

**THE SEMIOTICS OF DIASPORA:
LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND COPTIC ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY
IN BERLIN, GERMANY**

by

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Dedication

To my parents, my husband and my sons

--- with love.

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Preface

Research Background

My personal connection to Germany is long-standing and enduring. I first visited Germany in 1983 and my first extended visit was to Hanover for six weeks in 1998. Before beginning my fieldwork in 2006, I made several long trips to Germany for language study, career development and fieldwork. In 2000, I spent three months learning German at the Goethe Institute in Bonn and it was during this summer that I took my first weekend-long trip to Berlin. In 2001, I returned to Germany for four more months of intensive German study at the Goethe Institute in Dresden. At this time I developed an interest in (East) Germany as well as the theoretical questions of time and narrative in this country. In 2002, I moved to Berlin for six months before beginning my doctoral program in Anthropology at the University of Michigan. During this time I lived in Schöneberg and Charlottenberg, both Western residential districts of the city.

While identifying a dissertation topic, I made several more trips to Germany to solidify my contacts and explore my research interests there. I lived for three months in 2003 in Görlitz on the German-Polish border, exploring language contact on the borders of Europe, and cultivating an interest in the construction of Europe through the interplay of language and space that remains visible in this work. In 2005 I visited the Coptic monastery in Höxter for the first time for preliminary fieldwork and to discuss my work with Bishop Damian, the Coptic Orthodox Bishop for Germany. At this time I also met with the eminent

Coptologist Stephen Emmel. In Fall 2005, I returned to Dresden for four months while preparing to begin my dissertation fieldwork. These preliminary trips, especially as they spanned cities in the East(ern) and West(ern) areas of the country, provided me with a deep comparative basis for my study of Berlin and the Coptic diaspora and prepared me well for the traveling that I did throughout my fieldwork.

I began learning German while I was pursuing my bachelor's degree in Religion at Reed College since it is a primary scholarly language for that discipline. It was also at Reed College that I spent two years learning Ancient Greek, the original language of the New Testament, and then started to study Coptic. Learning Coptic was a natural extension of learning Ancient Greek since they share so much lexicon and their scripts are closely connected. As discussed in the dissertation, Egypt and the desert fathers were formative for Ancient Christianity. As an undergraduate I not only studied the Coptic language, but also worked with an independent study group to translate an original Coptic manuscript from the Morgan Library in New York. This is when my interest in Coptic manuscript translation and textual ideologies began.

Once I developed my project with the Coptic Orthodox diaspora, I began to study the Arabic language. I studied Modern Standard Arabic for a year at the University of Michigan. I then followed up this study with an intensive summer course, also at the University of Michigan, in Levantine Arabic. Once in Germany I studied Modern Standard Arabic for one semester at the Technical University's Sprachbörse (literally, 'language market') and followed this course with a semester of Egyptian Arabic. As part of a research trip to Egypt, I took another intensive month-long course in Modern Standard Arabic coupled with an intensive course in Egyptian dialect. While improving my language skills, these courses were also activities of participant observation

that brought forth and improved my understanding of both implicit and explicit language ideologies surrounding Arabic.

Project Development

As I wrote my grant proposals, my interest was in Coptic texts and how they are read, talked about and engaged today. Given my own background, I was particularly interested in the interplay between the Coptic Orthodox community in Germany and Coptologists who study these texts professionally. Germany has a very large collection of Coptic texts and is a main center for Coptic scholarship. I hypothesized that the Coptic language, and ideologies arising from the dialogue between academic Coptologists and Copts in the diaspora, were forming a 'new' type of imagined community in the diaspora for Copts, not only a linguistic community but also a religious and national one.

This project changed in a variety of ways during the course of my fieldwork and then again during the writing stage. Although I did have many interactions with Coptology departments while I was in Germany, this wasn't where my focus remained. I found the interactions between Coptologists and the Coptic community were not as central to either party as they at first appeared. While I was wrestling with the language ideologies of the Copts and the Coptic Church, the scope of the project became too broad to give full attention to the university system. Coptologists appear in the dissertation, but more as a representation of German language ideologies than as immediate co-constructors of Coptic language ideologies, church and text. I think this is more true to the experience of Copts in the diaspora.

The original project engaged with Benedict Anderson's (1991) theories about the role of language in building the nation by exploring the possibility of a religious nation

being built by Copts in the diaspora. Ultimately I did not find the idea of a Coptic nation to be either useful theoretically or ethnographically substantiated through fieldwork. I engage with Anderson throughout the dissertation, but I now tend to side with Boyarin and Boyarin (2002) that the powers of diaspora are in their non-nation-like qualities. There is a tension here because of the sense in which the Coptic Orthodox Church is a national church and also a sense in which Copts see themselves as the true Egyptians.¹ However, I now think Jones' (2000) analysis of Copts' "long-distance nationalism" in Detroit, for example, reinforces a global cartography to which both religion (theoretically) and Copts (ethnographically) offer not only more subtlety, but also compelling alternatives. I do engage with Anderson (1991) directly in his assumptions about the dusk of "religious modes of thought" and communities built around sacred textual languages. My work is an important ethnographic example countering these assumptions and in the process some of the ways in which 'imagined community' is imagined theoretically. These topics will be discussed throughout the dissertation, but especially culminating in Chapter Six and its discussion of the Christian ecumene.

Although I have long been interested in diaspora, I now view this as part of a broader interest in the social construction of time and space, especially as it is built through language and narrative. Chapter Three developed from this realization and is now central in providing the groundwork for my argument about what the Coptic diaspora is and how it works. Ultimately, my focus on the social and linguistic construction of time and space was born out of the ethnographic surprises of my fieldwork. I did not anticipate that the ecumene would be such an important political and hierarchical presence for the (Coptic) church in Germany. Grappling with the definitions of ecumene, not just within Coptic Christianity but Christianity more broadly in

¹ As long as the nation continues to be the dominant paradigm for imaging our global space, communities will be struggling with the tension between diaspora, nation, transnation and (for religious communities) church.

Germany, in Europe and globally, required me to move beyond a focus on the nation. From Chapter Two to Chapter Six there is a gradual elaboration of a fundamental tension between exclusive and inclusive spaces. The city and the nation are important to this tension, but so too are the diaspora and the church.

During fieldwork, I developed a more complex picture of the language ideologies at work in this community. They are not as clear cut as they first appeared. In this work I provide a picture, even an explanation, of how a community could consider a language they do not speak as their native language (Coptic) and how they could dislike (but also use, teach, and proudly proclaim that others were learning) a language in which most members are fluent in one form or another (Arabic). I argue their ideas about both these languages converge to not only facilitate language shift, but to facilitate a view of that language shift into German as overwhelmingly positive.

I present this view of language shift through the community's engagement with various spaces (the city, the nation, the text, the church and the ecumene). In my view their understanding of language(s) is integrally connected to their understanding of space and what spaces they and others belong within and without. This is a temporal as well as a spatial construct. Although the process of language shift is not completed, we can see it enacted through a series of temporal projections of the linguistic future in the liturgical text and performance and in the performance of the ecumene. These are the intended spatial and temporal futures of the community. In Chapter Three I explore these issues through a discussion of the projected pasts and futures of Coptic spaces in Germany. In Chapters Four and Five these temporal and spatial projections are connected to code switching and language choice in the liturgy. Chapter Six then links these language choices with the construction of the ecumene as a future for Christianity.

Fieldwork and Methodology

My fieldwork consisted of ethnographic and linguistic research over the course of two years from January 2006 to May 2008. As my primary research method I employed the anthropological technique of participant-observation.² I expected that the method of participant-observation would provide rich data about patterns of speaking in the community. When observing members' linguistic practices I aimed to pay particular attention to identity labels, code-switching activities and indexical practices because these have proven important in the study of language ideology (Blom and Gumperz, 1972; Irvine, 1996; Woolard, 1998).

I recorded the liturgy in Berlin on regular church Sundays and on special occasions and feast days throughout the two years of my fieldwork. Regular services occur three times per month at the church, but at some times of the year leading up to major feasts, such as Easter services, take place daily. In addition to recording the liturgy in Berlin, I also recorded at the church in Hanover and the monastery in Höxter. I attended, and occasionally recorded, liturgical performances in other locations as well, including Hamburg, Wittenberg, and Stevenage, England. Recording the liturgy was part of my research design because it is a primary event where Coptic is used and transmitted and religious ritual is often a locus of ideologies (Bloch, 1977; Kuipers, 1990).

In addition to liturgical services at Coptic churches, I also recorded ecumenical church services, choir concerts, and talent shows involving Copts in Berlin and at youth conference venues such as the Coptic monastery in Vienna. The importance of these events developed during my fieldwork as I began to understand the pivotal place of the ecumene in the Coptic diaspora.

² It is an open question whether when studying a religious community of which one is not a member one can truly be a *participant* observer.

I also participated in and recorded an Egyptian Arabic course in Berlin, which was part of my original research design since language classes are also often revealing sites for meta-commentary on language and the development of language ideologies (Collins, 1996). In addition to the Egyptian Arabic class, which I was able to record, I also took a Modern Standard Arabic course at the Technical University in Berlin with the same Coptic instructor. In Cairo I attended another set of Egyptian and Modern Standard Arabic classes.

I recorded academic talks given at a Coptology conference in Wittenberg, as well as several talks given at the church in Berlin and at the monastery in Höxter. I originally planned these recordings because I believed the Coptic scholars provided an alternative group, in contrast to the Coptic clergy, of authoritative practitioners creating and influencing Coptic language ideology in Germany. However, during my fieldwork this part of my research became integral to understanding the dominant linguistic milieu and ideologies of German and German religion in which the Coptic diaspora was immersed. Other recorded events included monastery tours of the facilities and roundtable discussions during conferences.³

Any project of diaspora must be multi-sited (Marcus, 1995) and as originally conceived the three sites of my project were the church, the monastery and the university. I attended Coptic language classes and Egyptology courses at the university level. I participated in the Berlin Program seminar at the Freie Universität-Berlin during which other American scholars of Germany presented work on topics closely related to my own. I also attended events around Berlin that were relevant to (German perceptions of) Egypt, such as the Berlinale Film Festival and Berlin's Egyptology Museum.

³ Unfortunately, the untimely demise of several computers and back-up hard drives during fieldwork resulted in the loss of some of these important recordings before analysis. I describe them here because they have nevertheless impacted the work presented. My recordings of naturally occurring talk are also limited because of the concerns of my participants about the purpose of data collection and the demands of the IRB informed consent process.

Although I recorded many types of events, some of my richest sources of data were conversations that were not recorded except in my fieldnotes after the fact. As a few examples, I observed a Sunday school class of the Coptic Church in Hanover, went on a bus tour of notable sites in the Wittenberg area with Coptic scholars, and took a trip to München to meet Pope Shenouda, the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church at the time.

As part of my fieldwork I completed semi-structured interviews. Each interview was based around a set of open-ended questions. These interviews were a set of two, although they were often conducted concurrently. I completed life history and linguistic life history interviews with Copts, those working closely with the Coptic Church, and hopeful converts. These interviews asked questions ranging from the participant's birthplace and circumstances of being in diaspora (job, family, education etc.) to specific questions about what languages they spoke in which settings and what languages they felt were appropriate to the liturgy. This piece of the project was designed to compare and contrast the meta-commentary of linguistic interviews with the data on patterns of speaking from participant observation (Silverstein, 1981).

My recordings were made on several different recording devices including an Edirol R-1 with built-in microphone, Microtrack 24/96 with external microphone and an iRiver MP3 recorder as a back-up device. Transcriptions and translations in German were completed primarily by the researcher initially with proof-reading and consultation by one primary native-speaking consultant and other native and non-native speakers as appropriate. All of my interviews were conducted in German, with a few exceptions, as this was the language that I used with the community during my fieldwork. Translation from Arabic was assisted by three research assistants at academic institutions in the United States.

As outlined in *Research Background*, I made a preliminary research trip to Germany in March 2005 specifically for this project, during which time I obtained support for my research from the Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Germany and Professor Emmel of the Egyptology Department in Münster. My first eighteen months of fieldwork were funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, with an overlapping year supported by the Berlin Program for Advanced German and Eastern European Studies. It was The Berlin Program for Advanced German and Eastern European Studies' support which made possible a one month trip to Cairo in Egypt during my fieldwork, learning both Modern Standard and Egyptian Arabic, living in different parts of the city, and visiting other cities important for Coptic Church history such as Alexandria.

Over the course of two years I traveled to the monastery in Höxter for various events, ranging from book tours and choir concerts to academic presentations and youth conferences, and spent up to a week at a time in the monastery. I visited the church in Hanover approximately once per month for the period of at least a year as a supplement to my work with the community in Berlin. Some of my other travels are already mentioned above including trips to Munich to meet Pope Shenouda, Vienna for a Coptic youth conference, Wittenberg for a Coptology conference, Hamburg for a visit with another Coptic community, Munster to interact with the Egyptology department there and Stevenage (England) to gain additional insights into the Coptic Church in the wider European diaspora.

An Anthropologist at Home in Berlin and its Diasporas

After I had been attending the Coptic Church in Lichtenberg for over a year, I reached a point for the first time during the 4+ hour liturgy where I could not wait another minute to go to the bathroom. I left the small chapel at the back of the church where the services are held and

headed through the main church sanctuary and towards the kitchen and dining room where social events took place, but I realized I was not sure where the bathroom was or if there even was a bathroom in the church. I asked the only other person in the huge main sanctuary, who walked past me heading back to the chapel. He gave me directions: it was hidden behind a small door in a darkened area at the back entrance of the church. I never would have found it without asking. And then he said, “You’ve been coming here for over a year and you don’t know where the bathroom is?” His tone was almost accusatory.

As I begin my dissertation now, years later, this exchange comes to mind because it highlights an unusual aspect of the data, the everyday experiences, that I draw on for my dissertation and that I feel is vital for understanding the fieldsite and the diaspora with which I worked: I had been coming to church for a year and did not know where the bathroom was. In my portrayal of the Coptic diaspora in Berlin you will not find many bathrooms, living rooms, kitchens or bedrooms of Copts. This was a study that rarely took place in people’s homes. That is because I was very rarely invited into them, and when I might have had the opportunity to invite myself I did not push to do so.

When I first began my fieldwork, I was committed to finding a Coptic family with whom I could live, as I had outlined I would do in my grant proposal. But when it came time to start my fieldwork, I still did not have a host family. I finally accepted an apartment with an American Fulbright scholar. When someone at church asked me how my search for accommodation was going and I said I was living with an American he said confidently, “*That’s better, isn’t it? It’s better to live with someone from your own country.*” My own housing search clarified my understanding of the social spaces of Berlin, which I argue Copts share with the German majority. It also clarified how Copts use this understanding to define themselves as a diaspora

that is integrated into the majority (Chapter One). At the same time, I argue their definitions of home in Berlin's cityscape are connected to a trifold view of language, race/genealogy and religion as defining characteristics of home (Chapter Two).

In the end, the settings in which I knew Copts and in which they knew me were institutional ones, such as the church and the university system I had set out to study. It is these settings that will be reflected in this dissertation, but also reflected in these limits will be the conditions of possibility for building a home in Berlin and its diasporas as understood by Copts. This is a feature of my fieldsite and the communities with whom I worked, and the ones I was perceived *by them* to be a part of, not only in Berlin but in the ecumene as well.

The idea that Christianity is heritable and overlapping with racial, linguistic and spatial categories, which I will discuss in Chapter Two, also had many consequences for me as a fieldworker, one of which was that despite not being a practicing Christian, nor even having been baptized Christian, I was nevertheless accepted as Christian. I would argue this acceptance was based on the fact that my parents are British and were raised in the Church of England combined with my phenotypic whiteness and linguistic features like my name. I was *heritably* Christian even if I did not practice any form of Christianity myself. As one Coptic woman who interviewed me to possibly share her apartment said, after asking me about my religious background, "*The most important thing is that you're not Muslim.*" (Hauptsache, du bist kein Muslim.)

My not being in Coptic homes indexes important understandings of relatedness and belonging in the Coptic diaspora and in Germany. In Chapter One I will lay out some of these insights through an exploration of discourses on space in Berlin. It will be both an introduction to my fieldsite and to the conditions of my fieldwork and is the opening segment for addressing

issues integral to diaspora, which will be explored throughout the dissertation. The genealogies of diaspora will be explored further in Chapter Two. They have implications for the argument as a whole, culminating in understandings of the ecumene in Chapter Six.

• ***The example of Prenzlauer Berg***

Part of what attracted me to Berlin the first time I moved there in 2002 is the way in which Berlin's spaces have an abundance of meaning as a consequence of the converging and conflicting imagined pasts and futures of the city's contested landscape (Ladd, 1997). In 2002, Prenzlauer Berg with its unrenovated (in German, unsanitized) low rent apartments and hip Kastaniallee filled with bars and restaurants was the popular place to live if you were a student in the city. By 2005 when I began my fieldwork, the gentrification of the neighboring Hackescher Markt had begun to spread to Prenzlauer Berg next door. The population of Prenzlauer Berg was also aging and consisted more and more of young professionals and young families. As one friend put it, "I'm afraid if I move to Prenzlauer Berg I'll get pregnant." The perceived concentration of young mothers in that area of the city was very high.⁴ A new hip student area with low rents had begun to develop in Friedrichshain, which in 2002 was on the margins of the discourse of "dangerous places" in Berlin's landscape (see Chapter One).

Copts, Germans and British I worked with in Berlin all saw Prenzlauer Berg as a district of Berlin that made sense as the living space of young professionals and students. I lived in the Prenzlauer Berg district of Berlin as a British-American in four different living arrangements with Germans, British and Americans. One of my nearby neighbors was a German woman I met

⁴ Susseback in an article for *Die Zeit* drew attention to the discord between this discourse and the statistical evidence. "*Prenzlauer Berg is obviously not what it is always celebrated to be – also not when it comes to the much celebrated treasure of children. Per 1,000 women in the age between 15 and 45 only 35 children are born each year... That the impression on the streets and playgrounds is different comes from the fact that almost exclusively young people live here. Even though they have relatively speaking few children, there are enough of them to change the appearance of this quarter*" (2007:4).

on my first day at the Coptic Orthodox Church. At the time she was preparing to make a television film clip on the Coptic Orthodox Christmas celebration. She had just finished her dissertation on Copts in Egypt and was now an aspiring young professional. For these roles she had correctly placed herself in Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg district. Similarly, I once rode home from church with a young Copt who worked at a photography shop in the area. He was engaged as a photographer at church events, and had a serious German girlfriend. As a young aspiring student he demonstrated an intricate knowledge of Berlin's spatial norms by living in Prenzlauer Berg. We all met, or aspired to meet, the agreed upon criteria for living in Prenzlauer Berg: young cosmopolitan and international students who were upwardly mobile and living a single lifestyle.

Prenzlauer Berg made sense of me for the Copts and Germans with whom I worked. In Chapter, I suggest a few of the ways in which Copts demonstrated their understanding of and participation in the social constructions of space also engaged by the non-Coptic majority in Berlin. These discourses on space were created and perpetuated on a personal, corporate and state level. I argue Copts negotiate the understandings of social space that these discourses provide to construct themselves as a diaspora.

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A Note on Transcription and Translation

The German transcriptions of interviews and conversations were created by the anthropologist, or in some cases an initial transcription was created by Robert Hein and then reviewed and modified by the anthropologist. All translations are by the anthropologist. Robert Hein and other German speakers, including interviewees themselves, were consulted on matters of translation into English. The transcripts have attempted to represent the flow of spontaneous conversation while maintaining readability.

The transcriptions and translations of the liturgy were created by the anthropologist in consultation with texts of the liturgy produced by others in Arabic, German, Coptic and English including Moftah (1998), Melika and Abdel-Massih (1978), Mekhail (2006), St Mina Kirche (2001), and Diözese für Österreich und den deutschsprachigen Teil der Schweiz (2003). I chose to provide transcriptions in the original scripts in order to better represent the code-switching under analysis, and in keeping with my own and my interlocutors' language ideologies. When possible I have chosen to maintain clearer connections to scriptural referents in my translations of the liturgy, rather than opt for a more literal translation of the terms.

I am indebted to Heather Sweetser and Abdullah Siraj for their transcription and translation of the segment of sermon in Arabic, which appears in Figure 5.7, as well as their comments on the performance. They provided valuable insights and corrections of my own Arabic transcriptions and translations in Chapter Five as well.

Whenever possible the translations have been provided in the scripts of the languages used and with standard orthographic conventions. The Coptic font used is Antinoou, a font

designed in cooperation with Coptologists in Germany at the time of my fieldwork. Within the text, quotations originally in German have been written in italics, quotations originally in Arabic have been bolded, and quotations originally in Coptic have been underlined. The original language has not been provided for printed materials, which were translated by the anthropologist, unless necessary for purposes of interpretation and clarity.

I am solely responsible for any errors that remain in the transcriptions and translations. Some of the 'errors' my consultants identified are faithful reproductions of the liturgy, interviews and conversations under analysis and remain in the text for this reason. Additions to the transcript needed for expositional clarity have occasionally been provided in brackets. An exception is the Arabic sermon text, where brackets indicate moments in the transcription that are unclear or open to interpretation due to recording quality. These moments are indicated with question marks in the German language transcripts.

Real names of research participants have been replaced with pseudonyms throughout the dissertation except in the case of Popes, Bishops and other people considered public figures or when the statements are quotations from published materials. The priest in Berlin has been called "Abuna" throughout, which means "our father" in Arabic and is the customary title for Coptic priests.

Abstract

The dissertation is based on field research in Coptic Orthodox Church congregations in Germany, where Copts are living after emigration from Egypt. The data for the study are drawn from participant-observation, interviews, and recordings in these communities and include analysis of texts collected during fieldwork. The focus is on Copts' ideologies of language in the diaspora, where their linguistic repertoires – Coptic (sacred language of religious texts), Arabic (most community members' first language, spoken within the home or with other Copts), and German (language of the new location) – are being reconfigured.

The dissertation has these main arguments: (1) in the liturgy and in its textual representations, the three languages are being interpreted as in a temporal progression, in which Arabic – devalued for its association with Islam and Arabs– is to be replaced by German, although there are some tensions surrounding this as yet incomplete process; (2) Copts are making a rhetorical effort, and (in effect) sociological project, to be identified with whites, Europe, and Christendom (seen as overlapping categories), thus evading German anti-immigrant prejudice and becoming part of the majority. This identification entails a semiotics of temporality as well, in the assertion that Christ came "out of Egypt" (as, more recently, did the Copts) – thus Egypt is to be included as the root domain of Christianity, rather than excluded from it because of its Muslim majority. This narrated past is part of Copts' claim to inclusion in the (future) ecumene of Christianity. The author contends that the temporal progression implicit in the language shift in progress (1) can be seen as part of this wider semiotics of temporality (2).

The present work contributes to debates on diaspora and the narrative construction of

time and space. Its central themes of language ideologies, code repertoires, and textuality and performance are important topics in linguistic anthropology, the anthropology of Christianity and the anthropology of the Middle East and Europe. Detailing how Copts in the diaspora bring to life a dead language, while enthusiastically shifting to German, the dissertation is an ethnography of language contact and language shift.

CHAPTER ONE

Was für ein Identitätsbewußtsein als Kopten werden die Kinder der Kinder der jetzigen Generation der koptischen Diaspora haben? Freilich kann niemand die Antwort auf solch eine Frage voraussagen. Ich gehe aber davon aus, dass die Kopten ihre Identität als Kopten bewahren wollen.

What sense of identity as Copts will the children of the children of today's generation of the Coptic diaspora have? Admittedly, no one can answer such a question in advance. I am assuming, however, that the Copts want to keep their identity as Copts.

- Professor Steven Emmel, *The Copts between Past and Future* (Emmel, 2000), a speech delivered on June 1st, 2000 in Düsseldorf, Germany on the occasion of the 2000th anniversary of the arrival of the holy family in Egypt

Introduction

The dissertation is based on field research in Coptic Orthodox Church congregations in Germany, where the Copts are living after emigration from Egypt. The data for the study are drawn from participant-observation, interviews, and recordings in these communities and include analysis of texts collected during fieldwork. The focus is on Copts' ideologies of language in the diaspora, where their linguistic repertoires – Coptic (sacred language of religious texts), Arabic (most community members' first language, spoken within the home and/or with other diasporic Copts), and German (language of the new location) are being reconfigured.

The dissertation has these main arguments: (1) in the liturgy and in its textual representations, the three languages are being interpreted as in a temporal progression, in which Arabic – devalued for its association with Islam – is to be replaced by German, although there are some tensions surrounding this as yet incomplete process; (2) Copts are making a rhetorical effort, and (in effect) sociological project, to be identified with whites, Europe, and Christendom

(seen as overlapping categories), thus evading German anti-immigrant prejudice and becoming part of the majority. This identification entails a semiotics of temporality as well, in the assertion that Christ came "out of Egypt" (as, more recently, did the Copts) – thus Egypt is to be included as the root domain of Christendom, and as such part of the (future) ecumene of Christianity, rather than excluded from it because of its Muslim majority. The author contends that the temporal progression implicit in the language shift in progress (1) can be seen as part of this wider semiotics of temporality (2).⁵

The present work contributes to debates on diaspora and the narrative construction of time and space. Its central themes of language ideologies, code repertoires, and textuality and performance are important topics in linguistic anthropology, the anthropology of Christianity and the anthropology of the Middle East and Europe. Detailing how Copts in the diaspora bring to life a dead language, while enthusiastically shifting to German, the dissertation is an ethnography of language contact and language shift.

Institutions and History of the Coptic Orthodox Church

The Coptic Orthodox Church traces its roots back to the very beginnings of Christianity. The head of the Coptic Orthodox Church at the time of publication is Pope Tawadros II, who was enthroned as Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church on November 18th, 2012. At the time of my fieldwork and writing, Pope Shenouda III led the Coptic Orthodox Church from his enthronement on November 14th, 1971 until his death on March 17th, 2012.⁶ The Coptic Pope stands in a line of apostolic succession that traces its roots to Saint Mark the Evangelist, the author of one of the synoptic gospels in the New Testament. According to tradition, Saint Mark

⁵ I am indebted to Judith Irvine for her help in formulating this concise statement of the present work.

⁶ Since Pope Shenouda led the church during my fieldwork and writing, it is his papacy which is focused on and referenced in the present tense throughout.

was the disciple who first missionized Egypt, founded the Christian church in Africa, and was martyred in Alexandria in 68 CE. The head of the church is thus the Patriarch of Alexandria.

The claim to apostolic succession, provided by this historical connection to Saint Mark, is just one element of the diverse history of the Coptic Orthodox Church that I explore in the dissertation, due to its impact on present day Copts in the diaspora. In the section *Where is Egypt?* I outline the multiple instantiations of Egypt as a biblical, historical and nation homeland for the Copts, detailing the appearances of Egypt in the Old and New Testament, the importance of Alexandria for early Christian theology, and the role of monasticism and conceptions of Christian martyrdom. In this section I also discuss colonial encounters in Egypt that were influential for Coptic conceptions of Egypt, and the relationship between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Egyptian nation-state. Some facets of this final dynamic will be discussed in the next section to provide historical context.

Focusing on the claim to apostolic succession can help to make sense for the unaccustomed reader of the idea that Coptic Orthodox Christianity has at its head its own Pope. As the Patriarch in Alexandria, the Coptic Orthodox Pope oversees a geographic realm of Christianity, on equal footing with the patriarchs in other parts of the world including the more well-known Roman Catholic Pope, who is head of the Patriarchate in Rome. Today Pope Shenouda has his papal residence in Cairo. The elaborate edifice of Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Cairo is the centerpiece of this complex. Nevertheless, Pope Shenouda is still considered the Patriarch of Alexandria for historical and theological reasons. In Chapter Six I will explain the global geography of patriarchs further when I outline the relationship between

the churches of the ecumene. This is a topic that I already begin to develop in Chapter Five with an exploration of language shift through the liturgy and the eucharist.⁷

Another way of imagining the division of the churches is a temporal one. In this framework the so-called Oriental Orthodox churches, of which Coptic Orthodoxy is one branch, split from the branch which became the dominant form of Christianity in 'the West' in 451 AD. The split was motivated by more than theology, but the theological reason was a disagreement about the doctrine of the two natures of Jesus elaborated at the Council of Chalcedon in that year.⁸

Under the Pope, the church is composed of a clerical hierarchy including Metropolitans and Bishops at one level, Archpriests and Priests at the next level, and Archdeacons and Deacons at a lower level. In this most hierarchical of churches there is also a hierarchy of believers, as discussed in Chapter Four. Due to the continued emigration of Egypt's Copts, this hierarchy has extended into the diaspora in complex ways, some of which will be elaborated in the discussion of the Coptic diaspora in Germany below. There is also a monastic hierarchy as monasticism is a central institution of the Coptic church. All bishops and many of the priests in the diaspora are monks and maintain a connection to their home monastery in Egypt. The hierarchy is discussed in Chapter Four in the particular instantiation in which it is relevant for the use of texts and the performance of the liturgy in the diaspora. I argue in that chapter that a hierarchy of

⁷ I do not capitalize eucharist in the dissertation in order to indicate that I am using it as a theoretical term to refer to the material, social and linguistic elements involved in the transubstantiation of the body and blood of Christ. This term overlaps with the way it is used in religious communities. In the Coptic Orthodox Church there are many terms, including oblation, offering, etc., which I subsume under the term eucharist, such that it is more general than the one that would be used by theologians in the community. The term is not capitalized in order to distinguish it from the theological construct.

⁸ For an introduction to this controversy and the history of early Christian doctrinal divisions I recommend Henry Chadwick's (1967) *The Early Church*. Some elements of the theological divisions between the churches are discussed further in Chapter Five.

comprehension can be observed in the presentation of code in the texts, which allows insight into the language shift that is in progress in the community.

• ***Historical Context: Coptic Relationships with the Egyptian Nation-State***

I will briefly discuss some of the tensions between Egypt's Muslim majority and their large Christian minority in order to contextualize for the reader some of the topics of the dissertation.⁹ These tensions are historically important for understanding the relationship between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Egyptian state, as well as some of the reasons that are most often given for the exodus of Egypt's Copts in large numbers beginning in the 1950s. At the same time, focusing exclusively on the relationship between the Coptic Church and the Egyptian State may be part of a discourse which deprives Copts of the agency to form their own complex relationships and influence change within Egypt (Rowe, 2009) and in the diaspora (see below). Recognizing this, I only mention here some of the major events that have impacted Coptic migration and defer to analysts and ethnographers of the Coptic situation in Egypt for a detailed presentation (e.g., Heo, 2012; Mahmood, 2012; McCallum, 2005, 2007; Rowe, 2007). The history of the church-state relationship I describe is a diasporic one, which would be told differently by Copts in Egypt.

In my overview, *Where is Egypt?* in Chapter Three, I highlight some of the positive impacts of Egyptian nationalism that impact the Coptic communities' understandings of Egypt. The reign of President Nasser in Egypt from 1956-1970 is often portrayed negatively by Copts in the diaspora, not only because of his Soviet-led Socialism, but also because of his platform of pan-Arab identity. (See Chapter Two for a discussion of negative views of the term 'Arab' as an iconization among Copts in Germany.) Economic and ideological conditions during Nasser's

⁹ This tension includes the desire of Copts within Egypt not to be referred to as a minority. See *Copts in Egypt* below for a brief discussion of this point.

reign are often linked to the beginnings of emigration of Copts out of Egypt, which began in earnest in the 1960s.

Pope Shenouda became Pope shortly after the beginning of the reign of President Sadat (1970-1981) in Egypt. Pope Shenouda is unusual as a Coptic Pope for his involvement in politics, forging alliances or waging battles with the Egyptian government, a role for the Pope that is controversial in the Coptic community. In 1981 Pope Shenouda came to such a political impasse with President Sadat that he was exiled, held under house arrest in a remote monastery. Amnesty International named him a 'Prison of Conscience' on August 26th, 1983 and he remained in enforced exile until President Mubarak revoked Sadat's decree just before Christmas in 1985. There were multiple reasons for this political deadlock, but one was Sadat's decision to promote the Islamization of Egypt.

Despite the fact that Pope Shenouda and the Coptic Orthodox Church remained officially on good terms with Mubarak for the remainder of his presidency, Coptic migration out of Egypt continued at a steady pace, often attributed to the increasing control of Islamic organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood within the country. Sectarian violence against Christians in Egypt has also increased in the last decade. Several of these events, which impacted my fieldwork, are mentioned in the dissertation, including a knife attack by one man in three churches in Alexandria in April 2006.

Although the Egyptian state condemns attacks against Copts, it is often portrayed in the diaspora as complicit. For example in the 2006 attacks there should have been government security at the churches in question and the security guards either were not present or did not act appropriately, a topic of much speculation among Copts abroad. Copts also focus on educational, employment, and marriage discrimination against Copts, put in place by the Egyptian

government, when discussing their reasons for leaving the country. Regulations that greatly restrict the building and expansion of churches, another locus of sectarian violence, are also part of the discourse of departure.

On New Years Day, 2011 a car bomb exploded and killed 23 parishioners leaving another Coptic church in Alexandria. This attack impacted the Coptic community in Germany to a greater extent than other violence in the homeland because of a terrorist threat against Coptic communities released on the internet following the attacks. The Frankfurt, Germany, community was one of the threatened targets, prompting increased security to be provided by the German government.

My fieldwork ended before the Egyptian revolution of January 2011, but my impression from conversations with Copts from my fieldsite, as well as newspaper reports, is that while Copts were initially enthusiastic about the revolution and eager to play a role in the development of a new government, at the time of publication many are concerned about the rise of President Morsi to power, given his connections to the Muslim Brotherhood and its plans for the country, and are unsure what the future will hold for Copts who remain in Egypt.

This very brief historical overview has only been intended to provide some context for the coming chapters so the reader can better understand the language ideologies and temporal projections explored there. These historical and contemporary tensions play a role in the shift away from Arabic in the diaspora, but the process is dialogic. The narratives of homeland are sculpted by changes already underway in the diaspora. As stated above, I do not intend this brief overview to be a substitute for engaging with the critical history and ethnography of Egypt or the Coptic Orthodox Church and Coptic community in that country.

Demography, Statistics and Ideologies of Integration

• *Copts in Egypt*

How many Copts live in Egypt today is a matter of controversy, as is the demography of Christian communities throughout the Middle East. Academic articles discussing Copts often open by describing the statistical ambiguities of Coptic demography. Characteristically, the Egyptian state's estimate is regarded as too low. This was 2.3 million in the official 1976 census (Pennington, 1982:158) or 6% of the population. The Coptic Orthodox Church's estimate is sometimes regarded as too high, but estimates made by the diaspora community are typically the highest. Most authors writing for an academic audience settle on about six million Copts, or about 10% of the population of Egypt, while recognizing that this figure is only an estimate.¹⁰ Coptic Christians are indisputably the largest Christian minority in the Middle East.

In the diaspora the low state estimates of the Coptic population are usually interpreted as part of the state effort to repress the Coptic minority, minimizing their numbers in order to justify their limited participation in government and other exclusions. However, in light of Ayalon's (1999) discussion of opposition to identifying the Copts as a 'minority' in Egypt, including Coptic opposition within Egypt, we can see how the statistical ambiguities of Coptic demography within Egypt could have a variety of possible motivations, not all of them antagonistic towards Copts.¹¹ Saba Mahmood (2012) has recently written an insightful and in depth article on "the minority question" and its relation to Copts in Egypt. Despite the seeming

¹⁰ Within Egypt the estimated number of Copts typically includes all those who identify as Copts including indigenous Egyptians belonging to Catholic and Protestant churches. However, in the diaspora figures are usually drawn from estimates and surveys of the Coptic Orthodox Church and include only members who affiliate with that institution.

¹¹ See also the original Ibn Kahloun Center study, which developed out of the conference that spurred this public controversy (Ibrahim et. al., 1996).

disparity between Coptic anti-ecumenicalism in Egypt (Heo, 2012) and the focus on the ecumene in Europe, both processes can be seen as efforts to "become the majority" (Chapter Six).¹²

• *Copts in the Diaspora and Europe*

Establishing the number of Copts in the diaspora has its own challenges. For example, the German government census material only tallies the number of Egyptians and does not distinguish Copts from Muslims. In Germany the state also only includes within the statistics those Egyptians who hold foreign passports, so any Egyptians that have become naturalized German citizens, and have thus relinquished their Egyptian citizenship, will no longer be counted in the total.

The countries with the largest populations of Copts in the diaspora are Australia, Canada and the United States. Most Copts in the diaspora live in major metropolitan areas. In the United States there are large Coptic communities in New Jersey, New York, Boston and Los Angeles, and smaller but still prominent communities in Chicago, Detroit, Houston and Cleveland (Dickinson, 2008:8). Coptic priests were first sent to Jersey City, Montreal and Los Angeles in the 1960s. Describing the influence of Pope Shenouda on expansion of Coptic churches in the diaspora Meinardus (1999) says,

In 1971 there were only seven Coptic churches in the diaspora. Today there are almost eighty Coptic churches in the United States and Canada, about twenty-six churches in Australia, and almost thirty churches in Europe. Seven Coptic bishops serve overseas congregations (1999:7).

These numbers only include churches officially founded by the Coptic Orthodox Church and do not count all of the congregations worshipping in rented churches or other spaces.

¹² I am indebted to the participants of the Linguistic Anthropology Laboratory at the University of Michigan for opening my eyes to the similarity of these seemingly antithetical discourses.

One of the earliest Coptic churches in Europe was Saint Mark's in London. England also was the location of the first Coptic diocese outside of Egypt, the diocese of Birmingham. In Europe the relationships of ecumene complicate the statistics of membership. For example in 1993 the British Orthodox Church requested to be in full communion with the See of Alexandria and the leader of that church was consecrated by Pope Shenouda as the Metropolitan of Glastonbury. In France there are over 40,000 Copts today because Pope Shenouda answered the request of former Catholics in that country dissatisfied with the changes of Vatican II to enter full communion with the Coptic Orthodox Church and set up congregations of the Coptic Orthodox Church there. In the section on *Discourses on the Liturgy* I describe a meeting with Abuna Matta, who is one of the priests at the Coptic Orthodox monastery in Stevenage, England. The Coptic community in Europe is small, but supported by a network of monasteries, which serve as community centers. In Chapter Six I describe a youth conference that was held at one of the church's monasteries outside of Vienna.

• *Copts in Germany and Berlin*

In 1999, Meinardus reported the number of Coptic Churches in Germany as nine (1999:131), but there are many more congregations within Germany not counted in this estimate. In this section I outline the basic demographics of the Coptic diaspora in Germany and situate Berlin's community within it. I am unsure of the veracity of the statistical data cited below both because of the methods used to obtain them and because it included only those Copts who were involved in Church activities.¹³ I see the greatest value of the statistics to be providing an understanding of how the community strives to represent itself in dialogue with the German

¹³ Ibrahim and Ibrahim (2000) did not individually interview those they claim as respondents, but instead depended upon "knowledgeable informants and drew upon [their] intensive personal contacts with the Coptic congregation in Germany during the last thirty-three years (since 1965)" (2000:112). The Boutros (2007) study has similar drawbacks in data collection.

government and media representations of minorities. For this reason I include a detailed discussion of two studies by members of the Coptic diaspora in Germany. The small number of Copts in Germany sheds light on the urgency of the discourses of ecumene and majority discussed in Chapter Six. I will also provide some statistics and comparative data on the largest immigrant community in Berlin and Germany, the Turkish one, against which the Coptic community defines itself or is defined by others. I argue these statistics are also part of the discourse on integration.

In 2000, Fouad and Barbara Ibrahim set out to survey the population of Copts in Germany in order to “throw some light on the questions...concerning the globalization of European societies in general and the German society in particular” (2000:111). They informally surveyed what they estimated to be half of the Egyptian Coptic households in Germany, focusing on Northern Germany where the authors reside. It was also the Northern German Coptic communities that I interacted with most in my fieldwork. Ibrahim and Ibrahim surveyed 300 households, including all of the 151 households of the Düsseldorf parish, all 37 households of the parish of Hanover, 68 of about 85 households served by the parish of Hamburg, and “44 of about 80 households belonging to the parish of Berlin, including several from Leipzig and Magdeburg” (ibid.).¹⁴

A more recent study, *The History of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Germany after the Second World War*, submitted as a master’s thesis by Kyrellos Boutros (2007), presents a similar overarching picture of the community during the time of my fieldwork. Boutros draws on the archival data of Father Sourial, of the Coptic community in Frankfurt, for a historical picture of how the community increased from approximately 200 people before 1965 to 582 families in

¹⁴ Ibrahim and Ibrahim do not offer a reason for having surveyed only half of the households in Berlin, but Berlin’s Copts may be less active in the church than Copts in some other areas of the country. When I asked the priest why this was, he replied “*because it’s Berlin*” (weil es Berlin ist) and smiled.

1981 (2007:47). Boutros arrived at a final estimate of 800 Coptic families throughout Germany with approximately 70 of those families belonging to the community in Berlin (2007:48). He estimates the total membership of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Germany at 4,000 to 5,000 people (ibid.). According to Boutros,

[W]ith this the Church lost her place as the largest Coptic Church in Europe, which she had in the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s. [The] oldest member and co-founder of the church in Germany¹⁵ estimates that the numbers are as follows: The largest number of Copts are in the United Kingdom, followed by France, Italy, the Netherlands, then Germany and last of all Ireland (Boutros, 2007:48).

The German government does not provide statistics on the number of Copts living in Berlin, but they estimated the number of Egyptians living in Berlin on December 31st, 2009 at 1,769 people with 1,203 being men and 566 Egyptian women. This is a small part of the overall 460,187 foreigners (*Ausländer*) living in the city.¹⁶ According to official Egyptian state statistics three quarters of all emigrants from Egypt for the same time period were Copts (CAPMAS, 1997:29ff, cited in Ibrahim and Ibrahim, 2000:111). If this ratio held true for Berlin, one could extrapolate from the available data an estimate of 1,326 adult non-citizen Copts were living in Berlin in 2009.

As reported above, there are nine churches of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Germany (Meinardus, 1999:131), but I suggested above there are many more communities (*Gemeinde*), which meet in other spaces. The priest in Berlin during my fieldwork served five congregations regularly, traveling not only through the region surrounding Berlin, to Hanover, Leipzig, etc. but also once per month to Warsaw, Poland. Services were first celebrated in Germany in Wiesbaden

¹⁵ I have chosen to eliminate this person's name from the citation despite its published status to maintain participant anonymity.

¹⁶ Unless otherwise noted, all German government population statistics are taken from Rockmann (2010).

and Mainz in 1964 and 1969 respectively (Meinardus, 1999:131).¹⁷ The St. Anthony and St. Shenouda Church (see below) was officially established in Berlin on May 18th, 1975 (Boutros, 2007).

There are two Coptic monasteries in Germany. The first is the Monastery of Saint Antony in Waldsolms-Kröffelbach outside of Frankfurt, on which building began in 1988. It is home to a Coptic theological college (see Chapter Four's *Socialization through/into Text and Liturgy*). The Monastery of the Holy Virgin and Saint Maurice in Höxter-Brenkhausen, which was acquired in 1993, is the residence of Bishop Damian, the General Bishop for the Coptic Orthodox Church in Germany. Bishop Damian is a General Bishop, which means that he is not head of a diocese. The priest in Frankfurt is under the direct control of Pope Shenouda rather than Bishop Damian. The monastery at which Bishop Damian resides is, however, the official center of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Germany, taking over this role from the Kröffelbach monastery in 2000 (Boutros, 2007). The monastery and church's role in the creation of Egypt as a space in Germany will be analyzed in Chapter Three. The Coptic Orthodox Church also owns a former United States military base near the monastery in Borgentreich called The Coptic Village of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III (*Das Koptische Dorf Seiner Heiligkeit Papst Shenouda III*).

Ibrahim and Ibrahim (2000) analyze their data from a variety of fronts, all intended to show how Copts are an example of a well-integrated immigrant community in German society.¹⁸ To open their analysis they explore problems with the legal situation and human rights violations Copts face in Egypt today. Ibrahim and Ibrahim are advocates of asylum in Germany for persecuted Christians and this is part of the perspective of their article. In framing immigration,

¹⁷ Boutros (2007) places it even earlier in August, 1960 in Mainz/Rhein (Boutros, 2007:21).

¹⁸ Although Boutros' (2007) study is more recent, most of his statistical data is reprinted from the older Ibrahim and Ibrahim study so I will give an overview of the older data and situate it in the authors' discussion.

they report Coptic migration to Germany was almost non-existent before 1960 and then gradually increased in each decade since that time. They attribute the first wave of immigrants to (West) Germany's need for labor after World War II, combined with the simultaneous experience of

many young and ambitious Egyptians suffer[ing] a severe frustration due to the hopeless situation of the country under Nasser's Soviet-oriented socialism, the suffocating state monopoly and the repercussions of Egypt's defeat in the war against Israel in 1967 (2000:112).

I read this as an autobiographical statement since Fouad Ibrahim migrated to Germany in 1965. Barbara Ibrahim, the other author, is his (German) Coptic wife. Both are members of the church in Hanover. In addition to this first initial wave of immigration, of which Fouad Ibrahim is a part, Ibrahim and Ibrahim report a dramatic increase of Copts immigrating to Germany since 1990. Over 30% of those surveyed came to Germany during this time (Ibrahim and Ibrahim, 2000:112).

After this initial overview, Ibrahim and Ibrahim then go on to analyze their data in a variety of ways in keeping with their project. They argue that the Coptic community is an ideal example of how minorities can effectively and correctly integrate into German majority society. They found Copts in Germany to be very educated (2000:118), financially solvent (2000:119), and to report strong social relationships with Germans, including the 51% of members who are married to German spouses (2000:120). They highlight that Egyptian Copts have approximately the same number of children as the German majority (*ibid.*). They discuss use of the German language and European naming styles (see Chapter Two) as proof of integration, and report that

57% of Copts in Germany have German citizenship (2000:125) and approximately 50% of those surveyed reported that they returned to Egypt every five years or even less often (2000:127).¹⁹

Ibrahim and Ibrahim do not explicitly state that with the statistics they collected they are positioning the Coptic community against stereotypes that immigrants to Germany are usually uneducated, financially dependent on the state, isolated from German social circles and have larger families than their non-immigrant counterparts. However, I suggest that their argument implicitly engages with the discourse of 'integration'. It is because minorities are imagined to marry within their own community, not speak German at home, not have German citizenship and return frequently to their home countries that graphs about how Copts in Germany do not exemplify these behaviors are meaningful to Ibrahim and Ibrahim's argument. They do not present any comparative data to assert whether or not these stereotypes are born out for other minority communities, but present the Coptic community as the ideal integrated minority with the implication that the same features are not found in a less than ideal 'other'. I suggest this less than ideal other is the Turkish and Muslim minority, seen in this case as a unity.²⁰ Boutros (2007), using Ibrahim and Ibrahim's data, reaffirms this perspective and more explicitly says:

Without difficulty Copts are fully integrated into German society. In comparison to other foreign communities – for example the Turkish communities – Copts have fewer problems in their relationship [to German society]. The Copts feel themselves here – in a society

¹⁹ Ibrahim and Ibrahim's discussion of church membership, in which they find that the vast majority of those surveyed had a strong relationship with their parish (Ibrahim and Ibrahim, 2000:128), was a point of tension in their analysis. They note that "due to their religion, many Copts have a certain affinity to Europe" (2000:103) and stress ecumenical relationship in organizing the church and renovating church buildings. Boutros takes a more pessimistic view of the connection to the church, arguing that the youth feel less and less connection to it and that this is a problem for the community (2007:69). See Chapter Six for similar views and a detailed discussion of the ecumene.

²⁰ Ewing (2008) discusses discourses of integration as they relate to the Turkish minority in Germany and provides evidence from studies that these assumptions are not born out in the data (2008:18). She further discusses how the empirical research on Turkish minorities highlight different reasons for the disparities that do exist than the public discourse, which focuses more on culture as the key term to define outsiders (2008:19).

founded in part on Christianity – in every way better than in Egypt (2007:69).²¹

I suggest that Ibrahim and Ibrahim's data present not only a detailed picture of the Coptic community in Germany, but a view of Coptic and German theories of integration and efforts to achieve social acceptance over and against the Turkish and Muslim minority in Germany. My analysis of these statistics complements the argument of the dissertation as a whole. Ibrahim and Ibrahim articulate a self-understanding that resonates in particular with the one presented in Chapter Two and Chapter Six of this dissertation. I will now explore the placement of Copts in Berlin's landscape as another example of Coptic engagement with integration discourses and conclude by situating the Coptic Orthodox Church in Berlin within that landscape.

Constructing and Avoiding *Ausländer* Spaces in Berlin

Many scholarly works have been devoted to how the spaces of Berlin are constructed, in discourse and otherwise (e.g., Borneman, 1993; Ladd, 1997; Glaeser, 2000), and this has been part of a trend to address the social and discursive construction of space in Germany as a whole (e.g., Berdahl, 1999; Ten Dyke, 2000). Much of this work focuses on the East/West divide, and exploring these spaces in fractally recursive (Irvine and Gal, 2000) configurations. This is part of a wider interest in the construction of space and memory for scholars of Europe (e.g., Verdery, 1996; Herzfeld, 1991; Stein, 1993; Berdahl, Bunzl and Lampland, 2000). Inspired by Jurgens (2005), I suggest these understandings of space are shared and negotiated around Berlin by Germans and Copts such that people living in one space understand themselves to be defined as a certain type of person because of the space they inhabit and vice versa. Berliners understand that their choice of Berlin borough not only defines for others what type of person they are, but can

²¹ Boutros uses the terms *Gesellschaft* (German and Christian) and *Gemeinde* (foreign), which I discuss below in the section on *Code Repertoires*.

be part of an active process of creating the type of person (and, for Copts, diaspora) they want to be defined as. Both Germans and Copts choose and construct their living space in order to tell others about themselves and the groups, communities and categories to which they belong, and the ones of which they are not a part.



Figure 1.1: The Districts of the former East Berlin (Wiki-vr, 2005)

In his 2005 dissertation, *Plotting Immigration: Diasporic Identity Formation Among Immigrants From Turkey in Berlin*, Jeff Jurgens drew attention to the landscapes of Berlin and how they are lived in and negotiated as social spaces. He argued that the Turkish community, with whom he lived and worked, misunderstood the landscape of Berlin, driving their cars around the central square of West Berlin after a soccer game, because they still saw this area

around the main train station of former West Berlin as the center. He portrayed their failure to see Potsdamer Platz as the center of the new Berlin as part of their marginalization from not only the geographic but the social spaces of a new unified Berlin. For Jurgens, this misunderstanding was part of their status as immigrant and other, avoiding an East not welcoming of Turkish immigrants (2005:51).

Jurgens was right to emphasize how social space defines personhood in the city and to stress the predominantly West-focused geography of many of Berlin's Turks. However, rather than focusing on how Copts in Berlin have an alternative geography of Berlin's social spaces to the one that is dominant in discourse, what I want to highlight is how closely the understandings of Berlin's social spaces align among the various communities in the city, including between lifelong Berliners and Copts who have immigrated from Egypt.²² Jurgens also noted this similarity for Turks in regards to discourses of integration:

[T]he commonality between the [settlement] bans [instituted by the German government] and many immigrants' accounts of ethnic authenticity in Berlin lies in the way both rely upon, even reify, subjects' social relations and their spatial arrangements as reliable signs of their cultural affiliations. That is, both link non-German cultural maintenance and/or lack of 'integration' with the spatial concentration of immigrants, assimilation and/or 'integration' with their geographic dispersion (2005:58).

The next section of this chapter explores Coptic and German understandings of spaces perceived to be the home of Berlin's foreigners (*Ausländer*, literally out-landers). I argue Copts negotiate these understandings of social space that these discourses provide, to construct themselves as a diaspora. As in the case of Jurgens's lawmakers and the Turkish minority, I suggest Copts' negotiation of Berlin's spaces is based around a discourse of 'integration,'

²² It is an open question, but I contend that Turks are more attuned to dominant German discourses than Jurgens supposed. I would argue that in the social geography of Berlin only tourists imagine that Potsdamer Platz is the center of Berlin.

defining themselves as integrated in contrast to the Turkish and Muslim community, which receives a lot of public attention for failure to properly ‘integrate’ (see also Ewing, 2008; Partridge, 2012). While I do not delve into the intricacies of their alignments, I use this topic as a way to introduce readers to Berlin, Berlin's diasporas, and the Coptic Orthodox Church where I centered my fieldwork.

•••

One of the ways in which discourses of social space circulate in Berlin is in the speech genre called “Where do you live?” While participating in this small talk genre, it was possible to affirm or contest someone’s location. I was told repeatedly when I lived on Torstrasse at the border of Prenzlauer Berg that I did not live in Prenzlauer Berg but in Mitte. This could be seen as contesting not only my geographic location, but my construction of personhood. Prenzlauer Berg is imagined to be the location of hip, young bar-hoppers and professionals. Conversely, people might also choose to structure their living space to be unexpected rather than expected. One young student said that although he lived on the border with Mitte he frequently told people he lived in Wedding, a place you wouldn’t expect to find him based on his career (student), marital status (single) and nationality (American) since it is strongly associated with lower class non-G8 (see below) immigrant families.



Figure 1.2: The Districts of Berlin (TUBS, 2010)

Prenzlauer Berg is an example of a district constructed in discourse as not containing very many foreigners (*Ausländer*). It is difficult to estimate the number of immigrants living in Prenzlauer Berg in part because the statistics for this district are calculated with Pankow as a whole. It is also difficult because, as an article published in *Die Zeit* about Prenzlauer Berg described: “*This part of the city changes so quickly that the statisticians can hardly keep up. Between 1995 and 2000 alone half of the population (ex) changed*” (Susseback, 2007).

According to the estimates in *Die Zeit*:

The percentage of foreigners is approximately 11.1%, which is only a good 2% less than the average for Berlin. The composition is what is completely different. The biggest group are French, followed by Italians, Americans, Britons, Spaniards, and Danes. A G-8 population, highly educated and employed. There are ten times more Japanese people here than Egyptians. The number of Turks is less than 0.3% (Susseback, 2007).

According to discourses that circulate in Berlin, Prenzlauer Berg is home to very few foreigners, but statistically it ranks at levels similar to other districts. However, it does have fewer foreigners in the sense that *Ausländer* are defined in Germany as including only certain types of foreigners (non-white, non-European, non-Christian, see Chapter Two). The closest H&M to Prenzlauer Berg that sold children's clothes and had a large maternity section was located in the main shopping center in Wedding, both as a consequence of, but also creating the possibility for, the idea that Wedding is the place in Berlin where babies are created. In circulating discourse, this is due to its high concentration of immigrants, who are constructed as more family-oriented and fertile than their German neighbors.²³

In my experience, Copts were very aware of discourses that labeled Wedding, Neuköln and Kreuzberg as areas of the city with high immigrant populations. It is difficult to find statistics to support this view, in part because the way districts are structured for statistical purposes differ from the ways they are structured in the social landscape of the city. Wedding is statistically part of Mitte. Kreuzberg is part of a new district called Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. Kreuzberg was once a West Berlin district and is now joined for statistical purposes to the formerly East Berlin Friedrichshain. Kreuzberg has a high Turkish population because many residents of Turkish origin who came to West Berlin as 'guest workers' (*Gastarbeiter*) during the 'economic miracle' of the Marshall Plan moved to these inexpensive neighborhoods. In my experience, Copts avoided living in this area. Friedrichshain on the other hand was formerly part of East Berlin and is beginning to replace Prenzlauerberg as a hip lower-rent student area. Friedrichshain is still incorporated into danger discourse (see below). As one German observed, when looking at the statistics, "*The Turks probably all live in Kreuzberg.*" (Die Turken wohnen

²³ German discourses on their population crisis can take on an implicitly racial dimension as the problem is that people construed as German are not having enough children (see Partridge, 2012).

wahrscheinlich alle im Kreuzberg.) On December 31st, 2009 there were 56,480 foreigners officially living in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg and of those 19,523 were Turkish. Due to the association of such areas as Wedding and Kreuzberg with the Turkish and Muslim communities, I argue Copts avoided living in those areas of the city. Instead, they chose to live in districts such as Spandau, for example. Spandau is known as a suburban and wealthy area of Berlin. On December 31st, 2009, Spandau had 21,231 foreigners living within its boundaries. This is only slightly more than Lichtenberg (17,210), which I discuss below as having a reputation for being unfriendly to foreigners.

In a related move, Copts avoided living in residentially close proximity to one another. There is not a part of Berlin that one can identify as having a high Coptic population. I argue one can instead only identify where they are least likely to live, since my research indicated they avoid areas with high immigrant populations. Such areas are also anticipated to have higher than average Muslim populations. On December 31st, 2009 there were 460,187 *Ausländer* officially living in Berlin and 25% of them were originally from Turkey (108,000 people). To highlight the way in which *Ausländer* is not a term that signifies non-Germans or non-citizens, I note that this is less than the number who are from other countries in the European Union (145,674 people). Members of the European Union are not defined as *Ausländer* even though they are considered to be such for statistical purposes. As Jurgens insightfully wrote, “Perhaps even more than elsewhere in Germany, then, to be ‘foreign’ in Berlin was to be ‘Turkish’” (2005:56).

I suggest that the strategies of avoiding living in these areas known to have many immigrants and avoiding close residential proximity were an intentional negotiation of space on the part of at least some members of Berlin’s Coptic community. In their 2000 article from which I drew statistics in the previous section, Fouad and Barbara Ibrahim outline why they think that Copts are an ideal example of successful immigrant integration in Germany. In a

section entitled *The social contacts of the Egyptian Coptic immigrants with their German co-citizens and their general readiness for integration*, they describe how

the intensive social relationships to the German co-citizens do not involve the environments at work only, but also the residential neighborhoods. Nowhere do Copts build Ghettos. They live scattered – or rather integrated – among the German communities (Ibrahim and Ibrahim, 2000:123).

I argue the residential spacing of Copts in Berlin is not coincidental but an effort to position themselves within a discourse (spatial, as well as linguistic) on integration of minorities. As such it is one example of how Copts negotiate this discourse and their position as a minority or part of the majority through spatial and temporal orientations, which is an underlying theme of the dissertation.

• *Danger Discourses and A Coptic Church in Berlin*

In 2006, an Ethiopian Coptic student in Potsdam, a nearby city to Berlin connected to it by the S-bahn (fast train) network, was attacked while waiting at a tram stop at 4:00 AM. He called his wife as the initial verbal assault began and the beginning of the incident, which led to his hospitalization for critical injuries, was recorded on his wife's answering machine. This was a major news story in Berlin, as it was clear from the recording that the violence was racially motivated.²⁴ The man was an Ethiopian Copt, making him a member of a “sister church” to the Coptic Orthodox Church, since their separation in 1959, and the news story was taken up in community conversation. This event circulated in what I call the danger discourse in which

²⁴ Although media was not a main focus of my research, I was surprised by the limited amount of discussion among non-diasporic Germans about individuals who met with tragic or violent ends. My suspicion, which would require more research, is that Copts spent more time discussing such events reported in the news media, especially those that included news of violence against Copts in Egypt. Copts also often reported in interviews that they read a variety of daily news reports about Egypt online. On the other hand, I don't wish to over-emphasize an interest in foreign media among diasporic populations, which can be part of a derogatory public discourse on perceived failure of immigrant integration in Germany due to cultural rather than structural obstacles (Ewing, 2008:19).

Berliners discuss what areas of the city are particularly dangerous. As in this news story, public transport often plays a role in danger stories.

Danger discourses seemed to be less prevalent by 2005 when I moved to Germany to begin my fieldwork than it had been earlier in the decade, but they still played a role in where Copts lived and traveled in Berlin. For in-depth analyses of discourses of fear and dangerous spaces in the East/West Berlin spatial divide, see Jurgens (2005) and Partridge (2012). Both authors focus on the fear and danger discourses of immigrant communities about East Berlin, but these discourses also circulated among the German majority. In 2002 I was told very earnestly by a middle-aged German woman that I should be sure to find an apartment in West Berlin as East Berlin was dangerous because of all the foreigners (*Ausländer*) living there. This remark is another example of how in Germany a person's status as an *Ausländer* (*lit.* out-lander) is officially connected to their immigration and citizenship status, but in practice the term is disconnected from the status of one's paperwork. Efforts by Copts to evade the category of *Ausländer* will be discussed throughout the dissertation.

When I was unsuccessful in finding a Coptic family to live with in 2006, the Bishop suggested that I move to Lichtenberg and live close to the Coptic church there. Lichtenberg is a part of Berlin dominated by Soviet-style apartments, many of them empty, and there was no Coptic community there. This lack of community was in part because of the discourses of danger that circulated about this place. Lichtenberg is experienced as unfriendly to immigrants and rumored to be a center of neo-Nazi activity. The only Copt who lived in Lichtenberg was Berlin's priest. After an incident when the priest was harassed walking home from the subway one night, there was a community discussion about how he could get a driver's license and car because the area in which he lived was too dangerous for him to be a pedestrian.



Figure 1.3: Saint Antonius and Saint Shenouda Church in Berlin (Arnold, 2007)

Although Copts were very fluent in the spatial discourses of Berlin and used them effectively, the purchase of the community's church in Berlin-Lichtenberg was clearly a *misunderstanding* of Berlin's spatial landscape. This church was gifted in 1999 by the Protestant (*Evangelische*) Church due to the need for substantial repairs. The repairs to the roof alone cost six million D-Mark, according to Bishop Damian. It is possible that those who were involved in the purchase, many of whom did not live in Berlin, did not have an understanding of Berlin's social landscape or perhaps they rejected these understandings for strategic reasons. Bishop Damian contested danger discourses of all types in Berlin. He was dismissive when we were taking Berlin's subway together late at night about my concerns not to delay my return home because I wouldn't feel comfortable walking back to my apartment alone. He suggested instead that my own danger discourses were imported from the United States where (he argued) cities were much more dangerous due to rampant drug use of the wealthy.

Bishop Damian's dismissal of dangerous discourses can be viewed as an integration technique. By situating oneself outside of this discourse one could deny categorization as an *Ausländer*. The places of Berlin and the definitions of community they imply are always being negotiated by Copts. Nevertheless, the location of the community's central meeting place was recognized and constructed as a *mislocation* by the community. The previous meeting place had been a shared space in a Catholic Church in the borough of Mitte. My friend Yustos said he stopped coming to church once the church was purchased in Lichtenberg because he disapproved of the purchase and did not want to travel to that part of the city (see Chapter Six). Others complained about the long travel times, especially from the Western suburbs, since no one lived in close proximity to the church. One family who did live closer to the church than most members was renovating a house in the Berlin environs. Building or buying houses at the edge of the boundaries of the city was also the housing choice of several former East German families I knew. I argue their proximity to the church through these means thus demonstrates adherence to Berliner spatial norms rather than an alternative spatial discourse.

Among Copts in Berlin there was an on-going discussion about finding another church to hold meetings, but it stopped once a meeting after the service one day clearly outlined, with specific locations and purchase prices, what the purchase of a new church in a different location would cost. The current Saint Antonius and Saint Shenouda Church in Berlin (Figure 1.3) could not be sold because it was a gift. Despite its status as a locus of contention for the community, I argue the church can also be seen as part of constructing a Coptic past for Germany and a German future for Copts through narrative and material means (see Chapter Three). Shortly before I began my fieldwork in 2005, it was the site of Berlin's annual ecumenical church service on Pentecost.

Why Germany?

One of the challenges of working with a diaspora community is to represent both what is distinct about the community as a diaspora and its similarities to and embeddedness within two other cultural entities: the dominant culture in which the diaspora find themselves, and the one to which their diaspora points back, as well as the multiplicities within and between each, so as not to fall victim to the hegemony of the culture concept. This challenge is greater when working outside of the United States because readers may be unfamiliar with both the dominant culture and the diaspora community.

Many of the people I worked with had relatives in the United States so they asked as many questions as to why I was not working with Copts there as anthropologists might. Of course, anthropologists hold dear the notion that the numerically largest communities are by no means always the most theoretically and ethnographically rewarding to study. Throughout the dissertation I have tried to provide answers to the question, "Why Germany?" and in doing so to illuminate how I see understandings of language, land, space and time in Germany to be in a dialogic relationship with those of the diaspora such that (I argue) an analysis of the Coptic diaspora can also shed new light on Germany and the Anthropology of Europe.

In Chapter Two, when I outline the genealogies of race, language and religion, I argue that this iconization process, which sees these features as connected and heritable, is not only distinctly Coptic, but also reinforced through similar processes in Germany. In so doing, I have not fully explored the ways in which these genealogical theories have also been articulated in the Middle East as dominant understandings of narrative and temporality as well, see for example Shryock (1997) and Ho (2006). Partridge (2012) has argued against seeing German citizenship laws as an exceptional case, pointing to Pred's (2000) work in Sweden to argue that German

models of exclusionary citizenship and cultural racism are found throughout Europe. Partridge stresses instead that Germany is exemplary, showcasing a broader trend. In either case German discourses of citizenship and belonging, both legal and otherwise, are dominated by ideas about being German by blood and by language rather than by birth. These citizenship discourses form a strong contrast with explicit ideologies of citizenship in the United States, for example. Brubaker (1992) has famously distinguished the German construction of the nation from the French on these grounds. Discourses of whiteness, present among Middle Eastern immigrants in the United States, also articulate with very different histories in Germany (see Chapter Two). I suggest that this dialogic encounter between theories of genealogical relatedness fundamentally changes narratives of community belonging from what they would be in another fieldsite and illuminates both the minority and majority communities.

In Chapter Three, when I discuss narratives of time and space in the diaspora, I focus on Bishop Damian's tours of the monastery to highlight the ways in which Copts in the diaspora create Egypt as a past for Germany through the construction and narratives of monuments. Once again I argue that this process is reinforced by, and engages with, narrative constructions of time and space that are ubiquitous in Germany, especially the rebuilding of German monuments to reinforce a certain narrative of the past and future, a Capitalist one and a Christian one. That is not to say they do not have resonances with narrative practices centered in the Middle East, such as the Coptic process of building and narrating Marian visions in Egypt, see Heo (2012).

In Chapters Four and Five there is less of a focus on the connection between textuality, liturgy, and language ideologies in circulation in Germany as a whole. Nevertheless, the discussion of comprehension in the liturgy in Chapter Four draws on discussions with Coptologists working in Germany, which is central to the field of Coptic Studies both for its

collections of texts and its scholarship. In Berlin one can go to the world famous museum of Egyptology and in the gift shop pick up a copy of *Kemet*, the academic journal of Egyptian history, one of whose editors regularly attends the Coptic Orthodox Church in Berlin. Germany has a complex relationship to textuality that arises in part out of the Reformation and the development of nationalism around the text (Eisenstein, 1993; Anderson, 1991) and this vexed relationship informed and is informed by Coptic textuality.

The code choices of the liturgy, which are analyzed in Chapter Five, are also brought about by being in Germany. I believe the code-switching exhibited there is indicative of the wider process of language shift in the Coptic diaspora. However, in another setting the liturgy would not be performed in the same manner with the priest, deacons and folk choosing between three languages in one performance. I argue this code-switching is a powerful way of implicitly situating German and Germany as future, which I suggest is part of structuring the ecumene. In the section on *Explicit Discourses on the Liturgy* I provide metacommentary on how the liturgy is organized in other Coptic communities, including ideologies of English as future. I believe that by studying the shift to German, which while dominant in Germany does not have the global reach for the Coptic diaspora that English does, one achieves a clarity about Coptic language ideologies in practice that would not be possible elsewhere.

Chapter Six is the culmination of the dissertation and I argue that in Germany Copts perform the ecumene, to different degrees, in order to claim a place within the German majority. I argue Copts use their own (genealogical) Christianity, as identified throughout the dissertation, to separate and distance themselves from the Turkish and Muslim immigrant community, and claim a place in the majority through religion (and by extension race and language). Insofar as this argument encompasses the dissertation as a whole, it is a study of distinctly German and

European realities. In his essay exploring how "Europe" is defined by Europeans, Talal Asad (2002:209) engages with a very similar exclusionary discourse among "Europeans" to the one I identify among German and European Copts.

