleopolis, 6th/7th c.), l. 13:
  † di emu Petroniu Πετρωνίου (marks)
– *SB* VI 9590 (Herakleopolis, 7th c.), l. 28:
  ⳨ di emou Curou ⸳⸳⸳ sumb() (marks) δι᾽ἐμοῦ Κύρου ς[υ]μβολαιογρ(άφου)[58]
– *SPP* XX 148 (Herakleopolites, 6th c.), l. 24:
  ⳨ di emu Κόμιτος (marks)[59]
– *P. Oxy.* LXXXI 5288 (Oxyrhynchus, 570), l. 30:
  ⳩ di emu Ioḥnnu πρ(εσβυτέρου) eteliothẹ
– *SB* VI 8987 (Oxyrhynchus, 7th c.), l. 51:
  † δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Γεωργίου σὺν θ(εῷ) συμβολαιογράφ(ου) ἐτελειώθη
  † ⳩ di em(u) Geωrgiu eteliothh (marks) †[60]
– *P. Mert.* II 98 (Oxyrhynchus, 7th c.), l. 23:
  ⳩ di em(u) Geωrgiu eteliothh (marks) †[61]
– *P. Oxy.* VII 1042 (Oxyrhynchus, 578), l. 34:
  ⳩ di emụ Serηnu etelioth[62]

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[57] *CPR* VIII 62; *P. Oxy.* LVIII 3952; *SB* I 4825.

[58] Improved reading of Diethart & Worp, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), p. 56: † di emu Curouς ẹ[s]emioth − δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Κύρου σ[υ]μβολαιογρ(άφου) from Di emou Sarous − Δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Ἰσαρίο[υ] σ[υ]μβουλαιογρ(άφου) (*BL* VIII 351). Correction to ς by Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23), p. 440 n. 38: 'Wahrscheinlich wird [...] in συμβολαιογράφου ein lateinisches s oder zumindest eine s/σ-Mischform verwendet'.

[59] Improved reading of *BL* VIII 469.

[60] Correction from o to ω by Diethart & Worp, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), p. 79.

[61] Correction from o to ω by Diethart & Worp, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), p. 79.

[62] Reading with η borrowed from Fournet, 'The multilingual environment' (cit. n. 2), p. 427. For the variation and transcription of the ending -θη, see Feissel, 'Écrire grec en alphabet latin' (cit. n. 22), p. 224.

It can be observed that all of them are introduced by *di emu* in Latin characters. The script of the name of each notary varies, sometimes being written in Greek, and sometimes in Latin. It is further interesting to see that Ioannes made a short switch from Latin to Greek writing for the abbreviated title, and then continued by completing the signature with a verb in Latin (*P. Oxy.* LXXXI 5288, l. 30).

Another noticeable example is *SPP* XX 148, where there is a switch to the Greek alphabet when it comes to the name of the notary (di emu *Κόμιτος*).
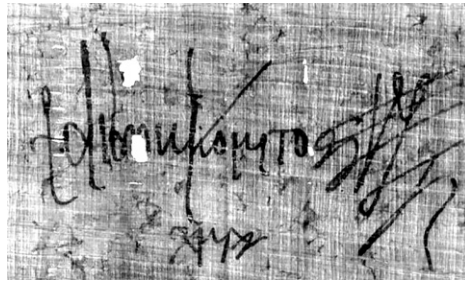
Fig. 11. Detail from SPP XX 148 (recto), ll. 24–25
(© Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, G 02147 Pap.)

In *P. Prag.* I 41 (l. 13) a notary named *Πετρώνιος* found writing his name in Greek equally necessary, as it is only his name that has been repeated in Greek script, right after its Latin equivalent: di emu Petroniu *Πετρωνίου*. Considering the fact that half of the mixed instances come from Herakleopolites and the other half from Oxyrhynchites, these findings could suggest a weak (due to their limited number) indication for a mixed script practice of these places.

The phenomenon of mixing alphabets can become even more complex, as two scripts can be used not only within the same clause, but even within the same word, making script choices even more complex. This refers to very short switches, or graphemic borrowings, of one character from the Greek alphabet. We meet this in very few Latin (versions of) signatures in our corpus, that nevertheless deserve our attention. The 'foreign' element is one graphically distinct Greek character, namely *omega* (ω),

written twice by the notary Georgios, who was active in seventh-century Oxyrhynchus, in *SB* VI 8987 (644/5), l. 51, and *P. Mert.* II 98 (7th c.), l. 23.
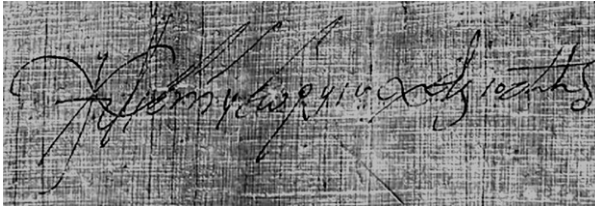

Fig. 12. Detail from *SB* VI 8987, l. 51 (Latin part): ✠ di em(u) Geωrgiu eteliothħ (© British Library Board, Papyrus 2018, f.2r). Improved reading of Diethart *&* Worp, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), p. 79. The horizontal stroke on the h of eteliothħ ends with a flourishing mark (ʂ)

In these papyri, we can read the name *Geωrgiu*. In the first case, this is found in the Latin version of a double signature, where the purely Greek writing of the name (*Γεωργίου*) can also be met in the first, Greek part of the signature. This shows that the strategies of mixing scripts and using both a Greek and Latin version for the completion of one contract are not mutually exclusive, but may also be combined (see the same in *SB* VI 9590). In addition, *P. Oxy.* VII 1042 offers a similar example, this time with an *eta* included in the name of the notary (*Serηnu*). This is probably replacing the long *e* of the name (*Serēnus*). All three papyri mentioned come from Oxyrhynchites, but again constitute insufficient evidence for supporting that this was a more general practice followed in the notarial offices of this nome.

4.2 *Linguistic variation*

Just as is the case for variation in scripts, linguistic variation in *di emu* / δι᾽ ἐμοῦ signatures is very rich and cannot be left unnoticed, as already pointed out.[63] The treatment of linguistic variation, however, has been more geographically oriented in previous literature, whereas here we are

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[63] Diethart *&* Worp, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), pp. 9–20.

interested in the motivations of variation in language, rather than its distribution throughout Egypt.[64]

The formula that is met most frequently and is considered as the 'standard' or 'default' formula of notarial signatures is *di emu* / δι' ἐμοῦ + name of notary (+ title) (+ verb). On the basis of this formula, types of linguistic variation can be grouped into the two following groups: (a.) variation in 'default' elements of the signature formula, and (b.) addition of modifying ('non-default' or less standardized) elements. What is immediately noticeable is that both of these variation types appear almost exclusively (i.e., with the exception of the addition of a few patronymics and χμγ) in signatures written in the Greek script. Latin signatures were not excluded from the examination, but did not offer many occurrences, as they were quite homogeneous both lexically and syntactically.

a. Variation in 'default' elements

Even though the composition of notarial signatures seems very homogeneous at first glance, a closer look confirms that even some of their most standard linguistic elements may vary. The elements discussed here are (i.) patronymics and (ii.) titles accompanying the names of notaries, (iii.) the choice of verbs describing the notarial act, and, lastly, (iv.) variation in word order.

i. Patronymics
Names of notaries are sometimes followed by a patronymic (the name of the father of the notary, in genitive case).[65] This is the case in only

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[64] It should be clarified that linguistic variation does not refer to the choice of one language or the other (Greek or Latin), as was the case in the section about scriptal variation, where the choice of Greek and/or Latin script was discussed. The types of linguistic variation examined here are lexical (primarily) and syntactical variation. Besides, as was already mentioned in the beginning, the corpus consists of Greek signatures found in Greek contracts.

