1 Greek and Old Nubian Language Contact

When we speak of language contact and translation practices in Medieval Nubia, we are faced with a society that appears very multilingual, producing documents in four different languages: Greek, Sahidic Coptic, Old Nubian, and Arabic.¹

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<tr>
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<td>662</td>
<td>22.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Nubian</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>7.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek–Old Nubian</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coptic–Greek</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic–Old Nubian</td>
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<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Coptic–Greek–Old Nubian</td>
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In the following presentation I will first briefly discuss the particularities of the Greek written by Nubian scribes and several aspects of Greek loanwords in Nubian in contrast with the Greek influence on Coptic vocabulary. We will then move on to a brief overview of the syntactical and morphological features of bilingual Greek–Old Nubian texts.

1.1 Nubian Greek

It appears that during the Middle Ages, the Byzantine koinē was still widely spoken in the region, with nearly one-third of the attested materials from Nubia

in that particular language.² A number of peculiarities of written Greek in Nubia stand out.

We find a loss of distinction between aspirated, voiceless, and voiced consonants, which is caused by the structure of the Old Nubian phoneme inventory, which has no aspirated stops and a weak distinction between voiced and voiceless stops, while at the same time in spoken Greek voiceless stops were increasingly becoming voiced:

\[ \text{x–y}: \text{Ben 15} \bullet \text{πάρος} < \text{Gr. πάγος} \]

\[ \text{k–γ}: \text{Dong 1 10} \bullet \text{oικέω} < \text{Gr. ἔγειται} \]

\[ \text{c–ζ}: \text{P.QI 1 2.1.3} \bullet \text{εἰπέω} < \text{Gr. ἠλπίζετε} \]

\[ \text{r–κ}: \text{P.Q.I P 3} \bullet \text{ἐκαταλήψῃ} < \text{Gr. ἐκάθισαν} \]

\[ \text{θ–τ}: \text{P.Q.I 1 2.1.4} \bullet \text{ἐπιποθεῖτε}; \text{P.Q.I 1 3.1.4} \bullet \text{κλοοροθεοῦν} < \text{Gr. κατέρθωσεν}; \text{Ben 21} \bullet \text{ορια} < \text{Gr. τὰ θέρια} \]

Itacism is caused both by sound changes in the Byzantine koiné, such as the reduction of several vowels to /i/ and the absence of rounded front vowel /y/ in Old Nubian:

\[ \text{ι–η}: \text{Ben 21} \bullet \text{ορια} < \text{Gr. τὰ θέρια} \]

\[ \text{γ–η}: \text{Ben 21} \bullet \text{κτῆνη} < \text{Gr. κτήνη} \]

\[ \text{ει–η}: \text{Ben 13} \bullet \text{αι μερὰς} < \text{Gr. ἡμέρας} \]

\[ \text{οι–η}: \text{Dong 1 10} \bullet \text{oικέω} < \text{Gr. ἔγειται} \]

\[ \text{ει–η}: \text{P.Q.I 1 2.1.7} \bullet \text{ρεῖ} < \text{Gr. ρέη} \]

\[ \text{η–υ}: \text{P.Q.I 2 12.1.9} \bullet \text{ἐγκατάληψῃ} < \text{Gr. ἐγκατάληψης} \]

\[ \text{οι–η}: \text{P.Q.I 2 12.1.13} \bullet \text{ἐγκαταλϊσοῦν} < \text{Gr. ἐγκαταλῖστον} \]

\[ \text{η–οι}: \text{Ben 19} \bullet \text{βοῦνα} < \text{Gr. βουνοὶ} \]

\[ \text{ι–υ}: \text{P.Q.I 2 13.1.17} \bullet \text{αλλοφολοῦ} < \text{Gr. ἀλλόφιλοι}, \text{but P.Q.I 2 13.1.20} \bullet \text{αλλοφυλο– as loanword} \]

Other vowel variations again show the interplay between changing pronunciations of koiné Greek and the smaller Nubian vowel inventory, or are perhaps simply scribal errors (as seems to be the case in Ben, whose scribe was certainly not well versed in Greek):


³ Editorial Sigla: •: Both context and form are clear; ●: Context is clear, form is unclear or damaged; ○: Context is unclear or damaged, form is clear; ◦: Context and form are unclear or damaged; ◆: Analysis uncertain. And the standard set of editorial sigla: […]: lacuna; ⟨⟩: addition by editor; { }: deletion by editor; […]: deletion by scribe; ⌂: ⌂ is uncertain; /…/: phonological representation; *𐎣: Not attested or reconstructed;
In comparison with Coptic, the inventory of Greek loanwords in Old Nubian is limited, and the orthographical variants encountered are similar to those discussed above. However, there are a few striking differences with the phonological properties of Greek loanwords in Coptic, which I would like to review briefly.\footnote{4. For the Coptic exx. see Sarah J. Clackson and Arietta Papaconstantinou, “Coptic or Greek? Bilingualism in the Papyri,” in The Multilingual Experience in Egypt from the Ptolemies to the Abbasids, ed. Arietta Papaconstantinou (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 79–83.}

- Coptic often has false aspiration, such as Copt. ρωμος < Gr. ἔδωνος; Copt. χριστιανός < Gr. εἰκόνα. This phenomenon is unknown in ON, cf. P.QI 1 9.ii.7 • εἰκόνα, P.QI 1 9.1.17 • εἰκόνα.
- Like in Coptic, the Old Nubian distinction between κ/γ and π/β is weak or perhaps non-existent. In contrast with Coptic, however, the distinction τ/Δ is phonemic. Hence Copt. χριστιανός, but M 2.12 • χριστιανός/γογν < Gr. χριστιανός;
- In Coptic, initial θ, φ, χ are analyzed as τ+θ, π+φ, κ+χ. For example, Gr. θάλασσα > Copt. τ-τάλασσα, with τ- reanalyzed as feminine determiner. Instead, we find SC 7.15 • ἀλαξογ, where the original -α has been reanalyzed as predicative -α.\footnote{5. The -ὁγ is phonological; ON words are not allowed to end in a voiceless consonant.}
In Coptic, Greek endings are often preserved, whereas in ON they are sometimes reanalyzed as morphemes, as already exemplified above. Also compare Copt. ςⲧⲕⲟⲓⲟⲛ < Gr. δημόσιον with K 29.5–6 ⲧⲧⲓⲁγⲉⲅⲧ-ⲧⲉⲑⲓⲧⲉⲕⲗⲁ < Gr. τυχαγγέλων, and St 3.8 ⲧⲧⲉⲑⲓⲧⲉⲕⲗⲁ < Gr. μυστήριον, where -ον has been reanalyzed as the complementizer -ⲓⲟⲛ;

Whereas in Coptic the supralinear stroke indicates a syllable with ε, in ON it appears to signal on a consonant a syllable with ι and on a vowel a syllable consisting of /V/: Copt. ςⲧⲑⲣ̄ⲩⲩⲩⲩ < Gr. ςⲧⲑⲣ̄ⲩⲩⲩ; M 7.4 ⲧⲧⲇⲕ-ⲧⲉⲑⲓⲧⲉⲕⲗⲁ < Gr. πιστεύω; L 111.10 ⲧⲧⲕⲖⲧ-ⲕⲥⲑⲕⲁ < Gr. θυμιστήριον;

In contrast with Coptic, word-initial consonant clusters are not tolerated. Compare Copt. ⲧⲧⲕⲣ̄ⲩⲩⲩⲩ ⲧⲧⲑⲕⲏⲩⲩⲩ with St 1.8 ⲧⲧⲕⲣ̄ⲩⲩⲩⲩ ⲧⲧⲑⲕⲏⲩⲩⲩ; P.QI 1 19.0.1.9 ⲧⲧⲕⲟⲥⲕ-ⲕⲥⲑⲕⲁ < Gr. ςⲧⲑⲰⲩⲩ, with the final -η /i/ phonologically deleted.