The largest minority community in Germany is a Turkish and Muslim one and they are especially dominant in public discourses in Berlin (see above). This community is not monolithic and in describing a Turkish and Muslim minority as if this were one group lacking in internal diversity, with its own iconizations and laminations of religion with other attributes of community, I am engaging with the public discourse rather than the experiences of Turkish-German immigrants. This community has been the focus of much excellent scholarship on Berlin and its diasporas. In addition to Jurgens (2005) and Partridge (2012), discussed above, see also Ewing (2008). The works of Queen (1996, 2002, 2005, 2006), Pfaff (1991, 1994), and Kardam and Pfaff (1993) provide insights into the language encounters of this minority.

While Christianity is prevalent in the United States, it is not linked to nation, land and heritage of the semiotic community in the same ways. As a Christian minority within Germany, Copts offer a unique perspective on processes of immigration, exclusion and integration of minorities in a country that has a vexed present and a traumatic past with regard to religious minorities since long before the atrocities of the Holocaust. To study a Christian minority community within Germany, one that can make claims to be part of the religious majority, is to provide a unique view not only of the Coptic diaspora, but of Germany and its hegemonic language ideologies and narrative temporalities, which have been influential far beyond its borders.

Topics in Linguistic Anthropology

• *language ideology*

There is a long tradition of work in linguistic anthropology on language ideologies and this dissertation is a contribution to that field. Linguistic anthropologists do not espouse an idea of language ideology as false consciousness (Eagleton, 1991), but instead consider language ideologies as present in all communities, including among academics (Gal and Irvine, 1995). One of the earliest formulations of language ideology is Michael Silverstein's articulation of language ideologies as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein, 1979:193).

Silverstein's definition addresses language ideologies above the level of awareness (1981), but language ideologies may be explicit or implicit. Kroskrity's influential (1998) article on the Arizona Tewa's Kiva speech is an example of a study of language ideology implicit in practice. In his more recent article on Tewa narratives (Kroskrity, 2009), which I engage in Chapter Five, Kroskrity points out how his own work presenting the Tewa as "paragons of persistence" (2009:41) may have played a part in supporting language ideologies that in his view damaged community maintenance. This is an example of recognition in the literature that implicit and explicit ideologies are not a clear dichotomy, but a question of degree and dialogic encounter. Das (2008) describes metalinguistic awareness as emergent. Some chapters of the present work focus more on explicit language ideologies (Chapter Two). Others draw out the implications of this metacommentary through analysis of language ideologies as enacted in text and performance of the liturgy (Chapters Four and Five).

In her essay on *When Talk isn't Cheap: Language and Political Economy*, Irvine has expanded the definition of language ideology to include "a cultural system of ideas about social

and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (1989:255). This way of engaging language ideology overlaps with what Keane has called a representational economy: “how people handle and value material goods may be implicated in how they use and interpret words, and vice versa, reflecting certain underlying claims about the world and the beings that inhabit it” (2003:410). Following these broader definitions, I argue that a language shift towards German is in progress in the Coptic diaspora in Germany despite community members rarely drawing attention to this shift themselves (Chapter Five).

This type of analysis is supported by a tradition of ethnographies of language encounter and shift (Errington, 1998; Gal, 1978, 1987; Hill, 1986; Kulick, 1992; Silverstein, 1996). Although metacommentary on this phenomenon was limited, I suggest the ongoing shift is influenced dialogically by a semiotics of temporality, on which there was significant metacommentary. I argue the language shift in progress is not only connected to the more explicit ideologies of language (Coptic as mother tongue and Arabic as a language of others) discussed in Chapter Two, but also that it is part of a particular temporality of the diaspora, creating Egypt as a past for Germany (Chapter Three) and creating Germany and the ecumene as future (Chapter Six).

Keane (2007) aims, with the idea of representational economy, to expand language ideology into a broader semiotic ideology, to better encompass the social relationships between words and things (2007:18). Opponents of this alternative term argue a broad definition of language, and language ideology, is both theoretically and ethnographically expedient. Semiotic ideology may allow the analyst to more easily forge connections to those things signified and semiotic relationships that, at least in the ideologies of readers, may fall outside of the strictly linguistic. I have tended towards the use of language ideology in this dissertation because there is

a stronger theoretical literature surrounding the uses and meanings of this term (e.g. Irvine and Gal, 2000; Kroskrity, 1998; Kroskrity, 2000; Schieffelin, Woolard and Kroskrity, 1998; Blommaert, 1999). I also fear that the use of the term semiotic ideology may inadvertently support the hegemonic dichotomy between words and things that ethnographies of semiotic phenomena, including this one in Chapters Three, Four and Five, are ideally positioned to question.

Chapter Two explores iconizations between language, race and religion, taking this term from the threefold semiotic processes iconization, fractal recursivity and erasure, outlined by Irvine and Gal (2000). These concepts are situated within a Peircean linguistic tradition (Peirce, 1955; Parmentier, 1987) as "in these ideological constructions, indexical relationships become the ground on which other sign relationships are built" (Irvine and Gal, 2000:37; Hanks, 1992). Chapter Five returns to a focus on indexicality using the concept of shifters first articulated by Jakobson (1971) and elaborated and expanded by Silverstein (1976). My understanding of diaspora is also indebted to these important studies of indexicality.

• *performance: from text to talk*

For Erving Goffman, every moment of a person's social life was performative. A person was in a "temporary ritual state...whether [s]he was engaged in formal social activity, work, or informal recreation" (1981:24). Indeed, it is a hallmark of linguistic anthropology to find organization in talk even when it is categorized as spontaneous and everyday. I draw on Goffman's ideas about interaction ritual (Goffman, 1982, via Silverstein, 2004) to examine the liturgy in Chapter Five, arguing that the liturgy, even as it is considered a ritual par excellence, is also an interaction ritual and can be heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1986), in contrast to Bakhtin's own assertions that the liturgical is excluded from this category as the authoritative Word.

I avoid referring to the liturgy as a performance, since the term is embedded in a theatrical view of audience encounter that seems at odds with the much older ritual of the eucharist. Austin presumably would not have placed it in this category since he viewed a performative utterance, central to the eucharist, "when uttered on stage rendered hollow and void" (Austin, 1975:22, cited in Lemon, 2000). Lemon (2000) articulates the ways in which performativity and performance may or may not be held apart and encourages us to look closely at framings and reframings as a way to differentiate and connect them (Lemon, 2000:25).²⁵ In his foundational work on performance, Briggs (1988) likewise identifies frames (Bateson, 1972; Goffman, 1974) as one element of performance, along with the existence of particular formal and stylistic patterns and parallelism (Briggs, 1988:9). The liturgy contains all of these features and is highly regimented, but I argue in Chapter Five that the performance should be viewed as a detextualizing into the present moment, through code-switching and other deictic resources.

In Chapter Four I examine how the liturgy is framed in the diaspora as textual and I consider my work part of the literature in linguistic anthropology on the movement of text to talk. To frame the move from talk to text as directionally opposite to this one, rather than dialogically implicated, is an oversimplification. Nevertheless, for literature which focuses more on the procession of talk to text see e.g., Boyarin, 1993; Collins, 1995; Haviland, 1996; Jaffe, 1996; Ochs, 1979. Entextualization has received valuable attention in the literature of linguistic anthropology (e.g., Bauman and Briggs, 1990; Kuipers, 1990; Silverstein and Urban, 1996). The analysis in this dissertation draws in particular on the insights of those authors who have focused on textuality and the move to performance in Christianity (e.g., Bauman, 1974; Shoaps, 2002; Engelke, 2009), especially in Chapter Five.

²⁵ Bauman and Briggs' (1990) review article on this topic also offers counterpoints to Austin's view.

The relationship between text and performance (as talk) can be contested, as I suggest in Chapter Four, but as Bauman and Briggs (1990) point out, "the decontextualization and recontextualization of performed discourse bear upon the political economy of texts" (1990:76). Perhaps for this reason, many studies that address the relationship between the two focus on standard languages (Bourdieu, 1991; Collins, 1996; Milroy, 2001; Silverstein, 1996; Watts, 1999) and also on institutional sites of language ideology (Haviland, 1998; Mertz, 1998; Philips, 1998; Philips, 2000). My study centers around an institutional site, the church and the connected locus of the monastery, in order to explore the dialogic nature of textuality and performance. This focus on an institutional site is tempered by the idea of diaspora (see *Why Diaspora?* below).

- *code repertoires*

In the dissertation I have struggled against the strong pull of talking about Copts as an 'imagined community' in the vein of Benedict Anderson (1991) and research that follows on his seminal work (see Chapter Six). Instead of imagined community, I have used the term semiotic community, drawing on the definitions of language and semiotic ideology above. Bringing the tools of linguistic anthropology to bear on the concept of community in my view creates an object that is less illusive and psychologically driven.

The term community is not without contention even within linguistic anthropology. The work of Gumperz (e.g., 1968) and Silverstein (1998a, 1998b) is useful in understanding how community can be a viable unit of analysis. Gumperz defines a speech community as "any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language use" (1968:381). Silverstein draws on this work, as well as that of Whorf (1956), to create a contrast

between speech community and linguistic community, a linguistic community (or a language community) being:

a group of people who, in their implicit sense of the regularities of linguistic usage, are united in their adherence to the idea that there exists a functionally differentiated norm for using their 'language' denotatively (to represent or describe things), the inclusive range of which the best language users are believed to have mastered in the appropriate way (Silverstein, 1998:285).

Although 'community' had its heyday as a unit of analysis in the 1970s, now often abandoned in favor of publics (Habermas, 1991, Calhoun, 1992; Gal and Woolard, 2001; Warner, 2002), I found it useful theoretically in part because it was grounded in the ethnography of my fieldwork. The Coptic Orthodox Church in Germany is divided into *Gemeinde*. The word is sometimes translated as parish, but in my opinion is more accurately translated as community. In German, this term has a close relationship to another term "Gemeinschaft" (*lit.* together-creation), which can also be translated as community and is part of a powerful dichotomy between *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (civil society), which has driven theoretical discourses on the nation and the state for over a century (see Tonnies, 2001) and the discourse on publics. It is also linked to the idea of the folk (*das Volk*), which was influential in the development of (German) nationalism (see Herder, 1993; Olender, 1992; Baumann and Briggs, 2000). The term *folk* is used to describe the congregation of the Coptic Orthodox Church. The use of these terms engages the mutually reinforcing dialogic between theory (including language ideology) and ethnography.²⁶

²⁶ As with Gal's (2005) analysis of the public/private dichotomy, we should think of these as constructs, which are "amenable to reformulation into alternative models through further discursive activity" (Agha, 2005:2, summarizing Gal, 2005). In the case of a diaspora community they are also constructed through the relevant categories from Egypt and Arabic such as الشعب, the folk (V).

The definition of code-switching, and its distinction from other terms such as code-mixing, is the topic of an extensive literature in linguistics. What constitutes language shift, and how it is identified, is also a topic of much debate. What is indisputably necessary to define code-switching and shift is an understanding of a code repertoire by the speaker or analyst such that there are recognized to be multiple codes embedded within the speech of an individual or a group in dialogue. I describe the codes of the diaspora in *Language Family: the Code Choices in Overview* in Chapter Two as Coptic, German and Arabic. There I provide some details of the present and historical variability of each language. Both German and Arabic have ideologies of diglossia and strong regional variation as well as a standard language ideology. In a similar way to Ferguson (1959) and Silverstein (1996) referenced in that chapter, Fishman (1967), another influential thinker on diglossia, uses Arabic as an example of diglossia with bilingualism, although his definition of the terms differs significantly from Ferguson. He describes a conflation of the standard and sacred language and dialects, which I suggest can not only present for analysts, but part of the language ideologies of speakers as well.

"[U]pper and upper middle class males throughout the Arabic world...use classical (koranic) and vernacular (Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, Iraqi, etc.) Arabic and not infrequently, also a Western language (French or English, most usually) for purposes of intragroup scientific or technological communication (Blanc, 1964; Ferguson, 1959; Nader, 1962)" (Fishman, 1967:31).

In Chapter Two I draw out some of the compelling differences and similarities between ideologies of Arabic and German and the ones surrounding Coptic in the diaspora, including that both Arabic and Coptic are sacred languages attached through processes of iconization to two different religions (Islam and Coptic Orthodox Christianity, respectively).

At several points in the dissertation, including Miriam's declaration that she speaks "Egyptian Arabic" (Figure 2.6) and the sermon in Egyptian Arabic (Figure 5.7b), it is clear that

ideologies and practices of dialectal variation are important pieces of the language ideologies of this community. In Chapter Four I describe how one can see the impact of dialect variation and (ideologies of) language contact in the orthography of the textual transcriptions. The Coptic transliterations belie Arabic influence to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the text, and the Arabic transliterations belie their origins in Egypt. Despite the importance of ideologies of dialectal and regional variation for all three languages, I have discussed them throughout the dissertation as three distinct and standard unities because I argue this is how they are experienced and negotiated through what Michael Silverstein (1996) has called the hegemony of the standard, especially in the cases of Arabic and German.

Although distinctions at a finer level of analysis are made in metacommentary and in social interaction, I suggest that the projection of Germany and Europe as future, with the accompanying language shift, is performed at the level of the standard and motivated by ideologies of standard, such that Arabic as a whole experiences an iconization with Islam and Arabs and is rejected for this reason. Other types of linguistic variation are under erasure (Gal and Irvine, 2000) in this model, just as differences within Christianity are erased in the construction of the ecumene. In using the terms German, Arabic and Coptic in a monolithic sense in the analysis I do not advocate for the erasure of linguistic difference, but suggest that these terms accurately represent the languages as lived through dominant discourses. Thus, the discussion of code repertoire is part of the discussion of semiotic, speech and linguistic/language community because the definition of the languages is intimately linked to the understandings of the speakers as a community.

Topics in the Anthropology of Christianity

The dissertation aims to follow Joel Robbins's call to establish an anthropology of Christianity. In his 2003 article, "What is a Christian?" he claimed that one could not yet say that there is such an entity, but called for the creation of the field following the success of scholars in creating an Anthropology of Islam (el-Zein, 1977; Asad, 1986). Although there has always been work on Christianity in anthropology, Robbins has petitioned for a discourse around the topic with a set of comparative questions for scholars to engage across ethnographic examples, recognizing the relevance of work on the topic for their own analysis (2003:191). In his 2007 article, Robbins identified other scholars attempting to engage in such a discourse (Cannell (2006), Keane (2007), Scott (2005)) but still asserted that the subfield had thus far failed to develop. In this section I outline some of the ways I imagine my work fitting into the anthropology of Christianity, and in so doing hope to inspire the continued effort to support the subfield and show how my work is a contribution to it. I also intend to help answer Rogers (2010:352) astute question: What contribution can studying Eastern Christianity [in that volume including Oriental Orthodoxy] have beyond correcting the common "slippage" by which one part of Christianity (Protestant, Catholic or Western) is made to stand for the whole? In this section I suggest some of those contributions.

• *Christian unity*

Robbins (2003) critiques the tendency in the discipline to destroy the object of analysis, Christianity, highlighting how scholars usually discuss Christianities plural, as if they have little in common with one another. My exploration of both the Coptic diaspora and the ecumene is an argument that by examining *ethnographically* we can see ways in which Christianity should be *theoretically* taken as a unity. It is a unity for those Copts with whom I worked, even as they see

their own Coptic Orthodoxy as having a special place within it (Chapters Three and Six). It is a unity for Pope Benedict (Chapter Five). It is a unity even for Luther resting in his grave as the Coptic mass is performed above (Chapter Four).

In Chapter Three I briefly discuss the teleological view of the development (and eventual end) of religion that the anthropology of religion is still struggling to move beyond (see Lambek, 2000 and Cannell, 2005). Asad's (1993) brilliant book *Genealogies of Religion*, which asserts that Christianity is no longer defined by practice, but now by an internalized belief is a well-known example of the tendency, as already explored by Herzfeld (2003:48, cited and expanded in Rogers (2010:355)).²⁷ I suggest that not taking Christianity seriously as a unity is in fact subscribing to another piece of this teleological view of the development of religion, a compelling narrative, which imagines Christianity to have begun as a unity and then gradually, through the Reformation and other processes, to have splintered (Chapter Six).

In examining the ecumene, I explore how Christian communities themselves create and negotiate a unitary object of analysis, following on Hannerz (1996) and Keane's (2007) opening explorations on this topic (see Chapter Six). I suggest the predominant focus in anthropological studies of Christianity on Protestant forms of Christianity may obscure the ways in which Christian unity is structured and practiced, facilitating this definition of 'Christianities.' Hann and Goltz (2010) have reinforced a point I make in Chapter Six:

"[T]he Orthodox churches can stake a strong claim to be more global in the original Christian sense of church unity: they form a global structure of local churches, as distinct from the "globalization" of a

²⁷ Bialecki, Haynes and Robbins, 2008 also discuss Asad's important work and the way in which this characterization of belief as central to Christianity may cause anthropologists to misrepresent the lives of people who practice Christianity in other ways, although their examples point towards this problem as it occurs when Christianity has been acquired recently through conversion (Robbins, 2007).

local church, be it the West Roman, the Wittenbergian, or the Genevan" (2010:3, italics removed).

I take this a step further, exploring how this strong sense of the global, through geographically situated Patriarchates, can be integrated into an even broader locative nesting to create the ecumene in Germany and a definition of Europe as Christian.

• *Christian diaspora*

While the ecumene presents a new way to see Christianity as a semiotic unity, I argue that the concept of diaspora, a pointing of Coptic Christianity back to Egypt, locates Coptic Orthodox Christianity such that it is not "global in its ambitions and self-conceptions" as in Robbins and Engelke's (2010:623) portrayal. See Chapter Three's section *Out of Egypt* and Robbins (2010), Bialecki (2009) and Keane (2007) for discussions of the way an Augustinian view of Christianity became a dominant conception of Christianity globally and in anthropological literature.²⁸ In contrast, I argue Coptic Orthodox Christianity is only heritable along certain genealogical lines (Chapter Two) and attached to the particular bounded space of Egypt, even when Egypt is in Germany (Chapter Three). Thus the diaspora is localizing in that it points back to a particular Egypt, but the ecumene is globalizing, not through missionization and conversion, but through an expanding definition of Christian and particular technologies of imagining ecumene as semiotic unity, such as through text and liturgy. The ecumene may appear to be in opposition to diaspora, but it is a distinctly diasporic phenomenon. As Bishop Damian asserts (Figure 3.13), the ecumene is not a possible construct in the homeland (see Heo, 2012 for a discussion of the anti-ecumenical view of Copts living in Egypt).

²⁸ Many scholars attribute this universalizing tendency to Paul, but as Bialecki (2009:114) has already noted this may be a (very influential) misreading of Paul's writing (see Stowers, 1997). Robbins (2010) traces the interest in Paul further to philosophical trends, focusing on the work of Agamben, Badiou and Zizek. (Robbins, 2010:650).

• *Christianity and narrative temporalities*

One of the areas of comparison and dialogue within the anthropology of Christianity is (I argue) on time and narrative. This theme is prominent in Robbins' own work (2001, 2004, 2007), which I engage in detail in Chapter Three as I articulate the time and space of the Coptic diaspora. Temporal projections are a dominant theme throughout the dissertation as I argue that the language shift to German, which I highlight in Chapters Four and Five, is driven in part by a larger sociological project with a particular semiotics of temporality. In this argument I engage with the ideas of hermeneuts such as Ricœur (1984), but also Dilthey (in Owensby, 1994), Gadamer (1984), and Derrida (1992), which are at the core of my interest in narrative constructions of time and, if somewhat unintentionally, answers the call of Robbins and Engelke (2010) to engage Christian philosophers and theologians in anthropological discussions of Christianity.

These philosophers offer tools for thinking about continuity as a part of Christianity, although they also offer perspectives on rupture. Many scholars of Christianity focus on conversion (see Chapter Two, *Conversion and Genealogy of Religion*) and the resulting discontinuity. Robbins (2007) critiques Comaroff and Comaroff's (1997) focus on continuity, claiming that they marginalize Christianity in their focus on non-Christian continuities because they do not take seriously the rupture of the conversion narrative. Robbins (2007) argued that "continuity thinking is the main obstacle to an anthropology of Christianity" (2007:18).²⁹ I submit instead that only certain types of Christianity focus on rupture. Continuity is found in abundance in Coptic Orthodox Christianity. I highlight not only the special features of a continuous past for the Coptic Orthodox Christianity, but also the continuity of the future

²⁹ I do not want to imply that Robbins is unaware of continuities within Christianity. Bialecki, Haynes and Robbins noting that "Christianity *in many of its forms* is a religion centered on sharp discontinuities" (2008:1144, italics added).

ecumene. In exploring these continuities I draw especially on the resources describes in the section on *Performance* above.

Why Diaspora? Coptic Orthodox Christians and Middle Eastern Diaspora

Diaspora as a term comes from the Greek, meaning scattered (*speiro*) about (*dia*). Diaspora always implies a point from which the community is scattered. As Weingrod and Levy have pointed out, this means that diaspora and homeland are often “twinned terms” (Weingrod and Levy, 2004:3). I argue that diaspora is an inherently indexical construction. Michael Silverstein (1976), following Peirce (1902), has defined indexes as “those signs where the occurrence of a sign vehicle token bears a connection of understood spatiotemporal contiguity to the occurrence of the entity signaled (Peirce, 1902; Silverstein, 1976:27). Highlighting the indexical quality of diaspora, Slyomovics in her work on the Palestinian village of Ein Hod discusses how many of the photographs in her memory book contain people pointing fingers (1998:11). In order to be considered a diaspora, I argue a community must be in an indexical relationship to another place that is not here but *there*. The dissertation illustrates the ways in which linguistic anthropology is uniquely equipped to address diaspora as a semiotic concept.

• *diasporic matters*

One of the benefits of the term diaspora is that it accentuates the ways in which the language shift and semiotics of temporality addressed in the dissertation are unique to the Coptic situation outside of Egypt and within Germany. This is also addressed in the *Why Germany?* section above. The focus on the circulation of text in the Coptic liturgy is uniquely diasporic (Chapter Four) since in Egypt the texts would not be engaged and circulated in the same ways. Code-switching in the liturgy (Chapter Five) also does not occur in the same ways, even in other parts of the diaspora, and the appearance in the liturgy of the temporal progression of the shift is

uniquely diasporic. I argue the processes of language shift in progress uncovered in Chapters Four and Five are related to the creation of the ecumene, which is also only a possibility outside of Egypt.

Even the explicit language ideologies in Chapter Two would not be articulated the same way in Egypt, as I argue they are tied to a rejection of Arab (race, religion and language) identity, which is a stance only openly articulated outside of Egypt. These sociological processes and language ideologies are *diasporic* in that they index experiences in/of the homeland. To see this one can consider the contrasting case of Antiochian Orthodox Christians in the United States. This group strongly self-identify as Arab or Arab American (see Stiffler, 2010, 2011). Stiffler argues that this is related to "complex homeland cultural, religious, and political reasons" (2010:14). I agree that this is true in the Coptic rejection of the label Arab as well (see *History and Institutions*), although I have tried to show throughout the dissertation how these "homeland reasons" are engaged and experienced through language ideologies and language use in the diaspora.³⁰

• *the powers of diaspora*

Since I have explored it in detail elsewhere in the dissertation, I will only now point to what I see as the "powers of diaspora" (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993, 2002), which as Boyarin and Boyarin have argued are the powers to be other than national, not subservient to the hegemony of the modern geopolitical construct of the nation. In Chapter Three I explore the multidimensionality of the Egyptian homeland as not exclusively, or even primarily, a national homeland. In Chapter Six I lay out what I see as Coptic Orthodoxy's challenge to Benedict

³⁰ Stiffler argues that "the Archdiocese maintained religiously and politically engaged in the Middle Eastern homeland, and the Antiochian Orthodox parishioners continually constructed and celebrated an Arab cultural identity through food festivals, *haflis* [parties], and *the continued use of Arabic in liturgical services*" (2010:14, italics added).

Anderson's theory of the national founded on "the dusk of religious modes of thought" (1991:11). The term transnational also takes as a given the national (see Jurgens, 2005:17). Appadurai's 1996 concept of the postnational has similar problems, while trying to overcome the hegemony of the national it embraces a teleology that must include the national.

I find the idea of diaspora useful in arguing against the idea that Christianity is always the religion of empire and the colonial (see *Topics in Anthropology of Christianity* above and Chapter Two). The concept of diaspora is more appropriate to the minority status of Copts. In a related vein I have chosen to use the twinned pairing diaspora/homeland rather than hostland/homeland because of the way in which the terminology of 'hostland' plays into the structuring of immigrants in Germany as guests, as *Gastarbeiter* (guest worker), which is historically how they were structured after World War II when Germany encouraged labor migration to rebuild German infrastructure. Although theories of hospitality are of central importance to communities from the Middle East (for one example see Chapter Five, *Discourses on the Liturgy*), it is also the case that such constructions, which portray immigrants in Germany as only visitors, undermine their efforts to gain equal rights and citizenship.

• *diaspora and church*

A further reason to use the term diaspora when referring to Coptic Christians outside of Egypt is to provide an analytical separation between the Coptic Orthodox Church as an institution and Coptic Christians as a community. These two groups are not identical and in fact it is a weighted ideological project for the Coptic community and the Coptic Orthodox Church to be seen as one and the same or for the former to be under the authority of the latter. By not confusing the diaspora community with the church as an institution we can see the work that is necessary to construct each for the other and also how the former may distance itself from the

latter or vice versa. As Fiona McCallum (2010) has noted, the focus within scholarship of Middle Eastern Christians on the church leadership and the church as institution (e.g., 2007) may “mask internal divisions within the Christian community and attempts to bridge them” (2010:486) as well as the impact these divisions may have on politics, etc.

The dissertation in its focus around the church, monastery and university may sometimes privilege the views of those in the church hierarchy, such as in Chapter Three where the evidence is drawn primarily from conversations with Bishop Damian. Aware of this tendency, I have shown throughout how the church is co-constructed by those in the diaspora, at all levels of church hierarchy and by community members at various degrees of remove from that hierarchy. I have included in the discussion of hierarchies of knowledge and socialization into the liturgy, converts, visitors and Germans not affiliated with the church (Chapter Four). Language ideologies motivating language shift, even in the liturgy, may be as much in keeping with processes and interests outside of the hierarchy as within it (Chapter Five).

The term diaspora can, on the one hand, allow for community belonging that is not defined by the church as institution. On the other hand, the diaspora construction always indexes a homeland, in the Coptic case Egypt, and Egypt is imagined to be connected to Coptic Orthodox Christianity in particular ways, which localize the community over and against other branches of Christianity (Chapter Three). Thus defining the community as diaspora (pointing back) as opposed to another type of (semiotic) community (*Gemeinde* within a German *Gesellschaft*) may privilege the role of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Coptic belonging. In her rich ethnography of Chaldean Christian diaspora, Yasmeeen Hanoosh discusses the "transnational social field" of the Chaldean diaspora in "the traditional identification sites of the family, church and coethnic institutional networks" (2008:32). By identifying the church as only one of several sites for

articulating Chaldeanness, Hanoosh effectively contests such a tendency. Approaching this problem from another angle I have shown throughout the dissertation how the church is constructed and contested at many levels (and degrees of remove from) the church hierarchy.

Outline of the Dissertation

In the Preface and Chapter One, I have presented my fieldsite and the condition of my fieldwork. I explore being at home in Berlin and its diasporas, and situate the Coptic community within Berlin. I begin with a discussion of how Copts negotiate their understanding of themselves and others as diaspora, especially in opposition to Berlin's large Turkish and Muslim minority community, through locations and the placement of home in Berlin's landscape. Chapter One provides an overview of the history, institutions, and demographics of the Coptic Orthodox Church and diaspora community, situates the dissertation within some of the relevant anthropological literatures, and outlines the remaining chapters.

Chapter Two is entitled “Codes of Relatedness, Languages of Belonging.” In this chapter, I examine the overlap that members of the Coptic Orthodox diaspora perceive between race, religion, and language, such that all three are seen as heritable characteristics. This chapter draws on interview data to outline some of the important language ideologies that accompany the multiple languages of the diaspora (German, Arabic and Coptic), including how each language is valued or devalued, so that the reader is prepared to understand the in-depth analysis of the chapters that follow. I explore the iconization process that may lead Copts to reject Arabic as their native language in the diaspora and facilitate a shift towards German.

Chapter Three is entitled “From Egypt to Egypt: Narratives of Time and Space in the Coptic Orthodox Diaspora, Germany and Christianity.” Narrative constructions of space and time are explored through a close examination of the creation and contestation of Germany as

Egypt and as having an Egyptian Christian past. This chapter draws for analysis on transcript data from tours of one of the Coptic Orthodox monasteries by Bishop Damian, and in so doing addresses the space and time of the Coptic diaspora, Christianity as a diaspora, and diaspora as a theoretical construct. This chapter is central to the argument of the dissertation as a whole, as it situates the construction of a Christian past and ecumenical future within Germany's landscape.

Chapters Four and Five are each explorations of different dimensions of the Coptic liturgy. Chapter Four, "Everything is Written in Books: Exploring a Textual Diaspora," articulates the tensions between language ideologies of comprehension and language as social action in the Coptic community, which are exhibited both explicitly in conversations and implicitly in the liturgical texts in two parts, a) exploring a textual diaspora and b) the intended liturgy. I argue these ideologies and their textual instantiations direct the language choices of the community by intending not only liturgical but also linguistic futures. The chapter includes an in-depth analysis of the multilingual presentation (and potential code switches) of the liturgy in diasporic texts.

In Chapter Five, "The Heteroglossia of the Liturgy," I explore how the language choices presented in the text (Chapter Four) are negotiated through code-switching in the performance of the liturgy. The chapter analyzes how the authoritative Word of the liturgy becomes heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981). This is an argument about the role of language in creating the time and space of the church. Performative language, including code choice, 'brings hither' (Kroskrity, 2009) and makes present the ancient (textual) liturgy. I argue that in the liturgy we can see the language ideology of German and Germany as future in practice and a resulting language shift in progress.

The title of Chapter Six is “Defining the Ecumene and the Limits of Europe.” For data I draw on attendance at ecumenical conferences and events organized for Coptic Orthodox Christians in the diaspora, such as youth conferences. This chapter explores Coptic efforts to incorporate themselves into the Christian majority in Europe through their language practices. I suggest that Copts construct themselves first and foremost as Christians, and Germany as a Christian country, to transform themselves into part of the majority. I argue that this project is both theological and political because in creating the boundaries of a Christian Europe, one can exclude Muslims, including Germany’s large Turkish population, from belonging within it. As with any political project, this one is embraced or rejected in varying degrees by different members of the community. Chapter Six is the culminating chapter of the dissertation. The preceding chapters show that the temporal and spatial construction of the ecumene is reinforced implicitly in the language practices (narrative, textual and liturgical) of the community.

CHAPTER TWO

Codes of Relatedness, Language of Belonging

Throughout the dissertation I engage with models of kinship as spatial (geographic) as well as temporal (genealogical). In many ways I feel I view the Coptic diaspora in Chapter One (and diaspora in general) as a house society, to use Lévi-Strauss's term (1982 [1975]). This is a theme to which I will return in Chapter Three exploring the building and rebuilding of Egypt in Germany. In this I am following work on the spatiality of kinship (e.g., Carsten, 1995a,b; Mueggler, 2001; Hallowell, 1992) as well as a plethora of literature specifically focused on kinship and the house in the Middle East and/or European diaspora (Bahloul, 1999; Bourdieu, 1973; Shryock and Howell, 2001; Chelcea, 2003).

In Chapter One, I explored some of the spatial constructions of Berlin and how Berlin is constructed as a home for the Coptic diaspora. This chapter has many links to that introduction, including continuing the exploration of how the diaspora is constructed in space as well as time. As Boyarin and Boyarin have simply put it, "Group identity has been constructed traditionally in two ways. It has been figured on the one hand as the product of a common genealogical origin and, on the other, as produced by a common geographical origin" (1993:693). One can imagine numerous other ways in which group identity may be constructed, but these two are compelling for Boyarin and Boyarin and for my research, probably not coincidentally. We are both working with religiously bounded diaspora communities. Chapters Two and Three both look broadly at the ways in which Copts construct their community as having a common genealogical and geographic origin.

The dissertation explores spatial constructs of home, nation, church and ecumene, often as overlapping categories. On the other hand, the current chapter draws out some of the ways in which the diaspora is constructed genealogically for Copts. In the diaspora, I argue race, religion and language are constructed as heritable and this ideology of heritability is important for community maintenance. I argue that this heritability creates an iconization³¹ (Irvine and Gal, 2000) between the three categories. I also argue this genealogical theory of community formation has strong affinities to a dominant model of relatedness in Germany. I hope to highlight in this chapter ideas about genealogical relatedness, kinship and belonging that exist both in the Coptic diaspora and in the larger German nation within which they reside. I will explore how these ideas may articulate with, and mutually reinforce, one another.

The impetus for the Preface was a struggle surrounding the spaces and places I had and had not lived in Berlin and how these spaces made sense for the community in which I worked, such that I was correctly placed in Berlin's landscape. Chapter One expanded into an exploration of how Copts placed themselves in this landscape to make sense of their diaspora as a community. Chapter Two arose as an extension of my original fieldwork dilemma. In my view my place outside of Coptic homes was indicative of how home, language, biology and religion not only overlap for Copts, but are indexes of each other in a semiotic theory of relatedness and belonging. As an exploration of these genealogical overlaps, this chapter shows just one facet of belonging in the Coptic diaspora, which should be viewed as one dimension of the play of space and language that I detail in other chapters.

³¹ "Iconization [see below] involves a transformation for the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked. Linguistic features [or in our case languages] that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature [or language] somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature of essence" (Irvine and Gal, 2000:37).

Genealogical Theories of Kinship and Race

Boyarin and Boyarin observe that genealogical theories of relatedness and belonging tend to be viewed negatively because of their association with race and by extension racism (1993:693). Boyarin and Boyarin suggest that genealogical theories of relatedness are tolerated in minority communities with limited power and influence. In this vein Hanoosh (2008), in her insightful ethnography on Chaldean Christians in Detroit, Michigan argued that preference for the patrilineal lineage of Chaldean Christians in their grocery store business was *misunderstood* as racism by the African Americans in the same community (2008:175, drawing on Aswad, 1993). Fishman's influential article (1985) likewise connects race and racism to power and he shows how 'ethnicity' is used instead, for similar genealogical theories of belonging, when the group in question has access to limited power.

It would indeed be possible to imagine a genealogical theory of belonging that did not lead to the extremes of racism. In this chapter I somewhat controversially discuss both the genealogical theories of Copts and the German majority under the rubric of race, which seems appropriate because of the way in which German histories of race and racial discrimination must be negotiated by all involved, whether of Coptic or German genealogical origin. In Germany the danger in these types of theories dominates discourses of genealogy due to the atrocities of the Holocaust. Yet, there are also prohibitions against these strategies of group belonging, especially when linked to the nation or nationalism in Germany.

These genealogical/racial arguments have a long and still influential history both within and beyond Europe. Racial arguments in Germany were commented upon and disputed by Franz Boas (1940) in the beginnings of the development of anthropology as a discipline. For the discipline of linguistics, genealogical theories of related languages lead to the reconstruction of

Indo-European and the idea of the language family (e.g., Irvine, 1995; Trautmann, 1992). Many anthropologists and historians continue to explore how racial theories of kinship still have currency and circulate in Germany and Europe today (e.g., Linke, 1999; Silverstein, 2004b) and have been instrumental in the German imagining of the nation (e.g., Brubaker, 1996; Klopp, 2002). Hobsbawm (1992) used Germany as his quintessential example of how a nation could be formed by imagining themselves as a unity on the basis of common ethnicity, structured as a common language and culture.

I do not want to suggest that Germans subscribe to a genealogical theory of relatedness, of being German, that lacks subtlety or complexity. Borneman is just one anthropologist of Berlin who has explored how the legal genealogy of relatedness in German is negotiated in everyday life against idealized kinship paradigms. (He argues it becomes a kind of Heideggerian ‘being cared for’ (1997:583).) Nevertheless, as I explore Coptic theories of relatedness in this chapter I want to situate them within German genealogical theories, which are still dominant, perhaps especially for those living in diaspora in Germany.

I knew several Copts in Germany who obtained German citizenship during my fieldwork. As Kanstroom has noted, “Laws of citizenship and immigration do more than regulate the entry and status of non-citizens; they reveal much about how a nation conceives itself” (1993:183, cited in Klopp, 2002:40). I suggest they also reveal to immigrants how they are expected to conceive of themselves. Obtaining German citizenship is a challenge because Germany continues to structure its citizenship laws around ‘blood’ (temporal relatedness) rather than ‘birth’ (spatial relatedness). If a person’s mother or father was German then they are German, no matter where they were born or where they had lived. A Turkish friend, who had never been to Germany, was able to obtain German citizenship through her deceased German mother.

Conversely, if one was not German by heritage, until very recently German citizenship was not available even to those who were born and grew up in Germany.

Beginning in 2000, the German government has slowly changed these laws so that people who have lived for a long time in Germany can also become German citizens. Nevertheless, Egyptians who become German must relinquish their Egyptian citizenship. Still today only people who acquire German citizenship at birth, that is through the blood model of relatedness, are eligible for dual citizenship without special permissions. This is only one example of how discourses in German, with which Copts interact on a state level, continues to privilege genealogy over geography for the construction of kinship relations. This example of the construction of citizenship also points to the ways genealogical theories in Germany often coalesce around the nation and what or who makes the nation.³²

• *Discourses in Silence*

In my view, Copts in the diaspora work within these genealogical constructions of kinship in their own self-understandings of relatedness and belonging, and these theories of the majority and the state in Germany interact with and can reinforce their own genealogical theories of belonging. When I have presented my work, scholars in my field have encouraged me to consider the ways in which race is a factor in everyday interactions for Copts in Germany, but it is challenging to address this because it seems to me that Copts where I worked, and this they have in common with many Germans, explicitly downplay the role of race in their own self-

³² When my Arabic teacher, Yustos, who became a German citizen, was questioned by his native German students about how he felt about giving up his Egyptian citizenship, he said that he enjoyed traveling to Egypt on a passport that did not list his religion. He felt this protected against some of the discriminations that he would otherwise experience as a Copt traveling in Egypt. Having successfully overcome a strong connection between genealogy and the nation in obtaining citizenship, he approved of the dissociation of religion from nation in the citizenship laws of today's Germany.

definition. What might be discussed in terms of race in the United States or England, is discussed in terms of other categories such as language, religion and spatial relations here.³³

When I was in Vienna with a group of Copts from the United Kingdom for a European youth conference, one young woman commented that she felt she was always being stared at in Austria because she did not look German. She constructed the stares as racially motivated, based on her phenotypic features, and her experience as one of racism. I had rarely heard Copts in Germany doing this explicitly. The Copts I spent a weekend with in Vienna from the United Kingdom were more open about negotiating racial vs. spatial constructions of citizenship and belonging than Copts in Germany.³⁴ One time that genealogical constructions of Germanness and race did come up explicitly was when I was questioning my friend Sharif in a formal interview, asking if he considered himself German. He had several different replies including,

Sharif: Ich weiß nur, was ich nicht bin. [Araber.]

Sharif: I only know what I'm not. [Implication from earlier in the interview: an Arab.]

But eventually he also said,

Sharif: Auch ein Deutscher mit schwarzen Haare und, uhh, braune Augen und so weiter, so was gibt es nicht.

Sharif: Also a German with black hair and, uhh, brown eyes and so on, that does not exist.³⁵

In Germany, spontaneous conversation about race is socially proscribed, as if silence on the topic of race will make genealogically-based ideologies of kinship and nation, and the problems of race and racism stemming from them, disappear. I am reminded of watching *American Beauty* in a cinema in Germany. There is a scene where the male teenage protagonist shows his girlfriend a plate his father got during World War II in Germany with a swastika on

³³ For analyses of how discussions of language may circulate racist discourses in the United States see for example Woolard (1989) and Hill (2001).

³⁴ I will return to this group of youth conference participants, who were young adults rather than children, in Chapter Six when I discuss the construction of the ecumene.

³⁵ For another mention of skin color see Luca's comment on discrimination and names (Figure 2.2).

the reverse side. It was as if the theater was holding a collective breath. I still do not know how to bring such silences into the analysis as a linguistic anthropologist.³⁶ These silences may be even more profound in Egypt.³⁷

Discourses on race circulate in Germany, and among Copts, but usually only in intimate circles. German reasons for not discussing race and genealogical theories of relatedness are often attributed to discourses of silence and/or guilt surrounding the Holocaust. I suggest Copts, on the other hand, have another reason for silence on this topic. This reason is that Copts in the diaspora often aspire to be in the unmarked category of “white.” Scholars working with the Arab American communities in the US have noted a similar tendency for Middle Eastern immigrants to identify as white (see Abdulrahim, 2008; Stiffler, 2010; Shryock and Lin, 2009; Majaj, 2000; Jamal and Naber, 2008). Speaking of the category of whiteness, what Stiffler (2010) says of Arab immigrants in the US applies here: “[T]he process through which Arab immigrants form racial identities is highly subjective’ (Abdulrahim, 2008) and highly contextual” (Stiffler, 2010:192). In my argument I articulate the important differences between these cases and the

³⁶ I remain confident, however, that they are just as meaningful as the clapping that broke out in another German movie theater years later when footage of the World Trade Center being hit was shown during the documentary *Bowling for Columbine*. Susan Gal has explored some of the problematics of researching silence. She raises three insights to explore in regards to silence: “First, and most generally, the example of silence suggests a close link between gender, the use of speech (or silence), and the exercise of power. But it also shows that the link is not direct. On the contrary, it appears that silence, like any linguistic form, gains different meanings and has different material effects within specific institutional and cultural contexts. Silence and inarticulateness are not, in themselves, necessarily signs of powerlessness” (1991:176). I only indicate some of the meanings of silence on race in the German/Coptic context and it is open to further research and interpretation. For an interesting piece on silence in Christianity see Richard Bauman’s (1974) work on Quaker silence.

³⁷ In 2000, I watched a video on German history at the Goethe Institute during a German language course. The video showed photographs of Holocaust survivors leaving concentration camps. One classmate asked the teacher when the video was finished, “Were those people Germans?” She was a German teacher in Egypt visiting for the summer to improve her German skills. Our teacher became visibly uncomfortable. It was a topic that required a degree of linguistic subtlety not available in an elementary level immersion German course. Afterwards, I asked the Egyptian student if she was aware that six million Jews were murdered in Germany during World War II and she said that she was not. This is an example of possible silences on race that Coptic immigrants to Germany may arrive in the country already negotiating. It has strong potential links to understandings of race and religion for Egyptians in Germany.

Coptic diaspora in Germany hinge on the connection of whiteness with authentic Egyptianness and the pasts and futures that are particular to racial and minority belonging in Germany.

There is a tension between this silence and other discourses, like those of ‘dangerous spaces’ discussed in Chapter One. The harassment and intimidation linked to both particular spaces and non-whiteness is at odds with this desire to construct oneself as belonging to the category of whiteness.³⁸ In an interview with my friend and Arabic teacher, Yustos, he described his experience of being discriminated against in Berlin as one of being mistaken for Muslim. This framing of discrimination, and the opportunity to avoid discrimination, in religious rather than racial terms will be discussed again in Chapter Six.

As I think back on the few times during my fieldwork when race was mentioned, I recall an offensive joke told to me when I visited a Coptic Church in another city about people employed to paint the White House. The three people in the joke were characterized as “*ein Weißer*,” (a white guy) “*ein Schwarzer*,” (a black guy) and “*ein Jude*” (a Jewish guy). In the joke, the Coptic joke-teller placed himself in the category of the white person. Although I will not go into the details of the joke here, I think the three categories of racial description that the joke uses are important to Coptic self-understanding.³⁹ Equally important is the way in which the racial categorization of this joke opens the door to the possibility that religious categories (such as Jewish) can overlap for Copts with racial categorization and contribute to the pervasive construction of religion as heritable, genetic or phenotypic (see below).

³⁸ As I commented in Chapter One, Bishop Damian’s denial of the dangerous spaces discourses could be construed as a denial of racial minority status.

³⁹ I was chastised by one of the other men present at the time for not verbalizing at the time how offensive I found the joke to be. Even as I write this chapter years later, I do not know how to address the overt racism, especially anti-semitism, that I found to be prevalent in the Coptic community. While using genealogical theories of kinship to distance themselves from Arabs and Muslims, anti-semitism is something Copts share with many Arabs.

I want to draw out below the ways in which these other categories (language, religion and space) take on a genealogically-limiting dimension. They are imagined to have characteristics similar to those of race as a social construct. They are imbued with characteristics that are imagined to be heritable, genetic, and even phenotypic in their manifestations.

Genealogical Theories of Religion

The overlap between biological race and religion, as indicated by the joke about the white guy, the black guy and the Jewish guy, reveals Coptic categories of belonging and relatedness. As has been my goal throughout, I do not want to suggest that these theories are either exclusive to Copts or shared by all Copts. They are also only one dimension of the relatedness and belonging that Copts negotiate in diaspora. On the other hand, I believe they have similarities and interactions with theories of race, religion and language as heritable that circulate both in Egypt and in Germany.

In conversations I had in Germany both with Copts and Germans, especially in the former East Germany, Jews and Judaism were rarely discussed. The religious dichotomy that is in discursive circulation, structured as an (almost) acceptable topic of discussion in Germany today, is that between Christians and Muslims. I argue this is especially true for Copts. Discourse about Jews was limited to either the most private or the most public of realms. It is a discourse that is reified, but one that is out of circulation.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ When I say it is a discourse that is out of circulation, I am thinking explicitly in terms of conversational circulation. In Chapter Three I discuss the rebuilding of the Church of Our Lady in Dresden as an example of creating privileged pasts through monuments. When this church opened its doors to the public for the first time on Reformation Day in 2005 the nearby synagogue also opened its doors. Unlike the Church of Our Lady, this synagogue is very clearly and intentionally *not* a reconstruction of the Dresden synagogue that was destroyed during the infamous burning of synagogues and destruction of Jewish property on Kristallnacht (November 9th, 1938). This original synagogue was designed by Dresden's premier architect Semper, whose Semper Opera House is now renovated and lauded with praise in the center of Dresden's Old Town. The modern synagogue which normally has very limited public opening hours, almost inaccessible to the working population of Dresden, opened for tours and viewing simultaneously with the opening of the Church of Our Lady. This was a powerful semiotic dialogue about the reconstruction of the Church of our Lady and Dresden's past, through the language of architecture.

For my purposes I want to highlight one aspect of what “die Juden” as a category does in discourses in Germany that I think has a powerful overlap and influence for Coptic understandings of kinship and diaspora in Germany. Judaism is clearly a religion that, within Germany, is also a racial categorization. I suggest in this chapter that today, in Germany, and for Copts, Jew is only one religious category, which can and often is racially defined. Christian and Muslim may be defined this way as well.

Copts in the diaspora structure themselves as descended from the pharaohs.⁴¹ One can find it as the heading of the section *Egypt: An Economic Geography*, written by Fouad and Barbara Ibrahim (2003), the members of the Hanover community whose statistics on Copts in Germany I discussed in Chapter One: “The Copts — the descendants of the Pharaohs as a minority today” (2003:23). Meinardus, the famous German Coptologist, in his work *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*, also opens with a description of how “the sons and daughters of the Pharaohs are filled with an unheard-of enthusiasm...through their Coptic Church” (1999:4).

In Coptic self-understanding, being descended from the Pharaohs means they are genetically distinct from the Arabs who conquered Egypt in 700 AD, bringing Islam with them. This is part of the reason that Sharif in his interview said, “*I am under no circumstances an Arab.*” (Ich bin auf keinen Fall Araber.)

Ibrahim and Ibrahim discuss the question of ‘physiognomy’ thus: first, they state “since Egyptian Muslims and Copts have largely the same ethnic origin, they cannot be differentiated according to physiognomy” (2003:24). But they go on to create a differentiation:

⁴¹ When I was writing my grant proposals, it was suggested to me that I should formulate this fact as “Copts believe they are descended from the people of the pharaohs”, since they are not all descended from the actual pharaohs, the rulers of ancient Egypt. However, “descended from the pharaohs” was the dominant formulation I encountered in fieldwork.

However, the ancestors of the Egyptian Muslims may have intermarried with other Muslims who came to their country... The Copts, on the other hand, remained by and large ethnically unmixed. So, neglecting the minor influences of the Greeks and the Romans who ruled over Egypt from 332 BC to AD 641, one may consider them the direct descendants of the ancient Egyptians” (ibid.).

Thus, Ibrahim and Ibrahim argue they are the true Egyptians and have a claim to a kind of racial purity that separates them from the Arabs, a separation that can be identified by their religion in that Copt becomes both a designation for a person of a certain religion (Christianity) and race (Pharaonic). Ibrahim and Ibrahim support this overlap by discussing how the word Copt comes from the word Qibt, from the Greek, which the conquerors used for Egyptians.⁴² In this light Ibrahim and Ibrahim, in their 2000 paper, placed a 1981 statement by Pope Shenouda to the effect that Copts were not a minority in Egypt in the same way as Armenians or Kurds (2000:101). As they say,

Many of those who do not consider the Copts a minority give as reasons for this that Muslims and Copts in Egypt are inseparably linked by a common language, a common culture and a common ethnic identity (ibid.).

They suggest instead that Coptic Christians could not be a minority because they are the quintessential Egyptians with a different language, culture and ethnic identity.

The iconizations I outline in the dissertation between race, language, religion and land are always fluid and negotiable, however. In an interview with my Arabic teacher, Yustos, he said being Coptic (Christian) was in his blood (Figure 2.1, Line 1), which supports a genealogical theory of religion, but he no longer considered himself Egyptian (Figure 2.1, Line 5).

| | | | |
|---|----|--|--|
| 1 | Y: | Also ich bin Kopte und das liegt in meinem Blut. Also und mit Kopte meine ich, äh, christlich. | Okay, I am a Copt and that lies in my blood. Okay, and with Copt, I mean, um, Christian. |
| 2 | E: | Ja. | Yes. |

⁴² The overlap that is also evident in these arguments between these categories and the spaces of Egypt and Europe will be discussed in Chapters Three and Six.

| | | | |
|---|----|---|--|
| 3 | Y: | Ja und das ist schon in meinem Blut und so identifiziere ich mich. Äh, aber ich bin jetzt nach so vielen Jahren in Deutschland eher Deutscher als Ägypter, also mehr deutsch als Ägypter. | Yes and that is already in my blood and so do I identify myself. Um, but I am now, after so many years in Germany, rather a German than an Egyptian, okay, more German than an Egyptian. |
| 4 | E: | Mmhmm. [laughs] Aber immer noch Ägypter? [laughs] | Mmhmm. [laughs] But still always an Egyptian? [laughs] |
| 5 | Y: | Gut, [laughs] für mich selber also ich, ich betrachte mich jetzt nicht mehr als Ägypter. | Well, [laughs] for me, myself, okay, I, I don't see myself now anymore as an Egyptian. |
| 6 | E: | Okay, ahh. | Okay, ahh. |
| 7 | Y: | Aber Kopte, ich bin Kopte. | But a Copt, I am a Copt. |

Figure 2.1: Yustos on identity labels

I suggest here that for Copts there is a powerful overlap between Jews and Judaism, Copts and Christianity, *and* Arabs and Islam such that the racial categories are icons for the religious categories. Within Egypt, Copts consider themselves to be Arab and they participate in discourses of pan-Arab unity (Jones, 2000:231), but in the diaspora Copts are adamantly not Arabs. Arabs conquered Egypt and brought with them Islam in 700 AD, such that the conquest becomes part of the theory of the overlap between race and religion. Muslims are racialized as Arabs. Through these three categories religion becomes not only genealogical but also inevitably inherited and racial. This is an iconization (Irvine and Gal, 2000), such that two potentially distinct categories become icons of one another. By being Christian and becoming part of the ecumene, as I will discuss it in Chapter Six, Copts can stake claim to whiteness and Europeanness. In this theory, whiteness as a racial category and Christianity as a religion reinforce one another, so that by being one a person can index that they are also the other. In other chapters, especially in Chapter Six, I will argue that these genealogies are also linked to the space of Europe in the diaspora.

One of the consequences of this genealogy of religion I will discuss below is its impact on conversion and universality in Coptic Christianity. In other chapters I will explore other dimensions of the tripartite theory of race, religion and language as heritable as they relate to the creation of Germany and Egypt in diaspora, textuality and liturgy, and the ecumene. In Chapter Six I suggest the possibility that the connection of Europe as a space with Christianity as a religion can be part of a political project to exclude Muslims from Europe.

• *Conversion and Christianity as heritable*

It is important to emphasize at the outset this notion of Christianity as heritable, as biological or even racial, because so much literature on Christianity, especially in Anthropology, has focused on types of Christianity in which conversion plays a major role (e.g., Coleman, 2000; Cannell, 2005). Many important anthropological works on Christianity address the ways in which conversion takes place (e.g., Harding, 1987; Robbins, 2004; Van der Veer, 1996), possibly because anthropologists have historically worked in colonial and missionary settings, which have a close relationship with Christianities of conversion (e.g., Comaroff and Comaroff, 1997; Fabian, 1991). Conversion and the potential inclusiveness of Christianity that follows from it may even be described by scholars as one of its distinctive features as a religion, especially what distinguishes it from Judaism (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993; Keane, 2007). In contrast, Coptic Christianity is not a Christianity primarily defined by the process of conversion and because of this was *limited* in a way that Christianity rarely is addressed as being in the literature.⁴³ Other chapters will focus on the ways in which Coptic Christianity is inclusive, but these genealogical

⁴³ This topic will be taken up again in Chapter Six and explored from other angles, including by examining how the ecumene is an alternative method for expanding membership. I do not mean to imply that Coptic Christianity, or Orthodox Christianity more broadly, has never been interesting in evangelism in other times or other places (see Kan, 1999 and Werth, 2001), but in the diaspora community in which I worked proselytizing was not engaged as an activity.

theories are exclusive. It is an exclusivity which may even be a necessary part of defining them from a theoretical standpoint as a Christian diaspora (see Chapter One).

One might assume conversion is downplayed because converting to Christianity in Egypt is illegal. However, even in the diaspora there is a lack of interest in conversion except along familial lines. This exclusive focus on familial conversion is part of a genealogical theory of Christianity. This is not to say that people do not convert to Coptic Christianity. I met people during my fieldwork who were planning on converting from other branches of Christianity.⁴⁴ However, the vast majority converted along family lines. Most were women converting because they were marrying Copts and conversion was necessary or desired in order for them to be married in the church. (On the occasion of one wedding I attended at the monastery, the baptism of the pregnant bride took place in the morning before the liturgy and wedding service.)

One friend of mine at the church, Sophia, wanted to convert to Coptic Christianity from a previous latent Christianity growing up in the former East Germany.⁴⁵ She very much wanted to convert so she could be married in the church. I was planning my wedding at the time and she talked about how meaningful having one wedding ceremony, as I did, was to her. Although she came to church almost every week during the period of my fieldwork, her conversion process was stalled for the duration. The priest, who had met her fiancé in Egypt, continued to discourage her from converting for a church wedding ceremony. He advised her instead to have a civil ceremony and make sure that the marriage was going to last before converting and having a church ceremony at a later date.

⁴⁴ All the hopeful or successful converts I met were converting from Christianity to Christianity.

⁴⁵ Sophia reappears in the dissertation as one of the converts engaging with theories of comprehension in the liturgy in Chapter Four. When I say “previous latent Christianity” I mean to acknowledge that it was important to her that she had been to church with her grandmother as a child in the former East Berlin.

Sophia's experience is an example of how strong the connection can be between kinship and conversion. Becoming and staying a Coptic Christian after having (potentially) lost the accompanying kinship connection to a Copt, like her fiancé, was almost unheard of.⁴⁶ On the other hand, one German doctor I met who had been married to a Coptic man for a year described their decision to get married thus, "*Michael suggests it, and I said yes.*" ("Michael hat es vorgeschlagen und ich habe ja gesagt.") But this woman was six months pregnant at the time of her wedding ceremony. Conversion was quick because kinship was coming on its heels.

I did meet several German men whose reasons for conversion were stated as theological rather than genealogical, but even in these cases, the genealogical connection was prominent. Daniel stated that his reason for wanting to convert from Catholicism to Coptic Orthodoxy was that the Catholic Church would not allow the dissolution of his failed marriage under any circumstances whereas the Coptic Church recognized the possibility for divorce in the event of adultery.

I suggest that conversion in Coptic Christianity happens along family lines as part of a larger ideology. Christianity for Copts is transmitted in a genealogical, genetic or even racial way. Conversely, for Copts it may not be possible to convert from Christianity to another religion in any true sense, in part because of the iconic overlap between these categories.⁴⁷ For my purposes here, I want to set out this possibility for the reader as a workable contrast to the way in which Christianity is usually thought of in anthropological literature. The possibility of conversion to Christianity should not be understated, but so too, the imperative nature of the

⁴⁶ Sophia never did marry her Egyptian fiancé or convert to Coptic Christianity. When I returned to the church in 2011 and asked about her whereabouts, I was told she had not been to church in "*an eternity.*"

⁴⁷ In Egypt it is forbidden for Muslims to convert to Christianity and in Islam it is considered an apostasy to do so. Given this, there is a tension between the idea of being Christian as essential and heritable, which has obvious similarities to genealogical theories of religion in Islam (see Chapter One), and a desire for Copts to distance themselves from Koranic prohibitions against conversion.

Biblical warrant for conversion in Christianity, focusing on its possible universality should not be overstated, especially when the emphasis on universality may occlude the ways it can be limited (spatially, culturally, and linguistically, for example). In this alternative view, Christian is not primarily about belief or practice, but an essential characteristic with which a person is born (see Figure 2.1).⁴⁸ I will expand on the ideas presented here, as well as present the tensions and contradictions inherent in them, in the rest of the dissertation. Many of the other chapters focus on the ways in which Copts seek inclusiveness, but in this chapter I address some of the ways they perpetuate exclusivity. In the following section of this chapter I explore how language travels along kinship lines for Copts becoming part of this tripartite genealogical theory of belonging and relatedness.

Not “Code referring to Code”: Coptic Names, German Names⁴⁹

In the first two sections of this chapter, I have outlined the way in which race and religion are imagined and manipulated in the Coptic diaspora in order to draw attention to the racial imagining of religion for Copts and vice versa. I would like to suggest further that these theories of race and religion also overlap and converge with a theory of language as heritable. Throughout the dissertation I mention several times the significance of names in placing people and defining people for the Coptic community. Even after I changed my name to Hein during my fieldwork, people would still comment on my maiden name, Carter, usually with a reference to the former US president. At one time during my fieldwork my mailbox gained graffiti: the residents of my apartment became Diana Ross and Jimmy Carter, which shows that this association was not limited to Copts. But for Copts, given names were a particularly important

⁴⁸ Although I do not explore this dimension fully here I believe this is not a view that Copts hold alone, but one which I would suggest is prevalent, if mostly unspoken, among many Germans today. Some examples of this are provided in Chapter Three when I explore the construction of Germany as a Christian space.

⁴⁹ Where the names discussed in this section would identify a single individual the names have been changed, while as much as possible maintaining the coherence of the examples.

way of indexing a person as Coptic. Names were not, as Jakobson (1990) claimed, code referring to code.

In his groundbreaking 1956 article entitled *Shifters and Verbal Categories*, Roman Jakobson suggests that names, unlike the other linguistic signs, are code that cannot be defined without reference to the code, that they are circular in that the code refers to the code C/C and not to any meaning (C/M). In his words, “to paraphrase Bertrand Russell (1940), there are many dogs called Fido, but they do not share any property of “Fidoness” (Jakobson, 1990:387-88).” This limited and, given Jakobson’s genius, disappointing section on proper names is, as anthropologists have argued since, a very culturally-specific theory. Even Jakobson’s own example undermines it since there is a certain quality of dogness attributable to the name Fido and it is unlikely anyone in the United States where Jakobson was writing would call their child Fido.⁵⁰

It is not clear names are code referring to code for anyone, but the ways in which they are code referring to message has diverse manifestations across cultures. In this section, I discuss the linguistic ideologies about names that Copts and Germans share and show how names are imagined as showing who your family is, where you come from, and who you are racially, religiously and linguistically. This is one example of the heritability and genealogy of language for Copts, which also shows some of the tensions of belonging they negotiate with their naming choices. From this point, I will move into an exploration of the connection between the heritability of language and code choice, which I will continue to explore throughout the dissertation.

⁵⁰ I am grateful to John Haviland (personal communication) for this observation about the quality of dogness attributable to the bearer of the name Fido.

The significance of a given name for Copts was emphasized for me by my Arabic teacher in Berlin. I had been wondering for a while if he was a Copt when he finally told me that *he* knew who *I* was. He had been trying to decide if I was the woman his friend had told him about who was studying Copts in Berlin and attending the Coptic Orthodox Church. I said I had not been sure if he was Coptic and he replied that I should have known he was Coptic because of his name, Yustos. Another woman I talked with told me that her husband had always said if he had a son he wanted to name him after the much beloved late Pope Cyril whom he had met personally. Her son's name was Kyrillos, the Coptic equivalent of the name, which in her own native language (German) would be Kyrill (Cyril). Yustos commented that he had specifically chosen a Coptic way of writing his name in Roman script. (As Justus, it would otherwise not be marked as non-German.)

However, not all Copts choose Christian and notably Coptic names for their children. One man I interviewed specifically said that his father in Egypt had chosen names which were not obviously Christian, but were bivalent, marking the bearer as neither Christian nor Muslim or either Christian or Muslim. Alternatively, some Coptic members born in Egypt had names that were not Coptic Christian, but linked to Ancient Egypt, like Amun. Whether they bore or chose names that displayed their Coptic heritage, were ambivalent on this point, or linked them to Ancient Egypt, all the Copts I spoke with were very aware of and careful about how names displayed important information about a person's heritage. For Copts it was clear that parents chose a name for their child that was intended to be a message about their heritage and religion or actively to disguise such a message.

Not all names chosen in the diaspora linked their bearer strongly to Egypt. Ibrahim and Ibrahim in fact make a point of elaborating statistically that "70 per cent of the children's names

chosen by immigrants and their spouses are European ones... This implies a strong readiness to accept European culture” (2000:122).⁵¹ One example of a European name from the church community in Berlin is the child named Gottfried. This name is clearly religious, meaning as it does “God’s Peace,” and also indisputably German, being the first name of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, the German mathematician and philosopher. It is also a name that only someone somewhat alienated from mainstream German naming norms would give their child today.

When little Gottfried was called up by the Bishop to become a deacon in the church, he was asked his name and responded Gottfried. However, the Bishop told him that his name must be a “Christian” name. His father on the sidelines quickly produced the name of one of the four evangelists, which was used in the ceremony as their son’s name. So in the event that a name did not appropriately index heritage in a given context, another name could be provide that would fulfill the role.

The idea that a name is a genealogical and religious marker is not unique to Copts. This ideology of name as message is reinforced by German naming practices. In Germany, there are many rules imposed by the state restricting a parent’s options in naming their child. When I was pregnant with my son I was sent to a special office for family names because the person presiding over the last names A-H at the town hall in Prenzlauer Berg felt the fact that I had the middle name Carter made it unclear what our family name (Familiename) was. If you are married in Germany you must declare a family name, the last name you will give any children if you have any together, as part of your legal marriage document. The lack of this clarification on

⁵¹ The reader will remember from Chapter One that Ibrahim and Ibrahim’s project is to show how the Coptic community in Germany is an ideal example of successful immigrant integration. That they use one of their only thirteen graphs and tables in this article to talk about names is an indication of how important they are in establishing heritage and belonging for Copts. This graph follows directly from one in which they establish that 68% of Copts reported speaking mostly German at home with only 15% reporting speaking mostly Arabic (Ibrahim and Ibrahim, 2000:121), showing the strong ideological link between other types of language shift and names.

our United States marriage license became the focus of investigation. I was sent to another office to obtain the correct document to confirm our family name.⁵²

This preoccupation with the connection between names and heritage was not only a state imposition, however. A German teacher I had was horrified when I told her that a friend's parents in the United States had invented her last name. "How would you know who her parents were?" she asked. For Germans, no less than Copts, the preoccupations with names is related to family and the transparency of genealogy and kinship.

Names are not only message referring to message (M/M), in contrast to Jakobson's theory, but in Germany they convey a very particular message about your heritage. For the anthropologist, they are one window into ideologies of the heritability of language. As I stated above, names are important to both Copts and Germans because they indicate who your family is, where you come from, and what kind of person you are, racially, religiously and linguistically. One day when Paul was describing ways in which he had been discriminated against as a Copt in his daily life in Egypt I asked him how people would know that he was a Copt. He showed me the tattoo of a cross on the inside of his wrist, which he claimed was a common tattoo for Coptic men.⁵³ Of discrimination against particular names in Egypt, Luca said in an interview:

⁵² I emerged with a letter from the irritated bureaucrat in that office stating that if the British government had accepted that my last name was Hein then the German government needed no further documentation in order to accept it as well. When my son was born in a district in the former West Berlin that office required significantly fewer documents to establish his name and acquire his birth certificate than I had been told would be necessary in the former East German Prenzlauer Berg courthouse. This would be interesting to explore further in relation to the reputation of the Eastern districts as being unfriendly to foreigners (Ausländer) (Chapter One) and what Caroline Humphrey (2002) has observed about the way in which having the right papers is a vital, and sometimes impossibly circular, preoccupation in Russia.

⁵³ Meinardus discusses both tattoo and name together in an appendix on these "two marks of identification": "[T]o this day, tattoo and name are the two distinguishing marks of the Coptic minority in the Nile Valley, whether they happen to be Orthodox, Catholic, or Evangelical Copts" (1999:265).

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Luca: Also ich als Kopte, also ich war vor allem, wegen meinem Vornamen Anton fühlte ich mich in Ägypten nicht so ganz heimisch. Und in Deutschland so auch wegen der Hautfarbe und..und so also irgendwie, bei mir ist das halt komisch, daß ich vielleicht in beiden Ländern nicht so ..ähm.. nicht so richtig angekommen bin.</p> | <p>Luca: Okay, I, as a Copt, okay, I was primarily, because of my first name, Luca, I didn't feel totally at home in Egypt. And in Germany in a similar way because of my skin color and...and therefore somehow, with me it's a little strange, that I feel in both countries not so... um... not so completely settled.</p> |
|--|--|

Figure 2.2: Luca on discrimination in Egypt and Germany

While both tattoos and names can mark a person as a certain type of being, there is an element of choice involved. Parents choose a name for their child, even if it is constrained by the state, church or other institutions, and the parents I talked to discussed names in this light. At the same time, a name is linked to messages about your genealogical status and it is not chosen by the bearer. In the section that follows, I will explore how Copts and Germans perceive language as a whole to be heritable in similar ways, but without this element of choice. Language is an attribute of personhood that a person inherits from their family, and as such is an icon for religion and race in the ways I have discussed above.

Language Family: the Code Choices in Overview

The complexities of code choice for Copts in the diaspora will be a topic to which I return throughout the dissertation, especially in Chapters Four and Five where I will lay out, in relationship to the liturgy, many of the tensions created by the multilingualism of the diaspora that I discuss here. In this section, I would like to provide an overview of the code choices available to Copts and situate them within what I argue is a theory of language as heritable such that race, religion and language may all become icons of one another. In this language ideology, all three (race, language and religion) are acquired through kinship.

This is not an ideology without complexity, and even contradiction, in the diaspora as people negotiate their language choices. Those will be explored throughout the dissertation. But

in this section I hope to prepare the reader in part for the potentially surprising fact that the Copts I met in the diaspora were uninterested, or even actively opposed, to maintaining what I considered to be their native language of Arabic. To do this I will show how code is connected to the overarching theory of relatedness and belonging that I have been outlining in this chapter.

