JEAN-LUC FOURNET, *The Rise of Coptic: Egyptian Versus Greek in Late Antiquity*, Princeton-Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2020, 224 p.

Coptology is a territory that still lacks a comprehensive map. In spite of the cornerstone dictionary of Walter Ewing Crum, which has been fascinating readers and users for one hundred years, the fundamental studies of grammar due to Hans Jacob Polotsky, Bentley Layton and Eitan Grossmann, the contributions on textual criticism, philology and literature due to Paul E. Kahle, Stephen Emmel, Heike Behlmer, Anne Boud'hors, David Brakke, Jacques van der Vliet, Alin Suciu, those on Coptic history by Roger S. Bagnall or on art history and iconography by Hilde Zaloscer, in spite of all these contributions and many, many others, the domain still needs further structural scholarship. Important steps in this direction are being taken by the collective and groundbreaking projects directed by Tito Orlandi (Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari), Heike Behlmer and Frank Feder (*The Digital Edition of the Coptic Old Testament,* based at Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities), and Tonio Sebastian Richter (*Database and Dictionary of Greek Loanwords in Coptic*, based at the Freie Universität Berlin).

The volume entitled *The Rise of Coptic. Egyptian versus Greek in Late Antiquity* by Jean Luc Fournet, directeur d'études at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Greek papyrology and professor at the Collège de France to the chair Culture écrite de l'Antiquité tardive et papyrologie byzantine is a comprehensive survey on the development of Coptic from its first written sources to the epoch which immediately followed the Arab conquest of Egypt. The four chapters of the book correspond to the four lectures the author gave at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (New York University) in 2017 as part of the Rostovtzeff Lectures series. The importance of this contribution consists in its twofold perspective: on the one hand, Coptic is constantly scrutinized in its relation to the Greek language used in Egypt during the first seven centuries of the Christian era and, on the other hand the book brings into systematic discussion the invaluable, but still undervalued testimony of documentary Coptic to the development of the very interesting linguistic phenomenon which provided a large and often misunderstood community with an acute sense of social appurtenance. The holistic approach benefits from a clear and profound understanding of the historical, social, legal, religious, and political context of Late Ancient Egypt which underlay the progress of Coptic from an experiment on the Christian Egyptian élite of the first centuries of its history to an autonomous language competing with Greek around the date of the Arab conquest.

The first chapter is a survey on the Egyptian linguistic situation between 250 and 550 CE with a focus on the first two centuries of Coptic attestation. As it is widely known, after the Graeco-Macedonian conquest and, consequently, the instauration of the Ptolemaic dynasty, Greek became the only official language of Egypt. The situation remained the same after the Roman conquest (30 CE), only some documents relating to military orders and Roman citizenship being in Latin). Egyptian, language of the vast majority, who had been used in multiple written forms depending on the context was gradually fading away from the written domain. Whereas Hieratic, specialized for literary and religious texts, and Hieroglyphic, designed for carved inscriptions were practically out of use, the last grafitto in Demotic, the only written form of Egyptian that was in common usage dates from 452 CE, although its natural usage disappeared much earlier, probably during the 1st century CE. There are no legal transactions written in Demotic after this date and its survival was associated with temple environments and pagan conservatism. Under these circumstances, the large population was