2 Old Nubian–Greek Bilingual Texts

I would now like to focus on Greek–Old Nubian bilingual texts, in particular Old Nubian translations of the Septuagint, in order to explain certain morphological and syntactical features of literary Old Nubian particular to Biblical translations. Following Christian Askeland’s study on the Coptic translations of the Septuagint, I would like to orient this preliminary investigation through the difference between obligatory explicitation, which “is caused by the lack of equivalent syntactic categories,” and optional explicitation, which “resolves stylistic differences between the source and translation languages,” without which “a translation would be clumsy.”

Both forms of explicitation serve the aim of rendering the Greek Vorlage as closely as possible without being ungrammatical. That this drive toward literalness can become quite extreme is shown by Wulfila’s Bible translation in Gothic, where “the Greek Vorlage is rendered word for word and in the same order.” This is possible because Gothic belongs to the same language family as Greek, has a similar verbal and nominal inflection system, and appears to have a relatively free word order.

By contrast, the linguistic differences between Greek and Old Nubian are numerous. For example, whereas the former is an Indo-European SOV language

6. It should be noted that most of the variants in the Greek texts that we will discuss below are not attested in any other Greek manuscripts of the Septuagint, cf. the apparatus in Gerald M. Browne, Bibliorum Sacrorum Versio Palaeonubiana, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalum 547 (Louvain: Peeters, 1994), pp. 62–77.
that has transitioned to a general SVO structure with the emergence of Hellenistic koinē.\footnote{Ann Taylor, “The Change from SOV to SVO in Ancient Greek,” Language Variation and Change 6, no. 1 (1994): 1–37.}

Old Nubian is a strict SOV language from the Nubian family within the North-Eastern Sudanic subgroup of the Nilo-Saharan phylum; Byzantine Greek has a fusional case and agreement system with a lot of irregular forms, whereas Old Nubian is a very regular agglutinative language like Turkish; the former has a large inventory of discourse particles and clitics, whereas the latter has none; and while Greek has three genders, Old Nubian has none. These and many other differences imply that we expect to find obligatory explicitation for example in cases where particles and clitics have to be rendered as suffixes, and verbal and nominal morphological categories need to be matched. In terms of constituent order, we expect Old Nubian scribes — following the obligation to arrive at a translation that is as literal as possible — to develop syntactical strategies of optional explicitation to match Greek constituent order whenever possible.

Currently we have the following published bilingual Greek–Old Nubian literary texts, which, apart from a few fragments, come in two varieties:

Full, line by line translations:

- P.QI 1 2.i.1–20 = dbmnt 1002: Ps. 61:10–13 (Qaṣr Ibrīm)
- P.QI 1 3 = dbmnt 1003: Ps. 95:6–13 (Qaṣr Ibrīm)
- P.QI 2 12 = dbmnt 1009: Ps. 26:8–14; 90:1–5 (Qaṣr Ibrīm)
- P.QI 2 13 = dbmnt 1010: Ps. 83:13; 86:1–7; 46:2–6 (Qaṣr Ibrīm)

Translations with alternating lines, one in Greek and one in Old Nubian:

- P.QI 1 2.i.21–ii.30 = dbmnt 1002: Ps. 83.2–12 (Qaṣr Ibrīm)
- P.QI P = dbmnt 1292: Ps. 149–150 (Qaṣr Ibrīm)
- Ben = dbmnt 1319: Dan. 57–81 (Qaṣr El-Wizz)
- Dong 1 = dbmnt 1388: Ps. 103:15–31 (Dongola)
- Dong 2 = dbmnt 1393: Dan. 3:31–34, 38–40 (Dongola)

To make a start with the long overdue inspection of translation techniques present in these bilingual texts, I will give an overview with dbmnt 1002, 1009, and 1010, which are all written in the same hand and therefore — presumably — by the same scribe and translator.\footnote{Gerald M. Browne, Old Nubian Texts from Qaṣr Ibrīm, vol. II (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1989), 12, with note ad loc.}
2.1 Obligatory Explicitation

According to Klaudy, obligatory explicitation “is dictated by differences in the syntactic and semantic structures of the languages,” the most obvious cases being those of “missing categories,”12 in which syntactic and semantic categories of the original and target languages don’t fully overlap. Old Nubian and Greek being part of two completely unrelated language families, obligatory explicitation is very common indeed. Let’s review a few cases.

- First person plural pronoun
- Pairs
- Case
- Prepositions
- Prefix verbs
- Subordination
- Tense
- Pluractionality
- (Medio-)passivity

(1) P.QI 2 13.ii.18–23

a. ὑπέταξε λαοὶς ἡμῶν καὶ ἔθνη ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας ἡμῶν
b. γνωταζέ φίλοις ἡμῶν ἔτως

κοιναρρύκα δίπλονγυκα οὐγκλε οὐ εἰσπαγωγοῖν

ὑπὸ τοὺς πολλὴς ἡμῶν //

οὐκ ἔνας τὰξ τάγω //

c. ak-oup-ar-r-a-sin kipt-ougou-ka ou-gillé

sit-overthrow-TR-NEUT-PRED-EMP people-PL-ACC 1PL.EXCL-DIR

on sipp-igou-k-on ou-n oe-n tr-il

and nation-PL-ACC-C 1PL.EXCL-GEN foot-GEN pair-DET

tau-ö

belly-LOC1

“He overturned peoples for us and nations too under our feet.” (Ps. 46:4)

First person plural pronouns  Different from Greek, Old Nubian makes a difference between an inclusive first person plural pronoun (including the addressee) and exclusive one.

Pairs  Old Nubian uses as specific plural formation for pairs, such as body parts, whereas Greek has no such form.

Case  The Greek and Old Nubian case systems partially overlap. We see here that objects of the main verb are marked in both languages with the accusative, whereas the recipient has a different case. Such differences can often be ascribed to how valency is encoded differently on ON and Greek verbs.

Prepositions  Whereas Greek has prepositions, Old Nubian has postpositions, both simple and complex. In this particular case we see that Greek preposition ὑπὸ has been translated with postposition ṡⲧⲁⲩⲱ̄.

Prefix verbs  Greek has a large inventory of prefix verbs, consisting of a prepositional prefix and a root. This type of combination is not possible in Old Nubian, which relatively consistently employs so-called multverb constructions, combining the meaning of two different verb roots to approach the meaning of the Greek prefix verb.

This is another example:

(2)  P.QI 2 12.i.12–16 ●

a. ὡς ὁ πατήρ μου καὶ ἡ μήτηρ μου ἐγκατέληπον με, ὁ δὲ Κύριος προσέλαβε με.

b. ὡς ὁ πατήρ ὑπὸ ἐγκατέλειψε με ὁ δὲ Ἰηλὶς τοκογιάν ἀγάλλω ἀγκ αὐτοῦ με.

Subordination  Subordinate clauses in Greek are often preceded by the complementizer ὅτι, which, depending on the verb form, can have a wide variety of meanings. As Old Nubian does not have such a grammatical element, we find very different translation strategies. In this particular example, the Greek ὅτι-clause has been rendered with a regular subordinate clause, in which the Old Nubian verb is not marked with the main predicate marker -ⲑⲧⲪ.[13]

Tense  Greek is known to have a large verbal tense system, whereas Old Nubian only distinguishes a neutral/present tense and two different past/preterite tenses, of which the distribution still remains uncertain.[13] In this example, the two Greek aorists are rendered with first preterite forms.