First, I will provide an overview of the languages in this community. The Coptic diaspora with which I worked in Germany is a multilingual one. The languages at play are Coptic, Arabic and German with limited use of English when interacting with the anthropologist.⁵⁴

- *Coptic*

Coptic as a language shares a name with Copts as a group, which already facilitates an iconization between the language and the people. The language is descended from Ancient Egyptian and when discussed in the academic literature the language called Coptic refers to Ancient Egyptian once it was no longer written in hieroglyphics and instead was written in a variation on the Greek alphabet.⁵⁵ Coptic is part of the Afro-Asiatic language family⁵⁶, but by the point in the evolution of the language that the term Coptic refers to, it was very much a contact language, heavily influenced lexically by Greek.

There are several distinct dialects of Coptic which differ significantly. Sahidic is the variety most often learned in universities because it is the dialect of most of the Coptic language literature that is vital to the history of the early church. Bohairic is the dialect used in the Coptic liturgy. There is some dispute in the academic literature as to whether Bohairic was a different regional dialect that co-existed with Sahidic or whether it is a temporally distinct version of

⁵⁴ Many Copts speak English very well due to the British colonial legacy in Egypt and the resulting strong support of English language education in the schools.

⁵⁵ At the time of this scriptural transition, there was a Greek administration in Egypt and efforts to missionize to the native community were underway.

⁵⁶ The primary dictionary of the language (Crum, 1939) is organized as if it were part of the Hamito-Semitic language family.

Coptic, a more recent development of the language under the influence of Arabic. Copts understand Bohairic as an alternative variant that was co-eval with Sahidic, but it was not used in the Coptic liturgy until the 11th century.

In addition to this already complex linguistic history, as spoken today in the liturgy, I was told by a church member, Coptic bears the mark of a 19th century shift in pronunciation to try to assimilate the pronunciation closer to the Greek used in the Greek Orthodox Church for ecumenical reasons. Coptic has not been the spoken language of any community in any of its forms in at least five hundred years. However, it continues to be used in the liturgy with varying degrees of competence and comprehension by members of the community (see Chapters Four and Five).

- *Arabic*

After the Arab conquest in 700 AD, native Egyptians began a language shift to Arabic, which was complete by the 16th century, if not earlier. The fact of the Arab conquest and the death of Coptic as a native language means that all Copts emigrating from Egypt speak Arabic natively. Arabic has its own complex linguistic history and a host of language ideologies that accompany it. What I offer here, for further exploration, is essentially the ideological construction of Arabic as a language as I have experienced it when learning Arabic in Egypt, Germany and the United States. These ideologies have been critiqued in the academic literature, but for our purposes in making an argument about how Arabic is understood and accepted or rejected in the diaspora, I suggest a grounding in the prevailing ideologies is sufficient. (See Chapter One for a related discussion of code repertoires.)

Arabic was one of the four languages that Ferguson (1959) used when he wrote his groundbreaking paper on diglossia, which he drew out of his own experiences of Arabic

language ideologies in Beirut (1959:249).⁵⁷ Arabic is understood as existing today in a form called fusha, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) or Classical Arabic.⁵⁸ (This is the high (H) form in the diglossia relationship.) Then there are the low (L) forms of the language, colloquial, which are regional variations which often are not mutually intelligible to their users. Copts in Egypt speak Egyptian Arabic in their daily lives and at home, and their experiences with MSA/Classical are connected to school and newspapers.⁵⁹

Although speakers from different regions cannot necessarily understand one another, in the language ideology they are speaking the same language.⁶⁰ In addition to these variations in the language within Egypt there is also a strong perceived dichotomy between the Arabic of the city (Cairo) and the Arabic of the peasants.⁶¹ (When I commented once that I had trouble understanding the priest's sermons, it was explained to me that he is from the country and so his Arabic is difficult even for other Copts at church to understand.) Arabic is written in Arabic script, which is distinctly different from both the Greek-based script used to write Coptic and the

⁵⁷ Ferguson's description of diglossia has been contested and elaborated extensively in the theoretical literature. I do not think I need to delve into those debates here because my purpose in using Ferguson's terms is only to describe the prevalent *ideology* of Arabic, which I found was very much active in the community in which I worked, as it seems it was during Ferguson's sojourn in the Middle East as an Arabic language teacher fifty years ago.

⁵⁸ Some groups will draw a strong distinction between Modern Standard Arabic, the Arabic in which newspapers are written today and the Arabic which is taught at universities, and Classical Arabic, which is the Arabic of the Koran. I did not find a distinction between the two with the Copts who I talked to about Arabic and in fact it seems to me the lack of a distinction was vital for their understanding of Arabic and whether they could or could *not* be part of an Arabic language community (see below).

⁵⁹ Egyptian Arabic has many distinctive features including phonetic ones, but it is widely understood across the Arabic-speaking world because of the influence of the Egyptian cinema and the Egyptian entertainment industry. (Cairo has its own Hollywood, complete with palm trees.)

⁶⁰ The first Arabic-speaking friend I had in Germany, years before I became an anthropologist, lived in Bonn and was the son of a foreign ambassador. I remember my surprise when he could not communicate with the other Arabic speakers in our class at the Goethe Institute. All of them insisted that they spoke Arabic and no one could (or was willing to) explain why they could not communicate. Where other communities may exploit linguistic differences in mutually intelligible languages in order to make claims to unintelligibility and membership in different linguistic, national or racial communities, Arabic speakers, as in this example, often claim similarity even where intelligibility is lacking.

⁶¹ There is also a discussion in the literature of Coptic Arabic (Ferguson, 1959), a marked variety of Arabic spoken in Cairo, but I did not find any evidence of this as important or distinctive for Copts in the diaspora.

Roman script used to write German. Among the many other differences, Arabic script is written from right to left.

- **German**

Finally, the third major language of the diaspora is German. German is another language which Ferguson used to explain ethnographically the theoretical concept he called diglossia. Like Arabic, German has a high variety (*Hochdeutsch*), which is the standard, and then it has a variety of regional dialects, which may be incomprehensible to each other. I did not find any incomprehensibility in practice living in various places across Germany, but certainly there was an ideology of possible incomprehensibility. (Ideologies of) incomprehensibility increase(s) as one leaves Germany's national borders.

When asked, Germans may have a language ideology that people around the area of Hanover (or more broadly, the North) speak high German natively, and the most disfavored dialect is probably Saxon, deep in the heart of the former East Germany. There is a dialect of German that is ideologized as being specific to Berlin, but it was not prominent in my fieldwork. The experience of both Arabic and German as being diglossic is mutually reinforcing and co-constructing for Copts in the diaspora such that in my Arabic classes in Germany MSA was called high Arabic (*Hocharabisch*).⁶²

Genealogical Theories of Language

In the remainder of this chapter I will explore the ways in which language is imagined as heritable for Copts in the diaspora and which languages are inherited by whom. These ideas about the genealogical transmission of language are connected to the larger semiotic ideology

⁶² This use of the term *Hocharabisch* to describe MSA helps to elide the distinction between MSA and Koranic/Classical Arabic, which may be important in other communities.

discussed above such that Copts, racially distinctive, have both a distinctive religion and a distinctive language. Religion, race and language become iconizations of one another in the way that Irvine and Gal have elaborated. In their words,

Iconization involves a transformation for the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked. Linguistic features [or in our case languages] that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature [or language] somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature of essence (Irvine and Gal, 2000:37).

As in the other sections of this chapter, I will explore how this ideology of the genealogy of language is reinforced by a similar dominant language ideology for the German majority. I will also argue that this is not an ideology only about how Copts are connected to Coptic, but how they are *not* connected to Arabic. This is in part not only because they connect the Coptic language to the 'people of the Pharaohs' and Coptic Christianity. It is also because they connect Arabic to the Arabs and Islam. I suggest that this is an ideology that is not unique to them but that circulates in the much larger language community (Silverstein, 1996) of Arabic. Since Copts are native speakers of Arabic there are tensions in this ideology of language as genealogically limited and their engagement with and resolution of these tensions will be discussed throughout the dissertation.

• ***Genealogies of German: German as Muttersprache***

Just as Germans have an idea of names as indexing kinship and genealogy, which they share with Copts, it is clear that among the German majority there is a dominant theory of language as a phenomenon of kinship. It was in Germany that the notion of the family tree of languages and the genetic model of historical linguistics developed and gained prominence.

These are metaphors of language development and change which are integral to the modern study of linguistics (Irvine, 1995).

On the level of everyday ethnography, I am reminded of an Italian woman at a ob/gyn office, whom I helped to understand her medical bills, after the office refused to treat her in her 9th month of pregnancy, because her insurance company had declined to pay them for previous visits. When I emerged from my own appointment, the receptionist shared with me that the woman's husband had eventually appeared and he spoke very good German. She seemed to be astounded that the husband could be such an excellent German speaker, able not only to understand but also to provide the information needed to solve their insurance problems quickly, while his wife lacked these linguistic skills. In a similar vein, my sister-in-law worried that my son would acquire my poor German accent, specifically my pronunciation of 'r', if we attempted to raise him bilingual. For Germans, language is something that is acquired and transmitted at home. There is in circulation a strong ideology of language as heritable, reliant upon families for proper reproduction, and transmitted along genealogical lines. There is also an iconization between speaking German and *being* in essence German, which does not come across in these examples, but has been instrumental in German nationalism (Hobsbawm, 1990; see Chapter Six).

The idea of *Muttersprache* (mother tongue), which is such a well-known component of German nationalism and theories of race/ethnicity, is also prevalent in the Coptic diaspora. When I asked my friend Sharif about whether his children could speak Arabic, he mused on the topic of *Muttersprache* thus:

| | | | |
|---|----|---|---|
| 1 | S: | In Bezug auf die Sprache zum Beispiel. | In regards to the language for example. |
| 2 | E: | Ja. | Yes. |
| 3 | S: | Ich... Meine Meinung nach, wenn die Mutter. | I... In my opinion when the mother – |
| 4 | E: | Ja. | Yes. |

| | | | |
|----|----|--|--|
| 5 | S: | Oder andersrum. Die Kinder lernen die Sprache, die fremde Sprache, wenn die Mutter diese Sprache als Muttersprache hat. Das heißt wäre Iris, also meine Frau, ägyptisch und ich deutsch, hätten die Kinder schon Arabisch gelernt. | Or the other way around – The children learn the language, the foreign language, when the mother has this language as her mother tongue. That means that if Iris, that’s my wife, was Egyptian and I was German then the children would have already learned Arabic. |
| 6 | E: | Kann deine Frau Arabisch? | Can your wife speak Arabic? |
| 7 | S: | Ja. | Yes |
| 8 | E: | Aber du hast nie Arabisch zu Hause gesprochen oder so, so was? | But you never spoke Arabic at home, or something? |
| 9 | S: | Nein. Nein, nein. Also, gut. Bei mir fehlt auch ein bisschen Übung. Aber sie kann das, also Koptisch, gut. | No. No, no. Okay, good. I also need a little bit of practice. But she can speak it, by that I mean Coptic, well. |
| 10 | E: | Aber zu Hause ist es, war es immer auf Deutsch. | But at home it is...it was always in German. |
| 11 | S: | Deutsch. Deutsch. Ich träume sogar auf Deutsch. [laughter] | German. German. I even dream in German. [laughter] |

Figure 2.3: Sharif on Arabic as mother tongue

As in the examples from non-immigrant Germans above, Sharif takes up the idea that language competence is created and reproduced in the home, which the word *Muttersprache* (mother tongue) implies. He takes this even further in explicitly arguing that the children will acquire the language of the mother even if it is not the language of the majority, but not the language of the father if he is the non-native German speaker. This is implicit in the above German examples, which express surprise or concern over the mother’s language competence. Sharif draws it out explicitly in Figure 2.3.

• ***Genealogies of Coptic: mother tongue in the diaspora***

In Figure 2.3, there is a moment where Sharif replaces an affirmation of Iris’s language competence in Arabic (Figure 2.3, Line 7) with Coptic (Figure 2.3, Line 9). There is slippage between Arabic as the possible mother tongue of the home and Coptic as the possible mother

tongue. I did not pursue this slippage in the interview, but it could be interpreted as a resistance to the idea of Arabic as the mother tongue of a Coptic family, especially when situated within the rest of the interview (see below). This is where ideologies of Copts in the diaspora regarding *Muttersprache* and the genealogy of language differ from those of Germans. For Copts, I suggest their mother tongue is a language they do not speak.

In one of my earliest encounters with the Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Germany, we discussed the use of Coptic in the diaspora. He told me that Coptic is his mother tongue. He elaborated by saying that he was embarrassed to speak Arabic because it was not his native language. At the time these statements were shocking to me as I was prepared for older people in the community and those in authority to lament the loss of Arabic among the young as the community shifted away from it.

The Bishop repeated a similar form of these statements to me in an interview years later. I suggest we view this narrative as a dominant, or even official, narrative of the diaspora:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Bishop: Es ist wichtig, weil es Teil unserer Identität ist. Die koptische Sprache ist unsere ... oder soll unsere Muttersprache sein. Die arabische Sprache ist nicht unsere Muttersprache. Es ist eine große Schande, daß wir untereinander Arabisch sprechen müssen, denn im 11. Jahrhundert war es erforderlich Arabisch, äh, zu lernen, [ansonsten] hat man die Zunge abgeschnitten bekommen. Und im Laufe der Jahre haben wir unsere Sprache verloren und jetzt versuchen wir diese, unsere koptische Sprache wieder zu beleben und zu reaktivieren.</p> | <p>Bishop: It is important because it is a part of our identity. The Coptic language is our...or should be our mother tongue. The Arabic language is not our mother tongue. It is a great shame that we must speak Arabic among ourselves, because in the 11th century it was required to, um, learn Arabic, otherwise they would cut out a person's tongue. And over the course of the years we have lost our language and now we're trying to bring this, our Coptic language, back to life and to reactivate it.</p> |
|---|---|

Figure 2.4: Bishop Damian on Coptic as mother tongue

Arabic in this narrative is something that was learned by force and is not the mother tongue of the community. On the other hand, when I first asked Bishop Damian what his native language in this interview was he responded, “Arabic” without any qualification. There is a

tension between the idea of Coptic as the native language of the community and Arabic as the language in which the community, especially older members and community leaders, are fluent. A mother tongue, in this model, is not the language in which you are raised into fluency. Being in possession of the language is something essential to the person as a Copt.

In Chapter Four (Figure 4.10) I analyze a long piece of an interview with Sharif about Coptic in the liturgy and he uses a very similar formulation to the one the Bishop uses here. “*The Coptic language isn’t just an old language from earlier or something. The Coptic language also means identity (Identität) for Copts*” (Figure 4.10, Line 25). Sharif’s ambivalence about Arabic as a native language of the community is discussed in detail in Chapter Four, but the ambivalence indicated by the slippage in Figure 2.3, Line 9 is in keeping with Bishop Damian’s own ambivalence.

My Arabic teacher, Yustos, is a single man divorced from a German spouse, who was born and raised in Egypt as a Catholic and no longer attends the Coptic Orthodox Church in Berlin. Nevertheless, when I asked him, “What is your mother tongue?” his response followed the same pattern as Bishop Damian.

| | | | |
|---|----|--|--|
| 1 | Y: | Äh, das ist umstritten, also äh, eigentlich ist meine Muttersprache die koptische Sprache. | Eh, that is debated about, so, um, actually my mother tongue is the Coptic language. |
| 2 | E: | Mmhmm | mmhmm |
| 3 | Y: | Aber wir ... ich kam nicht dazu, äh, diese Sprache richtig zu lernen. Ich habe als Kind angefangen – in der Kirche – aber dann, äh, wir haben das nicht so, ähm, ernst genommen, weil Arabisch ist ja, ähm, die..die Muttersprache in Ägypten... | But we --- I never got around to it, eh, to really learning the language. As a child I started – in the church – but then, um, we didn’t take it, eh, so seriously, because Arabic is after all, eh, the...the mother tongue in Egypt... |
| 4 | E: | Mmhmm | mmhmm |
| 5 | Y: | ...oder die andere Sprache. Und es lief alles auf Arabisch. Deswegen hat die arabische Sprache geherrscht... | ...or the other language. And everything went through Arabic. Therefore the Arabic language dominated... |

| | | | |
|---|----|---|--|
| 6 | E: | Ja. | Yes. |
| 7 | Y: | ...über Koptisch. | ...over Coptic. |
| 8 | E: | Aha. | Uh-huh. |
| 9 | Y: | Von daher, also ursprünglich ist meine Muttersprache Koptisch, aber die zweite Muttersprache ist, äh, Arabisch. | From that, okay, originally my mother tongue is Coptic, but the second mother tongue is, eh, Arabic. |

Figure 2.5: Yustos on "What is your mother tongue?"

He says in Figure 2.5, Line 1 that his mother tongue is the Coptic language, but then explains how Arabic dominated (*geherrscht*, as in ruled) over Coptic (Figure 2.5, Line 5) and ends his answer with the intriguing conclusion that his original mother tongue is Coptic, but the second mother tongue is Arabic (Figure 2.5, Line 9).

Miriam is a widowed housewife and mother of two who came to Germany when she married her husband, by arrangement through his sister, who had already lived there for many years. When asked, "What is your native language?" she too followed the same formulaic pattern in her discussion, starting off by saying that her native language was "Egyptian Arabic, unfortunately."

| | | | |
|----|----|--|---|
| 1 | E: | Was ist Ihre Muttersprache? | What is your mother tongue? |
| 2 | M: | Äh..Arabisch, ägyptisches Arabisch. | Um... Arabic, Egyptian Arabic. |
| 3 | E: | Ägyptisches Arabisch, ja. | Egyptian Arabic, yes. |
| 4 | M: | Leider. [inaudible Arabic] | Unfortunately. [inaudible Arabic] |
| 5 | E: | [chuckles] | [chuckles] |
| 6 | M: | Leider! | Unfortunately. |
| 7 | E: | Warum sagen Sie.. warum sagen Sie "Leider"? | Why do you say, why do you say unfortunately? |
| 8 | M: | Weil..ich habe..äh..ägyptische, koptische Sprache, aber die Ägypter hat verboten, für uns, äh, zum reden in koptisch-orthodox. Schon lange, natürlich, das ist über hundert Jahre, und so was. | Because...I had...um...Egyptian, Coptic language, but the Egyptians forbade us, um, to speak in Coptic-Orthodox. Already a long time, of course, that was hundreds of years ago, and so on. |
| 9 | E: | Aha. | Aha. |
| 10 | W: | Und daß sie müssen die arabische Sprache [sprechen], ob[wohl] ägyptische war damals christlich. | And that they must speak the Arabic language. Although Egyptian was at that time Christian. |
| 11 | E: | Aha. | Aha. |

| | | | |
|----|----|--|--|
| 12 | M: | Koptisch bedeutet, mit äh, ägyptisch, koptisch heißt مصري, äh, Ägypter | Coptic means, uh, with, uh, Egyptian, Coptic means an Egyptian , um, an Egyptian. |
| 13 | E: | Ja. | Yes. |
| 14 | Y: | Mit ...äh...mit arabisch .. nicht mit arabisch, mit koptisch. Und viele Leute [glauben] koptisch, es bedeutet Christen, aber das [?] bedeutet Ägypter. | With...um...with Arabic...not with Arabic, with Coptic. And many people believe Coptic, it means Christian, but it means Egyptian. |
| 15 | E: | Ja. | Yes. |

Figure 2.6: Miriam on Arabic and Coptic as mother tongue

Miriam’s explanation of why she finds it unfortunate that Arabic is her mother tongue is detailed and continues on for some time beyond what is transcribed here. As Bishop Damian and Yustos did, she describes how “the Egyptians forbade us, um, to speak in Coptic-Orthodox⁶³” (Figure 2.6, Line 8). She connects this discussion of Coptic as her native language with the idea that Coptic means ‘Egyptian’ (Figure 2.6, Lines 12-14), just as Ibrahim and Ibrahim did in their 2000 article above, which I argued was tied to the idea of Copts as racially distinct from Arabs. In Figure 2.6, Line 8 she refers to those who forbade the Coptic language as “the Egyptians.” This may have prompted the clarification on the meaning of ‘Coptic’, as a repair sequence, because later in the narrative she refers to “the Arabs” (der Araber) and “the Islam” (der Islam) as those/that which came and brought Arabic to Egypt.

In his ethnographic piece *Egyptian Copts in Detroit*, Jones (2000) provides strong evidence that this language ideology is prevalent across the diaspora. Of Coptic his young interviewee says, “I don’t know Coptic. That is a terrible, terrible thing. I just haven’t sat down and learned it” (2000:234). Of Arabic he says, “I learned it by force... (2000:236)” and when asked if he would teach it to his children he replies, “Absolutely not. I have no reason to make that a requirement (ibid.)” Bishop Damian talks about the threat of having one’s tongue removed

⁶³ Using the term Coptic-Orthodox for the Coptic language even more closely aligns it with the Coptic Orthodox Church than other descriptions.

in the 11th century in framing Arabic as learned by force. A Coptic youth in Detroit reproduces the same narrative. Similarly, Thomas, the Coptic university student who appears again in Chapter Four, was a very fluent Arabic speaker, but when I asked him if he knew how to write it he was dismissive of the idea saying that he not only could not write in Arabic script, but had no interest in learning to do so.

In his analysis, Jones sees these statements by the Coptic youth as only a problem of language maintenance in the second generation, similar to the type of dynamic found in my communities involved in language shift. In contrast, my interviews show clearly that the lack of interest in maintaining Arabic, the perception that it was learned by force, and the focus on Coptic as the true language of the community, is embraced by older and hierarchically higher members of the community just as it is by those younger or hierarchically lower members. At the same time, as a dominant narrative, it can also be contested in the community. Luca, a professional journalist in the community who has lived in Germany for 20+ years and is married to an Egyptian woman, when asked his mother tongue, answered only that it was, “Arabic.” As we began to discuss Arabic he interrupted my line of questioning to say:

| | | | |
|---|----|---|--|
| 1 | L: | Ich will dir sagen, daß die koptische Sprache... | I want to tell you that the Coptic language... |
| 2 | E: | Ja? | Yes? |
| 3 | L: | ...ist kein Identifikationselement für uns Kopten. Das heißt, äh..äh, also man muss nicht die Sprache beherrschen, damit man Kopte sein darf oder sein kann. Die koptische Sprache an sich ist nicht so ein Identifikationsmerkmal. | ...is not an identification element for us, Copts. That means, um...um, that one doesn't have to control the language, in order that one is allowed to be or can be a Copt. The Coptic language in itself is not an identifying attribute. |
| 4 | E: | Es ist <i>nicht</i> ? | It is <i>not</i> ? |
| 5 | L: | Nö. | No. |
| 6 | E: | Okay. Aber..ja. So, das heißt: Ist das für dich - würdest du sagen – ist es [kein] Merkmal, oder für die Kopten insgesamt? | Okay. But...yes. So, does that mean: It's not for you - would you say - it isn't an attribute of identity, or for the Copts all together? |

| | | | |
|---|----|--|--|
| 7 | M: | Nee, weil äh..weil äh, die ist auch eine Sprache, die nennt man eine Liturgiesprache, das heißt, man benutzt sie nur in der Kirche. Und außerhalb der Kirche spielt die Sprache ein, keine große Rolle im Leben [?]. | No, because, eh...because, eh, it is also a language, what one calls a liturgical language. That means, one uses it only in the church and outside of the church the language doesn't play any big role in life. |
|---|----|--|--|

Figure 2.7: Luca: Coptic is not an identity marker for Copts

Luca's comment is an example of how some members of the community position themselves against the narrative of Coptic as mother tongue. Luca's view of Arabic will be discussed more in the next section. As one can see from Figure 2.7 (Line 3) his disagreement hinges on a different definition of mother tongue than the one used in arguing that Coptic is the mother tongue of Copts. The negative view of Arabic is likewise in tension with positive understandings of Arabic, including from those who reproduce the narrative of Coptic as mother tongue. In the dissertation I argue that, despite these tensions, this ideology facilitates language shift to German and a positive view of this language shift, because one is not in danger of losing the mother tongue (Coptic) while shifting away from Arabic. This positive perception of language shift, and the imagined future connected to it, will be explored especially through analysis of the liturgy in Chapters Four and Five.

• *Genealogies of Arabic: the mother tongue of others*

I have briefly outlined here some of the ways that language is understood as something that is transmitted in the home and the result of kinship and especially its transmission through the mother. In my experience of Arabic language classes in Germany, the United States, and Egypt, I found the same types of ideologies in circulation. In fact, Arabic dialects have only recently begun to be taught at all, so strong is the ideology that they can only be transmitted among the family.

When I was learning Arabic there was copious evidence of this ideology. In one dialect course I took, the method of instruction was almost exclusively through acting out dialogues structured as informal and between friends. There was almost no explicit instruction in either vocabulary or grammar, as if we could only learn by recreating in the classroom the environments of the home and family circle in which people *could* learn the language. In my Egyptian Arabic course in Berlin, instructed by Yustos, these connections of the dialect to the informal and intimate were exhibited by his use of often racially or sexually inappropriate cartoons as examples of the language in print.⁶⁴

In contrast, in my Modern Standard Arabic courses in Egypt the goal of the six-month program was to obtain the competence necessary to read the newspaper. Only when I understood this, could I understand why we were learning vocabulary for empire and the stock exchange after only a few weeks of instruction. But in the complex language ideologies of Arabic, classical Arabic (which as I suggested above can overlap with MSA) is structured as the language of another text: the Koran. These ideologies of Arabic are a topic I would like to explore more in future work. For now, I will only suggest that for Copts in the diaspora there was a strong association between Arabic and the Koran and more broadly between Arabic and Islam. One fellow churchgoer discussed his experience of being educated in Arabic in Egypt and lamenting having been forced to study from the Koran as part of the instruction. Even in my Arabic courses in Berlin with a Coptic teacher, the association between the Koran and Arabic was so strong that he too used the Koran as a text for studying high Arabic (*Hocharabisch*).

In his 1996 paper on Monoglot Standard, Michael Silverstein uses Arabic as the quintessential example of a language community. In his words,

⁶⁴ These may have been chosen because they were the teaching materials available in dialect, but they also reinforce the ideology that these are the domains for which dialect is appropriate.

speakers of Arabic belong to a single linguistic community...by virtue of equivalent local functional differentiation of all the dialectal forms of Arabic from Koranic and Classical Arabic, which are usable by the 'best' speakers of Arabic in appropriate situations as the denotational code par excellence, the mode of correct or truthful communication about what is apprehensible in God's universe (1996:2).

Silverstein's definition of the Arabic linguistic community is controversial because of the way in which it elides the difference between MSA and Koranic Arabic and focuses on the language community as it is formed around the sacred text of the Koran. However, I find that this definition, open to further exploration, is an accurate representation of a language ideology surrounding Arabic that was prevalent in the diaspora. For Copts, Arabic can be problematic because it is the sacred language of Islam. In other words, there is an established iconization between Arabic as a language and Islam as a religion. Although many Copts are native Arabic speakers, this ideological link between Arabic and Islam mirrors and is supported by their own equivalent iconization between Coptic Orthodox Christianity as a religion and Coptic as a language.⁶⁵

Insofar as Copts understand language as heritable in an overlap between the genealogies of race and religion that I have outlined above, Arabic is the language the religion (Islam) *and* race (Arab) of others. This is controversial in part because an alternative language ideology is in circulation (especially in Egypt) that argues for Arabic as the language of, for example, Egyptians, as a common language that Copts and Muslims share (see Ibrahim and Ibrahim, 2000:101, above). This alternative ideology may seem at first self-evident since Arabic is the first language, that is the language in which they are most fluent, for both Copts in Egypt as well as many Copts in the diaspora, but it is far from self-evident when one considers the above ways in which many Copts view *Coptic* as their native language. These language ideologies are in

⁶⁵ The textuality of the sacred language in both cases is also mutually reinforcing. The textuality of the Coptic diaspora will be explored more in Chapter Four.

tension with one another and I suggest that for the diaspora community, where the divisive nature of the rejection of Arabic is relatively unproblematic, Arabic’s link to a language community that is not their own is the one that most often takes precedence for Copts. In another piece of her discussion of Coptic as her native language (Figure 2.6), Miriam points to one way the ideology of Coptic as mother tongue allows Copts to maintain a view of language as an important and heritable feature of belonging without that language being the one in which they are fluent.

| | | | |
|---|----|--|--|
| 1 | M: | ... Und die originale..originalischen [ursprünglichen] Ägypter | ...And the original...original Egyptians |
| 2 | E: | Ja. [??? | Yes. |
| 3 | M: | Die anderen kommen von anderen Ländern. Zum Beispiel, ich bin hier in Deutschland – meine Kinder können nicht Arabisch. Aber sie [sind] Ägypter, von anderen Ländern. Und das, genauso die Araber [kommen] nach äh,äh, Araber [kommen] nach Ägypten und [man kann] nicht merken wer [sind] die echten Ägypter und wer [sind] so die Araber, oder so was, leider. | The others come from other countries. For example, I am here in Germany – my children can’t speak Arabic. But they are Egyptian, from other countries. And that, exactly like that the Arabs come to um,um, Arabs come to Egypt and... one can’t tell who are the true Egyptians and who are the Arabs, or so on, unfortunately. |

Figure 2.8: Miriam: “My children are Egyptian”

In Figure 2.8, Line 3 Miriam makes a point of clarifying that her children are Egyptian even though they do not speak Arabic. The Arabs in this narrative are not Egyptian because they come from elsewhere, just as her children come from elsewhere (Egypt) and thus are Egyptian even though they were born and live in Germany. In this discussion it seems she was going to begin with the example of herself, “I am here in Germany” (ibid.), but then changed to using her children as the example, which emphasizes how these identities are conferred genealogically. She also ties this discussion of language into the theory of two racial categories in Egypt, the Arabs and the “true Egyptians” (ibid.).

A strong association of Copts with Coptic as their native language and a related rejection of Arabic are prevalent in the diaspora, but this is an issue of debate, as Yustos said above (Figure 2.5, Line 1). When I asked one married couple who had recently had a daughter about their language situation at home they said they wanted to raise her bilingual in Arabic and German. The husband was impressed that I had learned Arabic and could write the script and used me as an example to his wife to encourage her to do the same. Others, even those who were critical of Arabic in other contexts like the Bishop, lauded my (limited) Arabic competence. Community members were impressed when I exhibited comprehension of what they were discussing in Arabic.

I pressed Yustos on positive views of Arabic in an interview because he teaches Arabic himself, both Modern Standard (*Hocharabisch*) and Egyptian dialect, and is proud of his own competence in Arabic. Most of his students are native German speakers. In the interview I ask him broadly about his goals for teaching Arabic to ‘the youth’ and whether he thinks they should learn it. His response expresses some of the dimensions of positive views of Arabic in the diaspora.

| | | | |
|---|----|---|---|
| 1 | E: | Ich meine...Möchtest du, daß zum Beispiel die Jugend doch Arabisch lernen [kann], oder warum unterrichtest du das, oder was ist dein Ziel? | I mean, do you want, for example, the youth to learn Arabic, or why do you teach it, or what is your goal? |
| 2 | Y: | Ja, ja das möchte ich, weil: eine, äh, eine..generell eine fremde Sprache zu können, äh, ist eine Bereicherung für den Menschen. | Yes, yes, I want that, because at a general level a, um, a... to have a foreign language, um, is an enrichment for a person. |
| 3 | E | mmhmm | mmhmm |
| 4 | Y: | Und es gibt [...] sehr schöne arabische Literatur, die auch man [sic] lesen sollte. Äh, Literatur..ich meine also Romane, äh, Poesie. Und das soll man genießen, wenn..wenn man das könnte. | And there is... very beautiful Arabic literature, that one should read. Um, by literature I mean novels, eh, poetry. And one should enjoy that when, when, one can. |
| 5 | E | Ja. | Yes. |
| 6 | Y: | Also, wenn ich Kinder hätte, hätt' ich | Okay, if I had children, I would |

| | | | |
|---|----|--|--|
| | | meinen Kindern auf jeden Fall Arabisch in Wort und Schrift beigebracht. | definitely teach my children Arabic in word and writing. |
| 7 | E: | seeks clarification of Line 6 | (omitted) |
| 8 | Y: | Und auch für den Beruf in der Zukunft eine neue..so eine weltliche Sprache zu können, ist wunderbar, also ich verdiene Geld damit. | And also for a profession in the future a new... so to say, to know a worldly language is wonderful, I mean, I earn money with it. |

Figure 2.9: Yustos discusses reasons to learn Arabic

Although I asked him about his goal in teaching Arabic, which he does in a university setting, he reframed the question, discussing teaching Arabic to his own (hypothetical) children (Figure 2.9, Line 6). This is an example of how learning Arabic is connected to kinship, genealogy and family. (In this discussion he uses the verb ‘beibringen’, which is an informal word for teaching similar to providing the person with or sharing the language.)

At the same time that Yustos lists many reasons to learn Arabic, he also frames it later in the interview as a language of others and ties it to Islam.

| | | | |
|---|----|--|---|
| 1 | Y: | Äh, also ich find’ Koptisch ist schön und gut, aber ich denke Arabisch ist wichtiger für die Kinder zu lernen. | Um, okay I find Coptic is beautiful and good, but I think Arabic is more important for children to learn. |
| 2 | E: | Wegen den .. wegen den.. | Because of... because of... |
| 3 | Y: | Wegen. wie gesagt: Bereicherung, | Because, as I said: Enrichment, |
| 4 | E: | Ja. | Yes. |
| 5 | Y: | äh, äh, Kontakt zu Literatur , Kontakt zu...zu...zu arabischen Ländern, Kontakt, äh..weil..also wir werden also in den nächsten vielen Jahren mit dem Islam und mit den Arabern viel zu tun haben. | Um, um, contact to literature, contact to...to...to Arabic lands, contact, um... because, okay, we will, okay, in the years ahead we will have a lot to do with Islam and with the Arabs. |
| 6 | E: | Ja. | Yes. |
| 7 | Y: | Und es ist gut, daß die Kinder die Sprache können, damit sie auch, äh, [???] den Kontakt haben und verstehen können, was da abläuft. | And it is good that the children can speak the language, so that they can also, um, have contact and can understand what is happening there. |
| 8 | E: | So nicht nur für den Beruf , sondern auch so für das Leben. | So not only for a profession, but also for life. |
| 9 | Y: | Auf jeden Fall, ja. | Yes, definitely. |

Figure 2.10: Yustos on Arabic providing contact

Arabic, he says, in Figure 2.10 (Line 5) offers those learning it contact to literature, Arabic lands, and Islam and the Arabs.⁶⁶ It is a language that allows contact to another place ('*da*', *there* in Figure 2.10, Line 7). This placing of Arabic elsewhere contrasts with Bishop Damian's situating of Coptic within Germany in his interview. After Bishop Damian described the reactivation of the Coptic language (Figure 2.4) within Germany, he pointed to Father Biwohl, a priest in Frankfurt, and his family as fluent speakers of the Coptic language: "*So Father Biwohl in Frankfurt knows it very well – with his wife and children – [they] speak fluent Coptic at home.*" In both cases there is a mapping of language onto land. Bishop Damian's use is consistent with community efforts to place Egypt within Germany, which I discuss in Chapter Three. Yustos' description mirrors his depiction of Arabic as the mother tongue of Egypt earlier in our conversation (Figure 2.5, Line 3).

• ***Back to Ideologies and Genealogies of German***

Of those whose views on Coptic are described above, three have raised or are raising children in the diaspora. Of those parents, only Luca claimed to be raising his children to speak Arabic. He is also the one who, in Figure 2.7, Line 7, discounted the idea of Coptic as mother tongue, so in a sense this reinforces my argument that an ideology of Coptic as mother tongue facilitates language shift from Arabic in the diaspora. We talked about various elements of that experience and he described some of the Arabic language books he and his wife share with their children. Luca lists the Pharaonic stories as some of the stories that he tells in Arabic, situating that important part of the Coptic Egyptian past into an Arabic literary tradition.

⁶⁶ In German, the adjective Arabic is used more broadly than in German, to name Middle Eastern restaurants (*arabische Restaurants*), countries (*arabische Länder*) and the language (*Arabisch*).

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| L: | Ja, wir haben ja arabische Bücher hier, wir erzählen auch den Kindern arabische Märchen. Zum Beispiel aus ‘Tausend und einer Nacht’. [???] auch pharaonische Geschichten, wir zum Beispiel die Gutenachtgeschichte erzählen wir immer auf Arabisch. | Yes, we have Arabic books here. We also tell the children Arabic fairy tales, for example from <i>Thousand and One Nights</i> . Also Pharaonic stories, we for example, the good night story we always tell in Arabic. |
|----|---|--|

Figure 2.11: Luca on reading Arabic at home

This section of the chapter opened with an assertion by Sharif about the role of the mother’s tongue in language maintenance (Figure 2.3). Having noted the narrative of language struggle that frequently accompanied the question, “What is your mother tongue?” I asked Luca (Figure 2.12) if he was aware of this narrative and if he had anything else to say about why he did not embrace it himself.

| | | | |
|---|----|---|---|
| 1 | L: | Ja, das ist, weil äh, ähm, Muttersprache heißt, die Mutter, die [Sprache] man am meisten beherrschen kann, oder? Das heißt, äh, a native speaker ich bin kein koptischer native speaker, nee, ich bin nicht, ich bin arabischer native speaker. | Yes, that is, because, um, um, mother tongue means, the mother, the [language] one can control the best, or not? That means, um, ‘a native speaker’. I am not a Coptic ‘native speaker’, no, I am not, I am an Arabic ‘native speaker.’ |
| 2 | E: | Ja ja, so für, so, für dich dann koptisch ist nicht die Muttersprache, weil du dann, weil du das nicht... | Yes, yes, so for, so, for you then Coptic is not the mother tongue, because you, then, because you don’t... |
| 3 | M: | Nee, das ist nicht die - wie nennt man das auf Englisch? Mother tongue, oder so? | No, that is not the – how do you say in English? ‘Mother tongue’, or something? |
| 4 | E: | Ja, so, die Deutschen sagen eher mother tongue, aber wir auf, auf Englisch sagt man normalerweise native language, so... | Yes, so, the Germans say more like ‘mother tongue,’ but we in, in English one says normally ‘native language,’ so... |
| 5 | M: | Mhh. Nee, das ist, Arabisch ist die Sprache, die ich am meisten beherrsche, dann ist das meine Muttersprache. | Mhh. No, that is, Arabic is the language that I control the best, so therefore it is my mother tongue. |
| 6 | E: | Okay. | Okay. |
| 7 | M: | Aber, aber vielleicht haben die Leute dich nicht so richtig verstanden, vielleicht haben sie gedacht, ähh, als du gefragt hast. Was ist die Sprache deiner Mutter, oder so, weiß nicht [laughter] | But, but maybe people didn’t understand exactly right, maybe they thought, um, as you asked them: What is the language of your mother, or something, [I] don’t know. [laughter] |

Figure 2.12: Luca discusses ‘mother tongue’

This discussion involved a brief dialogue about the English equivalents to the word *Muttersprache* including ‘mother tongue’ and ‘native language’ and the concept of a ‘native speaker’. In Figure 2.12 (Line 1), Luca says “*I am not a Coptic 'native speaker', no, I am not, I am an Arabic 'native speaker'.*” Although in the examples above others endorsed the idea of Coptic as their native language they also indicated an awareness and, sometimes begrudging, endorsement of this other concept of mother tongue. Miriam said Arabic was her mother tongue, *unfortunately*. Bishop Damian said that Coptic *should be* our [Copts'] mother tongue. Yustos ended his proclamation on the topic with the conclusion that he had *two* native languages ranked in order (Coptic and Arabic).

Luca was the only one in the five interviews used as examples who did not endorse an idea of Coptic as mother tongue, but others did recognize the tension in the two ways of thinking about language. In contrast to Luca’s assertion that Coptic has no influence on daily life (Figure 2.7, Line 7), I argue that the concept of having a mother tongue one does not speak, conferred in the ideology along the same genealogical lines as race and religion, opens the community up to a positive view of language shift. In Figure 2.13 Miriam, who engaged in the interview and in other conversations I had with her in a long narrative of the ways in which these categories overlap, discusses the language that she uses with her children.

| | | | |
|---|----|--|--|
| 1 | M: | Ja ja, Arabisch, das ist die einzige Sprache, kann ich. Leider. Ich kann nicht koptisch, ich kann nicht gut deutsch und ich kann nur arabisch. | Yes, yes, Arabic, that is the only language I can speak, unfortunately. I cannot speak Coptic, I can’t speak good German, and I can only speak Arabic. |
| 2 | E: | So dann, die, deine Kinder müssten dich verstehen dann, auf Arabisch? | So then, the, your children must understand you then, in Arabic? |
| 3 | M: | Also, mit [ihnen], ich rede mit [ihnen] deutsch. | Okay, with [them] I speak with [them] in German. |
| 4 | E: | Oh, wirklich? | Oh, really? |
| 5 | M: | Immer so, ich habe immer Probleme mit meinen Kindern, verstehen meine Sprache nicht immer. [laughs] Leider. | Always. I always have problems with my children. They don’t always understand my language. [Laughs.] Unfortunately. |

| | | | |
|---|----|---|---|
| 6 | E: | Aber du redest auf Deutsch? Mit deinen Kindern? | But you speak in German? With your children? |
| 7 | M: | Nee, meine Kinder - nur deutsch. Meine Kinder [sind] Deutsche. Und sie [können] nicht arabisch. Wenn ich rede mit meinen Kindern, ich versuche mit meinen Kindern deutsch zu sprechen. Aber die Kinder können kein Arabisch, nur Deutsch. | Nope, my children – only German. My children [are] German. And they can't [speak] Arabic. When I talk with my children, I try to speak with my children in German. But my children can't speak Arabic, only German. |

Figure 2.13: Miriam speaks German with her children

One can see that her claims about language competence are open for debate. She claims that she cannot speak good German (Figure 2.13, Line 1), while giving an interview in German. During the interview she also claims that her daughter speaks better English than Arabic and queries her daughter about the accuracy of her claim in German. For the purposes of this chapter, I want to highlight the fact that, contrary to Sharif's discourse in Figure 2.3, Miriam is a native Arabic speaker, who also claims Coptic as her native language, but who speaks or tries to speak (Figure 2.13, Line 7) to her children in German. She says, "*Nope, my children – only German. My children [are] German.*"

With this assertion Miriam aligns herself with the very ideology of mother tongue that she had previous left open for dispute. Her children only speak German and this is at least correlated to, if not causally linked to, the fact that they *are* German. If she as their mother speaks to them in German, essentially making German their mother tongue, then that affects their state of belonging in the diaspora, they *are* German. This came on the heels of her previous assertion that her children *are* true Egyptians (Figure 2.8, Line 3), even though they do not speak Arabic. I argue that because Coptic is their native language as Egyptians, a language they do not speak natively, Copts can, in this language ideology, remain Egyptian (in religion, race, *and* language) while at the same time assimilating to the language ideology prevalent in Germany that speaking German is a defining characteristic of being German.

Rejection of Arabic and enthusiasm for German may be for Copts precisely what it is in Ibrahim and Ibrahim's (2000) article: a way to express their desire to integrate into Germany.

German is the language used within the families of the greatest majority of the Copts living in Germany. This is not surprising, on account of the high number of German spouses. A further 13 percent of the families use both German and Arabic, side by side with each other. Those who prefer to speak Arabic (15 percent) constitute recent immigrants and asylum seekers" (2000:120-21).

As I have shown, the preference for German in the home is more complex than a deference to the language of a German spouse (usually the mother). Nevertheless, the underlying argument of Ibrahim and Ibrahim's (2000) article (see Chapter One) is consistent with my argument in this chapter: Copts have a strong ideology of language as an important part of community belonging, and therefore they have a strong desire to gain competence in the language of the majority. Along those lines I contend that Copts may talk more with an outsider like the anthropologist about their rejection of Arabic as a way to demonstrate precisely those attributes discussed in the first two sections of this chapter and again in Chapter Six: their belonging in Europe in race, religion and language.

Conclusions: Genealogies in/of Diaspora

In this chapter, I explored Coptic theories of race, religion and language as heritable, along with German ideologies of the same, in order to argue that as race is accepted and imagined as heritable for Copts so too religion and language are also discussed and constructed as heritable. For Copts, through the processes of iconization all three attributes can be part of a genealogical theory of kinship. My claim is not that these ideas are unique to Copts. On the contrary, they are reinforced by many discourses about race, religion and language in Germany and beyond. My claim is, however, that they are explicitly imagined as a set for Copts such that if one of the three is identified, the other two are imagined to follow. Arabs are racially defined

and have a particular religion, Islam, and a particular language, Arabic, which is theirs. In this paradigm, Copts then are also a racially distinct group with a particular religion, Christianity,⁶⁷ and a particular language, Coptic, which is theirs and is inherited genealogically through families. Of course, not everyone subscribes to such a theory or subscribes to it at all times. Some of the tensions in this theory, especially as they are visible in debates about mother tongue, have been discussed above.

Throughout this dissertation I will continue to engage with the tensions in what religion, language and other categories, such as nation, can mean for Copts. To reiterate part of my conclusion from the Preface and Chapter One, now with more depth of analysis behind it: for Copts kinship is about where you live (spaces where kinship is built, language is taught, etc.) and who you are genealogically. I suggest that in the Coptic diaspora there is a dominant theory about how diasporas work. You are essentially part of your own diaspora and you cannot join someone else's community except through particular means, which are always in some sense familial.

In relation to language ideologies in particular, this chapter has aimed to highlight the ways in which Copts see a language as theirs that they do not speak and reject a language as distinctly not theirs that the majority of members of their community do speak fluently. The various ways this language ideology manifests itself and is constructed and contested in the community, especially as it is linked to Christianity and understandings of belonging in the diaspora and in Germany, will be explored throughout the dissertation. I argue one impact of this language ideology is an enthusiasm for language shift away from Arabic (see Chapters Four and Five). If there is a limited or problematic iconization linking the language Copts speak to other

⁶⁷ There is a tension in the diaspora between the idea of Coptic Orthodoxy as the most ancient form of Christianity (Chapter Three) and ecumenical definitions of Christianity (Chapter Six).

social aspects of their group membership, and in fact a strong ideology linking that language to a community of which they are adamantly not a part (a Muslim one), then another language (German) could not only sufficiently, but perhaps more appropriately, take on the role of spoken code.

CHAPTER THREE

From Egypt to Egypt:

Narratives of Time and Space in the Coptic Orthodox Diaspora, Germany and Christianity

Introduction: Narratives of the Secular and Monumental Spacetime

On a preliminary field visit to Germany in 2005 I went to the Coptic monastery outside of the small town of Höxter to meet with Bishop Damian, the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Germany. The building was formerly a Cistercian and Benedictine monastery and was acquired by the Coptic Orthodox Church in 1993. As he drove around the town, Bishop Damian talked about the secularization of the buildings, how the many religious buildings in the town had been transformed into non-religious ones.⁶⁸ Secularization is a common word to hear in theories about religion in anthropology and beyond. It is a word that is tied up in a teleological framework (Fabian, 2002; Asad, 1993) in which, as many of the founding fathers of anthropology saw it, religion was dying out and being replaced by the modern and the secular, which for them were one and the same. Freud traced the “future of an illusion,” (1961), which looked bleak, and Durkheim discussed the triumph of the scientific over the religious in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1995). Benedict Anderson (1991) talked about the death of religious worldviews as something that happened concurrently with the rise of modern languages. Many anthropologists still discuss modernity and the secular in terms which deny co-

⁶⁸ The timeline detailed on the Coptic monastery's website included secularization (Säkularisation) as an event that took place in 1803. This coincided with the arrival of Napoleon's troops in the region.

evalness to religious communities like the Copts who would offer a counterpoint to the notion that “we are all Protestants now” (Keane, 2007).⁶⁹

What surprised me as I drove around Höxter with Bishop Damian that day, traveling in the monastery’s large white van down the thin asphalt pathway and into the grounds of the town’s old castle, was the way in which he *subscribed* to this narrative of secularization. These German spaces had once been religious and then they had become schools, hospitals, museums, and barns or, in many economically depressed regions, abandoned buildings. These spaces were monumental reminders, signs inscribed in the landscape, of a German loss of religiosity. Like other Germans, Bishop Damian described German history to the present as a process of secularization, noting a religious past and a secular present, of which he, as the Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church for Germany, was in some sense outside. But was he denying himself coevalness, placing himself outside of German time? This chapter provides an answer to this question while exploring the Coptic construction and reconstruction of buildings like the monastery in Höxter -Brenkhausen as one of both constructing a Coptic (narrative) space *and* (narrative) time.

Bishop Damian became the first Coptic Orthodox Bishop for Germany in 1993 and it was also in this year that the Church purchased the monastery outside Höxter for a very small sum of money with the understanding that it would only be restored in certain ways, ways which were in keeping with the government’s understanding of it as a *Kulturgewerbe* or cultural treasure. The Bishop told me that while there were other offers to purchase the property, it was sold to the Coptic Church because of their willingness for the restoration to follow the committee’s

⁶⁹ This is not a quotation of Keane’s own view, but the commentary of an anonymous reviewer that he takes up and engages in his work.

guidelines.⁷⁰ The Coptic Orthodox Church purchased the former Cistercian monastery, unused as a monastery since 1848. The reinhabitation of Brenkhausen as a monastery was a *desecularization* and thus a resacralization and rupture with the dominant narrative described above. This chapter explores the transformation of space that was underway during my fieldwork for members of the Coptic diaspora in Germany, focusing on the (dis)continuities at play between Copts and Germans and how these projects may be projects of integration. How can the Coptic past become a German one through these projects of (re)construction and spatial transformation? Conversely, how can the German past become a Coptic one? Alternatively, how are they perpetuated as meaningfully distinct pasts?

This discussion has a wide variety of connections to the large literature on German narratives of the past and how they are erected/created through spaces, building and rebuilding projects, monuments and narratives.⁷¹ In the first part of this chapter, I will situate my discussion into this larger discourse for the reader interested in the ethnography of Germany and Europe. This is not only a nod to that regional literature. Instead, I aim to show that the project of the Copts I worked with is a quintessentially European one, at the same time that it is a specifically Coptic one.

I argue that these projects are not only about transforming a non-religious space into a religious one (*desecularization*). They accomplish the transforming of a German space into an Egyptian one and a German past into an Egyptian one. They create a home or, to situate the work in a related body of literature, a homeland, narratively. Through the careful semiotic (material and narrative) construction of space and time in the diaspora, that home(land) is not in Germany

⁷⁰ I did not research the accuracy of this retelling because my interest is in the contemporary narrative about the change.

⁷¹ I outline some of these literatures in the section of Chapter One entitled *Constructing and Contesting Ausländer Discourses in Berlin*.

but in Egypt or rather both in Germany and in Egypt. In this process, there is a continuity created in which the Egyptian past and the Egyptian space become the appropriate time-space for all of Christianity. This will be the discussion with which I conclude this chapter as I claim that these transformations of space are an important part of the linguistic project of becoming (part of) the majority and performing the ecumene for Copts in Germany.

Based on this introduction alone, one might wonder in what way this chapter is one of *linguistic* anthropology, but I hope it will become clear as we continue that my argument is about *narratives* and how they construct time and space for a religious community. In the chapters that follow I link these narrative organizational techniques to wider language ideologies and in particular understandings of how language can and should act, both for this community and more broadly (see Chapters Four through Six). In my analysis, however, I do not ignore other semiotic processes that intersect with more obviously linguistic ones. The monastery and the church are not only what the narratives are about, the buildings also tell the story.

The Bed and Breakfast in the Desert

During one of my visits to Höxter-Brenkhausen, the Bishop asked me if I would like to accompany him on a meeting about the purchase of a bed and breakfast across the street from the monastery. The owners had expanded into an operation equivalent to a hotel in size, complete with a massive cafeteria. The space was far beyond what was necessary to accommodate guests who might visit and now the couple who owned the building, to which their own house was attached, were in serious financial straits, unable to pay back loans that were borrowed for the remodeling. Bishop Damian expressed compassion especially for the wife of the couple and was exploring the options for the church to purchase the bed and breakfast as a place for visitors and tourists coming to the monastery to stay.

This meeting had many vivid moments and converging complexities, but what I want to discuss here is a comment by the Bishop's financial advisor, Antonious, a Copt and friend who had come into town for this meeting. He was explaining the dual points of why he felt the bank's loans and the Coptic Church's bailout plan were both ill-advised. His reasoning was that there simply wasn't enough demand for bed and breakfast in this small town in central, and centrally isolated, Germany to justify this complex. It looked from the outside like a bed and breakfast, which is what I have chosen to call it to emphasize its nature as a family-run business, but on the inside had a huge dining room and the space to accommodate tour groups as a three-star motel. To express the misstep of either financing such a facility in such a place, as the bank had done, or purchasing it, as the church contemplated doing, the Bishop's financial advisor said, "Das ist die Wüste. Für mich ist das die Wüste." (This is the desert. For me, this is the desert.)

I previously worked in a fieldsite in another border town in Germany, on the German-Polish border rather than the East-West border. I have heard such outposts described in a variety of very creative ways. There was a child who described Görlitz as the "ass of the world," baffled as he was by my interest in the town in which he had lived his entire life. Then there was the West German university student who described it as "practically Asia," as he was shocked to discover train connections to this East German town in his German rail guide.⁷² But I never heard anyone previously describe such spaces as "the desert."⁷³

⁷² This comment was followed quickly by the quip, "You can put that in your dissertation."

⁷³ Borderlands are a popular theme in the Anthropology of Europe, where nationalism was born and national borders are at the forefront of many debates. In her book on the East-West border, Daphne Berdahl (1999) drew attention to the borderland as "a transitional zone where identity can be particularly fluid; it is a place of intense clarity as well as complicated ambiguity. This, I suggest, is the paradox of the borderland" (Berdahl, 1999:141). This theoretical framework styles the border as a liminal place (Turner 1967). Berdahl tells of the border jokes, stories and walks that constructed the border in a small German town even after the fall of the wall. Although Höxter is located two hours north of the border village where Berdahl worked, I want to situate

The description of this little village in the German countryside as “the desert” is a very appropriate and telling description to help make sense of Coptic imaginings of the landscape. Coptic Christianity is famous throughout the world for beginning the Christian tradition of monasticism. It was Egyptian Christians who first developed the ascetic practices of going into the desert for religious contemplation as a Christian imperative, first as hermits and then later in cooperative groups. Pope Shenouda bears the name of one of Coptic Christianity’s most famous saints who created the first contract, one in which the individual agreed to relinquish individual property, to join a Christian religious community in the desert. When Benedict, who is commonly known as the father of Western monasticism, wrote the rule that became a standard for Europe’s monastic communities, he was drawing on these “desert fathers” who were vital to the early church’s doctrinal foundations, both for theory and in the realm of practice.⁷⁴ In the Middle Ages when monasticism reached its peak in Germany, flourished, and led to the building of monasteries like this one now found outside Höxter, the inhabitants stood in a tradition that claimed its roots in the Egyptian desert.

This narrative of Coptic Christianity and the Egyptian desert’s role in the rise of monasticism is only one possible narrative, but having this narrative as background allows us to fully appreciate the significance of Antonious’s comment, “This is the desert.” Trying to describe the location of this monastery, he described it in fundamentally Egyptian Christian terms. Egyptian monasteries are desert institutions and even in central Germany, very close to

the remark by the Bishop’s financial advisor into this theoretical discourse of borderlands that is so powerful, not only for anthropologists of Europe, but also for the people whom they study, whether they live on the East/West border, one of Germany’s national borders, or a borderland between their diasporic home and the homeland to which the diaspora points back.

⁷⁴ As the Greek word for God in the English word theory indicates, even the distinction between theory and practice so vital to anthropology as a discipline can trace its roots to Egyptian Christianity.

some of Germany's most lush and green national parks, the monastery is in the desert. For Antonious, the German landscape was also an Egyptian one, perhaps even more an Egyptian one now than when the monastery was previously occupied. The gorgeous buildings that Bishop Damian bragged about on my first tour of the town belie a more prosperous past for Höxter and its surrounding villages. Today it is isolated, the empty center of Germany. No longer defined by military installations,⁷⁵ it is fortified not by difference but by indifference instead. The desert then is not an entirely positive designation for this landscape. Antonious' comment on the desert is also derogatory, pointing out the low worth of the real estate located within it that was being discussed. While acknowledging the life of the monastic in the desert, one can also access this perspective on the desert as one Coptic author and resident of Germany writes about it,

Until quite recently, most [Egyptians] did not consider the desert as part of their environment, although it covers 96.5 percent of Egypt...Only in recent times, after intensive political propaganda through the media, did the common citizen become aware—without being entirely convinced—that the desert could serve as a habitat too (Ibrahim and Ibrahim, 2003:8).

What Antonious creates is the parallel he sees between the two places—Höxter, Germany and the Egyptian desert. But more than a parallel, there is an identity between them. That they both have monasteries and are isolated from the more populous and popular landscapes of their nations, gives them an identity. They are both deserts, socially arid places even though one lacks the physical aridity of a desert.⁷⁶ When Antonious stated that this is the desert, I argue that he situated the monastery within a landscape and a past that was both German and Egyptian. Just as monasteries are traditionally found in the desert in Egypt, Höxter was discussed as the desert as well. This comment frames the purchase and (re)construction of the Benedictine monastery, and

⁷⁵ The former American military base, which the Coptic Church purchased in a nearby town, will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁷⁶ Antonious is not unfamiliar with the borders of Germany. His own town of Aachen is situated between Germany and Belgium at the former center of the Roman Empire.

other spatial edifices of the Coptic Church in Germany, as a project of both creating and recreating a Coptic landscape, a Christian Egypt, in Germany.

Where is Egypt? Outline of a Biblical, Historical and National Homeland

So far in this chapter, I have discussed Egypt as if the author, all Copts, Germans and the reader are all in agreement about what and where Egypt is, as if it was self-evident as a location. Many scholars have called the self-evidence of nations into question; one of the most prominent is Benedict Anderson who in his book *Imagined Communities* famously defined the nation as "an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (1991:6). In this section, I would like to outline some of the ways in which Egypt is imagined for Copts. What kind of place is Egypt? This is a preamble for the rest of the chapter so that the reader has a frame of reference for the ethnographic tensions I will be illustrating. This is not intended to be the analysis itself.

First, Egypt is a biblical homeland, like the homeland of the Jews.⁷⁷ It is one of the few places easily located on a map today that makes a prominent appearance by name in both the Old and New Testament. It is the place from which Moses emerged and then, according to the prophesy as detailed in the Old Testament and described as fulfilled in the New Testament, it is the place from which Christ emerged.⁷⁸ Coptic doctrine teaches that Christ traveled in Egypt as an infant and Copts consider holy the places where he stopped on his journey. Often there are ancient monasteries built on these sites. They are places of pilgrimage for Copts and other Christians today. Pilgrimage, monuments and artistic renderings are only some of the semiotic

⁷⁷ This claim is not uncontroversial. See discussion of Boyarin and Boyarin's (1993) objections below.

⁷⁸ The New Testament stories of Jesus' journey as an infant through Egypt are considered by some biblical scholars to be apocryphal but this makes them no less significant in the imagining of a biblical and modern Christian Egypt.

processes through which the biblical Egypt is made present in Egypt today and this biblical Egypt is understood as the homeland of Copts. This biblical Egypt and the processes of place formation related to it will be discussed further below.

In addition, Egypt is the homeland of Christianity in another sense. It is a birthplace of the theology (theory and practice) of Christianity. As discussed above, monasticism developed in Egypt when ascetics secluded themselves in desert caves and then later as monastic communities. Although the Coptic Church split from what became the dominant model of Christianity for the West relatively early (451 AD), the theological debates of Egypt among the early church hierarchy were formative in the theology that became doctrine across Christendom.⁷⁹ Although the Coptic Pope now spends most of his time in Cairo, his official position as the Patriarch of Alexandria harks back to the importance of this ancient Egypt to Coptic spatial imaginaries. Egypt is imagined as the birthplace of Christianity, not only biblically but also theologically, and this foundational Egypt is the homeland of Coptic Orthodox Christians.

There is another Egypt that is understood as the homeland of Egyptian Christians today. This is Egypt the nation-state. As with the other Egypts above, this is a complex entity. As a state, Egypt has a long history of colonialism.⁸⁰ Egypt was a colony of the British Empire for many years and long before that, from the Coptic perspective, Egypt was occupied by the Arabs (see Chapter Two). Even earlier, it was an administrative regime of the Greeks. Each of these

⁷⁹ Alexandria was an influential port for the Greek empire and as such an important city in the development of Christian theology through the works of Origen, Jerome, Evagrius and others. Athanasius was a bishop from Egypt and an influential figure in establishing what became the orthodox position in the controversies over the nature of the Godhead.

⁸⁰ This overview addresses only the most prominent colonial encounters, as they were discussed by Copts in the diaspora, and does not include all of the complexities of the colonial encounter. The French effort to establish a colony in Egypt (1798-1891) is one example of a colonial encounter that is not included.

occupations is viewed in a different light by the Copts in the diaspora. In my discussions, usually only the Arab occupation is viewed negatively as the cause of oppression, which Copts perceive through the domination of Islam and Arabic. The Greek administrative regime, on the other hand, was the avenue via which Christianity first came to Egypt. As with the Arabs, the Greeks were another set of rulers who did not share the religion of the population they oversaw. Before the introduction of Christianity, Egypt already had a rich and complex religious tradition spanning thousands of years.⁸¹ As discussed in Chapter Two, harking back to this ancient Pharaonic tradition, Copts often see themselves as racially distinct from their Arab neighbors in Egypt and abroad. This racial and religious distinction overlaps with a linguistic one and Egypt becomes a linguistic homeland for Copts as well.

When living in Egypt, there is a focus among Copts on similarity with their Muslim neighbors and Copts may identify as Arabs.⁸² In the diaspora, narratives and practices of exclusion are more prevalent than those of similarity, along with a rejection of the identity label Arab. These are not just narrative tropes, but are created in experiences of tragedy as in the stabbings, bombings and terror attacks on the Coptic community in Egypt that have rocked the diaspora community both during my fieldwork and following it.⁸³ These martyrdom narratives also have a historical place in Coptic Christianity. Coptic Christianity is a “church of martyrs.” Many of the early saints of the church were martyred at the hands of Roman emperors.

⁸¹ The influence of this tradition and especially Egyptian monotheism can still be seen in Christianity today (Assmann, 1997). This is receiving more attention today than ever before, perhaps especially among German scholars of Egypt. It was featured prominently at Berlin’s Egyptian Museum in 2006.

⁸² See Ayalon (1999) for a discussion of the Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies’ attempt to organize a conference discussing Copts as a minority and the public backlash, even among prominent Copts, at using the term minority for the Copts of Egypt.

⁸³ For example, Copts were stabbed at three different churches in Alexandria shortly before Christmas in 2006 and as a result the feasting of Christmas celebrations was curtailed. Church members in Berlin were asked not to bring the usual food as a sign of mourning.

Martyrdom is part of diasporic Copts' understanding of what it is to be Christian and their understanding of their relationship to an antagonistic nation-state thus fits into this much older trope from an early period of Christianity (see Chapter Six). These martyrdom stories are historical, but also like the stories of “desert fathers” they border on scriptural if not biblical.

In Chapter One I outlined some of the major historical events in Egypt's history and the relationship between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Egyptian state that influenced migration out of Egypt and views of being Coptic in the diaspora. One of the most prominent events was Pope Shenouda's exile for four years in the early 1980s under Presidents Sadat and Mubarak. Recently, Pope Shenouda urged Copts to view themselves as part of the nation-state, weighing in on the dispute about whether Copts are a minority to declare that they are not a minority because they are an integral part of the nation-state of Egypt.

Despite tensions, I argue Egypt *as a nation* is a place of which Copts are very proud. The nation-state of Egypt has become even more important for Copts during the last century as nationalism changed the landscape of the Middle East and the world. The Coptic Church, which once spanned an area much wider than the borders of the Egyptian state, has become in many senses a national church, although not the religion of the majority (see Chapter Six).⁸⁴ Linguistic nationalism also played a role in the Coptic resurgence of the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the much beloved Pope Kyrillos, after whom several Copts in Germany had named their children (see Chapter Two), supported a return to the mass in Coptic rather than Arabic and led what is described as a Coptic renaissance in Egypt.

⁸⁴ For example, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, once ruled by Pope Shenouda as its patriarch and thought of as a daughter church of the Coptic Orthodox Church, has now been granted its own patriarch, in part on national grounds, and is styled as a sister church to Coptic Orthodox Christianity. As we will see in Chapter Six, this (newly) ecumenical relationship is fraught with productive tensions.

In the above section, I outlined some of the ways in which Egypt is imagined as a place for Copts and even Germans. It is at once biblical, historical, and national. The Egypt of the old and New Testament is not the same geographically or geopolitically as the nation-state of Egypt found on the map today. Scholars of nationalism and scholars of Ancient Christianity concur on this point. But the differences between these types of imaginings are obscured in practice. They may also be understood in opposition to other possible imaginaries such as Arab. A creative symbiosis between the biblical and historical Egypt, in which Christ and Christianity feature prominently, and Egypt as a nation-state may allow Copts to have more of a place and stake in present-day Egypt than they might otherwise have, at least from the vantage point of the diaspora.

This chapter explores the Coptic spaces of Germany and how they create an Egyptian past and ecumenical future for Copts in Germany and for Germany. Understanding the multiple meanings of Egypt for Copts is crucial for understanding this argument. We see that diasporic Copts have as their homeland an Egypt that has multiple meanings. It is a biblical, historical, and national homeland. Slippage (Benveniste, 1958) between these different imaginings of Egypt is facilitated by the perceived racial, linguistic and religious continuities between them, as discussed in Chapter Two. This discussion of Egypt, both multiple and one, lays the groundwork for the rest of this chapter.

Narratives of German Timespace: How to Construct A Past with Monuments

Antonious' comment on Höxter's location in "the desert" is one example of how German spaces are situated as Egyptian spaces for Copts and the German past overlaps with an Egyptian one. This is both a spatial and temporal construction. In order to understand the reconstruction of the monastery and my larger argument, I will juxtapose the monastery project to other

Wiederaufbau ('again-building') projects in Germany. This situates the narrative (re)constructions Copts are undertaking in Germany within wider German and European understandings of the past and how it can be created and recreated. I argue that the technique of rebuilding the monastery to 'close the parentheses' around a period of secularization, and projecting a continuous German (and in this case Egyptian) past using monuments, is not unique to the Coptic monastery project but part of a wider understanding of monumental time and space.

During the firebombing of Dresden in 1945, the Church of Our Lady (Frauenkirche) collapsed in on itself due to excessive heat from the flames inside. The incoming Soviets, when they took over the government of the city and founded the German Democratic Republic (DDR), decided to leave the collapsed building as a monument to remember the ravages of war and fascism/capitalism. It remained a pile of rubble in the center of the old part of the city until 1989 when plans for reconstruction were taken up again. After the reunification of Germany, the decision was made to rebuild, using original uncleaned sandstone where possible and replacing what was necessary with new sandstone, creating a stark contrast between the new and old sandstone in the rebuilt church.

James (2006) has written a compelling piece on this reconstruction project and situated it within the topic of memory and monuments, which is so prevalent in discussions of post-socialist East Germany.⁸⁵ The rebuilt church, and now rebuilt Old Town, erases the Socialist past as if the period from 1945 (or 1936?) to 1989 had never taken place. One former bank in front of the Frauenkirche, was rebuilt on the outside to appear as its former incarnation as a bank. On the inside, however, it is a mall, or as my (East) German friends might call it, an 'Einkaufstemple' (shopping temple). This mall is further evidence that this reconstruction is a closing of the

⁸⁵ James' analysis corroborates my own fieldwork in Dresden while living in the city in 2002 and 2005 and during my first visit to the city in 1998.

Socialist rupture. These projects were financed by supporters in the capitalist strongholds of Britain, the US, and West Germany, and by the selling of watches, an appropriate symbol of capitalism (Thompson, 1991).

With the (re)building of both a protestant church and the “shopping temple” as the old town structure of Dresden, a capitalist Christianity was inscribed onto Dresden’s streets as if it had always already been there.⁸⁶ A socialist Atheism was at the same time erased. I have chosen this example because the Church of Our Lady is a church, a point barely touched upon by James.⁸⁷ To link it with other Christian temporalities we can consider the rebuilding of the Church of Our Lady as an effective closing of the parentheses (Robbins, 2001) over the Soviet period. The closing of the parentheses is a closing of a period of Atheism and what rises from the rubble is a triumph of Christianity.