condemned to *agraphia* and adopted the Greek alphabet. After a period of experimentation, which lasted almost two centuries, during which priests of Egyptian cults took over the Greek graphemes, adding up to eight other signs that rendered phonemes specific to Egyptian (Old Coptic), the first literary texts in what we call early Coptic appeared exclusively as language of Christian thought, expressing annotations to the biblical text, glossaries, the first Coptic versions of the biblical text, school exercises. These texts already attest an important dialectal diversity. Interestingly enough, contemporary to these first literary attempts was only one document, a private letter preserved on an ostrakon from Kellis (late 3rd century). After this date, the number of Coptic documents increases considerably: dating from the 4th century are several monastic archives where, beside documents written in Greek, a good number of letters in Coptic has been discovered. The oldest such archive, the one from the Monastery of Hathor/Cynopolis, preserves in two subarchives 30 letters in Greek and 6 in Coptic dating from 330 to 370 CE; in the bindings of the codices from Nag Hammadi was found an amazing ratio of 1 to 1 between Greek (16) and Coptic letters, the latter although fragmentary (16); more documents have relatively recently been discovered in the oasis of Kharga (11 Coptic texts of the 639 published ostraka) and Dakha (207 Coptic texts out of which 199 letters and 405 Greek texts comprising legal documents, petitions and private letters). Even more interesting is the archive of the famous apa John of Lycopolis composed of 34 papyri containing 14 letters in Greek and 20 in Coptic, addressed by monks, soldiers, state officials to apa John for intercession. Striking in all these Coptic letters is their very diverse bilingualism (e.g. a father writes to his son in Coptic and the son answers in Greek, one and the same person writes to his brother one letter in Greek and another in Coptic and even in the same letter the code switches without any apparent reason). The provenance of the Coptic documentary material is very important from a sociolinguistic point of view: most of it originates from the oasis (with the remarkable exception of Fayyum where Demotic made the longest career as a sort of resistance to Greek), rather marginal and recluse monastic milieus and the rural area around them. There is no urban attestation of any Coptic document from this period. On the contrary, urban elites seem to have been much more interested in forging a language able to render the Christian scriptures. The fact that the early literary texts precede the apparition of Coptic documents is an indication of a voluntary design with important social consequences. In the understanding of professor Fournet, the first generations who used Coptic were of Christian urban Hellenized origin. Their purpose was not as much to compete with Greek, as it had been previously thought, but rather, emulated by the latter, to forge a new form of vernacular in order to make the Scriptures accessible to a larger Egyptian audience. Greek thus served as a model rather than a rival, which further explains the massive quantity of Greek loanwords into Coptic and, after decennies, the pervasion of Coptic into less Hellenized milieus as attested by the day-to-day documentary texts. There is nevertheless in the case of Coptic a certain flat note to the usual development of a vernacular language. Whereas in other contemporary linguistic areas of the Near East (e.g. Syriac and, to a certain extent, Palmyrene Aramaic), the variety of documentary material is way larger, comprising legal documents, petitions, contracts, testaments, even inscriptions, the Coptic of the first three centuries is only attested in more or less private letters, thus confirming the earlier observation of Jacques van der Vliet that the public space of Christian Egypt was exclusively Greek (Van der Vliet 2006:304).

The second chapter is an in-depth analysis of why Greek was preferred to Coptic during its first three centuries (250-550 CE), namely why Coptic was absent from the public scene and from formal exchanges between individuals. The first outer and apparent cause might have been one of punctual historical context: during the abovementioned period there were no more courts operating in Egyptian. Unlike during the first fifty years of Greek domination, when the number of documents written in Demotic exceeded that of the documents redacted in Greek, the trend gradually reversed as Greek was imposed as administrative language: from that point on, an institutional marginalization of Egyptian took place. Greek was used for the relation with the government, while Demotic, only for local, interpersonal dealings (for this latter purpose the famous courts of laokritai were enacted). A further step was taken in 146 BCE, a demotic contract could have a legal value only if it had been previously registered in Greek. During the Roman period, Demotic was ousted from the public scene and eventually died out: while the Romans retained Greek as official language, the bilingual public