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In the next example, we see that the Greek future tense, is rendered by the Old Nubian intentional mood:

(3) P. Qi 2 12.ii.22–24

a. καὶ ἵππο τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἐλπιέις
b. ἤτιο τας πτερυγας δυτον ελπιεις
   ταρι αγραν τρι ταγμποειν τεαλ δουδιαραλ
   3SG-GEN wing-GEN couple-DET under-LOC1-FOC-C hope
doud-d-r-a-le
   exist-INT-NEUT-PRED-AFF.2SG
   “And under his wings you shall feel hope.” (Ps. 90:4)

(4) P. Qi 2 13.ii.10–13

a. δεδοξασμένα ἐλαλήθη περὶ σοῦ ἡ πόλις τοῦ Θεοῦ.
b. δεδοξασμενα ἐλαλον περι ου ς πολις του θεου
   εοου κοφαλογουλ πεστακοδα ερι δογρη αλπα τδλα
   glory(.acc) have-PLACT-DET-PL-DT say-PASS-PLACT-PT1-PRED
eir-in - jour-iro dipp-a till-na
c. ηοοκ kon-j-il-gou-l pes-tak-j-ar-a glory(.ACC) have-PLACT-DET-PL-DT say-PASS-PLACT-PT1-PRED
eir-in - jour-iro dipp-a till-na
diou-eion teeil
   exist-INT-NEUT-PRED-AFF.2SG
   2SG-GEN cause-LOC city-PRED God-gen
   “Glorious things we said because of you, city of God.” (Ps. 86:3)

Pluractionality Another grammatical element that is absent from Greek but in certain contexts obligatory in Old Nubian is the pluractional suffix, encoding plural agents, patients, or recipients in the verbal complex. In this case, the pluractional suffix cross-references with the plural patient of the passive verb.

(Medio-)passivity An interesting issue is encountered with the translation of medio-passive forms, which also gives us an insight into how Old Nubian scribes perceived or, perhaps, “analyzed” the Greek fusional and highly irregular morphology from the perspective of a regular agglutinative language such as their own. In the above example, the Greek passive aorist ἐλαλήθη is translated with a passive suffix -τακ and a preterite 1 tense.

(5) P. Qi 2 13.ii.13–17

a. μνησθήσομεν Ρααβ καὶ Βαβυλώνος τοις γνώσιοις µε·
b. μνησοναι παρ γυγαθον τοις γινοκοοιν he
   κακτακαλίνεσε ραβδε ραβγαλολεκεπι τελογ δικ
   eikrolgolalke //
c. ank-tak-ad-imme rab-il-de
   remember-PASS-INT-AFF.1SG(!).PRED Raab-DET-CONJ
   babulōn-deke-l tedou ait-k ei-ar-a-l-gou-l-gille
   Babylon-CONJ-DET 3PL 1SG-ACC know-TR-PT1-DET-PL-DT-DET-DIR
“Raab and Babylon shall be mentioned (by me) to those who have known me.” (Ps. 86:4)

Now in the next sentence, which follows directly on the previous one, we find a verb form with the same morpheme -ⲧⲕ, but in a different function: as marker of a medio-passive future tense. Naturally, the scribe renders this morpheme with the passive -ⲧⲕ, but then gets into problems with the agreement, which in Greek is a first person singular – “I will mention Raab and Babylon” – but which in Old Nubian should be third person – “Raab and Babylon shall be mentioned.” We nevertheless find, ungrammatically, a first person agreement suffix, as if the scribe intended to repurpose -ⲧⲕ as medio-passive marker. The absence of accusative case on ραⲃⲓⲗⲇⲟⲅⲃⲩⲖⲛⲏⲕⲉⲗ⳿ (which in Greek is a genitive object), however, clearly shows that a passive interpretation is the desired one.

(6) P.QI 2 13.ii.17–22 ●

a. καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄλλοπλοι καὶ Τύρος καὶ λαὸς τῶν Λιδιώτων, οὗτοι ἐγενήθησαν ἐκεῖ.

b. ἦς τοιοῦτοι ιωτῷ οὗτοι ἐγενήθησαν ἐκα // οὐχὶν κίτωγον{γοὺς}λαέκελ εἰναίνγοια ἡμινόλω

Kιραϊπικαί //


“Lo, the gentiles and the Tyrians and the peoples of darkness – these got into being (lit. coming) there.” (Ps. 86:4)

The next verse again features a verb with -ⲧⲕ, another aorist passive. Here the scribe has chosen for a completely different morpheme, the inchoative, to render the meaning of the Greek verb, perhaps because the verb κιρ can simply not be combined with the real passive -ⲧⲕ.

So in these three example we clearly see how the scribe is struggling to render what he wants to consider a single suffix with a fixed meaning, -ⲧⲕ, in very different morphological and semantic contexts.

2.2 Optional Explicitation

Optional explicitation “is dictated by differences in text-building strategies … and stylistic preferences between languages. Such explicitations are optional in the sense that grammatically correct sentences can be constructed without their application in the target language.”

Optional explicitation is here compounded by the scribe’s stylistic preference to stay close to the Greek Vorlage, to imitate its constituent, if not word order. Optional explicitation therefore often involves strategies that render the grammar of the Old Nubian “foreign” or “artificial,” while at the same time attempting to keep it within bounds of the grammatical. An additional handicap in our endeavor to determine at which points Old Nubian grammar may have been “pushed” is our currently limited understanding of Old Nubian syntax. However, based on some general typological features of OV languages, we will be able to point to a few peculiar aspects of Old Nubian translations from Greek, which then in turn may be used to improve our knowledge of Old Nubian syntax.

- Extended personal pronouns
- Possessor and adjective inversion
- Object inversion
- Leftward movement

I start with this example because it gives us nearly a 1-on-1 Greek–Old Nubian translation. Let us inspect a few of its features.

(7) P.QI 2 12.1.16-20 ●

a. νομοθέτησόν με, Κύριε, ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ σου καὶ ὁδήγησόν με ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ

b. ἡμωνετίκον ἐν Κε ὅπως τὰς ἁγίους ὑπὸ τὸ ἀδελφόν ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐν τῇ ἁγιασμῷ ἐ


“Instruct me Lord, in your way, and lead me in the path of justice.”
(Ps. 26:11)

**Extended personal pronouns** All translations of this particular scribe feature a special set of personal pronouns with more extensive forms than otherwise attested in Old Nubian texts. In this case εἰρή instead of regular εἰν.

**Possessor and adjective inversion** According to regular Old Nubian DP order, possessors and adjectives precede the noun. However, we find that the scribe quite often inversed this order so as to match the Greek word order. The result is often a stacking of case markers on the right edge of the DP.
Object inversion  Old Nubian is an OV language, and therefore usually has the object preceding the main verb. However, it seems that under certain circumstances, the object follows it. This often seems to happen with imperative verb forms, as in this case.

(8)  P.QI 1 2.i.3–7  ●
   a. μὴ ἐλπίζετε ἐπ’ ἁδικίαν καὶ ἐπὶ ἁρπάγματα μὴ ἐπισκοπεῖτε;  
   b. μὴ ἐλπισάτε εἰπ’ αὐτίκαν  ὑπ’ (sic) ἀρπαγμάτα  
      τεσφηνάζων οκκδρτήγογικα ον  σοῦρτγογκελέςιον  
      νη επίποσον  //  
      εἰκαθηνάζων  // 
   c. tevir-men-a-sō  okkdirt-in-gou-ka  on  
      hope-NEG-PRED-COMM injustice-PL-PL-ACC and  
      sourt-in-gou-k-ende-eion  
      grasping-PL-PL-ACC-NEG-C  
      eik-ij-men-na-sō  
      be.near-PLACT-NEG-IMPL.2/3PL-COMM 
   “Do not hope for injustices nor be eager for grasplings.” (Ps. 61:11)

In this example, we see that the first imperative verb form τεσφηνάζων is again on the left side of the object, but the second is not. But on the second object σοῦρτγογκελέςιον we find the complementizer -ειον, which we know always attaches at the leftmost, or highest constituent of the sentence, and signals leftward movement. We therefore may assume a double movement: leftward movement of both imperative forms and leftward movement of the second object.

