EGYPTIAN Arabic has acquired numerous lexical items from practically all the languages with which it has come in contact. Coptic was among the more important of those languages to influence the Egyptian Arabic vocabulary, especially that of Upper Egyptian. In everyday life the Egyptians use a number of expressions without the slightest notion that they are repeating words which can be traced back to Coptic and ancient Egyptian. The following wintertime scene, typical of modern rural Egypt, provides a good illustration of this. As some peasant boys play their popular “Egyptian ball game” they may repeat such common terms as الأول سنو, awwal senno, which means “the first (movement) of the second (round).”

سنو, which refers to the second round of the game, is taken from Coptic cH3, “two.” While the boys are playing, they get into an argument and one says to the other بالاش تهمس, “quit bluffing.” تهمس is a noun derived from همس, which in turn is a borrowing from Coptic èNø{øcc, meaning “talkative.” When the boys go home for supper they may eat cheese, and their mother may say دى جينه حلوم, di gibna halum, “This is cream cheese.” حلوم, which means “cheese,” is Coptic èNø{øm.

The Coptic loanwords in Egyptian Arabic have been partially investigated by several writers among whom are G. Sobhy, W. Vycichl, and W. Worrell; but the validity of these words has never been determined. Many lexical items which have been listed by these writers as Coptic loanwords in Egyptian Arabic are plainly pure Arabic, while others can be attributed to Turkish, Persian, or one of the languages which came in contact with Egyptian Arabic after the Coptic period. The writer has collected two hundred and five lexical items, all of which were suggested by various scholars to be Coptic loanwords in Egyptian Arabic. Of these only the one hundred and nine items treated in this article are considered as valid loanwords. Fifty-eight are best explained as being of Arabic origin; eight as originating from sources other than Coptic or Arabic; fourteen are of uncertain origins; and sixteen have no reference to source in the standard Coptic dictionary by Crum.

The following one hundred and nineteen do not include proper nouns or words borrowed from Greek origins, since such items are not directly related to the study at hand. The items treated are arranged alphabetically according to the transliteration of the Egyptian Arabic words into the English alphabet. When a certain writer is the only source of any citation, his name is quoted between parentheses.

**Valid Coptic Loanwords**

†ä, “yes,” SB ãã, “yea.” Coptic ê was dropped causing the lengthening of the vowel.

1 Egyptian peasant boys use balls made usually of socks stuffed with rags; they are frequently seen in streets and open fields playing this native ball game often referred to as كورة شراب kūra gharab.

2 G. Sobhy, Common Words in the Spoken Arabic of Egypt, pp. 4–15; W. H. Worrell, Coptic Texts, pp. 329–42. Worrell included material collected by W. Vycichl. See also W. Spiegelberg, Koptisches Handwörterbuch, p. 339; and A. Erman, Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache, VI, 222–42.
ajbiya, “a prayer book for the Copts,” S ajbi (pl.), “hours.” It follows ازسم, which is a broken plural in Arabic whose singular is ضيل, such as رغيف, “loaf of bread.” The Coptic apparently was borrowed into the nearest Arabic broken plural pattern.

ال، “a game of pebbles (Sobhy),” B a®, “pebble.”

إماني, “hell,” dahya tweidak(i) Pamanidi (Sobhy), “May a tragedy take you to hell”; BF a®ت, SA a®ت, “hades” or literally “the western place.” Egyptian Arabic amandi is not frequent in Egypt; جهنم الأرب, gahannam(i) lgharb, “the hell of the West,” is very common and possibly a literal translation of the original meaning of a®ت. The voicing of т in اماني is quite normal after a voiced obstruent such as n.

أمنت, “sexton (Vycichl),” SBAF AMOr,T, “porter, doorkeeper.” The hamza in Arabic is prosthetic.

أنا, “title for Coptic priests,” B ا®با, S ا®با (from Aramaic). The phonetic change is most likely caused by partial dissimilation which developed this way: ا®با > ا®با > ا®با. However, ا®با is also used. It is possible to attribute أنا to Aramaic abba, “father,” or any other Semitic language cognate, but since it is used only with Coptic priests, it is most probable that it was borrowed from Coptic.

ابن, “the portion of the field left for cultivating clover or beans,” possibly from S نص، توك، تاك, “fragment.” The change in meaning involves specialization, but the sound changes are normal.