[65] For a variationist analysis of patronymics in papyri of petitions and contracts, see K. BENTEIN, 'Expressing lineage in Roman and late antique petitions and contracts: a variationist perspective', *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 48 (2018), pp. 1–35.

thirty-five signatures of this corpus (7%). The vast majority (31 signatures[66] or 89%) concerns signatures entirely written in Greek. The contracts in which they are found come from different places of Egypt (Aphrodito, Arsinoites, Hermopolites, Oxyrhynchites, Panopolites), from the fourth to the seventh, but mainly from the sixth century. About half of them are from Elephantine, and the archive of Flavius Patermouthis son of Menas, though not from one and the same notary. As for signatures in Latin characters, patronymics are included in four double signatures[67] composed by two notaries acting in sixth- and seventh-century Arsinoites. More specifically, a patronymic is included in the preceding Latin part and it is not repeated in the Greek version of the signature after the name of the notary. This is clearly visible in, for instance, the signature of *P. Col.* VIII 244:[68]

P. Col. VIII 244 (Arsinoiton Polis, 6th c.), l. 25:
✝ di emu Apa Ol **Epifaniu**[69] (*marks*) δι᾽ ἐμο(ῦ) Ἄπα Ὄλ (*marks*)

ii. Titles

Notarial titles of this corpus were not examined in detail here. Nevertheless, it seems that the results of Diethart and Worp, who have already looked into this matter,[70] are indicative of the situation. If we look at them in relation to scriptal choices, it is evident that titles written in Greek were more diverse compared to the transliterated ones. In fact, the authors list ten different Greek titles (νομικός, νοτάριος, ταβελλίων, συμβολαιογράφος, etc.), and most regions use more than one of these titles.[71]

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[66] *P. Athen. Xyla* 12; *P. Cair .Masp.* I 67100; *P. Flor.* I 37, III 281; *P. Giss.* 53; *P. Herm.* 30; *P. Lond.* V 1723, 1728, 1730, 1733–1735; *P. Mich.* XIII 670; *P. Michael* 43, 45; *P. Münch.* I 1, 3, 9–14; *P. Palau Rib.* 25; *P. Panop.* 22; *P. Rain. Cent.* 124; *P. Ross. Georg.* III 33; *SB* I 4683, XXV 16529, XXVIII 16858; *SPP* III 422.

[67] *CPR* X 31; *P. Col.* VIII 244; *SB* XVIII 13961; *SPP* III 330.

[68] The image can be viewed on http://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.col;8;244/images.

[69] Different types of linguistic variation appear in bold.

[70] DIETHART & WORP, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), pp. 13–14.

[71] A special mention of four sixth-century Elephantine papyri can be made, where we find different titles. In military environments, acts could be drawn up by people who were not

It is striking that only one notarial designation, namely *symbolaeo-grafus*, appears in Latin letters, in the three nomes using this script for their signatures (Arsinoites, Herakleopolites, Oxyrhynchites).[72] Therefore, it seems that varying notarial titles is more relevant for Greek signatures.

iii. Verb choice

Verb choice is undoubtedly very diverse and deserves attention when discussing notary signatures. Since Diethart and Worp have already listed variation in the choice of verbs per region and script,[73] it is not covered in detail here. Summarizing their results from the viewpoint of scripts allows us to observe that verb choice in Greek (parts of) signatures is richer than the one in Latin ones. More specifically, they list ten different types of verbs (ἐγένετο, ἐγράφη, ἔγραψα, ἐπράχθη, ἐσωμάτισα, ἐσωματίσθη, ἐτελειώθη, etc.) rendered in Greek letters, whereas transliterated ones are just five (*egrafe*, *eprachth*, *esemioth*, *etelesth*, *etelioth*). No other transliterated verb forms were found in our corpus either.

One intriguing Greek signature comes from Aphrodito and belongs to the archive of Phoibammon son of Triadelphos (5th–6th c.). It finishes with the same verb written three times.

P. Vat. Aphrod. 1 (Aphrodito, 598?), l. 47:[74]
✝ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Φηρῦτος σὺν θ(εῷ) ταβελλ(ίωνος) **ἐγρ(άφη) ἐγρ(άφη) ἐγρ(άφη)** (*marks*)

The repetitive, triple use of ἐγρ(άφη) is striking here. It seems unlikely that this choice adds to the meaning of the signature. A more appropriate

real, authorized notaries ('pseudo-notarized' acts, see Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* [cit. n. 23], p. 491). Detailed information about their identity is provided in the aforementioned papyri through the use of accompanying titles referring to their office or rank: στρατιώτης, ἀδιούτωρ (*adiutor*), βικάριος (*vicarius*).

[72] Diethart & Worp, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), p. 14.

[73] Diethart & Worp, *Notarsunterschriften* (cit. n. 18), pp. 14, 100–101.

[74] The image of *P. Vat. Aphrod.* 1 can be found on http://bipab.aphrodito.info//pages_html/P_Vat_Aphrod_1.html.

explanation would be that the *tabellio* used the same abbreviation three times with the purpose of enhancing the visual result.

Apart from the verbs chosen in each signature, it is further interesting that the frequency of including a verb in notarial signatures appears to differ between Greek and Latin/Latin-Greek signatures. Among Greek signatures, 73% (210) include a verb. The same goes for a little less than half (87 or 48%) of the transliterated signatures in this corpus. This indicates that verbs were another element more commonly found in Greek rather than in transliterated signatures.

iv. Word order

The presence of *di emu* / δι' ἐμοῦ in the beginning of these clauses is undoubtedly characteristic when it comes to the signatures in question, but even this feature does not fail to vary. There are some components that might precede δι' ἐμοῦ in the signatures (cf. use of καί in 4.2 b. iv below). Twenty-eight occurrences[75] concern verbs being written in the beginning of the notarial signature, such as *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67001:

Fig. 13. Detail from *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67001 (Aphrodito, 514), l. 49:
✝ ἐγράφη δι' ἐμοῦ Ἰσακίου νομικ(οῦ)
(© Photographic Archive of Papyri in the Cairo Museum,
CG67001; JE40745; SR2346)

All signatures following this word order are written in Greek and start with the use of the verb form ἐγράφη (either in full or abbreviated). There

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[75] *P. Bingen* 130; *P. Cair. Isid.* LXXXIII; *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67001, 6712; *P. Flor.* III 279, 281; *P. Heid.* V 351; *P. Herm.* 30; *P. Lond.* V 1696, 1796; *P. Mert.* I 37; *P. Mich.* XIII 670; *P. Michael* 43, 45; *P. Panop.* 10, 22; *P. Paris* 21, 21bis; *P. Sakaon* 64; *PSI* VIII 934; *P. Thomas* 28; *P. Vat. Aphrod.* 19; *SB* I 4505, 5285, VIII 9931, XX 15202, XXIV 15959, XXVI 16529.

are four exceptions to this: *P. Cair. Isid.* 88 (Karanis, 308), *P. Mert.* I 37 (Arsinoiton Polis, 373), *P. Sakaon* 64 (Theadelphia, 307) with ἐπράχ(θη), and *P. Panop.* 22 (Panopolis, 336) with ἐτελέσθ(η). The only component preceding δι᾽ ἐμοῦ which is not a verb or καί is found quite early, in *P. Cair. Goodsp.* 13 (Hermopolis, 341), and it is the name and title of the notary: Αὐρ(ήλιος) Πινουτίων συναλλαγματογρ(άφος) δι᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐγρ(άφη) (l. 19). Keeping in mind that including a verb that refers to the notarial *completio* can be considered as part of the typical signature formula, the existence of this variation goes to show that even more standardized components might appear in novel or less conventional ways. Half of the signatures of this type come from Aphrodito, a fact that might indicate a tendency of the notarial practice there, although evidence is quite scarce. It should be recalled that, in terms of word order, a verb phrase in which the verb precedes the subject is not all that surprising in Post-classical Greek.[76] It is the formulaic environment of the signature that makes this variation more noteworthy.

b. Addition of modifying elements

Apart from variation in 'default' components of the signature, many other, less standardized elements are sometimes added to the formula. In our corpus, these additions can be divided into four categories: (i.) the addition of the subject of the verb, (ii.) the inclusion of an (abbreviated) phrase of religious content, (iii.) the explicit mention of a representative signing on behalf of the notary, through the use of the preposition διά plus a noun in genitive case, and (iv.) the addition of a component which creates or expresses links with information previously mentioned in the contract.

i. Addition of subject

In most cases, the subject of signatures which include a verb (in passive voice) remains implicit and is omitted by notaries. Even if rare, it can happen that a subject of the verb is added to the verb phrase. In total, four occurrences of this variation could be detected:

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[76] Cf. G. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers,* 2nd ed., Chichester 2010, p. 173.