(8’)  i. τεσφηνάζων, οκκδρτήγογικα  ὑπ’ -ειον εἰκαθηνάζων;  ὑπ’ σοῦρτγογκελέςιον  
      τεσφηνάζων, οκκδρτήγογικα  ὑπ’ εἰκαθηνάζων;  
      πικ-ειον  
   ii. τεσφηνάζων, οκκδρτήγογικα  ὑπ’ σοῦρτγογκελέςιον;  εἰκαθηνάζων;  
      τπ;  τκ

We have to note here that the presence of -ειον is completely superfluous in terms of conveying the meaning of the Greek. The negative imperative and the conjunction on already do that. The only reason for the presence of -ειον is that it allows a constituent, in this case the object, to move to the left side of the imperative, thus allowing for the imitation of Greek word order without being ungrammatical.

Finally, for verbs that are not imperatives, there is a grammatical strategy available to move them leftward, called the “affirmative.” This verb is only sparingly used in documentary evidence, and then usually in the context of standard formulas such as “I greet you.” It is much more widely employed in translations, because it allows for the word order to be rearranged in a manner closer to the Greek original.

(9)  P.QI 2 12.ii.8–12  ●
   a. ἔρει τῷ Κυρίῳ: ἀντιλήπτωρ μου εἰ καὶ καταφυγή μου,  
   b. ἔρει  τοι ἐκ ἀντιλήπτωρ ποι ὑμῖν  ἐπ’ ἐπ’  ἀντιλήπτωρ  
      πειθάθηε εσκαὶ ἀν ταμανναὶ //  
      ἐπ’ ἀν ἠλήτ. ἀλήτ. //
c. pes-ad-immeḥod-ka an tamann-a-ma on
say-INT-AFF.1SG.PREDLord-ACC1SG.GENhelper-PRED-AFFand
an mant..d-a-mi-a
1SG.GENrefuge(?)-PRED-AFF-QUOT
“I will say to the Lord: ‘You are my helper, you are my refuge(?).’”
(Ps. 90:2)

In this example, the verb has moved to the left of the object, and clearly shows
the affirmative morpheme. There is nothing obligatory about this move, again
otherwise than allowing the Old Nubian word order to imitate the Greek one.

3 Conclusion

In this presentation I have given a first and tentative overview of certain aspects
of the Greek used and translated by Nubian scribes and the interplay between
Greek and Old Nubian in several examples gathered from bilingual psalms. It
appears that Greek in the Christian Nubian kingdoms had an independent ef-
fect on Old Nubian, which can be clearly distinguished from its much stronger
influence on Coptic. This is evident from both the spelling of Greek by Nubian
scribes, and the characteristics of the inventory of Greek loanword in the Old
Nubian lexicon. Moreover, I have shown that a close morphological and gram-
matical analysis of the bilingual manuscripts may yield valuable information
about the limits of grammaticality of Old Nubian, and the different syntactical
and morphological techniques the scribes had at their disposal to come to a
faithful rendering of the Greek Vorlages.

4 Appendix: Full Text Analysis

(a) Septuagint Greek version; (b) parallel Greek/Old Nubian rendering; (c) mor-
phological gloss of the Old Nubian

(8) P.QI 2.1.3–7 ●
   a. μὴ ἐλπίζετε ἐπ’ ἀδικίαν καὶ ἐπὶ ἁρπάγματα μὴ ἐπιποδεῖτε;
   b. ηθ ἐπιστάτε ἐπ’ ἠλικίαν 5 ηθ (sic) ἄρπαγμα
γκεφεμακοδ οκκαπτιγογκα ὁν τοὐμαρτιγογκανθεσιον
ηθ ἐπιποδεῖτε //
εικδιμασακω //
   c. tecir-men-a-sō akkdirt-in-gou-ka on
hope-NEG-PRED-COMMinjustice-PL-PL-ACCand
sourt-in-gou-k-ende-eion
grasping-PL-PL-ACC-NEG-C
eik-ij-men-na-so
be.near-PLACT-NEG-IMPL.2/3PL-COMM
“Do not hope for injustices nor be eager for grasplings.” (Ps. 61:11)
Notes Absence of agreement on τεθησαν, but note its exceptional leftward movement to mimic Greek word order (or the object has been extraposed); extra plural on οκκάρτιγιοικά; complementizer (leftward movement) on σοφτύγχαδεσον, which seems superfluous because of previous ον, perhaps because of -εης; absence of negative particle μή, rendered as verbal morpheme -μη, not as vetitive; τεθηρ takes a direct object, whereas Greek ἐλπίζετε takes prepositional object with ἐπ' ; εἰκαθησαν is the main verb of the entire Ps. 61:11, with both τεθησαν and δοσει[ει]ησαν dependent on it.

(??) P.QI 1 2.1.7–10
a. πλούτος ἐὰν ρέη, μὴ προστίθεσθε καρδίαν.
b. πλούτος εἰς ρέη, μὴ προστίθεσθε καρδίαν //
   εἰ[ψ]ττι δοσικεκα δοσι[ει]ησαν //
c. εἰσίλκτ-ιν do-eiŋ-ik-e-lō aeil-ka
   ωθ-ιν-εν-α-σο enslave-NEG-PRED
   ωθ-ιν-εν-α-σο
   “In the streaming in of wealth, do not enslave the heart.” (Ps. 61:11)

Notes Both δεκα and δοσει[ει]ησαν (dependent on εἰκαθησαν in the previous line) are in their original position. δοσει[ει]ησαν cannot move leftward to mimic the Greek word order: the Greek subordinate clause πλούτος ἐὰν ρέη is here rendered by an adverbial phrase εἰ[ψ]ττι δοσικεκα.

(10) P.QI 1 2.1.16–20
a. ὅτι σὺ ἀποδώσεις ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ.
b. ὅτι σὺ ἀποδώσεις ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ //
   εἰ[δ] εν-εν en-en be-neut.2/3sg.gen
   τιτ-ιδ-ιτ cause-LOC1 recompense-PRED
   τιτ-ιδ-ιτ
c. εἰ[δ] τί τι τί τι θεϊ τιτ-ιδ-ιτ
   2sg be-NEUT.2/3sg.gen cause-LOC1 recompense-PRED
   τιτ-ιδ-ιτ/τιτ-ιδ-ιτ give-PLACT-INT-NEUT.DET each-ACC
   τιτ-ιδ-ιτ
   “Because it is you who will recompense each according to his deed.”
   (Ps. 61:13)

Notes Old Nubian has no complementizer ὅτι and usually drops pronominal subjects. Therefore the translators has instead used a cleft sentence construction εἰ[δ] ἐν-εν δογγρῳ “because it is you” (lit. “the cause of it being you”) with the rest of the verse rendered as an extraposed relative clause dependent on εἰ[δ] with the participial form θοδολα, which is the only way to preserve the Greek constituent order: the Greek prefix verb ἀπό-δώσεις is rendered by a multiverb construction ογεικα θοδολα, with the future tense of ἀπό-δώσεις matched with the intentional
The mood suffix -ⲡⲥ is obligatory on verbs of giving with plural objects; the order in the DP ἔργα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ is necessarily reversed: the Greek preposition κατὰ is rendered by the complex postposition ⲟⲧⲕⲓⲕⲁ < ⲟⲧⲕ “limit” + accusative -ⲡ, which takes genitive ⲟⲧⲕ; αὐτοῦ is rendered by тαϣⲡ, which, being a possessor, always precedes the noun.