باغ، “bubble,” SB a®ر، with the article “pitcher” or “jar.” Possibly the relationship in meaning is due to the air bubbles caused when a pitcher is filled with water. The Coptic was borrowed as a collective noun whose singular باغ references to one of the kind, such as شجّار, “trees,” and شجارة, “one tree.”

baghrhur, “frog (Upper Egyptian),” S непрош with the definite article, “the frog.” The Arabic followed the quadrilateral pattern such as طورط وَّرَتَر, “tassel.” It was first borrowed into Upper Egyptian Arabic, then taken over by Cairene Arabic as بئرر.“

باغى, “small basket,” used mainly in Middle Egypt, S непош with the definite article н(е). The unaspirated value of Coptic т at the close of a syllable apparently sounded to the Arabic ear as ٕ.

بلحوم, “to bluff,” S la®س، “Blemmye, name of some barbarian people dwelling in the Christian period on the East of the Nile south of Philae.” The Blemmye people were known for their bluffing.

بلاشوم, “heron,” S непшув with the definite article, “the heron.” The change of ٕ to ٕ is normal since both are voiced bilabials.

بارس, “clover or alfalfa,” SB a®س، “clover.” The Arabic vocalization followed the pattern with a quadrilateral root, such as عفرت, “devil.”

بشاروش, “flamingo” (Spiro), S неп©-неп©-неп©, “the thing which is red,” made up of неп, “that which (is),” and неп©, “red.” Worrell suggests that basharosh developed from *bashsharosh < *badsharosh < *badtrashrosh < *badtrashrosh < неп©-неп©-неп©. ٔ

بيخ, “a word used by children when they try to frighten each other,” B يس, “the demon.”

بيبة, “site of a ruined temple,” S нипе, “the temple,” which is нипе with the definite article н(е).

بيب، “cooked beans,” possibly from непапо a compound of неп (construct form of нипе), “to cook,” and апов, “beans.” The Arabic followed a regular pattern such as رابه, riwaya, “story.”

³ Worrell, op. cit., p. 333
**Coptic Lexical Influence on Egyptian Arabic**

biskha, “part of a plough” (Vycichl), “edge of a plough” (Sobhy), B *πιεσθ* with the definite article, “plough handle.” Coptic final *o* was assimilated to the feminine termination -*a* with the shift of stress to the first syllable. The pattern is *falta*, such as *fikra*, “idea.”

*bshōbesh*, “a call of welcome during country weddings,” SB *πυμος* (with the definite article *π(ε)*, “reception, entertainment.” This example indicates the progressive assimilation of Coptic *c* to Arabic *j* which rendered the word *bshōbesh*. A parallel example of this is *shams*, “sun,” which in Upper Egypt is pronounced *samsh*.

*būri*, “a kind of fish,” S *Σωπε*, “fish, nurgil cephalus” (Crum). The sound changes are normal; and the Arabic equated well with the pattern *j* (plus the nisbe *s*) of a hollow root such as *rmr*, “a turkey.”

*bursh*, “mat made of palm leaves,” *πωρυ*, “to spread” or “something which is spread,” such as a mat. Possibly *πωρυ* is related to Semitic *prsh*, or Arabic *fرش*, with the same meaning. However, *fرش* cannot come from *fr*; *fرش* is a collective noun form, such as *naml*, “an ant.” Accordingly, *gashwa* can be derived from *gashw* to mean “a fish.”

*bush*, “porridge” (Vycichl), S *πρωου*, B *πρωου* with the definite article “gruel.” The Arabic followed the pattern of a media-weak noun such as *ftl*, “beans.”

*būri*, “a wooden door lock,” S *τεκαμπ* with the definite article “high water, inundation.” The Arabic followed the pattern such as *farqa*, “way.” The voicing of *t* is normal (cf. *‘amandi*).

*babbah*, “a wooden door lock,” S *τερω* with the definite article. Egyptian Arabic follows the pattern after doubling the Coptic second consonant in order to form a triliteral root. Coptic *τ* is expected to yield Arabic *ط*, *ظ*; the voicing of *ظ* to *ظ* is anomalous.

*bshōbesh*, “a call of welcome during country weddings,” SB *πυμος* (with the definite article *π(ε)*, “reception, entertainment.” This example indicates the progressive assimilation of Coptic *c* to Arabic *j* which rendered the word *bshōbesh*. A parallel example of this is *shams*, “sun,” which in Upper Egypt is pronounced *samsh*.