notaries and the courts of laokritai disappeared. The advantage of Greek was also that it perfectly adapted to the Roman law and institutions as it had previously adapted to Egyptian realities and traditions. So that in 212 CE, the landmark year of Caracalla's constitution, Greek was in Egypt the only language prepared to enact the stipulations of the legal reform. Replacing Greek that occupied the scene between the disappearance of Demotic and the early rise of Coptic was an immense challenge that the latter could not tackle. The diffusion of Christianity was one step further into what author considers the self-victimization of Coptic. The prestige that Greek already had in Egypt as official language was literally exalted by its becoming the liturgic language of the Egyptian Church which was based in Alexandria long before the emergence of Coptic. And although the rise of Coptic can be referred to as a sample of a general trend in the East during Late Antiquity to create new forms of writing for local languages that were needed for the translation of the Bible, the process itself was not documented as such in Egypt since there were no explicit 'memories' for its invention as was the case with Ethiopian, Armenian, Georgian, Albanian or Glagolitic. So rather than being a competitor for autonomy, Coptic was at the beginning an auxiliary to the Hellenization process. The arguments are linguistic and are exposed systematically. Fournet starts his demonstration with the specific letters of the Coptic alphabet which were adapted to the Greek writing system by borrowing an analogical form of similar Greek letters (except for hori and keema). The same goes for some diacritic signs (Umlaut, apostrophe, period, and even the superlinear stroke). These are all signs that Coptic writing was created by good readers of Greek willing to perpetuate a model, or as the authors puts it: 'Coptic was invented by Hellenographs for Hellenographs'. On the lexical level, there is always the very intricate and ever surprising issue of the Greek loanwords. In this respect, coptologists are awaiting the results of the major project directed by professor Tonio Richter (Database and Dictionary of Greek Loanwords in Coptic). Which does not mean that there are no theories operating in the field. A relatively recent volume concentrates most of these theories and perspectives (Grossman 2017) . Fact is that there is a strong presence of Greek loanwords in Coptic texts from all periods, which is in substantial contrast to Demotic or Old Coptic. In average, Greek loanwords represent 20% of the words used in texts, but their presence may climb to 70% in certain texts. What is even more surprising is that in documentary texts their occurrence is higher (25% in the Kellis Papyri) than in literary texts (18%). A mere quantitative look determined Ewa Zakrzewska to label Coptic as an average borrower, but Fournet insists that a qualitative analysis would be really relevant, since more important than the number is the nature of the Greek loanwords in Coptic. Thus, there are very few so called necessary loanwords that fill in lexical gaps in the recipient language denoting material and institutional realities like weights, functions, currencies, titles etc. and very many lexemes for which Coptic had an equivalent of Egyptian origin which makes the loanwords appear arbitrary. The usual explanation for this situation points out the essential role the translation of Greek texts played at the beginnings of Coptic. Fournet brings in the counterargument that this explanation does not cover the situation in documentary texts which also used loanwords from the outset. He is of the opinion that presence of Greek loanwords in Coptic is an indicator of the "writer's desire to lay claim to a Greek cultural identity and to demonstrate his active participation in this identity". The author also adopts a very nuanced position in between the claims that Coptic was, on the one hand, a pidginized language or even a bilingual variety (Reintges 2001:198) and, on the other, a deliberately constructed *literary* idiom, which implies that Hellenization was merely an epidermic process (Zakrzewska 2015: 188, 192). Fournet invokes again the statistics showing a higher rate of loanwords in documentary texts which are closer to the oral universe than the literary ones. In contrast to Zakrzewska, the author shows that Hellenization was an in-depth and pervasive process which had a great impact on all speakers and writers of various social levels. This fact can be acknowledged in the first generation of documentary texts. These reveal the fact that people did not want to betray the Greek model, nor to compete with it, but rather to mold a new linguistic variety on the Greek one and to construct a cultural heritage as a complement to the Greek heritage. This first version of Coptic is bicultural and urban. Then Coptic 'escaped' from its bilingual users and spread to other milieus (namely the rural ones documented by the monastic archives from the 4th century on.