(11) P.QI 2 12.i.2–7  ⚫
   a. μὴ ἀποστρέψῃς τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐκκλίνῃς ἐν ὀργῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ δούλου σου.
   b. μὴ μηδεπρέσῃς τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἐν ὀργῇ καὶ μὴ ἐκκλίνῃς ἐν ὀργῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ δούλου σου.
   c. eir-in 2sg-gen 2sg-gipīrt-r-a 1sg-loc1 turn turn-tr-pred
      men-e-sō on 1sg-loc1-gi-turn
      neg-imp.2/3sg.pred-comm and Lord-pred 1sg-dir
      kend-emin-e-sō 1sg-dir-away(?)-NEG-imp.2/3sg.pred-comm anger-after 2sg-gen
      medjou-lo-dō servant-loc1-loc2

   “Do not turn your face away from me and, Lord, don’t turn away from me out of anger for your servant.” (Ps. 26:9)

Notes The Greek preposition ἀπ’/ἀπὸ has been translated differently, first with ἀ-ω, then with ἡλδόγυ-λο-ἀω; the prefix verb ἀποστρέψῃς is translated with a multiverb construction ἦλε γιπίρτα ἡνεκα; the scribe clearly had a problem with ἐν ὀργῇ ἀπὸ τοῦ δούλου σου and seems to have interpreted ἀπὸ τοῦ δούλου σου as dependent on ἐν ὀργῇ rather than as the prepositional object of ἐκκλίνῃς, hence the additional pronominal clitic in the Greek me, which matches Old Nubian Ⲟⲉⲕⲗ, perhaps a reflex of the double occurrence of the same clitic με in the following line.

(12) P.QI 2 12.i.7–12  ⚫
   a. βοηθῶς μου γενοῦ, μὴ ἀποσκορακίςῃς με καὶ μὴ ἐγκαταλίπῃς με, ὁ Θεός, ὁ σωτήρ μου.
   b. bohjōc 1sg-gen 1sg-gi-turn 1sg-gen-è-turn 1sg-gen-è-turn
      ANON 1sg-gen 1sg-gen NEG-imp.2/3sg.pred-comm and 1sg-gen
      toj-ka strike-acc 1sg-gen-è-turn
      on 1sg-gen
      ANON 1sg-gen-è-turn
      blow-acc strike-NEG-imp.2/3sg.pred-comm and 1sg-acc

   “Do not turn your face away from me and, Lord, don’t turn away from me out of anger for your servant.” (Ps. 26:9)
“Become my helper; do not strike a blow on me and do not abandon me, God, my savior.” (Ps. 26:9)

Notes
The inverse order of possessed and possessor as in τῷ θεῷ μου δεῖ ταύτα μου only occurs in literary texts and here clearly mimics the Greek order ὁ Θεός, ὁ σωτήρ μου; the final nominatives ὁ Θεός, ὁ σωτήρ μου are rendered by the vocatives (predicatives) τάλα σε μητέρα.

(2) P.QI 2 12.i.12–16 ●

a. ὅτι ὁ πατήρ μου καὶ ἡ μήτηρ μου ἐγκατέλειπον με, ὁ δὲ Κύριος προσέλαβέτο με.

b. ὅτι ὁ πατήρ μου καὶ ἡ μήτηρ μου ἐγκατέλειπον με, ὁ δὲ Κύριος προσέλαβέτο με.

“When my father and my mother left me, the Lord took me up.” (Ps. 26:10)

Notes
The verb ἐγκατέλειπον is here rendered with the multiverb construction σολα τοκογιαν in contrast with the previous verse; the focus marker on τοκογιαν could be a reflex of Greek particle δὲ; we find here another strategy for translating a ὅτι-clause, namely with a subordinate verb τοκογιαν.

(7) P.QI 2 12.i.16–20 ●

a. νομοθέτησον με, Κύριε, ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ σου καὶ ὁδήγησον με ἐν τῷ ὄρῳ ἐνδοτῇ.

b. ἐν τῇ ὁδῇ σου ἐνδοτῇ.

“When my father and my mother left me, the Lord took me up.” (Ps. 26:10)
“Instruct me Lord, in your path, and lead me in the path of justice.”
(Ps. 26:11)

Notes The inverted verb-object order in both clause matches the Greek order, as in (8); possessor inversion with τάποι ὑδώρωσιν.

(13) P.QI 12.i.20–24 ●
a. ἐνέκα τῶν ἐχθρῶν μου. μὴ παραδός μὲ εἰς ψυχὰς θλίβοντων με,
b. εἰς τῶν εχθρῶν ἴσω μὴ παραδός μὲ εἰς μασίας
 αὐς οὐκκαλεῖσθαι δογματικά διὰ ἁλκᾶ
 οἶλαιων μὲ //
 κατὰ ἀλληγορίαν ὁμηρίαν ὑδώρωσιν ἄλκα //
c. an ouk-και-γούν jour-rō an ael-κα
1SG GEN oppress-NMLZ PL-GEN cause-LOC1 1SG GEN heart-ACC
mat-a add-il-gou-ka doumn-a
affliction-PRED prepare-NEUT DET PL ACC hand over-PRED
tīj-j-imin-e-sō ai-ka
give 2 3 PL ACT NEG IMP 2 3 SG PRED COMM 1 SG ACC
“Because of my enemies do not hand me over to those who prepare affliction for my heart.” (Ps. 26:11–12)

Notes The scribe took the latter part of verse 26:11 to be part of the beginning of 26:12; rather than interpreting θλίβοντων as a plural genitive dependent on ψυχὰς “the desire of them that afflict me,” the scribe has taken it to be the as the recipient of the verb παραδός; at the same time, εἰς ψυχὰς is reinterpreted as the object of θλίβοντων; the prefix verb παραδός is translated with the multiverb construction ὁμηρίαν ὑδώρωσιν.

(14) P.QI 12.i.24–29 ●
a. ὅτι ἔπανεντιράν μοι μάρτυρες ζώικοι, καὶ ἐθεύσατο ἡ ἀδικία ἑαυτῇ;
b. ὅτι ἔπανεντιράν μοι μάρτυρες ἀδικοὶ
διὸ ἔπανεντιράν μοι μάρτυρες ζώικοι
καὶ ἐθεύσατο ἡ ἀδικία ἑαυτῇ //
καὶ ἔθανεν δογματίκον ματαρ ὁκκαρτόγονα
ζ ἐθεύσατο ἡ ἀδικία ἑαυτῇ //
καὶ ἔθανεν δογματίκον ματαρ ὁκκαρτόγονα
καὶ ἔθανεν δογματίκον τελεικούν τούχο"

Notes The scribe took the latter part of verse 26:11 to be part of the beginning of 26:12; rather than interpreting θλίβοντων as a plural genitive dependent on ψυχὰς “the desire of them that afflict me,” the scribe has taken it to be the as the recipient of the verb παραδός; at the same time, εἰς ψυχὰς is reinterpreted as the object of θλίβοντων; the prefix verb παραδός is translated with the multiverb construction ὁμηρίαν ὑδώρωσιν.

“Because of my enemies do not hand me over to those who prepare affliction for my heart.” (Ps. 26:11–12)
Notes The scribe seems to have trouble parsing the Greek verb-initial word order, translating both ὅτι ἐπενέστηκαν μοι and ἐφέστησα with a causal clause ending in ὅραμα; assuming a parallelism, the scribe misinterpreted ἡ ἀδικία as referring back to μάρτυρες ἄδικοι instead of being the abstract noun “injustice”; because plural marking on Old Nubian nouns is not obligatory, we find ὁκκαρτίκιον with the plural reflexive τελκάκιον.

(15) P.QI 2 12.i.29–ii.1

a. pisteύω τοῦ ἰδείν τά ἄγαλμα Κυρίου ἐν γῇ ζωτον. ὑπόμεινον τὸν Κύριον
b. πιστεύω τοῦ ἰδείν τά ἄγαλμα ΚΥ ἐν θ ζωτον 5 πιστεύω ἔρρησα ἐκκάκα [ὅ] ἢ ἐπτήτουγος ἤψεα ούκ ἐκτά [ὅ] ἐπομενον τὸν ΚΙ //
εἴφθεκα εὐακα //
c. pisteue-imme ηα-j-ad-er-i-ka ηοδ-in believe-AFF.1SG.PRED see-PLACT-INT-NEUT-1SG-ACC Lord-GEN

“I believe that I will see the wealth of the Lord in the land of the living, and in suffering for the Lord.” (Ps. 26:13–14)

Notes ηπόμεινον was misread as εὐπομενον (cf. (16) ηπομενον), leading to the translation εἴφθεκα: the use of the affirmative πιστεύω is another strategy to create a verb-initial clause in Old Nubian; the non-finite genitive complement τοῦ ἰδείν is rendered with the finite accusative complement ἔρρησα; again the division of the verses differs from the Septuagint.