*būri*, “a kind of fish,” S *Σωπε*, “fish, nurgil cephalus” (Crum). The sound changes are normal; and the Arabic equated well with the pattern *j* (plus the nisbe *s*) of a hollow root such as *rmr*, “a turkey.”

*bursh*, “mat made of palm leaves,” *πωρυ*, “to spread” or “something which is spread,” such as a mat. Possibly *πωρυ* is related to Semitic *prsh*, or Arabic *fرش*, with the same meaning. However, *fرش* cannot come from *fr*; *fبرش* is a collective noun form, such as *naml*, “an ant.” Accordingly, *gashwa* can be derived from *gashw* to mean “a fish.”

*bush*, “porridge” (Vycichl), S *πρωου*, B *πρωου* with the definite article “gruel.” The Arabic followed the pattern of a media-weak noun such as *ftl*, “beans.”

*būri*, “a wooden door lock,” S *τεκαμπ* with the definite article “high water, inundation.” The Arabic followed the pattern such as *farqa*, “way.” The voicing of *t* is normal (cf. *‘amandi*).

*babbah*, “a wooden door lock,” S *τερω* with the definite article. Egyptian Arabic follows the pattern after doubling the Coptic second consonant in order to form a triliteral root. Coptic *τ* is expected to yield Arabic *ط*, *ظ*; the voicing of *ظ* to *ظ* is anomalous.

to bluff by talking,” and "bluffing.”

Hallūs, “cobweb,” SB ḥalūs, “spider’s web.” Coptic ḥ may be borrowed in Arabic as either ḥ or h. The Arabic followed the JS pattern such as ḥārāb, “to give to drink”; hemmis is a dialectal variant of hammas.

Hammas or hemmis, “to sit (Vycichl),” S ḥammas or hemmis, “to sit, dwell, remain.” Hammas is a regular II Conjugation form such as ḥārāb, “to give to drink”; hemmis is a dialectal variant of hammas.

Hawjal, “anchor” (Sobhy), B ḥawjal, “anchor” (Sobhy), B ḥawjal or ḥawjal. The Arabic followed a quadriliteral pattern such as bakrāj, “tea pot.”

Hawwash, “to bluff, mostly by talking roughly,” S ḥawwash, “to abuse or insult.” The Arabic followed the II Conjugation pattern of the root hwsh, from which other words were derived such as ḥawwash, “bluffing,” and ḥowsh, “bluffer.”

Hēba, “a bird” (Sobhy), SF ḥēba, “a bird.” Metathesis of Coptic y and n renders honye which became hnayye following a diminutive Arabic pattern such as ḥnayye, “small girl.”

Halūm, “cream cheese,” SAB ḥallūm, “cheese.” The change of Coptic ḍ to Egyptian Arabic ḍ is normal.

Handūs, “lizard” (Sobhy), B ḥandūs, “lizard” (Sobhy), B ḥandūs or ḥandūs. The Arabic with the same meaning. The voicing of ḍ is normal.

Handūs, “lizard” (Sobhy), B ḥandūs, “lizard” (Sobhy), B ḥandūs or ḥandūs. The Arabic with the same meaning. The voicing of ḍ is normal.

Hantūr, “carriage drawn by horses,” SF ḥantūr, “carriage drawn by horses.” Possibly Coptic unaspirated ḍ sounded to the Arabic ear as a doubled sound which later developed to nṭ.

Idā, “he gave,” ḍāʾ yiddi, “he gives,” ḍāʾ ʾiddi, “give (imp.),” SB ḍāʾ, “to give.” The form ʾiddi is rather problematic in Arabic because it does not fit any of the known verbal patterns. If it is considered a corrupted form of classical Arabic ʾaṭā with the same meaning, ʾaffa or ʾanṭa is expected; the latter form is used in Iraq. Moreover, Egyptian Arabic vocabulary includes ʾaṭa, “to give.” If ʾiddi is considered original in Arabic stemming from roots such as ḍāʾ or ḍāʾ, the form of the imperfective does not seem to fit any of them. On the other hand, a Coptic origin from ḍāʾ is feasible after certain normal changes that might have taken place. S ḍāʾ ti (unaspirated) may have become di and possibly was first borrowed in Arabic as an imperative ʾiddi with ḍāʾ as a prefix (which is a normal feature of Arabic) and with doubling the d to equate it with a triliteral tertia weak root such as ḍāʾ ʾirmi, “throw” (imp.). The imperfect ʾyiddi was also formed such as ḍāʾ ʾyirmi, “he throws.” The perfect form, however, is problematic; ḍāʾ ʾaddā like ḍāʾ ʾramā is the form which is expected, but such a form (with a double ḍ root) is very uncommon in Arabic. Therefore, a IV Conjugation form ʾidda was used for the perfect form.