– *BGU* XVII 2675 (Hermopolis, 481), l. 24:
  καὶ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐγράφη **τὸ σωμάτιον**
– *BGU* XIX 2806 (Hermopolis, 2nd half of the 5th c.), l. 6:
  [*c.* ?] κ̣αὶ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐγράφη **τὸ σωμάτιον**
– *P. Flor.* I 75 (Hermopolis, 380), l. 31:
  δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Ἐπ̣ωνύχου ἐγράφη **τὸ γραμ**(**μάτιον**) **τῆς ὁμολ**(**ογίας**)[77]
– *SB* XXII 15764 (Arsinoites, 7th c.), ll. 22–24:
  ✝ δι᾽ ἐμο[ῦ] Ἰ̣ο̣ύσ̣τ̣ου συμβολαιογράφου ταύτης τῆς Ἀρσινοιτ(ῶν)
  πόλεως ἐγράφη **ὁ παρὼν ὅρος** ἐκ φωνῆς τῶν εἰρημένων
  δικασ̣τ̣ῶν (*marks*) ✝[78]

The noun σωμάτιον is present in two signatures, namely *BGU* XVII 2675 and *BGU* XIX 2806. They both originate from Hermopolis and date back to the second half of the fifth century. The first one is part of the archive of Flavius Taurinos, son of Plousammon. It is noteworthy that both these signatures follow the phrase '[…] ἀξιωθεὶς ἔγραψα ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ παρόντος καὶ εἰπόντος μοι γράμματα μὴ εἰδότος'. This probably explains the omission of the name in the signature, as there is also no change of hands between the two parts. These two contracts were most likely composed and signed by the same person, referred to as Pkylis, although his name has been lost in *BGU* XIX 2806. As the body (σῶμα, diminutive: σωμάτιον) of the contracts (and not just the signature) was also written by the notary, the addition of the subject becomes meaningful. In *P. Flor.* I 75 (l. 31), a contract about grain transport, we find another subject, but this time it is abbreviated: τὸ γραμ(μάτιον) τῆς ὁμολ(ογίας). The term *grammation* is typically associated with loans and delivery purchase affairs.[79] The notary of *SB* XXII 15764, Iustos, also elaborates on the subject of what was written (ὁ παρὼν ὅρος) (and not only), in his very long signature, which

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[77] Improved reading of *BL* I 146. Diethart and Worp suggest another option (Diethart & Worp, *Notarsunterschriften* [cit. n. 18], p. 62): δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Ἐπωνύχου ἐγράφη τὸ γράμ(μα) τῆς ὁμολ(ογίας).

[78] Detailed reading of A. J. B. Sirks & K. A. Worp, 'Tres faciunt collegium', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 104 (1994), pp. 256–260, at p. 257.

[79] Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23), p. 558.

extends to three lines.[80] Therefore, it seems that subjects used in notarial signatures are not arbitrary, but their selection depends on and describes the type of the contract they appear in.

ii. Religious additions

Many signatures are enriched by additions of religious content. These insertions are mainly two-word phrases referencing God. In our corpus, eighty-five such features were detected. The most popular one is σὺν θεῷ, meaning 'with (the will of) God', with forty-five occurrences.[81] It appears after the name and before the title of the notary, abbreviated as σὺν θ(εῷ), as can be seen in the example below:
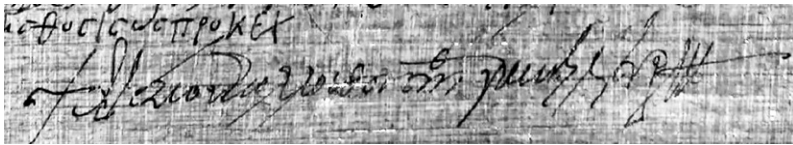
Fig. 14. Detail from *P. Mich.* XIII 666 (Aphrodito, 6th c.), l. 41:
✝ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Κολλούθου σὺν θ(εῷ) ταβελλ(ίωνος) ἐγρ(άφη) ✝✝✝
(University of Michigan Library Digital Collections, P. Mich. inv. 6906)

These signatures were written in Hermopolites, except for ten from Aphrodito,[82] and two from Arsinoites (*SPP* III² 115, *SPP* III 411). According to Kovarik,[83] σὺν θ(εῷ) is used in documents for stating official or honorary titles of living persons (and points to the second half of the seventh

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[80] ll. 22–24: ✝ δι᾽ ἐμο[ῦ] Ἰούστου συμβολαιογράφου ταύτης τῆς Ἀρσινοιτ(ῶν) | πόλεως ἐγράφη ὁ παρὼν ὅρος ἐκ φωνῆς τῶν εἰρημένων | δικαστῶν (*marks*) ✝.

[81] *BGU* IV 1020, XII 2204, XVII 2694–2697, XIX 2814, 2828; *CPR* IX 1, 2, 4, 5; *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67121; *P. Flor.* I 13, 70, III 299; *P. Grenf.* I 58; *P. Hamb.* IV 265; *P. Heid.* V 352; *P. Herm.* 34; *P. Kramer* 15; *P. Laur.* II 29; *P. Mich.* XIII 663, 664, 666; *P. Michael.* 52; *P. Palau Rib.* 25; *P. Stras.* IV 247, 248, V 348, VI 600, VII 658; *P. Vat. Aphrod.* 1, 4, 5; *P. Worp* 30, 31; *SB* VI 9151, XVIII 13173, 13320, XX 15043; *SPP* III² 115, III 324, 411, XX 261.

[82] *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67121; *P. Hamb.* IV 265; *P. Mich.* XIII 663, 664, 666; *P. Michael.* 52; *P. Vat. Aphrod.* 1, 4, 5; *SB* XVIII 13320.

[83] Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23), pp. 290 n. 47, 384, 604.

century, at least in Arsinoites). This interpretation can also explain its position before the title of each notary.

The second most commonly used phrase of religious content is κύριε βοήθει ('Lord, help'), found twenty-three times.[84] It is written in the abbreviated form κ(ύρι)ε βοήθ(ει), at the end of the signature, after the verb. Here the *theta* is written on top, before or after *eta*. Its horizontal stroke is usually connected to this *eta*, forming what looks like a cross.
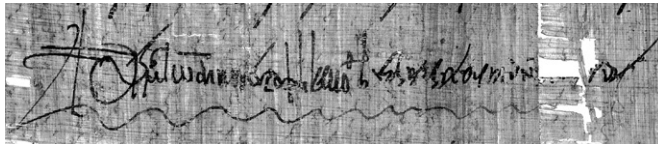

Fig. 15. Detail from *BGU* XVII 2687 (Hermopolis, early 6th c.) (recto), l. 8:
✝ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Ἰωάννου ἐγράφη, κ(ύρι)ε βοήθ(ει), εαλ.
(© Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung – Staatliche Museen
zu Berlin, Scan: Berliner Papyrusdatenbank, P. 13913)

All twenty-three occurrences come from the Hermopolites, making this addition characteristic of the notarial practice in this nome. Diethart[85] explains that this formula can be detected in calls to Jesus Christ or the θεοτόκος (κύριε / θεοτόκε βοήθει) found in Byzantine seals since the fourth century.

The addition of χμγ is found fifteen times[86] in the corpus. The composition and meaning of the abbreviation remain unclear, but the assumption that it is religious is generally accepted.[87] All occurrences come from sixth- and seventh-century Arsinoites and Herakleopolites. It is remarkable

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[84] *BGU* XII 2158, XVII 2676, 2687, XIX 2822; *CPR* IX 1–11, 23, 26; *P. Flor.* III 323 (?); *P. Select.* 16; *P. Worp* 29– 31; *SB* XVI 12864.