Like the monastery in Höxter, this is a desecularization. This story of the Church of Our Lady is instructive for our purposes here for two reasons. First, it highlights a project of desecularization that is not a peculiarly Coptic one. These “again-building” movements are being embarked on throughout Germany. Second, it shows an example of how these projects are part of choosing a particular past and enforcing that narrative semiotically through monuments. This may be easier to see in the case of the Frauenkirche because the socialism/capitalism dichotomy and related narratives are so well known. The socialist and atheist past of East Germany is gone from the landscape.

⁸⁶ This is not to say that the reconstruction and efforts at erasure were entirely successful. Dresden’s streets are still much wider than they once were, which reflects the Soviet style. Dominant narratives, even when successful, are always partial.

⁸⁷ I am indebted to Katherine Verdery for bringing my focus to the importance of the Frauenkirche’s status as a church (personal communication, 2003).

Another example of the control of the past and projected future through spatial and material means is the fate of the historic Palace of the Republic in Berlin where the government of East Germany and its parliament used to meet. The Palace of the Republic was not only a government building, but true to the ideology of socialism, in which the government was one of the people, it also contained a disco and other entertainment for the masses. In the song *Express Train to Pankow* Udo Lindenberg chides Erich Hoenneker after the leader of the DDR refused him permission to travel from West Germany to give a rock concert in this venue.

The Palace of the Republic was the focus of an extensive asbestos removal project and then housed, or was engaged in, a variety of artistic and cultural projects from 2003 until it was finally demolished during the period from 2006 to 2008.⁸⁸ It is in the process of being replaced by a replica of a former palace, which was similarly destroyed by the Soviets. What this interesting choice of government monuments might say about the past and the (political) narrative that Germany has chosen as its own, as well as the wisdom of these choices, is an exploration for another work. For our purposes, I aim to show how prevalent and compelling these monumental attempts to control past and future narratives are. Reconstructing buildings in Germany is a project of erasure (Irvine and Gal, 2000; Derrida, 1992) or what I have called “closing the parentheses” (Robbins, 2001).

The process that is taking place at the Coptic monastery in Höxter-Brenkhausen is part of this ongoing project in Germany to close the parentheses through monumental means. These projects are always endorsed by one section of the German public and contested by another, but regardless of the side on which one stands, there is a strong awareness in Germany that the

⁸⁸ Shortly before its destruction, I stood in the entrance and considered visiting an exhibition about the Terracotta Army so that I could later say I had been inside the Palace of the Republic. I did not go in because the admission price was too high, which shows that the erasure of this space as a socialist one was already well underway before demolition.

official past can be chosen through the way in which one manipulates the landscape, its monuments, and the paths objects and persons take as they move through both. The monastery project detailed here is participating in this dominant German framing of space.

To understand this view of time from a theoretical point of view, perhaps it would be useful to contrast it to the view Robbins discusses for the Urapmin and premillennial dispensationalists. I follow Joel Robbins in an interest in the relationship between time and narrative. As he puts it,

if we agree with Ricœur (1981:165) that ‘...temporality...[is] that structure of existence that reaches language in narrativity and narrative [is] the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate referent,’ then for anthropologists it is only a short step to the argument that narrative is capable of constituting temporal experience” (2001:531).

He then goes on to lay out the narrative framework of everyday millenarianism, which he claims the Urapmin he works with, and the Pre-dispensationalists who indirectly missionized them, share.

The term “the great parenthesis” (Boyer, 1992:88; Weber, 1987:20, cited in Robbins, 2001:543) is actually taken from ethnography rather than theory. As Robbins describes the temporality of those caught up in messianic time,

Dispensationalists see themselves as living in a gap between the narratives that make up sacred history and those that have already been foretold as structuring the future. What is difficult to know from the point of view of the present ‘discontinuous unorganized middle’ is if one has finally landed up on the opposite shore where the parenthesis closes and the narrative of the future finally picks up (ibid.).

Robbins sees this type of temporality as unusual, because it is unusual in the theory of anthropology.⁸⁹

My fieldwork from a different part of the world would suggest that the tendencies Robbins outlines are not so unusual once we undertake ethnographies of everyday time. As the field of postsocialism in anthropology has realized, there are many people in Eastern Europe who have experienced the present as a “discontinuous unorganized middle” (ibid.) and wonder(ed) when the narrative of the future, being capitalism, will finally pick up. Like the premillennial dispensationalists, they see the problem of rupture, a period of time that must be closed up and folded in on itself so that the narrative (historical rather than biblical, in this case, but no less textual) does not get out of control and fail to reach its preordained imagined future.⁹⁰ As Mojtabai, quoted in Robbins, says of Dispensational premillennialists,

It is hard to name the precise tense in which so many Christians live; whatever it might be called, it is not the present tense. The present is merely an interim” (Mojtabai, 1986:153). Yet that interim is not unimportant. It is the time in which one must live daily life in a way that will gain one salvation (Robbins, 2001:544).

This is a lived time for postsocialist East Germans, and even Germans more broadly, who seek now in validating and valorizing certain types of pasts to close the parentheses around what they see as times not a part of the master narrative and this is done by monumental as well as narrative means.

⁸⁹ Robbins' piece has a wonderful literature review of the tendency to separate and the attempts to bring together cyclical and linear views of time in anthropology. See also Harding, 1999.

⁹⁰ German philosophers have been dabbling in these ideas for centuries. It was Wilhelm Dilthey (Owensby, 1994) who noted that the past is full of possibilities, it is the future that subordinates us. Late in life Paul Ricouer (e.g., 2004) admitted a strong reliance on the work of Wilhelm Dilthey. We should not forget that Ricouer himself was driven by Catholicism in his conclusions about time. There is always a challenge in separating the theory from the ethnography in the anthropology of Christianity.

Höxter is situated in West Germany so it did not undergo the extreme secularization of Dresden or (East) Berlin. In fact, the church attached to the monastery is still owned by the Catholic Church and home to a seemingly thriving, although aging, local community. Nevertheless, it was part of the secularization that Bishop Damian described and reinforced in his tour of the town upon my first visit. In contrast to the secularization of East Germany, this is the less radical and possibly more successful secularization that is better known to most anthropologists. Less well known are the ways in which this secularization is contested.

As Bishop Damian told his story the Coptic Church's bid for the monastery was accepted because he was willing to rebuild it completely in keeping with the 'Wiederaufbau' that the local authorities imagined. The political motives of the German government in the sale and regulation of the monastery's reconstruction are less obvious than in Saxony and East Berlin. However, the overlapping social, political and economic agendas found in these projects, bent as they are on creating certain kinds of pasts, make the implications clearer. Throughout Germany buildings are being engaged in the project of recreating a continuous narrative of the Christian past and future. But the government officials were orchestrating the recreation of a Benedictine monastery and the Bishop was creating a Coptic monastery. These projects collide, reinforcing each other and coming into conflict.

Restoring the monastery closes the parentheses around the period of secularization so that the Cistercian and Benedictine monastery is a monastery once again. The Coptic project, while it dovetails with this one in its hermeneutic premise, is transforming this space into an Egyptian one and creating in Germany a Coptic past and even for Copts a German past and a historical

place in Germany.⁹¹ I argue the project closes "a gap between the narratives that make up sacred history and those that have already been foretold as structuring the future" (Robbins, 2001). This will be illustrated with transcript material taken from a series of tours Bishop Damian gave to a medley of guests visiting the monastery in August 2007, first focusing on the construction of a past through monuments and then on the projected future that this past anticipates. The decision to purchase a pre-existing building at the Brenkhausen location is part of a deep engagement with German and European narratives of space, time, and hermeneutic transformation.

Narratives of Egyptian Timespace: Closing the Parentheses

The reconstruction of German monuments, like the Church of our Lady, erase a(n) (atheist) past, a rupture in the triumphant version of German history, and create a continuity with an alternative past for the nation. Through choices about which monuments to destroy and which ones to rebuild, the narrative of the nation and its future can be controlled. The Coptic project participates in the active control of past narratives through present and absent monuments, but the continuity it creates is with an Egyptian past, thereby embedding Egypt in a Christian past and future for Germany.

Before secularization the monastery in Brenkhausen was a Cistercian and Benedictine monastery. Now it is being restored as a Coptic one. Although the Denkmalbehörde dictates very specific guidelines for the restoration of the monastery, the difference between these two types of monasteries is very visible. One example is the baptismal chapel, which contains two baptismal fonts. One is for adults and the other is for children because the Coptic Orthodox Church practices full immersion baptism. One of the fonts must be large enough for a full-grown adult to

⁹¹ The building of the other and older Coptic monastery in Germany, which is located outside of Frankfurt, stands in sharp contrast. It is a Coptic Church built from the foundations in the traditional Coptic architectural style.

walk down into the font. This is in strong contrast to Catholic or mainline Protestant baptismal practices.

As Bishop Damian describes it in one of his tours:

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|---|---|
| Bishop: Hier handelt es sich um zwei Taufbecken. Unten ein kleines für Babies [<i>English</i>] und ein größeres für Erwachsene. Wir praktizieren Babytaufe. Ein Babylein, ab dem vierzigsten Lebenstag, wird festgehalten, bekommt Hals, Beinchen und dann richtig dreimal unter Wasser. | Bishop: These are two baptismal fonts. One for small babies and a big one for adults. We practice baby baptism. A little baby, 40 days or older, is held tightly, gets neck and legs, and then properly three times under water. |
| Frau: Wie mit Kopf und allem? | Frau: How? With the head and everything? |
| Bishop: Alles. | Bishop: Everything. |
| Frau: Ach so. | Frau: I see. |
| Bishop: So flach wird das Kind gehalten und dann richtig dreimal unter Wasser. Im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes. | Bishop: So flat is the baby held and then properly three times under water. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. |

Figure 3.1: Bishop Damian’s tour

The large white marble fonts are in the separate baptismal chapel directly off the main chapel where services are held so that celebrants can first be baptized and then enter the chapel as a member of the community.⁹² The presence of the marble fonts here are a marking of the monastery as Egyptian and not German. The Bishop in this case does not mention the scriptural warrant for full immersion baptism⁹³ and the fonts stand as a material reminder of an oft

⁹² By comparison when an infant was baptized in the Coptic church in Berlin a large orange tub was brought into the chapel into which the infant was immersed during the ceremony. The baptismal font in Berlin was not installed in the building as a permanent fixture. Instead it was a mundane washtub before consecration.

⁹³ Many Protestant groups outside of the mainline Protestant (Evangelische) church now practice full immersion baptism due to a prevailing belief that it is the older form of baptism. This has both scriptural and historical warrant. In the Bible Jesus participates in full immersion baptism in a river. One can see the font as part of this larger narrative of scriptural practice for the church. It not only marks the monastic space as Egyptian, but also structures Egyptian as more ancient. In these baptismal fonts the overlap between different definitions of Egypt is also reinforced.

discussed point of tension in doctrine and practice between different branches of Christianity: when should a person be baptized, when should they receive communion, and in what way?

Throughout this chapter I aim to show that the monastery also tells the story. My focus on the materiality of the monastery as co-creating the (claims of) the narrative was inspired by Stephen Collier's (2004, 2011) study of Russia and how heating pipes were materially implicated in socialism. For Collier, these pipes constrain the ideological shift to democracy because the pipes were designed in keeping with an underlying communist ideology, the materiality of which cannot shift as easily as the political/linguistic ideology does.⁹⁴ Even though changes in Russia brought in a new focus on individual choice, neighbors were still connected to each other for heat. They were living the ideology of socialism through the materiality of pipes long after its purported collapse. In one tour of the monastery Bishop Damian engages with the German visitors to the monastery in a lively debate about the heating system currently in use and under construction in the monastery. Some feel that the number and position of pipes cannot possibly be sufficient.

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| Bishop: Im Winter hier zu wohnen, das kann man nicht beschreiben. Es ist so angenehm temp.. - es ist nicht heiß - es ist richtig angenehm temperiert. | Bishop: In winter to live here, this can't be described. It is such a comfortable temperature - it isn't hot - it is really a comfortable temperature. |
| Dissenting German Visitor: Ja, wenn es der Mönch... | Dissenting German Visitor: Yes, if the monk... |
| Bishop: Es ist die... | Bishop: It is the... |
| Dissenting German Visitor: ...ja schon sagt, ne? | Dissenting German Visitor: ...says so, no? |

Figure 3.2: The Heating system

The heating pipes twisting through the interior of the thick walls themselves define the

⁹⁴ The heating system is centralized and heating is chosen at a main control point rather than in individual residences. This means that individual apartment owners cannot choose the temperature of their dwellings. “The fixities of the heating apparatus followed logically from the unbending certainties of Soviet social and economic regulation” (Collier, 2004:51).

monastery as monastery. The baptismal chapel is an example of the distinctly Coptic materiality of the monastery. The debate about the heating pipes, on the other hand, ends with the German visitors coming to a consensus that there is something monastic that transcends different confessions. I will now explore the ways in which the monastery is constructed, both narratively and structurally, as both Egyptian *and* German, bringing Egypt into Germany as a relevant past for Germany.

I illustrate the construction of alternative pasts and futures for Germany with the narrative given by Bishop Damian during tours of what he called the 'abenteuerliche Baustelle,' or the adventuresome construction site, as he took visitors to the monastery into the parts of the building still in the process of being restored. These tours also included a visit to the main chapel and dining area. The second set of narratives from these tours in the following section on *Moving Monks* are examples of the way in which pilgrimage, exile and diaspora are inscribed in the monastic space. Like the building itself these visitors situate Egypt not only as part of the past for Germany but also, as for Robbin's premillennial dispensationalists, through these means project a particular future for Christianity as well.

In the opening transcript a female visitor to the monastery has just asked about the state of the monastery when the Coptic Church purchased it. Bishop Damian opens by situating the building in two different states, first as a ruin and then as a building under the protection of the government that should be restored. These are familiar frames of reference for his German tour participants.

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| Bishop: Wer dieses Bild hier nicht gesehen hat, kann [man?] sich nicht vorstellen, was [??] ist, wir haben das Kloster wie eine Ruine, nicht in diesem Zustand, nein es war schlimmer, es war eine abrisssreife Ruine. | Bishop: A person who hasn't seen this picture can't imagine how it was. We acquired the cloister as a ruin. Not in this state, no, it was worse. It was a ruin ready to be torn down. |
| Frau E: War denn das Dach noch drauf | Frau E: Was the roof still on it and so |

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| und so etwas? | forth? |
| Bishop: Zum Glück hat der Landeskonservat[or] 1972 veranlasst, daß das Dach saniert werden soll. | Bishop: Luckily the Land Conservator decided in 1972 that the roof should be restored. |

Figure 3.3: The Cloister ruin

After discussing the state of the roof the Bishop begins to describe the construction of the walls of the monastery. Here we see the slippage between reconstruction as a Cistercian/Benedictine monastery and as a Coptic one. Not only is this an Egyptian building, but a biblical Egyptian building, so that the past being restored is a biblical Egyptian past. After describing this restoration process he returns to a discussion of the prior state of the monastery as ruin.

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| Bishop: Diese Bauweise ist aus Ägypten entnommen. In Ägypten, steht im Alten Testament, die Israeliten lebten als Sklaven, holten Schlamm, trampelten in diese Schlammmassen, vermischten Sand und Stroh, und daraus wurden Lehmziegel und Lehmputz gemacht. Wir holen Weserschlamm und dann machen eben diesen Lehmputz. Auch die Großen Balken werden die großen Balken werden ummantelt mit Stroh und Leisten und handgeschmiedeten Nägeln... | Bishop: This method of construction is taken from Egypt. In Egypt, as it says in the Old Testament, the Israelites lived as slaves, hauled mud, stomped in these masses of mud, mixed sand and straw, and out of this clay and plaster is made. We haul Weser mud and then we make this plaster. Also the big beams are - the big beams are wrapped with straw and straps and handmade nails... |
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Figure 3.4: The monastery as ruin

The restoration that is taking place here is a structural one, but the structure being built is a biblical Egyptian one. The Israelites in Old Testament Egypt hauled mud and constructed their buildings in this way and so too the Egyptians in Höxter ('we') haul mud out of the river Weser, which runs through Höxter. This creates an identity between the biblical Egyptians and the Egyptian workers in Germany, but also creates an identity between the biblical mud and rivers of Egypt and the mud of the river Weser. Like Antonious' declaration that he was in the desert, this is a bringing of Egypt as homeland to Höxter.

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| Frau E: Ist das jetzt nur Schlamm und | Frau E: Is this here just pressed mud and |
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| Stroh gepresst? | straw? |
| Bishop: Schlamm, Stroh, Holzspäne und Sand... | Bishop: Mud, straw, shavings of wood and sand... |
| Frau E: Ja. | Frau E: Yes. |
| Bishop: [???] alle vier zusammen. | Bishop: All four together. |
| Frau E: Und das ist nicht gebrannt? Das ist... | Frau E: And this isn't fired in a kiln? This is... |
| Bishop: Nein ... | Bishop: No ... |
| Frau E: Nur, nur ... | Frau E: Only, only ... |
| Bishop: macht man nicht. | Bishop: One doesn't do that. |
| Anderer Mann: Nur getrocknet. | Anderer Mann: Only dried. |
| Bishop: Nur getrocknet. Und genau dieselbe Technik wird in Ägypten gemacht - bis heute leben Menschen und Tiere in solche[n] Häuser[n]. | Bishop: Only dried. And exactly the same technique is used in Egypt - up until today men and animals are living in such houses. |

Figure 3.5: An Egyptian technique

This narrative not only provides an Egyptian past for this German monastery, but also reinforces the construction of the various Egypts outlined above as one and the same, bivalently biblical and modern. Biblical slaves used these building techniques in Egypt where such buildings are still lived in today. The monastery is rebuilt as if it were an ancient Egyptian monastery using Egyptian building techniques, ones that reinforce the connection of the monastery and the surrounding landscape to the biblical *and* contemporary Egypt, creating an identity between the two Egypts at the same time as they are placed in the German landscape.

In the next section of this tour Bishop Damian also describes pieces of the reconstructed monastery that are built in Egypt and then brought to Germany. Parts of the monastery travel with the diaspora.

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| Bishop: Uns hat ein sehr großes Problem konfrontiert: nämlich die Beschläge. Die müssen handgeschmiedet sein, exakt nach einer Vorlage, wie vor dreihundert Jahren. Wer kann sich so 'was leisten? [Da] kostete die Stunde einer Fachschmiede um die fünfzigtausend äh äh um die fünfzig D-Mark, damals. In Ägypten kostet eine vergleichbare Leistung | Bishop: And then we were confronted with a big problem, that is, the hinges. They must be handmade, exactly according to a model from three hundred years ago. Who can afford such a thing? There the hourly wage of a blacksmith is 50,000, um, um 50 D-Mark, back then. In Egypt the wage for a whole day of similar work is five D-Mark. All I could do was to take an exemplar with |
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| einen Tag lang fünf D-Mark. Es blieb mir nichts anderes übrig, als ein Muster mitzunehmen, nach Ägypten zu fliegen, und dann haben wir eine Firma beauftragt [???]tausend Beschläge zu bauen. Alle Besucher, die aus Kairo nach Deutschland kamen... | me, fly to Egypt, and then have a firm contracted to build [?]-thousand hinges. All visitors who came from Cairo to Germany... |
| Frau: Jeder ... brachte 'n paar Beschläge mit [laughter] | Frau: Everyone...brought a pair of hinges with them. [laughter] |
| Bishop: ...hundert[?] Beschläge. Wir bauten dann hundertundvierzig Fenster. | Bishop: ...A hundred hinges. We then built a hundred and forty windows. |

Figure 3.6: The reconstructed monastery

The narrative techniques employed in the tour support the material transformations, and vice versa, so that the monastery is both narratively and structurally Egyptian in order to meet the criterion to be authentically connected to its German past. The German building is made German by meeting all the guidelines of the Monument Authority, built with hinges according to a three-hundred-year-old European design. It is also Egyptian through materials constructed in Egypt and traveling to Germany with Copts. Just as the building techniques of Egypt are linked to the German landscape with Weser mud, the building techniques of Germany are linked to Egypt with Egyptian labor.

Bishop Damian then goes on to describe a time when they did not import materials from Egypt but something else instead:

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| Bishop: ...Wir müssten künftig kein Eisen importiere, wir haben einen Mann importiert. [laughter] Und dieser Mann holte vergammelte [verrostetes?] Eisen aus dem Kloster, alte Wasserrohre. | Bishop: We didn't need to import iron. We imported a man instead. [laughter] And this man hauled [rusty] old iron out of the monastery, old water pipes. |
| Frau: Ja. | Frau: Yes. |
| Bishop: Und daraus hat er Geländer gebaut und diese Geländer erfüllen die Kriterien der Denkmalbehörde | Bishop: And out of that he built banisters and these banisters fulfilled the criterion of the Monument Authority. |
| Frau: Ach so. | Frau: I see. |
| Bishop: Also eine richtige[s] Recycling. Er | Bishop: So, it's a real recycling. He built |

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| hat Kastenschlösser gebaut, so wie auf dem Land in Ägypten [...] in Oberägypten, da werden die Türen mit solche[n] Kastenschlösser[n] ... - das beherrschen die Schmiede in Ägypten - in Deutschland keiner. | lock boxes just like they do in the countryside in Egypt, in Upper Egypt. There the doors are locked with this type of lock box - this is something that the smiths in Egypt are masters of - in Germany no one is. |
| Mann: wird hier aber auch nicht mehr so gebraucht | Mann: Here it also isn't needed so much anymore. |
| Bishop: ...Alles maschinell. Aber in Ägypten - das ist kein Problem und die Denkmalbehörde was überglücklich, daß überhaupt so 'was machbar ist. | Bishop: Everything with machines. But in Egypt - this is no problem and the Monument Authority was overjoyed that such a thing is even possible. |

Figure 3.7: The Monument Authority

In this final part of the tour of the construction area, Bishop Damian returns to the Denkmalbehörde (Monument Authority) and their requirements for reconstruction. Many items must be handmade or made using particular types of materials, with as much saved from the original building as possible, with the idea that the reconstructed monastery will then be an authentic replica of the Cistercian/Benedictine monastery.⁹⁵ The Monument Authority was "thrilled" with the availability of handmade door locks, hinges, window frames and other pieces of the monastery available in Egypt or using skills originating in Egypt. Egyptians in this narrative have access to a past that Germans no longer can create and thus are uniquely able to reconstruct the monastery according to the Monument Authority's criteria.

The monastery being constructed here is clearly an Egyptian one. No claim is being made that residents of Höxter at the time that the monastery was originally built were hauling mud from the river Weser. On the other hand, the monastery is approved by the Monument Authority as an authentic reconstruction of a German past, made possible by drawing resources from past and present day Egypt that are not available in Germany. This narrative and these construction techniques (materially) situate the monastery within a particular past, just as the Church of Our

⁹⁵Bishop: *So, our principle is to save as much of the old material as possible.* (Also, unser Prinzip ist [es], so viel vom alten Material zu bewahren, wie es geht.)

Lady and Palace of the Republic create a particular past, but in this case it is an Egyptian Christian past for Germany. The joy of the Denkmalbehörde at the successful reconstruction made possible in and through Egypt is authenticating the monastery as both Egyptian and German with Copts providing this authentic past that Germans may be unable to provide for themselves. The monastery reconstruction simultaneously participates in the wider German practice of using buildings to close ruptures over unappealing pasts and also takes that project in a new direction by creating not only a continuation with a Benedictine and German past but with a Coptic and Egyptian one as well.

My goal in this chapter is to argue that this transformation of German space into Egyptian space creates a temporal continuity in which Copts are reconstructing an Egyptian past for Germany. As the monastery becomes an Egyptian one, from the heating pipes on out, the landscape around it becomes the desert. This is not only a spatial but also a temporal transformation and continuity. The reconstruction of German monuments creates an imagined German past and erases what are deemed to be ruptures in the narrative, such as the processes of secularization. Likewise, this Coptic project of reconstructing the monastery creates a past for Germany that has always already included Egypt and Egyptian Christianity. By closing the parentheses in this way, it also projects a future that envelops Coptic Christianity and Christianity more broadly as the future of Germany.

Holy Journeys: Exile, Diaspora and the Making of Time and Space

The monastery at Höxter-Brenkhausen was constantly accepting visitors, both invited and uninvited. Bishop Damian traveled often and told me that he had selected the monastery location

in part because of its good train connections to the capital.⁹⁶ When he gives tours of the monastery, he uses narratives of journey (pilgrimage, exile and diaspora) to construct the space as Egyptian and German (or more broadly European) so as to create a shared Christian past and future. Although these narratives are not a literal construction of the structural space as German and Egyptian, as with the examples in the previous section, these narrative journeys are embedded in the materiality of the monastery. In the final instance, the narrative is co-constructed by the traveler himself who arrives during the tour.

In the monastery at Höxter-Brenkhausen a small chapel is used for Coptic Church services. As you exit the chapel a long hall opens, on the walls of which there are murals and illustrations of many of the major Coptic saints including Shenoute, Anthony, Pachomius and Athanasius. Confronting those exiting the chapel is a mural of Mary riding with the baby Jesus on a camel through Egypt. Following the prophesy of Hosea (1:11) that “out of Egypt I have called my son” (Matthew 2:11), the Coptic Church teaches that Mary traveled in Egypt with Jesus when he was an infant. This pilgrimage, although contested in the academic literature, is important to Coptic understandings of Egypt as a birthplace of Christianity. Here it is a *literal* birthplace as we have Jesus in diaspora in Egypt as a baby. Bishop Damian described this painting to tour participants who went on a tour of the 'adventuresome' construction site and were exiting from their tour of the chapel thus:

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| <p>Bishop: Hinter uns ist eine der schönsten Motive der koptischen Kirche. Die Kopten sprechen von der Flucht der heiligen Familie nach Ägypten. Jesus Christus, als ein Säugling, sollte von Herodus getötet werden, äh, jedoch nahm Jesus Christus' Mutter, äh, Maria, Joseph und die</p> | <p>Bishop: Behind us is one of the most beautiful motifs of the Coptic Church. The Copts tell of the flight of the holy family to Egypt. Jesus Christ, as a baby, should have been killed by Herod, eh, instead Jesus Christ's mother, eh, Maria, Joseph and the midwife Salome went on their way to</p> |
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⁹⁶ The fact that the train connections to the capital were really not very good does not in anyway discount the narrative of connection and travel being performed.

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| <p>Hebamme Salome und machten sich auf den Weg nach Ägypten. Und dies soll die Flucht nach Ägypten zeigen. Wir haben eine Künstler aus Ägypt.. aus London gewonnen, äh, der diese Darstellung gemacht hat. Aber es ist eine außergewöhnliche Darstellung.</p> | <p>Egypt. And this represents the flight to Egypt. We attracted an artist from Egypt, eh, from London he created this representation.⁹⁷ But it is a very unusual representation.</p> |
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Figure 3.8: Egypt, Birthplace of Christianity

There are two trips described which both involve Egypt. The first is the "flight to Egypt" of the holy family and the second lesser, but nonetheless important, journey is the visit of this important Egyptian artist to the monastery to paint the mural. One of the trips reminds the reader of the biblical warrant for the importance of Egypt in the New Testament. This is an especially Coptic vision as it includes the midwife Salome. The second is a journey out of Egypt connecting the monastery to this birthplace.

Both visits are inscribed on the wall of the monastery, so that as one exits the chapel one sees Jesus traveling to Egypt. Mary and Jesus ride on a camel across the desert with a pyramid-like rock cluster and with a strong likeness to a Coptic Orthodox monastery in the background. The Bishop's interpretation of the painting is long. Here I transcribe the final section where he returns to the Egyptian elements of the painting.

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| <p>Bishop: Die heilige Familie wird mit Palmen empfangen. Es erinnert daran, daß Jesus später mit Palmenästen empfangen werden..äh..wird, in Jerusalem. Palmen aber erinnern auch an die Heiligen. Palmen tragen Früchte. Die Kinder bewerfen in unserem Land, äh, die Palmen mit Steinen. Die Antwort sind immer süße Datteln. Und so sollen die Heiligen reagieren wenn sie immer beschimpft [sind?] werden oder beleidigt, daß ihre Antwort sanft wird. Palmen stehen hoch. Das ist ein Symbol für einen stolzen Menschen und die Mutter Gottes wird in unsere [???] als eine Palme dargestellt, eine</p> | <p>Bishop: The holy family was received with palms. It reminds us that Jesus later would be received with palm fronds in Jerusalem. But palms also remind us of the saints. Palms carry fruit. The children pelt, in our land, um, the palms with stones. The answer is always sweet dates. And so should the saints react, if they are insulted or offended, so that the answer is mild. Palms stand tall. This is a symbol of a proud person and the mother of God is represented in our [church?] as a palm, a strong woman. Corn reminds us that Jesus</p> |
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⁹⁷ The artist is Dalia Sobhi Ibrahim who is originally from Cairo but now resides overseas.

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| <p>stolze Frau. Getreide erinnert daran, daß Jesus Christus lebendige Brot des Lebens ist. Die roten Rosen erinnern daran, daß die koptische Kirche eine Märtyrerkirche ist. Das Wasser erinnert an das [???]wasser, aber daran auch, daß das Wort Gottes ein lebendiges Wasser des Lebens ist. Vier Fische erinnern and die vier Evangelisten.</p> | <p>Christ is the living bread of life. The red roses remind us that the Coptic Church is a martyr church. The water reminds us of the [???]-water, but also that the word of God is a living water of life. Four fish remind us of the four evangelists.</p> |
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Figure 3.9: Egyptian elements of a painting

The Bishop focuses on the palms in his interpretation of the picture and specifically links these palms to Egypt where children (even today) throw stones at palm trees to get dates. Thus the modern Egypt and the biblical Egypt are isomorphically connected in his narrative and in the picture, as they were with the building processes and the walls of the monastery.⁹⁸ He specifies this picture as not only a picture of the holy family in Egypt, but one for the Coptic Church as a church of martyrs.

This large mural as Copts and visitors are leaving the chapel makes a claim to Egypt's prominent place at the beginning of Christianity, of relevance to all Christians. It legitimates the view that the Egyptian Christian past is the past of all of Christianity. As such it is part of combining the German and Egyptian past in order to foreshadow a shared future. This journey was one of exile, but it is also one of pilgrimage and diaspora. Other scholars have argued that pilgrimage can be very important to the sustaining of a religious diaspora and also to Christianity (see Berdahl, 1999 and footnote 73). This practice of inscribing space through journeys and movement, which the mural in the monastery depicts, is taken up again in a separate tour, this time as an Egyptian travels to Europe in the third century.

⁹⁸ As with other renovations of the monastery, these murals meet the requirements of the Monument Authority. They were funded with support from the Staatskanzlei (State Chancellery) Dusseldorf.

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| Frau: Mich interessiert die Figur des heiligen Mauritius. Was hat der mit Ihnen zu tun? Wie nennen Sie ihn? | Frau: I'm interested in the figure of Saint Maurice. What does he have to do with you? How do you call him? |
| Bishop: Ja [Arabic interlude to others.] Der heilige Mauritius ist ein Kopte. Ägypten war eine römische Provinz oder Körnerkammer für das römische Reich. Die Soldaten aus dem Luxor wurden beordert, um nach Europa zu kommen, um die Rebellen zu unterdrücken, die den Frieden der römischen Reichs beeinträchtigten. Als die Soldaten in der Schweiz eintrafen, es handelte sich um 6600 Soldaten, wurden die aufgefordert [Christen?] zu töten [??] [??] anzubeten, was sie ja abgelehnt haben. Daraufhin wurden die als Rebellen angesehen und mussten dezimiert werden. Das heißt, jeder zehnte wurde umgebracht, bis die ganze Legion getötet worden war. Der bekannteste von allen, war der heilige Maurizius. Der Patron des Domes von Magdeburg. Seine Kameraden Cassius und Florentius sind die Patronen der Stadt Bonn. Wenn Sie in das Bonner Münster reingehen, unterhalb des Hauptaltars, sehen Sie den wunderbaren [??] der beiden koptischen Märtyrer. Wenn Sie in Köln sind, [??] Sie die Verehrung des heiligen [??] und des heiligen Viktors. Alle gehören zu der [??] [??]. | Bishop: Yes. The holy Maurice is a Copt. Egypt was a Roman province or granary for the Roman Empire. The soldiers from Luxor were ordered to come to Europe, to repress a rebellion that was disturbing the peace of the Roman Empire. As the soldiers entered Switzerland, they were 6,600 soldiers, who were told to kill the rebelling Christians, which is something they refused. After that they were seen as rebels and had to be decimated. This means, every tenth person was killed, until the whole Legion was dead. The most famous of all of them was the holy Maurice. He is the patron saint of the Cathedral of Magdeburg. His comrades Cassius and Florentius are the patron saints of the City of Bonn. If you go into the Bonn Minster, underneath the main altar, you will see the wonderful --- of both Coptic martyrs. If you are in Cologne, they honor the holy --- and the holy Victor. They all belong to the ----. |
| Mann: Das waren römische Soldaten, die aber koptische Christen waren. | Mann: They were Roman soldiers, but ones who were Coptic Christians? |
| Bishop: Ja. Ägypten war eine römische Provinz. Und diese Soldaten, die man [??] römische Soldaten nennt, sind nichts anderes als Kopten. | Bishop: Yes. Egypt was a Roman province. And these soldiers, the ones called Roman soldiers, were none other than Copts. |
| Mann: mmmhmm | Mann: mmmhmm |
| Bishop: Ja? Sie sind Kopten. - Die Schwester von Mauritius, wie heißt sie? | Bishop: Yes? They are Copts. The sister of Maurice, what is her name? |

Figure 3.10: Egyptians travel to Europe

The narrative continues with a discussion of the holy Verena who, according to the Bishop, is highly venerated in Switzerland. In this narrative the holy Maurice and a series of

other Coptic Christian soldiers travel to Europe and become prominent martyrs there, not only in Switzerland but in Germany as well.⁹⁹ The Bishop names Magdeburg, Bonn and Cologne as cities in Germany where these Copts are venerated. The monastery in Höxter is just one example of the transformation of German timespace. In this narrative the Egyptian soldiers transform other more well known monuments within Germany as well.

The monastery is linked to this journey by name as The Coptic Orthodox Cloister of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Maurice (Koptisch-Othodoxes Kloster der Jungfrau Maria und des heiligen Mauritius). The monastery is named after both Mary, who carried Jesus to Egypt, and Mauritius, an Egyptian saint who was traveling from Egypt to Europe in the third century, in whose footsteps Coptic Christians follow as they enter into diaspora. This is the narrative of an authentic past rooted (and routed) in the Christianity of Egypt, not only for Egyptian Christians, but for Germans as well.

These narratives participate in the project of closing the parentheses around the period of secularization and (re)establishing Europe as Christian. In this way the space is inscribed as Egyptian through travel. It is an ancient as well as current residence of Copts legitimating Copts as European. I argue that this is part of the project of creating an Egyptian landscape (space) and Egyptian history (time) for Germany. This is a similar process to Antonious' declaration of "die Wüste" and the way in which the monastery was restored and narrated as both German and Egyptian.

⁹⁹ In an interview, the Bishop told me that he originally asked to carry the name Mauritius. His description explicitly links Maurice to the ecumene and attributes Christian Europe with remembering for the Copts their own ("our") saint. *"I originally wished for the name Mauritius... And this was for the ... Church ... still foreign, because the holy Mauritius was at this time in Egypt not very well known. We first discovered him after our experience, um, with the ... ecumene in Switzerland... That was when we first discovered our saint."*

In this final example I present an excerpt from the tour in which the heating pipes were so hotly debated. At the beginning of this tour the group was discussing the layout of the monastery, which is still connected to a Catholic church today.

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| <p>Bishop: Dann hier der Übergang zur Katholischen Kirche. Das ist die Wand, die uns trennt. Dieses hier! Das, was uns trennt. Das ist der Übergang zur Katholischen Kirche hier. -- Das ist so, so war das allgemeine Bild noch...</p> | <p>Bishop: Then here is the passage to the Catholic Church. This is the wall, which divides us. This here! It's this that divides us. This is the passage to the Catholic Church here. -- This is how, how the general picture looked...</p> |
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Figure 3.11: The monastery layout

The declaration by the Bishop plays upon and reinforces how the very materiality of the monastery compels a certain perspective on Christianity, as if the wall itself and not doctrinal or political debates is what divides the Catholic from the Coptic Orthodox Church. Later in the same tour a visitor from Egypt arrives. This is an unexpected development for the tour participants:

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| <p>Bishop: Es kommt ein katholischer, koptischer Priester mit [nach Deutschland?]. Vielleicht machen wir zusammen ein kurzes Gebet, bis dann [haben meine Leute das Essen vorbereitet?].</p> | <p>Bishop: A Catholic, Coptic priest will come ---. Maybe together we can have a short prayer, after that my people will have prepared the meal.</p> |
| <p>Frau: hmmm.</p> | <p>Frau: Hmm.]</p> |
| <p>Bishop: Und ihre Zeit ... auch paar Minuten. Hmm? [Interlude in Arabic] Bis dann ist das Essen schon auf dem Tisch. Hmm? Also das wollt' ich - und dafür haben wir die Lehmsteine gebaut. Es kommt ein katholischer, koptischer Priester mit nach..</p> | <p>Bishop: And your time also a few minutes. Until then the food is on the table. Hmm? This is what I wanted. And it was for this that we build the clay masonry (???). There is a Catholic, Coptic priest coming along...</p> |
| <p>Frau: Heute?</p> | <p>Frau: Today?</p> |
| <p>Bishop: Jetzt gleich. Zum, äh, zum Kloster zu Besuch, er kommt...macht Vertretung. [Äh, die ist?] Vertretung und das ist schon..</p> | <p>Bishop: Right now. To, eh, to the cloister to visit, he comes...is substituting [for someone]. Substitution and that is already...</p> |
| <p>Frau: Für Sie?</p> | <p>Frau: For you?</p> |

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| Bishop: Ja, er ist koptisch-katholisch. | Bishop: Yes, he is Coptic-Catholic. ¹⁰⁰ |
| Frau: Koptisch-katholisch? | Frau: Coptic-Catholic? |
| Bishop: Das heißt, der koptische, katholische Kirche [???] Wir sind orthodox. | Bishop: That is, the Coptic, Catholic Church [???] We are Orthodox. |
| Frau: Ja. | Frau: Yes. |
| Bishop: haben mit Rom wenig zu tun. Wir haben unseren eigenen Papst. | Bishop: ...have very little to do with Rome. We have our own Pope. |
| Frau: Ja. | Frau: Yes. |
| Bishop: Eigenen Papst. Unserer Papst ist der Nachfolger des heiligen? Markus! [Pater??] Shenouda war hier. Das ist er. | Bishop: Own Pope. Our Pope is the successor of the holy? [waits for answer] Mark! Pope Shenouda was here. That's him . [Points to picture.] |
| Mann: Hmm. | Mann: Hmm. |
| Bishop: Er war 1997 hier in Brenkhausen. Können Sie sich erinnern? | Bishop: He was here in Brenkhausen in 1997. Do you remember? |
| Mann: Nee. | Mann: Nope. |
| Bishop: '97 war Papst Shenouda hier. Und Papst Shenouda ist der Nachfolger des heiligen Evangelisten Markus. Der römische Papst ist der Nachfolger des heiligen Evangelisten.. des heiligen Petrus. Wir haben eigenen... Papst..und, äh.. der römische ist anders. Aber wir sind eng befreundet.. ist [eine] ganz, ganz herzliche Beziehung. Und sie wollten uns besuchen. Da hab' ich gesagt wir beten zusammen und essen zusammen und dann.. Ja? | Bishop: In '97 Pope Shenouda was here. And Pope Shenouda is the successor of the holy evangelist Mark. The Roman Pope is the successor of the holy evangelist... Saint Peter. We have our own...Pope...and, eh...the Roman one is a different one. But we are close friends...is [a] very, very cordial relationship. And they wanted to visit us. Therefore I said we will pray together and eat together and then... Yes? |

Figure 3.12: A visitor from Egypt

In this dialogue we are told about the arrival of a "Coptic-Catholic" priest who arrives imminently. As Bishop Damian established at the beginning of the tour, the monastery is in a region dominated by Catholicism, and the church, which was part of the original monastery, is

¹⁰⁰ The "Coptic-Catholic" priest later explains that he comes to Germany every summer to be a substitute priest for priests in Germany who are on vacation. This recording was made in August, which is the most popular month for vacation in Europe. In this conversation the woman asks if the Catholic priest is a substitute for him and he replies affirmatively, but as my native-speaking transcription assistant concluded, "Sie reden völlig aneinander vorbei." (They are talking past each other.) The Catholic priest is not a substitute for Bishop Damian although it is not entirely clear if he is a substitute for the local Catholic priest or is only visiting before moving on to his assignment.

still operated separately by the Catholic Church. But here a Catholic priest is arriving from Egypt, an Egyptian and therefore 'Coptic' priest (see Chapter Six), who can oversee the very Catholic community from which the monastery is divided. This visitor, like the Virgin Mary and Mauritius, bridges the gap between Egypt and Germany and between Egyptian types of Christianity and other varieties of Christianity. Rather than being an ancient visitor, he arrives in the present moment.

While describing the relationship between the Coptic Orthodox and Catholic churches, Bishop Damian mentioned another visitor from Egypt to the monastery, Pope Shenouda, who visited in 1997.¹⁰¹ In his narrative Bishop Damian connects him through apostolic succession to another traveler, Saint Mark, who according to tradition brought Christianity to Egypt. This is another important journey for the ancient and modern authenticity of the Coptic Church and in this dialogue it is used to place the Coptic Church and its Pope on equal footing with the Catholic one. Both recent visitors, Pope Shenouda and the arriving Catholic-Coptic priest, authenticate the monastery as an Egyptian and Coptic space. In addition, by following in the footsteps of the saints these modern members of the church hierarchy authenticate a place for Copts as belonging in diaspora. These journeys situate the monastery as part of a much larger spatial and temporal transformation through the movement of persons across the landscape such that the distinction between homeland and hostland is collapsed.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ This was not Pope Shenouda's only visit to Germany. He visited Germany during my fieldwork to receive medical treatment and stayed at the St. Antonius Coptic-Orthodox Cloister in Kroeffelbach outside of Frankfurt.

¹⁰² In this transcript a German visitor contests the relevance of Egyptian Christianity and the monastic space for Germans. He is a local resident from the area and claims not to remember the visit of Pope Shenouda to the monastery. Germans and non-Coptic Christians both participated in and contested the attempts to merge a German and Egyptian Christian past and make Coptic Christianity of value for other Christians in Germany.

Although the monastery is being built as both Coptic Orthodox and German, insofar as it must meet the Monument Authorities requirements, there is still a literal wall between the Catholic and Coptic Orthodox sections of the monastery. The arrival of the Coptic-Catholic priest bridges that divide just as the ancient saint Mauritius does, and the German visitors, the Bishop, the Catholic priest and his companion, who is also Egyptian, all went to the chapel together for a short prayer service.

Above I discussed the possibility in certain types of Christianity, such as Robbin's premillennial dispensationalists, that the past is full of possibilities but it is the future that subordinates it. As Robbins describes it: "Dispensationalists see themselves as living in a gap between the narratives that make up sacred history and those that have already been foretold as structuring the future." It is my contention that the (re)structuring of the past that Copts are involved in, both through a literal restructuring of place and through narratives of exile and diaspora, also is intended to create a particular future. This future will be explored in the following three chapters, but it was made explicit by Bishop Damian after the prayer service in which he welcomed the Coptic-Catholic priest and his companion:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Bishop: Das ist eine Herzensfreude, wenn ein koptischer, katholischer, äh, Priester mit einem koptischen, katholischen, orthodoxen Priester zusammenleben. Das was wir hier als eine Selbstverständlichkeit sehen und erleben, ist nicht im Heimatland selbstverständlich und, äh, unmöglich. Wir beten und hoffen, daß die Einheit der Kirche eines Tages möglich wird. Wir denken, daß Christen, katholisch, evangelisch, es ist die höchste Notwendigkeit, daß wir die Gemeinsamkeiten aufsuchen und, äh, zur Einheit kommen, denn wir denken, das ist wie ein geteilte Leib Jesu Christi. Und das muss nicht sein.</p> | <p>Bishop: It warms the heart, when a Coptic, Catholic, eh, priest with a Coptic, Catholic, Orthodox priest can live together. This, which we here see and experience as a given, is not given in the homeland, and, um, impossible. We pray and hope that the unity of the church will one day be possible. We think that Christians, Catholic, Protestant, it is of the greatest urgency that we seek our similarities and, eh, come to unity, because we think that this is like a separated body of Christ and it doesn't have to be like this.</p> |
|--|--|

Figure 3.13: The Bishop explores the future

Bishop Damian describes the future that he imagines will be possible because of such journeys as the visit of a Coptic-Catholic priest to the monastery. It is a vision of ecumene, such that the different branches of Christianity may once again be a unity and a single universal church. He especially focuses on how this would not be possible in Egypt (the homeland), thus defining Germany and more broadly Europe as a crucial place in the Church's future. He continues on to discuss the great schism which divided the Coptic Orthodox Church from the western churches in 451 CE and how in his view this schism was bridged in an agreement of reconciliation reached in a monastery in 1988. He continues thus:

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Bishop: Ich glaube, das was uns verbindet, ist größer als das was uns trennt. Ich finde, es ist großartig, wenn ich sehe, daß ein koptischer, katholischer Priester aus Ägypten kommt, um in Deutschland Urlaubsvertretung machen zu können. Das heißt, im Prinzip es sind keine Barrieren zwischen den Nationalitäten, zwischen den Nationen, zwischen den Konfessionen mehr. Ich kann mir vorstellen, daß eine universale Kirche wiederhergestellt werden kann. Und das ist der Beweis dafür.</p> | <p>Bishop: I think that what ties us together is greater than what divides us.¹⁰³ I find it is wonderful when I see that a Coptic, Catholic priest from Egypt comes to Germany in order to seize the opportunity to substitute for another priest on vacation. This means, in principle there are no barriers between the nationalities, between the nations, between the confessions anymore. I can imagine that a universal church can be restored. And this is the proof of that.</p> |
|---|--|

Figure 3.14: Imagine a universal Church

The final conclusion to his speech imagines not only a unified Christianity in the future, but also claims ecumenical journeys such as the one of the Coptic-Catholic priest as proof of this end to barriers between nationalities, nations and confessions. This combines a future (re)construction of a universal Christian church with the collapse of distinctions between homeland and hostland already orchestrated in the present moment through narratives such as this one. The past, defined by the monastery as a place, creates, but also is created by, this vision of Christianity's future.

¹⁰³ This is the same “was uns trennt” phrasing that the Bishop used at the beginning of the tour when discussing the structural division between the Catholic church and Coptic monastery.

Out of Egypt: Enter the Church in Berlin

I closed the previous section of the chapter with a visit from a Catholic priest to a Coptic monastery. I suggest journey narratives are part of a Coptic strategy to create a home landscape that has theological underpinnings. In this section I would like to link these movements and the project of constructing space and time that I have outlined in this chapter to the Coptic Orthodox diaspora *as* a diaspora. To do this, I move from the monastery in central Germany to the Coptic church in Berlin. This also is a move towards the setting in which the following two chapters will be located.

The Coptic Orthodox Church in Berlin was built at the turn of the 20th century as a Protestant (Evangelische) church. It is an imposing brick and stone building, which would cost a small fortune to heat. As I described in Chapter One, when it was purchased by the church, it needed repairs to the roof totaling six million Euros. During my fieldwork, the enormous space served as a homeless shelter several nights per week. The first time I came to the church I found an empty sanctuary with an empty pulpit and empty pews, even though I knew there was a service in progress. I could hear the liturgy being broadcast with a microphone and speakers from somewhere inside. I saw a man approach the church, take off his shoes in the snow, and go in. Behind the large metal trimmed door to the right of the entrance is a small intimate chapel with decorations brought piece by piece from Egypt or assembled from other orthodox traditions. It has the traditional ostrich eggs of the Coptic Orthodox Church hanging from the ceiling and the room is divided by an iconostasis with a door through which the congregation can see the performance of the mass.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ A website maintained by Copts in the diaspora in the United States attributed a special significance to the altar of the Coptic Church by referencing a verse from Isaiah: “There will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar to the Lord at its borders”

As you leave the chapel after the service a poster taped onto the back of the door says, “Out of Egypt, I have called my son — Matthew 2:15.” In the book of Matthew, this scripture follows from Joseph receiving a dream telling him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Thus the poster is a reference, like the murals at the monastery, to the biblical journey of Jesus in Egypt. I have already discussed some of the ways this journey is important in the Coptic Orthodox Church. Here is another framing of its importance to diasporic Copts.

The complete passage of scripture is, “And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said to the prophet: ‘Out of Egypt I have called my son.’” (Matthew 2:15). As this longer version shows, it is an Old Testament prophecy, which is then quoted to show that it was fulfilled in Matthew. The Old Testament prophecy reads, “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son” (Hosea 11:1). On the poster in the church in Berlin it was the New Testament citation that was given for the phrase. The Old Testament text is a shadow conversation (Irvine, 1996) and the New Testament text, the quotation of the prophecy, is the text displayed. This structure of quotation is an example of the very convergence of different Egypts analyzed in this chapter. There is an identity created between the biblical homeland of Egypt and its importance in the Old Testament and the birth of Jesus and the importance of Egypt to Christianity by quoting Matthew rather than Hosea.

This poster is placed on the door as one is leaving the service here among this community of diasporic Copts, called out of Egypt for study, work or family. The poster so artfully positioned on the door of the chapel in Berlin is another merging, this time between the journey of the central figure of Christianity and the journey of each (male) Copt in the diaspora. This is

(Isaiah 19:19). These processes of creating a connection between the scriptural Egypt and the church structure in the diaspora are not limited to the European community with which I worked, but are space-creating narrative strategies used throughout the Coptic diaspora.

another example of the theological import of travel and movement for Copts. Not just pilgrimage and exile but diaspora also becomes a theological imperative.

Not all immigrant communities can be defined as diasporas. As described in Chapter One, diaspora is a Greek term meaning scattered (*speiro*) about (*dia*). One of the earliest written uses of the term diaspora in the Greek is recorded in the New Testament:

Jesus said, ‘I am with you only for a short time and then I am going to the one who sent me’... And the Jews said to one another: ‘Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go to where his people are *scattered among* the Greeks and teach the Greeks?’ (John 7:33-35).¹⁰⁵

In Chapter One, I discussed the ways in which for its current analytical usage, as in this ancient interpretation, to be defined as a diaspora the community must be looking back to a central homeland that anchors the diaspora, a point (hand or land) from which the seeds are scattered. Boyarin and Boyarin (1993) thus consider the Jewish diaspora to be the quintessential diaspora, which looks back to the biblical (and for some national) Israel as a unifying homeland. Even as they argue that a group defined by religion may be the quintessential diaspora, Boyarin and Boyarin (1993) also argue that Christians cannot be thought of as constituting a diaspora community. This is in part because of the type of religion Christianity is seen to be, one which bridges national and racially-defined boundaries,¹⁰⁶ and in part because of the power dynamic that Christianity has on the world stage since it is the dominant religion of the West and beyond. Christianity is seen as the religion of empire and it is argued that the powers of empire place it in a position antithetical to diaspora (Anderson, 1991; Comaroff and Comaroff, 1997; Appadurai, 1996).

¹⁰⁵ This is a scriptural example of Jesus in diaspora and with the potential for theological significance for Christians: “You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am going, you cannot come” (John 7:33-35).

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter Two for a counterpoint to this theorization of Christianity.

This chapter has explored the ways in which the Coptic community is a diaspora indexing a homeland. This indexing of homeland geographically is intimately connected to the creation of the Coptic Community genealogically that was explored in Chapter Two. The poster on the door of the small chapel in Berlin where Copts hold their services establishes Copts as a diaspora community, always pointing back to Egypt as the place they are not. Like the Messiah of the Old and New Testament, they were called out of Egypt. “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” becomes not only a prophecy fulfilled by Jesus, but by the Coptic Orthodox diaspora as well. At the same time, just as the monastery became an Egyptian monastery through a transformation of the landscape, the structures of the building, and the persons who (narratively) traveled to it, so too the church in Berlin becomes Egypt within Germany.

I have argued that diasporic Copts have as their homeland a land that has multiple overlapping meanings, in line with Slyomovics’ (1998) discussion of palimpsests. It is a biblical, historical, national and linguistic homeland. I have shown how slippage between these different imaginings of Egypt is facilitated and facilitates the Coptic view of a religious connection between them. Coptic Orthodox Christianity is not a Christianity without a locality. In this chapter I have shown some of the multiple meanings that are layered into the scripture situated on the door of the chapel of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Berlin.

It is the fulfilled prophesy of Matthew: “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” This is a scripture situated not only on the door, but on the inside of the door so that only those in the chapel will see the message and they will be confronted with it as they are leaving. The chapel, the site of the liturgy, eucharist, and communion, takes on the place of Egypt and as one leaves the chapel they leave Egypt with its relics of saints, icons and the smell of incense behind. “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” In this case, it is out of Egypt and into Berlin, the pulsing capital

of the unified Germany. Chapters Four and Five will explore other ways in which the church in Berlin is created as Egypt for Copts in Berlin through code-switching and performative language.

In this chapter I have explored constructions of Germany *as* Egypt in order to suggest that Copts actively create and negotiate Egypt *both* as a past for Germany *and* as a space within Germany. I have suggested that one way they have done this is by building an Egyptian monastery in the desert of central Germany, a monastery that is both Egyptian and German and closes a parentheses around a time of secularization. I argue that this is both a definitively German practice and a distinctively Coptic one. I then argue that journeying, in the form of exile, pilgrimage, and diaspora, is part of the construction of a homeland for Copts and the creation of Germany as Egypt, and thus Egypt not only as a past and place relevant for Copts but for all Christians. The church in Berlin is created as another space of Egypt within Germany, once again disrupting the secularization narrative of this former Protestant church.

In conclusion, I encourage the reader to see this creation of a single past for Christianity as a project of creating a present and future for Copts in Germany. The remaining three chapters will continue to explore this project of situating Copts as members of the Christian ecumene. I suggest that the twinned terms homeland/hostland create a dichotomy that does a disservice to the “powers of diaspora,” (Boyarin and Boyarin, 2002). As I argued in Chapter One, diaspora has the power to be something other than national. The fact that Copts negotiate multiple countries, but only one possible “—land” (the homeland) is crucial to an understanding of the diaspora. I suggest a link between homeland and diaspora such that what might otherwise be viewed as diaspora can become the homeland. This is both from Egypt to Egypt and from Christianity to Christianity.

Through the stories of this chapter, both Egypt and Christianity become built into the nation, in this case Germany, and become part of the landscape. Germany as a Christian country becomes the homeland, where one can become a citizen and act as part of the Christian majority, the latter being a privilege not attainable in (the other) Egypt. Establishing an authentically and continuous Christian past for Germany is a project of establishing a place for Copts in Germany's present and a possible (Christian) future for Copts, for Germany and for Europe. This project is not without its contestants both from within and from outside of the Coptic community, but it is a powerful timespace structuring with a strong theological import. In these processes, I suggest an alternative narrative of time and space to the dominant narrative of secularization is created, shared and strengthened.

CHAPTER FOUR

“Everything is Written in Books”

4A Exploring A Textual Diaspora

One Sunday in Hanover the church service had ended and we were all working our way down the line for a potluck lunch. Two men I did not know very well told me that they wanted to talk to me. The three of us found a table and sat down with our meals and they began asking me questions about my research. I was enthusiastic that they were interested. I did not visit this church often since I centered my fieldwork in Berlin. However, I sometimes traveled to other churches in the area. Berlin’s priest also traveled there to give services and meet with and minister to the community. Abuna called the community in Hanover “ein lebendige Gemeinde” (a living community) and I felt very welcome during my first visits there.

After a few cursory opening questions, the two men began asking pointed questions about my recordings. I recorded the liturgy almost every Sunday. This was not because it was the most fascinating instance of language in use to record, but because I had permission to do so. One never knew what one might later discover to be interesting. One of the main questions my interlocutors had was, “Why do you record the liturgy every Sunday?” Every week it is *the same*, they stressed. And furthermore, everything that is said in the liturgy is written in books. There are already books where it is all written down, they argued.

After much reflection on this pivotal conversation, I believe that these two men in Hanover had their own answer to why I recorded the liturgy every Sunday. Since they believed that there was no reason to record the liturgy itself, they had deduced that my intent was to

record the conversations that surround the liturgy. These are casual and private conversations that intermingle with the formal Word of the liturgical service.¹⁰⁷ The belief that the liturgy is every time the same, every time identical to its textual counterpart, is so indisputable, for this community, that it led directly to the conclusion that the liturgy was not what I intended to record during those Sundays in church. For Copts, the liturgy is immersed in and perpetuates a powerful ideology of textuality.

The next two chapters began as an exploration of the question I faced that day: “Why do you record the liturgy every Sunday when it is all written in books?” I set out to prove that there was something in the liturgy that was not written in books. This would be a reason for attending (and recording) the liturgy rather than reading it at home alone. I also wanted to understand the ideology that the liturgy is all written in books and the significance of the centrality of textuality to this important binding ritual of the Coptic Orthodox Church.¹⁰⁸ This chapter aims to do the latter. It explores theories of textuality as they dominate this primary ritual and the reach of (Coptic Orthodox) Christianity and language. To draw these theories out, I will highlight the tensions in the Coptic community’s ideologies of comprehension and code as they emerge from

¹⁰⁷ In accordance with my interlocutors’ wishes, expressed at this lunch meeting, these side conversations surrounding the liturgy will remain private in my research, as fruitful as they would be for analysis. I have also discussed their interpretation of my recordings in Chapter Two. If I were not a journalist or family, I could make sense as a spy. I encountered a situation in Berlin where two women I was chatting with seemed to suspect I was recording them without permission when I was writing a text message to a friend on my Blackberry. The priest told me that people in both communities came to him with such questions. The strange wording of the IRB’s consent form complicated and even intensified, rather than alleviated, these concerns.

¹⁰⁸ I use the term ideology here to mean both a language ideology about textuality and the primacy of the text, and a semiotic ideology that encompasses this and emerges from it. I follow Webb Keane’s (2003) use of the term, which recognizes that “how people handle and value material goods may be implicated in how they use and interpret words and vice versa, reflecting certain assumptions about the world and the beings that inhabit it” (2003:410). However, I think this description reinforces a semiotic ideology that sees a strong division between words and things (material goods). This is the (dominant?) semiotic ideology that the eucharist stands against.

liturgical texts. In Chapter Five, I will explore the (dis)connection between the text of the liturgy and the performance of the liturgy. These chapters were difficult to separate because the text and the performance are so intimately connected, but disconnecting them is revealing for that reason. This chapter is an analysis of texts that provides the reader with the necessary foreground to understand the significance of both textuality and language more broadly for the liturgical performance.

What is the Liturgy?

The liturgy is the center of the church service that takes place in the Coptic Orthodox Church in Berlin every other Sunday and on the first Saturday of every month.¹⁰⁹ It can be performed on any day of the week, and in communities with a larger active membership and a resident officiant it could be performed every day. (I've been told it is performed this often in the monasteries in Germany at certain times of the year.) In Berlin, the priest who is answerable to the community and has an apartment close to the church in Lichtenberg also serves several other communities including Hanover (two Sundays per month), Leipzig area (one Saturday per month) and Warsaw area (one Saturday per month) so the number of liturgical performances at the church in Berlin is limited by these commitments. Berlin also stands out among these communities by being the only one of the surrounding communities for which the Coptic Orthodox Church owns the building in which services are performed.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ The Saturday service is a special children's service, which does not have a sermon. For this reason, the service is also shorter. Usually the children leave during the sermon at a regular service and may participate in Sunday school activities during this time.

¹¹⁰ In a longer exploration of these central issues I would like to explore more than I am able to here how the liturgical language of the church creates the space of the church and the subsequent links forged between those issues discussed in Chapter Two and those discussed here and in Chapter Four.

In German, the liturgy is often called a Gottesdienst or “God’s service.” The word Liturgie, which is also used, is derived from Greek. At times in my interviews and discussions the word liturgy referred more to the liturgy in textual form than to the service itself. The word Messe (mass) is another term used. I read of a division between the Mass as specifically the Catholic Mass and the Liturgy as reserved for the Eastern Orthodox churches, but I discovered no such distinction active in the communities with which I worked. In fact, one of the texts which I will discuss in this chapter (Text 4) was explicitly labeled *Die Koptische MESSE nach St. Pasilius* (The Coptic Mass of St. Basil¹¹¹, emphasis in original). I use the term ‘liturgy’ in part to stress the textual element. Other terms like ‘mass’ might go further to highlight an ecumenical perspective, which I explore more in the final chapters. In this Chapter, I discuss Texts 1-6; unless indicated by reference to a figure, my discussion of ‘Text X’ refers to the text as a whole.

Every week from the beginning of my fieldwork I diligently attended the liturgy. In Berlin, the liturgy contains Arabic, Coptic and German. I have studied all three languages, but German is my strongest language for listening comprehension. Although I was often lost, this was an experience I shared with long-time members and hopeful converts. In the beginning I listened to the priest giving long sermons in Arabic and I did not know this was a sermon and not a (surprisingly monologic) part of the scripted liturgy. Likewise, I mistakenly believed that the Bible verses read during the service were specifically chosen by the officiant rather than predetermined by the liturgical calendar. The texts that I will be discussing in this chapter, which I was gradually introduced to over time, helped me to follow and develop an understanding of this linguistic ritual. It is that understanding that I will share in the next two chapters as well as

¹¹¹ There are several different versions of the Coptic Orthodox liturgy. St. Basil’s is used most often.

my understanding of the role of texts in explicit (language) socialization practices for the diaspora community, of which my own experience is a part.

To begin, I want to stress one key point, which was not obvious to me at the beginning of my fieldwork. The central point of the liturgy is the eucharist. Copts believe in transubstantiation. This is the belief that the bread and wine at the center of the liturgical performance are literally transformed into the body and blood of Christ and then consumed by the community in communion. This has a scriptural warrant when Jesus held up the bread at the last supper and said “Take, eat; this is my body.” The story describes how he held up the wine he was drinking and said, “Take, drink; this is my blood” (ibid.).¹¹² I will discuss this central event of the liturgy more in the next chapter, but for now I would like the reader to keep this central purpose of the liturgy in mind. The liturgy as performed in the Coptic Orthodox Church is a linguistic event that transforms material (bread and wine) into human/divine flesh and blood (the person of Christ).

Everything else that takes place in a Coptic church service pivots around the eucharist. I establish the centrality of this event for the liturgy and the church in Chapter Five. I want to foreground it here so the reader can have this interpretation of the liturgy in mind as they proceed. The linguistic event centers on this transformation, this ‘bringing hither’, of the person of Jesus Christ. ‘Bringing it hither’ is a phrase used by Paul Kroskrity (2009) in his recent analysis of Tewa storytelling, which I argue in Chapter Five is a fruitful way of thinking about the liturgical performance. In brief, Kroskrity’s analysis is grounded in Bakhtin’s (1981)

¹¹² In his discussion of “the semiotics of explicit ritual” Michael Silverstein (2004:628) provides the scriptural basis from the four gospels for the eucharist ritual (Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-25, Mark 14:22-25, and Luke 22:17-20 and John 6:48-58). In the case of the Coptic Orthodox liturgy it may be a mistake to privilege the scriptural basis over the liturgical recreation of the story. As these two chapters will show, the liturgy is fixed textually in a way that scripture is not.

approach to textuality and the “authoritative Word” and asks what types of textualities and performances can make present the “words of the fathers” for different communities. Although Kroskirty works in a very different ethnographic setting, what I find useful from his approach is the way he focuses on the use of linguistic resources to link religious ritual and everyday life or to (re)define religious ritual as everyday life where they have so often been diametrically opposed. This theoretical underpinning of the argument, which is only partially presented here, will be fleshed out more in Chapter Five.

This transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is a crucial difference between the liturgy as performed and the liturgy as text. (The text may be a precondition of the transformation, but reading the text alone cannot create it.) In Chapter Five I argue that the liturgy as performed, including the multilingual code choices made during the performance, are part of a semiotic ideology within which, through language, Christ is brought temporally and spatially from the ancient textual moment into the present lived moment in the eucharist. Chapter Four sets the stage by exploring ideologies of textuality, comprehension and code that the texts both represent and create.

Liturgical Persons

The Coptic liturgy is three hours long, although it can sometimes be shortened and can certainly be lengthened depending on the needs of the community and the occasion. The service often begins with just a few deacons and the priest plus a few members of the Folk who are usually wives and children of deacons.¹¹³ In the following section I will lay out the structural roles described in the texts I discuss.

¹¹³ One of my interviewees asked me why I attend every week and why I arrive so early.

This was unusual behavior as most people do not arrive in time for the whole service. A German

• ***The Priest (P)***

The priest is the main officiant of the liturgical ritual. In Chapter Five, Pope Benedict's decree highlighted the defining trait of the priest, which allows him to perform the ritual, is that he is the bearer of apostolic succession. Although I refer to the officiant of the liturgy as the priest (P), the officiant would be the most senior member of the church hierarchy present at the service. If the Bishop is present he is in the role of officiant (P). In the next chapter I discuss how apostolic succession distinguishes the Coptic, other Orthodox, and Catholic churches from the Protestant churches, whose communities have other means of authorizing the leaders in their communities.

• ***Deacons (D)***

Deacons ranged in age from young children to senior men. Deacons are not the Coptic equivalent to altar boys in other forms of Christianity since they are as often as not older men. They also do not necessarily have special training in the church hierarchy, although they may have attended a Coptic Institute of Higher Learning course. Eating dinner after a church service, a non-Coptic scholar of Egyptology, who attributed a great deal of weight to the title, was in conversation with several deacons. One of the deacons revealed he had just become a deacon after moving from Egypt to Germany to attend university. His closest church was the monastery community outside Hörter, which did not have very many members in attendance and deacons were needed. In the diaspora, the deacon role is often assumed by any man who is active in the church community who is at the service. The community in Hanover, for example, might have

woman and fellow non-Copt (Sonia), who also attended the services, said that she felt other people had an excuse for arriving late since they had children and other delays, and we had a responsibility to arrive punctually.

twelve deacons dressed in white robes on a given Sunday. As they arrived, more men would join the deacons already participating in the service. Other men not acting as deacons might still read scripture passages that were designated for that day in the liturgical year.

• *The Folk (V)*

Women are not allowed in the section of the church separated off by the rood screen.¹¹⁴ They only go close to the front of the church when taking communion and otherwise remain in pews. There was also a division in the pews between women on one side and men on the other although it was not strictly partitioned. Married couples often stood together for the service. Women and men who were not acting as deacons still actively participated in the services as members of ‘das Volk’ (the folk), a term used in texts and in conversation.¹¹⁵ They are not an audience because they are vital performers, having specific lines in the scripted liturgy that they must speak. As part of their active role, they participate in the textual circulations that take place during the service, which I explore in this chapter. As I explore the texts of the liturgy, the reader will see how the role of folk is an integral part of the ritual.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ In the diaspora some of the rented churches do not have a rood screen, but instead the altar is in full view of all. In the rented chapel in Hanover all activities of the deacons and priest were visible to everyone as they circled the altar. The separation of the parts of the church was still preserved even when not visibly marked.

¹¹⁵ From an interview with one of the Coptic church members: “Mann kann auch jemand von den Volk, wie man dass immer sagt, also von den Zuschauer, von die Leute die da....ja, holen um etwas zu lessen.” (One can also get someone from the folk, as one always says, I mean from the onlookers, from the people who are [pause] yeah, [one can] get someone [of them] to read.)

¹¹⁶ I will use the folk here because it preserves the connection to other German ideas about ‘das Volk,’ which was a prominent concept for the development of (linguistic) nationalism (e.g., Herder, 1993). As such, it emphasizes their membership in a community imagined along these lines. When referred to as a whole the community is called in German ‘die Gemeinde’, which I translate as ‘community’. In German this term is found in the important pair Gemeinde and Gesellschaft (loosely, community and civil society).