Hnayye, “matter, affair,” ḡoīhe, “some(thing).” Metathesis of Coptic y and n renders honye which became hnayye following a diminutive Arabic pattern such as ḡnayye, “small girl.”

Halūm, “cream cheese,” SAB ḥallūm, “cheese.” The change of Coptic ḍ to Egyptian Arabic ḍ is normal.

Handūs, “lizard” (Sobhy), B ḥandūs, “lizard” (Sobhy), B ḥandūs or ḥandūs. The Arabic with the same meaning. The voicing of ḍ is normal.

Hantūr, “carriage drawn by horses,” SF ḥantūr, “carriage drawn by horses.” Possibly Coptic unaspirated ḍ sounded to the Arabic ear as a doubled sound which later developed to nṭ.

Idā, “he gave,” ḍāʾ yiddi, “he gives,” ḍāʾ ʾiddi, “give (imp.),” SB ḍāʾ, “to give.” The form ʾiddi is rather problematic in Arabic because it does not fit any of the known verbal patterns. If it is considered a corrupted form of classical Arabic ʾaṭā with the same meaning, ʾaffa or ʾanṭa is expected; the latter form is used in Iraq. Moreover, Egyptian Arabic vocabulary includes ʾaṭa, “to give.” If ʾiddi is considered original in Arabic stemming from roots such as ḍāʾ or ḍāʾ, the form of the imperfective does not seem to fit any of them. On the other hand, a Coptic origin from ḍāʾ is feasible after certain normal changes that might have taken place. S ḍāʾ ti (unaspirated) may have become di and possibly was first borrowed in Arabic as an imperative ʾiddi with ḍāʾ as a prefix (which is a normal feature of Arabic) and with doubling the d to equate it with a triliteral tertia weak root such as ḍāʾ ʾirmi, “throw” (imp.). The imperfect ʾyiddi was also formed such as ḍāʾ ʾyirmi, “he throws.” The perfect form, however, is problematic; ḍāʾ ʾaddā like ḍāʾ ʾramā is the form which is expected, but such a form (with a double ḍ root) is very uncommon in Arabic. Therefore, a IV Conjugation form ʾidda was used for the perfect form.

Hnayye, “matter, affair,” ḡoīhe, “some(thing).” Metathesis of Coptic y and n renders honye which became hnayye following a diminutive Arabic pattern such as ḡnayye, “small girl.”

Halūm, “cream cheese,” SAB ḥallūm, “cheese.” The change of Coptic ḍ to Egyptian Arabic ḍ is normal.

Handūs, “lizard” (Sobhy), B ḥandūs, “lizard” (Sobhy), B ḥandūs or ḥandūs. The Arabic with the same meaning. The voicing of ḍ is normal.
because it was considered the Arabic conjunction ٍ، or the Coptic indefinite article ٠. 

جيتس jukṣ, “crepitus ventris.” “This utterance is used in Upper Egypt; جيس is its equivalent in Lower Egypt. The Coptic origin is ب ٌوسٌ، “crepitus ventris” (Crum). The last i vowel was eliminated in Egyptian Arabic, perhaps it was considered a case ending; the velarization is anomalous.

كاكة ka'ka, “cake” س ٌارك. This word is problematic owing to the existence of the ء sound. It may be attributed to Coptic as well as to Persian كلاك كلاك، “biscuit or dry bread,” which may be related to the Indo-European origin of English “cake.” Classical Arabic dictionaries list كلاك but indicate that it is foreign. The writer is inclined to attribute كلاك to Coptic and consider the existence of ء a kind of hypercorrection in Arabic perhaps encouraged by other Coptic pronunciations such as سٌاٍٍ (Crum), with a double vowel.

كاكولا kâkula, “outer garment,” س ٌوٌكٌٍ. “hood, cowl of monks.” The Arabic followed the pattern فاعله such as سامولوا، “screw nut.” 