(16) P.QI 2 12.ii.1–4

a. ἀνδρίζω, καὶ κραταιούσῳ ἡ καρδία σου, καὶ ὑπόμεινον τὸν Κύριον.
b. ἀνδρίζω 5 κραταιούσῳ ἡ καρδία σου 5 ἑπομενον ὁδόταρα ἐν<ε>ν τογιλεα εἰρή δεκλα δεκεκων το[ί][i] ΚΙ //
εὐακα //
c. ogj-aŋ-r-a enen toull-in-a cīr-in man-INCH-NEUT-PRED be-NEUT.2/3SG strong-PRED 2SG-GEN
aen-il aek-es-ō ηοδ-ka heart-DAT be.patient-IMP.2/3SG.PRED-COMM Lord-ACC

“When becoming a man, become strong in your heart and abide in the Lord.” (Ps. 26:14)

Notes The scribe translates both καρδία and (13) ψυχής with δεκ “heart”; the translation of ἀνδρίζω with the subordinate clause ὁδόταρα ἐν<ε>ν (with haplography) seems to suggest that the scribe did not recognize it as imperative; ἡ καρδία σου is not rendered as the subject of κραταιούσῳ but as a dative εἰρή
Delex: krattoʊsítho is not translated as a separate imperative but as a non-finite verb marked with a sole predicative -α, signaling it takes the inflection of δελεα, which also explains the absence of the conjunction ον.

(17) P.QI 2 12.ii.5–8 ●
   a. ὁ κατοίκων ἐν βοηθείᾳ τοῦ ῾Υιώστου, ἐν σκέπῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κύλισθεται.
   b. ὁ κατοίκων ἐν βοηθείᾳ τοῦ γῆς τοῦ ὦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ δολούλα λαμψει τηγερρα λαμψει ταύται ἄρει
   ᾧ παθεῖσται //
   ἐγογγεῖλον //
   c. δόδου-λῶ dou-n tēaker-ra dou-l harm-in high(est)-LOC1 exist-NEUT.GEN help-DAT heaven-GEN God-GEN
till-in ηου-ra ηου-ar-r-α-λῶ
shade-DAT rest-INT-NEUT-PRED-FOC
   “The one who dwells in the help of the one who is highest will rest in the shade of the God of heaven.” (Ps. 90:1)

Notes A typical opening sentence, ending in a focus marker -ⲱ; the two large DPs ὁ κατοίκων ἐν βοηθείᾳ τοῦ ῾Υιώστου and ἐν σκέπῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ are rendered in reverse order in Old Nubian, according to the regular structure of the Old Nubian DP; the final verb ἐγογγεῖλον is not marked for agreement because the subject is explicit; again the usage of complementizer -ⲱ allows close imitation of Greek constituent order.

(9) P.QI 2 12.ii.8–12 ●
   a. ἔρει τῷ Κυρίῳ ἄντιλήπτερον μου εἶ καὶ καταφηγῆ μου,
   b. ἔρει τῷ κῷ αὐτοῦ εἶ ᾧ καταφηγή
   πεκλαύσθε εὐδακα ἀν ταμαννάμα ὁ αὐτῷ
   μοι //
   ηαμίτ. . ηαμί //
   c. pes-ad-imme ηοδ-κα an tamann-a-ma on say-INT-AFF.1SG.PRED Lord-ACC 1SG.GEN helper-PRED-AFF and an mant...d-a-mi-a
1SG.GEN refuge(?) -PRED-AFF-QUOT
   “I will say to the Lord: ‘You are my helper, you are my refuge(?).’” (Ps. 90:2)

Notes ταμαννάμα translates ἄντιλήπτερον, cf. ταμαλάμα in (2); the affirmative (or copulative) suffix -η(α) is often found in elocutionary contexts, but here seems to be part of a discursive structure ending with the ηαμί-marked clause in the next line; the final quotation marker appears to indicate that the scribe considers ηαμί. . ηαμί the end of the quote.

(18) P.QI 2 12.ii.12–15 ●
   a. ὁ Θεός μου, καὶ ἐλπίῳ ἐπ’ αὐτόν,
b. ὁ Ὁ上帝 你 五 你 //
    天主 他 你 //
    阿门 //

c. 亦 a-na on tēukder-t-a an-na-sin
    God-PRED 1SG-GEN and help-NMLZ-PRED 1SG-GEN-EMP
    tad-dō-lo teeil doud-d-r-e
    3SG-LOC2-FOC hope exist-INT-NEUT-1SG-PRED
    “My God and my helper, I will hope in him.” (Ps. 90:2)

Notes  Again it seems that the scribe has difficulties interpreting the Greek syntactic structure while attempting the follow the Greek constituent order. The result is a leftward moving constituent ⲧⲗ̄ⲗⲁ ⲁⲛⲛⲁ ⲧⲏⲩⲕⲇⲉ̣ⲣ̣ⲧⲁ ⲁⲛⲛⲁⲥⲛ̄ marked by the emphasis marker -ⲛ̄ leaving the anaphor ⲧⲁⲇⲇⲱⲗⲟ̣ behind (no extraction from PPs is possible in Old Nubian). Focus marker -ⲛⲟ indicates that we are dealing here with the final element in the series started in the previous line: ⲧⲁⲙⲁⲛⲁⲙⲁ … ⲧⲁⲇⲇⲱⲗⲟ̣.  

(19)  P.QI 2 12.ii.15–17 ○
    a. ὅτι αὐτὸς ρύσεται σε ἕκ παγίδος ὑφευρτόν
    b. ὅτι αὐτος  ὑφευρτῷ //
        ἐκ παγίδος ὑφευρτόν //
        ταδόγ //
    c. tadou ai-ka aul-os-ar-r-a-sin
        3SG 1SG-ACC save-ASP-INT-NEUT-PRED-EMP
        “(For) he will save me [from the snare of hunters].” (Ps. 90:3)

Notes  We see here another usage of the emphatic marker -ⲟ, without a relative clause or leftward movement context, but seemingly translating the causal ὅτι; agreement on the verb is absent because the subject ταδόγ is explicit.

(20)  P.QI 2 12.ii.17–22 ○
    a. καὶ ἀπὸ λόγου ταραχόδους. ἐν ταῖς μεταφρένεις αὐτοῦ ἐπισκάστει σοι,
    b. ἐκ τοῦ μεταφρήνεις ἁγίοις
        σαλ πανηγυρίζων τῷ ἄγαν τῷ ταγνῷ
        επιμελεῖσαι coi //
        ἔγγρακα . . . ἀραμι ἡμᾶς //
    c. sal pann-et-in-no-eion tar-in aura-n tri-l
        word trouble-NMLZ-GEN-LOC1-C 3SG-GEN wing-GEN couple-DET
        tau-o-lō your-ka . . . . d-r-a-lē . . . . 2SG-ACC
        under-LOC1-FOC shade-ACC . . . INT-NEUT-PRED-AFF.2SG 2SG-ACC
        “And from the word of disturbance, under his wings he will shade you.” (Ps. 90:3–4)
Notes  Possessor inversion with καὶ παρακείμενοι; translation of initial καὶ not with οὖ, but with complementizer -ειον, indicating that the scribe considered καὶ ἀπὸ λόγου ταχαγχὸν the first constituent of the new clause while keeping Greek word order; άραμ τρξ is a dual as often found with body parts, the Greek has μεταφράσσως “shoulders,” and ταρι άραμ τρξ may be a reflection from the same constituent in the next sentence, or perhaps “wing” and “shoulder” are the same word in ON; the prefix verb ἐπισκάσσει has been translated with object + unknown verb εὐγερνα . . . . δραλο; Browne reconstructs both ταχαγχο and the verb . . . . δραλο with a focus marker, which however can only appears once in a clause. Considering the appearance of second person singular affirmative -λη in the next sentence, . . . . δραλη, and the presence of complementizer -ειον, -λη is a better and more grammatical reconstruction.

