

How Coptic speakers learned Latin? A reconsideration of P. Berol. inv 10582

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HOW COPTIC SPEAKERS LEARNED LATIN?
A RECONSIDERATION OF P.BEROL. INV. 10582

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HOW COPTIC SPEAKERS LEARNED LATIN? A RECONSIDERATION OF P.BEROL. INV. 10582

The trilingual colloquium preserved in P.Berol. inv. 10582 is a fascinating document, offering as it does a glimpse into a moment when some language learner(s) used Latin, Greek, and Coptic in the same text.¹ The text on the papyrus² is a cross between a dialogue and a phrasebook, evidently intended for early-stage language learning, with the Latin transliterated into Greek script. First published by W. Schubart in 1913,³ the text was largely neglected until Johannes Kramer re-published it in the context of more information about ancient language-learning materials (1983: no. 15, 2010).⁴ Despite the considerable advances made by Kramer, further improvement is possible both in the text and interpretation of the colloquium and in making it comprehensible to readers, so a revised edition and translation are offered here.

The papyrus has no archaeological context (it was purchased on the antiquities market in Egypt in 1904) but can be dated to the fifth or sixth century AD from the script, which has Coptic tendencies. Kramer expressed a preference for the fifth century and Schubart for the sixth, but both believed that it could come from either century.⁵ The papyrus has been badly damaged; not only are there numerous holes, particularly in the middle of the page, but a chemical solution used by Schubart (1913: 34) to make the ink more readable has caused it to run, so that many lines are now illegible. Fortunately not all parts of the papyrus were treated with the solution (some small fragments that had escaped Schubart's attention and hence his chemicals emerged in the 1980s), and photographs of the text before the chemical damage also exist. Nevertheless I have not been able to read (or, in some cases, even find) some letters that appear to have been present when earlier editors saw the text. In those situations I have respected the earlier editors' readings and merely added dots or brackets to indicate the current condition of the papyrus.

The papyrus is a single leaf from a codex 27 cm high and 19 cm wide, containing two columns on each side; each line in each of these columns contains a Latin word in Greek transliteration, a double point, a Greek word, another double point, and then a Coptic word.⁶ The columns are somewhat wider than could conveniently be fitted onto the page, so the second column on each page has an irregular left margin as it wraps around the line-ends of the first column. Occasionally a long phrase is continued on the following line, which therefore ends up unusually short; these continuations are usually marked with paragraphoi. This layout is a significant handicap for a reader (or editor), because the way the boundary between the two columns fluctuates means that it is not always certain which column a word was supposed to belong to. Because the Latin is in Greek script and the Greek and Coptic alphabets are effectively identical except in a few letters, it is not possible to distinguish the different languages by their alphabets: one has to decipher the words first and then decide which language they belong to, and this situation combined with the layout has naturally led to some disagreements about the interpretation of letters in the middle of the page. I attempt to reproduce the original layout here, but because modern readers are used to reading Greek and

¹ I am extremely grateful to Fabian Reiter and the staff of the Neues Museum in Berlin for allowing me to see the original document despite the considerable complications involved, for providing me with excellent photographs, and for help with some readings. I am also very grateful to Rachel Mairs and Daniela Colomo for help with the Coptic, and to Jürgen Hammerstaedt, Martin West, and Philomen Probert for reading this article and suggesting numerous corrections. All mistakes that remain are my own.

² The papyrus is number 3009 in *M-P*³ (<http://promethee.philo.ulg.ac.be/cedopal/indexsimple.asp>), 6075 in *LDAB* (<http://www.trismegistos.org/ldab/>), and I 609 in Beltz's catalogue of the Berlin Coptic manuscripts (Beltz 1978: 98).

³ This edition was reprinted by Cavenaile (1958: no. 281).

⁴ Kramer's 1983 edition was reprinted by Hasitzka (1990: no. 270).

⁵ See Schubart (1913: 28) and Kramer (1983: 97, 2010: 558); the fifth-sixth century date is also given by Cavenaile (1958: 394) and Hasitzka (1990: 210).

⁶ This layout is normally altered in modern editions of the papyrus, but see the comments by Ammirati and Fressura (forthcoming: §5).

Coptic in distinctly different fonts the Latin and Greek are here transcribed in a Greek font and the Coptic in a Coptic font.

The Coptic version of this text is highly problematic. It was evidently composed and/or copied by someone with a poor understanding of the language, and it has then been edited by a succession of scholars with little knowledge of Coptic. The only attention this text has received from a real Coptic scholar came in 1985 from Wolfgang Brunsch, who made some corrections to the Coptic on the basis of Kramer's 1983 edition; Kramer later incorporated those corrections into his 2010 edition. But Brunsch must have worked from the edition rather than a photograph or the original, for the Coptic readings have in a number of places ended up incompatible with the preserved traces: they may be what the scribe should have written or even what he intended to write, but they cannot be what actually stood on this papyrus. I am not in a position to solve this problem fully, since I am not a Coptic expert either. I have therefore decided that the best solution for now is to alert scholars to the problem, remove from the text the readings that cannot be reconciled with the traces on the papyrus, and include in the notes explanations of the difficulties; I hope that some day soon a real Coptic scholar will re-edit this text.