كلاج kalaj (present tense بٌوكٌ، “to limp”), س ٌوكٌٍ, “to be bent.” The Arabic followed a regular I Conjugation pattern from the root ك ل ج.

كالح kalâh, “the corn cob after it is beaten to gather the kernels,” س ٌوكٌٍ, “to strike.” The Arabic followed a pattern such as سٌوم رٌوم، “merciful.”

كاسى kâs, “misfortune” or “pain,” usually used by women during a funeral such as ٌا و ٌبٌ يا كاسى، “O my distress, O my misfortune,” SB ﻟٌسٌ، qualitative of “burial or corpse” (Sobhy mentions ﻟٌسٌ, “pain” with no reference).

كخت khiṣ, “dirty,” س ٌارك, “soil, earth.” The borrowing of Coptic ء as Arabic ء is very unusual, a fact which casts some doubt on this otherwise satisfactory etymology.

لابس labis, “a kind of fish,” س ٌاحٌ, “fish cyprinus niloticus” (Crum). The borrowed form is normal.

ليج lajj, “to be persistent,” س ٌوكٌٍ, “be impudent, persistent.” The Arabic followed a double a인 pattern such as رٌم، “to pass.”

ليبن libân, “ship’s cable,” س ٌودٌ. The Arabic followed a نٌال pattern such as كمكتب kitâb, “book.” The Coptic word itself, however, is of obscure origin.

ليلش lubsh, “a kind of prayer” (Vyeichl), س ٌودٌٍ, “a crown,” used to refer to a final stanza in certain hymns. The vocalic change is regular.

ماغور majûr, “a pot for kneading,” perhaps س ٌوٌسٌٍ which is made up of سٌٍ, “place,” and سٌوسٌٍ, “scatter.” Although س ٌوسٌٍ does not appear in Coptic dictionaries as one word, it is possible that ماغور might have developed from a colloquial Coptic term which was not stated in any literary record. The phonetic transition is regular and it must have been borrowed in Upper Egyptian Arabic and then taken over to Cairene as magûr.

ماريى marisi, “southerly,” used for wind, س ٌرفٌ, “southern country.” This is a clear case in which the Coptic noun was borrowed with the addition of the Arabic relational suffix ء to form an adjective.

مرب mbû, “water to drink,” usually said to children, س ٌوٌوسٌٍ with the masculine definite article ﻟٌثٌ، “water.” Here there is a clear case of metathesis between ﻟٌث and سٌ after the voicing of ﻟٌث.

ميسى mihyâs, “fanfaron, boaster, blusterer,” perhaps سٌوٌسٌٍ سٌوسٌٍ, “full of hurry,” which is made up of سٌوسٌٍ, “full,” and سٌوسٌٍ, “speed” or “hurry.” It is possible that ﻟٌث dropped, thus leaving سٌوسٌٍ, which may have become Arabic ميسى. The Arabic followed the pattern سٌسٌٍ.
such as *mikyāl, “measure.” Other related forms were derived such as hayyaṣ (II Conjugation), “to make noise,” and hēṣa, “a noise.”

mnāw, “thither” (Sobhy), B ḥāḥ, “there.” The diphthong āw was possibly caused by the influence of ḥāḥ, “there.”
mnāy, “hither” (Sobhy), B ḥāḥ, “here.”

nabārī, “the winter crop of maize,” S ḥāṭār, “grain.” Arabic nabārī is the broken plural of ṣāʿ nabr, such as ḍar-ḍarāḏi, “territory.” Possibly the Coptic was borrowed first as singular from which the plural was derived and became more common.

nāfī, “yoke” (Sobhy) SAB ḥāḥ, “yoke.” The h-sound dropped and the preceding vowel was lengthened.

nannūs, “delicate, nice, mignonner,” SAF ḥāṭār, “it is nice,” made up of ḥāṭār, “nice or fair” and the suffix 3, third person feminine used impersonally.

nūš, “big” (Sobhy), S ḥāṭār, “great” or “big.” The Arabic followed a ṣāʿ pattern of a hollow verb such as ṣūr, “fence.”

nūsha, “fever, especially typhoid,” S ḥūquq with unknown meaning but parallel with “stinking of disease.” The Arabic pattern is ṣūr of a hollow root such as ṣūr “ball.”