Although I will focus in the next sections on how these roles are created and sustained linguistically, there is a wider semiotic set of signs through which these roles are fixed. For most services, the priest will be wearing black robes and a black head cover while the deacons are wearing white robes. Women and men who make up the folk do not wear any particular clothing except that women will put on head coverings as they approach the front of the church for communion and everyone will remove their shoes at that time. Some people removed their shoes as they entered the church. More subtle clothing choices, hair styles, and ways of sitting also distinguish those who are definitely part of the folk and those who are visitors and outsiders.

Once when I was sitting in church with crossed legs a young girl told me that we did not sit like that *in church*. Later when I was in Egypt the possible offenses of crossed legs were a hot topic of conversation in guidebooks, in the classroom and in casual conversation. In this chapter I do not emphasize a strong separation between the folk and outsiders because the linguistic practices of the church in Berlin were very inclusive, but these subtle semiotic practices established divisions that in other Orthodox communities are much stronger and may even include sending those who are not members of the community out of the church for the culmination of the eucharist. One remained an outsider in part because little to no effort was made to provide non-community members with instruction about these subtle signs of separation. I think this was intended to be a strategy of inclusion, but it functioned just as effectively as a strategy of exclusion.

Circulating Texts

Texts are both a permanent part of the Coptic liturgy and an item always in circulation. In this section I will briefly offer some examples of texts that are engaged during liturgical performances by persons in every role of the liturgy. My hope through these circumscribed

examples is to show how the text is not only discussed as a grounding for the liturgy, but this ideology is reinforced in practice through giving texts central roles in all parts of the liturgical performance. Even as I will describe the disconnect between the text and the liturgy in Chapter Four, here I want the reader to see how they are connected through practice in the semiotic ideology of the community.

Thus I show here some of the different ways texts circulate and the way they are integral to the service. The construction and circulation of the text is in part driven by the different languages and scripts they use and how that defines the liturgy. I want to make it clear to the reader how much a part of the liturgy texts are. Some of those that I will discuss in the most detail are designed for people like myself who are unfamiliar with the Coptic Orthodox Liturgy and are learning the liturgy as children or adults. But as we have already seen, everyone who is engaged with the liturgy is engaging the textuality of the liturgy. Even those who were socialized into the liturgy as children regularly circulate and share texts during the service.

The priest will have a text on the altar, facing him on a stand as he is facing away from the congregation and preparing the eucharist. Once during one of the services leading up to Easter known as the Passion Week (Pasche Woche), he brought this book to me to look at during the service. It had Coptic in Coptic script on one side of each page and Arabic in Arabic script on the other. He told me he was sharing it with me because I am able to read Coptic script.



Figure 4.1: The Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church at Easter¹¹⁷

The Passion Week is the series of services in the week leading up to Easter. It is a time of fasting before this feast, which is the most important feast of the Coptic liturgical calendar. The services can be twelve hours long during the Passion Week, with the most important service taking place on Good Friday. During the Passion Week (Pasche Woche) a large black book called the Katameres contains all of the different scriptures that must be read. Because of the length of the liturgical ritual at this time of year, the book of scriptures that must be read is large.

¹¹⁷ This picture was given to me by a member of the Coptic community in Berlin (the photographer).

The German edition will be passed among the young deacons reading the German translations as they step up to the podium at the appointed time. Another text is available for those reading in Arabic.¹¹⁸



Figure 4.2: A deacon's stole with circulating texts

Another example of a circulated text is *The Hours* (*Agpeya*), which is a book of prayers that are read quietly/silently at a particular time in the service. One of the deacons will distribute

¹¹⁸ Some of the young deacons who can speak Arabic fluently cannot read Arabic script since it is very different from the Roman script they learn in German schools. This may be one of the reasons they read scriptures in German although some church members who are fluent in the written form of both languages will read in German. The language choices surrounding the performance of scriptures will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

copies to those who do not have them and also tell each person present a number, which coincides with the prayer they will be reading. Some books containing the liturgy also contain these canonical prayers, but others do not. The prayers are available in German in a separate bound book, but the numbers of the prayers do not match up between the editions in the different languages. There are constant reminders that this circulation is a process of imperfect translation (Jaffe, 1999).



Figure 4.3: Texts waiting to be circulated

Copies of the liturgy as a whole also circulate throughout the congregation. Some of them are in Arabic with Arabic script and are clearly intended for use by those who are already socialized into the liturgy. There are many reasons those already socialized into the liturgy might need such a text. Since the service in Berlin was a trilingual service, they might have trouble following the liturgy when it was in a language in which they were not fluent. Alternatively, the particular time

of year might mean a part or the whole of the service deviates from the typical service. For example, there were little yellow booklets with the Christmas liturgy passed out to everyone, which contained the special songs sung only at that time of year. As mentioned above, during the Passion Week the services are long and complicated and even long-time members may have trouble following.



Figure 4.4: Incense from the censer clouds the text

This section shows a few of the ways texts circulate during services. One, like the text for the priest, has a stand on the alter where it remains, but even that can be shared with the folk. Others are passed among the deacons during the service and can be purchased. Copies of the liturgy are available in the monastery shop in Höxter and from Amazon.com. These texts are found in different languages and different scripts. Many include more than one language or more than one script in the same text. In this chapter I focus on liturgies that were in circulation in the

communities I worked with in Germany. These texts are artifacts designed for socialization into the liturgy.

Socialization through/into Text and Liturgy

The texts I have described so far were designed for those already socialized into the liturgy. The ones I was most often offered, which I will explore in the remainder of this chapter, are designed for readers who are learning the liturgy as youth and adults. In this chapter I frame the liturgical texts in terms of their role in what I term 'socialization into the liturgy.' Textual engagement by the congregation in the ways I outline in this chapter is an experience of diaspora. This is in part because of the challenges the diaspora faces in maintaining their sense of themselves as a unified community. I will identify some of these challenges below.

In the Coptic Church, children are baptized when they are forty days old and at that time they also receive their first communion and are considered full members of the Coptic Orthodox Church. In a sense, it is not a part of the Coptic Orthodox theory of church membership that children must be socialized into the community. As Bishop Damian put it, "The child receives medicinally¹¹⁹, so to say, the belief and the tradition with the mother's milk." I argue this relationship to children is part of the genealogical theory of religion, language and race that I outlined in Chapter Two. Just as children receive their mother tongue from their mother, so too they receive through a fundamental substance of kinship (milk) directly from the mother the traditions of the church. Children are full members of the Coptic Orthodox Church on their fortieth day of life, but they are also already genealogically connected to the church. As I argued in Chapter Two, being Coptic can be imagined as essential and not contingent upon belief or practice. This is equally true for children.

¹¹⁹ The verb 'verabreichen' means to give, but it is usually only used when administering medicine.

In spite of ideologies of direct transmission, the beliefs and the traditions of the church must be taught. This is not only an assertion of the anthropologist, but also a central focus in the Coptic Orthodox Church. Pope Shenouda was the bishop for theological and educational institutions of the Coptic Church before he became Pope, and continued to focus on education after he was appointed patriarch (see Meinardus, 1999). The texts of the liturgy play a central role in the educational process. In the comparison between Text 1 and Text 4 we will see how the authors of the text, and the text itself, struggle with a tension of readership and audience. I argue that Text 1 is aimed at socializing, to a degree, outsiders and visitors to the community, while Text 4 is aimed at socializing deacons, young men who have certain duties during the service. In Egypt children must be socialized into the liturgy as well, but it may happen with processes that are less transparent and textual. In a sense, the diaspora presents possible disruptions to the theory and practice of genealogical transmission of religion, language and race.

One of the disruptions to socialization present in the diaspora in Germany is the large number of Egyptian men who are married to German women. If one is expected to acquire beliefs and traditions in the mother's milk, what happens when the mother has not (yet) fully acquired those beliefs and traditions? In my experience the children of German mothers are considered to be Coptic Orthodox, but there were varying degrees to which they were socialized into the church practices and the liturgy. Some Coptic men married to German women attended with their wives and children, but others attended alone.¹²⁰ Children who did not attend the Coptic church regularly attended non-Coptic churches, only came to church on major holidays, or did not attend church at all. However, the same might be the case with the children of non-German members of the church. In Chapter Five, where I discuss adept's views on code-

¹²⁰ Some Coptic women also attended alone without their husbands or children, but no native German women attended without their husbands.

switching and reaching the youth, Bishop Damian says “A church without children is a church without a future.”¹²¹ This is a quote from Pope Shenouda, which artfully expresses the hierarchy’s concern regarding these matters.

In addition to socializing children into the liturgy, German wives of Coptic men, and other converts to the church, are also included in the rubric of ‘socialization’. In the comparison of texts to follow, I discuss cues that the silver Bible will be presented for the congregation to kiss. My friend Rosemary related to me when members of the community were approaching the front of the church during this part of the service that she had at first been unsure whether she needed to remove her shoes to approach the front of the church for this ritual. This is one example of her struggle to become socialized into the liturgy.¹²²

German spouses and converts are not the only adults who might need some assistance learning the liturgy in the diaspora, however. I found that the Coptic wives of Coptic men in the diaspora often had limited competence in German both in terms of listening comprehension and ability to read Roman script. In this situation even those who had grown up participating in the liturgy as children might need help learning the diasporic liturgy. Coptic men might also take on new roles as deacons in the diaspora, which they would need to learn and practice in a uniquely multilingual setting. As we see in Text 6 (Figure 4.9) many members do not read Coptic script and may need translations of the liturgy into Arabic as well. Some of these issues are discussed elsewhere in the dissertation.

¹²¹ This is from a sermon by Pope Shenouda on the theme "Service Overseas", which he gave on October 19th, 1994 in the Cathedral of St Mark in Cairo. The sermon specifically addressed concerns of losing a connection to the youth of the church in the diaspora. Boutros (2007:69) also uses the quote to express concern about the church's ability to keep youth in Germany connected to the church and to older generations.

¹²² We can see from this example and others in the dissertation that although I primarily discuss language in these chapters the socialization is more broadly semiotic.

Despite her own work as an adult being socialized into Coptic ritual practice, Rosemary and another German woman with an Egyptian spouse ran the Sunday school program for children in their congregation during my fieldwork. Their status as converts did not prevent them from being directly involved in the education and socialization of the children into the church community and the education was carried out in German. They taught the children Coptic songs, read Bible stories together, and did craft projects related to the Bible and the Coptic community after the service.¹²³

Sunday School in the Coptic Church is not only for children, however. The Sunday School movement was responsible for a Coptic renaissance in the middle of the 20th century. Pope Shenouda was active in the movement as a young man first as a student and then as a teacher (Meinardus, 1999:4). In Germany today the church runs a Higher Institute of Coptic Studies at the monastery outside of Frankfurt where adult members of the church, including those studying at a distance, can continue their education into church theology and practice. The courses at the Coptic Institute are only offered in Arabic, however, so although women can participate in theory, several German wives lamented to me that they were not able to attend the courses due to the language barrier. This can be construed as part of a hierarchy of comprehension in the church, which I discuss below.

Being in diaspora presents challenges to socialization. At the same time, living in diaspora presents opportunities to integrate people who may not otherwise participate in the liturgy and are only partially socialized into it. These people include visitors, whether they be curious tourists, tour groups, ambassadors or dignitaries. They include converts and members of other churches within the ecumene as well as Muslims of Egyptian origin. These people at the

¹²³ In Berlin the Sunday School program sometimes ran during the service itself since some children left the service while the priest preached the sermon.

margins of socialization into the liturgy also highlight the tension between diaspora and church. Not everyone who considers themselves Coptic will be socialized into the liturgy because the diaspora and the church are not co-terminous. This is why I think imagining the diaspora within the framework of a hierarchy of comprehension, as I suggest in this chapter, is not only theologically and theoretically compelling, but helpful from an ethnographic perspective. I suggest that imagining German as the future is part of a diasporic solution to the problem of socialization into the liturgy.

Herr der Heerscharen. Himmel und Erde sind erfüllt von Deiner heiligen Herrlichkeit.

Volk: Ni-scheroubim se-ou-oscht emmok, nem ni-seravim se-ti-o-ou nak, evosch evol evgo emmos.

Je agios agios agios, Ki-rios sava-ot, epli-ris o oura-nos, ke i gi-tis agias sou so-xis.

18. Heilig, heilig, heilig

Priester: Heilig, heilig, heilig bist Du in Wahrheit, o Herr, unser Gott. Du hast uns geformt und geschaffen und in das Paradies der Freude gesetzt. Als wir Dein Gebot durch die Verführung der Schlange gebrochen hatten, sind wir vom ewigen Leben gefallen und aus dem Paradies der Freude verbannt worden. Du aber hast uns bis zum Schluß nicht verlassen, sondern hast uns allezeit begleitet und ständig Deine heiligen Propheten gesandt. Am Ende der Tage bist Du uns erschienen, uns, die wir saßen in Finsternis und Todesschatten, durch Deinen einzigen Sohn, unseren Herrn, Gott und Erlöser Jesus Christus, der aus dem Heiligen Geist und der Jungfrau Maria ist.

Volk: Amen

19. Er nahm Fleisch

Priester: Er nahm Fleisch an und wurde Mensch und lehrte uns die Wege des Heils. Er gab uns die Gnade der Geburt von oben durch das Wasser und den Geist. Er führte uns für sich zu einem einzigen Volk zusammen. Er machte uns rein durch Deinen Heiligen Geist. Er ist der, der die Seinen in der Welt liebte. Er hat sich hingegeben zu unserer Erlösung bis zum Tod, der über uns regierte, welchem wir ausgeliefert waren, verkauft durch unsere Sünden. Er stieg hinab in die Unterwelt durch das Kreuz.

Volk: Amen, Wir glauben.

Amin, ti-nahti.

Priester: Er erstand von den Toten am dritten Tag. Er ist aufgefahren in den Himmel und setzte sich zu Deiner Rechten, o Vater. Er bestimmte einen Tag zur Vergeltung, an dem er erscheinen wird, um die ganze Welt in Gerechtigkeit zu richten und jeden nach seinen Taten zu belohnen.

Volk: Nach Deiner Gnade, o Herr, und nicht nach unseren Sünden.

Volk: Kata to ele-os sou Kyrie, ke mi kata tas a-mar-tias imon.

20. Die Einsetzung

Priester: Er setzte für uns dieses große Sakrament zur Frömmigkeit ein. Denn da er vorhatte sich selbst in den Tod zu geben für das Leben der Welt,

Volk: Wir glauben.

Volk: Alisos pis-tev-omen.

Priester: nahm er Brot in seine reinen, makellosen, fehlerfreien, unbefleckten, seligen und lebensspendenden Hände.

Volk: Wir glauben, daß dieses in Wahrheit so ist. Amen.

Volk: Ti-nah-ti je vai pe chen ou-mes-mie amin.

Priester: Er blickte hinauf zum Himmel zu Dir, o Gott, seinem Vater und unser aller Herrn.

Priester: Er dankte,

Diakon: Amen.

Priester: er segnete es,

Diakon: Amen.

Priester: und heiligte es.

Diakon: Amen.

Volk: Wir glauben, wir bekennen, wir verherrlichen.

Volk: Pis-tev-omen ke omo-loghou-men ke zoxa-zo-men

Priester: Er teilte und gab es seinen heiligen Jüngern und reinen Aposteln und sprach: Nehmet, esset alle davon, denn dies ist mein Leib, der für euch und für viele gebrochen wird zur Vergebung der Sünden. Tut dies zu meinem Gedächtnis.

Volk: Dies ist es in Wahrheit. Amen.

Priester: Ebenso mischte er nach dem Mahl auch den Kelch mit Wein und Wasser.

Figure 4.5: Text 1 in German and Coptic

Six Texts for Socialization into the Liturgy

• *Text 1*

The first book (St_Mina_Kirche, 2001) that I received to help me understand the liturgy was a bound copy of the liturgy in German. I will refer to this text as Text 1 (Figure 4.5). This text of the liturgy was printed entirely in German with short sections of Coptic transliteration, but no Arabic. I saw copies of this text available in Berlin, as well as at the monastery. I saw them distributed at occasions where the Bishop officiated, such as at a Coptology conference I attended, where the attendees of the conference (mostly German) were given copies so they could follow the evening service at the Wittenberg Cathedral. In the final section of this chapter, I will compare this text to another, Text 4, in order to draw out the significance of the differences in these texts for Coptic theories of textuality, liturgy and diaspora. First I will describe several other editions of the liturgy in German, or including German, which I encountered during my fieldwork.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>P.: <i>(still)</i> Nun läßt Du, Herr, Deinen Knecht, wie Du gesagt hast, in Frieden scheiden. Denn meine Augen haben das Heil gesehen, das Du vor allen Völkern bereitet hast, ein Licht, das die Heiden erleuchtet und Herrlichkeit für Dein Volk Israel.</p> <p>V.: (Psalm in koptischer Sprache) Alleluja.</p> <p>D.: Steht auf in Ehrfurcht vor Gott, um das hl. Evangelium zu hören</p> <p>Der Priester verläßt das Heiligtum und beweihräuchert das Evangelium. Er küßt das Evangelium²⁷ und gibt es dem Diakon (<i>Lektor:L.</i>), der die Lesung²⁸ vortragen wird. Der Priester geht zur Tür des Heiligtums zurück mit dem Blick nach Osten.</p> <p>P.: Gesegnet sei er, der kommt im Namen des Herrn der Mächte. Lesung aus dem heiligen Evangelium nach "<i>Mt., Mk., Lk., oder Joh.</i>".</p> <p>V.: Ehre sie Dir, o Gott.</p> <p>Es folgt die Lesung des Evangeliums. Ihm geht ein Psalmauszug voraus nach der Ordnung des Katameros. Anschließend wird das Evangelium eingeleitet. Währenddessen spendet der Priester Weihrauch für das Evangelium.</p> <p>L.: Steht in Gottesfurcht und seid aufmerksam in Weisheit, um das heilige Evangelium zu hören. Abschnitt aus dem hl. Evangelium nach "<i>Mt., Mk., Lk., oder Joh.</i>", dem Evangelisten, sein Segen</p> <p>V.: sei mit uns. Amen.</p> <p>P.: Unser aller Herr, Gott, Erlöser und König Jesus Christus, Sohn des lebendigen Gottes, ihm sei Ehre in Ewigkeit.</p> <p>L.: Aus den Psalmen unseres Lehrers David, des Propheten und Königs, sein Segen sei mit uns, Amen.</p> | <p>Der Lektor liest einen Auszug aus einem Psalm. Am Ende sagt er: Alleluja.</p> <p>V.: Alleluja.</p> <p>L.: Gesegnet sei er, der kommt im Namen des Herrn, unser Herr, unser Gott, unser Erlöser Jesus Christus, ihm sei Ehre</p> <p>V.: in Ewigkeit. Amen.</p> <p>Der Lektor setzt die Einleitung des Evangelientextes fort. Am Schluß der Lesung:</p> <p>L.: Ehre sei unserem Herrn in Ewigkeit, Amen</p> <p>V.: Ehre sei Dir, o Herr.</p> <p>Der Priester geht zum Evangeliar und spendet Weihrauch:</p> <p>P.: <i>(still)</i> Du bist der, dem Ehrung gebührt mit einer Stimme und von jedem. Ehrung, Verherrlichung, Lobpreisung und Anbetung seien Dir zusammen mit Deinem guten Vater und dem lebensspendenden, Dir wesensgleichen Heiligen Geist. Jetzt und alle Zeit und in Ewigkeit.</p> <p>Jetzt folgt die Lesung in Arabisch bzw. einer anderen Sprache. Während der Lesung des Evangeliums betet der Priester:</p> <p>P.: <i>(still)</i> Langmütiger, der Du reich an Barmherzigkeit bist, Wahrhaftiger, nimm an unsere Bitten und Gebete. Empfange von uns unsere Reue und unser Sündenbekenntnis auf Deinem heiligen, unbefleckten, himmlischen Altar. Mache uns würdig, Dein heiliges Evangelium zu hören und Deine Gebote und Befehle einzuhalten, so daß wir darin hundertfache, sechzigfache und dreißigfache Frucht bringen in Jesus Christus, unserem Herrn.</p> <p>Gedenke, o Herr, der Kranken Deines Volkes. Suche sie heim mit Barmherzigkeit und liebender Güte, heile sie. Gedenke, o Herr, unserer Väter und Brüder auf Reisen. Bringe sie in Frieden und wohltauf nach Hause zurück. Gedenke, o Herr, der Luft des Himmels und der Früchte der Erde, segne sie. Gedenke, o Herr, des Wassers der Flüsse, segne es, laß es nach Maß ansteigen gemäß Deiner Gnade. Gedenke, o Herr, der Saaten, der Kräuter und der Gewächse des Feldes, segne sie. Gedenke, o Herr, der Menschen und Tiere. Gedenke, o Herr, dieses heiligen Ortes, welcher Dein ist, und aller Ortschaften und Klöster unserer rechtläubigen Väter. Gedenke, o Herr, Deines Knechtes, des Präsidenten unseres Landes, erhalte ihn in Frieden, Gerechtigkeit und Kraft. Gedenke, o Herr, derer, die entführt oder in Gefangenschaft sind, rette sie alle. Gedenke, o Herr, unserer Väter und Brüder, die entschlafen und im orthodoxen Glauben zur Ruhe gegangen sind. Gib den Seelen aller die ewige Ruhe. Gedenke, o Herr, derer, die Dir diese Gaben dargebracht haben, und derer, für die sie dargebracht wurden und derer, durch die sie dargebracht wurden. Gib ihnen allen den himmlischen Lohn. Gedenke, o Herr, derer, die in irgendeiner Not oder</p> |
|--|--|

Figure 4.6: Text 2 is a detailed clarification of the liturgy in German

• Text 2

Text 2 (St_Antonius_Kloster, 1999) was also a printed and bound version of the liturgy, but it was out of print and I only saw copies of it at the church in Hanover (Figure 4.6). This version of the liturgy was entirely in German except for the phrase Kyrie Eleison.¹²⁴ As with Text 1, the Coptic was transliterated using Roman script. In Text 2 longer sections not translated into German were referenced but not included, as in Figure 4.6 when the folk sing: "(Psalm in the Coptic Language) *Halleluja*." Unlike Text 1 this text contained lengthy explanations and notations on what was happening in the liturgy, clarifying for the reader not only what was happening but also why, as they experienced the liturgy they were reading.

¹²⁴ Although I describe this phrase as Coptic it is also Greek, meaning in both languages "Lord have mercy."

• Text 3

Text 3 (no longer available) was another typed edition of the liturgy in German, which circulated in the church in Berlin. It may have been an early edition of Text 1 or 2.¹²⁵ I do not know the history of Text 3, but it exemplifies how translating the liturgy was a process with many different iterations. These versions circulated simultaneously, often within the same communities, and none was a complete representation, but a representation that made choices about its intended audience and its intended liturgy. Showing no signs of official publication, Text 3 may have been an example of the earliest liturgies available in German, which were made by priests and deacons working with limited resources and without the official endorsement or control of the church and without the printing press.

| Evangeliumsgebet | | |
|--|--|--|
|  | |  |
| P. Eschliel | Sallo | Betet |
| D. Ebebrov evke stasite | Lelsalah kefo | Erhebt euch zum Gebet |
| P. Ereni pasie | Salam legamiAekom | Friede sei mit allen |
| V. Keto ebnevmati so | UaliroHjika ajdan | Und mit deinem Geiste |
| P. Efniev ebschojs esos bechrestos bennoti fi etav gos ennef agjos etajot emmaBeties oo en apostolos eBouav ge han miesch emepro feties nem han eBmi af er ebeBmien enaf eneteten naf eroo ouo embo naf ouo esotem encteten sotem er oo ouo embo sotem enBoten zi ouo nejato enneten | Ajoha alsajed alrab JasuA almasieH elahhna allazi kal letlamizeh elkeddisien almokarramien uaroseleh el athar enna anbeja ua abraran kaBerien eschtaho an jaro ma antom taron ualam jaro ua an jasmaAO ma antom tasmaAon ualam jasmaAO, amma antom fatuba le aAJonakom le annaha tobser ua | O Meister, Herr, Jesus Christus, unser Herr. Du hast zu den heiligen und ehrwürdigen Aposteln gesprochen. Viele Propheten und Gerechte sehnten sich zu sehen, was ihr seht und haben es nicht gesehen und zu hören, was ihr hört und haben es nicht gehört. Selig aber sind eure Augen, dass sie |
| | | val gi senav nem neten maschg gi sesotem maren er eb em ebscha en sotem oo e eri en nekef angelejon eBouav chen ni tafh ente ni eBouav entak |
| | | le aznanekom le annaha tasmaA fal nastaHlek an nasmaA uanaAmal be anagilek almokaddasa betelbati keddesiek |
| | | sehen und eure Ohren, dass sie hören. Mach uns würdig dein heiliges Evangelium zu hören und danach zu handeln, durch die Gebete deiner Heiligen |
| | | D. Ebrov eveksaste eberto agjo evangeljo |
| | | Sallo men agl al engiel almokaddas |
| | | Betet um des heiligen Evangeliums Willen |
| | | V. Kerjeleison |
| | | Jarabbo erHiam |
| | | Herr, erbarme dich |
| | | P. Ari efmevi ze oon bennief en oon neven etaf honhen nan erbomevic chen nen teho nem nen tafh eten eri emmo e ebschoj harok ebschoj bennoti.ne etav er schorb enenkot mamton no ni et-schoni ma talet-schoo ge enBok gharbi ben onch tero nem ogaj tero nem ten helbies tero nem taletscho tero nem ten anastasis teren. |
| | | Ozkor ajdan ja sajedana koll al-lazien amarona an nazkorhom fi tadarroAatena ua telbatena allati narfaAha eleik ajjoha alrab elah hna allazina sabako farakado najeHhom,almarda eschfiehon le annaka anta houa Hajatena kollena uachalasena kollena uaraga ona kollena uaschefa-ona kollena ua kejamatona kollena |
| | | Gedenke auch, o Herr, die uns gebeten haben, ihrer in unseren Gebeten und Bitten zu gedenken, die wir dir darbringen, o Herr, unser Gott. Den Seelen deren, die uns vorausgegangen und entschlafen sind, gib Ruhe. Heile die Kranken, denn du bist unser aller Leben, unser aller Erlösung, unsere Hoffnung, unser Heil, unser aller Auferstehung. |

Figure 4.7: Text 4 with Coptic, Arabic and German

¹²⁵ Unlike the others, it was not bound, but was stapled together at the top and was created on a very old word processor with limited formatting.

• Text 5

At the monastery bookstore I found a professionally bound copy of the Coptic liturgy (Mekhaiel, 2006), which was very similar to Text 4, but instead of transliteration it used Coptic, Arabic and Roman scripts. Text 5 (Figure 4.8) was published in 2006, but when I left the field in 2008 I had never seen another copy in use among the community. Even though it was not in use, it presents a compelling alternative textual possibility. Text 5 also highlights that the German translation is not fixed and authorized as the German translation in this version differs substantially from the one found in Text 4 and used in the performance.

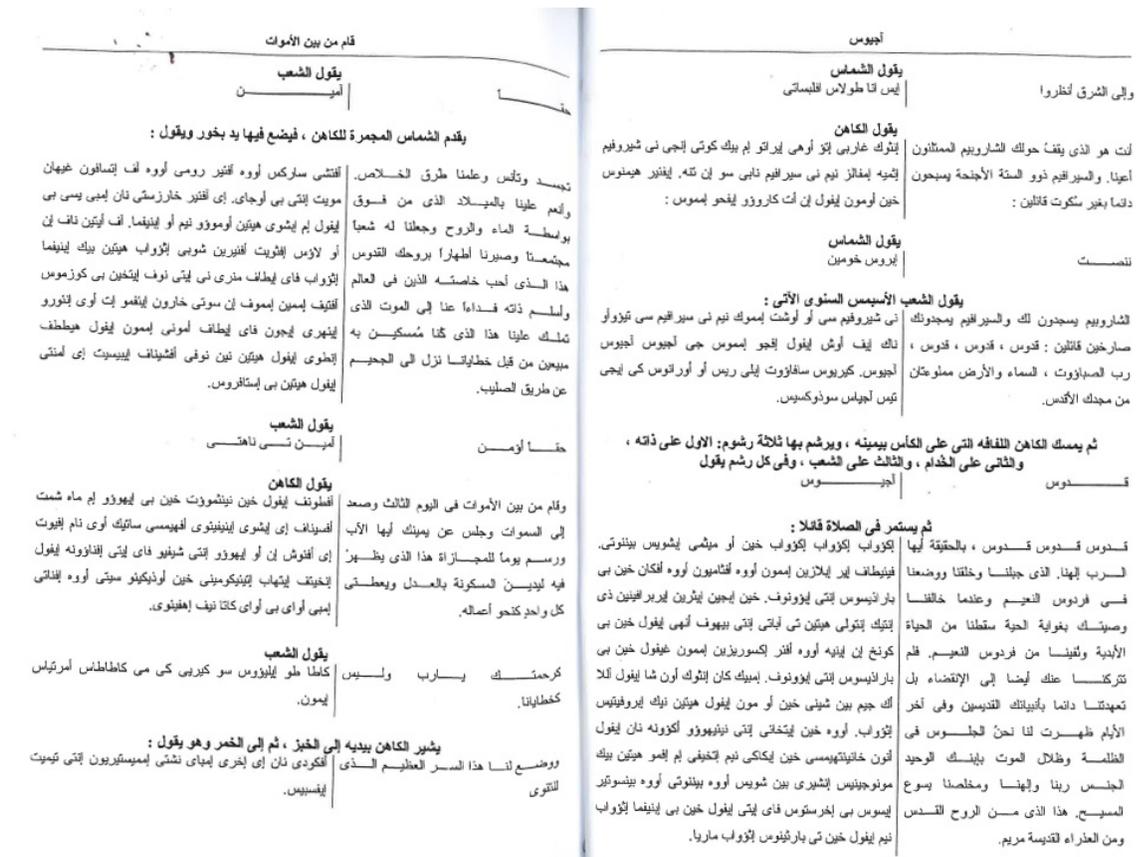


Figure 4.9: Text 6 provides both Coptic and Arabic in Arabic script

• *Text 6*

There were also many copies of the liturgy that circulated in Arabic. I classify these texts as intended for those already socialized into the liturgy and thus not the primary texts under discussion, but I provide an image of Text 6 (Figure 4.9) for comparison.¹²⁶ The text has Arabic on one side in Arabic script with Coptic on the other side also in Arabic script. It is this style of liturgical text that I argue later Text 1 is a replication of with only the code choices and script choices altered.

In the section above, I introduced the idea that the liturgy is replicated and reproduced from a text which is an important one for Copts, especially in the diaspora. Circulating texts is also a crucial part of the diasporic liturgical performance. The process of circulating and the performance of reading texts, of which there will be more examples in Chapter Five, underline the importance of the text to the liturgy and allows for the creation and recreation of the important ideology that the liturgy is inalienably connected to the text and even is the text.

In the third section of this chapter I will provide a detailed comparison of the Texts 1 and 4, which I described above, and consider how they differ in the type and degree and socialization into the liturgy that they provide, as well as the groups they aim/appear to socialize. I argue that although they are very different texts, we can understand their differences within what I call a hierarchy of comprehension and see both texts as not representations of the performed liturgy, but representations of the intended liturgy. I explore 1) the completeness of the liturgy presented in the texts, 2) the audience the text intends from code choice and non-linguistic cues, and 3)

¹²⁶ There is not enough bibliographic information to provide a full citation of the text. It says simply on the front cover **Church of St. Antonius and St. Shenouda Berlin and Holy Liturgy** on the front cover.

how the text tends toward a particular linguistic future for the Coptic liturgical performance and the Coptic community, despite its lack of identity with the performance.

In one sense, I disagree with my interlocutors who saw the text as a replica of the recorded liturgy (see Chapter Five). At the same time, their ideology that the two are identical is what makes the texts themselves performatively effective. Even as they differ, both texts project a liturgical future. This projected future reveals particularly diasporic language ideologies. In short, I argue that these texts bring both the German-speaking participant and the liturgy into being. (See Chapter One; Munn, 1986; Gadamer, 1984.)

Before embarking on an examination of particular texts I explore whether comprehension is (always) the goal of these socialization texts. What role texts should have in comprehension and the importance of comprehension to the liturgy, is a subject of debate among visitors, potential converts and full-fledged members of the church. It is this debate that I will introduce here to complicate the idea that the primary role of these texts is for comprehension and/or that the liturgy is intended to be (necessarily) comprehended. I argue theories of (in)comprehension are key to understanding the language ideologies surrounding code choice and code shift in the liturgy and diaspora. We will see this first through an examination of the texts of the liturgy in this chapter and then in Chapter Five through an examination of the spoken performance of the liturgy. Although I present it first as a dichotomy, I see a hierarchy of comprehension at work in the diaspora that informs the code and other linguistic/semiotic choices of the texts (Chapter Four) as well as the community's understanding of how language, including any code, is performative for the liturgy (Chapter Five).

Comprehension and Code: Competing and Complementary Language Ideologies

• *Comprehension as converts*

To begin to explore the hierarchy of comprehension, I will describe the ideologies of comprehension and text held by two potential converts to the church, Sonia and Daniel. Sonia, who was a frequent visitor to the church and hopeful convert, never tried to follow the liturgy using the text for as long as I attended church. Perhaps she had not ever used the text in this way. She would simply move through the book (usually Text 1) at the approximate pace of the liturgy, reading sections when it seemed appropriate to exhibit comprehension or when it seemed one should be engaged with a text, one's own thoughts or prayers. She did not turn to the pages corresponding to what was being spoken at the right times and did not desire a relationship between the structure of the liturgy and the structure of the text. When I tried to direct her to the correct page or share my more comprehensible Text 4 with her, she was uninterested in my corrections and, by her own admission, was unconcerned by this disconnect between the text and the performance. The text's importance to her was established by the way she held it, looked at it, moved through it, and, according to her statements, read it.

Sonia's approach surprised me as I struggled to connect the text to the performance and to comprehend the latter, but perhaps her usage was more true to the intent of the text (see below). Sonia used Text 1 during the service, but not in a way that would allow her to comprehend what she was experiencing. For her, the text was a text of the liturgy, which she could read at leisure while also experiencing the liturgy. She came to the service every week, hoping to convert and to be married in the Coptic Church. She came to be present at the liturgy and experience it without fully comprehending it. She did not feel, as I did, that Text 1 somehow failed in its appointed task of aiding in comprehension.

I knew another hopeful convert who took a similar approach to the Coptic liturgy and the texts that surround it. I met Daniel during a week I spent at the monastery in 2007. After I left, he e-mailed me describing the events that had transpired since I was gone while he stayed on for another week: he described to me how the service (Gottesdienst) had taken place almost everyday during the week after I left. On Sunday, he said, it was “sogar komplett in Deutsch so dass das Herumblättern in die Liturgie entfallen könnte” (basically entirely in German so that the leafing around (herumblättern) in the liturgy could drop away).

Daniel had expressed dissatisfaction during the last service we attended together with all the “leafing around” that went on as I and some other German-speaking women, including long-time members, strove to follow the liturgy in a variety of provided texts. By this point, I had been doing fieldwork for a year and a half and understood engagement with texts as part of participation in the liturgy. Daniel, on the other hand, was annoyed with our passing of the texts back and forth, whispering to each other about where we were, and pointing helpfully as we endeavored to follow the highly formulaic liturgy in three different languages with unfamiliar contextual cues and few textual ones. Daniel declined to take up one of the books himself during the service, saying that he believed one could get what was most important out of the liturgy without necessarily understanding the words.¹²⁷

Despite his feeling that comprehension was unnecessary to experience the liturgy effectively, in this e-mail Daniel celebrates the liturgy being almost entirely in German. His reasoning, however, is not that he could then understand it more easily, but that this “leafing around” in the texts could come to a halt. Like Sonia, he took a strong position against

¹²⁷ He later presented this theory to the Bishop who expressed no view for or against that idea. This may be related to the hierarchy of comprehension I will outline more below, which I argue is part of the doctrine of the church.

comprehension. Unlike Sonia, he did equate the textual search with the desire for comprehension. I felt he misunderstood the importance of textuality to the liturgy, since he was glad when the texts could be dispensed with. But perhaps he was correct to focus on the liturgy as performed and not as comprehended, just as Sonia did. Both Sonia and Daniel were in the process of being socialized into the church. When I analyze Text 1 (below), I question whether the goal of Text 1 was to allow for comprehension in part due to their views.

• *Comprehension as visitors*

So far, I have introduced the views of two non-Copts at various stages in the process of conversion to Coptic Orthodoxy. These hopeful converts rejected the idea that comprehension is necessary and consequently either rejected the text itself (Daniel) or rejected its need to be connected to the service (Sonia). In 2006, I attended a liturgy at the Wittenberg Cathedral with other participants in a Coptic Conference in that city. The conference attendees were predominantly German, although some were Egyptian. The Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Germany was the officiant at the service. When they arrived at the Cathedral, the conference participants were all given copies of Text 1. I describe the reaction of the Coptology scholars who were at that service to Text 1 as a counterpoint to Sonia and Daniel's negotiation of the liturgical texts

At the end of the service, one of the professors suggested to the Bishop that the church should create a book that would help newcomers to follow the liturgy. They were frustrated with their failure to comprehend it, or perhaps with the Bishop's failure to make it comprehensible. This failure was all the more frustrating because of the scholars' training in Coptic, which was the language they clearly expected to be hearing at the service. They did not recognize Text 1 as providing, or even attempting to provide, the comprehension they sought. This is hardly

surprising as the liturgy was much abbreviated and was difficult to follow since so much of it had been excluded from both the service and the text.¹²⁸ This accentuated the difference between text and performance. Although the scholars from the Coptology conference did not recognize Text 1 as providing comprehension, they did seek comprehension. They also sought it from a text. This was clear from their suggestion that a text be created to help non-Copts understand the liturgy. Their failure to comprehend the liturgy led from there directly to criticisms of code and authenticity.

The Coptic scholars' theory of text and desire for comprehension of the liturgy is at odds with those views expressed by Sonia and Daniel. At first it might be tempting to see this as a division between the understanding of those German speakers completely unsocialized into Coptic Orthodoxy, experiencing the liturgy for the first time, and Sonia and Daniel who are German speakers at various stages of conversion to Coptic Orthodoxy. One might see this as evidence of two different language ideologies at play. The language ideology which expects comprehension of religious ritual as a component of faith could be characterized as a Protestant one. This service was after all taking place in the Wittenberg Cathedral, on the very door of which Luther is purported to have nailed his theses and started the reformation. As part of that reformation, he translated the Bible into German, believing that comprehension of this text was a necessary element of faith. In contrast, one might characterize the Coptic and non-Protestant perspective as one in which comprehension is not necessary to experience the social action and

¹²⁸ In retrospect, I realize this was almost certainly only the evening incense ceremony, which is the first part of the liturgy. That was not made clear to participants, who expected a full service (and many were expecting a full service), as I have experienced at other conferences in religious studies.

fulfill the purpose of the ritual.¹²⁹ Daniel and Sonia, the hopeful converts, would be expressing one language ideology while the Coptology professors worked within another.

• *comprehension as members*

The Coptology professors I spoke with saw comprehension as a crucial component of ritual participation and strove for it. The hopeful converts saw the performance as effective in itself as social action. In the next chapter, I will continue to explore these semiotic ideologies as they connect to the performance. One perspective sees comprehension of code and semiotic signs as crucial for the effectiveness of the ritual and the other acknowledges the possibility for a language the participant does not understand to performatively transform the eucharist. This is one possible dichotomy that can be drawn out of the data. It may be a valid one in a historical sense, looking back at the point when Luther set the events of the reformation into motion. But these two ideologies come into conflict for (full-fledged) members of the Coptic church in the diaspora, who struggle with the role of both code and comprehension in the liturgy.

One Coptic friend, Paul, surprised me by saying one night that he did not think the liturgy should be in Coptic at all. Paul explained his point with reference to the Nicene Creed. The Nicene Creed was developed in early Christianity by a synod of bishops to affirm the orthodox (in the sense of correct) theory of the Godhead.¹³⁰ The Nicene Creed is part of the Coptic Orthodox liturgy and is recited by each member separately but simultaneously at the appropriate time. Paul felt strongly that the Nicene Creed should not be memorized and recited in a language

¹²⁹ As this ideology begins to address the performance of the liturgy, the reader should be assured that it will be addressed further in the next chapter.

¹³⁰ Adherence to the Nicene Creed is something that Copts still share with many other branches of non-Protestant Christianity. Practicing Catholics can also repeat it by heart.

that the person did not understand. He thought comprehension was critical for the authenticity of the ritual.¹³¹

The Nicene Creed is a special case in texts of the liturgy, as we shall see in the next section and in Chapter Five. For Paul it epitomized the importance of comprehension. He did not feel that preserving Coptic in the liturgy was valuable if doing so would obscure comprehension of the liturgy. The Nicene Creed begins with the phrase “I believe...” and he felt that one should not repeat something that one claimed to believe without knowing what they were saying. Like the German scholars, Paul forged a strong link between comprehension and faith. For him, both were important to ritual. Paul was especially concerned that code of the liturgy needed to change to accommodate the youth of the church who speak German natively.

| | | | |
|----|----|---|--|
| 1 | S: | Also, Arabisch sollte man überhaupt nicht benutzen. (laughter) | Okay, Arabic should not be used at all. (laughter) |
| 2 | E: | (laughter) Deiner Meinung nach, ja. | (laughter) In your opinion, yeah. |
| 3 | S: | Man kann auch einen Teil auf Deutsch machen, weil die haben öfters Besucher oder Leute, die, die nicht Ägypter sind und trotz[dem]... Also, die können nur Deutsch, ja? | One can also do part in German because they often have visitors or people who, who are not Egyptians and nevertheless... Okay, they can only speak German, yeah? |
| 4 | E: | Ja. | Yeah. |
| 5 | S: | Dann sollte man auch ab und zu mal ‘was auf Deutsch machen, damit sie auch teilnehmen können, ja? | Then one should also do something in German every once in awhile so that they can also take part, yeah? |
| 6 | E: | Ja. Aber die Leute aus Ägypten, sie können, glaubst du, sie können teilnehmen an die koptische... wenn es auf Koptisch ist? | Yeah. But the people from Egypt, they can, you think they can take part in the Coptic, when it is in Coptic? |
| 7 | S: | Als ich klein war, ja? | When I was little, yeah? |
| 8 | E: | Ja. | Yeah. |
| 9 | S: | ...ein Kind war. Es wurde viel mehr auf Koptisch gesungen in die Kirche, ja? | When I was a child, there was much more Coptic sung in the church, yeah? |
| 10 | E: | Ja. | Yeah. |

¹³¹ I will return to the Nicene Creed and the code choices for this speech genre in Chapter Five.

| | | | |
|----|----|--|---|
| 11 | S: | Und die Leute, sie haben sicher, sie können weder Koptisch lesen noch Koptisch verstehen, aber sie wissen ganz genau, dass wenn Abuna das und das sagt dass das so und so bedeutet auf Arabisch, ja? | And the people, they surely have, they cannot read Coptic nor understand Coptic, but they know very clearly that when Abuna says this or that that means such and such in Arabic, yeah? |
| 12 | E: | Ja, ja. | Yeah, yeah. |
| 13 | S: | Deswegen ist es egal, ob man... man muss das nicht unbedingt auf Arabisch singen. | Therefore it's irrelevant whether one, one does not necessarily need to sing in Arabic. |
| 14 | E: | Ja, aber... | Yeah, but... |
| 15 | S: | Die Leute wissen das, ja? | The people know it, yeah? |
| 16 | E: | Ja. | Yeah. |
| 17 | S: | Aber mit der Zeit hat man das, eh, eh hat man immer weniger Koptisch verwendet und viel mehr Arabisch. Und die Leute haben das einfach verlernt. | But with time one has, um, uh, one has used less and less Coptic and much more Arabic. And the people have simply forgotten (<i>lit.</i> unlearned) it. |
| 18 | E: | Und warum? Glaubst du, es gibt ein bestimmten Grund? | And why? Do you think there's a particular reason? |
| 19 | S: | Ich weiß nicht. Das finde ich bescheuert, ganz ehrlich. | I don't know. I think it's stupid, to be honest. |
| 20 | E: | Ja. | Yeah. |
| 21 | S: | Doof. | Idiotic. |
| 22 | E: | Ja, ja. | Yeah, yeah. |
| 23 | S: | Es ist einfach dumm, ja? Weil die Leute einfach nicht wissen, welch...was ein Wert die koptisch Sprache hat. | It's simply dumb, yeah? Because the people simply don't know which...what the Coptic language is worth. |
| 24 | E: | Ja. | Yeah. |
| 25 | S: | Die koptische Sprache ist nicht nur ein alte Sprache von früher oder so. Die koptische Sprache bedeutet für die Kopten auch Identität. Ist die koptische Sprache verloren? Dann ist die Identität von den Kopten verloren. Und das ist der was... wie unterscheiden uns mit der Zeit immer weniger von den Moslemen. Früher wüsste man, was unterscheidet uns von die Moslem. Früher wusste man, da ist ein Kopte, da ist ein Moslem. Das bedeutet nicht das ein Kopte besser ist als [die] Moslem, oder umgekehrt, ja? Aber man konnte die unterscheiden, ja? | The Coptic language isn't just an old language from earlier or something. The Coptic language also means identity for Copts. Is the Coptic language lost? Then the identity of the Copts is lost. And that is the thing that... over time we differ less and less from the Muslims. Earlier one knew what makes us different from the Muslims. Earlier one knew: There is a Copt, there is a Muslim. That doesn't mean that a Copt is better than a Muslim or the opposite, right? But one could tell them apart, yeah? |

| | | | |
|----|----|---|---|
| 26 | E: | Ja. | Yeah. |
| 27 | S: | Heute haben wir die gleiche Angewohnheiten. Wir haben die gleiche Art zu sprechen und zu denken und so weiter, wie die anderen, ja? | Today we have the same habits. We have the same way of speaking and of thinking and so forth as the others, yeah? |

Figure 4.10: Interview with Sharif

Sharif provides a contrasting case to Paul as an advocate for a liturgy almost exclusively in Coptic. Like Paul, he is a lifelong member of the Coptic Orthodox Church who moved from Egypt to Germany as a young man. But unlike Paul, he is focused on the preservation and expansion of Coptic in the liturgy. In his view, Coptic is part of the identity of Coptic Christians (Figure 4.10, Line 25). His description aligns with ideas I outlined in Chapter Two, such that Coptic is the mother tongue and the heritage of Copts even if they do not speak it. The Coptic language distinguishes Copts from Muslims (Line 25).

In Figure 4.10, Sharif distinguishes two types of knowledge, knowing what the Coptic means, which is being unlearned (Line 17), and another type of understanding, which is aligned with reading (Line 11) and I interpret to be more the understanding of a grammarian. Regarding reading, Sharif told me on another occasion that he disapproved of the concession of Text 4's Coptic written in transliterated Roman script rather than in Coptic script. He asserted the role that the texts played in the expectation of a liturgy. If Text 4 were written in Coptic script then it would mean the youth were expected to learn Coptic script.

When considering ideologies of comprehension Sharif's support of Coptic in the liturgy was not fundamentally different from Paul's refusal to (fully) support it. He equated more Arabic in the liturgy with a loss of Coptic language competence. He believed that Coptic should remain in the liturgy and in the texts and be comprehended, that is, be meaningful to the participants. We can see that he valued comprehension of the liturgy because, despite his advocacy for the Coptic language, he supported German in the liturgy for members who would not be able to understand

Coptic. These are not the youth of the community who, in Sharif's view, should learn Coptic. There are meaningful ellipses at the point where he describes the people for whom German should be spoken in the liturgy (Line 3): "One can also do part in German because they often have visitors or people who, who are not Egyptian and nevertheless... Okay, they can only speak German, yeah?" I take these ellipses to be primarily implicating the German wives of Egyptian men in the church. They are non-Egyptians, but members of the Coptic Orthodox Church. They are not expected to speak Coptic, which aligns with the discussions in Chapters Two and Three where I argued race, language and land of origin overlap in the Coptic genealogical imagination (Shryock, 1997). However, Sharif himself avoids defining these non-visiting non-Egyptians who only speak German.¹³²

Where this piece of interview ends, Sharif continues into a long and interesting discussion about the resurgence over the last 10-15 years of women wearing headscarves in the church service. Where others might see continued use of Coptic as more conservative, Sharif aligns the use of Arabic with a "conservative" movement, which he suggests is driven by a mirroring of developing conservative practices in Islam. According to this argument, using Arabic is a Muslim practice (Line 25), just as wearing headscarves and removing shoes is a Muslim practice for him. For Sharif, Copts are moving towards those more conservative practices, which reduce their distinctiveness as Copts, starting with having the same way of speaking (Line 27).

Sharif had strong views not only on the language in which the liturgy should be given but also the language in which the liturgy should be written. In his discussions of code with me, he

¹³² Sharif's wife, Iris, is a native German speaker who is textually fluent in Coptic. I have participated in classes in which Sharif taught Coptic to German-born members of the church. These ellipses are a place of paradox.

was clear that the text is connected to the performance (as we saw in the dominant ideology of text described above) and argued that code choice in the text influences code choice in the liturgy. Coptic script in the text leads to Coptic language and comprehension of that language in the liturgy. Following this ideology, in the next section where I closely compare Texts 1 and 4, I will argue that the texts of the liturgy do not depict the performance, but do intend a future for the performance.

Sharif's and Paul's language ideologies both expressed a need for comprehension of the liturgy. They chose different codes as most appropriate for this purpose. Sharif aspired for comprehension in Coptic, whereas Paul advocated for use of German. But neither advocated for the continued use of Arabic (Figure 4.10, Line 1). I see the influence of language ideologies surrounding each code, discussed in Chapter Two, coming to the fore here. Sharif adamantly opposed the use of *any* Arabic in the liturgy, in keeping with the theory that Arabic is non-Copt and non-Christian that was discussed in Chapter Two. Using Arabic, he argues, makes Copts more like Muslims.

Like Sharif, Paul also recognized that Arabic would eventually not be appropriate for the liturgy. While he did not express strong opposition to it as a language, he did recognize the language shift of the community away from Arabic by wanting to move the service into German in order to make concessions for the German-speaking youth. Accepting this language shift as somehow given and natural may be an implicit rejection of Arabic similar to that articulated explicitly by Paul, but his reasoning did not include an evaluation of the different possible codes. His reasoning was that comprehension is paramount if one is expected to pronounce on what one believes. For Sharif, on the other hand, the desire for the liturgy to be in Coptic was a meeting of the need for comprehension and the need for a distinctive Coptic "identity," as he called it.

Correct comprehension was something for which an Egyptian person could and should strive. On the other hand he acknowledged multiple types of comprehension because one know what the Coptic means without understanding it. In this contrast, we see how different members of the community negotiated ideologies of comprehension and the possibility of an effective liturgy without comprehension without finally coming to the same conclusions about code.

• ***Comprehension for religious adepts: the hierarchy of comprehension***

I suggest that the idea of *striving for comprehension*, which Adel asserts in his interview, aligns with Coptic doctrine on the comprehension of the liturgy. By doctrine I mean a linguistic and more broadly semiotic ideology of comprehension, which has been privileged historically and is embraced by the church hierarchy. In this way comprehension and incomprehension of the liturgy are not necessarily ideologies in tension, as in the dichotomy of Protestant vs. Coptic/Non-Protestant I presented earlier. Instead I argue they are both part of a single hierarchy of comprehension within Orthodoxy. If one studies theories of the liturgy in Ancient Christianity, early theologians worked with, and were instrumental in developing, a theory of the liturgy where its mysteries were revealed to the initiate only at the appropriate phase.

Those who developed this theology, a semiotic ideology, include those theologians such as St. Basil and St. Gregory whose versions of the liturgy are still used in the Coptic Orthodox Church today. The theologian who is most well-known for its development is Pseudo-Dionysius, a 5th century scholar who for most of the history of Christianity was believed to be the biblical Dionysius the Aeropagite. Pseudo-Dionysius described the mystical hierarchy of comprehension explicit in his work. In this theory, those who were uninitiated or at the bottom rung of the initiated may only be aware of the pictures on the walls, the pattern on the bread, the sound of the music, the symbolic element of the liturgy. These are the same symbolic elements of the

liturgy that Bishop Damian described to me and another college-aged female visitor to the monastery on my first trip there. I think this is no coincidence as the Bishop was addressing us in the terms of the symbolism appropriate for our place in the hierarchy of comprehension.

As one advances in rank in the very hierarchical organization of the church, one can also advance in comprehension, so that finally monks might see the same liturgy as a mystical event, so far beyond the symbolic as to be apophatic. One eventually learns to experience God in that which is unspoken (see Derrida, 1992). This is a theory of signs,



Figure 4.11 The symbols of the eucharist bread

a full semiotic ideology, in which the symbolic is appropriate for those at the lowest levels of the hierarchy and the indexical is reserved for those at the highest levels. Just as Sharif in his interview moves from discussing the Coptic language to a discussion of head scarfs and the removal of shoes as all part of a single semiotic ideology, so Bishop Damian described the cross impressed in the communion loaf and the cymbal and the triangle used in the service as part of the language of the liturgy during my first tour of a Coptic chapel.

Above I presented the possibility of a dichotomy of valuing comprehension and finding it in the text (non-Coptic Coptologists) to finding comprehension (and even texts) unnecessary for the liturgy. One could then argue that comprehension is unnecessary for the liturgy to be effective because the liturgy is language as social action, a performative event, which could be performed in any code. But now having explored the views of full-fledged members of the

church, I want to introduce the idea that there is a hierarchy of comprehension at work here rather than a dichotomy between two possibilities.¹³³

A theory of signs that takes into consideration the religious aptitude of the initiate, such as the one I argue is at the doctrinal core of Coptic Orthodox Christianity, may be more difficult to effectively observe when one stands at the position of the uninitiated. I also did not observe in my interviews that a hierarchy of comprehension was at the forefront of discussions about comprehension for non-monastic and non-priestly Copts.¹³⁴ Upon close examination of the texts of the liturgy, however, I realized that the texts themselves offer evidence of such a hierarchy. I will analyze this evidence in the next section as we compare Texts 1 and 4. For now, I hope this discussion makes it clear that Copts are not muddling through a variety of ideologies of comprehension when it comes to the liturgy, which conflict because they came from different sources. Outside influence, especially in the diaspora, cannot be discounted. However, these semiotic ideologies have also developed *within* the Coptic community. There can be an appearance of conflict if one does not consider hierarchies of knowledge and understanding.

In this section I have explored the language ideologies regarding code and comprehension for four different groups of people who engage the liturgy: visitors, potential converts, members of the folk, and religious adepts. I have brought these various views on

133 The understanding of comprehension by religious adepts is drawn from important primary sources, such as the works of Pseudo-Dionysius (1987), and my own background in mystical theology acquired while obtaining my degree in Religion from Reed College. Unfortunately I did not explore this theory of comprehension with the adepts with whom I worked in the field since its relevance to the project did not become evident to me until later. Early iterations of this chapter actually framed the requirement of comprehension for an effective liturgy as the result of Protestant influence.

134 These are overlapping categories in the diaspora. All of the priests and higher officials I worked with in my fieldwork were also monks, so their monastic view on hierarchies of understanding may have come into play more in language choice and semiotics in the liturgy.

comprehension and code into the discussion of Coptic texts of the liturgy to show how theories of comprehension are engaged by those using these texts. Copts and non-Copts may perceive the role of comprehension and the relationship between comprehension and code in a variety of conflicting and complementary ways. What is clear is that ideologies of comprehension, always linguistic and semiotic ideologies when engaging texts, influence how code choice (and language shift) are determined.

In the first section of the chapter, the idea that the text is the liturgy and the importance of text for the liturgy was introduced. The analysis of comprehension begins to draw out the possible futures that these liturgical texts may bring into being and how those futures are recognized and negotiated by people either already socialized into the liturgy or immersed in the socialization process. In the next section, I will show the ways in which Text 1 and 4 intend a particular liturgy, one which we will see in Chapter Five both differs from and influences that which is performed. As my interlocutors did in conversations about the language of the liturgy, the texts emphasize the importance of code to comprehension and to the liturgy. In keeping with the hierarchy of comprehension, they may also undercut the importance of comprehension and thus a particular code.

4B The Intended Liturgy: A Comparison of Texts, Comprehension and Code

In the final section of this chapter I will create a comparison between Texts 1 and 4 that shows how the ideologies of comprehension and code are negotiated in the texts of the liturgy. I will compare and contrast these texts by describing a) how much of the liturgical texts they provide (length and detail), b) what non-linguistic cues they provide to the reader to follow the

text, and c) the code choices that they make in their creation of the liturgy. I use these points of comparison to argue that the texts are intended for different readers/performers and that the texts offer different degrees of comprehension to the reader in keeping with their anticipated role. The contrast between these texts provides a deeper understanding of the tension between comprehension and code in this community, as well as ideologies of text, and by doing so will provide the reader with a clear picture of how the ideologies of comprehension, code and textuality intersect to create a particular (linguistic) future for the Coptic Church in the diaspora.

I argue that despite their differences, both texts negotiate and create the same language shift (away from Arabic in the liturgy and towards German). I suggest that the code choices, which the texts make, are in keeping not only with the ideology of comprehension outlined in this chapter, but also with a connected understanding of language as social action in the eucharist and the role of language and belonging in the building of the church and the ecumene, which I will present in Chapter Five. By juxtaposing these texts, I will prepare the groundwork for the next chapter which explores the (dis)connection between the text and the liturgy and the role of code in the formation of the ecumene that I argue follows from the diasporic liturgy.

Text 1 vs. Text 4: The Complete Liturgy?

In the section on circulating texts, I introduced Text 1 as the text that visitors to the church most often receive when they attend a Coptic liturgy (see Figure 4.5). Although we know from ethnographic observation that this text is given to visitors, in this section I analyze the text to show the way in which it is constructed for visitors. The purported purpose when it is handed out is to help visitors follow the liturgy when the majority of the service will probably be in a language they do not understand. Text 1 is always given to native German speakers, such as the Coptology professors whose reaction to it I described in the previous section.

A person given Text 1 may at first hope to follow the liturgy along in the text, expecting it to be a translation of what they are hearing. But the visitor will soon be lost. Although Text 1 is always given to visitors, it is largely useless to visitors if their goal is to use it to comprehend the liturgical performance as seen and heard. I argue the book condenses the liturgy down to its imagined irreducible, essential parts. It is a slim book that covers a 3+ hour service.

Narrowing the liturgy to what might be its essential components might not be problematic if the visitor were listening to a liturgy in a language they understood. For example, the reader could simply return again to the passage they recognized from an earlier point in the service. Without these cues, however, the book cannot be used effectively for comprehension by those who are not fluent in the languages they are hearing. The book relies on the reader to navigate repetitions, changes of pace, and pieces left out at certain times of the year. I suggest it could only be useful for comprehension for someone who was already socialized into the liturgy. Text 4, on the other hand, provides a much more complete version of the liturgical text as a whole than Text 1. It includes, for example, descriptions in German of when the liturgy might vary at particular times of the year. Extra hymns and prayers are provided from the Agpeya and for the eucharist when it is performed during special feasts or fasts.

Because Text 1 did not include pieces of the text and left out information about how to read the text, even the information it did provide became useless to the reader as a tool for comprehending the performance. So many pieces were missing that the unsocialized reader could not deduce the location in the text that would have matched the performance.¹³⁵ This is an additional challenge on top of the fact that it *would not* have matched the performance in code choice (see below and Chapter Five).

¹³⁵ I discussed Sonia and Daniel's approach to the text in the previous section as an example of converts' (in)comprehension of the liturgy.

Figure 4.12 compares Text 1 and Text 4 at the same point in the liturgy to show the ways in which Text 1 is an abbreviated form of the liturgy.

| Text 4 | | | Text 1 | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Das Versöhnungsgebet | | | | |
| P. | Vergebt mir, denn ich habe gesündigt. | | | |
| V. | Wir haben gesündigt, wir brauchen die Vergebung. | | | |
| P. | Eschliel | Sallo | Betet | |
| D. | Ebebros evke stasite | Lelsalah kefo | Erhebt euch zum Gebet | |
| V. | Keto ebnevmati so | UaliroHika ajdan | Der Friede sei mit allen | |
| P. | Evnoti be nescthi be scha eneh vi etaf kot embe romi eh ehri egen ti miet entak.ouo efmo etaf eh echon ehbi kosmos heten bi o onh evol enref tancho ente bek monogenies enscheri benschojs ouo bennoti ouo bensotier esos bechrestos ouo ak moh embi kahi evol chen ti hereni ti evol chen nife oui Baj eteri ti setratja ente ni angelos ti oonak enchiets efgo emmos ge ooo em evnoti chen ni etschosi nem o hereni hegen bi kahi nem o timati | Ja allah alAazim alabadi allazi gabala elansan Aala gheir fasad ualmaut allazi dachala elalAalam beHasad ebliies hadamtaho belzehir almoHji allazi lebnek aluaHied elgens rabbena uaelahhna uamochallesna JasuA almasieH ua malaat alard men alsalam allazi men alsamauat haza allazi agnad almalaeka jommaggedonak behi kaelien almagdo lellahh fi alaAali uaAala alard alsalam ua fi alnas almasarra | O großer und ewiger Gott, der du den Menschen ohne Makel geschaffen hast. Den Tod, der in die Welt durch den Neid des Satans kam, hast du zerstört durch die lebensspendende Erscheinung deines eingeborenen Sohnes, unseres Herrn, Gottes und Erlösers Jesus Christus. Du hast die Erde mit deinem himmlischen Frieden erfüllt. Dafür preisen dich die Engelscharen, indem sie sprechen: Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe und auf Erden, Friede und Freude den Menschen seiner Gnade. | 16. Versöhnungsgebet Priester: O großer und ewiger Gott, der Du den Menschen ohne Makel geschaffen hast. Den Tod, der in die Welt durch den Neid des Satans kam, hast Du zerstört durch die lebensspendende Erscheinung Deines eingeborenen Sohnes, unseres Herrn, unseres Gottes und Erlösers Jesus Christus. Du hast die Erde mit Deinem himmlischen Frieden erfüllt. Dafür preisen Dich die Engelscharen, indem sie sprechen: Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe und auf Erden Friede und Freude den Menschen seiner Gnade. Diakon: <i>Betet für den vollkommenen Frieden, für die Liebe und die apostolischen, reinen Küsse.</i> Volk: <i>Kyrie eleison!</i> |
| D. | Ebros aveksaste ebrties tiljas erenies ke aghabies keton agjon espasmon ton apostolon | Sallo men agl alsalam alkamel ualmaHabba ualkobla altahira alrasolejja | Betet für den vollkommenen Frieden, für die Liebe und für die reinen, apostolischen Küsse | |
| V. | Kerjeleison | Jarabbo erHam | O Herr, erbarme dich | |
| <p>Der Ministrant erhebt das Kreuz und stellt sich hinter den Altar</p>  | | | | |

Figure 4.12: A side-by-side comparison of Text 1 and Text 4

To compare the completeness of each text to the performance of the liturgy, the reader can consult Figure 4.13, which is a piece of transcript from the liturgy that will be discussed again in Chapter Five as Figure 5.3.

| | | | |
|---|----|---|--|
| 1 | P: | Ωληλ | Pray. |
| 2 | D: | επι προσευχη σταθητε | Stand up to pray. |
| 3 | P: | ιρηνη [πασι] | Peace [be with you]. |
| 4 | V: | κε τω πνευματι σου | And with your spirit. |
| 5 | P: | با الله العظيم الابدي الذي جبل الانسان على غير فساد | O God, the great and eternal, you who created mankind without corruption - |
| 6 | P: | Den Tod, der in die Welt durch den Neid des Satans kam, hast du zerstört durch die lebensspendende Erscheinung deines eingeborenen Sohnes, unseres Herrn, unseres Gottes und Erlösers Jesus Christus. Du hast die Erde mit deinem himmlischen Frieden erfüllt. Dafür preisen dich die Engelscharen, indem sie sprechen: | Death, which came into the world through the envy of Satan, you have destroyed through the life-saving manifestation of your only-begotten son, our Lord, our God and Savior Jesus Christ. You have filled the earth with your heavenly peace. For that the hosts of angels praise you saying: |
| 7 | P: | المجد لله في الاعالي وعلى الارض السلام وفي الناس المسرة | Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and goodwill towards men. |
| 8 | D: | صلوا من اجل السلام الكامل و المحبة و القبلات الطاهرة الرسولية | Pray for complete peace, for love and for the pure apostolic kisses. |

Figure 4.13 Transcript from a liturgy in Berlin

Text 1 leaves out the first five turns of talk in this section of the liturgy, including two turns of talk where the folk speak. Thus the visitor is not given enough information to participate in the liturgy. They also will easily lose their place as there is no indication these pieces are missing from the script of Text 1. Text 1 includes German and Coptic where Text 4 provides Coptic, Arabic, and German. If one were listening to this particular performance of the liturgy

In Figure 4.12 there is a pictorial cue in Text 4 of the cross, which the minister holds up at a particular moment in the liturgy. To illustrate the implications of the lack of pictorial cues for the reader of Text 1, I will use the example of the censer from Figure 4.14, which is missing in Figure 4.15. At the times when the priest swings the censer, a picture of the censer appears in Text 4 (Figure 4.14).¹³⁷ This is important for both comprehension and participation, because at these points in the service members of the folk need to stand. Only for those who are infirm, pregnant or otherwise unable to stand is it appropriate to sit.

13. Das Evangeliumsgebet

Priester: O Meister, Herr Jesus Christus, unser Gott, der zu seinen heiligen Jüngern und ehrwürdigen Aposteln gesprochen hat: Viele Propheten und Gerechte sehnten sich zu sehen, was ihr seht, und haben es nicht gesehen, und zu hören, was ihr hört, und haben es nicht gehört. Selig aber sind eure Augen, daß sie sehen, und eure Ohren, daß sie hören. Mache uns würdig, Deine heiligen Evangelien zu hören und danach zu handeln durch die Gebete Deiner Heiligen.

Diakon: *Betet um des heiligen Evangeliums Willen.*
Volk: *Kyrie eleison!*

Priester: Gedenke auch, o Herr, aller, die uns gebeten haben, ihrer in unseren Gebeten und Bitten zu gedenken, die wir Dir darbringen, o Herr, unser Gott. Den Seelen deren, die uns vorausgegangen und entschlafen sind, gib Ruhe. Heile die Kranken. Denn Du bist unser aller Leben, unser aller Erlösung, unsere Hoffnung, unser Heil, unser aller Auferstehung.
Volk: *Alleluja.*

Figure 4:15: Text 1 is missing pictorial and verbal cues

Sitting during the entire service made visitors stand out as non-Coptic in a number of ways. When I asked Sharif why everyone stands when the priest releases incense from the censer, he said that they believe that when incense is being released it signals that the saints are praying for us and you do not sit when the saints are praying for you. Drawing on this

¹³⁷ Although code-switching is not the focus of our discussion at this time, Figure 4.14 highlights the sections of the liturgy that appear in Text 1 for ease of comparison.

interpretation, continuing to sit could indicate that one was not being prayed for and not one of us. However, the lack of pictorial cues is not the only thing that leads to inappropriate inaction. In this example (Figure 4.15) and in Figure 4.12, the imperative “Stand up to pray” (Erhebt euch zum Gebet) found in the transcript in Figure 4.13, Line 2 is left out of the script provided by Text 1. As we can see from the transcript in Figure 4.13, although this line will be performed as a direction to the audience it appears in Coptic in this instance of the performance and is thus a direction likely to be missed entirely by those not yet fully socialized into the liturgy.

Figure 4.14 also shows the silver Bible case and cross, which congregants in some denominations move towards the front of the church to kiss. Above I describe Rosemary’s struggle with socialization into this ritual. Although it may be directed to deacons in Text 4, the graphic found, which is missing from Text 1, helps the members of the community in the process of socialization to orient themselves to the performance of the liturgy and participate in it.