(3)  P.QI 2 12.ii.22–24
a. καὶ ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἐλπιζει //
b. Ταρι-αραι τρξ ταχαγχο-ειον τεειλ δοωαλαλο //
c. ταρι-αιν αυρα-ν τρι-λ ταυ-ο-ειον τεειλ 3SG-GEN wing-GEN couple-DET under-LOC1-FOC-C hope
douω-δ-α-λε exist-INT-NEUT-PRED-AFF.2SG
tiωρακοντ “And under his wings you shall feel hope.” (Ps. 90:4)

Notes  Consistent translation of ἐλπιζει, cf. (18); as in (20), clause-initial καὶ appears to have been translated with the complementizer -ειον, and similarly we find an affirmative form in -λη.

(21)  P.QI 2 12.ii.24–27
a. ὁπλῳ κυκλώσαι se ἡ ἀλήιεα αὐτοῦ. //
b. οπλῳ κυκλώσαι se ἡ ἀλήιεα αὐτοῦ //
c. ταρι-αραι τος-κανε-λ-ας έδ-κα //
ed-κα 2sg.acc be.near-INT-NEUT-PRED-EMP
c. ταρι-αραι τος-κανε-λ-ας 3SG-GEN justice-NMLZ-DET-EMP shield-INCH-PRED 2SG.ACC
eik-αδ-α-σιν be.near-INT-NEUT-PRED-EMP
tiωρακοντ “(F or) his justice shall be near you, becoming a shield.” (Ps. 90:4)

Notes  As in (19) we find the emphatic marker -οι, again used in a causal context. As is clear from the constituent order in the ON translation, the scribe had difficulties imitating the Greek order while at the same time using -οι; the Greek ἀληθεα has been translated with a word otherwise used for “justice,” τοκανε. There is a well-attested ON word for “truth,” άλε, so perhaps this reflects an error in the Greek Vorlage.

(22)  P.QI 2 12.ii.27–30
a. οῦ φανηθηση ἀπὸ φάβου νυκτερινοῦ, ἀπὸ βέλους πετομένου ἡμέρας,
b. 

“... You shall not fear because of the fear of the night and of the arrow(?) [that flies] by day." (Ps. 90:5)

Notes: The ON translation of the verse is incomplete; the affirmative on 

appearance as a strategy to have a verb-initial clause, in imitation of the Greek constituent order.

(23) P.QI 2 13.ii.3–5 ⋆

Notes: Greek oἱ ἡμέλειαι is translated with a singular in ON; both DPs 

c̣ι̣π̣τ̣ο̣υ̣ όρ̣ι̣ο̣ν̣ and εἰ̣ν̣ ὀ̣ρ̣ι̣ο̣ν̣ show inversion in order to imitate Greek word 

order; whereas Greek has dropped the copula, it is explicit in ON.

(24) P.QI 2 13.ii.6–10 ⋆

Notes: Usage of affirmative for verb-initial order; whereas Greek usually does not inflect Hebrew names, in ON we find a regular genitive on יִֽקְּאוֹב and בֵּיתֶיהָ; the scribe has used the less frequent universal quantifier דַּמָּא rather than לְכוּנִּים.
(4) P.QI 2 13.ii.10–13 ●
  a. ἀδεδοξασμένα ἐξάληθη Θεῷ ἀπὸ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ.
  b. ἀδεδοξασμένα ἐξάληθη Θεῷ ἀπὸ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ //
  c. οὐκ ἔστιν ἐξάληθα πεποιημένα εἰρήνης χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ //
  
  "Glorious things we said because of you, city of God." (Ps. 86:3)

Notes Possessor inversion with Δῆμος τῶν; passive Greek ἐξάληθη translated with passive ON πεποιημένα.

(5) P.QI 2 13.ii.13–17 ●
  a. ἔλασσα ἐλαήμα τοῦ σοῦ πόλεως τοῦ Θεοῦ.
  b. ἔλασσα ἐλαήμα τοῦ σοῦ πόλεως τοῦ Θεοῦ //
  c. οὐκ ἔστιν ἐξάληθα πεποιημένα εἰρήνης χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ //
  
  "Raab and Babylon shall be mentioned (by me) to those who have known me." (Ps. 86:4)

Notes After the passive aorist in -θη in the last verse, the scribe has trouble parsing the future medium form μνησθήσωμεν with the same morpheme. He renders -θη again with the passive -τάκ but with a first person affirmative (verb-initial inflection) that in ON makes no sense together with ἔλασσα πεποιημένα, which, judging from the absence of the genitive on Βαβυλῶνος that we find in the Greek, was clearly intended to be the grammatical subject of ἐπειδή, because ἐπειδή is a participial form, the object άκ cannot follow the verb in order to imitate Greek word order.

(6) P.QI 2 13.ii.17–22 ●
  a. καὶ ἔνως ἀλλόφθοι καὶ Τύρος καὶ Ἰακώβ καὶ Ἰακώβ τῶν Λαδήπων, ὡστε ἐγεννήθησαν ἐκεῖ.
  b. ἐκείνη ἀλλάθανεν *τῷ γαῖ ἀλλάθανεν τῷ γαῖ //
  c. ἔστιν ἀλλάθανεν τῷ γαῖ ἀλλάθανεн τῷ γαῖ //
  
  "Kings of the earth have become; the old have passed away." (Ps. 79:11)
c. cissin allophulos-gou-l-de turos-gou-l-de oudm-in
INTERJ gentile-PL-DET-CONJ Tyrian-PL-DET-CONJ dark-GEN
kipt-ougou-l-deke-l einēn-gou-l
people-PL-DET-CONJ-DET DEM.PROX.PL-PL-DET
man-no-lō kír-ay-is-an-a
DEM.DIST-LOC1-FOC come-INCH-PT2-3PL-PRED
“Lo, the gentiles and the Tyrians and the peoples of darkness – these
got into being (lit. coming) there.” (Ps. 86:4)

Notes It is interesting that λαὸς τῶν Αἰγύπτων, which is known to refer to all
black peoples living south of the Egyptians,¹⁵ that is, including the Nubians,
is literally translated with οὐλαμίν κτητογογ{γογ}λαέκα “peoples of darkness”
and not with any endonym, perhaps the scribe didn’t understand the Bible was
speaking about him?; the passive aorist ἐγενήσαν is here not translated with a
passive -τακ but with inchoative -ας, which often carries a passive connotation.

(25) P.QI 2 13.ii.23–29
a. μήτρη Σιών, ἐρεῖ ἁνηρωπός, καὶ ἁνηρωπός ἐγενήθη ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐθεμελίωσεν αὐτήν ὁ Τριάδος.
b. ηὕρει αὐτήν ἁνηρωπός ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ ἐγενήθη ἐν αὐτῇ ἡ σιγή
ἐπίλλος σιγῆκα εἰς τὴν καλλιάνα ὁ Ἐσφαλλω τὰ βασιλεῖα
ἐν τῇ ἔρει Ἰςιὼν ἐν τῇ σιγή ἐν τῇ καλλιάνα //
ΔΟΥΛΑΛΕΑΡΑ ΤΑΔ ΔΙΩΛΗΜΗΝ ΤΑΡΗ

Notes The usage of the complex postposition τακοίκα which is often used
for the agent of passive verbs (“by”), suggests the scribe’s interpretation of ἐν
αὐτῇ as the agent of ἐγενήθη rather than the place; the scribe has difficulties
rendering the non-definite ἁνηρωπός and twice uses a determiner; the Greek
constituent order of the last sentence is impossible to imitate, as Old Nubian
allows no broken subject constituents; ἐπίλλος σιγῆκω in its entirety is the object
clause of καλλιάνα; the denominal verb ἐθεμελίωσεν is rendered with οἰκίσκα
τοικάρα; ἐγενήθη is rendered with ΔΟΥΛΑΛΕΑΡΑ, cf. ΚΙΡΥΞΕΛΛΑ in (6).