[85] J. M. Diethart, 'κύριε βοήθει in byzantinischen Notarsunterschriften', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 49 (1982), pp. 79–82.

[86] *BGU* I 315, II 364; *CPR* VIII 62, XIV 2; *P. Eirene* II 3; *P. Erl.* 67; *P. Heid.* V 361; *P. Lond.* I 113 6c; *P. Prag.* I 41, II 165; *SB* I 4659, 4771, VIII 9876, XIV 12194; *SPP* XX 148.

[87] Cf. the discussion of χμγ (and θμγ) in notarial signatures by Kovarik (Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* [cit. n. 23], pp. 549–551), including its non-religious interpretation by

that, unlike most other linguistic variation types examined, this abbreviation does not appear in signatures exclusively written in the Greek script. It accompanies Latin (transliterated) signatures or the ones where both scripts are used (double or mixed), where it is again written close to the Latin version/part of the signature (usually above *di*) and not the Greek one. There are three exceptions to this observation, where χμγ is written below the Greek part of the double *completio* (*P. Eirene* II 3 [Arsinoites, 6th c.]), in both the Latin and the Greek parts (*P. Erl.* 67[88] [Herakleopolis, 591]) or, in the case of the mixed signature found in *SPP* XX 148 (Herakleopolites, 6th c.), under the name of the notary, which is written in Greek script (see image in Fig. 11).

Far more rarely witnessed is the abbreviation θεοῦ θέλ(οντος/ήσει) ('God willing'). Two signatures from Aphrodito, dating to the sixth century, have it (*P. Hamb*. III 234 [Aphrodito, 6th c.], *P. Ross. Georg.* III 36 [Aphrodito, 537]). This follows the verb at the end of the signature, similarly to κύριε βοήθει.

- *P. Ross. Georg.* III 36 (l. 26):
  ☩ δι' ἐμοῦ Κύρου νομικ(οῦ) ἐγράφ(η) **θ[ε]οῦ θε[λ(ήσει)]**
- *P. Hamb.* III 234 (l. 18):
  δι' ἐμοῦ - c. ? - ἐγ]ράφ(η) **θεοῦ θέλ(οντος)** (*traces*)

In any case, it should be noted that, judging by their diffusion and their use in different contexts, all of these elements were only loosely, if at all, connected to their religious meaning. It is more likely that they had become standardized as markers of the official character and validity of the document and the signatures in particular.

Karl Wessely (K. Wessely, 'Griechische Papyri des British Museum', *Wiener Studien* 9 [1887], pp. 252–254).

[88] The improved reading of *BL* VII 120–121 (χμγ di emu Mhna ⟨esemio⟩th – δι' ἐμοῦ Μηνᾶ [marks]) was further improved by Kovarik (Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* [cit. n. 23], p. 437), who also included χμγ in the Greek part of the signature. Her reading is adopted here.

iii. Addition of διά + genitive

The next group offers eight instances and concerns the addition of a reference to someone who signed (and, for half of the contracts, also wrote) on behalf of the notary. This variation is very limited both geographically and chronologically, as all occurrences come from the fifth-/sixth-century Hermopolite nome.

- *CPR* IX 7 (Hermopolites, 6th c.), l. 16:
  ✠ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Καλλινίκου ἐγρά[φ(η)] **δ(ιὰ)** ***Γεωργί(ου)*** **ἀδελφ(οῦ)** κ(ύρι)ϲ βοήθ(ϵι)
- *CPR* IX 8 (Hermopolites, 6th c.), l. 17:
  [✠ δι᾽] ἐμοῦ Εὐλογί(ου) ἐγράφ(η) **δ(ιὰ)** ***Γ[ϵωρ]γί(ου)*** κ(ύρι)ϲ βοήθ(ϵι) (*marks*)[89]
- *CPR* IX 9 (Hermopolites, 6th c.), l. 5:
  ✠ δὶ ἐμοῦ Εὐλογί(ου) ἐγράφ(η) **δ(ιὰ)** ***Γεωργί(ου)*** ϟ(ύρι)ϲ β[οή]θ(ϵι) ✝✝✝]
- *P. Worp* 29 (Hermopolis, first half of the 6th c.?), l. 9:
  [✝] δ̣[ι] ἐμοῦ Καλλινίκου ἐγράφ(η) **δι(ὰ)** ***Γεωργίου*** **ἀδελφ(οῦ)** κ(ύρι)ϲ β̣ο̣ήθ(ϵι) (*marks*)
- *P. Flor.* III 313 (Iliou Epoikion, 449), l. 21:
  ✝ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Βίκτορος **δι(ὰ)** ***Σ̣....ίωνος***[90] **βοηθ(οῦ)** ἐγράφη
- *P. Grenf.* I 57 (Hermopolis, 561), l. 23:
  [δι᾽ ἐμοῦ – c. ? – συμβολαιογρ]άφ(ου) (*marks*) **δ(ιὰ)** ***Βίκ(τορος)*** **υἱοῦ** ✝✝✝[91]
- *P. Horak.* 9 (Hermopolites, 6th c.), l. 17:
  ✝ δι᾽ ἐμ[οῦ] λο̣..μου ἐ̣[γρ]άφη **δι᾽ Ἀπολ( )** ...**βοηθ(οῦ)** ✝
- *SB* XVIII 13620 (Hermopolis, 473), l. 18:
  δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Ἀφοῦτος ἐγράφ(η) **διὰ Φοιβάμμωνος βοηθ(οῦ)**

The genitive accompanying the second preposition διά is a name, which refers to the person who signed. This name can be accompanied by a title describing this person. Most commonly, this noun is βοηθός, i.e., the assis-

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[89] Improved reading of Diethart and Worp (DIETHART & WORP, *Notarsunterschriften* [cit. n. 18], p. 61).

[90] For the improved reading, see *BL* VIII 129.

[91] For the improved reading, see *BL* I 183.

tant of the notary (*P. Flor.* III 313, *P. Horak.* 9, *SB* XVIII 13620). The characterization ἀδελφός (brother) appears twice, abbreviated as ἀδελφ(ός) in *CPR* IX 7 and *P. Worp* 29. These papyri come from the archive of Eulogios, Georgios and Kallinikos. They all acted as notaries officially, except for Georgios, whose name has been added here. In fact, he signed most of the documents of the archive,[92] including *CPR* IX 8 and *CPR* IX 9 cited here, only this time on behalf of Eulogios, and without any title. According to Andrea Jördens, these persons might have been actual relatives, and may have operated a family business.[93] If we follow this scenario, then ἀδελφός is not just a general, metaphorical characterization but a description of the family relationship between the representative and the notary. There is also one occurrence of υἱός (υἱοῦ) (*P. Grenf.* I 57) which could imply a father-son relationship between the notary and the signatory respectively, considering its non-religious context. The fragmentary condition of the signature does not allow us to read the name of the notary and evaluate the actual relationship between the two individuals. In any case, the previous examples found in our sources are enough to indicate that this signature addition can provide some information about the identity of the representative. This addition clearly showcases how external circumstances can be reflected in variation in notarial signatures. In this case, the mention of the fact that the notary did not draw up the act by himself must have been vital for validating contracts and was, thus, considered necessary to include.

iv. Addition of linking components

The final type of additions pertains to elements which create a link between the notarial signature and something written in a previous part of the contract. Most commonly, the conjunction καί is added before the initial preposition δι(ά). This happens eight times[94] in the selected corpus, as, for example, in *P. Stras.* I 1 (Hermopolis, 435):

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[92] *P. Worp*, p. 218.

[93] *P. Worp*, p. 221 n. 9.

[94] *BGU* XVII, XIX 2806; *P. Athen. Xyla* 17; *P. Berl. Zill.* 5; *P. Giss.* 53; *P. Stras.* I 1; *PSI* I 66; *SB* XXVIII 16857.