This edition is based on a personal examination of the papyrus as well as numerous photographs from different dates.

Diplomatic transcript:

	column 1	Recto	column 2	
			<i>traces</i>	
1	ομνιβους:πασιν·ογονηθε:	φηκι:εποιησας:[αιειρε]		36
	ακκουμβεντιβους:τοισανακει	ακκενδιτε:αναψαται:		
	—μενοις:εφιχεβολ:ογτη[ρ]ογ:	λουκερ[ν]ας:τουκλυχνου[ς]:η2ΗΒC		
	αι:ομνης:ειπαντες:εσχεντο	ετπροεκουαμινο:καιπρο		
5	βιβεριντ:επιαν:αγωφ:	πεμψαται:αγωφωο'ρ'πινχοογ		40
	τεργε:καταμαξον:βωτι:	ομνης:παντες		
	μεναμ:τηντραπεζαν:	σερμω: ομιλια:πωδθετηρογ		
	αδπωνιτε:θεται:ογωρ	κω[τιδια]νους:καθημερινη:		
	ινμενδιουμ:ειστομεσον:	—ηθεμηνηε:		
10	κανδελαβρας:τα[κλυχνι]ας ηκδαντηλαδ:	κοιδ'φακιμους		45
	ετακκεντιδε:κ[αιαναψ]αταιαγωφωο	τιποιοιμεν:τηδ'ρογ		
	λουκερνας:λου [.]:η2ΗΒC:	φρατερ:αδελφε		
	διλουκε:φωθ[ι]ον:ρογοειν]	[λι]βε[ντ]ερτη:ηδεωσσε:†ηαγωφαι		
	δατενοβις:δοτε[ημιν:]	εαιπθεηατεροκ: πθεροκ		
15	βελλαρια:τραγηματα:	βιδεω:ορω:		50
	ουνγουεντουμ:μυρογ:στοι	ετεγωδη:καγωσε:αγωδανοκτοκ:		
	δικιτε:ειπατε:χοοο	δομινε:δεσποτα:πχοεις:		
	ομνης:παντες:ετηρτ'η	ετνω:καιημεις:αγωδανον:		
	φιλικιτερ:ευτυχως	βως:ημας:δανδαν		
20	βενενωσ:καλωσημας[:]	νεκ[ιω]:ουκοιδα:ητιςοογανη		55
	ακκιπιτσι:εδ[εξω:]	κοις:τις:ημιν:		
	ετρεγαλιτερ:καιβας[ιλικω]ς:	οστιουμ:τηνθυραν:ηπρο:		
	ουτ:τιβι:ωσ:τοι:ηθε[ετς]ραηακ	πω'λσατ:κρουει:πεδχωλζ		
	δεκετ:αρεσκει	εξειιτο:εξεληθ[ε]:ηημογβολογιη:		
25	νηκοιδ:μητι:μηπωφ:	κιτωφορας:ταχεωεξω:		60
	βουλις:βουλεσθαι:ητ'ετ'νογωφ	κωβολδηπη:		
	ικδοριρε:ενταυθα:κοιμηθηναι:ενκοτρηπιμα:			