Following Text 1, the visitor marks themselves as unfamiliar with the semiotics of the community, possibly infirm, not one of the folk and, if disrespectful, then disrespectful in a way that was expected of their outside status. Failing to comprehend when to stand is not a simple matter of confusion for the individual, it is meaningful to the semiotic community. In offering but not fulfilling the hope for comprehension, I argue Text 1 keeps visitors correctly located in the hierarchy of comprehension. I suggest that we can see from the textual characteristics that it is intended for a particular type of reader.

• ***Text 4: The semiotics of comprehension for deacons***

Figure 4.12 included one example of the way in which pictorial cues have descriptions with them: “*The minister (deacon) lifts the cross and positions himself behind the altar.*”

P Eßvi faj ten teho
ouo ten tavh en
tek met aghaßon
bi maj romi mes
nan eßrin gok
evol em baj ki
ehe oh eßouav faj
nem ni ehe ohtero
ente ben onch
chen herini neven
nem tek hoti.
Eßfonov neven bi
rasmus neven en
ergeja neven ente
ebsatanas ebsot-
schni ente han
romi ev ho oh nem
ebtonf ie ebschoj
ente han gagi ni
ethieb nem ni eß
oh onh evol,ahlit
o evol haron,nem
evol hobik la os
terf,nem evol ha-
taj ekekliseja
ßaj,nem evol ha-
taj etrabeza ßaj,
nem evol habaj ma
eßouav entak faj,
ni zi eßnanief
nem ni et,eht
nofri sahnni emo-
oh nan gi enßok
bi etakti em bi
ehr schischi nan
ichomi egen ni
hof nem ni gagi

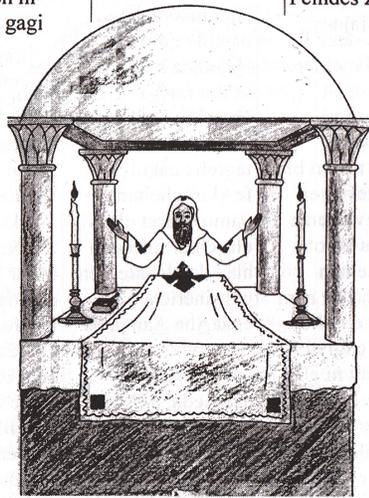
Men agl haza nas-
al ua natlob men
salaHek ja moHeb
elbaschar emnaHna
an nokammel haza
aljaum almokaddas
ua koll ajam
Hajatena becoll
salam maAa
chaufek. Koll Hasad
uakoll
tagreba uakoll
feAl elscheitan
uamoamaret elnas
elaschrar uakejam
alaAda alchafejjien
ualzaherien,
enzaAha Aanna ua
Aan saer schaAbak
uaAan hazehi
al maeda, uaAan
mauedAek
almokaddas haza,
amma alsaleHat
ualnafaAat
farzokna ejjaha
leannak anta allazi
aAteitana alsoltan
an nadoos alHajjat
ualAkareb uakoll
kouat alAado

Darum bitten und
beschwören wir
deine Güte, du
Menschenliebender:
Gewähre uns,
diesen heiligen Tag
und alle Tage
unseres Lebens in
völligem Frieden zu
vollenden in
deiner Furcht.
Jeden Neid, jede
Versuchung, alle
Werke des Satans,
die Nachstellungen
böser Menschen
und das
Hervorkommen von
Feinden, verborgen
oder offenkundig.
Halte fern von uns
und von deinem
ganzen Volke und
von diesem Tisch,
und diesem heiligen
Platz. Aber die
guten und
nützlichen Dinge
lass uns zuteil
werden, denn du
hast uns die Macht
gegeben, auf
Schlangen und
Skorpione und
jegliche Gewalt des
Feindes zu treten.

Text 4 (left)

Text 1 (below)

Priester: Darum bitten und beschwören wir Deine Güte, Du Menschenliebender: Gewähre uns, diesen Tag und alle Tage unseres Lebens in völligem Frieden zu vollenden in Deiner Furcht. Jeden Neid, jede Versuchung, alle Werke des Satans, die Nachstellung böser Menschen und das Hervorkommen von Feinden, verborgen oder offenkundig halte fern von uns und von Deinem ganzen Volk und von dieser heiligen Kirche und von diesem Deinem heiligen Ort. Aber die guten und nützlichen Dinge laß uns zuteil werden, denn Du hast uns Macht gegeben, auf Schlangen und Skorpione und jegliche Macht des Feindes zu treten. Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung, sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen.



Der Priester bedeckt die Gaben mit einem großen Velumen (=Tuch). Ein Ministrant hilft ihm dabei.

Figure 4.16: The priest is facing the deacon as he performs the eucharist in Text 4¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Empty spaces and page breaks were eliminated from Text 4 to create Figure 4.16.

In Figure 4.16, a picture of the priest praying over the altar before the covered eucharist¹³⁹ has the caption: “*The priest covers the offering with a large sheet. The ‘ministrant’ (deacon) helps him with this.*”

This picture and the accompanying text reveal the intended reader and user of this text. In the picture the priest is facing the reader and praying, but those who are sitting in the pews at a service will see only the back of the priest. Both the picture and the accompanying description in Text 4 adopt the view of the deacon.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, a deacon would help the priest set the incense in the censer burning and hand it to him at the points when he needed it (Figure 4.14). I argue this is the reason the picture of the censer appears. (Assisting visitors and converts is only a secondary benefit.) A deacon might play the cymbal or triangle, when they are appropriate, during particular hymns. Hence we find a picture of the cymbal and triangle (see Figure 4.18).

Although I first found this text in the hands of a very social 11-year-old girl named Magda, who kindly allowed me to look on with her during the service, I would suggest the text was not created or (primarily) intended for our use. In Figure 4.16, the priest is facing the reader, but neither I, nor Magda, would ever be on that side of altar since women never step beyond the rood screen (either real or only observed) that divides the church. Although the symbols throughout the text were helpful for us, I argue they are intended to help young male deacons

¹³⁹ Although I refer to the bread and wine that is transformed into the body and blood of Christ as simply “the eucharist” in this chapter, there is a detailed terminology associated with communion, which varies as the ritual progresses, across languages, and across churches.

¹⁴⁰ Although the priest faces the same direction as the folk for most of the Coptic liturgy, such that they are all facing East and praying together, the priest does face the congregation at specific times during the service. Because Text 4 is not a complete script it is not possible to know for sure that the picture is not intended to be a representation of one of these times, but the analysis here is supported by the available evidence. (Text 4 and Text 1 both leave out the Prayer of the Offertory, which the picture represents.) The ad orientem position of the priest in the Oriental churches is a significant liturgical difference between their ritual and the current popular form of the Catholic mass, so the picture may be read as a commentary on that discourse as well.

who are being socialized into *performing* the liturgy. The pictures are intended to orient and instruct deacons, rather than for me and Magda, who use them to find our place in the text when we become lost. Indeed, in *The Explanation of the Pictures* next to the censer it says, “*The deacon brings the priest the censer. The priest puts incense in the censer.*”

•••

Although the explicit statements of the text’s creators about comprehension are a different type of evidence and may foreground different ideologies than the implicit ideologies presented here, in the case of Text 4 they align with some of the ideas I have presented above. The very short introduction to Text 4 describes how it came into being and what it hopes to achieve. The first line reads, “*This book came into being because visitors and especially children cannot read the Coptic and Arabic language. Thus they had difficulty following the Coptic liturgy and taking part in it.*” According to the description, it was not only intended for the young deacons. However, further along in the introduction they say, “*We pay special attention to our children and to all the little ones and young ministers. This book is designed especially for them and therefore it includes these many illustrations.*” The introduction confirms what the text shows, that it is intended for comprehension by those being socialized into the liturgy and especially deacons. What the introduction leaves implicit, I have argued in this chapter, is that this male and hierarchically higher audience is the one for whom such comprehension is necessary in the liturgy.

Text 4 positions itself, both through explicit explanation and by an analysis of the way the text is presented (implicitly), as being for visitors and children. However it is especially for

children who are deacons. Comprehension is important to the authors of this text.¹⁴¹ As they describe the process of its creation, it was originally (1982) a set of handwritten hymns in Arabic and Coptic transliteration. This would have enabled the deacons to perform the hymns, “*but only the pronunciation was not enough for (the) understanding.*” They say that they realized that this is “*...still too little to be able to comfortably follow the Mass and pray effectively.*” This is what led them to include the German translation in the text and to expand it to cover the entire liturgy, in its most popular version, rather than only those parts that the deacons would need to speak. They expanded the text for the purposes of comprehension.¹⁴²

I have argued that the deacons were the readers for whom Text 4 was designed while Text 1 was intended for visitors. We can consider what the text includes and excludes, the pictures and prompts, and the code choices as direct evidence of a hierarchy of comprehension when it comes to the liturgy. The visitor with Text 1 may be hoping to follow the liturgy, but Text 4 provides comprehension in order that one may *pray* it effectively. Comprehension is desirable for practitioners. As a visitor to the church, I was on the very outside of the intended reach of this text (see Chapter Six).

Given this, Sonia and Daniel, the potential converts above, who did not see comprehension of the performance as integral to the liturgy, correctly interpreted their position in the hierarchy. Since they were potential converts, but not actual practitioners, comprehension may not be necessary or desirable. Nevertheless, as I discussed briefly above, the debate about

¹⁴¹ I use the term authors here because I want to emphasize the creativity of the textual creation process, but the writers are not structured as authors. This is in keeping with the textual ideology of the liturgy. The liturgy is already given and they are only translating and transliterating it for the audience. Ideally, no element of interpretation, and thus no authorship, would be involved. Thus, no author or translator is listed in Text 4, other than those who wrote the introduction.

¹⁴² The description of the early versions shows that performance without comprehension was possible.

comprehension and liturgical practice is a point of tension in the community. It impacts the code choices in the performance (Chapter Five) and also in the texts, the futures of which I will discuss below.

Text 1 and Text 4: Code Choice and Linguistic and Liturgical Futures

I introduced Text 1 as a text for socialization into the liturgy. I have shown some of the ways in which Text 1 is uninterpretable for visitors because it lacks details of structure and seems to narrow down the liturgy to its essential components without either enough textual or non-linguistic cues for the uninitiated. I have suggested that this is not because the text is poorly designed, but because it is not designed to be comprehensible and thus is in keeping with the hierarchy of comprehension discussed above. The intended readers of Text 4 are at a different level in the hierarchy of comprehension.

At this point I will compare and contrast the code of the liturgy to that of Text 4 and in so doing I will frame Text 1 in an alternative role. It is incomprehensible because it represents a *future* comprehensible liturgy. The book portrays a liturgy that is experienced without Arabic. When sections of the mass would be in Coptic they appear in transliterated Coptic. They may then be translated into German. (Kyrie eleison, meaning Lord have mercy, is not translated.). No such concession is made for those sections of the liturgy that usually occur in Arabic in the communities where I work.

| | | | | |
|----|----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | P: | ارفعوا قلوبكم. | Priester: Erhebet Eure Herzen. | Ano imon tas kar-sias |
| 2 | V: | هي عند الرب. | Volk: Wir haben sie beim Herrn. | Echomen erpos ton Kyrion |
| 3 | P: | فلنشكر الرب. | Priester: Laßt uns dem Herrn danken. | Evcharsti-sou-min tou Kyrio |
| 4 | V: | مستحق وعادل. | Volk: Würdig und recht | axion ke sie-ke-on |
| 5 | P: | ΑΖΙΟΝ ΚΕ ΔΙΚΕΟΝ ; ΑΖΙΟΝ ΚΕ ΔΙΚΕΟΝ ; ΑΛΗΘΕΣ ΓΑΡ ΞΕΝ ΟΥΜΕΘΜΗ ; ΑΖΙΟΝ ΚΕ ΔΙΚΕΟΝ. | Priester: Würdig und recht, würdig und recht, Er ist in Wahrheit würdig und recht! | |
| 6 | P: | O Meister Herr, Gott der Wahrheit. Du bist vor aller Ewigkeit und regierst bis in Ewigkeit. Du wohnst in den Höhen und schaust auf die Erniedrigten herab. Du hast Himmel, Erde Gewässer und alles darin geschaffen. Vater unseres Herrn, Gottes und Erlösers Jesus Christus, durch den du alles geschaffen hast, das Sichtbare und das Unsichtbare, | O Meister, Herr, Gott der Wahrheit. Du bist vor aller Ewigkeit und regierst bis in Ewigkeit. Du wohnst in den Höhen und schaust auf die Erniedrigten herab. Du hast Himmel, Erde und Gewässer und alles darin geschaffen. Vater unseres Herrn, Gottes und Erlösers Jesus Christus, durch den Du alles geschaffen hast, das Sichtbare und das Unsichtbare, | |
| 7 | P: | الجالس على كرسى مجده، المسجود له من جميع القوات المقدسة. | Du sitzt auf dem Throne Deiner Herrlichkeit, alle heiligen Kräfte beten Dich an. | |
| 8 | D: | Wer sitzt, stehe auf. | Diakon: Wer sitzt, stehe auf! | |
| 9 | P: | Vor dir stehen die Engel, die Erzengel, die Häupter, die Herrschaften, die Throne, die Mächtigen und die Kräfte. | Priester: Vor Dir stehen die Engel, die Erzengel, die Häupter, die Herrschaften, die Throne, die Mächtigen und die Kräfte. | |
| 10 | D: | Schauet nach Osten. | Diakon: Schauet nach Osten! | |
| 11 | P: | Du bist der, der umgeben ist von den Cherubim, die voller Augen sind, | Priester: Du bist der, der umgeben ist von den Cherubim, die voller Augen sind, | |
| 12 | P: | والسيرافيم ذوو الستة أجنحة، يسبحون على الدوام بغير سكوت قائلين. | und von den Seraphim mit sechs Flügeln. Diese preisen Dich immerdar unaufhörlich und sprechen: | |
| 13 | V: | الثاروييم يسجدون لك . والسيرافيم يمجدونك صارخين قائلين: قدوس، قدوس، قدوس رب الصباؤوت، السماء والأرض مملوءتان من مجدك الأقدس. | Diakon: Wir hören! Volk: Die Cherubim beten Dich an und die Seraphim preisen Dich, indem sie ausrufen und sprechen: Heilig, heilig, heilig, Herr der Heerscharen. Himmel und Erde sind erfüllt von Deiner heiligen Herrlichkeit. Volk: Ni-scheroubim se-ou-oscht emmok, nem ni-seravim se-ti- o-ou nak, evosch evol evgo emmos. Je agios agios agios, Ki-rios sava-ot, epli-ris o oura-nos, ke i gi- tis agias sou so-xis. | |

Figure 4.17: Text 1 (right) compared to a transcript of the liturgy in Berlin (left)

Figure 4.17 compares a transcript for the December 23rd, 2007 liturgy with a portion of Text 1.¹⁴³ As we can see, in lines 1-4 German translation and Coptic transliteration are provided, but Arabic is used in the transcript. Then in Line 5 Coptic is used, but only German is provided. The rest of the text alternates German and Arabic (in ways which are analyzed in Chapter Five), but only German is provided until the final Line 13. In Line 13 German and Coptic are provided, but only Arabic is used. This is an example of the mismatch between the codes of the text and the actual performance of the liturgy.

This is not simply a mismatch, however. Text 1 excludes Arabic entirely from the liturgy, presenting the liturgy in only two languages, German and Coptic and German predominates. I have argued that Text 1 reinforces the incomprehension expected of visitors and those unsocialized into the liturgy. Another (not mutually exclusive) possibility is that the text constructs a reader who is a German speaker familiar with the structure of the mass and who is experiencing the mass primarily in German. Narrowing it down to its essential elements without extra-textual cues or multiple codes embraces this reader's imagined competence. Such a situation has never occurred during a liturgy I have attended in Germany. The liturgy is never without some components in Arabic. I would suggest that Text 1 is not (only) a text for socialization into the liturgy.

Perhaps one way to see this point is to consider the Arabic text (Text 6 or one similar to it), which was sometimes engaged by my friend across the aisle as I struggle with Text 1 (see Figure 4.9). Cyrillos grew up in Egypt where he would have experienced the liturgy predominantly in Arabic, with some Coptic, similar to the way he experiences it in Berlin. Unlike some other members of the community, he also speaks and reads both Arabic and

¹⁴³ The text has been realigned so that the textual pieces correspond to the transcript and make it easier for the reader to analyze.

German. Because of his lifelong socialization in the liturgy he does not need the pictorial cues discussed above. He also does not need a translation of the code. Yet, the text is still worth reading. He might look at the text when the priest is speaking German or when there is a prayer specific to that particular time in the liturgical year.

Text 6 provides the liturgy in Arabic and Coptic. Text 1 is similar, but replaces Arabic with German as the second language of the text. Unlike Cyrillos, an understanding of the code is not the only, or even the primary, part of the mass that German-speaking visitors are missing. While this script fails for the current intended audience, because more than a translation of the code is required, I argue it represents a future *intended* liturgy that would be comprehensible. Text 1 does not provide comprehension for the readers to whom it is given. But Text 1 would provide this, insofar as it would be necessary, for a fully integrated German-speaking participant in a Coptic mass where only two codes are used, Coptic and German. Such a participant engaged in such a liturgy did not exist at the time I completed my fieldwork. However, I suggest this text brings both this German-speaking participant and this liturgy into being.

• *Script choices*

The majority of Text 4 is divided into three columns of Coptic, Arabic and German in Roman script (see Figures 4.12, 4.14 and 4.16). The introduction to the text describes these meaningfully as “*Coptic Pronunciation*” (Koptische Aussprache), “*Arabic Pronunciation*” (Arabische Aussprache) and “*German Translation*” (Deutsche Übersetzung). This points toward one of the intended uses of this text: to help the young deacons pronounce the liturgy in order to perform the liturgy.

By presenting all three languages together simultaneously, the text *appears* to place all three languages in a position of equality and portray a liturgy in which any of these languages

could be used at any given time.¹⁴⁴ By choosing to provide Coptic and Arabic in transliteration, the authors have already made a choice about their imagined intended audience. This intended audience can read German and Roman script, but may not be able to read Coptic and/or Arabic scripts. In my experience this was a common situation for youth in the diaspora. They could often speak Arabic fluently, but they could not read it.¹⁴⁵ Text 1 makes a related choice, privileging Roman script in the Coptic transliteration.

Providing the Arabic and Coptic transliteration in Text 4 was one aspect of this text which made it possible to follow a liturgical performance for fluent German speakers. With access to this transliteration, one could find one's place in the service when Coptic or Arabic were being spoken. Since these were the two languages used the majority of the time, this was crucial for comprehension. There were members of the community who disagreed with this approach, however. Sharif, whose opinion of Coptic in the liturgy I transcribed above, lamented that they did not use Coptic script in this text. He recognized the way that the text could not only mirror, but also create (intend) a certain linguistic and semiotic community. As described above, he felt that knowledge of Coptic, including the script, was vital for community maintenance. The

¹⁴⁴ I do not mean to imply that there is no evaluative judgment in this text regarding these languages, as should be clear. I have already discussed in the section on comprehension in the liturgy how evaluative judgments regarding Arabic and German impact ideas about code choice and I see those as visible in these texts. The appearance of all three languages simultaneously translated does present a kind of equality, but on the other hand all three languages are in Roman script, the script of Germany, and it has been suggested to me that placing German in the right hand column also gives it priority. In addition, the German presented is standard written German, known as high German, where the non-standard transliterations betray dialectal choices that also impact their evaluation in the text. These are intricacies of the written code choice that I would like to explore further. I appreciate the comments of the Linguistic Anthropology Laboratory at the University of Michigan on these points.

¹⁴⁵ The opposite was true for some of the people I met who had emigrated from Egypt as adults, especially women. They sometimes could not read Roman script even when they could speak German well.

text not only accommodates to the youth's lack of knowledge, but also reinforces that lack of knowledge by eliminating this script(*ural*) requirement.

Here I will explore especially the code choices that Text 4 makes, or does not make, as they relate to ideologies of comprehension and what I have called the futures of the liturgical text. In the previous section, I suggested that Text 1 presented not (only) an incomprehensible text of the liturgy but also an ideal picture of a possible liturgy that would eventually come into being. One might even think of this as its primary purpose. The text is not passive in this regard. As part of their textual ideologies, Copts are acutely aware of the powers of the text. In this case the choice of Roman script reinforces a shift into German.

• *The title of Text 4*

Although it appears to present a tripartite division of linguistic equality for most of the text, I would suggest that there is a struggle between languages in Text 4. It is a struggle that plays out on the page and draws in the linguistic ambivalence and bivalence that I discussed in Chapter Two. An example of where this struggle can be seen is in the title of the text. The title is “Die Koptische MESSE nach St. Pasilius” (The Coptic MASS of St. Basil, emphasis in original). It portrays (and betrays) the linguistic tensions of the diaspora.

First, the title is in German, but the German language name for St. Basil is St. Basilus and this has been substituted here by St. Pasilius. This Pasilius is close to the German, but all evidence suggests it is intended to be the Coptic name for the saint who was so important to early Christianity. However, in the time period in which Saint Basil lived, both Greek (from which the name Basilus derives) and Coptic had a voiced nasal *b* and a *p/b* distinction. His name would have been pronounced Basilus. The *b* dropped out of Coptic only after intensive influence on the language by Arabic, which does not have a *b/p* distinction. Thus, in choosing the purportedly

Coptic name over the German one, in a German title, the creators of the text have taken a step away from the original Coptic, which the German closely approximated, and introduced the influence of Arabic, a language which is otherwise missing from the front cover of this printing of the liturgy.

The trivalence of the term Pasilius misses the mark of all three languages it tries to approximate. It is neither Coptic nor German nor Arabic or as Woolard (1998) has astutely observed in her work on Catalan, it could be all three. But surrounded as it is by the German title, I would suggest it is another example of how the linguistic tensions of the text point in a direction. They point towards a particular future for the Coptic liturgy in Germany, which is a shift into German. This is implicit in the title, the coding of *The Reading of the Evangelists* (below), the ways in which Roman script is used, and the portrayals of which languages are comprehensible and which languages are ancient and unchanging. It is not only an implicit hope of the texts, but is also explicitly stated in the introduction to the text in closing: “*Hopefully this book will fulfill its purpose until the masses in our churches are given only in German and Coptic.*”

Hymne:
Trishagion



Text 4 (left)

Agjos ose os, agejos es
scheros, agjos assanatos
o ekbar seno genneties
alejson imas

Agejos ose os, agejos es
scheros, agejos assanatos
o estavroties dimas
alejson imas

Agejos ose os, age os es
scheros, agejjos assanatos
o anastas ek ton nekron ke
anelson estos oranos
alejson imas

Zoksa batri ke ejo ke agjo
ebnevmati, ke nien ke a i ke
estos e ona ston e onon, amin
ageja-trejas
alejson imas

Heiliger Gott, heiliger Starker,
heiliger Lebendiger,
Unsterblicher,
der von der Jungfrau geboren
wurde,
erbarme dich unser.

Heiliger Gott, heiliger Starker,
heiliger Lebendiger,
Unsterblicher,
der für uns gekreuzigt wurde,
erbarme dich unser.

Heiliger Gott, heiliger Starker,
heiliger Lebendiger,
Unsterblicher,
der von den Toten
auferstanden ist und in den
Himmel aufgefahren ist,
erbarme dich unser.

Ehre sei dem Vater und dem
Sohn und dem Heiligen Geist,
jetzt und alle Zeit und in die
Ewigkeit der Ewigkeiten.
Heilige Dreifaltigkeit, erbarme
dich unser.

Text 1 (below)

12. Trishagion

Volk: Heiliger Gott, Heiliger Starker, Heiliger Lebendiger, der Du von der Jungfrau geboren wurdest, erbarme Dich unser. Heiliger Gott, Heiliger Starker, Heiliger Lebendiger, der Du für uns gekreuzigt wurdest, erbarme Dich unser. Heiliger Gott, Heiliger Starker, Heiliger Lebendiger, der Du vom Tode auferstanden und in den Himmel hinaufgestiegen bist, erbarme Dich unser.

Ehre sei dem Vater und dem Sohne und dem Heiligen Geist, jetzt und immerdar und in alle Ewigkeit. Amen.
Heilige Dreifaltigkeit, erbarme Dich unser.

Volk: Agios o Se-os, Agios is-schi-ros, Agios a-sana-tos, o ek-par-se-nou gen-ne-tis e-lei-son imas.

Agios o Se-os, Agios is-schi-ros, Agios a-sana-tos, o es-tav-ro-tis si imas e-lei-son imas.

Agios o Se-os, Agios is-schi-ros, Agios a-sana-tos, o-anas-tas ek ton nek-ron ke a-nel-son is-tous oura-nous e-lei-son imas. Soxa pa-tri ke I-iou ke agio Ep-nev-mati.

ke min ke ai ke is-tous e-onas ton e-onon amin. Agia et-rias e-lei-son imas.

Figure 4.18: The hymn Trishagion in Text 4 and Text 1

• Hymns

As we have seen, Text 1 chooses German as the language of the script most of the time. One of the consequences of the tripartite division of Text 4 was that despite privileging Roman script, the layout provided to the reader of the text has no way of predetermining which language would be chosen at any given time.¹⁴⁶ This is the way that the introduction of Text 4 also describes the layout. However, they do point out one exception to this tripartite division: “By the Coptic hymns, which have not changed in almost 2,000 years, the Coptic pronunciation and German translation is sufficient.” Chapter Five includes discussion of some other explicit commentary on language of the liturgy which reinforces this idea of Coptic as ancient and unchanging.

¹⁴⁶ The code choices of the performance and the connection of code to specific speech genres will be discussed more in Chapter Five.

As we can see from Figure 4.18, both texts represent the hymns in this way. They provide only a German translation and a Coptic transliteration. I suggest that Arabic is excluded because it is neither the language of the past, the language of ancient identity, like Coptic, or the language of the future for the diaspora like German. These pieces of the text that included only two languages show the way in which the texts move the liturgy in the direction of language shift away from Arabic, which is a shift we will see supported in the performance in Chapter Five. In Figure 4.18 we can also see that Text 1's Coptic differs from Text 4 in that the Coptic π is transliterated as 'p' rather than 'b'. This is both a recognition of the intended reader of Text 1, a native German speaker, and a further move away from Arabic influence in the text, which supports the idea of Text 1 as a representation of a future liturgy after a completed shift.

BelHakika ti nomen be elahen
 uaHed/ allah alahb/ dabet
 elkoll/chalek alsama ualard/
 ma jora ua ma lajora/ nomen
 berabben uaHed/ JasuA
 almasieH/ ebn allah aluaHied/
 almaulud men alahb kabl koll
 eldohur/ nur men nur/ elah
 Hak men elah Hak/ maulud
 gher machluk/ uaHed maAa
 elahb felgauhah/ allazi bihi
 kana koll schei/ haza allazi
 men aglena naHno elbaschar/
 uamen agl chalasena/ nazala
 men alsama/ ua tagassad men
 alroH alkodos/ uamen Mariam
 alAazra/ ta-annasa uasoliba
 Anna Aa Ahhd Pilates
 elponti/ ta-allam uakobera
 uakama menelamuat feljaum
 albaeß kama felkotob/
 uasaAda elalsamauat
 uagalasa Aan jamin abieh/ ua
 ajdan ja-ti fi magdih/ lijodien
 alaHja ualamuat/ allazi leiBa
 limolkihi enkeda/ NaAm
 nomen belroH alkodos/ alrabb
 almoHji almonbaßek men
 alab/ nasgod laho ua
 nomaggedoh/
 maAa alahb ualebn/ alnatek
 felanbja/ ua bikaniesa uaHeda
 mokaddasa gameAa rasolejja/
 ua naAtaref bimaAmodejja
 uaHeda lemaghferat alchataja

Wir glauben an den einen
 Gott/ Gott den Vater/ den
 Allmächtigen/ der Himmel
 und Erde geschaffen hat/ alles
 Sichtbare und Unsichtbare./
 Wir glauben an den einen
 Herrn./ Jesus Christus./ Gottes
 eingeborenen Sohn/ aus dem
 Vater geboren vor aller Zeit./
 Licht vom Licht./ wahrer Gott
 vom wahren Gott/ gezeugt,
 nicht geschaffen./ eines
 Wesens mit dem Vater/ durch
 ihn ist alles geworden./
 Für uns Menschen/ und um
 unseres Heiles Willen/ ist er
 vom Himmel herabgestiegen./
 hat Fleisch angenommen
 durch den Heiligen Geist./ von
 der Jungfrau Maria/ und ist
 Mensch geworden./ Er wurde
 für uns gekreuzigt unter
 Pontius Pilatus./ hat gelitten
 und ist begraben worden./ Ist
 am dritten Tage auferstanden
 von den Toten, gemäß der
 Schrift/ und aufgefahren in den
 Himmel./ Er sitzt zur Rechten
 seines Vaters/ und er wird
 auch wiederkommen in seiner
 Herrlichkeit./ um zu richten
 die Lebenden und die Toten/
 und seiner Herrschaft wird
 kein Ende sein./ Ja, wir
 glauben an den Heiligen
 Geist./ den Herrn, der lebendig
 macht./ der aus dem Vater
 hervorgeht./ Wir beten ihn an
 und verherrlichen ihn./
 zusammen mit dem Vater und
 dem Sohn./ der gesprochen hat
 durch die Propheten./
 Wir glauben an die eine
 heilige, universale und
 apostolische Kirche./
 Und wir bekennen die eine
 Taufe zur Vergebung der
 Sünden.

Text 4 (left)

Text 1 (below)

Volk: Wir glauben an den einen Gott, den Vater, den Allmächtigen, der alles geschaffen hat, Himmel und Erde, die sichtbaren und unsichtbaren Dinge. Wir glauben an den einen Herrn Jesus Christus, Gottes eingeborenen Sohn, aus dem Vater geboren vor aller Zeit. Licht vom Licht, wahrer Gott vom wahren Gott, gezeugt, nicht geschaffen, eines Wesens mit dem Vater; durch ihn ist alles geschaffen. Für uns Menschen und zu unserm Heil ist er vom Himmel gekommen, hat Fleisch angenommen durch den Heiligen Geist und die Jungfrau Maria und ist Mensch geworden. Er wurde für uns gekreuzigt unter Pontius Pilatus, hat gelitten und ist begraben worden, ist am dritten Tag nach der Schrift auferstanden von den Toten und aufgefahren in den Himmel. Er sitzt zur Rechten Seines Vaters, und er wird wiederkommen in Seiner Herrlichkeit, zu richten die Lebenden und die Toten, und Seiner Herrschaft wird kein Ende sein. Ja, wir glauben an den Heiligen Geist, der Herr ist und lebendig macht, der aus dem Vater hervorgeht; der mit dem Vater und dem Sohn angebetet und verherrlicht wird, der gesprochen hat durch die Propheten und an die eine heilige, apostolische und universale Kirche. Wir bekennen die eine Taufe zur Vergebung der Sünden. (gesungen) Wir erwarten die Auferstehung der Toten und das Leben der kommenden Welt. Amen.

Ten goscht evol
 cha ethe enti
 anastasis ente
 niref mo ot nem
 bi onch ente bi
 on eBnejjo,amin

Ua nantazer
 kejamat elamuat
 uaHajat eldahhr
 elaati, amin

Wir erwarten die
 Auferstehung der
 Toten und das
 Leben der
 kommenden Welt,
 Amen

Figure 4.19: The Nicene Creed in Arabic and German in Texts 4 and 1

• *The Nicene Creed*

The authors of Text 4's introduction are correct that many of the Coptic hymns appear in this format, but that is not the only place that the tripartite division is abandoned. Some of the

prayers appear only in German with their Arabic titles. A particularly informative deviation from the pattern is the Nicene Creed (see Figure 4.19), which Paul used as his primary example of the need for comprehension and thus German in the liturgy moving forward. In Text 4, the Nicene Creed appears in two columns and the two columns are Arabic transliteration and German translation. Coptic does not appear. Text 1 provides the creed only in German.

Both texts support Paul's ideology about comprehension and belief. By exclusion it also portrays Coptic as *not* a language of comprehension and faith. The situation is more complex, however, as the final sentence of the Nicene Creed in Text 4 returns to a tripartite pattern with the line, "***We await the resurrection of the dead and the life of the coming world. Amen.***" From this we can see one of the ways in which the text portrays the tension of comprehension and code that is so vibrant and pressing for the diaspora community.

Lesung des Evangelium

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>D. Steht alle in Ehrfurcht vor dem Herrn und seid aufmerksam, um das heilige Evangelium zu hören, die Lesung aus dem Evangelium nach (.....) dem reinen Jünger, sein Segen...</p> | <p>ehrwürdiger Patriarch, Papst Anba (.....), und zur Seite deines Teilhabers am apostolischen Dienst, dem ehrwürdigen Bischof Anba (.....). Der Herr beschütze uns euer Leben.</p> |
| <p>V. ...sei mit uns allen. (Amen)</p> | <p>V. Amen, Halleluja.</p> |
| <p>P. Benschojs ouoh bennoti ouoh bensotir ouoh benoro tiren isos bechrestos ebschiri emevnoti etoch bi o-u naf scha eneh. Bi o-u fa bennoti be (scha eneh ente nie eneh amin)</p> | <p>Unser Herr und Gott, unser Erlöser und unser aller König Jesus Christus, Gottes lebendiger Sohn: Ihm sei Ehre in alle Ewigkeit. Ehre sei unserem Gott (bis in die Ewigkeit der Ewigkeiten, Amen.)</p> |
| <p>V. Zoksasi kereja Almagdo lak jarabb Ehre sei dir, o Herr</p> | <p>D. Gepriesen sei er, der kommt im Namen des Herrn aller Mächte. Unser Herr und Gott, unser aller Erlöser Jesus Christus, Gottes lebendiger Sohn, sein ist die Ehre...</p> |
| <p>D. Aus den Psalmen und Liedern unseres Vaters David, des Propheten und reinen Königs, sein Segen...</p> | <p>V. ...in alle Ewigkeit, Amen.</p> |
| <p>V. ...sei mit uns allen. (Amen)</p> | <p>D. „Lesung des Evangeliums“</p> |
| <p>D. „Lesung des Psalms“</p> | <p>V. Ehre sei Gott in alle Ewigkeit.</p> |
| <p>V. Halleluja</p> | |
| <p>D. (Bei Anwesenheit eines Bischofs) Sie sollen ihn in der Gemeinde des Volkes rühmen, ihn loben im Kreise der Alten. Denn er vermehrte ihre Sippen einer Herde gleich. Der Herr hat geschworen und nie wird's ihn reuen: „Du bist Priester auf ewig nach der Ordnung Melchisedeks“. Der Herr stehe dir zur Seite, o du unser</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">PREDIGT Der Priester predigt nach der Bibellesung. Die Predigt kann aber auch nach der Kommunion gehalten werden.</p> |

Figure 4.20: The Reading of the Evangelists

• *The Bible*

Another section where Coptic does not consistently appear in Text 4 is in *The Reading of the Evangelists*. This portion of the liturgy is missing from Text 1. This section is revealing because it includes directions for speech by deacons (D), the folk, (V) and the priest (P). First the deacons speak exclusively in German. Then the folk speak, also exclusively in German. Then the priest speaks. His speech is given in Coptic transliteration and German translation. The folk speak again, but this time the tripartite division returns and they may speak in Coptic, Arabic or German. Then the deacons and the folk each take a turn speaking exclusively in German and from then on every part of the section is exclusively in German.

During this section of the service another text (or texts) would also be read from, which contains the appropriate scriptures to be read during that time of the year. These other texts, which are supplementary to the liturgy like the Agpeya, are typically not owned by individuals. They are available during the service only in Arabic and German. Thus we have a section that focuses around the Gospels and the Psalms, which one could argue have also “remained unchanged for almost 2,000 years,” and yet this section finds Coptic almost eliminated from the texts, except in the mouth of the priest, with the sole possible use being a single line “Honor to you, oh Lord.” Arabic is not included at all.

In the next chapter we will return to these dimensions of the text and code choice and how they (mis)match the performance of the liturgy. The deacons, the young men for whom the text is written, speak exclusively German. The priest is given the option of speaking in Coptic here, but not Arabic. The folk are the only ones given the option of speaking Arabic and then only for one of their seven turns of talk. The rest of the time they are restricted to German. In Chapter Five, I discuss how the sermons, which are given in Arabic and sometimes German, bring the liturgy hither, bringing this ancient text into the present. So too in the texts, the arguably oldest section of the liturgy, the readings from the Bible, including the Old Testament, demonstrate a language shift to exclude Arabic and towards German, the language of the community into which the Copts in Germany are integrating.

Textual Futures, Christian Futures: Conclusions

In Text 4 we see many of the tensions that I laid out in the discussion *Language Ideologies of Comprehension and Code*. Choosing transliteration over script, providing pictorial cues and multiple languages, and displaying the Nicene Creed only in the two languages that the majority of people in this diaspora community speak natively, are all consistent with a focus on

comprehension as necessary for faith. As was the case for those Copts I talked with on this topic, ideologies of comprehension implicit in the text become intertwined with ideologies of code. German and Arabic may be the codes that can be comprehended (in the ideology), but we have also seen another ideology in the community: to lose Coptic is to lose the Coptic identity. Text 4 is very different from Text 1, despite the fact that they are intended to represent (or in the textual ideology, to be) the same liturgy. I suggested above that Text 1 does not actually allow for comprehension of the liturgy by the audience for whom it was (presented as) intended. On the other hand, Text 4 makes the liturgy far more comprehensible. And yet, this is in keeping with its alternative audience. Viewing this in terms of what I have called a hierarchy of comprehension, the relevant difference is that the primary audience of Text 4 is young men of the church in positions of religious authority (deacons). They are intended to comprehend the liturgy. I have suggested that Text 1, given to visitors, is not actually intended to make the liturgy comprehensible while Text 4 aspires to this goal for those who will *pray* the liturgy.

Text 1 was never meant to provide comprehension, in part because that is not the ideal for its intended audience, but also because by being incomprehensible it presents a picture of an ideal liturgy as it might one day be performed in this German diaspora community. By portraying a liturgy exclusively in German and Coptic, disconnected from the performance to which it is assumed to be linked, Text 1 contributes to creating such a liturgy. It portrays a liturgical future and contributes to its creation. I argue that while Text 4 and Text 1 appear different, they are actually similar. Text 4 is dominated by a tripartite division, which seems to make no specific choice as to which code should be chosen. However, it not only draws on, but also brings into being, a liturgy that is predominantly in German with some pieces in Coptic, which are structured as more ancient.

When considering the trajectory of the liturgy, which I suggest is not only predicted but intended, Text 1, which seemed to diverge so much from Sharif's description of the ideal liturgy, meets with his description in the final analysis. It also meets with the description offered by the authors of Text 4. In the future, the text intends, Arabic will be eliminated from the liturgy in the diaspora. In Text 4 I have argued we can also see a representation of language shift with the deacons (youth) speaking and comprehending German in the text. Within this focus on language shift, I suggest Text 1 is a representation of *the completed shift*. It is incomprehensible to visitors because it bears limited resemblance to the liturgy as performed. Instead, it is a portrayal of a predicted liturgy, one exclusively in German and Coptic, which will be almost completely comprehensible to them *without the text*. I argue then that both of these texts, although they appear so different, tend towards a particular textual future. It is a distinctively diasporic future in which the liturgy is exclusively in German and Coptic and no longer includes Arabic.

•••

In the introduction to this chapter, I described a conversation I had with two men in Hanover who wondered why I recorded the liturgy every Sunday because "everything is written in books." In their opinion, the liturgy as performed was a replica of the written liturgy such that only the written liturgy was necessary for me. I have attempted in this chapter to understand this ideology of textuality, which has so much power in the diaspora. I have described how important texts are by looking at the ways they circulate throughout the service. They are in the hands of almost every member, and especially those performing the service, from the priest, whose text is on the altar in front of him as his back is turned to the folk, to the young deacons, who might read a Bible verse in German for the listening chapel.

I then explored two specific texts to argue that the texts themselves, far from being static artifacts, portray a particular future for the liturgy and for the diaspora. It is a future grounded in theories of comprehension and code that eventually aim to exclude Arabic from not only the liturgy but from what it means to be Coptic. The texts are a powerful tool in this restructuring of the language of the liturgy and in the perpetuation of these language ideologies. I have begun to develop a strong thesis which highlights the ways in which the liturgical texts in the diaspora, much like the Coptic spaces in Germany, try to approximate both an ancient Egyptian past and a hoped-for Christian future.¹⁴⁷

In this chapter, my engagement with the text has explored many of the language ideologies that focus on the singularity of being Coptic, both in comprehension and in code. In the next chapter, I begin to draw out how the liturgy also engages with the generality of being Christian, in the Coptic view. This is a topic that has been an underlying theme of the dissertation as a whole and will come to fruition in Chapter Six. In preparation for beginning to think of the possible connections to a broader theory of textuality and language in Christianity, I would like to end with a quote from a friend who was raised in the Catholic Church and shortly before his death, in a conversation about the use of Coptic in the Coptic Orthodox liturgy, described his opinion of the linguistic changes that had taken place in the Catholic Church over the almost one hundred years of his life.¹⁴⁸ The next chapter will open with Pope Benedict's declaration on closely connected semiotic ideologies.

M: I was saying to Emily: When you were a boy your services were all in Latin, weren't they?

¹⁴⁷ I would like to explore the idea that the text can be a homeland for the diaspora, much as Ezrahi (2000) described the possibility of the Torah becoming a central point for the diaspora, a home, in Rabbinical Judaism after the second temple fell. The permanency of the text is a permanency of Coptic Christianity and a permanency of Egypt for Copts.

¹⁴⁸ Back-channeling by the anthropologist has been removed from this dialogue.

G: Oh yes, yes. I think it was the biggest mistake they made.

M: Mmm-hmmm.

E: What?

G: Well...

E: Getting rid of the services in Latin?

G: Because that was the tradition. And you lost something by telling...altering the...*altering the text as it were*. And in some cases even the meaning. [inaudible] ...into the local language of the country. Whereas the argument was it was too difficult for people to learn Latin in order to comprehend the Catholic religion. But it was no problem at all. You didn't have to be a Latin scholar.

E: You just have to...

G: ...to parrot the Lord's Prayer.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Heteroglossia of the Liturgy

In 2007 Pope Benedict, the new Catholic Pope of German origin, offended many Christians around the world by approving a document that ‘reasserted’ the primacy of the Catholic Church as the one true church. He had drafted this piece himself during the previous Pope’s reign when he was Pope John Paul II’s theological advisor. The document, which made international headlines, was a small theological treatise, in question and answer form, clarifying somewhat obscure points of doctrine from the Second Vatican Council.

If one is familiar with Catholic theology, what is startling about the document is not the pronouncement that the Catholic Church is the one true church. Instead it is why the Oriental Orthodox churches¹⁴⁹ are described as churches at all that is surprising. The Protestant churches do not receive this honor, being referred to instead as "Christian communities born out of the reformation" (Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faithful, 2007). Pope Benedict’s answer as to why the Oriental Orthodox churches are considered churches points to an important tension for the construction of the Christian ecumene. It is an answer with wide political and social implications with which communities like the Coptic Orthodox diaspora struggle. Their struggle provides scholars with insight into the ecumene.

¹⁴⁹The Oriental Orthodox Churches include the Coptic Orthodox Church and those churches with whom they are in full communion. They may also be referred to as Miaphysite or Non-Chalcedonian. Although following Said (1978) I have a dispreference for the term "oriental," I use it here because it is the one used in the Vatican's English translation of the document. It is also still commonly used in Germany even among academics.

The Oriental Orthodox churches are considered churches, according to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faithful,

because these churches although separated, have true sacraments and above all – because of the apostolic succession – the priesthood and the Eucharist, by means of which they remain linked to us by very close bonds" (Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faithful, 2007).

In other words, according to Pope Benedict, Oriental Orthodox churches can be called churches because the priests acting in these churches do transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.¹⁵⁰ This transformation is called transubstantiation and it does not take place in the protestant churches, according to Pope Benedict's proclamation. According to Pope Benedict, the strong claim here is from the Second Vatican Council, for the 2007 document is intended to clarify the Second Vatican Council's use of the term church: although the Roman Catholic church may be the one true church, the Oriental Orthodox churches *are* churches, while the protestant churches are not churches at all. The reassertion of this principle invites a fruitful comparison with the practices of the Coptic Orthodox Church and its diaspora.

It is not coincidental that Pope Benedict approved this document after he became Pope. He is known to be a friend to the orthodox churches. When he was nominated, people in the Coptic community in his native Germany whispered, "Is it true that he's interested in reunifying the church?" In Chapter Six I will look explicitly at the ecumene and Coptic efforts to strengthen the ties between Christian churches. I argue the goal of these efforts is to grow in size by cooperation rather than conversion. The present chapter examines the role of performative

¹⁵⁰ Although I focus on the transformative aspect in this analysis, Pope Benedict's proclamation also emphasizes that through the apostolic succession these churches *remain linked to us*. Thus the Oriental Orthodox churches are given such powers through their relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. This is part of the tension of ecumene discussed more in Chapter Six.

language, and the accompanying de-emphasis on code in the Coptic liturgy, as an implicit structuring of the ecumene through language.¹⁵¹

The previous chapter explored Coptic texts of the liturgy and the way in which the liturgy is thought about and constructed as a textual experience. I introduced the idea that the text is the liturgy and that in some way the entire performance of the liturgy is contained within the text for Copts. Texts are engaged dialogically throughout the performance. The focus was on whether comprehension of the liturgy was necessary for participation and the role that code was or was not playing in (ideologies of) comprehension. The analysis encompassed the texts, the tensions of an ideology of comprehension, and the related struggle with code that is evident in the texts. I argued that the texts, while they may be the immutable liturgy in one Coptic language ideology, portray code as mutable and also portray a consequent language shift away from Arabic and towards German in the liturgy.

In this chapter I look at the performance of the liturgy and the ways in which it differs from the texts examined in the previous chapter. In a sense, this chapter provides an answer to the question of my Coptic interlocutors from the previous chapter who were not sure why I would record the liturgy every week since it is always the same, all written in books. What is in the performance of the liturgy that is not in the books? If one really believed that everything in the liturgy was written in books, then what would be curious is why the liturgy was performed at all. This chapter takes up the tensions of code from the previous chapter and posits an ecumenical solution. I suggest performing the liturgy is performing the ecumene. This chapter

¹⁵¹ Like Pope Benedict, I suspect that the performance of the liturgy is a central answer to the question: what makes the Christian Church? In a related question, what makes the Coptic Church a church? These questions are at the heart of an understanding of the Coptic diaspora and the Christian ecumene. One answer is found in language.

will lead into the concluding analysis of the dissertation in Chapter Six on defining the limits of Europe in ecumenical terms.

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In the previous chapter, I introduced the idea that the central event of the liturgy is the eucharist. The eucharist is the transformation of the bread and the wine into the body and the blood of Christ. As Pope Benedict highlighted, this distinguishes churches with apostolic succession,¹⁵² including the Coptic Church, from the Protestant Churches. I briefly outlined in the last chapter that the liturgy as performed in the Coptic Orthodox Church is a linguistic event that transforms the material (bread and wine) into the human/divine flesh and blood (the person of Christ). I also linked this linguistic event to a phrase that Paul Kroskrity (2009) draws out from his work with the Tewa tribe. The Tewa focus on storytelling as a way of ‘bringing hither’ the authoritative word of their religious knowledge. As I wrote in Chapter Four, the entire linguistic event centers on this transformation, this ‘bringing hither’, of the person of Jesus Christ.

In his article entitled *Narrative Reproduction: Ideologies of Storytelling, Authoritative Words, and Generic Regimentation in the Village of Tewa*, Paul Kroskrity (2009) explores how the Tewa community carry their sacred stories into the present through storytelling. He analyzes how these narratives resemble and/or negotiate the authoritative word and quotes Bakhtin’s description of this important concept thus:

The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us quite independent of any power it might

¹⁵² Apostolic succession is the idea that the church was founded by and continues in an unbroken line from one of the apostles, as described in Chapter One. Bishop Damian described apostolic succession to his guests in Chapter Three (Figure 3.12). The Coptic Pope is the 117th Patriarch of Alexandria, although his residence is in Cairo today. For Copts, their Pope is the successor of Mark with equivalent authority to Pope Benedict who is the successor of the apostle Peter.

have to persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused to it. The authoritative word is located in a distanced zone, organically connected with a past that is felt to be hierarchically higher. It is, so to speak, the words of the fathers. Its authority was already acknowledged in the past. It is a prior discourse” (Bakhtin, 1981:342, cited in Kroskrity, 2009:48).¹⁵³

As discussed in Chapter Four, during a Coptic service most of what is performed is scripted. The ideology is that the same text being performed on any given Sunday was performed the week before and since the beginning of Christianity. It is the authoritative word, the word of the fathers. As was clear from Chapter Four, this authoritative word does not necessarily have to “persuade us internally.” Comprehension is optional and hierarchical. However, I argue this prior discourse also ‘brings hither’, and makes present, through the performance of transubstantiation, the most important prior event, the coming of the Messiah. This is a narrative reproduction in the truest sense.

In this chapter I explore the temporalities of the performance of the liturgy, examining the ways in which the authoritative word is made present. I suggest the ancient is made present through switching from Coptic through Arabic to German. Bakhtin saw the authoritative Word as definitively monologic. He was familiar with a liturgy that embraced a sacred language (see below), but he only granted heteroglossia to the prose writer: "For the prose writer the object is a focal point for heteroglot voices among which his own voice must also sound (Bakhtin, 1986:278). In this chapter I show how this heteroglossia around the object (the eucharist) is also embraced by the priest in contrast to Bakhtin's portrayal.

The first section on *The Speaker* explores some limitations on code choice through the way in which code is linked to text and the categorical speaker, individual speaker and voiced

¹⁵³ It is no coincidence that this description fits the Coptic liturgy so perfectly. Bakhtin was influenced by another Orthodox Christian tradition, the Russian one, in his description of the Word. The application of the theory from orthodoxy to the ethnography of orthodoxy might be somewhat circular, but it can also be revealing.

(quoted) speaker. The second section on *The Genre* examines how code choice is linked to the ancient and the present through the use of particular codes for particular genres within the liturgy, observing a temporal progression as the liturgy is performed. Finally the section on *The Hearer* analyzes the role of code choice in transubstantiation and specifically engages the way in which indexicality, including pronoun and code use, brings otherworldly actors into the present moment.

The argument addresses what code choice in the performance of the liturgy *implicitly* reveals about the community's language ideology. This analysis of language ideologies as enacted, which may not be easily accessible for metacommentary, is not more important than explicit commentary from theologians or practitioners, but it is also not necessarily consistent with such metacommentary and can be revealing in its own right. Although the main argument of the chapter regards language ideology embedded within the performance itself, I will address how these implicit ideologies are in concert or conflict with language ideologies explicitly articulated by clergy and community members in a separate section.

I intend for this analysis of the liturgy as a 'detextualization' to engage with current discourses on the language ideologies of Christianity by exploring an alternative language ideology to the Protestant example usually taken to be representative for Christianity as a whole. As my opening with Pope Benedict indicates, from the standpoint of ethnography I see this language ideology to be crucial not only to Coptic definitions of ecumenical community (Christianity, writ large), but also as having a wider relevance for non-Protestant Christianity in general. The code switching of the performance mirrors in complex ways the ideologies of the text discussed in Chapter Four and is an integral part of creating the present and future Germany as a Christian space as discussed in Chapter Three and expanded further in Chapter Six.

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During my fieldwork I recorded many liturgies performed all over Germany and Europe. The following analysis is based upon a service I recorded in December 2007 at my primary fieldsite in Berlin. This service takes place during the fasting time prior to the Christmas feast on January 6th. As I entered the church, the language being spoken was Arabic. Soon after I took my place, a young woman standing to my left, who was also a native English speaker, leaned over and told me that we were “in the sixth hour.” The sixth hour is part of the *Agpeya*. (This is the Coptic book of canonical prayers, literally *The Hours*).

The previous chapter examined the main texts I used when observing the liturgy. By December of 2007, I was primarily using the text I called Text 4. In Text 4, the Sixth Hour is not translated into Arabic. It is provided entirely in German with the lines repeated by the Folk in transliterated Coptic with a German translation (see Figure 5.1).¹⁵⁴ The text makes different code choices than the community in Berlin. On December 6th, 2007, the prayers of the Sixth Hour were all in Arabic. Members of the folk are only required to repeat the Coptic responses, which are available in Text 4. However, insofar as the text is designed for deacons (see Chapter Four), it would not be useful at this point in the Berlin liturgy because of the absence of Arabic. It would also not help a non-Arabic speaker find their place and comprehend the liturgy.

¹⁵⁴ The exception is one line in the *Introduction to the Nicene Creed*, where the Arabic transliteration of “We call out to you, o Mother of Light” is written in parentheses.

**Ehre sei Gott in alle Ewigkeit, Amen.
Wir verbeugen uns vor dir, o Christus, zusammen mit deinem
guten Vater und dem Heiligen Geist, denn du bist
(gekommen/auferstanden/...) und hast uns erlöst.**

Christus unser Herr und Gott:
Du wurdest am sechsten Tage in der sechsten Stunde ans Kreuz
genagelt wegen der Sünde, die unser Vater Adam im Paradiese zu
begehen wagte. Zerreiße den Schuldschein unserer Sünden, Christus,
unser Gott und erlöse uns. Ich aber, will zu Gott rufen, der Herr wird
mich erhören. Vernimm, o Gott, mein Beten; verbirg dich nicht vor
meinem Flehen, wende dich mir zu und erhöre mich, am Abend, am
Morgen und am Mittag. Er hört mein Klagen, befreit mich, bringst
mein Leben in Sicherheit.

**Zoxa patrie ke ejo ke agio 'bnevmati
(Ehre sei dem Vater und dem Sohn und dem Heiligen Geist.)**

Jesus Christus, unser Gott: Du bist ans Kreuz genagelt worden in der
sechsten Stunde. Du hast die Sünde mit dem Holze vernichtet und den
Toten belebt durch deinen Tod: den Menschen, den du mit deinen
Händen geformt hast und der in der Sünde starb. Tilge unsre Qualen
durch dein heilbringendes und lebensspendendes Leiden und die
Nägel, an denen du gehangen hast.
Befreie unseren Verstand vor den Verlockungen teuflischer Werke
und weltlicher Begierden eingedenk deines himmlischen Gerichtes
gemäß deiner Barmherzigkeit.

**Ke enien ke aie ke estos e-ona stonie onon Amin
(Jetzt und alle Zeit und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. Amen.)**

Da wir keinerlei Grund noch Ausrede noch Entschuldigung für die
Menge unserer Sünden haben, so flehen wir durch dich, o Mutter

Gottes und Jungfrau, zu deinem leiblichen Sohne, denn siehe, mächtig
ist deine Fürsprache bei unserem Erlöser: Er nimmt sie an.
Du makellose Mutter, verwirf uns Sünder nicht in deiner Fürsprache
bei deinem Sohn, denn er ist barmherzig und mächtig, uns zu erlösen;
er litt für uns, um uns zu erretten. Wende uns eilends deine
Barmherzigkeit zu, denn wir sind sehr elend.
Hilf uns, Herr Gott, unser Heiland, um deines ruhmvollen Namens
willen. Du, Herr wirst uns erlösen und unsere Sünden vergeben ob
deines heiligen Namens.

**Ke enien ke aie ke estos e-ona stonie onon Amin
(Jetzt und alle Zeit und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. Amen.)**

Du hast Erlösung geschaffen vor den Augen aller Welt, Christus unser
Gott, als du deine reinen Hände auf dem Kreuz ausgestreckt hast.
Darum rufen alle Völker dir zu: "Ehre sei dir, o Herr!"

**Zoxa patrie ke ejo ke agio 'bnevmati
(Ehre sei dem Vater und dem Sohn und dem Heiligen Geist.)**

Wir huldigen deiner unbefleckten Person, du Gerechter, und bitten um
die Vergebung unserer Sünden, o Christus, unser Gott, denn dir hat es
gefallen, auf das Kreuz zu steigen, um deine Geschöpfe aus der
Sklaverei des Feindes zu befreien.
Wir rufen zu dir und danken dir, denn du hast alle mit Freunden
erfüllt, o Heiland, als du kamst, um der Welt zu helfen. Ehre sei dir, o
Herr!

**Ke enien ke aie ke estos e-ona stonie onon Amin
(Jetzt und alle Zeit und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. Amen.)**

Du bist voll der Gnade, Jungfrau, Mutter Gottes; wir preisen dich,
denn durch das Kreuz deines Sohnes ist die Hölle gestürzt und der

Figure 5.1: Text 4's Sixth Hour contains only German and transliterated Coptic

This piece of *The Agpeya* reinforces what we have already ascertained about the liturgical texts. Text 4 limits and sculpts the possible liturgy and exhibits a dispreference for Arabic. It also shows how the liturgy in action is not simply a reproduction of the liturgical text. This community makes particular code choices in accordance with their own language ideologies. More examples of these code choices will follow through the chapter. Text 4 often presents all three language options simultaneously without making a choice. In the performance of the liturgy, however, the speaker or speakers at any given moment *must make a choice*. This is a primary difference between the liturgy as written, the text, and the liturgy as spoken, the performance, which will be explored throughout this chapter. The performance can and does

contain all three languages in circulation, but at any given moment one of them must be the only language spoken.

What struck me when I first began analyzing the liturgy was how the text often left open the code choice, presenting three simultaneous columns, and it was unclear to me how a particular code was chosen by those performing the text, especially when it was a collective decision. I agree with John Gumperz (1982) that code switches are meaningful. They can reveal implicit language ideologies.

As someone striving to be socialized into the liturgy (see Chapter Four), I hoped to learn when these code switches took place so I could appropriately predict them during the service, just as I could predict when I should stand up once I knew that one always stands when the censer is in motion. Linguistic anthropologists may be divided on whether an understanding of code choice can actually provide *predictive* information. However, in my view the community with which I worked is not divided on this point. As shown in this and the preceding chapter, language choice in this community is necessarily future-oriented. It moves one towards the ideal church, the ecumene, and membership in Germany. I have explored this future orientation throughout the dissertation and will continue to develop this idea in Chapter Six.

The Speaker and the Confines of Code Choice

I set out to comprehend how one might understand *and predict* code choice in the liturgy. I use a Gumperzian approach insofar as I assume that code switches are meaningful. In Chapter Four, I established how this approach is warranted in this ethnographic situation, although it may not be warranted in all cases. The examples below are not exhaustive, but are illustrative.

First, I hypothesized that the language used depends on who the speaker is. Many excellent studies of participant role frameworks have shown how the folk categories of speaker and hearer should be questioned and considered within the broader context of social interaction. In ritual language it is well known that the various component of the "speaker role," as defined by Goffman (1974, 1981), may not be in alignment so that the animator of the utterance and the author of the utterance, for example, are two separate participants in the interaction.¹⁵⁵ For this analysis, however, I have followed Irvine (1996) in maintaining a primary set of participant roles "while deriving the more subtle types...from a notion of intersecting frames and dialogic relations" (1996:135). The complexity of the liturgy and the many, many shadow conversations (ibid.) in which it is engaged mean that there are no doubt other interesting participant frameworks available for analysis.

There are three ways I explore the idea of a speaker in the liturgy here. The first is the designated speaker. By this I mean the animator as a role, considering the three roles or categories that individual participants can inhabit during the service according to the folk ideology. These roles are P (priest), V (the folk) and D (the deacon/s).¹⁵⁶ Then I consider the individual speaker, such as Manassa who is the younger brother of Thomas, the college student with whom the priest simultaneously translates his sermons (see below). The individual speaker is still the animator, but the distinction I am making between designated speaker and individual

¹⁵⁵ For foundational discussions on this topic see Goffman (1974) and Hymes (1972) as well as Goffman's later work. Levinson (1988) expands Goffman's categories of universal participant roles significantly, but I follow Irvine (1996) in recognizing that the number of participant roles is potentially unlimited and therefore keep my expansion of the categories limited to what is revealing for (and in) the pieces of the interaction under analysis. I found Shoaps (2002) very helpful in determining the relevance of this topic for my case. She draws in particular on Du Bois (1986) for her understanding of participant structures relevant to religious language.

¹⁵⁶ These roles were described in detail in Chapter Four in the section *Liturgical Persons*.

speaker is similar to Schegloff's (1987) division between parties (roles and alignments) and participants (persons), as discussed in Irvine (1996).

Finally, I will consider the quoted speaker, as the liturgy often calls upon the participants to voice a biblical personage. In one sense the liturgy as a scripted performance is a double-voiced utterance in its entirety, whether the originator be taken as the Principle (divinity) or an Author (such as St. Basil). By double-voiced utterance I mean "the utterance whose form and significance presuppose a second voice – another party – whose utterances are invoked by the one at hand because they are partly imitated, quoted or argued against" (Irvine, 1996, drawing on Bakhtin, 1981, 1984, and Voloshinov, 1973). In the examples below I consider only voiced utterances which are framed as reported speech such that the deictic "I" is not the animator but a biblical personage. (That the animator and the author are not identical is not taken for granted, but a subject of debate I take up in this chapter.)

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Considering the designated speaker (speaker as role) leads to some very surprising observations. All three categories of speaker speak in all three languages on at least one occasion. The folk (V), however, speak in Germany on *only* one occasion in this December recording even though this is the category of speaker in which the majority of native German speakers are found. In contrast, the deacons (D) speak all three languages in a much more equal distribution than the other two categories. The priest (P) speaks the *most* German of anyone in the service. This is surprising in part because he is not a native German speaker and some Copts in the community suggest he is not a proficient non-native speaker.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ I was told when he first came to Germany as a priest he did not speak any German. Even during my fieldwork some members of the community admonished him that "*Abuna must learn German*" (Abuna muss Deutsch lernen.)

The priest (P) is the most likely speaker of German in the service. This is significant because the part of P is always enacted by the person with the most authority in the service. The voicer of “the words of the fathers” and the authoritative Word as Father (Abuna means “our father” in Arabic) is most likely to speak German, the language of the diaspora. When the part of P is enacted by the Bishop on his visits to Berlin, it is usually the case that *even more* German is spoken. It was when describing the Bishop’s services at the monastery that Daniel in Chapter Four said the service was "entirely in German."¹⁵⁸

All categories of speaker command all three languages, but the most authoritative speaker uses the diaspora language the most and the folk use it rarely, if ever. This shows that code choice is not determined by imagined, or perhaps real, competencies of speakers. From this single service we can see that no category of speaker is limited in their code choice. All three roles use all three languages. The next section explores more how code choice may be linked to competence when considering the language choices of individual speakers, but first I want to highlight how the speaker of the authoritative Word par excellence, the one whom Pope Benedict credited with creating the Church through their apostolic succession and ability to perform the eucharist, is also the one in this service most likely to initiate shifts into German. This is in line with the textual shift away from Arabic that I revealed in the last chapter. At the same time, all of the languages are used in the service by each category of speaker.

Exploring the speaker as a participant role is one way of looking at code-switching among speakers. Another way is to look at the language use of individual speakers, or what Schegloff (1987) called persons rather than parties. This may reveal another dimension of the way in which

¹⁵⁸ This is unlikely to be accurate from an analyst's point of view, but may accurately represent the intended effect given the language ideology.

the speaker determines code choice in the liturgy. As I have said, there are times when the youth of the church (males in the category of deacons) use German during the service. Chapter Four explored how the texts of the liturgy may facilitate a movement towards a Coptic and German service and away from the use of Arabic. I argue this movement towards German is connected to ideologies about youth language and comprehension.

| | | | |
|----|----|--|--|
| 8 | D: | Wer sitzt, stehe auf. | Whoever is sitting, stand up. |
| 9 | P: | Vor dir stehen die Engel, die Erzengel, die Häupter, die Herrschaften, die Throne, die Mächtigen und die Kräfte. | Before you stand the angels, the archangels, the principalities, the authorities, the thrones, the lordships and the powers. |
| 10 | D: | Schauet nach Osten. | Look towards the East. |
| 11 | P: | Du bist der, der umgeben ist von den Cherubim, die voller Augen sind, | You are the one, who is surrounded by the cherubim, who are full of eyes. |
| 12 | P: | والسيرافيم ذوو الستة أجنحة، يسبحون على الدوام بغير سكوت قائلين. | and the seraphim with their six wings, praising continuously without intermission, saying: |
| 13 | V: | الشاروبيم يسجدون لك . والسيرافيم بمجدونك صارخين قائلين: قدوس، قدوس، قدوس رب الصباؤوت، السماء والأرض مملو ءتان من مجدك الأقدس . | The cherubim pray to you and the seraphim honor you when they call out and say: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your holy glory. |

Figure 5.2: Worthy and just (transcript continues from Figure 5.9)

German may be used by deacons during the formal scripted parts of the liturgy such as when one young deacon (Figure 5.2, Line 8) says, “*Whoever is sitting, stand up.*” This initiates a code-switch from Arabic that the Priest then follows in his next turn of talk (Line 9). German may also be used by deacons in the less structured or seasonally structured portions of the service. One of the readings from the Evangelists, the apostles to whom the first four gospels of the New Testament are attributed, is read by Manassa who is a fluent German speaker. This use of German is motivated by his language competence, as it may have been for the deacon above as well. The text of the gospel verses is only available to the deacons in Arabic with Arabic

script or German with German script. Manassa speaks Arabic, but cannot read it, so if he reads Bible verses from the texts provided they will be in German.

This is one way the code choice is limited by the individual speaker and by competence. There is an element of necessity to Manassa's language choice, but as we have seen, necessity is also negotiable. Memorization or repetition without comprehension would also be possible. If it was necessary to read them in another language, the Bible verses could always be transliterated, as they are in Text 4. Alternatively, as Sharif hoped in his disapproval of transliterating Coptic in the liturgical texts, learning the other scripts might have become a goal. There are other deacons available who could read the text in Arabic and in fact sometimes the texts are read in both German and Arabic, showing that the use of German is a choice. In the section *Scripture* below, I will also reframe this choice as a way of bringing the past into the present in the liturgy.

Though competence and comprehension may be factors in code-choice, they limit but do not definitively constrain it. The same young deacon who says, (Figure 5.2, Line 8) "*Whoever is sitting, stand up.*" says five minutes earlier (Figure 5.3, Line 2) in the same service "Stand up to pray." in Coptic. Another older deacon follows this in the next turn of talk with Arabic and directs the congregation (Figure 5.3, Line 8) "**Pray for complete peace, for love and for the pure apostolic kisses.**" In these examples one young deacon uses multiple languages and the deacons (as one role) use all three languages to give directions to the folk.

As I discuss in the section of *Discourses on the Liturgy* below, there is an ideology of code accommodation to audience members in the diaspora community. In keeping with this explicit ideology, I believe more German was used when more of the audience were native German speakers, especially those classified as guests. In addition, one might expect a directive such as "Stand up" to be in German since the native German speakers, less well-socialized into

the liturgy, might especially need it (see Chapter Four). One could also argue that the examples in the previous section of the person inhabiting the role of priest (P) speaking the most German indicate that the recipient determines code choice. The priest addresses the folk and therefore speaks the most German. While this may be a factor in code choice, we can see from the examples in Figures 5.2 and 5.3 that directives can be in all three of the languages of the diaspora community. Nevertheless, in the section entitled *The Hearer* below I will discuss the role of the hearer in determining code choice and argue that the hearer is just as important in understanding how the liturgy works and how code-switching in the liturgy works as the role of speaker.