The third chapter deals with the Rise of Legal Coptic and the Byzantine State. During almost a century, from the middle of the 6th CE up to the Arab Conquest a series of new and relevant documents written in Coptic emerged. Their relevance consists in their nature as they are the first legal documents whose number will seriously increase after the Arab Conquest. The series is inaugurated by a report of settlement in a land arbitration dating from 550 CE. Callinicus son of Victor arbitrates the cause of the landowner Dioscorus and Joseph the currier who had rented the former's land and did not used it accordingly. Callinicus rules in favor of Dioscorus and put his decision in writing. The document comprises a subscription redacted in Greek and a report of settlement written in Coptic. A modest number of 15 such documents emerge until the Arab Conquest. These acts attempted to imitate the notarial acts written in Greek. This is why the diplomatic types and structure are very close to the Greek model (Christian invocation, regional dating, settlement, notarial type of completio), although they are almost never signed by proper notaries, but by rural scribes or deacons, an indication of the status difference between Greek and Coptic documents. The transactions they report are of minor importance (land leases, sales on delivery, settlements of debt, agreement concerning a former deed, a declaration of inheritance, a marriage contract, wills), a situation which lasts until the Arab Conquest, after which bigger transaction are settled in Coptic. As mentioned above, the writers are digraphic professional scribes, probably bilinguals: Dioscorus of Aphrodite, who also acted as a bicultural poet, Paul, son of Megas from This, more at ease with Coptic, but sufficiently bilingual to serve as a scribe for both Greek and Coptic, Daniel, son of Heracleides who had a perfect command of both languages, formulary and even graphic conventions, using the upright cursive for Greek and the sloping uncial for Coptic. These three figures had a decisive role in reinventing a Coptic legal language imitating Greek forms after three centuries of silence. The provenance of the documents is also important: all of them come from Southern Egypt (Thebaid), predominantly from rural areas (two thirds), but also from highly Hellenized urban milieus like Antinopolis, capital of the Thebaid, Apollonopolis (Edfu), Syene, which is an indication that Coptic was no longer restricted to the countryside and monasteries. These documents increased in number during the first three decennies of the 7th century, a period marked by the assassination of the emperor Maurice (602) followed by a long period of instability in Egypt that culminated with the Sassanian Conquest (619-629) and the setback of the Byzantine rule, a fact that might have encouraged the population to intensify the use of Coptic for contracts. The rise of documentary Coptic of this period is due to the withdrawal, weakening and, finally, failure of the state and it marks a change of the linguistic-cultural paradigm. The disappearance of the gymnasia already in the 5th century led to a later disappearance of rhetoricians, lawyers, poets and a decline of the urban areas. At the beginning of the 7th century the profound crisis of the byzantine legal system in Egypt underlies the disappearance of petitions and, by contrast, the increase of Coptic private paralegal settlements which avoided the more costly courts and trials. Just one step away from the replacement of the judiciary authority by that of the bishops.

The fourth chapter treats about the Role of the Church and Monasticism in the Growth of Legal Coptic. Egyptian monasteries were in their early days Christian centres inhabited in vast majority by monks of Coptic origin. Had you not been a coptophone, you would have had to be trained in Coptic. Nevertheless, visionary designers of Coptic monasticism like St. Pachomy favoured the presence in their monasteries of hellenophones as necessary translators and bridges to the outer world and the state. As such, monasticism played a very important role in the emergence of legal Coptic that transgressed the limits of private epistolary communication. A first sample of this trend is represented by the account receipts of the Weill Codex, a codex made up of eight wooden tablets that contains 26 receipts of which 20 in Greek and, surprisingly, 6 in Coptic. Even more amazing than the simple presence of these Coptic receipts is that they were written by same hand with the same mistakes as another receipt written on ostraka dating from the 6th century. Jean-Luc Fournet shows that the writers of the receipts may have been both monks and laymen attached to monasteries, who