- aiming for ΝΤΕΤΗΟΥΩΨ ‘you desire’, as in line 26, but accidentally omitted the first Ν; it is however incomplete without ‘what you’ on line 33, where Rachel Mairs accordingly suggests the supplement ΠΕΤ ΕΤΗ. Kramer took a different tack, restoring on 33 [ΠΕΤΕΤΗΤΩΒΖ], which means ‘what you desire’ and therefore translates the Latin and Greek of both 33 and 34; in 34, following a suggestion of Brunsch, he read ΜΗ[ΟΩ], which is incompatible with the surviving traces
- 35 Kramer suggests (1983: 105) that ΔΚΟΚ (which makes no sense but is certainly the reading on the papyrus) is scribal error for ΔΝΟΚ ‘I’; Schubart reads ΔΝΟΚΠΕ ΤΑΠΤΗ . . .
- 36 Kramer supplements this line with ΔΕΙΡΕ, but Daniela Colomo points out that it should be ΔΕΙΡΕ
- 37 Kramer suggests ΧΡΟ here, as scribal error for ΧΕΡΟ, but a longer word than ΧΡΟ or even ΧΕΡΟ is needed
- 38 <Ν>ΗΖΗΒC Kramer; ΗΖΗΒC Schubart; ΗΖΗΒC was suggested by Rachel Mairs
- 42 ΝΩΔΧΕΤΗΡΟΥ Schubart, which is equally possible from the traces but does not make sense
- 46 Kramer suggests that ΤΗΔΡΟΥ is scribal error for ΤΗΝΔΡΟΥ; Schubart read †ΤΗΝΔΡΟΥ, but there is not enough space for that
- 48 Brunsch suggests that ΩΔΙ may be scribal error for ΩΔΡΟΙ
- 49 ΕΙΔΙΠΘΕΝΕ ΕΡΟΚ: ΠΘ ΕΡΟΚ Kramer, but the middle of this does not fit the traces; ΙΕΡΟΚ: ΤΙΘΕΡΟΚ Schubart, who did not have the fragment containing the first part of this phrase
- 50 There is no good explanation for the omission of the Coptic here; it would not have been the same as the Greek (as is the case in many other places where the Coptic is omitted) but rather †ΝΔΥ
- 51 Kramer suggests that ΔΥΔΑΝΟΚΤΟΚ is scribal error for ΔΥΩ ΔΝΟΚ ΝΤΟΚ
- 58 Kramer’s {Π}ΕΩΧΩΛ is a typographical error; he clearly intended to follow Brunsch’s suggestion that the text has ΠΕΩΧΩΛ, scribal error for ΕΩΧΩΛ. Schubart reads ΠΕΩΧΩΛ and suggests that this is scribal error for ΠΕΩΧΩΛ
- 59 <Ν>ΗΟΥΒΟΛΟΥΗ is Schubart’s reading and what stands on the papyrus; the dots on either side of the initial Ν indicate expunction, which fits with the fact that the Ν should not be there, but the final ΟΥΗ, which makes no more sense, is not expunged. Kramer reads {Ν}ΔΜΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ ΔΗΠΗ, incompatibly with the surviving traces
- 61 ΚΩΖΟΛΔΗΠΗ Schubart
- 63 ΔΥΩΕΙΜΕ: Traces of about three additional letters appear below and to the right of this word; it is unclear whether they belong to this line or to the following one, as they are aligned with neither
- 64 Both Kramer and Schubart read ΝΗΠΕ, but the last letter has a long vertical and seems most unlikely to be Ε; it looks like Η
- 65 ΗΟ[]ΚΩΤΗΝCΔΝΗΜ Schubart; ΗCΥΧΩC Η ΝCΔ ΝΗΜ Kramer, but this does not fit the traces and does not make sense in the Greek context
- 69 †ΔΩΔΙ Schubart, with note suggesting that this is scribal error for ΔΩΕΙ

	Verso		
	column 1	column 2	
70	[νουντιο]υμ:φαιιν:ογογψ: [τουλι]τ: ηνεγκεν:αειειηη κ[λα]μα:καλεσον:μογτε ιλλουμικ:αυτονεν[τ]αυθα:ροδεη[ιμα:] κουδ'εστ:τιεστιν[ε]ογογπε:	κουοδ:οτι μουλτω:πολλω:ζηααζ: τεμπορε:τωχρονω:πιογψ: λιττερας: γραμματα: ατη: απορον:ζητοοτκ	107 110
75	πουερ: παι:πκογ! κοιδ:τι:νιμ: νουτια:αναγγελε[ις:] [ομ]για:παντα βενε:καλωc	νονακκιπι: ουκελαβον:ηπιχι: ποστμουλτουμ: μεταπολυν: ν:ηηηηααα: εργο:τοιγαρτοι: τεμπους: [χρον]ογ	 115
80	μαξιμους:μαξιμος: τηβουλ:σε[β]ολεται:ογογωκ:	μιττεμ[ι:αποc]τιλογμοι:αηητcηηα: [επιcτουλα]μ: επιcτολην	

- 133 This line ought to contain Latin and Greek terms for ‘from dawn’, as that is the meaning of the Coptic, but it is surprisingly difficult to restore. Schubart proposed . . . αινάπει: αβας, which makes no sense, while Kramer made excellent sense with μᾶνη: ημερας, which however cannot be reconciled with the preserved traces
- 141 [. . .] γυν Kramer and . . . ομη: Schubart, but this line should be Coptic
- 143 The Latin looks line ινδιαμουμ

Textual notes: Coptic (NB ‘Kramer’ refers to his 2010 edition)