P. Stras. I 1, l. 17:
καὶ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ τοῦ Ἑρμίνου ἐγράφ(η) (*marks*) ✝.[95]

The signatures above originate from the Hermopolites (4th–6th c.) in their entirety. First of all, this variation shows once again that δι(ά) does not always come first in signatures of this type. More importantly, the use of καί creates a connection between the signature and the body[96] of the text. It is one part specifically which is linked to the signature through this addition: the notarial subscription preceding the signature. For instance:

P. Giss. 53 (Hermopolis?, 4th c.), ll. 11–13:
Αὐρ(ήλιος) Ἑρμογένης συναλλαγματογράφος
ἔγραψα ὑπὲρ αὐτο᾽ῦ᾽ γράμματα μὴ εἰδ(ότος).
καὶ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Ἑρμογένους Ἕρμονος ἐγρ(άφη).

All occurrences listed above follow the example of *P. Giss.* 53. There are no changes of hands between the subscription where the notary states that he is writing on behalf of the initiator(s) (and the witnesses) of the contract and the signature. The fact that there is a matching name of the writing subject in both parts further confirms that it is the same person who composed them. What adds to the observation about a meaningful connection between the two through καί is the absence of the name of the notary in the signatures of *BGU* XVII 2675 (Hermopolis, 481), *P. Berl. Zill.* 5 (Hermopolis, 417), and *BGU* XIX 2806 (Hermopolis, 2nd half of the 5th c.). In the second one we read:

P. Berl. Zill. 5, ll. 23–24:
Αὐρ(ήλιος) Φοιβάμμων ἔγρ(αψα) ὑπὲρ αὐ[τῆς ἀγραμμ]άτου.
καὶ δι᾽ ἐμοῦ ἐγράφη.

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[95] For the improved reading, see *BL* VIII 413.

[96] The use of the term 'body' of a contract will hereafter refer to the organization of the text in a visual and not in a linguistic sense. The illiteracy formula is considered as part of this visual body of the document.

It can be assumed that the notaries behind these signatures considered including their names for a second time in their signatures unnecessary or even redundant, since it could be found very easily right above them. Any potential reader of such a signature would have to go back to the body of the contract to recover the name of the notary. It is also worth noting that, even though there is a link between the meanings of these subscriptions and the signatures introduced by καί after them, the usual space between these parts of the contract is maintained. This indicates that the connection introduced by καί (and occasionally followed by the omission of the notary's name) between the body of the document and the *di emu* / δι᾽ ἐμοῦ signature is primarily linguistic and not visual (at least in terms of space).

In the exceptional case of *SB* XXVII 16857 (Hermopolites, 6th c.), however, the notarial signature is placed before the illiteracy formula, something very unusual, as Peter Arzt-Garbner[97] notices. The two parts are written together, with their two verbs (both past forms of γράφω/ομαι) found next to each other in l. 11 (ἐγράφη καὶ ἔγραψα):

SB XXVIII 16857, ll. 9–15:
δι᾽ ἐμοῦ Φιλοξένου
συμβολαιογράφου
ἐγράφη **καὶ ἔγραψα**
ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ
κατ᾽ ἐπιτροπὴν
αὐτοῦ ἀγραμμάτου
ὄντος ✝

In any case, this addition must have been important for the validity of the contract, because it documents an important circumstance of its composition, namely that the notary was also a *hypographeus*.

Except for the use of καί, links can also be created in different and perhaps more novel ways. In the signature of *P. Athen. Xyla* 17 (Bawit, 548/9),

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[97] P. Arzt-Grabner, '"Brothers" and "sisters" in documentary papyri and in early Christianity', *Rivista Biblica* 50 (2002), p. 142.

we can observe that, in addition to καί in the beginning, Amounis writes ὁμοίως before the verb ἐγράφη, to express that, together with the rest of the contract and the statement that he wrote on behalf of the person who initiated it, he also composed the signature in the end.

P. Athen. Xyla 17, l. 16:
καὶ δἰ ἐμοῦ Ἀμούνεως **ὁμοίως** ἐγράφη ✝

Similarly, in *SB* XXII 15764 (Arsinoites, 7th c.), Iustos refers to the city of Arsinoe with the demonstrative pronoun αὕτη, because it has been previously mentioned in the contract as the place of origin of the contract initiators:

SB XXII 15764 (Arsinoites, 7th c.), ll. 22–24:
✝ δἰ ἐμο[ῦ] Ἰούστου συμβολαιογράφου **ταύτης** τῆς Ἀρσινοιτ(ῶν) πόλεως ἐγράφη ὁ παρὼν ὅρος ἐκ φωνῆς τῶν εἰρημένων δικαστῶν (**marks**) ✝

Something similar happens in the signature of *P. Thomas* 28 (Aphrodito, 534/5), l. 17, where we read: ✳ ἐγράφ(η) δἰ ἐμο(ῦ) Οὐίκτορος **ἀπὸ τῆς** (**αὐτῆς**) **κώμης** ✳.[98]

Moreover, it should be noticed that, in all of the examples listed above, notaries make use of the verb ἐγράφη. This can be viewed in a similar light, as a choice explained by the fact that they had composed more than just the *di emu* / δἰ ἐμοῦ signature. The ability of notaries to enrich their signatures with linking elements according to the situation requires and illustrates good competence in writing in the Greek script.

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[98] Apart from creating links, these signatures also provide information about the *origo* of the notary.

5. DISCUSSION: THE INTERRELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN SCRIPTAL AND LINGUISTIC VARIATION

The examination of script choice in contract signatures shows that geographical and chronological differences are present and at times very decisive. Drawing conclusions by the sum of evidence from all different regions and centuries can be misleading, but it is still useful in order to get an idea of the range of, for example, the use of the Latin script. This enables us to infer that Latin signatures were not exceptional, but very common in certain places (Arsinoites, Herakleopolites, and Oxhyrynchites). This is considered sufficient for justifying further investigation of signatures written in the Latin alphabet.

Especially since the rest of the contract is always (primarily) written in the Greek language and script, an interpretation of the switch to the Latin script while maintaining the Greek language is needed. In other words, why did notaries choose to transliterate their signatures? To answer this, we can remember the different scenarios provided by Adams.[99] If writing Greek in Latin script was done because notaries had no other option (*necessity*), then we would expect them to be incapable of or insecure about writing in Greek. This assumption of imperfect literacy or illiteracy in Greek is highly unlikely and clearly impossible in most of the cases. Many of the notaries composed the whole contract, or at least the statement that they wrote on behalf of the illiterate initiator, with Greek characters. Secondly, it was shown that many of the Latin signatures were accompanied by a Greek version, written by the same notary. It is equally unlikely that signatures were composed in Latin because potential readers would be familiar with the Greek language but unable to read its script, while being capable of reading the Latin alphabet. In late antique Egypt, when these contracts were drawn up, the use of Latin had become quite marginal in documentary texts, whereas most people were able to read Greek. Taking all these factors into consideration, the possibility of transliterating notarial signatures out of *choice* becomes plausible and needs to be investigated.

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[99] ADAMS, *Bilingualism* (cit. n. 6).

The analysis of the linguistic content of the signatures is useful for shedding some light on the matter. In spite of the conventional and formulaic character of notarial signatures, examples of more special and 'customized' signatures can be found. Adopting the view of a potential interrelationship analysis, the first question that arises is the following: Is this the case for signatures written in both the Greek and Latin scripts? From the cases of linguistic variation examined, it has become obvious that the answer to this is negative. The fact that nearly all occurrences of linguistic variation on the lexical and syntactical level cited above are written in the Greek alphabet is neither arbitrary nor based on a 'biased' selection. The difference in the degree of variation between signatures written in Greek and in Latin is striking. Most types of variation, which happens either by changing standard elements of the signature formula or by adding new components to it, are detected almost exclusively in Greek and not in Latin (parts of) signatures. More importantly, it was pointed out that most of these signature variants are not used incidentally, but are meaningful in the context they appear in. Some of them provide additional information (about the notary, the notarial act, the contract), while others create a meaningful connection between the signature and the body of the contract (through ὁμοίως etc.). This observation is important, because it allows us to deduce that notaries were not composing these Greek signatures mechanically, signing in the same way on every occasion. The fact that they were able to adjust their writing to the situation, despite the otherwise highly formulaic character of contracts, reflects solid competence in the Greek language and familiarity with using its script, as expected from professional writers.