collected taxes in the name of the state administration in the territory of the monastic confederation. At this stage the formulary of Coptic receipts remained heavily dependent on its of their Greek counterpart. A second group of important witnesses of the emergence of legal Coptic are four wills from the archive of the Monastery of St. Phoebammon. The wills belonged to four successive abbots, the first written in Greek (Abraham), the next three in Coptic (Victor, Peter, Jacob) and the first two date from the first decade of the 7th century. The preference for Coptic over the usual language of the wills that was Greek is important and the shift from the will of Abraham (in Greek, although the former abbot appointed to an episcopal see did not know Greek, but insisted for translation in order to respect the imperial law) to that of his successor Victor (in Coptic) is quite relevant for the general context. The latter was redacted during the ten years of Sassanian rule, which softened the linguistic constraints on the writing of documents. Very subtly, Fournet notices that unlike the will of Abraham, which is quite technical, the one of Victor introduces narrative elements justifying the choice of his successors and addressing his heirs directly. That gives the impression Victor's will had, beside the legal function, also a spiritual one, which obviously required a language that the whole community understood. Anyway, the formulary remained very close to the Greek model: the legal name of the document is Greek, as are the invocations, the regional dating and some phrases. The quantity of Greek words is impressive (300 hundred in 170 lines) and the wording in Coptic is according to the Greek syntax. Finally, Jean-Luc Fournet analyzes the vast archive of Abraham, bishop of Hermonthis (author of the abovementioned will) which comprises 114 Coptic ostraka preserving various documents (51 legal, 63 letters) dating from the period between 595 and 621 CE. The legal texts are again comparable to the Greek ones from the same epoch: all have Greek names, imitate Greek formulas and contain numerous technical words borrowed from Greek, but the formulary is simplified and there are many 'false loanwords', formulas that do not correspond to the Greek practice despite their Greek origin. The redaction in Coptic of these legal documents is linked to the rise in power of the church as a competing authority to the state and is a proof of the growing role of the clerics in the written documentary culture. For a century Egypt faced the emergence of 'holy men' able to serve as intermediaries to the imperial administration. They managed finally to impose their language in a domain mastered by Greek due to their position in their communities and contributed greatly to the creation of a stock of documentary types. With the Arab Conquest, the ties between Egypt and The Byzantine rule broke and Coptic no longer met any difficulty in its way to autonomy which it finally reaches towards the end of the 9th century. After a short akme period the documentary culture turned all Arabic.

The volume comprises three appendices with Coptic legal texts (1) and letters (2) edited and translated by Jean Luc Fournet, and a list of the first legal documents in Coptic prior to the Arab Conquest. The bibliography is followed a general index and an index of ancient sources

The book of Jean-Luc Fournet is a fascinating and complex analysis of a most difficult territory. The in-depth knowledge of sources, as well as the astute understanding of linguistic phenomena and the refined perception of social and historical rhythms depict and render a very plausible image of a scarcely retrievable reality. The Rise of Coptic. Egyptian versus Greek in Late Antiquity is a book that builds momentum in the academic research of the field.

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ROB COVER, ASHLEIGH HAW, JAY DANIEL THOMPSON, *Fake News in Digital Cultures: Technology, Populism and Digital Misinformation,* Bingley, United Kingdom, Emerald Publishing Limited, 2022, 192 p.

Fake news, along with misinformation and disinformation, is a serious concern in the modern, interconnected world and its growing prominence has come along with a kaleidoscope of multi-voiced perspectives on fake news discourses, institutions and principles threatened, parties responsible, interpretative frameworks, news making practices and, most crucially, the importance of addressing the issue itself. However, in analyzing the contours of the various fake news discourses, less has been so far explored about fake news as a product of pre-existing cultural processes and even much less about how changes to cultural and communication practices, developments of digital communication methods and shifts in the understanding of truth and meaning may lead to the proliferation of fake news and the undermining of communication ethics. It is in this context that *Fake News in Digital Cultures* fills a legitimate need to address disinformation and misinformation in contemporary digital communication, contending that fake news is not an alien phenomenon perpetrated by bad actors, but rather a logical consequence of contemporary digital and popular culture, conceptual shifts in meaning and truth, as well as variations in the social practices of trust, attitude, and imagination.