- 71 αϥειηε Kramer and Schubart, as required by the sense, but the last letter is indubitably η
- 73 Kramer suggests that ϣϥϥη[ιμα:] is scribal error for εϣϥ επιμα
- 74 αϥητιϥϥ Schubart
- 79–80 Schubart suggests that the Coptic was omitted here because it would be identical to the Greek
- 84 Kramer suggests that βολ is scribal error for εβολ
- 87 Kramer suggests that ϣιογη is scribal error for ϣιογηη
- 88 Schubart suggests that εϥερωαν is scribal error for εϥερωαγ
- 91 ϣογαςπασμοοκ Schubart; εογ- Kramer following Brunsch, who suggests that εογαςπασε μοοκ is scribal error for εγ-, though no error need have occurred as Rachel Mairs informs me that εογ- is also a valid beginning for this word
- 94 Kramer reads μηιote: and suggests that a second η should be supplied, but it is clearly present on the papyrus
- 96 Schubart suggests that αχχοογκας is scribal error for αχχοογηκας, but this cannot be right as it conflates two verbs for ‘send’, χοογ and κας; the reading of the papyrus is fine as it stands
- 99 Schubart suggests that the Coptic was omitted here because it would be identical to the Greek
- 101 Other editors take this line as complete before the break, but that requires fitting the three traces at its end into the Greek of 102, which as noted above does not work
- 103 Kramer reads αγω αη[ιματε], which would be scribal error for αηματε (thus Schubart) or for εηματε, both of which mean ‘very’ and thus would fit the context well; but unfortunately the last letter is indubitably η rather than ι. The traces before the η are less clear, but there is enough to see that they too are a poor match for the rest of the restoration; in particular the traces that resemble ω occur at the beginning of the word. Moreover the word probably ended with the η, as although there is a break one can see the remains of a curved vertical line dividing the columns, and this occurs directly after η
- 109 ηογιω Schubart, with a note suggesting scribal error for ηοογιω, but ηογιω Kramer, based on Brunsch’s point that the expected form here would be ηοογιω; in fact either ηογιω or ηοογιω would be correct Coptic here, but neither is possible because there is not enough space. The traces look like ηοτιω
- 110 Schubart suggests that the Coptic was omitted here because it would be identical to the Greek
- 114 ηηηϥας ϣας Kramer; none of the letters is really legible, but one can see where they are, and there is not enough space for the extra letter in Kramer’s version. Schubart suggests that this is what was intended by the scribe but that a letter was accidentally omitted
- 121 Kramer suggests that τηκωπτε is scribal error for τηηκωπτε, and Schubart suggests scribal error for τηηκωπτε, but the singular (which is clearly needed here) should actually be τηκωπτε, so Rachel Mairs suggests that the initial τ is an error for ϣ
- 124 Brunsch suggests that ηετηημακτηρϣ is scribal error for ηετηημακ τηρϣ
- 131 ηωημο Kramer (with suggestion that this is scribal error for ηηωημο) and Schubart, but the papyrus very clearly has ηωημο, which must be scribal error
- 132 The traces look very much like εμοτ: (or εμοτ2), but there is no such word; Schubart read ϣμοτ: meaning ‘grace, gift, give thanks’, which would have to go with the preceding lines (‘as the foreigners give thanks?’), while Kramer disregarded the preserved traces entirely to read ϣρϣ: ‘why you?’. This fits very nicely with Kramer’s interpretation of this and the following lines (‘why have you been awake

since dawn?'), but as noted above that interpretation is incompatible with the preserved traces in the Latin and Greek as well

137 ἀπὸ φῆς Kramer; ἀκρῆς Schubart; neither fits the traces well

141 Although both Kramer and Schubart read this line as Greek, it ought to be the Coptic equivalent of 'to the outside', as that is the meaning of the Latin and Greek on the previous line and this must be the Coptic version of that line. Either ἐπὶ ἔξω (suggested by Rachel Mairs) or ἐπὶ ἔξω (suggested by Daniela Colomo) would be possible, but the latter fits the preserved traces better. Neither restoration explains the two traces to the left of the word, but these may not be part of letters at all

Clearly this text is very peculiar. How and why was it created? It bears a striking relationship to a set of Latin-Greek bilingual dialogues known as the 'colloquia of the Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana'; these colloquia mostly survive via the medieval manuscript tradition, but fragments have also been found on papyrus.⁷ The colloquia all share enough features in common to show that they go back to a (very distant) common ancestor, and the text on this papyrus, because of its close relationship to the colloquia, must also descend from that common ancestor. Originally, therefore, this text was bilingual in Latin and Greek, with the Latin in the Roman alphabet.

The original version of this text would also have had a different layout. In antiquity, Latin-Greek bilingual materials were normally arranged in very narrow columns, one column per language; this was true both for glossaries and for continuous texts like colloquia. The format of this papyrus, with no space between the different languages and a double point used instead to separate them, is characteristic of Greek-Coptic glossaries.⁸ So three changes have been made to this text: the Coptic translation has been added, the Latin has been transliterated, and the layout has been altered. Who made these changes and why?