The same cannot be said about Latin signatures, which largely follow the standard formula. Variation is more or less limited to the not so common presence of patronymics, the addition of χμγ, and the use of a limited number of verbs. Attributing additional variation written in the Greek script to external circumstances, and the necessity of stating them, is not enough, as it does not answer why similar conditions are not reported in Latin signatures. The degree of standardization of Latin signatures does not provide sufficient evidence that their writers were familiar with

freely composing texts in Latin script.[100] On the contrary, this homoge-
neity might imply that notaries had been taught how to write these Latin
parts and had possibly memorized them for the occasion of signing legal
documents.[101]

The situation becomes even more complex when it comes to double
and mixed signatures, where we see both the Greek and the Latin script
being used next to each other or alternately. Starting from the first cate-
gory, which seems to be less complicated, the simultaneous existence of
two versions of the same signature seems redundant, especially since the
version that comes second (which is usually the Greek one) does not add
any new information and does not significantly differ from the first one in
general in most cases. An explanation for the choice of Latin script, even
when the latter is accompanied by the Greek one, is offered by Kovarik,[102]
who proposes that, on the one hand, a shift to Latin writing distinguishes
the signature from the rest of the document.[103] On the other hand, she
adds a second advantage that comes with the use of Latin signatures, its
ability to hinder forgery. As few people were able to write in Latin letters
during the time these documents were composed, these signatures were
difficult to counterfeit.

As for the mixed signatures, it was shown that they can fluctuate
between the use of a word written in a script different than that of the

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[100] It is only in one papyrus of our corpus, *SB* VI 8988 (Edfu, 647), in the context of lines
46–47, that a Latin word can be spotted in the body of the contract, in the form of an
intra-clausal code-switch: πρότερον ἐν εἰδήσει ἀποταξάμενος καὶ ἀποταττόμενος | π[άσ]η
ἐκ νόμων βοηθείᾳ καὶ παντὶ προνομίῳ καὶ δόγματι καὶ pribiligio (l. priuilegio). Cf. again ex-
amples of 'hybrid' words and phrases written by notaries in their attempt to include Latin
legal terms in documents in Fournet, 'La pratique du latin' (cit. n. 54), pp. 81–83.

[101] This assumption is further supported by the weaker skills of late antique notaries in
writing Latin in comparison with writing Greek. See examples in e.g. Fournet, 'La pra-
tique du latin' (cit. n. 54), p. 78.

[102] Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23), pp. 195–197.

[103] This function falls into the scope of 'paléographie signifiante' introduced by Fournet
(J.-L. Fournet, 'Disposition et réalisation graphique des lettres et des pétitions protoby-
zantines: Pour une paléographie "signifiante" des papyrus documentaires', [in:] J. Frösén,
T. Purola & E. Salmenkivi (eds.), *Proceedings of the 24th International Congress of Papyrology*,
Helsinki 2007, pp. 353–367.

rest of the signature to only one 'foreign' character. The fact that *di emu* is always written in Latin creates the impression of a template (metaphorically), where *di emu* would be the preexisting, prewritten part of the signature, and the rest could be completed more freely by the notary (remember, for example, *P. Oxy.* LXXXI 5288 [Oxyrhynchus, 570], l. 30: ⳨ di emu *Κόμιτος*). This once again points to a more standardized use of the Latin script and a higher competence in writing Greek. The fact that the Latin *di emu* is found in the beginning further supports the distinctive function of Latin characters in relation to the body of the contract.

One-character switches,[104] such as the 'omega-switch', are usually found in Latin signatures and refer to a brief shift to one Greek character within a word, followed by Latin script. It is difficult to interpret this phenomenon, especially due to the limited amount of evidence. However, a few preliminary assumptions can be made. To begin with, Adams uses the term *character-switching* to refer to this phenomenon (although not necessarily limited to one character) and describes it as 'the habit shown by some bilingual (and bi-literate) writers of switching, perhaps unconsciously, from one script into the other'.[105] These unconscious switches might then be attributed to graphemic interference from Greek. This scenario would be justified while writing in the Greek language, and even after writing in the Greek script (e.g. in the double signature of *SB* VI 8987), which they mastered better than the Latin one.

If notaries did not have perfect Latin writing skills, as is additionally underpinned by limited linguistic variation in Latin signatures, it makes sense to wonder again why they insisted on using this script in their signatures. Many researchers[106] have already attributed the use of Latin characters in notarial signatures to diglossia or, more accurately, *digraphia*.[107]

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[104] The use of the term 'switch' here is used to describe the change of scripts and should not be associated with code-switching. Finding the appropriate term for these graphemic switches opens a big theoretical discussion and will not be elaborated here.

[105] Adams, *Bilingualism* (cit. n. 6), p. 46.

[106] Feissel, 'Écrire grec en alphabet latin' (cit. n. 22); Fournet, 'The multilingual environment' (cit. n. 2); Kovarik, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23).

[107] Fournet, 'The multilingual environment' (cit. n. 2), p. 428. Digraphia is used here to associate the use of two scripts with differences in their functional values. Cromwell

Through this inventive, but unexceptional for the time, means, notaries could associate themselves with the authorities and the law. This association was significant, especially if we consider that they were not state notaries as before. Notwithstanding the fact that Latin was no longer widely used in legal texts, as it was during the Roman period, it seems that it had maintained its legal prestige through its script, even if the latter 'hosted' the new official language, Greek. Fournet[108] argues that, at this time, when Latin had almost fallen into disuse as the language of the state in Egypt, the usage of Latin became restricted to signs and not words, as was common previously. In this sense, transliterated notarial signatures and, as a consequence, digraphia in contracts, constitute a representative example of how the functional values of a script do not always coincide chronologically with those of its language; a language and its script have the potential to follow different paths in time.

Therefore, from the viewpoint of sociolinguistics, the first and second factors from the categorization of Unseth[109] about script choice (identifying with another group, and creating distance from another group, cf. § 1 above) are relevant. Notaries seem to have used the Latin script with the intention of associating themselves with Romans and Roman law, while distancing themselves from common people, and emphasizing their authorization by the state. According to Unseth,[110] it is easier and more practical for a group to create distance from another group using a script and not an entire language. This is because, opposed to languages, scripts are small, finite systems and thus can be more easily invented, replaced or regulated. This offers a good explanation of the shift noticed by Fournet,[111] namely the change from using Latin language (even superficially, in the form of inserting official terms in Latin) to only using the Latin script (and the Greek language), as knowledge of Latin was disappearing. In this

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(CROMWELL, 'Greek or Coptic?' [cit. n. 21], p. 267) offers the alternative term 'diglossic bigraphism' to refer to different scripts being used for different purposes in her discussion of scribal choices in Coptic documentary texts.

[108] FOURNET, 'La pratique du latin' (cit. n. 54), p. 85.

[109] UNSETH, 'Sociolinguistic parallels' (cit. n. 13).

[110] UNSETH, 'Sociolinguistic parallels' (cit. n. 13), pp. 20, 26.

[111] FOURNET, 'La pratique du latin' (cit. n. 54).

sense, the choice of the Latin alphabet for writing notarial signatures does not seem paradoxical, but appears as an anticipated development in the course of the decay of Latin in documentary practice.

Since what is being discussed is the Latin script and not the Latin language, signatures using Latin characters only differ from the Greek ones visually (and not in the sense of which language is used). This visual difference must have been immediately identifiable not only by readers literate in Latin, but by anyone who was able to vaguely recognize what the Latin script looked like. Besides, if we assume that few people were able to 'decipher' what was being written in Latin, the script is enriched with a codifying function, which makes perfect sense for signatures at the end of legal documents.[112] The fact that the language of these signatures does not change along with the script enhances the argument of a visual motivation. Therefore, it seems that Latin signatures were mostly viewed as visual products, offering the aforementioned functions, and Greek ones as linguistic ones, aiming at comprehension. This might explain the fact that some conditions of the notarial activity which most likely needed to be mentioned (e.g. if someone signs on behalf of the notary) were only documented in Greek signatures. As low competence in writing Latin was limiting for notaries, they must have chosen to use Greek writing every time they needed to elaborate on scribal circumstances. This observation does not imply that Greek signatures were not also given a carefully made appearance at times, as we saw for example in *P. Vat. Aphrod.* 1 (Aphrodito, 598?) with the triple use of ἐγρ(άφη) (l. 47) or in cases where religious phrases were added to signatures.[113]

For this reason, it is important to remember the visual aspect of language in papyri, namely the script, and it can prove useful to view the two as distinct carriers of potentially different meanings,[114] following the theory

[112] Cf. J. G. KEENAN, 'From the archive of Flavius Eulogius and his descendants', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 34 (1979), p. 137 n. 30, for some comments about the illegibility of transliterated signatures as a form of 'code writing'.