raftāw, “a measure of grain which is one-fourth of a kēlā, used only in distant Upper Egypt,” S ḥāṭār, “fraction of four or quarter.” The velarization of ṭā is normal as well as the vocalic change from ooṭ to āw.

ramrūm, “small fish” (Sobhy), possibly related to S ḥāṭār, “fish, tilapia” (Crum). The borrowed Coptic stem was duplicated in Arabic and followed the pattern such as ṣṭār, “tassel.”

rāy, “a kind of fish,” SB ḥāḥ, “a fish, aleses dentes” (Crum).

ritū (also pronounced ritu), “a plant, sapindus,” B ḥīta, “a plant, flower of laurus nobilis.”

ṣīmīṭ, “special bread made of fine flour,” SB ḥāṭār, “fine flour.” The more common Arabic form (also Persian) ṣīmīd, “white bread,” appears to be a borrowing from Syriac ṣīmīdā (itself from Akkadian ṣīmūdā). Since the word is Semitic, Greek ἕκμαδας is a borrowing, as is perhaps Latin simila. The Egyptian Arabic form ṣīmīṭ must, because of the ṭā, be from the Coptic, which in turn is a loan from some Semitic source.


sennū, “the second round of the Egyptian peasants’ ball game,” SAB ḥāṭār, “two.” Perhaps the doubling of n was caused by the contraction of the diphthong.

Shabbūra, “fog,” perhaps from *yādbīḥ, “the change of the sun,” from yādb, “change” and ḥāḥ, “sun.” This is a case where Ḥ was borrowed in Arabic as ʿ; the Arabic apparently borrowed a root ʿabīr from which ʿabbūra was derived according to the pattern such as ʿabbūra, “crystal.”

Shāl, “fish”; see under qāl gīl.

Shallūt, “a kick,” B ḥāṭār, “foot.” Possibly, shallūt is a later pronunciation derived from shallūj (in Kena) and shallūd (in Faršhūj); the former is the closest to the Coptic origin, which was borrowed first perhaps as a noun Shalāj shallūj, and then the Arabic used the denominative form of the II Conjugation to serve as a verb ḥāḥ shallat, “to kick,”
from which the secondary noun shallūt was later derived.  

Shāmar or šamār, “the fennel plant,” S ʿṣṣḥψʿψ, “fennel.” The change of Coptic s to Arabic sh is uncommon, but sometimes distant Upper Egyptians pronounce the regular s as sh, such as ʿšms, “sun,” which becomes ʿštsh, and saʿal, “to ask,” which becomes šal. ʿṣṣḥψʿψ was possibly borrowed first as ʿštšmh, which is a broken plural form, the singular of which is ʿštsh, such as ʿštqtrn, “tar,” and its plural ʿštqtrn. The h in šmh, being weak, was dropped leaving šm; šmar is possibly a shortened form of šmhr. Although the original of ʿṣṣḥψʿψ is as yet unknown, it is quite distinct from later Coptic ʿṣṣḥψʿψ, a reborrowing from Arabic.

Shāsha, “to rise,” usually applied to the moon, stars and dawn, S ʿṣ, “to rise.” The Coptic origin was duplicated in Arabic. Apparently šāsha was first borrowed as ʿṣš, which is still used) of the quadrilateral by duplication pattern.

Ṣāwshaw, “beat with a whip,” SB ṣswṣ, “strike, thresh.” The word has undergone a metathesis of the reduplicated root element wsh to shw. The Arabic form is that of a quadrilateral by duplication pattern.

Shhār, “wonder” used in saying Shhār ʿalayya, “I have become a freak or a wonder” (Sobhy), S ʿṣ, “wonder.”

Ṣḥgilgil, “bell” (Vyeichl), S ṣḥψɡψɡψ, “bell.”

Ṣḥlba, “a kind of fish,” S ʿṣḥψɡψɡψ, “fish, silurus mystus” (Crum). Sometimes Coptic h is borrowed as p such as ṣḥḥp, which appears in Arabic as ṣḥbr, “a place name.”

Ṣḥinf, “sack for straw,” S ṣḥψɡψ or ṣḥψɡψ, “basket or crate.” The Arabic followed the pattern such as ʿṣḥbr, “a measure of length.” Otherwise the changes are regular.

Shintyān, “large drawers out of mode” (Sobhy), B ʿṣḥψɡψ, “robe of linen” (cf. Greek ἄνθωμα). The Egyptian shndyt appears more original.