It is tempting to ascribe all three types of alteration to the same individual, a Coptic speaker who adapted a bilingual colloquium for fellow Coptic speakers; the extant papyrus could then be that adaptor's autograph manuscript. But such a simple explanation is unlikely, for the text probably has a transmission history in its trilingual form. The complex layout of the papyrus is most easily explained as being that of a copy of a pre-existing document, probably a document in which each page contained only one of the two triple columns now crowded onto each side of the surviving leaf.⁹

Moreover the combination of the typically Coptic layout with the poor linguistic quality of the Coptic indicates a process of transmission. Unlike the Latin and Greek, which are in reasonable condition, the Coptic is full of mistakes; it cannot be the autograph product of a native speaker but must have been either composed or copied (or both) by someone with little knowledge of the language, probably a Greek speaker.¹⁰ Yet such a person would not have changed the text's layout from a typically Graeco-Latin one to a typically Coptic one, so another person, a Coptic speaker, must also have been involved in the composition or transmission of the trilingual version. The involvement of a minimum of two people indicates a transmitted text rather than the adaptor's autograph. Can we know anything more about the text's history?

One possibility is that the original adaptor was a native Coptic speaker; this person would have been responsible for both the translation and the layout, and the text would then have been copied by one or more people with little or no knowledge of Coptic. Such a scenario is surprising on several grounds. Non-Coptic copyists would have been unlikely to preserve the Coptic layout, particularly as it is very confusing, and transmission by non-Coptic copyists seems incompatible with the usual theory that the purpose of this text

⁷ For these colloquia see Dickey (2012–15), Dionisotti (1982), Goetz (1892), and further bibliography cited therein. This fragment is most closely related to the Colloquium Montepessulanum but is clearly not identical to any of the colloquia known from other sources. This papyrus' relationship to the Hermeneumata colloquia was first observed by Schubart (1913: 27) and has also been discussed by Kramer (1983: 97, 2010: 558–9).

⁸ See Dickey (forthcoming) and Ammirati and Fressura (forthcoming: §5).

⁹ See Ammirati and Fressura (forthcoming: §5.2 with n. 83).

¹⁰ Some mistakes could be due to poor literacy rather than to poor knowledge of Coptic, but others could not. For example, in line 35 the nonsense word ἀκὸκ has been written where ἀνὸκ 'I' was clearly intended; that is not a phonetic slip.

was to allow Coptic speakers to learn Latin.¹¹ It is normally thought that language-learning texts were copied chiefly by language students as part of the language-learning process; rarely do such texts show signs of professional scribal work, and this papyrus certainly does not come from a professional hand. Therefore if the copyist did not already know Coptic, he was probably using the text to learn Coptic. Of course there is in principle no reason why Egyptian Greek speakers should not have learned Coptic, but Latin and Greek were higher-status languages and the existing evidence points more to learning of those languages on the part of Coptic speakers than to the reverse. Probably some native Greek speakers knew Coptic, but such knowledge is likely to have come about via close contact with Coptic speakers rather than via deliberate language learning.

The other possibility is that the original adaptor was a Greek speaker with imperfect knowledge of Coptic; on this theory the text would later have been copied by one or more Coptic speakers who changed the layout. This scenario is also surprising, for it requires Coptic-speaking copyists to have refrained from correcting the errors in Coptic introduced by the original adaptor. The easiest way to explain it is that a Greek speaker who happened to have acquired some knowledge of Coptic ended up teaching Greek and/or Latin to monolingual Coptic speakers; he adapted a colloquium for their use by adding the Coptic column, and they then copied the result faithfully because he was the teacher and they did not want to correct him. Although this scenario is less implausible than the previous one it can hardly be endorsed with great confidence.

There is one thing of which we can be reasonably certain, however: the adaptor who added the Coptic translation was not a native Latin speaker, for the Coptic is not a translation of the Latin but rather a translation of the Greek. Although in most places the two are of course the same, sometimes the meanings of the Latin and the Greek diverge. The clearest example is in line 54, where the Latin has ‘you’ (*vos*) and the Greek ‘us’ (ἡμῶς, a common spelling error for ὑμῶς ‘you’); ‘you’ makes more sense and is clearly original, but the Coptic follows the Greek and translates with ‘us’.¹² The translator must therefore have been looking only at the Greek; it cannot be conclusively ascertained that he did not know Latin, but he clearly did not know enough Latin to pay attention to it when it would have helped him with a textual problem in the Greek.

The transliteration of the Latin was probably a separate process from the addition of the Coptic, given the lack of attention to the Latin showed by the Coptic translation. The bilingual version of this text could already have had the Latin in transliteration when the adaptor found it, for many bilingual Latin-Greek glossaries use transliterated Latin.¹³ The background of the transliterator is difficult to establish. He knew how Latin was pronounced, for he has not simply replaced Latin letters with their Greek equivalents using a formulaic system based on the Latin spellings, but reflected the words’ late antique pronunciation fairly accurately. Of course, we have no way of knowing how the Latin words were spelled before the transliteration: the original version might have contained non-standard spellings reflecting contemporary pronunciation more closely than the classical spellings would (though the fact that the Latin of the colloquia tends largely to use standard spellings, both in papyri and in medieval manuscript copies, suggests that the original spellings in this version are likely to have been fairly ‘correct’ as well). But the transliterator understood things that could not have been conveyed in any Roman-alphabet spelling, such as which *u* signs represented vowels and which consonants, and therefore he must have known how Latin was pronounced.¹⁴ That knowledge, however, does not necessarily make him a native speaker of Latin.