(26) P.QI 2 13.i.29–ii.5

¹⁵. Frank M. Snowden, Jr., Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience

23
Notes Usage of affirmative ἐν γραφῇ for high verb position; ἐν γραφῇ is a misinterpretation of τούτων as independent genitive, referring back to λαῶν rather than demonstrative with ἄρχοντων; the genitive marker comes completely at the end of the relative clause ending in ἄρχοντων. Browne’s interpretation as a direct quote is not sustained by the morphology and the fact that the next verse is already marked as the object of ὑπερηφανείᾳ.

(27) P.QI 13.ii.6–9 ●

Notes The scribe has interpreted this entire verse as the object of (26) ἐν γραφῇ, misunderstanding the function of ὡς; the genitive on λογισμῷ is ungrammatical and perhaps a scribal error.

(28) P.QI 13.ii.10–12 ●

Notes The Lord will say in the writing of the peoples and the rulers of these who are born there,” (Ps. 86:6)

“Lord, say in the writing of the peoples and the rulers of these who are born there,” (Ps. 86:6)

“The habitation of everyone who rejoices is through you. " (Ps. 86:7)

“All you nations, raise (your) hands. " (Ps. 46:2)

Notes  The universal quantifier καλλω only seems to appear in translations, and was perhaps specifically coined in order to imitate the Greek word order, as all other universal quantifiers are postnominal; the -κε on επισημογε is a special suffix only to address a multiple audience, and is here attached to a predicative (vocative) plural.

(29)  P.QI 2 13.ii.12–14  ●
   a. ἀλαλάξατε τῷ Θεῷ ἐν φωνῇ ἄγαλλιάσεως.
   b. ἀλαλάξατε τῷ ὑπὲρ ἁγιάλασιν //
        ἀγάλασιν τᾶλικα ἃ
        λαγάδοκαίινον //
   c. jau-a tr-an-sō till-ika il
        shout-PRED give.2/3-IMP.2/3PL-PRED-COMM God-ACC voice
        aiyaj-kane-n-lo
        exult-NMLZ-GEN-LOC1
        “Shout to God in a voice of exultation.” (Ps. 46:2)

Notes  possessor inversion with ἃ λαγάδοκαίινον; applicative construction ἀγάλασιν in order to add a recipient τᾶλικα.

(30)  P.QI 2 13.ii.15–18  ●
   a. ὅτι Κύριος ύψιστος, κρατερός, βασιλεύς μέγας ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν.
   b. ὅτι καὶ ὄφεις φωστής ὕπαπες ἐνεπέκ //
        γόλος ἀνδρόγυνος εὐταίρεις οὐροῦτα λαχωράλω
        εἰπὶ πατρὰ καὶ γῆν //
        ὀχύρω τὴν ἄλλακυ //
   c. θυγατέρα διδού-δου l euegan ourou-η-a
douou-r-a-lo //
        Lord high-DET fearsome king-INCH-PRED great-NEUT-PRED-FOC
        iskiti jimnil-lo-dō
        earth all-LOC1-LOC2
        “The high Lord, fearsome, is a great king over all the earth.” (Ps. 46:3)

Notes  The Old Nubian again closely follows Greek constituent order, and again the absence of a copula leads to problems in the translation. Whereas the Greek has two predicates, ON only has one: οὐροῦτα λαχωράλω, a multiverb construction in which the inchoative allows the noun οὐροῦ to be incorporated, again in order to imitate Greek constituent order.

(1)  P.QI 2 13.ii.18–23  ●
   a. ὕπετάξαθε λαόν ὑπὲρ καὶ ἑτὸν ὑπὸ τοὺς πόλεις ἡμῶν
   b. ὕπεταξαθε λαοὺς ἑως ἃ ἐβαθ
        λαξαπαρακάις κίντομογεκ οὐγάλια οὐ ἐπιφογοκοῖ
        ὑπὸ τοὺς πόλεις ἑως ἑως //
        οὐν ὅτε τρυ̂ τογύ //

25
c. *ak-oup-ar-ra-sin*  
*kipt-ougou-ka*  
*ou-gille*  
sit-overthrow-TR-NEUT-PRED-EMP people-PL-ACC 1PL.EXCL-DIR  
on *sipp-igou-k-on*  
oo-*n*  
*oe-n*  
*tr-il*  
and nation-PL-ACC-C 1PL.EXCL-GEN foot-GEN pair-DET  
tau-*ō*  
belly-LOC1  
“He overturned peoples for us and nations too under our feet.” (Ps. 46:4)

**Notes**  
1pl exclusive pronouns *ⲟⲩⲅⲗ̄ⲉ* and *ⲟⲩⲛ* chosen for translation of ἡμῖν and ἡμῶν; co-presence of complementizer -ⲓⲟⲛ on *κⲡ̄ⲧⲟⲩⲅⲟⲩⲕⲁ* and emphatic particle on *ⲁⲕⲟϩⲁⲱⲣⲁⲥⲛ̄*, facilitating movement necessary to imitate Greek word order; dual on *ⲟ̄ⲉⲛ ⲧⲣⲗ̄*.

(31)  
P.QI 2 13.ii.23–25  
a. *ἐξελέξατο ἡμῖν τὴν χληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ,*  
b. *ἐξελέξατο ὁ ὁ̄ τὴν κληρονομίαν ἐκείνην //*  
γασσαρακί*  
*ⲟⲩⲕⲁ*  
tālā takī ṣewgārā //  
c. *ŋas-j-ar-a-sin*  
*ou-ka*  
till-il tar-in  
choose-PLACT-P1-PRED-EMP 1PL.EXCL-ACC God-DET 3SG-GEN  
seu-ae gar-a  
inheī-NMLZ-PL-CAUS-PRED  
“God chose for us, making (us) his heirs,” (Ps. 46:5)

**Notes**  
Absence of Greek word corresponding to *ⲟⲩⲕⲁ*; Browne translates *ⲟⲩⲕⲁ* as the direct object of *ⲥⲛ̄*, which however is clearly marked in the next verse; leftward movement of the verb with - cô̄n.

(32)  
P.QI 2 13.ii.25–28  
a. *τὴν καλλονῆν Ἰακὸβ, ἣν ἠγάπησεν.*  
b. *τ’elle καλὴν ἦν ἵκων, ἦν ἀγάπησε* //  
*ἵκων* γασσαρακί  
*ⲟⲩ巴菲特*  
c. *jakob-in*  
gajjour ēn ous-s-in-dekel-ka  
Jakob-GEN beauty REL love-PT2-2/3SG-C-ACC  
“the beauty of Jacob, which he also loved.” (Ps. 46:5)

**Notes**  
Note the artificial homography between Greek ἣν and ON ḫn; the entire clause is object of (31) *γασσαρακί*; there seems to be no Greek parallel for the -ΔΕΚΕΛ; *καλὴν* ἦν for καλλονῆν may be a scribal error, or an error already in the Vorlage.

(33)  
P.QI 2 13.ii.28–30  
a. *ἀνεβή ὁ Θεός ἐν ἀλαχμῷ, Κύριος ἐν φωνῇ σάλπηγγος.*  
b. *ἄνεβη ὁ ὁ̄ ἐν ἀλαχμῷ ἦν ἐν φωνῇ σάλπηγγος //*  
*καλὰ*  
*ὀλὰ*  
“God rose up in anger, the Lord in a voice of thunder.” (Ps. 46:6)
“God went up in a shout, and the Lord ...” (Ps. 46:6)

Notes Constituent order follows Greek, even though unnaturally, with υἱῶν preceding the subject τὰς without any morphology that seems to allow it to do so. Perhaps to be compared with the imperatives which also seem able to move up if not blocked on the left edge.

References