The volume consists of ten chapters (pp. 5–189) which represent as many critical and cultural perspectives on fake news that encourage and legitimize distinct and competing sets of responses within a wide variety of consequences and outcomes for fake news governance. A first, introductory section covers several definitions of fake news before expanding upon them in subsequent chapters and addresses the topic as a key concept and social issue of modern culture emerging relatively recently, since the mid-2010s. This Chapter (1) sets the main directions to be dealt with in each section.

Chapter 2 *What Is Fake News? Defining Truth* interrogates different frameworks of meaning and conceptual crossovers between fake news, disinformation, misinformation, propaganda and 'alternative facts' arguing that fake news is paradigmatic of the broad cultural logic commonly referred to as 'post-truth'. In Foucaultian (1980) overtones, the authors show that fake news discourse has emerged within the blurring subjectiveness of truth being ramped up by the post-truth's hazy border between reality and fiction and adding constant meanings that depend not only on context but also on the reading discourses by which meanings are activated (Bennett, 1983).

The next two chapters (3 and 4), examine the cultural emergence of fake news by theorising the cultural conditions that enable the production, and circulation of fake news. While Chapter 3 explores how current digital cultures have contributed to the proliferation of fake news arguing that

the changing nature of the cultural formation of digital communication – alongside the dissolution of ethical communication and universal truth regimes – have facilitated the conditions by which fake news, disinformation, misinformation, and deep-fake imagery are presently constructed, Chapter 4 expands on that discussion and interrogates how the 1980s and the subsequent postmodernisation of truth did nevertheless set the conditions for the 2010s rise of fake news. Interestingly, the conclusion drawn here is one within the neoliberal cultural mode of polemic that places consumption and profit at the core of all relationships (Duggan, 2003) and sets the scene for the cynical production of fake news discourses justifying profit-making and advertising revenue through sale and clickbait of misleading content. What is further implicated here, but more amply discussed in Chapters 5 and 9, is basically the fact that it is the very culture of digital interactivity and user-generated content – that emerged in the 1990s and challenged the gatekeeping labour of traditional communication, political, and news-making institutions – that has in fact enabled the creation and dissemination of unverified digital content. Such an advent of deliberate disinformation practices prompts in the logical narrative of the volume a clarifying discussion on deepfakes (in Chapter 5) that are presented as the new tools used to create and distribute false and misleading visual (and sound) content for artistic purposes and which often have covert uses in creating and 'proving' disinformation alike. The section feels necessary as it treats deepfakes and their role both *in* and *as* fake news.

An opportunity to make sense of fake news across a more canvassed critical discourse space is afforded in the next series of three Chapters (6,7 and 8) which take up disinformation and misinformation relative to conspiracy theories, reinforcement of power divisions and post-truth media ecology. These distinctive approaches bring to the fore not only the conspiratorial grip and nature of fake news (Chapter 6) at times of social unrest (including the Covid-19 pandemic) but also more importantly the role of fake news discourses in the reinforcement of unequal power divisions, in which prejudiced discourses, preexisting biases and negative stereotypes allow for marginalization discourses to be strengthened and legitimized (Chapter 7). Furthermore, the authors address the 'crisis of trust' (Flew, 2019) to explain the ways in which fake news are positioned in stark relation to mainstream media content, media credibility and reliability (Chapter 8). What subliminally unites the current approaches is an urge that citizens exercise a higher degree of responsibility, and skepticism alike, towards digital media information along with a call for common action to combat the negative effects of fake news.

Chapters 9 and 10 continue the exploration of fake news as a polarizing subject of investigation and public anxiety and address, in a full circle approach, the remedies that should be underpinned by cultural routines of fast-checking information, digital literacy education and ethical media and digital communication practices. These prevention tactics, attempted responses, remedies and fixes across policy, pedagogy, technology and journalistic discourses and practices, aimed at curtailing the prevention and circulation of fake news are, according to the authors of the volume, quite necessary in a sound media and information ecology but can provide no immediate effect as they are way more effective within a predictable and vigorous culture of long-term engagement.