•••

A final way I consider confines of code choice through the speaker is to consider the quoted speaker. A liturgical performance is always quotational, as Voloshinov (1973) and Bakhtin (1981) recognized. It is “bringing forth the voices of the fathers” (Kroskrity, 2009). The liturgy is recited at times as telling a third person story. “He *thanked*” (Figure 5.4, Line 5). At times it is a story told in the second person as the priest describes the events to God, “*You have created heaven, earth, the water and everything within them*” (Figure 5.9, Line 6). In addition, at times the story is told in the reported speech of the first person (Figure 5.5, Line 13).

| | | | |
|---|----|---|--|
| 1 | P: | ΩΛΗΛ | Pray. |
| 2 | D: | Επι προσευχη σταθητε | Stand up to pray. |
| 3 | P: | ιρηνη [πασι] | Peace [be with you]. |
| 4 | V: | κε τω πνευματι σου | And with your spirit. |
| 5 | P: | با الله العظيم الابدي الذي جبل الانسان على غير فساد | O God, the great and eternal, you who created mankind without corruption - |
| 6 | P: | Den Tod, der in die Welt durch den Neid des Satans kam, hast du zerstört durch die lebensspendende Erscheinung deines eingeborenen Sohnes, unseres Herrn, unseres Gottes und Erlösers Jesus Christus. Du hast die Erde mit deinem himmlischen Frieden erfüllt. Dafür preisen dich die Engelscharen, indem sie sprechen: | Death, which came into the world through the envy of Satan, you have destroyed through the life-saving manifestation of your only-begotten son, our Lord, our God and Savior Jesus Christ. You have filled the earth with your heavenly peace. For that the hosts of angels praise you saying: |
| 7 | P: | المجد لله في الاعالي وعلى الارض السلام وفي الناس المسرة | Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and goodwill towards men. |
| 8 | D: | صلوا من اجل السلام الكامل و المحبة و القبلاط الطاهرة الرسولية | Pray for complete peace, for love and for the pure apostolic kisses. |

Figure 5.3: The Prayer of Reconciliation

Compelling code-switches take place when voices are quoted in the first person during the service. For example, in *The Prayer of Reconciliation*, of which Figure 5.3 is one piece, the priest is telling God in the second person what he has accomplished through the crucifixion of his only son. He begins this narrative in Arabic (Figure 5.3, Line 5) and then switches into

German (Figure 5.3, Line 6) during his turn of talk. It is not clear what motivates the switch into German, but he then switches back into Arabic as he reports the speech of the angels (Figure 5.3, Line 7). "*Therefore the hosts of angels praise you when they say: **Glory to God on high and on earth, peace and goodwill to men.***"

The category of speaker (P, D or V) does not define code choice, but the speaker with the highest authority in the liturgy tends to speak the most German. The individual speaker also does not define code choice but the language competence of the deacons may limit it and facilitate a shift away from Arabic. In Figure 5.3 the voices of the angels initiate a shift into Arabic. In Chapters Two and Four we have seen a devaluing of Arabic in the diaspora, but in this example the angels, when their speech is reported, are speaking Arabic.

| | | | |
|----|------|---|---|
| 1 | P: | و وضع لنا هذا السر العظيم الذي التقوى . لأنه فيما هو راسم أن يسلم نفسه للموت عن حياة العالم . | He set before us this great sacrament of piety because he agreed to give himself up to death for the life of the world. |
| 2 | V: | نؤمن . | We believe [+...]. |
| 3 | P: | أخذ خبزاً عاى يديه الطاهرتين اللتين بلا غيب و لا دنس الصوناويتين الخبيبتين . | He took bread in his holy hands which are spotless, undefiled, blessed and life-giving. |
| 4 | V: | نؤمن أن هذا هو بالحقيقة، آمين . | We believe that this is the truth. Amen. |
| 5 | P: | Er blickte hinauf zum Himmel, zu dir, o Gott, seinem Vater und unser aller Herrn. Er dankte. | He looked up to heaven, to you, O God, his father and the Lord of everyone. He thanked. |
| 6 | D&V: | آمين . | Amen. |
| 7 | P: | Er segnete es. | He blessed it. |
| 8 | D&V: | آمين . | Amen. |
| 9 | P: | Und heiligte es. | He sanctified it. |
| 10 | D&V: | آمين . | Amen. |
| 11 | V: | πιστευομεν κε ομολογομεν κε Δοξαζομεν. | We believe and we acknowledge and we praise. |

Figure 5.4: The Preparation of the Bread

A similar code-switch happens again five minutes later in the same service. The priest is telling the story of the last supper in *The Preparation* (Figure 5.4). He begins the story in third person in Arabic. “**He set before us this great sacrament of piety. Because he agreed to give himself up to death for the life of the world. (V: We believe +.) He took bread in his hands, which are spotless, undefiled, blessed and life-giving. (V: We believe that this is the truth. Amen.)**” Then there is a code-switch to German.. “*He looked up to heaven, to you, O God, his father and our Lord. He thanked.*” (D&V: Amen.¹⁵⁹) “*He blessed it.*” (D&V: Amen.) “*And sanctified it.*” (D&V: Amen.) (V: We believe, we acknowledge, we praise.¹⁶⁰) “*He...he divided and gave it to each of the holy disciples and true apostles and said*”. (Figure 5.5, Line 12)

| | | | |
|----|----|--|---|
| 12 | P: | ⲁⲓ... Er teilte und gab es seinen heiligen Jüngern und reinen Aposteln und sprach: | He divided it and gave it to his holy disciples and true apostles and said: |
| 13 | P: | خذوا كلوا منه كلكم، لأن هذا هو جدي، الذي تقسم عنكم وعن كثيرين يعطى لمغفرة الخطايا. هذا اصنعوه لذكري. | Take it and everyone eat from it, because this is my body, which for you and for many will be broken for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in my memory. |
| 14 | V: | هذا هو بالحقيقة، امين. | This is the truth. Amen. |

Figure 5.5: The Preparation of the Bread (continued)

This is the point in the text where the switch into Arabic happens again (Figure 5.5, Line 13). The priest speaks the words of Jesus at the last supper in Arabic. “**Take it and everyone eat from it, because this is my body, which for you and for many will be broken for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in my memory.**” Voicing the original utterance from the Biblical

¹⁵⁹ This Amen does not occur in German. It is not clear whether it is intended to be in Arabic or Coptic since Copts pronounce the word identically in both languages. It is bivalent, to use Woolard’s (1998) term, but German is excluded from the multivalency of the word. Amen is never said in German during this recording of the liturgy.

¹⁶⁰ The folk speak in Coptic in Figure 5.4, Line 11. In the performance Abuna begins to follow their switch into Coptic in Line 12, but starts again in German.

text on which the eucharist is based, the priest uses not Coptic, ostensibly the ancient language of the Church, but Arabic. He *initiates* a switch into Arabic from German, as one might do if one were quoting speech in the original language in which it was spoken.

| | | | |
|----|------|--|---|
| 1 | P: | παρητη ον πικεαωοτ μενενα πιδιπμον αφοοττ εβολζεν ογηρη νεμ ογμωογ. | Similarly in the chalice after the supper, he mixed wine and water. |
| 2 | P: | Er dankte. | He thanked. |
| 3 | D&V: | آمين . | Amen. |
| 4 | P: | وباركها . | He blessed it. |
| 5 | D&V: | آمين . | Amen. |
| 6 | P: | وقدسها . | He sanctified it. |
| 7 | D&V: | آمين . | Amen. |
| 8 | V: | وأيضاً نؤمن ونعترف ونمجد . | And once again we believe and we acknowledge and we praise. |
| 9 | P: | αφχεμτη αφτηιφ ον ννηετε νογφ ñαγιος ñμαθητης ογορ ñαποστολος εθογав εφχω ñμος | He tasted it and gave it as well to his holy disciples and his pure apostles and said to them: |
| 10 | P: | خذوا اشربوا منها كلكم لأن هذا هو دمي الذي للعهد الجديد الذي يسفك عنكم وعن كثيرين يُعطى لمغفرة الخطايا، هذا اصنعه لذكري . | Take this and everyone drink from it because this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many. It is given for the remission of sins. Do this in remembrance of me. |
| 11 | V: | هذا هو أيضاً بالحقيقة، أمين . | This is also the truth. Amen. |

Figure 5.6: The Preparation of the Wine

This code-switch is made more compelling when it happens a second time as *The Preparation* continues (Figure 5.6, Line 4). The priest begins to tell the second half of this narrative and this time he begins in Coptic: “Similarly in the chalice after the supper, he mixed wine and water.” Then he makes a code-switch into German (Figure 5.6, Line 2), mirroring the switch from the last segment (Figure 5.4, Line 5): “*He thanked.*” (D&V: **Amen.**) This code-switch is not sustained, however. Unlike in the parallel narrative of the bread, Abuna switches into Arabic in Figure 5.6, Line 4. “**He blessed it.**” (D&V: **Amen**) “**He sanctified it.**” (D&V:

Amen. V: **And once again we believe and we acknowledge and we praise.**) The priest then continues this parallel narrative in Coptic in Figure 5.6, Line 9. “He tasted there from and gave it also to his holy disciples and his true apostles and said to them:” As with the narrative of the bread, the priest switches into Arabic for the reported speech of Jesus. “**Take this and everyone drink from it because this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many. It is given for the remission of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.**” The switch into Arabic is maintained for the remainder of *The Preparation*.¹⁶¹

Other sections of this chapter and the previous ones have tended to highlight the negative portrayals of Arabic voiced by members of the community and the way in which both the text and the performance of the liturgy privilege German in opposition to Arabic. And yet here, *Jesus* speaks in Arabic. These are the ancient words at the center of the eucharist (e.g., 1 Corinthians 11:23-24) and here they are voiced not in Coptic (styled as the language of Ancient Christianity) or in German (the language of the future of the diaspora), but in Arabic, the very language from which the community expects to shift and from which they participate in shifting.

This section has explored the code-switching of speakers variously defined. I have shown how categories of speakers (roles), as well as individual speakers (persons), all code-switch across the three languages of the liturgy. The last example, which portrays Jesus as not code-

¹⁶¹ In the section on *The Hearer* (see below) I engage Michael Silverstein's (2004a) ideas on the eucharist in order to highlight some insights into Christian language ideologies that may be missed by a focus on Protestant Christianity as Christianity par excellence. In reference to that later discussion I note that these moments when the priest voices Jesus and his pronouncements at the last supper are *not* the moments when the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood in the Coptic liturgy. The section that follows this one is a call to God to transform those materials into “his holy body” and “his delicious blood.” The Coptic community does not take communion until almost half an hour after this story is narrated. I suggest below that to focus on this voicing misses the dialogic nature of this transformation, and thus a central piece of language as social action, which is the appearance of Christ in the liturgy *as* consumed body and blood.

switching in the way that the community does, provides a counterexample to the ideology that Arabic is not valued in the community. It also portrays a speaker who does not code-switch with the fluidity of other members of the community. Jesus speaks Arabic and so do the angels. While Jesus is a quoted speaker and his quoted voice is embedded within a liturgy, which is in a sense all quotational, he is also one who is arguably undeniably present. The liturgy brings the ancient into the present and does this in part through code-switching from Coptic, through Arabic, to German. The voicing of Jesus will be taken up again in the final section of the chapter.

Code-Switching Genres: Scripture, Sermon and Hymn

In Chapter Four and in the beginning of this chapter, I introduced the idea that the liturgy as text is ‘carried hither’ in the performance of the text. By this I mean that it is brought into the present moment and given a present relevance for Copts. The eternal now is connected to the mundane now, so to speak. This may be part of an explicit theology, but in this analysis I show its creation implicitly through the de-textualization of the liturgy itself. The liturgy is embedded in the everyday partly through code choice and the linking of code choice to indexicality. The above section on the quoted speaker, showing Jesus and the angels speaking not Coptic but Arabic, is an example of this, which will be examined further below. The following section addresses the embedding in the everyday through genres of the liturgy such as scripture, sermon and hymn.

• *Scripture*

Scripture readings are designated by the liturgical calendar and change at every service. At this December service, the scripture verses are about Elizabeth’s revelation that she is

pregnant in her old age and Mary's revelation that she is carrying the Son of God.¹⁶² These scriptures describe the events leading up to Christ's birth just as the year's calendar is leading up to Christmas on January 6th. The scriptural texts follow a cyclical pattern that maps the stories of the Bible onto the calendar year.

As it is cyclical and not always identical, the scripture is a break in the genre of the authoritative Word (the fixed liturgy). This may be startling as the Biblical Word is often thought of as the authoritative word par excellence. In Chapter Four I challenged the reader to think of the liturgy as an equivalent Word in this sense, a textual foundation for Christianity. The liturgy as performance provides a frame for the Biblical Word and for the bringing of the past into the present. The reading about Mary and Elizabeth's pregnancies as Christmas approaches creates a temporal overlap with the original event of Christ's birth. Scripture reading is one area where the liturgy is 'carried hither' through the use of German (Kroskrity, 2009).

Viewing the genre of scripture in this way, one can re-frame the deacons' linguistic competence and their constrained choice to read scriptures in German (see above). Scriptures are a moment of bringing the past into the present, which is done through German and Arabic rather than Coptic. Considering Jesus' words in the scriptural genre might also offer a richer understanding of Jesus speaking in Arabic in the liturgy (Figure 5.5, Line 13 and Figure 5.6, Line 10). As his words are scriptural, they are not (only) the most ancient moment in the liturgy, but a point in the liturgy when the past is carried into the present. If one thinks of Jesus' words as part of the scriptural genre, one would never expect them to be in Coptic because scriptures are never

¹⁶² Mary and Elizabeth are friends and Mary goes to Elizabeth's house to congratulate her on the good news. Elizabeth eventually gives birth to John the Baptist who baptizes Jesus (Luke 1:39-56).

read in Coptic. Scriptures are in a category of their own as being partly scripted, but also having a fluidity attached to daily life, the seasons, and the circle of the year.

• *Sermon*

In the church in Berlin the sermon follows directly from the scripture readings and elaborates upon them. The sermon is one of the only parts of the liturgy that is not scripted, even in a cyclical sense.¹⁶³ In this December service the sermon follows from and acts as an analysis of the Biblical story. The sermon describes, two weeks before Christmas, the appearance of the Angel Gabriel to Mary and Elizabeth and how each responded differently, Elizabeth with questions and doubt and Mary with faith and comfort. It further brings the ancient, even eternal, text into the present moment for the folk, describing it in terms of their own (possible) journeys of faith, doubt, fasting and the approaching feast of the birth of Christ. The sermon ends with a suggestion to the folk that they begin to fast now if they have not already done so in the days leading up to Christmas. The sermon as a genre brings the liturgy into the present moment through clarification of the Bible stories and by connecting these stories to the moral imperatives of the community (encouraging people to fast, to have faith, to avoid lying etc.).

In the community in Berlin the sermon is always given in Arabic. It is never given in Coptic. The first time I heard a sermon in German was when I visited Hanover, another community that the priest oversees. During my first service there a senior man in the community translated the sermon into German. In Hanover services are given in a small Protestant chapel complete with a wooden pulpit at the top of a winding staircase. In this instance, the priest first

¹⁶³ It is possible given the artful narrative construction of the sermon that it is prepared as a text in advance, but the performance does not give any hint of this previous textual creation, if it exists, and, as the reader will see, the sermon is closely linked to the present struggles of the community.

gave the sermon in Arabic and then it was translated into German by a member of the folk, standing in the pulpit and reading from a text.

As my fieldwork continued, the sermon began to be translated into German in Berlin. The translation practices in Berlin were different, however. On this December day, Abuna delivered the sermon in Arabic and a 19-year-old university student translated the sermon into German. The sermon opened with a formulaic greeting to the community and proceeded to situate the preceding Bible verse and the events of ancient Christianity within the present moment. I argue that the sermon is a principle moment where the liturgy is brought into the present, along with communion, and that giving it in Egyptian Arabic¹⁶⁴ and German links these codes to the coming of Christ in both cases and the present and future of the community.

بسم الله والابن والروح المقدس هناك وحدة ابن ..

(pious formula)

(احنا نسمى التقدير احنا)... في شهر, شهر كياك اللي في آخر الشهر آخر الشهر حيجي ميلاد (مياليف) المخلص

كلنا عارفين وكلنا سامعين واحنا عندنا ... ايه وعندنا (أغاني) بنشوف
بنشوف (التسابيح) والكنيسة كلها بتسبح الليل كله الكنيسة تبقى سهرانه
الليل كله في (الوصف في الوصف) كل كل كنيسة بتبقى سهرانة وتسبح
تمجد العذراء وتمجد السيد المسيح (للفوائد) منها وتنتظر ميلاد السيد المسيح
الشهر كله الكنيسة تبقى سهرانة للصباح (هسه) الكنيسة كلها (في كل مكان
للصباح...الشغل..) التسابيح ... وكل كل التماجيد ... كل كنيسة تبقى
سهرانة منتظرة منتظرة (مجيب...) عشان كذه الشهر كياك كذه الكنيسة
قسمت اربع اسابيع اربع أحاد للأحد الاول للأحد للأول اللي هو فيه إشارة
الملاك لذكريا

Figure 5.7a: A Transcription of the Arabic sermon on December 23, 2007

¹⁶⁴ In this chapter I talk only about Arabic as a unity. Since Arabic has a strong diglossic language ideology, it is worth pointing out that the priest delivers this sermon in the Egyptian dialect of Arabic. This is unusual and inspired commentary from members of the community in Berlin and those non-Copts who helped me transcribe and translate the sermon.

Abuna: In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, there is one (son... pious formulae) (...) We are in the month, the month Koiak, in which at the end of the month, the end of the month will come the birth of the Savior. All of us know and all of us are listening, and we have (...), and we have (songs). We (will) see, we will see the (...). And the entire church glorifies all night long. The church will stay awake all night long in (describing, in describing all), all of the church will stay up all night long, glorifying and praising the Virgin and praising Christ for its benefits [i.e. the benefits of glorifying], and will wait the birth of Christ all month long. The church will stay up until the morning. (This) church, all of it (in every place, until the morning, working....) for the praises and all of the glorifications (...) each church remains staying up, waiting, waiting (...) As a result of this, this month of Koiak, this one, the church divided up four weeks, four Sundays. For the first Sunday, for the first Sunday, this is the one in which was the sign of the angel to Zachariah.

Figure 5.7b: A Translation of the Arabic sermon on December 23, 2007

The translation of Thomas's version of this sermon is given in Figure 5.8.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Thomas: Im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes, ???, Amen. Herzlichen Glückwunsch liebe [Geschwister?]. Wir befinden uns im Monat Koiak. Dieser Monat ist sehr wertvoll für die Kirche, denn es ist die Vorbereitung auf die Geburt Jesus Christus. und viele von euch haben viele , äh, christliche[n] Kanäle und in diesen Kanälen sieht man, daß die Kirche den ganzen Tag, den ganzen, den ganzen Monat [mit Leben? Beten?] verbringt [some audience members: laughter] und die beiden der, äh, Mutter Jungfrau Maria und Jesus Christus, äh, werden in der Kirche erwartet. Und dieser Monat Koiak wird in vier, äh, Schritten praktisch unterteilt und der ... der erste ... in der ersten Woche ist das so, daß der Engel Zacharias eine freundliche Nachricht überbringt.</p> | <p>Thomas: In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, ???, Amen. Best wishes, dear brethren. We find ourselves in the month Koiak. This month is very meaningful for the church, because it is the preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ. And many of you have many, um, Christian [television?] channels and in these channels one can see that the church occupies the whole day, the whole, the whole month with prayer(?) [some of the audience laughs] and the pair, um, the Virgin Mother Maria and Jesus Christ, um, are awaited in the church. And this month Koiak is divided essentially into four, um, parts and the... the first... in the first week it's the case that the angel brings Zacharias a happy message.</p> |
|---|---|

Figure 5.8: A German Translation of the Sermon on December 23rd, 2007

The Arabic sermon and its German translation have some compelling differences, but I will first focus on their similarities. In both languages “we,” the present members of the

community, find ourselves in the Coptic month of Koiak. As Abuna describes it “**The church...will await the birth of Christ all month long.**” Thomas describes how “[i]t is the preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ.” Both the priest and his translator use the present tense with no mention of a temporal disjunction between the original moment of birth and the upcoming celebration. In both versions members are told the whole month is occupied with praising, songs, glorifying (hymns) and prayer.¹⁶⁵ Abuna describes how “[**This**] church, all of it, (in every place, until the morning, working...) for the praises and all the glorifications [inaudible] each church remains, staying up, waiting, waiting [inaudible].” Thomas says in the present tense, “[T]he Virgin Mother Maria and Jesus Christ, um, are awaited in the church.”¹⁶⁶ In both cases the arrival is imminent. The Bible verse describing the angel's visit to Zacharias is not something that happened in a distant past, but is brought into the present in this narrative. It is brought even further into the present in Thomas’ translation. The community is praising, singing, and praying as an act to prepare for the arrival of Jesus in the church. He is not remembered in the past, but awaited in the future. Thomas’ German translation adds Mary to the awaited holy persons.

Thomas’ translation was not prepared in advance. First, the priest would speak into the microphone at the podium for a few minutes and then Thomas would take the microphone and translate what had been shared with the folk into German. I suggest that using Arabic and German for the scriptures and sermon links these languages to the present and vice versa.

¹⁶⁵ Abuna repeats the necessary behaviors of the month of Koiak, especially glorifying, which can also mean hymns. Thomas glosses this glorifying and praising as praying.

¹⁶⁶ Thomas adds the appellation “*Mother Maria*” to the “*Virgin*,” which Abuna uses. Thomas’ description is more characteristic of the way she is described in Germany where in Egypt she is usually called simply the Virgin. I am indebted to Heather Sweetser for drawing my attention to this contrast. See Heo (2012) for a discussion of Coptic Christianity and apparitions of the Virgin in Egypt.

Through pronouns, present tense usage, and characterizations of future activity as identical with past activity the sermon makes present the ancient and code becomes another resource to perform this continuity.

I argue in this chapter that the performance of the liturgy creates both the time and the space of the church. In the opening to his sermon Abuna works to construct this church as both global and particular. “**All of us know and all of us are listening**” to the singing and praising of the church. “**And the entire church glorifies all night long.**” Abuna describes the celebration of Christmas, which brings the month of Koiak to an end, and how it will take place in the middle of the night. This distinguishes the church from many other branches of Christianity, which do not follow the Coptic calendar or stay up until the early hours of the morning on January 6th to celebrate the birth of Christ. “**The church will stay up until the morning.**” Abuna is careful to describe the church as a unity “**(this) church, all of it (in every place)**” not only as the singular church in Berlin. At the same time he draws attention to how “**each church remains staying up, waiting, waiting**” to accentuate how those in Berlin will be participating in the same ritual practices as the rest of the global church community. He alludes to Coptic Christian media tying this church together as a unity, describing what “**all of us**” are seeing and listening to.¹⁶⁷ The practices of praising, glorifying and singing connect the global Coptic church.

Thomas translates the priest’s poetic articulation of the experience of being a global church reinforced through global media thus: “*And many of you have many, um, Christian [television/media] channels and in these channels one can see that the church occupies the whole day, the whole, the whole month with prayer(?)*.” He does not take up Abuna’s effort to envelope the members of the church in Berlin into a global church participating in a set of ritual

¹⁶⁷ This allusion is so subtle that it’s not clear from the transcript that this is what he is alluding to. Upon reflection Thomas’ translation seems to reveal the intended referent.

practices that last all month long and culminate in Christ's birth in every place.¹⁶⁸ His use of "*the church*" is ambiguous in time and space. It is distant in that the church and the prayer it participates in happens on television. He also challenges the unity Abuna constructs through his choice of pronouns. Instead of describing what "**all of us**" are seeing, he describes what "*many of you*" are seeing, separating himself from those who listen to and watch Coptic media channels.

The process of translation in the liturgy, between Abuna and Thomas, brings the liturgy even further into the present moment and links German to the present and the future of the church. The interpretive leap Thomas makes of Abuna's poetic construction of the global church and the license he takes with his own concrete depiction of watching Coptic media evokes laughter. Abuna never explicitly mentions watching religious television in the sections of the sermon we were able to transcribe, but even those who do not speak both languages or understand his alteration to the sermon may find the mention of these channels in a sermon funny. This is one example of how translation contributes to the circulation of authorship and authority throughout the community. The laughter among the folk brings the interpretation further into the community. Translation provides for a kind of speech communion, to use Bakhtin's (1986:67) phrasing. This is a process of circulating language similar to the circulation of texts described in Chapter Four and the circulation of bread and wine during communion.

• *Hymns*

Genre constrains code choice in the liturgy. I suggest the genres of scripture reading and the sermon, as they are not fixed sections of the liturgy, bring the liturgy into the present,

¹⁶⁸ Thomas' failure to take up the priest's artful construction of the global church is an example of the tensions between the notions of Coptic diaspora and Coptic church, which are not identical in practice but may be actively constructed as identical, especially by members of the church hierarchy. For Abuna, the singular church is connected to the global church in every place. Abuna is describing the rituals of glorification and waiting, which construct the church for him and, he argues, for the community as a whole.

bringing it hither (Kroskrity, 2009). It is telling that they contain more German than other parts of the service.¹⁶⁹ Bringing the liturgy into the congregation, creating a moment when the Biblical Word becomes real and temporally present, is done (or ideally done) in German. I suggested in Chapter Four this is in part due to the real or imagined competencies of various participants in the liturgy. One needs a speaker such as Thomas, who can simultaneously translate Arabic into fluent German, to translate the priest's sermon in the moment of the liturgy. One needs deacons who cannot read Arabic and texts available in German script to bring the scripture readings into German. One may imagine, as Sharif did in his interview in Chapter Four (Figure 4.10), that there is a folk who does not understand Arabic and needs German in order to be able to comprehend the liturgy. At the same time, these code-switches are driven by what I suggested in Chapter Four is an underlying hope to bring the liturgy into the diaspora, to the youth, into German and ultimately to eliminate Arabic.¹⁷⁰

Accompanying this tendency for German to appear in particularly flexible genres of the liturgy is a tendency for *more* German to appear as the liturgy proceeds. It was over 43 minutes into the recording under analysis that German was first spoken *by anyone*. The priest initiates the first code switch into German in the fixed part of the liturgy directly before the readings of the scriptures I discussed above. Thus the majority of the German used in the service is found in the section entitled *The Eucharist*. This is the section of the liturgy that I encouraged the reader to

¹⁶⁹ Early in this chapter I noted that in the performance of the liturgy, unlike in the texts I examined in Chapter Four, performers must choose one language at any given moment. The sermon and the scriptures are also the only two places in the liturgy that can be repeated. This is a feature of their flexibility, which I argue makes them more amenable to bringing the liturgy into interaction. It also may make these genres more likely to be in German.

¹⁷⁰ As I showed in Chapter Two and Chapter Four, not everyone in the community is in agreement that this language shift should take place or should take place in this way. For example, Luca who I described teaching his children Arabic in Chapter Two, said that he wished the liturgy could be given in Coptic or Arabic or German on different days and then each person could decide in which language they wished to attend the liturgy.

imagine as the pivotal point of the liturgy when the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. In the remaining section of this chapter I will argue that this ceremonial achievement is the ultimate moment of bringing hither the ancient text into the present time and space of the church in Berlin. Given the connection between German use and the present moment, it makes sense (theoretically and even theologically) that more and more German would be spoken leading up to the transformation of the eucharist. Using German as this transformation takes place reinforces, and is reinforced through, the ideology that German is a language of the diaspora and the present.

The reader may recall from Chapter Four that in the introduction to the liturgy of Text 4 the translators commented that some hymns had not been translated into Arabic although most of the text was written in a tripartite division between the three languages. Those who compiled the text explained that only Coptic and German were used in these sections because they had been read in Coptic since ancient times and continued to be sung in that language so Arabic was unnecessary. In this December service all of these hymns are sung in Coptic. They also occur relatively early in the liturgy. They are sung before the gospels are read, before the sermon is preached, and before the section of the liturgy called *The Eucharist* is carried out.

The only hymns that are not sung in Coptic occur at the end of the liturgy when the communion bread is being passed out. Psalm 150 and hymns following it are sung in Arabic. As Christ is made present in the community through the eucharist and communion, the hymns also transition from the ancient language of the church to Arabic, the language of Jesus' reported speech. The lack of German in the hymns exemplifies how the liturgy is a progression out of Coptic, the ancient language, and into Arabic. This shift accompanies the increasing use of German. I argue in this chapter that the liturgy is a process of bringing the most ancient

definitional moment(s) of the church into the present, in a sense creating the present church. The temporal progression of the liturgy is mapped onto a linguistic progression, a grounding in Coptic transitioning through Arabic and into German.

The Hearer: Pronouns and Code-Switching into the Present

Throughout this chapter I have been engaging with the idea that the liturgy is a type of Bakhtinian ritual discourse. As Bakhtin described it, “The authoritative word is hierarchically higher. It is, so to speak, the words of the fathers. Its authority was already acknowledged in the past. It is a prior discourse” (Bakhtin, 1981:342, cited in Kroskrity, 2009:48). I hoped to explore the liturgy in the same way in which Kroskrity (2009) uses Bakhtin to elucidate Tewan storyteller narratives. In that case,

they know that speaking the past into the present requires the agility to connect both with ancestral discourse and with the needs and interests of children and grandchildren. They need to ‘carry’ their stories ‘here.’ (Kroskrity, 2009:48).¹⁷¹

By examining the ritual of the eucharist in this way, I am offering an alternative portrait of this central ritual of Christianity to the one that Michael Silverstein offers in his 2004 discussion of the eucharist and its connection to interactive talk. In this article, Silverstein uses the eucharist as the example par excellence of an explicit ritual, one that is entirely a Bakhtinian prior discourse, a script in contrast to the transcript of spontaneous interaction.¹⁷² He places it at

¹⁷¹ There are several important differences between the case of the Coptic liturgy and the Tewan storytellers that Kroskrity is examining. One is that Kroskrity is examining stories that are told outside of the Kiva, rather than the Tewa ritual stories which are kept secret and performed by the ritual masters of the community. The Tewa stories carrying the words of the fathers into the present are secondary texts built upon primary ritual knowledge. In contrast, the Coptic liturgy is the primary ritual of the church community performed by the hierarchically highest person in the category of priest who is present at the time.

¹⁷² Silverstein’s primary interest is in the ritual-like interactional moments of the transcript as a performed text. “When we understand ritual text, we understand the principles underlying the way in which every interactional text...mobilizes cultural signs to discursive effect”

the polar extreme to everyday conversation. (Silverstein, 2004a:621). In contrast, my ethnographic approach to the liturgy shows how the Coptic liturgy, even that emblematic extreme of ritual efficacy par excellence, engages with and is de-textualized to become part of “everyday conversational language games” (ibid.).¹⁷³ This is part of a larger discourse on texts and contextualization in linguistic anthropology.

Silverstein’s understanding of the eucharist as text rather than text-in-context (Silverstein, 2004a:627) is consistent with the view of my interlocutors from Chapter Four who did not see a need to record the liturgy because it is all written in books. The idea of eucharist ritual as text is also prevalent both in linguistic anthropology and folk ideologies. In Chapter Five the script comes alive, becoming text-in-context, becoming the *interaction ritual* par excellence. A primary way this is accomplished is through the linguistic resources of indexicality. I argue it is also accomplished through the resource of code-switching, which brings the prior discourse into the here-and-now.

The above discussion of how the speaker and the genre constrain code choice has enabled us to see several trends in code-switching and language choice in the liturgy. However, there is a fuller picture of the influences on code choice or the liturgy as an ‘interaction ritual.’ I have focused primarily on the categories of speakers, or roles, defined in the text and clerical hierarchy of the liturgy. Now I would like to explore the more implicit category of hearer. Who

(2004a:625). Silverstein may at times reify rather than complicate the distinction between non-scripted interaction and ritual, but by taking up Goffman’s (1967) term ‘interaction ritual’ he recognizes some of their similarities, based in interaction. For him, the transcript becomes no less a script than the script of the liturgy.

¹⁷³ I suggest that this is not just a theoretical truism, as Voloshinov (1973) might find it, but a fact of vital importance to the community. The ancient must be brought into the everyday in order to create, in the words of the community’s priest “*a living community*” (ein lebendige Gemeinde).

are those who perform the liturgy speaking to, in what ways, and in which languages? And how do they respond?¹⁷⁴

In his analysis of the liturgy, which presents a similar (ecumenically-oriented) argument to the Catholic doctrine which opened the chapter, Silverstein describes how the priest stands to the congregation as Jesus to the Apostles in the partaking of the eucharist (priest : congregation :: Jesus : Apostles). Drawing on a version of the voiced utterances in Figure 5.5 (Line 13) and Figure 5.6 (Line 10), Silverstein argues that this voicing of the words spoken at “the fateful Passover Seder that constitutes, by belief, actually the first or authorizing occasion of the ritual in which the officiant and congregants are participating in an unbroken [indexical] chain” (2004a:626) is such that the priest *as Jesus* transforms the bread and wine. I agree that there is a scriptural voicing of Jesus at that point in the liturgy. I drew on this interpretation of the utterance when discussing Jesus’ Arabic as an index of the scriptural genre above. I find Silverstein’s discussion very valuable in that he defines the eucharist as a linguistic transformation in conversation. However, I suggest it is not this voicing, where the priest may be seen as the animator of Jesus (to use Goffman’s (1974) term), in which the transformation of the eucharist subsists in the Coptic Orthodox Church.¹⁷⁵ To see it as such misses the dialogic, even heteroglossic, nature of the liturgy and of the transformation at its center. As the transformation unfolds, the priest interacts with Jesus and the Godhead, as a crucially separate person in the

¹⁷⁴ Dell Hymes (1972: 58-60), cited in Irvine (1996:132) distinguished Hearer (or Receiver or Audience) from Addressee. As Irvine notes, "It is now widely agreed that Addressee is often the more central and useful notion" (ibid.). I have chosen to use hearer over ‘addressee’ in order to emphasize that through the discourse the addressee (God) is constructed as active in the interaction. The hearer, as in the speaker/hearer dyadic pair from folk ideologies of language, is not only addressed, but also hears. I distinguish the hearer (Hymes' Addressee) from overhearers (Hymes' Hearer).

¹⁷⁵ The similarity between Silverstein's (2004) characterization of the eucharist and the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church will be discussed more below in the section *Discourses on the Liturgy*.

interaction. The priest participates in the appearance of Christ in the midst of the folk through transubstantiation. This is both achieved in parallel and itself brought about through *dialogue*.

| | | | |
|---|----|--|---|
| 1 | P: | ارفعوا قلوبكم . | Lift up your hearts. |
| 2 | V: | هى عند الرب . | They are with the Lord. |
| 3 | P: | فلنشكر الرب . | Let us give thanks to the Lord. |
| 4 | V: | مستحق وعادل . | Worthy and just. |
| 5 | P: | ΔΖΙΟΝ ΚΕ ΔΙΚΕΟΝ ; ΔΖΙΟΝ ΚΕ ΔΙΚΕΟΝ ; ΑΛΗΘΩΣ ΓΑΡ ΖΕΝ ΟΥΜΕΘΜΗΙ ; ΔΖΙΟΝ ΚΕ ΔΙΚΕΟΝ. | Worthy and just, worthy and just, for truly in truth, worthy and just. |
| 6 | P: | O Meister Herr, Gott der Wahrheit. Du bist vor aller Ewigkeit und regierst bis in Ewigkeit. Du wohnst in den Höhen und schaust auf die Erniedrigten herab. Du hast Himmel, Erde Gewässer und alles darin geschaffen. Vater unseres Herrn, Gottes und Erlösers Jesus Christus, durch den du alles geschaffen hast, das Sichtbare und das Unsichtbare, | O Master Lord, God of the Truth. You have existed from eternity and reign until eternity. You live in the highest and look on the lowly. You have created heaven, earth, water and everything within them. The father of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, through whom you created everything, the visible and the invisible, |
| 7 | P: | الجالس على كرسى مجده، المسجود له من جميع القوات المقدسة . | who sits on his throne of glory and who is worshipped by all the holy powers. |

Figure 5.9: Worthy and Just (continued in Figure 5.2)

The transcript in Figure 5.9 is part of a section of the liturgy known as *Worthy and Just* (see also Figure 5.2). The first section (Figure 5.9, Lines 1-4) provides instructions to the folk about what they should be doing and what they are about to do in a call and answer format. Both the priest and the folk speak in Arabic here.

The priest switches into Coptic briefly for the beginning of his next dialogue (Figure 5.9, Line 5) as he echoes what the folk have said:

P: Worthy and just, worthy and just, for truly in truth, worthy and just.

He continues in German (Figure 5.9, Line 6) as he transitions from a repetitive chant to speaking in the second person directly to the Lord.¹⁷⁶ Much of the liturgy takes place as this type of second person dialogue.

P: *O Master Lord, God of the Truth. You (informal) have existed from eternity and reign until eternity. You live in the highest and look on the lowly. You have created heaven, earth, water and everything within them. The father of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, through whom you created everything, the visible and the invisible,*

Mid-sentence the priest switches to Arabic (Figure 5.9, Line 7), while still addressing God in the same turn of talk.

P: who sits on his throne of glory and who is worshipped by all the holy powers.

This is the same section of the liturgy where the young deacon initiates a code-switch into German (Figure 5.2, Line 8) saying:

D: *Wer sitzt, stehe auf.*

The deacon is addressing the folk, but the priest continues (Figure 5.2, Line 9) in German addressing God:

P: *Before you stand the angels, the archangels, the principalities, the authorities, the thrones, the lordships and the powers.*¹⁷⁷

D: *Look to the East.*¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ In most English and German translations this chant includes the third person. "For truly in truth, he is worthy and just." In the Coptic (Figure 5.9, Line 5) no 'person' is used as the phrasing "worthy and just" is not a complete sentence, but only a repetition of the adjectives.

¹⁷⁷ Both the Arabic and German terms used to describe these beings are awkward and do not capture well their intended referent, which is the hierarchy of angels. I have chosen a translation closer to the established names for the angelic hierarchy in English to emphasize the grounding of the concept in ancient Christianity.

P: You are the one surrounded by cherubim, who are full of eyes, and seraphim with six wings. They praise you always without stopping and they speak.

The folk continue in Arabic, repeating part of the priests dialogue and adding to it.

V: The cherubim pray to you and the seraphim honor you when they call out and say: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your holy glory.

All three languages are in use. The priest also uses all three languages in one turn of talk. He switches from Coptic (Figure 5.9, Line 5) to German at a point in the dialogue when he stops speaking of God and starts addressing him in the second person (Figure 5.9, Line 6). His second switch is while he is in the middle of this dialogue with God in the second person (Figure 5.9, Line 7). He switches from German to Arabic.

In his review article on religious language, Webb Keane (1997) discusses how religious language differs from everyday language as a problem of the invisible interlocutor.

The problems of communication between this world and another, or of handling authoritative words derived from distant sources, are critical to many religious practices: Not only do they impose special semiotic difficulties on human practitioners, but their language must sometimes contend with the fact that the very presence of the deity, spirits or ancestors cannot be taken for granted (Keane, 1997:48).

This definition is useful for my purposes because it is a definition of religion that is centered on communication with a deity.¹⁷⁹ Taking up this idea, I focus the argument on compelling similarities between everyday speech in the way in which God is brought into the liturgy for Copts. I frame the exchange (between priest and God, attended by the folk) in terms

¹⁷⁸ The chapel is oriented to the East. This may be one of the reasons the Coptic service takes place in the small chapel that is perpendicular to the large church sanctuary at the enormous formerly Protestant church in Berlin.

¹⁷⁹ It should be noted that this is a very experience-far definition of religion that may not be in line with practitioners' experiences. The article is also at cross-purposes with my project in some ways because Keane is interested in differentiating what is distinctive about religious language and I am focused in this chapter on elements that are not as distinctive as they may appear.

of some foundational ideas about shifters in linguistic anthropology that are evoked with many different types of interaction. The priest addresses God in the second person. He addresses him as both singular (affirming the trinity) and familiar (undercutting Keane's definition above).¹⁸⁰

Jakobson in his influential review of shifters (as code referring to message) makes this observation about them. "Every shifter, however, possesses its own general meaning. Thus *I* means the addresser (and *you*, the addressee) of the message to which it belongs" (Jakobson, 1990:388, italics in original). He discusses Burks' exploration of the topic thus:

I means the person uttering I. Thus on the one hand, the sign I cannot represent its object without being associated with the latter by conventional rule... On the other hand, the sign I cannot represent its object without 'being in existential relationship' with its object: the word I designating the utterer is existentially related to his utterance as an index (Jakobson, 1990:388; see also Silverstein, 1976).

The pronoun 'you' designating the hearer has an existential relationship, as a sign, with its object, in this case God. Its use creates/reveals God as a *person* in the interaction through the very act of address.

Benveniste has said, "What then is the reality to which 'I' or 'you' refers? It is solely a 'reality of discourse,' and this is a very strange thing" (Benveniste, 1958:218). He quickly points out the important anomaly of reported speech: "If I perceive two successive instances of discourse containing 'I', uttered in the same voice, nothing guarantees to me that one of them is not a reported discourse, a quotation in which 'I' could be imputed to another" (ibid.).

Silverstein's focus on the 'I' of the reported speech of Jesus in the liturgy as aligning the priest metaphorically with Jesus rightly points out how the ancient and scriptural is made present

¹⁸⁰ In his seminal article on pronoun usage, Friedrich (1964) suggests that while the use to address non-humans may indicate intimacy, it may also be that once "the greatness of power passes a certain point the speaker switched back [from symmetrical v] to what might be the use of total subordination or of an intimacy that could not be jeopardized" (Friedrich, 1964:238). Below I will compare this t/v distinction to the masculine/feminine distinction in the Arabic pronouns.

through the shifter ‘I’, but misses how the priest also stands separate from Jesus in the liturgy as the interlocutor. The priest speaks as ‘I’ in Figure 5.5 (Line 13), but in Figure 5.9 God is spoken to as ‘you’. It is also as ‘you’ that he is given credit for the eucharist transformation. To focus exclusively on the former as a metaphorical alignment, collapses referents which one can productively keep separate. (After all, not every voicing creates an identity between the animator and the author/principle.) In doing so it risks missing the *dialogic*, and heteroglossic, way in which the priest and the Godhead are being constructed as separate. It also misses the central event of the eucharist when the bread and wine (materiality made person, separate from the priest) become the Christ.

In his article, Benveniste discusses how “the essential thing, then, is the relation between the indicator (of person, time, place, object shown, etc.) and the *present* instance of discourse” (1958:219). I argue the liturgy makes an ancient discourse, and an ancient place and time, present as its culminating task. This is how the liturgy as performed fundamentally differs from the text. It is grounded in the text, gains authority and transportability (crucial to diaspora) from the text, but it must be enacted, interacted, to perform its work as liturgy. For Benveniste ‘I’ and ‘you’ are compelling because they create/reveal their referent. These pronouns (in the liturgy where Keane (1997) argued the interlocutor is invisible and/or cannot be taken for granted) create and reveal their referent. Pronouns do their work so effectively in the liturgy because they are doing *everyday* work to create something that engages both the timeless and the everyday.

To return to Figure 5.9, as a piece of *dialogue*, we can see that the hearer is as important (or more important) for understanding how the liturgy works, and the role of code-switching in the liturgy, as the speaker on whom many scholars from Pope Benedict to Austin (1975) place the emphasis. First, the priest (Figure 5.9, Line 3) instructed the folk, “**Let us thank the Lord.**”

Then he established an *existential* relationship between the sign (“Du”) and the being of God through his use of the second person. He describes explicitly an eternal you, “*You are from all eternity and reign until eternity.*” But at the same time he uses an informal second person singular pronoun¹⁸¹ which, as inextricably code linked to message, is tied to the *present* instance of discourse. This use of language as social action establishes not only God as a person in the interaction, but ultimately as the acting person who transforms the eucharist through language. During the prayer the priest prays in Arabic as he passes out the communion bread and wine. **“Oh God, you have made this sacrificial gift standing here pure and holy, through the arrival of your Holy Ghost over it.”**¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ The use of the singular pronoun is theologically loaded as the liturgy uses the same singular pronoun to encompass the three beings of the trinity (Father, Son, Holy Ghost) and thus establishes the Coptic Orthodox Church as staunchly Trinitarian. The way in which pronouns are used in the liturgy is similar linguistically to the worship songs which are a focal activity of a Pentecostal service. “I will worship you with every breath,” sings the not yet converted visitor to the church and, as Susan Harding (1987) has astutely observed, begins the conversion process by taking up a position (I) in conversation with God. See also Shoaps, 2002. I argue pronouns are part of creating a dialogic encounter with the divine.

¹⁸² Arabic does not have a t/v distinction in the second person singular. Instead, it has a feminine/masculine distinction. “**Your holy spirit**” (روحك القدوس) in Arabic is masculine and singular. Coptic also has feminine/masculine distinction in the second person singular although the feminine form was used so rarely in ancient Christian texts that scribes were very inconsistent in their usage when it appeared. Thus, the language shift from Coptic to Arabic to German is a change in the features of the hearer that are made manifest in the act of speaking the liturgy. Gender is no longer defined by the pronoun choice but intimacy is. On the other hand, register differences available in Arabic, which include different pronunciations of the masculine singular pronoun, might arguably create a t/v distinction.

| | | | |
|---|----|---|--|
| 1 | P: | ἈΓΙΟΣ ἈΓΙΟΣ ἈΓΙΟΣ. ἄογᾶβ ἄογᾶβ ἄογᾶβ ⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲉⲙⲛⲏ ⲡⲓⲟⲓⲥ ⲡⲉⲛⲛⲟⲩⲧⲧ. | Holy, Holy, Holy. Holy, holy, holy in truth, oh Lord, our God. |
| 2 | P: | الذي جبلنا و خلقنا و وضعنا في فردوس النعيم . وعندما خالقنا وصيتك بغواية الحية ، سقطنا من الحياة الأبدية ونُفينا من فردوس النعيم . فلم تتركنا عنك أيضاً إلى الانقضاء ، بل تعهدنا دائما بأنبيائك القديسين ، | Who has formed us and created us and placed us in the paradise of joy. And when we broke your commandment, through the lure of the serpent, we fell from eternal life and we were banished from the paradise of joy. You also never abandoned us to the end but attended us always by your saintly prophets. |
| 3 | P: | Am Ende der Tage bist du uns erschienen, uns, die wir saßen in Finsternis und Todesschatten, durch deinen einzigen Sohn, unseren Herrn, Gott und Erlöser Jesus Christus, der aus dem Heiligen Geist und der Jungfrau Maria ist. | And at the end of days you appeared to us, us, who sat in darkness and the shadows of death, through your only son, our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, who is from the holy Ghost and the virgin Mary. |

Figure 5.10: Holy, Holy, Holy

Like pronouns, code-switching is a resource for bringing the ancient liturgy into the present moment. During the liturgy, the community uses all three languages to address God. The priest moves from German to Arabic during the same turn of talk with God. In the prayer of the liturgy entitled *Holy, Holy?, Holy* (Figure 5.10) the priest begins in Coptic (Figure 5.10, Line 1) with “Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy, holy in truth, oh Lord, our God.”¹⁸³ After this turn in Coptic he switches into Arabic in Figure 5.10, Line 2: “**You have formed us and created us and placed us in the paradise of joy. As we broke your commandment through the seduction of the snake, we fell from eternal life and we were banished from the paradise of joy. But you never left us until the end, but attended us always by your saintly prophets.**” For the final

¹⁸³ The first set of holies in this prayer are not identical to the second set. The first set is from the Greek Ἅγιος and the second set is the Coptic word for holy. Since the liturgy was originally in Greek one could think of this section of the liturgy beginning in the most ancient language of the church. However, I have chosen not to engage with debates about 'Greek' in the liturgy and have therefore left Ἅγιος in Coptic script.

part of this story (Figure 5.10, Line 3) he switches into German: “*At the end of days you appeared to us, we who sat in darkness and the shadow of death, through your only son, our Lord, God and savior Jesus Christ, who came from the holy ghost and the virgin Mary.*”

This pattern of code-switching fits with the pattern found throughout the analysis. Just as the liturgy moves from more Coptic to more Arabic and increasingly more German as it progresses over three hours, so too as we move towards the ultimate transformation of the eucharist this story moves from Coptic through Arabic to German. Coptic (Figure 5.10, Line 1) is used for the timeless chant. Arabic tells the more ancient Old Testament story (Figure 5.10, Line 2). A switch to German characterizes the climactic coming of Christ in the new testament story (Figure 5.10, Line 3). On the other hand, using all three languages for a dialogue with the same interlocutor reveals a new dimension to the heteroglossia of the liturgy. Following the link of particular codes to particular times, God is *both ancient and present*. I argue the dispreference for a particular code when speaking to God is diasporically and ecumenically significant for Copts.

Bakhtin saw heteroglossia as antithetical to the authoritative word. For him, religious dogma, like the liturgy, was dichotomous to the discourse of the novel. The novel is inherently heteroglossic, mixing languages and embracing the multilingual reality of human experience. In contrast the authoritative word is monologic, not capable of maintaining its authority with linguistic diversity. Familiar himself with a (Russian) orthodoxy that embraces a sacred language, he describes the peasant who keeps his languages in separate domains: “He prayed to God in one language [Church Slavonic], sang songs in another, spoke to his family in a third...” (Bakhtin, 1986:295). Despite both practitioners living in a post-Babel theology, Bakhtin

attributes only to the prose writer what I want to attribute to the priest and liturgy participants in this chapter.

[T]he prose writer witnesses as well the unfolding of social heteroglossia surrounding the object, the Tower-of-Babel mixing of languages that goes on around any object, the dialectics of the object are interwoven with the social dialogue surrounding it... For the prose writer [and I argue priest] the object is a focal point for heteroglot voices among which his own voice must also sound (1986:278).

It would be possible to make the argument that this heteroglossia in the liturgy has developed in the diaspora under the influence of Protestantism, just as in Chapter Four an interest in comprehension in the liturgy might be portrayed as revealing the influence of Protestant theologies of language. However, I would suggest that the heteroglossia in the liturgy is a clue to a decidedly non-Protestant theory of language. This is the theory of language which Pope Benedict was working with and building on in his ecumenical address quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

This chapter explores some of the ways in which code choice is constrained by the speaker (either as a category or as an individual) or by the genre. There are certainly other ways in which code choice is constrained that have not been explored. On the other hand, code choice is not constrained by the hearer: in particular God can be spoken to in any code. In one turn of talk the priest may address him in Coptic, Arabic and German. While this piece of dialogue supports the overarching tendency of code to map a move from the ancient to the present (from Coptic to German, from Egypt to Egypt), it also shows that for Copts *any* code can perform the liturgy, bring the ancient (even eternal) scriptural story of Christ into the church in Berlin, and make present the coming of the messiah in the eucharist.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ The idea that any language can transform the liturgy is part of the implicit language ideology that I argue is revealed through an analysis of code-switching. In practice, in this community there are three languages that can perform the liturgy: Coptic, Arabic and German.

This is the skill, which Pope Benedict praised, that for the Catholic Church makes the Coptic Church a church: “[B]ecause these churches although separated, have true sacraments and above all – because of the apostolic succession – the priesthood and the Eucharist, by means of which they remain linked to us by very close bonds” (Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faithful, 2007). The eucharist is transformed through language, but it is not through a particular language, but through the ability of any language, as social action, to be performative.

It would be a mistake, as scholars from Malinowski to Silverstein have done, to attribute this linguistic agency to the priest.¹⁸⁵ Such an idea misrepresents the liturgy as monologic when it is dialogic. If the priest’s language has agency, for Copts, it is to bring God into the presence of the church, through the use of pronouns (first *and* second) through code-switching and through the recitation of the biblical stories in various genres, telling the stories to God and structuring the folk as overhearers to this storytelling, until the bread is transformed. These conversational techniques, all strategies of de-textualization, bring the Godhead into the present moment of the church service, indeed create the church.¹⁸⁶ It is not the priest’s words, even as animator, that carry out transubstantiation.

Discourses on the Liturgy: Metacommentaries by Practitioners

My goal in this chapter has been to engage certain theories of Christianity that circulate, often unexamined ethnographically, within sociocultural and linguistic anthropology. This is a

¹⁸⁵ Malinowski (1922) broke down the barrier between ‘magic’ and religion by noting that just as the garden magician transformed the gardens into fertile growing grounds with his words so too did the priest in the transformation of the eucharist. Unfortunately he used this observation to denigrate both groups by observing that “superstition” was not absent even from our own culture.

¹⁸⁶ “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I myself am” (Matthew 18:20). I have focused throughout this chapter on how language transforms time for Copts, but I would suggest that the transformation is equally spatial. This is why the eucharist was Pope Benedict's answer to the question: What makes the Christian Church?

different type of conversation to the discourse of theology. I want to engage with anthropological theory in and on its own terms. Christopher Hann and Hermann Goltz, in their introduction to the rich volume entitled *The Other Christianity?* have warned that “the anthropologist who lacks all familiarity with the texts of a great tradition may get excited about a “discovery” that has long been a commonplace to historians and theologians” (2010:15). It is important to stress the need for familiarity with the historical and theological works of a tradition. At the same time, the excitement is warranted if the discovery brings something new to the discipline of anthropology.

With ethnographic analysis I aimed to show how the eucharist, often taken as the formulaic example of ritual par excellence by anthropologists, is in fact an ‘interaction ritual’, to use Silverstein’s term. The performance de-textualizes the liturgy, bringing the ancient into the present moment. This is done through a variety of linguistic resources, especially indexicality, including code-switching as an index of the progression of time. This insight joins a broader conversation about textuality, performance and ritual within anthropology, examining a staunchly textual cultural phenomenon ethnographically, and showing how it is detextualized in the diaspora. I add *in the diaspora* because code-switching as it is enacted in the hymns, bible readings, sermon and eucharist prayer of the Coptic Orthodox community in Berlin is a decidedly diasporic resource, which indexes the uniqueness of being Coptic and creating Egypt outside the boundaries of Egypt.

This analysis of the implicit language ideology and enacted linguistic resources of the community is a contribution to the anthropology of Christianity and the anthropology of religion. That being said, I do not want to privilege the implicit ideology to the exclusion or devaluation of explicit formulations and metacommentary from either the community with whom I worked

or the larger theological literature. These explicit commentaries are extensive and well-articulated.¹⁸⁷

I opened the chapter with a theological treatise approved by Pope Benedict. This was a proclamation that was heard around the world through global media outlets and was a topic of discussion during my fieldwork such that it had an ethnographic import. In my discussion of Silverstein's pronouncement that transubstantiation occurs at the moment when the priest takes on the voice of Jesus, I chose to ground my disagreement in the particulars of the performance rather than theological debates. However, it is also the case that the Catholic Church agrees with Silverstein about the efficacy for the liturgy of those words spoken from the last supper. The history of the Words of Institution, as they are known, is complex, but for the Catholic Church these words alone are sufficient to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. The Coptic Orthodox Church, as well as all other so-called Old Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches, disagrees as a point of doctrine.¹⁸⁸ For the Coptic Orthodox Church transubstantiation is a process that begins with the preparatory prayer of the liturgy and ends with the epiclesis. The exact moment that it occurs is not identified, but the epiclesis is the moment of its completion, which occurs *after* the words Jesus spoke at the last supper are voiced by the priest.¹⁸⁹ The epiclesis, or 'calling out/down' is the call for the holy ghost to transform the

¹⁸⁷ As I noted in Chapter Three, it is out of theology that theory originated with the early monastics in the desert of Egypt and theologians in Alexandria developed 'theoria' as a theological concept.

¹⁸⁸ This alignment between explicit doctrine and ritual practice serves as a reminder that there is no simple dichotomy between explicit and implicit language ideologies. Equally, the Catholic Church declaring the words of Jesus sufficient for transubstantiation, as a point of doctrine, does not exclude the possibility of a Catholic liturgy exhibiting similar dialogic elements to those outlined here.

¹⁸⁹ One English-language reference book on the Coptic Orthodox liturgy (Sleman, 2005) declares following the epiclesis: "NOW THE BREAD AND WINE HAVE BEEN

eucharist, emphasizing the dialogic nature of the eucharist ritual, where a focus on the voicing of Jesus could be monologic.

I find value in the study of Coptic Orthodox Christianity in part because it offers a counterpoint to the tendency within anthropology to describe certain dominant forms of Christian practice as if they applied to all Christians. Thus I see elaborating this doctrinal difference, which turns on language use, as a worthwhile project in itself. Hann and Goltz highlight this general tendency when they write: “Such perceptions and ideal-types of Christianity based on Western Christianity alone reveal a profound ethnocentrism” (Hann and Goltz, 2010:4). On the other hand, by grounding the analysis in the interaction ritual in practice, the task is not only, or even primarily, an elaboration of doctrinal differences. I have argued from within the performance, especially using markers of performance which are not within the text like code choice, that the transformation of the eucharist is both a progression and a dialogue, moving from Coptic through Arabic to German, with German having a central place in the present (and future) of the eucharist ritual. This type of analysis allows a more complete understanding of what the eucharist ritual is and the centrality of theories/theologies of language as social action for Christianity, but it also has compelling implications for ideologies of code and language shift in the Coptic diaspora.

•••

There are two prominent types of metacommentary for the Coptic community. First is the extensive literature of theological commentary and guidance. This is complemented by the metacommentary of practitioners discovered through ethnography. Chapter Four included commentary on code and text from those being socialized into the liturgy, as well as a discussion

TRANSUBSTANTIATED (CHANGED) INTO THE HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST" (Sleman, 2005: 95, emphasis in original).

of the views of members and adepts. Those commentaries are relevant for Chapter Five as well. In addition, I will also provide a series of observations on the language(s) of the liturgy and code from expert practitioners I engaged with during fieldwork. I am indebted to many members of the community for conversation on these topics. Their commentaries, where they differ from the analysis above, reveal other dimensions of the liturgy and areas for further research. The commentaries in Chapters Three and Six, on other elements of the ecumenical future, are closely connected to these narratives.

In August of 2007 I visited the Coptic Center in Stevenage, England. Stevenage is a center for the Coptic Church in England with a Coptic Institute, church services, space for guests, meetings and offices in a former English manor building, and a then brand new Coptic Orthodox Church, which was still waiting to be dedicated by Pope Shenouda on his next visit to England. On that visit I met with Abuna Matta, one of the priests at Stevenage, and discussed many church topics with him including the languages of the liturgy. I use the conversation I had with Abuna Matta to frame five motivations for code choice, which I encountered during my fieldwork: prosody, comprehension, the youth, and English and/or a dual language liturgy as future. Code-switching as I experienced it in Berlin was not engaged in meta-commentary.

• *Prosody*

Abuna Matta offered a variety of compelling answers to my questions about code choice. Among them he said Coptic is a very musical language because of all the vowels and for this reason Coptic is used a lot in songs. This explanation brings up the distinctive prosody of the

liturgy, which is a chanted church service.¹⁹⁰ In this way he creates an iconic relationship between Coptic and the fixed text of the liturgy (see Moftah, (1998) for the musical score).¹⁹¹

The editors of Text 4 argued that the hymns are exclusively in Coptic because of their ancient, unchanging qualities. This is in concert with Abuna Matta declaration, which ties Coptic to the hymns because of the qualities of the language itself. Both sources agree, as my analysis of recordings affirmed, the language of the hymns is relatively inflexible in comparison to other areas of the liturgy.¹⁹²

• *Comprehension*

Another explanation that Abuna Matta offered for language choice was based around an ideology of comprehension. While I was meeting with Abuna Matta in the manor house at Stevenage there was a “charismatic” non-Coptic bishop visiting. According to Abuna Matta, they were celebrating the liturgy in English so that the bishop would understand it. He said that on Wednesday when they have the liturgy with the deacons it is in Coptic. Similarly when we discussed the publishing activities of the Coptic Church in England he said they do not publish books in Coptic because no one would understand them. This argument about code, which focuses on comprehension as the rationale for the code choice, resembles the ideology of comprehension that I argued was in tension among the members of the congregation in Berlin and the texts of the liturgy in Chapter Four. By drawing on the example of the visiting Bishop, it

¹⁹⁰ In spite of this ideology of the fixed liturgy, using a distinctive prosody for the reading of scriptures and chanting also occurs in Arabic, German and English. Both the priest and deacons with facility in these languages during my fieldwork accommodated the language of their choice to the liturgical chanting prosody. On the occasion of my visit to Stevenage I heard the chanting of the Hours (Agpeya) in English and also attended a predominantly English liturgy.

¹⁹¹ Abuna Matta’s explanation reminds one of a notable difference in the scripts of Arabic versus Coptic. Arabic includes vowels almost exclusively as diacritics and the Coptic alphabet, based upon Greek, includes vowels in writing in a similar way to English.

¹⁹² This is also in concert with literature from within linguistic anthropology, which ties entextualization to poetic features.

also links code choice to the ecumene, styling Coptic as the language of the Coptic Church (used by deacons), but English as an ecumenical language used for visitors from a wider Christendom.

Abuna Matta’s formulation is akin to the idea that the overhearer determines code choice.¹⁹³ This is an aspect of code choice that I did not explore in my analysis of code choice in this chapter, but it was addressed in other formulations in Chapter Four. This ideology was echoed by other practitioners and I witnessed it in practice. How Bishop Damian put it during an interview is shown in Figure 5.11.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Bishop: Wenn wir deutsche Gäste haben, dann wird überwiegend in deutscher Sprache [gesprochen]. Wenn wir keine deutschen Gäste haben, dann machen wir das in arabisch und koptisch.</p> | <p>Bishop: When we have German guests, then the liturgy is in the German language. When we don’t have German guests, then we do it in Arabic and Coptic [or arabic Coptic].</p> |
|---|--|

Figure 5.11: Bishop Damian on German guests

I suggest the notion of ‘guest,’ as Bishop Damian put it, is very important for this ideology of code choice, drawing as it does on hospitality and the dichotomy of host and guest, which is culturally significant across the Middle East (Shryock and Howell, 2001).¹⁹⁴ The idea of performing the liturgy in another language for guests is related to considerations of comprehension and the overhearer in (ideologies of) code choice. At the same time not all

¹⁹³ I style this hearer as the *overhearer* to underscore the point that the addressee, the hearer with whom the liturgy is structured as a dialogue, is God and not the congregation.

¹⁹⁴ During my first visit to Hanover, when Abuna described the community there as a ‘living community’ in the anecdote from this chapter, I saw this ideology in practice. On that occasion I believe the service included more German because of my own presence. However, I would argue that this type of code accommodation happened with prominent and occasional visitors to the church, as Bishop Damian put it “*Guests.*” For regular German-speaking attendees in Berlin, or for myself as my visits to Hanover became more frequent, such alterations in the code of the liturgy were not made.

overhearers for whom a particular code is (structured as) incomprehensible are categorized as guests.¹⁹⁵

• *The youth*

During our discussion Abuna Matta told me that they used to teach Arabic at the Coptic Centre, but they no longer did because the children are not interested in learning the language. He also encouraged me to come back on Saturday for the church service so that I could “connect with the youth.” When I returned Abuna Matta presided over that service and the liturgy was held predominantly in English in a small chapel in the manor house. Abuna Matta’s meta-commentary reinforces the connection between language choice and a mission to the youth or a pressing focus on keeping the youth in the church in the diaspora community, as I discussed in Chapter Four. Stevenage is the residence of Bishop Angelos, who is one of four Coptic Bishops in the United Kingdom. Bishop Angelos’ specific mission is focused on the youth of the church.¹⁹⁶

Bishop Damian also linked the language of the liturgy to the youth. When I asked him where he had gained the competence in Coptic to perform the liturgy he mentioned first the Sunday school (*Sonntagschule*) and then the monastery. The Sunday School movement is an important educational effort, started in the 1940-50s, which has contributed to the revival of the Coptic Church (see Meinardus, 1999:3). At the same time, Bishop Damian suggested, during one of his tours of the monastery, that participation in the liturgy is more important than the language it is in. For him, the children of the church exemplify this (Figure 5.12).

¹⁹⁵ The category of guest may also engage with another structuring of participants in orthodox liturgy between believers, catechumens, and observers. Bishop Damian articulated this division in relation to the structure of the space of the chapel.

¹⁹⁶ I later met Bishop Angelos who led the British youth to the youth conference in Vienna, which will be featured in Chapter Six.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Bishop: Ein Kind fragt nicht warum der Gottesdienst solange dauert, warum so viel Weihrauch, warum spricht ihr arabisch, koptisch oder deutsch. Das Kind macht alles mit. Die Gemeinde verträgt die Unruhe der Kinder. [Ihr?] Kommen, Gehen, Schreien, Bewegung. - sagte aber, das wichtige [???] für die Kontinuität der Kirche. Den eine Kirche ohne Kinder, [ohne] eine Jugend, ist ein Kirche ohne Zukunft. Wir legen einen sehr, sehr großen Wert auf die Kinder- und Jugendarbeit.</p> | <p>Bishop: A child doesn't ask why the church service lasts so long, why there is so much incense, why you are speaking Arabic, Coptic or German. The child participates in everything. The community copes with the disquiet of the children, their coming, going, crying, moving, saying though that's what's important for the continuity of the church because a church without children, without a youth, is a church without a future. We place a very, very great importance on the children – the work with the youth</p> |
|--|--|

Figure 5.12: A child doesn't ask why

• *The language of diaspora and English as future*

One place where Abuna Matta's commentary differed from my analysis for Copts in Germany was that he did not make the argument that England or Europe was the future for Copts. Abuna Matta explained to me that England is not a "land of immigration" and for this reason there are more Copts in the United States, Canada and Australia than in England.¹⁹⁷ In this regard his commentary contrasts with the 'Made in England' youth discussed in Chapter Six.

At the same time, Abuna Matta characterized the diaspora as being prominent in English-speaking countries and said that England was a more appealing country to move to for Copts than Germany because of the language.¹⁹⁸ Abuna Matta tied particular languages to particular

¹⁹⁷ He said that asylum seekers from the Sudan in the early 1990s increased the population of Copts in the United Kingdom by 50-60%, but that today Britain was limiting the number of asylum seekers they would accept. At the time of this interview England was experiencing a huge influx of Poles to the United Kingdom. This might make the designation as not a land of immigration inappropriate, but the trope 'land of immigration' is one used for political debate. Germany is similarly classified in such debates.

¹⁹⁸ The understanding of English as a prominent transnational language was reinforced by the liturgical books in Stevenage. In 1992 Pope Shenouda commissioned a unified English translation of the liturgy to be created from Coptic and explicitly not Arabic. A unified translation of the liturgy did not exist for German during my fieldwork. In Germany different texts in use during the service contained significantly different translations and when the priest

countries saying that they perform the liturgy in English in England and in Arabic in Egypt. This links the language of the liturgy to the land in which it is performed. In our interview Bishop Damian also drew attention to the use of English in the liturgy in “the countries”:

| | |
|---|--|
| Bishop: Allerdings in den Ländern, zum Beispiel England oder Amerika, dann wird der größte Teil auf englisch [????]. | Bishop: However in the countries, for example England or America, then the biggest portion is in English. |
|---|--|

In this part of the interview he had just described the use of German for guests and was drawing an almost explicit contrast between the multiple languages used in Germany in comparison to English-speaking countries. This mirrors the ideal discussed in Chapter Four for the liturgy in the diaspora to eliminate Arabic. The focus on English is evidence of a preference among clergy for the language of diaspora. It ties into the iconization of place and language discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

Once in Hamburg a visiting priest, who was substituting for the regular priest who normally ministered to the Hamburg community, gave the liturgy without giving a sermon. When asked why he had not delivered one his explanation was that he did not speak German. This makes explicit the goal of German, or the language of the majority, when giving a sermon in diaspora. However, on another occasion when I saw the same priest give a liturgy without a sermon at the monastery, the Bishop did not defer to his lack of German fluency as an explanation, but said the priest had not delivered a sermon in order to shorten the already lengthy liturgy out of respect for the guests. This is an example of how these ideologies of code are not mutually exclusive and may be mutually reinforcing.

chanted the liturgy they had to *choose* a particular translation from the multiple versions in circulation.

• *No ideology of code-switching*

Although my interviewees recognized that the language of the liturgy was flexible and that choices were made based on who was present, where it was performed, the ages of the participants, and other factors, neither of them discuss *code-switching* in the liturgy. In meta-commentary the liturgy is performed in one language in one country and in another language in another country. It may be performed in one language for the youth and in another language for older members. It is performed in German for guests and Arabic and Coptic when guests are not present.¹⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the liturgy was discussed as appropriate in at most two languages: Coptic and, if necessary, another language to aid in comprehension. At the same time, they did not voice a desire for the liturgy to be only in Coptic. This is consistent with the ideal I discussed in Chapter Four of a liturgy performed only in Coptic and German.