The presence of all three languages is difficult to justify on any theory of the adaptation of this text. If the adaptations were designed to make the colloquium usable by Coptic speakers who wanted to learn Latin, those Coptic speakers must not have known much Greek, since otherwise they would not have needed

¹¹ See Schubart (1913: 37) and Kramer (1983: 98).

¹² Cf. Schubart (1913: 35) and Kramer (1983: 97), also noting a similar mistake in line 105.

¹³ For example, nine of the fifteen other texts in Kramer (1983) have the Latin in transliteration; for a more extensive list see Dickey (2012–15: i.7–10).

¹⁴ For a detailed examination of the Latin spellings see Kramer (1983: 97–8, 103–8).

a Coptic translation. But why would Coptic speakers who did not know Greek have wanted to learn Latin, and why did they copy the Greek if it was no use to them? Although Latin had attained fairly widespread currency in some parts of sixth-century Egypt, Greek was undoubtedly much more useful as a second language in the East. One can certainly concoct a setting in which Coptic speakers might have needed Latin more than Greek – for example if they wanted to sell their produce to a Roman army base whose major purchasers came from the West – but such concoctions are a bit forced, and the question of why the Greek was also copied remains. On the other hand, if the text was used by Coptic speakers to learn Greek, or by Greek speakers to learn Coptic, why did they copy the Latin? There are really only two possible explanations for the presence of all three languages: either users wanted to learn more than one language from this text, or one language was retained unnecessarily because it had originally been part of the text and subsequent copyists hesitated to remove it. Given the conservatism that is inherent in much textual transmission, I suspect the latter motivation: one of the languages was probably retained despite being irrelevant to the text's last purpose. Whence it follows, unfortunately, that we cannot be certain that the final purpose of this text was to allow Coptic speakers to learn Latin; they might have been learning Greek.

The copyists' reluctance to eliminate the redundant language may also have been prompted by an uncertainty about which words belonged to which language, since it is not at all easy to work out how the text should be divided when all three languages are in effectively the same alphabet, the three columns are squashed together, and there are occasional overruns and omissions. Modern readers, of course, share the ancients' difficulties in deciphering the text in its current form. Editors have therefore usually provided some sort of restored version to make it clearer what the text says: Schubart and Cavenaile offered restored versions of the Latin, Brunsch offered a restored version of the Coptic, and Kramer in his 2010 edition provided separate restored versions of all three languages, plus a German translation. Such separate restorations are helpful for understanding how the text of each individual language works, but the original ancient writers never intended the versions in the different languages to be read separately. Like the other colloquia, for which no trace of a monolingual existence has ever been found, this text was created as a language-learning tool and never existed in a monolingual format: it is the interaction between the different languages that is the whole point of bilingual colloquia, and that point is lost when the languages are separated.¹⁵

A more accurate reflection of the text's intended function would be provided by a restoration of the colloquium as it originally appeared, before the transliteration of the Latin, the addition of the Coptic, and the change in layout. Such a restoration is therefore presented below, together with an English translation that follows the line-by-line translation format of the original as much as possible.

Restored version of the colloquium:

	Latin	Greek	Translation
			<i>The end of a dinner party</i>
1	omnibus	πᾶσιν	... to all the (diners)
2–3	accumbentibus.	τοῖς ἀνακειμένοις.	reclining.
4	si omnes	εἰ πάντες	<i>Host:</i> If all
5	biberint	ἔπιαν	have drunk,
	terge	κατάμαζον	wipe
	mensam.	τὴν τράπεζαν.	the table.
	adponite	θέτε ¹⁶	Put
	in medium ¹⁷	εἰς τὸ μέσον	amongst us
10	candelabras,	τὰς λυχνίας,	the candlesticks/lampstands,

¹⁵ For composition in this format and its implications for our understanding of this text see Dickey (forthcoming).

¹⁶ θεται pap.