[113] Not to mention the various marks and flourishing features which were not discussed here.

[114] For the use of social semiotics and the concept of multimodality in the study of documentary papyri, see K. BENTEIN, 'Documentary papyri as "multimodal" texts. Aspects

of social semiotics. In transliterated signatures, the visual functions of the Latin script explained above were shown to be accompanied by limited linguistic variation, whereas the Greek alphabet seemed to encourage the occurrence of more diverse linguistic content. Therefore, the co-occurring scriptal (visual) and linguistic (verbal) resources are combined meaningfully in a relationship of *intersemiotic complementarity*.[115]

The simultaneous use and interaction of these two semiotic resources produces a combination (the notary signature) with a meaning that is different than the sum of the separate meanings carried by each modality.[116] This means that what is expressed in transliterated signatures by the combination of the Latin script and the Greek language is different than what would be expressed through the use of one or the other alone. Latin signatures, for example, would not trigger associations with Roman authorities and law just on the basis of their linguistic content, if the latter were not combined with the Latin script; and, vice versa, the Latin script alone would not suffice for considering a signature trustworthy, if what was written could not be recovered and understood. As notaries and notarial offices were working with writing, they must have come up with such practices by creatively using the different tools available to them (i.e., language and script) to achieve this *multiplication of meaning*.[117] The different functions and meanings of combining the Latin or the Greek script with the Greek language might have contributed to the use of double signatures as well. Whoever needed to access the complex functions of

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of variation in the Nepheros archive (III–IV AD)', [in:] S. Dahlgren, H. Halla-aho, M. Leiwo & M. Vierros (eds.), *Act of the Scribe: Interfaces between Scribal Work and Language Use. Proceedings of the Workshop*, Cambridge (forthcoming).

[115] T. D. Royce, 'Intersemiotic complementarity' (cit. n. 20), pp. 63–109.

[116] Cf. Gestalt theory about the whole being 'greater' than the sum of its parts, e.g., in K. Koffka, *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*, New York 1936, p. 176: 'The problem of significance is closely bound up with the problem of the relation between the whole and its parts. It has been said: The whole is more than the sum of its parts. It is more correct to say that the whole is something else than the sum of its parts, because summing is a meaningless procedure, whereas the whole-part relationship is meaningful'.

[117] J. L. Lemke, 'Multiplying meaning: visual and verbal semiotics in scientific text', [in:] J. R. Martin & R. Veel (eds.), *Reading Science: Critical and Functional Perspectives on Discourse of Science*, London 1998, pp. 87–113.

these signatures needed to be 'multimodally literate' in order to 'unlock' the different meanings conveyed by them.

There are still a few things that need clarification. First of all, the impact of notarial offices on the choices of notaries is not and should not be underestimated. Kovarik has been able to identify practices followed in different regions and their offices even for marks used at the end of notarial signatures.[118] Different scriptal and linguistic choices were discussed here as sociolinguistic and socio-semiotic phenomena, and not as strictly personal and self-motivated choices of their writers. The fact that certain variations might have been prescribed by certain offices does not cancel the interpretation of how and why they came into practice. Secondly, as has already been stressed, variation in the paleography of the signatures is very rich, and, even if it is not the subject of this paper, it must be touched upon when talking about religious additions. As we saw, these are written in abbreviations that are very homogenous and distinct visually, and can be found in other types of texts as well. The fact that this variation only appears in Greek characters might thus be explained by the richer paleographic tradition and potential of the Greek script and writing in Egyptian documentation. In this sense, these religious additions are not purely linguistic variations.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Overall, when it comes to notarial signatures in contracts, certain writing techniques and traditions are followed in different places. Apart from the Greek script, a significant number of signatures are written fully or partially in the Latin script, while the Greek language is maintained. In spite of geographical tendencies, individual variation still occupies a significant role when it comes to Greek signatures, which seem to be more

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[118] KOVARIK, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23). See also CROMWELL, 'Greek or Coptic?' (cit. n. 21) for a discussion of the connection between variation in Coptic documentary texts and the background of scribes, and more specifically how digraphia can be used to distinguish different schools of training.

special and elaborate linguistically, with meaningful additions that either provide new information or reinforce the relationship between the signature and the body and content of the contract. Greek signatures reflect familiarity with writing in Greek, whereas Latin signatures seem to restrict notaries, who remain confined to formulaic speech. Viewing scriptal and linguistic variation in conjunction illuminates their function within the socio-historical environment of notaries and their signatures. Even when *tabelliones* do not seem to be perfectly literate in Latin, they still choose it for signing contracts, as this might help not only with distinguishing the signature from the rest of the contract and ensuring authenticity, but also with rendering legal prestige to their writing. Immediately recognizable as the script of Romans, Latin letters carry the official character that Latin language formerly did. An intersemiotic approach is therefore useful when linguistic and scriptal variation co-occur, as it allows us to go beyond their individual features and motivations, and interpret their relationship as 'productive' in terms of meaning.

Although notarial signatures have already captured the interest of several researchers, there is still much work to be done in this area. The close examination of equivalent signatures found in Coptic documents would be crucial for better understanding the composition and variation of notarial signatures in Egypt. Comparative studies with signatures found in documentary texts from other places, such as those of the Petra papyri,[119] could show the degree to which practices in different places of the empire converge and how they differ.[120] Potential criteria determining variation are numerous, varying from text type (e.g., contracts vs. receipts) to materiality (size or type of material, e.g., papyri vs. ostraca), and their impact needs to be assessed.

As a final note, it is true that variation, especially in script, where it is usually more immediately visual, might seem striking and unexpected for

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[119] M. VIERROS, 'Scribes and other writers in the Petra papyri', [in:] R. AST, M. CHOAT, J. CROMWELL, J. LOUGOVAYA & R. YUEN-COLLINGRIDGE (eds.), *Observing the Scribe at Work: Scribal Practice in the Ancient World* [= *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 301], Leuven (forthcoming).

[120] A brief comparison can be found in KOVARIK, *Das spätantike Notariat* (cit. n. 23), pp. 492–500.

official documents. However, it was much less surprising and rare than one would imagine nowadays for writers in the east of the Roman Empire during Late Antiquity to write official and prestigious documents in Greek by using Latin characters. Matching scripts and languages was not necessarily the norm or the desired result as in official texts of more recent societies. Visual aspects of language could prove crucial for understanding meaning, not only by conveying and following the meaning of language, but, more importantly, by actively enhancing it with new meanings.