In the section on the sermon above, I describe the first time I heard a sermon in German in Hanover. On the train back to Berlin I expressed to Abuna my surprise at hearing the sermon in German. As I laid out the contrasts I had noticed between Hanover and Berlin, Abuna referred to Hanover as "*a living community*" (ein lebendige Gemeinde). The idea that the translation of the sermon into another language kept the community alive is consistent with my argument that the scriptures, sermon and communion bring the liturgy into the present of the community. It was also one of the few times when we discussed code-switching into German. The priest asked if it would be better if he gave the sermon in German himself. When I diplomatically said I did not

¹⁹⁹ I heard the piece of interview in Figure 5.11 as discussing 'arabic Coptic.' A German language consultant argued that in this interview Bishop Damian says Arabic *and* Coptic, as reflected in the transcript. If in fact Bishop Damian does say 'arabic Coptic', he identifies that the liturgy is performed in a combination of Coptic and Arabic without identifying *more than one* language of the liturgy. This designation has echoes with the similar Koptisch-Katholisch, which the Bishop used to describe the Catholic priest from Egypt visiting the monastery in Chapter Three (Figure 3.12). It also has echoes of Ferguson's (1959) discussion of Coptic Arabic in his famous *Diglossia* article.

know, he repeated this as a statement: “*It would be better if I did it myself.*” But more than a year later when the sermon began being translated into German in Berlin, he did not perform the translation himself.

Conclusion: A Mission to our Youth

On December 23rd, 2007 God was addressed in three languages during the liturgy recorded in Berlin. God, the implicit ideology of the liturgy asserts, is multilingual. Specific ideologies are attached to certain languages. Specific codes are meaningful and both valued and devalued for their perceived abilities to transform people and the community in various ways. But the focus in the liturgy is on the ability of language, irrespective of code, to make something purely material (bread and wine) into something human and divine.

This idea may have resonances in Protestantism, some of which I addressed in Chapter Four. These may contribute to its usefulness as a principle of building the ecumene. It is also embedded in orthodoxy. In the Bible (Acts 2), the apostles are given the gift of tongues, which allows them to missionize all peoples. One could view the transformative ability of any language, rather than a particular code, as fundamental to Christianity.²⁰⁰ This biblical warrant is best known as it is used by evangelical Christians, rather than the Orthodox, who are not by and large interested in conversion. However, the Coptic Orthodox Church has a Bishop in the diaspora whose focus is on missionary activity. The crucial difference is this is not a missionizing to other religious groups, but “a mission to our youth.” This type of missionary activity takes up the admonition about code from Acts. The logic asserts if one is going to reach the youth of the church in the diaspora, one can and should use any language to perform this work.

²⁰⁰ I am grateful to Andrew Shryock (personal communication) for bringing the relevance of this verse for the present study to my attention.

I have argued that code is used in the liturgy in order to make the ancient present. A close analysis of the liturgical text shows how the indexical and social properties of language bring the Godhead into the Coptic community. At the beginning of this chapter I suggested that this was similar to Kroskrity's description of Tewa storytellers who recognize the need to bring hither the rituals of the Kiva and make those stories relevant for children and grandchildren. This is done both in the scriptures and sermons of the liturgy and in the liturgy itself through the eucharist and the language choices that lead to that material transformation. But a crucial difference between Kroskrity's example and the Coptic liturgy is that Kroskrity's community still keeps the secret Kiva rituals separate as the authoritative word. They remain in some ways monologic and monolithic like the Bakhtinian authoritative word. In contrast, the Coptic Orthodox liturgy takes on the heteroglossic properties that Bakhtin (explicitly) and other theorists of the eucharist (Silverstein, implicitly) claim it cannot contain.

When Joel Kuipers (1990) takes up the important work on ritual by Bauman and Briggs (1990) that Kroskrity's work engages with, he stylizes the ritual discourses that he watches as a process of entextualization. I suggest that the Coptic liturgy as performance is a process of *detextualization*. The dichotomy entextualization vs. contextualization does not emphasize the way in which the ritual rids the words of their textual properties in the Coptic liturgy. This is not an 'adding with' the text, but a coming out of the text (*detextualizing*) that was monolithically textual. In his review article on religious language, drawing on Kuipers research, Keane has observed:

Many rituals take advantage of this 'heteroglossic' variability by undergoing, for example, a shift over performance time from what Bakhtin (1981) called relatively 'dialogic' towards more 'monologic' and authoritative speech forms (Kuipers, 1990) (Keane, 1997:60).

In contrast I suggest that in the case of the Coptic liturgy the shift goes in the opposite direction, becoming less and less monologic as the service progresses.

As shown in Chapter Four, there is a strong ideology in the church that the liturgy *is* the text. One does not need to record it more than once, or even once, because it is all written in books. I began by observing that one thing that was not written in books was code-switching. The texts do not have to make language choices which the performance does, and to the extent that they do make such choices they make different ones. In this chapter I have analyzed this code-switching as part of a process of making the eternal and ancient in the liturgy present for the community. That is, code-switching is only one aspect of the way in which the liturgy recreates the coming of the Messiah as he arrives in eucharistic form in the church in Lichtenberg and *creates* the church in Lichtenberg. For the time and space of diaspora the connections to Chapter Three are revealing. It makes visible another dimension of the scripture on the door of the church: “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” This is a temporal achievement, but it is also a spatial achievement as the church is formed through the performance of the liturgy.

Although I have been analyzing the specifics of the Coptic liturgy throughout this chapter, I would like to reconnect this ritual to the proclamation of Pope Benedict with which I opened this chapter. He struggled to answer why, if the Catholic Church is the one true Church, other churches in the doctrinal proclamation of Vatican II were also called churches. And his answer to the question: “What is a Christian Church?” was that a Christian church has a priest with apostolic succession and has the eucharist. This definition of the ecumene, and the way in which it is supported by the language of the liturgy in the Coptic diaspora, resonates with the final chapter of this dissertation. Code-switching in the liturgy both exhibits and helps to create

ecumenical goals and understanding. Chapter Six will focus on the importance of the ecumene in the diaspora as a process of becoming the majority for Copts, that is, part of the (both imagined and hoped for/intended) Christian majority in Germany.

CHAPTER SIX

Defining the Ecumene and the Limits of Europe

“Why do We do this Every Year?”

It was a cool August night at a monastery outside of Vienna, Austria as the English contingent of the European Coptic Youth Conference gathered to practice their pieces for the talent show. First, we stood in a circle singing *Trust In The Lord*, a Christian worship song from the multimillion-dollar (evangelical) Christian music scene. Then they began practicing for the next piece, which was a medley that began with a spin-off from the song *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*.

Mina: Awimbaway – awimbaway.

Women: ooh, ooh, ooh

The women hit the wrong chord and the lead singer, a young man, makes a spitting sound, mocking us. As the debate rages about what the correct note for the second ooh would be, the lead singer breaks into an alternative set of tones. This is a piece of the Coptic liturgy, carried into this talent show rehearsal from another type of performance. Its formulaic repetition is instantly recognized, if not comprehended. Laughter follows. “Let’s try it again.”

Mina: A-timenya-walahimena-nah

Women: ooh, ooh, ooh

As the awimbaways start for the second time you can hear two men in the background walking past and discussing something loudly in Arabic. The altered words of *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* begin in a solo.

Sarah: In the conference,
the Euro conference,
the English have arrived.
In the conference,
the Austria conference,
the hills have come alive.
(Transition to *Sound of Music*)

At the end of the practice session Sarah asks me, “What did you think of that Emily?” (I laugh.) “Did you think, what a farce, what a farce the Coptic Church in England is? We are farcical... (To **Mina:**) “Why do we do this every year? We really don’t know, do we?” **Mina:** “We have no reputation.”

Like these youth of the Coptic Church in England, I am interested in their question, “Why do we do this every year?”, to which they had no answer. Sarah lists types of music that might be appropriate for a talent show performance. “We don’t come with.... We don’t come with **Tasbeha** [liturgical worship]. We come with “Ping Pongs” (their version of the Christmas carol *Ding Dong Merrily on High*).

The voices in this recording are those of very talented singers of their chosen genre, but another genre of music breaks into the practice performance: a piece of the Coptic liturgy being used outside of the liturgical context. In some ways, this is a joking mention of the liturgy, but it also brings the most respected form of Coptic music into this Coptic musical performance that draws on so many other Christian traditions to create its repertoire. The ooohs of *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* become connected to the voice of a deacon *as* deacon for a few seconds before the laughter breaks in. This shows that Coptic is a resource of community formation even outside of a church service. However, it is also a joke. *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* is so far from the singing of the Coptic liturgy and yet also very close to it as these young singers perform “the Coptic Church in England” for fellow Copts from all over Europe.

Performing Coptic and Performing Christian

When Sarah asks, “Why do we do this every year?” I would suggest that part of the answer is in the ability, through music, to construct the ecumene and make the “Coptic Church in England” part of a larger Christian community in the United Kingdom and beyond. The conference where these songs were performed was almost exclusively attended by Copts, with the anthropologist as one of the lone exceptions. Many different genres of music are appropriate for this performance. In addition to *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*, the talent show uses traditional Church of England carols and Pentecostal worship songs and brings them into the frame of a Coptic Church conference. As Sarah suggested, they might have taken traditional Coptic music genres and performed them. Instead, they take non-Coptic Christian genres and perform them at a gathering exclusively for Copts. They bring *Trust in the Lord* to meet the Coptic liturgy and in doing so, I argue, they claim membership in a European (and global) Christianity as Copts. In some ways the performance is a joke, “a farce,” but I suggest that underlying it is a serious claim about the ecumene.

The new words to *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* do not mention the Coptic Church at all. They discuss instead the categories of Euro, Austria and the English. These examples show that in bringing together Coptic youth from all over Europe, and aiming to solidify a unified Coptic identity, what is also solidified is national group belonging. “The English have arrived.” As one person says during the practice to a young non-English woman hanging out with the crowd, “You can be British for the evening.”

The English Copts also use popular English language Christian genres in their talent show, showing off some of the complex resources that Coptic youth have to semiotically construct themselves as Christian and align themselves with other Christians. In a conference

that affirms a specifically Coptic community, there is in this performance the affirmation of belonging not only to the Coptic Church, but to a larger Christian community. This is the ecumene. As Christians (and English-speaking Christians), Copts in a monastery outside Vienna can sing Christian pop. This music has more listeners than even the most ambitious calculation of Coptic Church membership. Through this music, they become part of a Christian majority in Europe. In singing *Ding Dong Merrily on High*, the words may be transformed, but the chosen tune belies a serious claim about membership in the majority.

Sarah asked the rhetorical question, “Why do we do this every year?” Together Sarah and Mina laid out a tension between their choice to perform these types of Christian music and another possible choice to perform traditional Coptic pieces. I would suggest that the reason they do this every year is because they feel this tension as Coptic youth in England and they want to perform this *as Coptic* at the conference. After performing these pieces when Sarah asks me, “Did you think, the Coptic Church *in England*, what a farce?” she frames the group as both Coptic and British. They are part of a small religious organization in the United Kingdom but also part of England’s state religion of Christianity (affirmed by the traditional Christmas carol) and a global youth Christian movement (affirmed by the Christian worship hit *Trust in the Lord*).

To simply see this group of vibrant youth as negotiating an imagined national community and religious belonging is to miss the answer to the question, “Why do we do this every year?” I argue that they are negotiating a resource that has the ability to reach beyond national belonging for this minority religious community. They use their membership in England, and their command of the English language, to access the music that aligns them with a wider Christian membership. Here we see the Christian ecumene being performed. In some ways, it’s a dangerous performance. It takes courage to perform this in front of their own much beloved

Bishop and many of the other members of the church hierarchy. I suggest this is also a serious statement about the importance of belonging in Europe as not only the Coptic Church (in England) but as Christians.

The Space of the Ecumene

In Chapter Three, I examined the way in which Copts construct time and space so that Egypt becomes a past for Germany. Their narratives of time and space construct Germany as Egypt in part by creating and then complicating the ‘pointing back’ of diaspora. The reader will remember that a diaspora, from the Greek, is a spreading about. It is always an act of indexing back to a homeland to which the diaspora is oriented and from which they were scattered. Through the work of the community, discussed in Chapter Three, this homeland is not only there but also here and Egypt is not only a homeland for Copts, but a homeland for Christianity as well. I have suggested this is one example of the ways in which Copts construct themselves as part of the Christian majority in Germany.

The ecumene is also a spatial and temporal construction. It has close ties to the concept of diaspora. The term ecumene (οἰκουμένη) also has its origins in the Greek and can loosely be translated as “the inhabited world” (Hannerz, 1996:6-7, see below). In the 20th century, ecumenism has come to denote activities of interdenominational cooperation between different churches defining themselves as Christian. One can think of the ecumene as the belief in or practice of a unified Christian Church, either one existing in the present or an imagined unified church in the future. It’s the hope whispered in the comment at the monastery dinner table when Pope Benedict’s recent enthronement came up for discussion: “Is it true that he’s interested in reunifying the Church?”

This dissertation as a whole explores Coptic efforts to construct themselves as part of the Christian majority in Germany. In Chapter Two, I outlined how Copts may position themselves as white in discourses about race in Germany. In Chapter Three, I argued that Copts build Egypt in Germany and construct the Egyptian Christian past as a past for Germany. Chapters Four and Five were an engagement with the textuality of diaspora and the language shift to German through discussion of the importance of the performative abilities of language over code. The ecumene is another way to conceptualize the Coptic place in the German majority, which is in some ways a culmination of all these tactics. It is an alternative to diaspora in the sense that the Coptic diaspora is a specific exclusive group. It overlaps with the concept of diaspora when Egypt becomes the homeland of all of Christianity such that every Christian is “from” Egypt (See Chapter Three).

The Time of the Ecumene

One of the “powers of diaspora” (Boyarin and Boyarin, 2002) is its other-than-national imaginary, both temporally and spatially. So too, ecumene is a possible alternative to the hegemony of the national imaginary. It can be transnational, to use the Appadurai (1996) term, but this term assumes the pre-existence of nations in order to transcend them. As discussed in Chapter One, Appadurai’s definition sets up the transnational as a future within the national trajectory. Although this may be problematic both for the theoretical constructs of diaspora and the ecumene, it can be an accurate reflection of how Copts may experience the ecumene. We saw this transnational element above when the “Coptic Church in England” was singing *Trust In The Lord*. Their performance re-enforces national boundaries at the same time that it is reaching beyond the boundaries of the Coptic Orthodox Church to inclusion in a Christianity with a global reach.

In addition to being possibly transnational for Coptic Christians, the ecumene may also be conceived of as being prenatal in the sense that the ecumene is a continuation of the “global imagined community” of “Christendom,” which Benedict Anderson described the nation as growing out of and superseding (1991:11).²⁰¹ Like that religious imaginary of Anderson’s description, I suggest (see below) the ecumene does not exist in homogenous empty time. In the ecumene:

[T]he here and now is no longer a mere link in an earthly chain of events, it is simultaneously something which has always been, and will be fulfilled in the future; and strictly, in the eyes of God, it is something eternal, something omnitemporal, something already consummated in the realm of fragmentary earthly event (Auerbach, 1957:64, cited in Anderson, 1991:24).

I argue, therefore, that in addition to possible overlaps with the spatiality of diaspora, ecumene also has a distinctively temporal dimension. It is not (only) a formation in the present, but something that is transpiring for the future. The ecumene is future-oriented and it is also often modeled on a perceived past of Christian unity. In this sense, participation in the ecumene can be a project to collapse time in a way similar to that described by Auerbach and Anderson above, and by Bishop Damien in Chapter Three (Figure 3.13).

The non-linear temporality of the ecumene is usually obvious to those working within ecumenical projects, but can be missed by observers. I think considering the project of Paul in the New Testament is helpful in understanding this feature of ecumene. In one compelling reading of Paul, it seems that he traveled around to the various communities that he oversaw, gathering money, and intended to bring that tribute back to James in Jerusalem. He believed that

²⁰¹ German has a close cognate to “Christendom,” which the reporter in the *Bild* article I will discuss towards the end of this chapter uses to frame his questions to Bishop Damian: “*What must the Islamic world learn about Christendom?*” (Was muss die Islamische Welt noch über das Christentum lernen?)

this gathering together and the eventual return to Jerusalem would bring about the second coming of Christ.

Ecumenical projects today may not be so brazen in the achievements they imagine for their work, but this biblical model underlies how the ecumene is a future-oriented vision of a unified Christianity, often with the theory that it will achieve religious ends. For some Christians, these ends are very close to Paul's own ends, such as the Mormon vision of the Gathering of Zion on the American continent before the 1,000 years of Satan's rule on earth, or the vision of the Gathering of Israel, based on similar logic, which several politicians who were prominent during my fieldwork believed would bring about Armageddon (see Harding, 1999). Although these ecumenical missions may be construed by outside observers as political, I suggest that they are always also theological.²⁰² For our purposes, I point out that the ecumene is part of this conception of "Christendom," which Anderson so artfully identifies, that according to his argument existed before the nation and out of which the nation sprang. It shares with this Christendom a global reach and a non-homogenous temporality.

This parallel with Anderson's "Christendom," however, also highlights where I disagree with Anderson's analysis of the ecumene, despite his important insights. He portrays this type of religious formation as dying away when the nation was born (1991:11). Instead, I suggest the ecumene is not (only) a prenatal community out of which the nation developed and whose death the nation oversaw. Nor is it (only) a postnational phenomenon that reaches across national borders while reaffirming the national community of those within them. I argue that the ecumene was born out of and alongside the national, as the community I worked with experienced it.

²⁰² Conversely later in the chapter I explore how the theological participation in the ecumene by Copts may also be viewed through a political lens.

When he engages with Ulf Hannerz' use of the term to describe “the inhabited world” (Hannerz, 1996:6-7; cited in Keane, 2007:41) Keane (2007) discusses the fact that the *ecumene* is a term arising out of the inhabited *Christian* world. He notes that the Oxford English Dictionary provides attestations of the term “dating from the mid-sixteenth century—precisely that moment when the presumed universality of the Roman Catholic Church was being thrown violently into doubt” (2007:41).

Thus we see a change, but not a disappearance, in the conception of Christian unity at this point in history. The philosopher Leibniz (1664-1716) could only seek to bring about the reconciliation of the churches *after* he perceived them to be torn apart by the Reformation. This was the very same Reformation that created the printing press and the nation, according to Anderson (1991; see also Eisenstein, 1993). Historically “Christendom” may have been distinct from the *ecumene*, but as the reader will see below, it has now *become* the *ecumene*, maintaining its timeless quality and the ability to encompass large expanses of space.

In his analysis, Keane (2007) uses the *ecumene* to affirm the global reach of Christianity. “In some respects Christianity has no locality, either sociologically (institutions and people circulate), culturally (ideas and practices circulate), or ontologically (its truth-claims are universal)” (2007:45). I have aimed throughout this dissertation to affirm the locality of Christianity for Coptic Orthodox Christians and do not want to undo that work in this chapter. In fact, as I show in the final section of this chapter, the *ecumene* reinforces the boundaries of Germany and Europe for Copts. As I point out in Chapter One, this argument has parallels with Talal Asad's (2002) argument that the construction of Europe is a definitively Christian and Christianizing project, such that Muslims are excluded from within its borders. Asad centers his

argument in a discourse about Europe by Europeans, so in that sense my analysis both affirms and complicates his claims.

The Ecumene and the Nation (Continued): From England to Germany

Many of the ecumenical meetings I attended or became aware of in the Coptic Church were intended to unify Christians within a national framework. When the protests in Egypt reached their peak in early 2011, Bishop Angelos in England organized an ecumenical event there titled, *The Church of Egypt Prays for Egypt*, which brought together Christians of all types in the United Kingdom who understand the nation of Egypt as their homeland. This is a clear bringing together of ecumene and diaspora, but it is also bringing them together in a national framework. Likewise Bishop Damian organized several ecumenical youth conferences for the Oriental Orthodox Churches in Germany at the Coptic Village near Höxter. This is a counterpoint to the “Euro conference” which brought together Coptic youth from throughout Europe. Instead, this conference brought together orthodox youth from throughout Germany who are in full communion with the Coptic Orthodox Church. Contrary to the idea that the ecumene is necessarily universalizing, these examples show that it can create boundaries which allow Copts to both increase in numbers by increasing the number of co-religionaries and establishing national belonging.

These types of events develop with the national frame. Bishop Damian’s youth conference imagines the borders of the national in the construction of the ecumene. They also show, just as I did in Chapter Three, how the Coptic Orthodox Church and other orthodox and non-orthodox churches as well, are increasingly constructed as national churches. The Coptic Orthodox Church is the church of Egypt, while other churches like the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church and Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church have recently split into sister

churches of the Coptic Orthodox Church on national grounds, in 1959 and 1993 respectively. Thus I argue that like the diaspora the ecumene is often viewed in national terms today, but it also exists as an alternative to a national imaginary.

Throughout the rest of this chapter, I will explore the ecumene as a part of the everyday lives of members of the Coptic community and consider the ways in which it aids their work to become part of the majority. The ecumene is not (just) a theoretical (or theological) construct, as I outlined it above, but it has practical everyday consequences.

As I set out in Chapter Three, when examining narratives of time and space in the diaspora, so I argue here too spending time with the English Copts at the Coptic Youth Conference in Vienna: they felt a tension between the various places of their lives, England and Egypt. On the bus on the way to Vienna, they asked each other, “Are you made in England?” playing off a record title by the English-born Elton John. (One boy said that he was born in Cairo: Made in Egypt.) On the other hand, as I hypothesized in Chapter Two, it is significant that this does not work as well in Germany where many Germans feel uncomfortable identifying themselves as “Deutsch” and children make fun of the Made in Germany label by playing on the word *maggot* (Made).²⁰³

In Chapter Two my friend Sharif expressed another complexity of referring to himself as “*Deutscher*”. “*A German with brown hair and brown eyes, yeah? That doesn’t exist.*” (Ein Deutscher mit schwarzen Haare und braunen Augen, ja? So was gibt’s nicht.) At the same time

²⁰³ This denigration of national identity labels in Germany is a generational phenomenon and many scholars have noticed an increase in public nationalist discourse in Germany in recent decades. One middle-aged German-born Coptic Orthodox convert argued with me once that the difference between the United States and Germany is that in the United States people feel very comfortable flying flags outside of their homes where as they would not do that in Germany. Shortly after this conversation there were German flags flying throughout Berlin for the World Cup soccer championship.

that Sharif was engaging with German discourses on race, however, he also echoed the sentiments of many native-born Germans in one of his other answers to my questions: "*This nationality...nationality question plays no role for me.*" (Diese Nationalität...Nationalitätsfrage spielt bei mir überhaupt keine Rolle.) As Sharif identifies in his remarks, the reduction in national belonging in Germany is due to twin anti-nationalism and anti-immigrant stances prominent in the country. I have suggested (see Chapter One) that these sentiments contribute to the increase in ecumenical strategies of belonging. It is to Germany's Copts' ecumenical strategies that I now turn. Keeping in mind the national construction of the ecumene, I will show how the ecumene is always also conceived of as a pan-European phenomenon with a goal beyond the national.

Becoming (Part of) the Majority

It might benefit the reader to think of ecumenical practices as an alternative way to expand a church. A great deal has been written on conversion in anthropology and some of this literature was included in the section on *Conversion and Christianity as Heritable* in Chapter Two. It is a fascinating topic and seems ideally designed for anthropological inquiry since it is a transformation of a person a-new, now a person belonging to a new community. Mormons, Pentecostals and other types of global Christianity have been part of anthropological inquiry in part because of their exponential growth rate. The Coptic Orthodox Church and other "mainline" Christian churches are (no longer) experiencing these types of growth rates for their churches. Where conversion is very limited, the ecumene is an alternative way to grow the church.

As I outlined in Chapter Two, Copts do not actively practice conversion and only encourage conversion in cases of marriage. In that chapter I even describe Sophia, who was actively discouraged from converting amid fears that her marriage might not stand the test of

time. In Chapter Five I describe how Copts in the diaspora do have a focus on mission, but it is a mission to their own youth. There is a Bishop for the diaspora whose job is defined as this mission to the youth. Before beginning my fieldwork, I did not think of a mission as something that was directed towards a church's existing membership, but the Coptic Orthodox Church is very concerned about the youth in the diaspora. As Pope Shenouda said in his 1994 address about "Service Overseas" (*Dienst im Ausland*), which Bishop Damian voices in Figure 5.12, "A church without a youth is a church without a future." (Kirche ohne Jugend ist eine Kirche ohne Zukunft.) The focus of the mission to the youth is to keep diasporic youth connected to the Coptic Church. The Coptic focus on bringing people into the church through marriage and birth is consistent with the portrait of Coptic Christianity as a hereditary religion, one that grows through kinship, that I presented in Chapter Two. With this limited possibility for growth in a small diaspora community, I argue the ecumene is a powerful method by which Copts can transform themselves from a small minority into the (Christian) majority.

In Chapter Five I addressed some of the ways in which one of the (linguistic) resources for constructing the ecumene is the liturgy. Only Oriental Orthodox Christians are officially in full communion with the Coptic Orthodox Church, but there are many special circumstances that allow for communion or sacraments among a wider range of churches in the ecumene. In the Berlin community, non-Protestant Christians were not required to convert for marriage. A Roman Catholic receiving communion in the Coptic Orthodox Church might require a ceremony of anointing by the priest, but not a full immersion baptism. (Some full converts chose to be baptised again or receive communion again anyway.) I argue ecumenical church services, although they do not always involve the preparation of the eucharist, are an important way in which the ecumene is built and reinforced, even beyond those who share communion. However,

constructions of the ecumene are not limited to the liturgy. The remainder of this chapter details some of the everyday consequences and privileges of membership in the ecumene (or the perceived exclusion from it).

Locating the Ecumene

- ***“We’re Christian.” (Part 1)***

The first time I visited the Coptic Church in Berlin, I did not go in. I walked around the outside and I found a bulletin board with a brochure pinned up on it that asked, “Who are the Copts?” The answer was: “The Copts are Egyptian Christians.” This claim reminds one of Miriam's interview in Chapter Two in which she described how the word Copt means Egyptian even though people may assume that it means Christian because it ties Copts to the country of Egypt. At the same time, it is a definition that can encompass more Christian groups from Egypt within it than the Coptic Orthodox Church, as did Bishop Angelos’ prayer ritual above.

Following this definition, my friend Yustos told me after several months as my Arabic teacher that he was Coptic. He is the same person who in Chapter Two criticized me for not already having deduced this information based on his name. I later found out that he was raised Catholic in Egypt and had only begun to attend the Coptic Orthodox Church after emigrating to Europe. He told me at that time that the experience of going to the Coptic Orthodox Church was closer to the experience of attending the Roman Catholic Church in which he grew up than the European Catholic churches that were available. When he first came to Berlin, however, the Coptic Orthodox Church held its services in a Catholic Church they rented for this purpose. In this way he was attending the Coptic Church, but in a Catholic Church space so that his membership was in some ways bivalent. Yustos had no hesitation describing himself as “Coptic”. Coptic for him meant Egyptian Christian (Figure 2.1).

| | | | |
|----|----|---|--|
| 1 | E: | So, ah, gehen Sie lieber zu [der] koptischen Kirche, oder sind Sie mal zu anderen christlichen Kirchen gegangen? | So, um, do you prefer to go to the Coptic church, or have you ever gone to other Christian churches? |
| 2 | L: | Also, als ich allein war, bin ich zu anderen, äh, Konfessionen gegangen. Ich war bei der evangelischen Kirche, ich war bei der, ähh, charismatischen Kirche, ich war bei der katholischen Kirche, ich war auch bei diesen, ähm, wie heißen die, äh, äh, wie heißt diese, diese Konfession in Amerika, die ist sehr berühmt? | Okay, when I was single, I sometimes went to other, um, confessions. I went to the Protestant Church. I went to the Charismatic Church. I went to the Catholic Church. I was also at the, um, how are they called, um, um, how is this confession called in America, they are very famous? |
| 3 | E: | Äh, die, so noch eine christliche? Babtist[en]? | Um, the, so still a Christian one? Baptists? |
| 4 | L: | Ja, die viele Frauen heiraten dürfen und so. Wie heißen die? Mormonen. | Yeah, the ones who are allowed to marry many women and so on. How are they called? Mormons. |
| 5 | E: | Mormonen, ja! Du bist... | Mormons, yes! You were... |
| 6 | L: | Da war ich auch mal. | I went there once as well. |
| 7 | E: | Oh, wirklich? Einfach [um] das zu erleben? Oder aus Interesse? | Oh, really? Simply to experience it? Or because you were interested? |
| 8 | L: | Nee ich wollte, ich wollte alle andern kennenlernen einfach. | No, I wanted, I wanted to simply get to know the others. |
| 9 | E: | Ohh, ja manchmal - ich finde das auch schön. Aber nicht, weil du dachtest: Vielleicht findest du eine andere für dich selbst? Sondern... | Oh, yes, sometimes - I also find that nice. But not, because you thought: Maybe you'll find another [confession] for yourself? |
| 10 | L: | Ja es, es war wichtig auch zu wissen, äh, ob ja, ob ich sozusagen, ähm, sagen wir mal, so bei der richtigen Konfession für mich [bin]. Und daß da Richtige für mich ist. Ich hab alle anderen kennengelernt und ich glaube, ich bin doch bei dem, bei der koptischen Kirche gut aufgehoben. | Yes it, it was important also to learn, um, whether yeah, whether I so to speak, um, so let's say, whether I was in the right confession for me, whether that is the right one for me. I got to know all the others and I believe, I am in fact rightly placed in the Coptic Church. |

Figure 6.1: Luca on other confessions

In Chapter Two I used Yustos' description of being Coptic (Figure 2.1) as evidence for a genealogical definition of religion because he describes being a Copt as running in his blood. In contrast in his interview Luca offered a portrayal of his decision to attend the Coptic Orthodox Church that was explicitly not genealogical. I argue that the way in which he disputed this

genealogical definition (implicitly) was based upon and participated in constructing the ecumene. Which churches can be described as Christian?

In 2006, I was waiting on a subway platform in Hanover with two Coptic priests and the Coptic Bishop for Germany. All three were wearing the black monastic robes that Coptic priests wear on non-ceremonial occasions. A man who may have been intoxicated approached us and asked them where they were from. The priest from Berlin quickly replied, “*We’re Christian.*” The group was tense. As I described in Chapter Two, the danger discourses for immigrants in Germany are frequently centered around public transport. I knew this priest had experienced xenophobic harassment and intimidation living and working in Lichtenberg. The priest showed with his response that day on the subway platform that he felt it was most important in Germany not to be Coptic, but to be Christian (and not Muslim). I will explore this particular example more below.

I argue Copts used the category of Christian in their daily lives to negotiate their membership as Copts in the Christian ecumene. This is the same activity that the English youth at the “Euro conference” were engaged in. In the example of the talent show, the youth develop their membership in the ecumene by singing non-Coptic Christian songs as “the Coptic Church in England.” In these examples and others that I will provide below, Copts explicitly make use of categories that have a wider reach than Coptic Orthodoxy for self-description. These examples reveal understanding of the Christian ecumene as a structure of nested groups (see Figure 6.2).

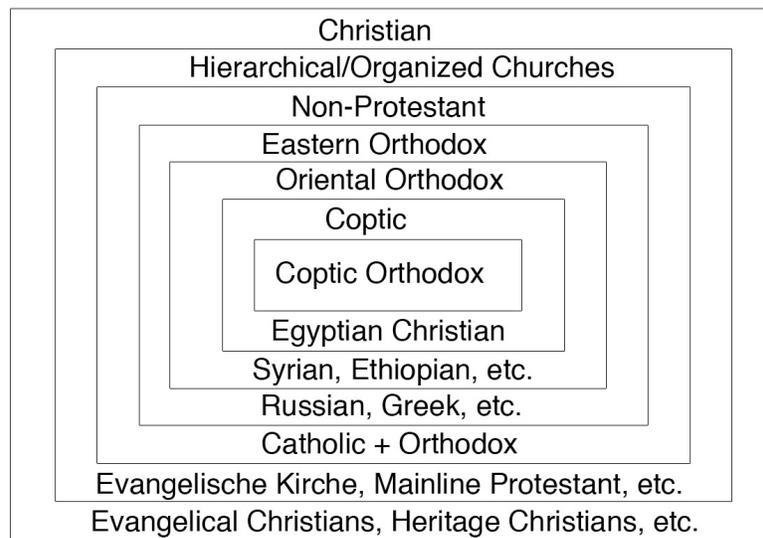


Figure 6.2: The nesting of Christianity

Yustos is Catholic but also Coptic. The youth attending the Bishop’s Oriental Orthodox Youth Conference were Coptic but also Orthodox. In the Pope’s proclamation from Chapter Five, the Orthodox churches are Orthodox, but also non-Protestant. All of these Christian groups (whether churches, communities, or diasporas) can be enveloped within the widest term of Christian.

Throughout my fieldwork, I found that personal friendships followed these diagrammed structural alliances as much as organizational friendships did. My Catholic Egyptian friend Yustos had a best friend who was a regular attendee at the Coptic Orthodox Church in Berlin. I went to a talk at Berlin's Greek Orthodox Church with Sharif and a female friend of his who was Armenian Orthodox. I later met her again when I went to an ecumenical church service at the Armenian Orthodox Church with Bishop Damian and several prominent community members.

Nesting has been discussed by linguists as a locating phenomenon (e.g., Schegloff, 1971). When asked “Where are you from?” one can answer “I am from the United States” at a high

level of generality. “I am from New York”, narrows the field. Each location is nested within the other until you reach the specificity of your street and house number or the hospital in which you were born. The nesting of Christianity that I suggest Copts use in their self-definition and definition of others has many similarities to this other type of locating. The most general category is Christian and the most specific category is Coptic Orthodox.²⁰⁴ In both cases the nesting can be evaluative.²⁰⁵

• ***“Where are you from?” (Part II)***

In the diagram I have created of nested Christian groups (Figure 6.2), I show some of the spatial and religious tensions in the schema. I have suggested that one remove from Coptic Orthodox Christians is the broader label “Coptic,” which means Egyptian Christians. It is this label Yustos could use to identify himself as Coptic. It is also using this structure that Bishop Angelos in England set up an ecumenical meeting after the protests began in Cairo at the beginning of 2011 with the tagline, “The church of Egypt prays for Egypt.” On the website for this service when it first took place, one of the priests admitted that he was not used to this kind of ecumenical activity since it does not take place in Egypt.²⁰⁶ The ecumene I describe here, including its categories and the way it is articulated and used by and for Copts, is a diasporic phenomenon. At the same time it has intended consequences for Egypt, especially in garnering international support for Egypt’s Coptic minority and their suffering.

²⁰⁴ In a strongly hierarchical organization like the Coptic Church, the nesting in some sense continues to an even greater degree of specificity within the hierarchy from deacon, priest and bishop to Pope. Chapter One and Chapter Four discuss further aspects of this hierarchy.

²⁰⁵ The Coptic Orthodox Church is not only more specific than Egyptian Christian or Orthodox Christian, it is also 'better' in this ideology because it maintains the ancient traditions of the original church. There is a parallel here to Pope Benedict’s statement on the Catholic Church as the one true church, which received so much media attention (Chapter Five). How do you negotiate the ecumene while still allowing that only your specific church is the true church? As described in that chapter, this is a tension in the ecumene.

²⁰⁶ See Heo (2012) and Chapter One for a discussion of this anti-ecumenicalism in Egypt.

I argue that Coptic Christian is a spatial and geographic designator in addition to being a theological one. The spatial definition of “Coptic” is in tension with the other place that Yustos, for example, could have fit (theologically) in this diagram. He could have belonged in the category of Non-Protestant where other (non-Egyptian) Catholics would be placed, but he belongs in the category Coptic because he has origins in Egypt. This geographic closeness was what prompted Bishop Damian in Chapter Three (Figure 3.12) to refer to the visiting Catholic priest from Egypt as *Coptic-Catholic*. When he first moved to Europe Yustos chose to attend the Coptic church, which I argued in Chapter Three is geographically closer to Egypt, but by the time of my fieldwork he went to a (European) Roman Catholic Church closer to his house when he attended services. This is an example of how Copts must negotiate the complexities of ecumene in their daily lives.

Taking into consideration the perceived overlap between theological and geographic closeness, I argue the theological categories of this diagram map onto geographic ones so that Oriental Orthodox Christians are spatially near to Copts as well as close to them doctrinally. Armenian Orthodox Christians are both geographically and doctrinally close to Copts, for example. Russian and Greek Orthodox Christians are further away both spatially and doctrinally in a scheme where national belonging and religious affiliation can be mapped geographically.

In conversations during my fieldwork, evangelical Christians or Mormons (see Figure 6.1) were often mapped onto America such that they were both geographically and doctrinally far from Coptic Orthodox Christianity. For example, during my fieldwork George Bush was president of the United States. It was known and commented upon that he is an evangelical Christian. I was once at a dinner with several Copts and a preacher for an African Pentecostal church in Berlin, and one Copt at the table asked me questions about George Bush's evangelical

Christianity that made it clear they were unaware that the preacher was Pentecostal. For my Coptic interlocutor the spatial nearness of our dinner guest as a man in the African diaspora excluded the possibility that he was an Evangelical Christian, so doctrinally far from Coptic Christianity.

The above example shows that the doctrinal positions of churches do not always map as neatly onto geographical categories as it may first appear. I argue this is especially clear in the diaspora. Amun, an active member in the Coptic Orthodox Church in Berlin, was involved in organizing a series of choir concerts, which were ecumenical in nature and included the participation of many Christian churches in Berlin. What the churches had in common is that they all described themselves as “African.” These choir concerts included Syrian Orthodox Church performances, Russian Orthodox Church performances, evangelical Christian performances, and others creating an ecumene of different types of Christianity linked to one continental space. Their geographic closeness allowed them to overcome their doctrinal remoteness in the diaspora.

Despite the failure of religion and geography to always map neatly onto one another, I suggest that it is the link between geography and theology that prompted Abuna to answer to the question from his encounter on the subway platform “Where are you from?” with “We are Christian.” I argue that for Copts, Europe is a Christian place. In one sense, when Abuna answers the question “Where are you from?” with “We’re Christian,” he is providing the answer to an unspoken implied question to which “Where are you from?” is intended to uncover the answer. That question is: “Are you Muslim?” Insofar as he was addressing the implicature inherent in the question it was not a non sequitur when the priest answered the question “Where are you from?” with “We’re Christian.” In fact, I suggest that the answer “We are Christian,” is locating for

Copts.²⁰⁷ In this way, the nesting of Christian groups is similar to the nesting of geographical location that sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists have long recognized. Through an iconization, the processes of which were identified in Chapters Two and Three, I argue that Christianity can be mapped onto a geographic location: Europe. In Germany, I argue that Copts see themselves, and hope to be seen by others, first and foremost as Christian. Since Christianity is the majority religion of Germany and Europe, being Christian can make Copts at home in Europe. Thus, the answer to the question “Where are you from?” can be “We’re Christian.” Being Christian makes one from Europe. Islam is elsewhere. I argue the limits of Europe are defined in ecumenical terms.

Throughout the dissertation I have investigated ways in which, for Copts, Europe is a Christian place and how I argue they see themselves as belonging within it. I have explored theories of race, religion and language as heritable (Chapter Two) and considered the desecularization of Christian buildings as part of re-creating a Christian past for Europe (Chapter Three). I have examined the textuality of the diaspora (Chapter Four) and ideologies of code choice (Chapter Five) to show how these open up the possibility for a language shift to German, which I argue is intimately linked to the semiotics of temporality, which sees Germany and the ecumene as future.

I suggest that when Abuna was asked “Where are you from?” his answer was trying to address the implicature of the question. He de-emphasized his (perceived) *Ausländer* status (not from here) by appealing to perceived similarity or insider status (Christian). By being Christian, he could be *from here*. This echoes Ibrahim and Ibrahim’s (2000) applause for Copts as an

²⁰⁷ The German questioner also expected location to be revealing, but it wasn’t clear to me that he was actually interested in whether the little group on the platform was Muslim. However, this is how his advances and question were interpreted. The direct question he asked never was answered.

integrated minority in Germany in Chapter One, which they attributed in part to living in a "society founded on Christianity" (Ibrahim and Ibrahim, 2000:103, see footnote 19 above).

Sharif connected to this discourse of integration in his interview when he said, "*In many ways I feel more integrated here than in Egypt.*" (Ich fühlte mich mehr integriert hier als in Ägypten.)

Figure 6.3 is the way that one of my interviewees, a single man named Farangi, described his view of Coptic integration into Europe:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Farangi: Und ich hab' ja.. und ich ich ich ich habe jeden Tag Klienten, arabische Klienten, äh, die auch hier geboren sind, oder türkische zum Beispiel auch. Und die sind nicht so integriert, äh, wie die Kopten, weil die Kopten haben kein Problem mit der westlichen Kultur. Mit der christlichen Kultur. Also diese Kultur ist für uns nicht fremd. Aber für die Muslime, die haben damit ein großes Problem. Und die sind [???] integrierbar.</p> | <p>Farangi: And I have yes... and I, I, I, I have clients everyday, Arab clients, um, who are also born here, or Turkish, for example, too. And they are not so integrated, um, as the Copts, because the Copts have no problem with the Western culture. With the Christian culture. For us this culture isn't foreign. But for the Muslims, they have a big problem with it. And they are [difficult??] to integrate.</p> |
| <p>[portion of interview omitted]</p> | <p>[omitted]</p> |
| <p>Farangi: Nein, also das sagen sie auch, sie denken ich bin Moslem. Also ich sag auf Arbeit nicht, daß ich Christ bin. Und die reden frei dann mit mir. Und sie, sie sagen ganz offen und klar, daß sie diese Kultur ablehnen.</p> | <p>Farangi: No, this is something they also say themselves. They think I'm Muslim. Okay, I don't say at work that I am Christian. And they talk freely with me then. And they, they say completely openly and clearly that they reject this culture.</p> |

Figure 6.3: Christian culture and the limits of Europe

When I followed this comment with a statement that claimed this was the way that he felt rather than a strictly factual claim, Farangi, who works with minorities in Berlin, argued against my stance, suggesting instead that this is not his own position, but the position of Muslims, attributing this view to those about whom it is expressed. He says in Figure 6.3, "[T]hey, they say completely openly and clearly that they reject this culture."

I argue these examples are part of an engagement of the discourse of integration in circulation in Germany, which I discussed in Chapter One. As I mentioned above, Talal Asad

(2005) has argued that defining the boundaries of Europe through Christendom is a distinctly European way to represent its boundaries and exclude its Muslim minorities. Ewing (2008:19, see footnote 20 above) also describes how public discourse in Germany excludes Muslims on the grounds of having a different culture. My analysis throughout the dissertation argues that this is not only a European discourse, however. It may be a European discourse, but it is also a discourse that is embedded in the language ideologies of a Middle Eastern diaspora. As they work to make themselves part of the majority, Copts may define the borders of Europe and the ecumene so as to exclude Muslims from it. Of course, it should go without saying that not all Copts participate in this exclusion discourse explicitly. They may even contest it. However, I would suggest that even when they do contest it, they may still participate in it implicitly through their language ideologies, including views of language shift, detailed in this dissertation.

The Christian “We” and the Moral Ecumene

In February 2008, an article featuring the Coptic Church, entitled *The Copts: Bild-visit to one of the Oldest Churches in the World in Höxter* (Die Kopten: Bild-Besuch bei einer der Ältesten Kirchen der Welt in Höxter), was published in the *Bild* newspaper (Reichelt, 2008).²⁰⁸ *Bild* is the bestselling newspaper in Germany. It attracts its audience with its inflammatory articles, bright pictures, and borderline tabloid-level stories, not to mention extensive advertising on billboards at bus stops.

Since I am not a reader of *Bild*, I might never have been aware of this article except that I was visiting the monastery in Höxter, the same one that the *Bild* reporter also visited, shortly

²⁰⁸ All quotations from this article are taken from Reichelt (2008). I do not include page numbers because of the limitations of internet formatting.

before it went to press.²⁰⁹ The reporter had sent a copy of the article to Bishop Damian for his comments. Bishop Damian happily passed it around to the three guests who were visiting the monastery at the time. These included myself, a Coptic man, and Sophia. He asked us what we thought. The Bishop himself appeared to be extremely pleased with the article and especially that *Bild* was interested in publishing an article about Copts.

The article opens by describing the monastery and Bishop Damian. After this, it is constructed in a question-answer format. First, the article answers for the reader the question “*Who are the Copts?*” (“*Wer sind die Kopten?*”) The answer is not Egyptian Christians, but “*One of the oldest churches in the world!*” (“*Eine der ältesten Kirchen der Welt!*”)²¹⁰ The first hint of the article’s potentially inflammatory theme is a quote from Bishop Damian, “*Sometimes the children call out to me ‘Hello, Osama bin Laden’ in the street.*” (Manchmal rufen mir Kinder, ‘Hallo, Osama bin Laden’ auf der Straße nach.’) The article attributes this mistaken identity to the “long beards” that “they” have.²¹¹ The article then goes on to describe the rebuilding of the monastery before bringing the discussion around to “...*the most important, most dangerous theme of our time — the dialogue between Christians and Muslims.*” (...das wichtigste, gefährlichste Thema unserer Zeit – den Dialog zwischen Christen und Moslems.)

²⁰⁹ Later I asked Bishop Damian to e-mail me news articles about Copts as he became aware of them and now I receive regular e-mails with articles about Copts in Germany (mostly the local Höxter paper) attached, as part of an e-mail list maintained by the Bishop.

²¹⁰ This article participates in the bringing of ancient Egypt to Germany with its subtitle: “*Bild-visit to one of the oldest churches in the world in Höxter.*” The Coptic Orthodox Church is not just one of the oldest churches in the world, but you can visit this ancient church simply by traveling to a small town in Germany, and its former Benedictine monastery. This is an example of the type of process I described in Chapter Three.

²¹¹ Bishop Damian does have a long beard, but it is not typical of non-clergy. The article does not mention any other characteristics that might have led children to this designation such as clothing or other identifying attributes of the type discussed in Chapter Two.

For the purposes of my discussion of the ecumene, I am interested in this article because of the way in which Bishop Damian, with the help of the *Bild* reporter, moves as the article progresses to incorporate Copts into the Christian ecumene.²¹² The discussion starts first with the specificity of the Coptic Church, “*we Copts*,” (wir Kopten) in contrast to “*the Muslims*” (den Moslems). But within the same quotation, Bishop Damian has already moved to incorporate the Coptic Orthodox Church into Christendom. I will include the entire quotation here so the reader can see this use of language as social action. “*Since the 7th century we Copts are living with Muslims. We know their mentality. We know how they think. We can be the bridge of peace between Islam and Christianity.*” (“Seit dem siebten Jahrhundert leben wir Kopten mit den Moslems. Wir kennen ihre Mentalität. Wir wissen, wie sie denken. Wir können die Brücke des Friedens sein zwischen Islam und Christentum.”)

These sentences set up several important contrasts. There is a contrast between Copts and Muslims. As the description continues, this develops into a contrast between the mentality of Copts and the mentality of Muslims.²¹³ Then Bishop Damian puts Copts in the role of being a bridge of peace between Christendom and Islam, thus placing Coptic Orthodoxy squarely in the ecumene, within Christendom, a category which will then be further located as the article continues. (As we saw above, Christianity for Copts in Germany is at home in Europe just as

²¹² Since I wasn’t present during the original interview, I have no way of knowing how much of the composition that follows was part of a relatively spontaneous conversation and follows the original flow of the interview or how much of it was sculpted later by the reporter Julian Reichelt. What I do know is that Bishop Damian saw and approved of this final version before it went to press, as did my companions at the monastery. I was the only one who expressed concern about the content, which I address below.

²¹³ In my experience, in Germany describing someone else’s “mentality” usually meant you were describing something negative about them. There is always the possibility that Bishop Damian as a non-native speaker did not intend this nuance, but it is open for interpretation.

Benedict Anderson's (1991) Christendom was, but I argue this is not a limitless Christendom, but one with very specific borders.)

The next question asks, "*What can the western world do, Mr. Bishop?*" (Was kann die westliche Welt tun, Herr Bischof?) It is not clear from the question that the reporter includes Copts in the category of the "*western world*," but Bishop Damian's reply does. "*Hate and aggression are a language, which we Christians are never allowed to use. Neighborly love is our inheritance and our treasure. When a Muslim in Egypt needs money...*" (Hass und Aggression sind eine Sprache, die wir Christen niemals verwenden dürfen. Nächstenliebe ist unser Reichtum, unser Schatz. Wenn ein Moslem in Ägypten Geld braucht...) Bishop Damian places "*the western world*" in Egypt and uses the actions of Copts as a demonstration of what all Christians can do to teach neighborly love to Muslims. "*We have a responsibility to expand the culture of neighborly love.*" (Wir haben die Pflicht, diese Kultur der Nächstenliebe zu verbreiten.) This places Copts and the rest of the western world into the same category, encompassed by one culture of neighborly love. The ecumene, active in Egypt, becomes a western phenomenon and a cultural one.

The article goes on to describe how Christians ("*we*") must provide Muslims with education (*Bildung*) and language.²¹⁴ When asked what the "*islamische Welt*" (Islamic world), now contrasted with the "*western world*" of which Copts are a part, must still learn about Christendom, Bishop Damian replied, "Sie müssen lernen, die Großzügigkeit der Christen

²¹⁴ The language of which he speaks is not a similar code, but instead a similar meaning for words. Bishop Damian uses the example of martyr and says that in parts of the "*Islamic world*" people that "*we*" think of as Terrorists are thought of as heroes because we have different definitions of what this word means. As I described in Chapter Three, the Coptic Church defines itself as a church of martyrs. This example of teaching "*language*" also reinforces the de-emphasis on code choice that was outlined in Chapter Five.

anzunehmen und nicht als Schwäche zu deuten.” (They must learn to take on the generosity of Christians and not to think of it as a weakness.)

This was one of the key points in the article that I suggested to Bishop Damian and the others might be offensive to Muslims. I pointed out that if he truly hoped for Copts to be “the bridge of peace” between Muslims and Christians, it could upset Muslims to be told that they do not understand generosity and see it as a weakness. In my defense of an alternative perspective on the article, I tried to argue that it was not in the interest of peace to suggest Muslims did not have education or neighborly love. I used the phrase “*If I were a Muslim...*” (Wenn ich ein Moslem wäre...) This resulted in a blank stare from my interlocutors. It was clear to me through this conversation the goal of the article was not to be a bridge of peace between Islam and Christianity.²¹⁵ I argue now that the bridge created in this article, with the slippage to which pronouns make themselves available and the careful deployment of categories of belonging, is a bridge between Coptic Orthodoxy and the rest of Christianity.

The question about what the “Islamic world” still needs to learn about “Christendom” (answer: generosity) was followed by the question: “*What must we learn?*” (Was müssen wir lernen?) With this formulation the reporter aligns us (*we*) with Christianity, spreading the wide net of the ecumenical “we” across himself, Bishop Damian and, one supposes, the presumed reader as well. Bishop Damian, as the article constructs him, answers that we must be strong in our Christian belief to have a dialogue: “*One can’t speak for oneself when one stands on weak legs. That Islam is among us, should give us motivation, to look to the traditions and strengths of our own beliefs.*” (Man kann nicht für sich sprechen, wenn man auf wackeligen Beinen steht. Dass der Islam unter uns ist, sollte uns Anlass geben, auf die Traditionen und Stärken unseres

²¹⁵ I also suggested that *Bild* wouldn’t have published the article if that was the goal. After all, peace is not what sells newspaper nor is it what *Bild* is known for promulgating.

eigenes Glaubens zu blicken.) Earlier in the article, Bishop Damian moved the western world to Egypt to include Copts in the ecumene. Here we are squarely back in Europe again, but still within the Christian “we” that includes Copts.

The reader can know we have returned to Europe because Bishop Damian describes Islam as among us (*unter uns*), a description of the situation in Germany, where Muslims who have emigrated from Turkey make up Germany’s largest immigrant community. Bishop Damian includes Copts in the “us” of Europe and unflatteringly describes the situation of the Muslim minority as people who are “among us” or literally “under us.” I have been cautioned by my German research assistants that they wouldn’t necessarily jump to any conclusions about what Bishop Damian meant here since he is not a native German speaker, but I can elucidate how this statement would be read by the *Bild* audience. To describe a person or thing as “among us” in German is very unflattering. It’s the way that you would describe spies or zombies who have infiltrated. This is not a descriptor for a community of neighbors with whom you hope to build a bridge of peace. This phrasing does two important related things simultaneously. It subjugates Muslims (and Islam) in Europe and it places Copts in the category of “us,” Christians who are the majority.

The final question of the article is also a final move to situate Copts within not only the Christian ecumene, but within the space of Europe as central to the Christian ecumene. Describing the future, Bishop Damian is reported as saying: “*The Europeans are responsible for educating people in order to open their hearts. Islam must learn to accept criticism.*” (Die Europäer sind in der Verantwortung, Menschen auszubilden, ihre Herzen zu öffnen. Der Islam muss lernen, Kritik anzunehmen.) I argue that this *Bild* article is a series of contrasts that escalates from Copt vs. Muslim to Christianity vs. Islam and now finally the Europeans vs.

Islam. Copts are always included within the category as an opposition to Islam. Thus we see that through the work of strategic pronouns and a variety of terminological contrasts, Bishop Damian and the *Bild* reporter have located the ecumene in Europe, just as Berlin's priest did above when he answered the question "Where are you from?" with "We're Christian." Christianity, for Copts in Germany, is at home in Europe.

By the end of the article, Christianity, and the Coptic community with it, are placed in Europe so that Christian becomes a synonym for European. This is an iconization process (Irvine and Gal, 2000), like the one discussed in Chapter Two. Once again, as I showed in Chapter Three, there is a particular religion, Christianity, mapped onto a geographic space, Europe. The continent becomes an icon for the ecumene. In this way, the nesting of the ecumene, as discussed above, is also a *locative* nesting. Although other scholarship has considered the ecumene universalizing, I argue that in this formulation the borders of the ecumene are the borders of Europe.

Throughout not only media presentations such as this *Bild* article, but a wide variety of linguistic and semiotic processes, some of which I have outlined in the dissertation, I argue Copts perform the work of locating themselves in Europe as part of the Christian majority. Bishop Damian knows as well as anyone does who has lived in Germany for a large part of their life, that many Germans are inactive in their observance of Christianity. Therefore, his work in this article is not only to incorporate Copts into a Christian Europe, but also to incorporate Europeans into the Christian ecumene, exhorting them to become stronger in their beliefs and "*to look to the traditions and strengths of their own beliefs.*" (...auf die Traditionen und Stärken unseres eigenen Glaubens zu blicken.)

Bishop Damian's work in this article, as a co-construction with the reporter from *Bild*, is then similar to that described by Susan Harding (1987) when she 'interviewed' a Baptist preacher. As she drove away from the interview turned conversion narrative, Harding described how she nearly hit another car and thought to herself afterwards "What is God trying to tell me?" Although we do not have access to his inner thoughts, the reporter leaving Bishop Damian at the monastery describes a similar type of experience in his car. "*Through purple clouds the sun shines down in wide gold slices. 'God's rays' is what one calls this magical light.*" (Durch lila Wolken fällt die Sonne in breiten goldenen Scheiben. 'Götterstrahlen' nennt man dieses magische Licht.) This is the image that closes the article.

Although this is not as stark of an example as Susan Harding's, it is more appropriate to the type of community expansion (an alternative to conversion) Bishop Damian and Julian Reichelt are engaged in orchestrating through this textual dialogue. It displays the reporter's support of the idea that Germany is in fact a Christian land. The author points to the foundational Christianity, so to speak, that I have argued many Germans see as a part of Germany, and the impact of this traditional Christianity on the German language. This is the narrative he participates in as he leaves the monastery. I argue this is also a type of heritable Christianity (see Chapter Two), which makes it possible for Germans and Copts to be part of the same semiotic community and to be encompassed within the Christian ecumene. So in effect the conversion narrative of Bishop Damian, like that of Harding's baptist preacher, was effective. The reporter is converted to the ecumene. The ecumene is a way for Christianity to grow stronger through dialogue, in this case not with Muslims, but with other Christians about Muslims.

When Bishop Damian asked my opinion on this article before it went to press, I pointed out that the article was inflammatory, as is much of the material *Bild* publishes. I took to heart

Bishop Damian's claim that the Copts could be a bridge between Christianity and Islam and I argued that "*if I were a Muslim*" I would not be very happy with the more or less implicit claims in the article that Muslims are not generous, lack in education and linguistic subtlety, and do not understand neighborly love, but instead are participating in a religion that embraces hate and aggression. In retrospect, I can see why my criticisms fell on deaf ears and both the interviewee and the other readers at the monastery looked at me as if I had entirely missed the point. This is because I had missed the point. I submit that Bishop Damian's dialogic construction with this interview was not to build a bridge between Copts and Muslims, but to build one between Christians (Copts) and Christians (Germans of Christian heritage).

I have entitled this section *The Moral Ecumene* because in this *Bild* article I have shown that, in addition to the terminological and categorical contrasts and the strategic use of inclusive pronouns, Christianity is set apart by its perceived superior morality. Where Christians are generous and teach their proponents to love their neighbor, some of the Copts I worked with described Islam as a religion that taught deception, telling its followers in the Koran that it was okay to lie and manipulate until one was in a position of power. For these Copts, as in the *Bild* article, Islam is fundamentally a religion lacking in morality, as Christians would see it. The reason I use this article to set up the final section of this chapter on the goals of the ecumene, rather than spontaneous conversations, is because my conversations on this topic were typically of a very private type. One interviewee specifically asked me to turn off the tape recorder for one section of our interview where we discussed Islam. Bishop Damian's article makes public discourses that are usually private in the community, positioning a Christian "we" against the "they" of Islam. (Like aliens, they are among us.) At the same time, I do not want to give the impression that there were no counter discourses. Luca, ever the counter example from the

interview participants described in the dissertation, made only one mention of Muslims in his interview and that was to say:

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| <p>Luca: Ja, also mein... wenn ich mich mit jemanden anfreunde, da fragt ich nicht, er ist ein, äh, Deutscher oder Araber oder Christ oder so. Das [???] so. Aber natürlich, äh, ich bewege mich in bestimmten Kreisen. Deswegen habe ich koptische Freunde, habe ich muslimische Freunde und habe ich auch deutsche Freunde.</p> | <p>Luca: Yes, okay my... when I become friends with someone, I don't ask, is he a, um, German or Arab or Christian or so on. That [???] so. But naturally, um, I move in particular circles. For this reason I have Coptic friends. I have Muslim friends. And I have German friends.</p> |
|--|--|

Figure 6.4: Luca on friendship

The use of the Christian “we” is not only a strategy of those in the hierarchy. A priest on the subway might use it to fend off potential harassment or English youth might use it to empower themselves as performers. I argue the ecumene is not only a contrast between Christians and Muslims, but a nested set of categories of belonging within Christianity. The ecumene is the way into the majority for Copts and as such it includes a particular semiotics of temporality. In my chart I have included in the outermost inclusive category of the ecumene “heritage Christians.” I argue even the least religious non-Coptic Germans could fit into the category of heritage Christians and thereby be included in the ecumene, as was I.

As I have argued throughout this chapter, the ecumene is mapped onto Europe for Copts such that Europe becomes a Christian space and this Christian space shares not only a past with Egypt but also a future. The ecumene is a spatial and temporal construction. A semiotic community is both created *and* located. As such, the discourses of the ecumene are, at their heart, discourses not only about who is Christian and who is not, but also about who belongs in Europe and who does not. From their use of texts, to their use of performatives in the liturgy, to their understanding of how code does and does not define a community, I would like to suggest in conclusion that Copts in the diaspora use linguistic practices not only to attempt to establish

themselves firmly within a Christian Europe, but to exclude Muslims and Islam from it. Even when they would not intend to do so, they may participate in such discourses implicitly through their language ideologies and the deployment of their semiotic resources.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

The dissertation is an exploration of the Coptic Orthodox diaspora in Europe centered on the community in Berlin, Germany. In the dissertation I argue that Copts are making a rhetorical effort to be identified with Europe in race, religion and language, seen as overlapping categories, in an attempt to both evade anti-immigrant prejudice and expand the domain of their co-religionaries, becoming part of the Christian majority. In my view this sociological project entails a semiotics of temporality such that Egypt is to be included as a root domain for Christendom and as part of the (future) ecumene of Christianity. I also argue that through an analysis of the liturgy and its texts we can see a language shift in progress as Arabic, devalued for its association with Islam and Arabs, is to be replaced by German. I suggest the wider semiotics of temporality is implicit in the language shift in progress. In this conclusion I will outline the main arguments with a focus on the conversations to which the dissertation contributes in sociocultural and linguistic anthropology. I will then address some compelling areas for further work that are opened by the current project.

Language Ideologies and Code Repertoires

The main focus of the dissertation is on the explicit and implicit language ideologies of the Coptic diaspora that contribute to the construction of this community and its boundaries. As discussed in Chapter One, these ideologies are dialogic and emerge in interaction. My dissertation is an exploration of the Coptic diaspora as a semiotic community. I use the idea of semiotic community as an alternative to Benedict Anderson's imagined community in order to

focus on how a diaspora is constructed through the use of language. The concept of semiotic community builds on work on speech community and language community, already productive units of analysis in the discipline for the investigation of code repertoires, while embracing a wider scope to incorporate some of the interactions between things and words that are integral to this diasporic community's reproduction and maintenance.²¹⁶

In exploring the language ideologies of the Coptic Orthodox diaspora, especially how they use, do not use, and talk about Coptic, Arabic and German in unexpected ways, I have addressed Copts' understanding of language from a variety of angles. In Chapter Two, I investigate the possibility for a language genealogy such that one's native language can be a language one does not speak. I identify a process of iconization between language, religion and race, which I argue may lead Copts to distance themselves from Arabic, Islam and Arabs. In Chapter Three I prepare the groundwork for the wider semiotics of temporality in which I argue these language ideologies should be viewed with an analysis of creating Egypt as a past for Germany at one of Germany's Coptic monasteries. In Chapters Four and Five, I analyze how the language ideologies of the community are both exhibited and contested through ideologies of the text and a focus on performative language. I suggest the code-switching in the liturgy makes explicit and even creates the possibility for German to become the language of the diaspora in a temporal progression from Coptic through Arabic to German. Taken together these chapters explore why and how the community is (often enthusiastically) shifting away from Arabic as a process of shifting towards a particular future. In Chapter Six I argue the future being

²¹⁶ Some examples of the author's interest in language and materiality are found in Chapter Three's narrative creation of the monastery, the exploration of a textual diaspora in Chapter Four and in the study of the transformation of the eucharist in Chapter Five.

constructed is the ecumene. This work contributes to studies of narrative and temporality as it focuses on how a temporal progression is created and performed.

One of the ways I hope this work will be influential in linguistic anthropology is in providing a more nuanced understanding of the language ideologies of Christianity, by investigating a diaspora community whose Christianity is not of the very vocal evangelizing and/or Protestant type. These versions of Christianity have been dominant in our understanding of the possible semiotic relationships available to Christians and/or anthropologists. One example from the dissertation of juxtaposing Coptic Orthodox Christianity to such portrayals is in the investigation of the participant roles of the liturgy in Chapter Five and how they contribute to the specific temporality and (I argue) resulting heteroglossia of the ritual for this community. Work on non-Protestant Christianity and Christian minorities is beneficial for all linguistic anthropologists who encounter Christianity in their fieldsites or take it as an unexamined backdrop against which to set up comparisons. One of the strengths of this dissertation is the way in which it does not consider the Coptic diaspora divorced from the language ideologies, narrative practices, and religion of the majority in which Copts are situated in Germany, but explores how German and European theories of religion, space and language interact with and are co-constructed and reinforced by those held by Copts.

Semiotics of Diaspora

The idea that Christianity can construct diaspora is contested in the anthropological literature for a variety of reasons, including that Christianity is conceived of as unlimited in its reach and uncentered in its locality, thereby lacking both a homeland and a bounded community of diaspora. I have used the ethnographic example of the Coptic Orthodox diaspora to examine the ways in which Christianity may instead be limited genealogically (Chapter Two), limited

spatially (Chapter Three and Chapter Six) and form a bounded community through linguistic practice, especially textual ideologies and performative language (Chapters Four and Five). On the other hand, while exploring a Christianity that has only a familial interest in conversion and mission, I have provided a valuable comparative case to studies that focus on expansion of so-called global Christianity by conversion.

I have found the construct of diaspora to be fruitful theoretically in approaching my broader interest in how language ideologies and narratives construct time and space for semiotic communities. I define diaspora as an inherently indexical construct, which it seems to me linguistic anthropology is ideally suited to examine. As an analysis of the times and spaces of diaspora, my work also provides a contribution to the anthropology of Germany's minority communities and the anthropology of Europe more broadly because it presents the struggles and resolutions of one minority's encounter with Europe's nations and their borders. I suggest in the final chapter that the *ecumene* may be used by Copts to define the limits of Europe as well as their place within it. This is the culminating argument of the dissertation towards which all the other chapters lead.

Future Work

• *Future Work: The Materiality of Language*

I have alluded above to my interest in the materiality of language and alternative ideologies of the sign. I am especially interested in possible non-arbitrary theories of the sign within Christianity, which I believe studies of Orthodoxy are ideally positioned to investigate. In Chapter Five I explore this in connection with the eucharist, but outside of Chapter Seven my interest in materiality, which underlies the arguments of Chapters Three, Four and Five, is not a

central focus of the dissertation. Instead, the dissertation lays the foundation for further work in this area. I am interested in how ideologies of materiality and text are linked to linguistic regimentation, heteroglossia and authorship. I see this work as a further contribution to the analysis in linguistic anthropology of the move from text to talk (and back again) through participant roles and narrative structures, which is a main focus of the dissertation. I would also like to engage more with the idea of textual homelands and contribute to work on how objects can become homelands for diaspora communities.

• ***Future Work: Arabic and Coptic, Islam and Christianity***

In the dissertation I explore why and how Copts consider Coptic to be their native language, distance themselves from Arabic, and are shifting towards German in the diaspora. I also articulate how these trends are negotiated and contested, providing a multidimensional picture of this language shift in progress. In future work, I would like to continue to explore this language shift. In the dissertation I argue that Arabic is understood by Copts to be the language of Islam and articulate ways in which Coptic can be a language of Christianity. One way in which I will explore this further is through language socialization and education practices.

When I visited Berlin in 2011 there was a course in Coptic currently being taught at the Coptic Orthodox Church, which was fertile ground for the exploration of how languages ideologies devaluing Arabic are constructed and shared. (As a class, we had a long conversation about the use of Allah as the name of God in Islam and the appropriate word for God in the Coptic Orthodox liturgy.) I have recordings of Arabic language courses taught in Berlin, which can serve as comparative data. I suspect that as the political situation continues to change in Egypt, with rising fears among Copts about their place as a Christian minority within a more overtly Islamic state, these topics will be at the forefront of discussion. I consider this work on

language ideologies and socialization to have many avenues for comparison with scholars who work with the Turkish German minority in Germany and other minority communities in Europe.

• ***Future Work: Multi-sited Ethnography***

Working with a diaspora is always a project of multi-sited ethnography. During my fieldwork I traveled throughout Germany and Europe following the bishop, the priest and other community members to services, conferences, and ecumenical events throughout Europe. I also spent one month in Egypt learning Arabic and experiencing Cairo. This trip was invaluable to me in gaining a better understanding of Egypt and the diaspora. In future fieldwork I plan to continue and deepen this multi-sited approach, exploring the Coptic diaspora in other parts of the globe. This will increase my understanding of which aspects of the Coptic diaspora experience are unique to Germany and in what ways they are part of broader temporal projections and processes of language shift. I also look forward to working with other scholars who are bringing new attention to Coptic Orthodox Christianity in Egypt and Middle Eastern diaspora around the globe. This work would be part of understanding the linguistic, textual and semiotic ideologies that construct the ecumene.

Finally, in my original research proposal, I had planned for more extensive archival work and engagement with departments of Coptology in Germany for a comparative understanding of ideologies of Coptic texts and how they may (or may not) be co-constructed in the diaspora. I completed fieldwork and have recordings from Coptology conferences, university classes, and encounters with Coptic texts and those who study them in Berlin's museums. In future work, I would like to analyze these data and the connections between the work of intellectuals and theologians in Germany and the Coptic Orthodox diaspora. This work would provide material for the analysis of textual ideologies and the materiality of language.

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