¹⁷ μενδίου pap.

	et accendite ¹⁸	κ[αὶ ἀνάψ]ατε ¹⁹		and light
	lucernas.	λου[.].		the lamps.
	diluce.	φώτ[ισον]. ²⁰		Give us light!
	date nobis	δότε [ἡμῖν]		Give us
15	bellaria,	τραγήματα,		sweets (and)
	unguentum.	μύρον.		unguent.
	dicite	εἴπατε	<i>Guests:</i>	Say,
	omnes	πάντες		all of you,
	‘feliciter!’	‘εὐτυχῶς!’		‘Good luck!’.
20	bene nos	καλῶς ἡμᾶς		You have entertained us well
	accepisti	ἐδ[έξω]		
	et regaler,	καὶ βας[ιλικῶ]ς,		and royally,
	ut tibi	ὥς σοὶ		as befits you [Gk: as
	decet.	ἀρέσκει.		pleases you].
25	ne quid ²¹	μήτι	<i>Host:</i>	Do you
	vultis	βούλεσθε ²²		want
	hic dormire,	ἐνταῦθα κοιμηθῆναι,		to sleep here,
	quod sero est?	ὅτι ὀψέ ἐστιν;		because it is late?
	et in hoc ²³	καὶ ἐν τούτῳ	<i>Guests:</i>	For this too
30	gratias	χάριτας		we are grateful,
	habemus,	ἔχομεν,		
	ut iussisti.	ὥς κ[εκέλευκας].		as you ordered. ²⁴
	quod vos	ὃ ὑμεῖς	<i>Host:</i>	Whatever you
	vultis:	βούλεσθε·		want:
35	ego meum	ἐγὼ τὸ ἐμὸν		I have done my (duty).
	feci.	ἐποίησα. ²⁵	<i>Host to</i>	
	accendite	ἀνάψατε ²⁶	<i>servants:</i>	Light
	lucer[n]as	τοὺς λύχνου[ς]		the lamps
39–40	et prosequamini ²⁷	καὶ προπέμψατε ²⁸		and accompany them home,
41	omnes.	πάντες.		all of you!
<i>General conversational phrases</i>				
42	Sermo	Ὅμιλία		Daily conversation:
43	co[ti]dia]nus:	καθημερινή·		
45–6	quid facimus,	τί ποιοῦμεν,	<i>A:</i>	What (shall) we do,
47	frater?	ἀδελφέ;		brother?

¹⁸ ακεντιδε pap.¹⁹ [ἀναψ]αται pap.²⁰ φωθ[ισον] pap.²¹ νηκοιδ pap.²² βουλεσθαι pap.²³ εστινοκ pap.

²⁴ Schubart (1913: 33) and Kramer (2010: 565) both interpret this as meaning that the guests gratefully decline the offer. They are probably right, but another possibility is that line 32 provides an alternative to lines 30–31, as 53–4 provide an alternative to 51–2; in that case 32 may be an acceptance. The reference to an order is metaphorical; the closest English equivalent might be ‘if you insist’.

²⁵ εποιησας pap.²⁶ ἀναψαται pap.²⁷ προσεκουαμινω pap.²⁸ προπεμψαται pap.

48	[li]be[nt]er te	ἡδέως σε	I am glad to see you.
50	video.	ὁρῶ.	
	et ego te, ²⁹	καὶ γὰρ σέ,	<i>B (if sing.):</i> And I (to see) you,
	domine.	δέσποτα.	sir.
	et nos	καὶ ἡμεῖς	<i>(if plural):</i> And we (to see)
	vos.	ὑμᾶς. ³⁰	you.
<i>A messenger's arrival</i>			
55	nesc[io]	οὐκ οἶδα	<i>Master:</i> Someone ³¹
	quis	τίς	
	ostium ³²	τὴν θύραν	is knocking at the door;
	pulsat;	κρούει·	
	exito ³³	ἔξελθ[ε]	go
60	cito foras	ταχέως ἔξω	out quick
62	et disce	καὶ μάθε	and find out
64	[qu]is est,	τίς [ἐ]στιν,	who it is,
65	aut qu[em]	ἢ τίνα	or who
66	[petit].	[ἀναζητεῖ].	he's looking for.
68	[a]b Aurelio	ἀπ' A[ὐρ]ηλίου	<i>Servant:</i> He has come from Aurelius; ³⁴
69	venit;	ἦλθεν·	
70	[nuntiu]m	φάσιν	he brought a message.
	[tuli]t.	ἤνεγκεν.	
	c[la]ma	κάλεσον	<i>Master:</i> Call
	illum hic.	αὐτὸν ἐν[τ]αῦθα.	him here.
	quid est, ³⁵	τί ἐστιν,	<i>(to messenger):</i> What is it,
75	puer?	παῖ;	boy?
	quid	τί	What
	nuntias ³⁶ ?	ἀναγγέλλε[ις]; ³⁷	do you have to say?
	[om]nia	πάντα	Is everything
	bene?	καλῶς;	all right? ³⁸
<i>A visitor's arrival</i>			
80	Maximus	Μάξιμος	<i>Servant:</i> Maximus

²⁹ ετεγωδη pap.

³⁰ ημας pap.