There is a refreshing air about the book, despite the very critical perspective on fake news and the negative impact it has on the quality of communication, one that emerges towards the end of the volume and makes the reader come to the realization that, given the embedding of engaging and co-creative technologies and postmodern practices of retelling, innovation, and virtuality in contemporary culture, fake news is not so much a "parasite" on contemporary communication but more of a phenomenon that is positioned in a symbiotic relationship with culture. In other words, in emerging from within cultural formations, the book shows us that fake news is an ultimately serious social issue that arises because we communicate in our current neoliberal, postmodern, sensationalist, and entertainment-seeking culture. And thus, in its renewed, re-angled and holistic articulation of the vulnerabilities of contemporary culture, the volume represents, in many ways, another variegated

presentation of cultural answers to global communication issues. To a cleaner, more responsible media ecology, that is.

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RAMONA CĂTĂLINA CORBEANU, *Topica subiectului în limba română veche* [The position of the subject in old Romanian], Bucharest, Editura Universității din București – Bucharest University Press, 2022, 178 p.

This monograph is based on Ramona Cătălina Corbeanu's PhD thesis, publicly defended in October 2017 at the Romanian Academy's "Iorgu Iordan – Alexandru Rosetti" Institute of Linguistics. Following the list of symbols and abbreviations, the book opens with the introduction, followed by four chapters of various sizes, conclusions, the corpus and the list of references.

In the Introduction, Corbeanu defines the subject of her research, namely the order of the subject in old Romanian clauses. Based on quantitative analysis, the author's goal is to identify the representative word orders for Romanian texts dating between 1532–1780, leading thus towards a typological generalization. Following Frâncu (2009: 158), the situation in contemporary Romanian (mostly considered to be a VSO language) is different from old Romanian, where the subject seemed to have been placed before the verb in more contexts. The line taken up by the author is twofold: subjects are scrutinized from a both syntactic, and discourse perspective. In doing so, Corbeanu looks at subjects in main clauses and embedded clauses, differentiating between object clauses and adverbial clauses. After setting up her objectives, the Introduction continues with presenting the structure of the volume, the theoretical framework (structural grammar, the minimalist programme, with a general generative grammar terminology), and a very useful corpus description (texts written directly in Romanian – known in the Romanian literature as "original texts" or "authentic texts", and translated texts alike), which also includes the periodization and separation by years of her corpus.

Chapter 2, *Aspecte teoretice privind topica subiectului* [Theoretical aspects on the position of the subject], is the theoretical core of the monograph. In scrutinising subject orders, the author makes use of both contemporary, and old Romanian examples (as opposed to Chs. 3 and 4, whose focus is entirely on old Romanian), but the discussion on subjects is extended to a great variety of languages and varieties, either related or unrelated typologically and genealogically. Corbeanu touches on generally used and accepted theoretical concepts such as free vs. non-free word order, topicalisation/focalisation, the null subject parameter, *pro*-drop languages, etc. While contemporary

Romanian is mostly classified as a VSO language, the author's conclusion to this chapter is that (standard) Romanian tolerates more orders, with less restrictions on the position of the subject.

In Chapter 3, *Topica subiectului în texte din perioada 1532–1640* [The position of the subject in texts dating from 1532–1640], Ramona Cătălina Corbeanu looks at subjects on authentic and translated texts from the first roughly one hundred years of old Romanian texts. She identifies the restrictions on subjects placed before verbs, scrutinises the expression of subjects in root clauses and various sorts of embedded clauses, while also focusing on the subject of non-finite verb forms and on the phenomenon of subject repetition. The corpus revealed an apparent free order. Statistically, in main clauses the subject is more frequently placed before the verb (57.49%), whereas in embedded clauses the subject is more frequently placed after the verb (51.92%) (p. 122). In embedded clauses, the complementiser type favours one order over another (*că* 'that' can place the subject either before, or after the verb, depending on the kind of verb, whereas *să* 'that.SUBJ' prefers to place the subject after the verb). The chapter also includes comparisons with contemporary Romanian, focusing on the (typological) differences between old and contemporary Romanian.