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CONTENTS

Abstract: This study investigates linguistic and scriptal variation in notary signatures found in late antique contracts from Egypt, seeking to identify and interpret the potential relationship between choices in language and script. To answer this, theoretical concepts and methods from sociolinguistics, social semiotics, and multilingual studies are used, with the objective of adding a new, more linguistically-oriented perspective to existing research on notarial signatures. On the one hand, this research demonstrates how the Latin script seems to restrict notaries, resulting in transliterated Greek signatures with very homogeneous content. The familiarity of notaries with the Greek language and writing is, on the other hand, reflected in signatures written in the Greek alphabet, which are much more diverse and at times adjusted to the circumstances under which specific documents were composed. Even if notaries seem to lack confidence in freely producing text in the Latin script, they choose to do so due to its functional values, which are conveyed and perceived visually. Latin letters create an association between signatories and Roman law, adding to the trustworthiness and prestige of the signatures. Differentiating between script and language allows us to understand how the Latin script maintained the connotations that formerly accompanied the Latin language, gradually replacing it in the form of transliterated passages, at a time when the language was disappearing from papyrological

documentation. In this sense, sociolinguistics, and especially social semiotics, prove useful when dealing with visual aspects of language in papyri, as they prevent their functions and meanings from being overlooked.
Keywords: notary, social semiotics, digraphia, diglossia, *di emou* signatures

Abstract: Starting from a detailed interpretation of *P. Oxy.* LXXVII 5123 (AD 555), I argue that the Apion estate favoured a tenancy arrangement with its *enapographoi georgoi*, the farmers registered on its tax-rolls. Such leases left them with a marketable surplus of the produce in remuneration, which they could sell either to their own estate or to outside parties. Contrary to the now current view of Apionic *enapographoi georgoi* as directly managed permanent employees or wage labourers, the evidence reviewed suggests that they were not an economically distinct and homogenous labour group.
Keywords: *coloni adscripticii*, *enapographoi georgoi*, Apion estate (Oxyrhynchus), tenancy, viticulture in late-antique Egypt

Abstract: Among the sixteen Ptolemaic texts (**33–44**) from the collection of the Greek papyri of the Department of Classics at Stanford are petitions, official correspondence, letters, a declaration of surety with royal oath – one the earliest dated texts in the collection (227 BC) – and an account. Most notable is the discovery of the upper part of *P. Köln* VI 261, a petition to the *oikonomos* Apollonios (**33 + 18**) about oil-contraband and prisoners of war. Another petition is addressed to the *oikonomos* Poseidonios (*Prosopographia Ptolemaica* I/VIII 1079) about the wool tax (**34**), while **35**, a draft written with an Egyptian rush, reports an effraction at night with arson. The official correspondence deals with tax-farming and oil-bearing products.
Keywords: Ptolemaic papyri, petitions, letters, oil contraband, tax farming, Arsinoite nome, prisoners of war

Abstract: Edition of three sixth-century shipping receipts for the *annona civilis* transported by the Monastery of the Metanoia (near Canopus). Two of

Abstract: This essay refutes the view that the Athenians of the Classical period were hostile to legal expertise. The Athenians had much respect for the Areopagus and the Exegetai, who were experts in law and religion. The legal expert Phanodemus was often praised and entrusted with important responsibilities. Litigants in public cases often show their legal knowledge by copious citation of statutes. They sometimes accuse their opponents of deceitful use of rhetoric never attack them for legal expertise. In the speech of Lysias *Against Nicomachus*, the accuser charges the defendant with illegally modifying the rules about sacrifices but never arouses suspicions about his legal expertise.
Keywords: expertise, Areopagus, Exegetai, Phanodemus, Apollodorus, son of Pasion, *anagrapheis* (inscribers), Lysias *Against Nicomachus*

Abstract: The paper provides an updated and annotated list of Latin and bilingual Latin-Greek papyri from the first century BC to the early third century AD – including very recently published and still unpublished – that refer to the lives and businesses of Roman citizens in Egypt. It also covers documents connected with the Roman army, that is produced in military *officia* to be specifically used by soldiers (acknowledgments of debt, receipts of money etc.). They are connected not with the army life, but with the life outside the barracks, among tradesmen, merchants, and (from the second century AD onwards) in the milieu of veterans.
Keywords: Latin papyri, Roman citizens, Egypt, business, trade, land

Abstract: *SPP* XXII 95 (early 3rd century AD) is concerned with the leading priests of the sanctuary of Soknopaios, who were arrested on account of the

suspicious death of a clothes vendor. Their interrogations, however, brought no result, and now efforts are being made to have them released. In the present papyrus, the head of the office summarises the state of affairs in order to append it as a 'cover-letter' to the petition submitted to the *strategos*.
Keywords: murder, pre-trial detention, priests, Soknopaiou Nesos

Abstract: The article presents a fragment of the cornice from the Ptolemaic Portico of the Hatshepsut temple at Deir el-Bahari discovered in 2021 in the fill of the Middle Kingdom tomb MMA 28. The fragment carries remnants of two dipinti in red ochre, of which one is illegible and the other preserves vestiges of the three first lines of the Greek inscription *I. Deir el-Bahari* 196. They show that the inscription was a *proskynema* (act of adoration) addressed to Amenothes (Greek for Amenhotep son of Hapu). The name of the author cannot be read with certainty (perhaps Pe[---]); the text also mentions a certain Menodoros, who may be the father of the protagonist of the inscription or another man. In an appendix, a fragment of another text in Greek, probably originating from the south wall of the Bark Room of the main sanctuary of Amun is presented.
Keywords: Deir el-Bahari, Amenhotep son of Hapu, Greek inscriptions

Abstract: A Greek inscription on stone found in Alexandria in the nineteenth century and exhibited in the Alexandrian Greco-Roman Museum contains an unusual dedicatory text in honour of Mark Antony. The text was edited several times. It contains useful information which agrees with the passage of Plutarch on the lifestyle of Antony and Cleopatra, and their entourage. In this paper the author suggests the date 34–30 BC for the activity of the 'Inimitables' and adds a further commentary on the history of Antony and Cleopatra.
Keywords: Alexandria, Mark Antony, Cleopatra VII, Antyllus, 'Inimitables'

Abstract: Unlike previous instalments of the 'Nubica onomastica miscellanea'-series which focused on correcting single names or phrases in Nubian texts, its fifth part brings the complete reedition of two more substantial

texts originally published by Giovanni Ruffini. The former is a list of witnesses to a deed of land sale (*P. Qasr Ibrim* IV 65) and the latter an account (*P. Qasr Ibrim* IV 80). While the main subject of the paper are personal names that can be found in the two documents, other elements, such as grammar, lexicon, and – especially for *P. Qasr Ibrim* IV 80 – the matter of the document are also duly treated. By identifying ghost-names in Ruffini's edition and proposing the identification of new Old Nubian substantives, the paper enhances our knowledge about the vocabulary of the language. Last but not least, the new interpretation of *P. Qasr Ibrim* IV 80, which – for the first time in medieval Nubia – appears to explicitly state the value of certain commodities in dirhams, is an important contribution to the studies on the monetisation of Nubian economy.

Keywords: medieval Nubia, Qasr Ibrim, Old Nubian documents, onomastics, ghost-names, account, Nubian economy

Abstract: In ancient Egypt sacred animals were served by specific categories of priests who fulfilled various functions and tasks. The aim of this article is to examine the evidence that concerns the activities of these priests within sacred animal cults in the Ptolemaic Fayum. This study identifies, analyses, and classifies the occupational titles of the priests and attempts to discover the full range of their duties, concentrating on their non-religious activities. This in turn will enable the role that they played in both local society and the economy to be explored.

Keywords: animal cult, priests, temple personnel, Egyptian temples, Ptolemaic period, Fayum area

Abstract: The main question that the present paper tries to answer is as follows: since two discordant precepts concerning work were to be found in the New Testament, how did monks behave? One precept treated work as a duty, the other recommended not to care about one's maintenance. The monks followed in their behaviour either the first or the second precept. As a result of disputes that took place in the fourth century the opinion prevailed that work was the better choice. It is important for us to find out when and under what circumstances that choice was done by the majority of the monastic movement in the East. It is also important to see what arguments were used by the monks of Late Antiquity in order to settle the conflict between the two discordant precepts. This conflict worried many and caused a renewal of

a dispute that seemed to have been closed. Two ways of reasoning in favour of monastic work were generally used: monks might and should pray and work at the same time, satisfying both precepts; monks ought to work in order to be able to give alms, and this conferred to work a meaning that went beyond immediate usefulness. Praying and working at the same time was not always feasible in actual practice, but this did not bother authors of ascetic treatises.

Keywords: voluntary poverty, St. Anthony, Pachomius, Horsiese, Basil of Caesarea, Evagrius of Pontus, John Cassian, *melete,* Messalians, 'wandering and begging' monks, Rabbula, Syriac monastic rules, almsgiving