³¹ Kramer (2010: 565) takes this as 'I don't know who is knocking', which would of course work better for the Greek. But the Latin would most naturally be interpreted as 'someone', and 'someone' makes more sense in context. The Greek of this colloquium is often a literal reflection of the Latin (not necessarily because it was composed by a non-native speaker of Greek, but more likely because a literal translation was more useful for Latin learners), as in line 19 and 70–71, and this line is probably another example of that practice. See Schubart (1913: 36) and Kramer (1983: 97).

³² οστισουμ pap.

³³ εξιειτο pap.

³⁴ This and *Maximus* in 80 are generic names, like 'John Doe' (cf. Schubart p. 34).

³⁵ κοιδ'εστ pap.

³⁶ νοῦϊτίας pap.

³⁷ αναγγελλε[ις] pap., perhaps intending the future ἀναγγελεῖς.

³⁸ Schubart (1913: 33) and Kramer (2010: 565) make lines 78–9 the beginning of the messenger's reply, i.e. 'Everything is fine ...'. But this passage is closely related to a passage in the Colloquium Montepessulanum (section 4; see Dickey 2012–15: vol. 2 or Goetz 1892: 655), and there these words are clearly the end of the question to the messenger rather than the beginning of his reply.

	te vult ³⁹	σε [β]ούλεται ⁴⁰		wants to greet you.
	salutare.	ἀσπάσασθ[αι].		
	ubi est?	ποῦ ἐστίν;	<i>Master:</i>	Where is he?
	foras	ἔξω	<i>Servant:</i>	He's standing outside.
85	stat.	ἵσταται.		
	veniat	ἐλθάτω	<i>Master:</i>	Let him come in.
	intro.	ἐνδον.		
	bene	καλῶς		Welcome!
	venisti. ⁴¹	ἦλθας.		
90	salutant	ἀσπάζονται ⁴²	<i>Visitor:</i>	The children send you greetings,
92	te infantes,	σε τὰ βρέφη,		
94	et parentes	καὶ οἱ γονεῖς		and so do their parents.
95	istorum.	αὐτῶν.		
	miserunt	ἔπεμψάν		They sent
	tibi autem	σοι δὲ		you
	hanc	ταύτην		this
	epistulam	τὴν [ἐπι]στολὴν		letter
100	per puerum	[διὰ τοῦ] παιδὸς		via the servant,
102	signatam:	[ἐσφραγισμένην].		sealed:
103	et valde	[κ]αὶ πάνυ	<i>Letter:</i>	I have been greatly
104–5	consternatus sum,	ἐλυπήθην, ⁴³		upset,
	frater,	ἀδελφέ,		brother,
	quod	ὅτι		because
	multo	πολλῶ		for a long time
	tempore	τῷ χρόνῳ		
110	litteras	γράμματα		I have not received letters
	a te	ἀπὸ σου		from you.
	non accepi.	οὐκ ἔλαβον.		
	post multum	μετὰ πολὺν		After [so] much time,
	?			
115	ergo	τοιγάρτοι		therefore,
	tempus	[χρόν]ον		
	mitte m[ihi]	[ἀπόσ]τειλόν ⁴⁴ μοι		send me
	[epistula]m,	ἐπιστολὴν,		a letter,
119	[ut hil]arius	ἵνα ἰλαρὸς		to make me happy!
121	fia[m.]	[γε]νηθῶ.		
122	⟨saluta⟩ ⁴⁵	ἄσπασαι		Give my greetings to
123	omnis tuos.	πάντας τοὺς σοὺς.		all your household.
			<i>Fragmentary scene</i>	
125	veniat	ἐλθάτω		Let him come
	intro.	ἐνδον.		in.
	?			

³⁹ βουλ pap.⁴⁰ [β]ολεται pap.⁴¹ βενιστις pap.⁴² The papyrus has σε here as well as on the next line.⁴³ ελυπηθη pap.⁴⁴ [αποσ]τιλον pap.⁴⁵ The Latin is missing from the original here.

	?		
	?		
130	sicut [p]eregrini. ? ?	[κα]θώς οἱ ξένοι.	. . . like foreigners.
	vigilas ⁴⁶ ?	ἀγρυπνεῖς;	. . . are you awake?
135	necessitas fecit me vigilare.	ἡ ἀνάγκη ἐποίησέν με ἀγρυπνήσαι.	Necessity forced me to be awake.
138	pro[dea]mus	προέλθωμεν	Let's go out
140	[in lum]en;	εἰς ὕ[παιθ]ρον	into the open;
142	curre	δράμε	run
143	in domum.	εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν.	home.

Readers wanting a linguistic commentary on this text are referred to the excellent one by Kramer (1983: no. 15), which discusses all three languages and pays particular attention to the light shed on late Latin by this text; there are also briefer discussions of the text's interesting linguistic features by Schubart (1913: 36) and Dickey (2012–15: vol. 2 section 4.1).

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⁴⁶ βιγίλιας pap.