Chapter 4, *Topica subiectului în texte din perioada 1640–1780* [The position of the subject in texts dating from 1640–1780], focuses on subject positions in texts dating from the second stage of old Romanian (a time when there was a tendency towards the use of a supradialectal variety, which would later become standardized Romanian). The corpus from this period shows more symmetric texts syntactically, with numerous authentic texts of various styles and registers; many scholarly texts are written in foreign mannerism (be it Greek, Latin, or Romance), depending on the education/background of the writer and/or translator. Chapter 4 follows the structure of the previous chapter, and comparisons are made between this period and the previous period, on the one hand, and between 1640–1780 and contemporary Romanian, on the other. In the conclusions to this chapter, Corbeanu notes that there are similarities to the 1532–1640 as to the excessive use of lexicalised subjects, and the position of subjects in main vs. embedded clauses. Foreign patterns are noted – for example Cantemir uses the verb at the end of a sentence, under a Latin(ised) model. Legal texts favour SVO to a much greater extent than the other types of texts. The chapter ends with statistical data with SV/VS orders in main clauses and embedded clauses for all the sources in the corpus.

The title of Chapter 5, *Topicalizarea şi dislocarea la stânga a subiectului în limba română veche* [Topicalisation and left dislocation of subjects in old Romanian], is self-explanatory. Ramona Cătălina Corbeanu scrutinises various types of constructions with topicalised subjects, impersonal constructions that allow extraction and topicalisation of a DP from the embedded clause, the structures with topicalised subjects in *Wh*-clauses, raised subjects, subject left dislocation and the influence of spoken language, such as case mismatch and subject doubling or repetition. This chapter of only eight pages is visibly shorter than the other ones. Also, unlike Chapters 3 and 4, there are no statistical data provided.

The last chapter is dedicated to general conclusions. Here, the author states the main characteristic of old Romanian texts is an apparent free order of the constituents, with the subject occupying any position in a linear sentential order. Nevertheless, certain texts favour a certain word order (most obvious in legal texts, for example). Also, certain complementisers show preferences for a certain position of subjects (most notably *să* 'that.SUBJ'). Most of the general conclusions have already been mentioned in their respective chapters, focusing on general observations, statistical data, and the differences between authentic and translated texts. The overall conclusion is that old Romanian shows a relaxed V2 syntax specific to main clauses, with the subject mostly placed before the verb in the main clause, while in embedded clauses it is frequently placed after the verb in the first stage of old Romanian, and before the verb towards the end of old Romanian.

To sum up, Ramona Cătălina Corbeanu's *Topica subiectului în limba română veche* [The position of the subject in old Romanian] is a useful monograph on syntactic subjects for researchers and graduate students working in typological linguistics, (Eastern) Romance linguistics, as well as philologists. While not ground-breaking from a theoretical point of view, the book reviewed hereunder is a proof of strict and useful scrutiny of subjects in old Romanian, with most valuable statistical data. Without undermining the quality of the book, the author could have included a

separate section dedicated to partial conclusions to Chapter 2 as well (she included them for Chapters 3 through 5), in which she could have pointed out what should set her analysis apart from the general consensus (if any) in the literature, or which theoretical interpretation is better or better serves her analysis. Also, albeit inconsistent, the author uses partial conclusions, see §3.2.2.1.7. *Concluzii parţiale* [Partial conclusions], p. 74); unless left un-proofread from a previous version, the adjective *parţiale* 'partial.PL' should have also been used in §3.2.1.3.6. *Concluzii* [Conclusions], p. 84. Also, a number of typos require a better proofreading for reprints. The rich and useful references included at the end of this monograph is up to date, with a large variety of sources from standard generative linguistics, structural grammar, and philological studies and editions.

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