Ṣḥb, “heat of the day,” B ʿṣḥɡψ or ʿṣḥɡψ, “fire or to scorch.” Usually Coptic w becomes ū in Egyptian Arabic and not ū, but in this case ū was pronounced on account of the guttural ʿ, which requires a back lower vowel. Otherwise the form is normal.

Ṣḥnūna, “store house for grains,” B ʿṣḥψɡψ pronounced approximately shewne. The change of ʿw to ū seems regular, and the final ū in Egyptian Arabic is the sign of feminine gender.

Ṣḥrīya, “censor” (Sobhy), SBF ʿṣḥψɡψ with the same meaning. The final ʿya might be for the purpose of giving a feminine ending to the Arabic word since the original Coptic is feminine.

Ṣḥshah, “small window,” SAB ṣḥψɡψ, “window.” Possibly the final ṣ was considered a feminine ending in Arabic and was levelled to a, rendering ṣḥsha after the pattern of a hollow verb such as ṣḥḥp, “ball.”

Ṣḥshah, “tuft of hair, crest,” S ṣḥψɡψ, “single lock or plait of hair.” Sahidic ṣ may be borrowed in Arabic as ṣḥḥp, which becomes ṣḥbr, “a place name.” The Arabic followed the pattern of a hollow root, such as ṣḥḥp, “picture.”

Ṣḥkikka, “plough” or “plowshare,” Ckai, “to plough or ploughing.” The Coptic utterance developed to fit the Arabic pattern of a double ain verb such as ṣḥḥp, “seed or kernel.”

Ṣḥsir, “salty,” ṣḥψ, “brine.” The change of ṣ to ṣ is common, such as ṣḥḥψ, “a place name.”
taff, “to spit,” S تاب. The second Coptic consonant was doubled in Arabic to make a triliteral double ‘ain root from which other parts of speech are derived such as tefāf, “spitting,” and matfūf ‘aleh, “spat upon.”

takhkh, “to become drunk,” A تاحك, “be drunken.” The Arabic followed a regular double ‘ain verb.

timsā, “crocodile,” SB تمسا, “the crocodile.” Arabic borrowed the Coptic word with the feminine definite article را; thus the word fell into the pattern ٌلُل such as ٌلُل تيمشل, “image.”

tūt, “gather,” used only in the expression تن تأ حا نى, “gather (for) the magic player,” S توتوت, “be gathered or collected.”

tabha, “prayer” (Sobhy), S تاب, “pray.” The final a in Arabic is perhaps a sign of a feminine noun.

tāsh, “border” or “boundary,” especially of a field, SAF تاش (Sobhy), “limit, boundary.” There is no problem with this word because Coptic t is unaspirated and its representation in Arabic as t is normal.

tayāb, “east wind,” S تيييث from تي, “wind,” and فيثت, “east.” It followed the Arabic ٌلُل pattern such as ٌلُل ساعداب, “clouds.”

tohma, “invitation” (Sobhy), S توهما, “to invite.” The Arabic pattern is ٌل, and Coptic ṭ became Arabic ُل instead of ُل because of the guttural h.

tūb, “a brick,” S توب. This is a normal change, since Coptic ṭ is usually borrowed in Arabic as ُ. The Arabic form with the article is the source of English (from Spanish) “adobe” < عَفَب.

For ٌفيا, “axe,” SA توب, “spade” or “pick.” The word is normal except that it received an added feminine ending in Arabic, possibly because it is feminine in Coptic.

wāḥa, “oasis,” S واحة with the same meaning. Regardless of the origin of this Coptic word Egyptian Arabic واحة is most probably derived from it. It became so common in Egypt that classical Arabic included it in its vocabulary, as it did with lexical items of other languages with which it came in contact, e.g., فردوس, “paradise,” from Persian, and حبس, “prison,” from Latin.

wahwah, “to cry with pain, to bark,” SB واححة, “bark, growl.” The phonetic changes are normal.

wā-resource وَسَر, “wood saw” (Sobhy), B دمَوس, “saw.” Although دمَوس is related to minshār in meaning it is difficult to trace it back to the root درشر. Possibly دمَوس itself is a loanword in Coptic from Semitic (Hebrew וָשוּר), nevertheless it may be considered as the origin of Egyptian Arabic وَسَر. However, the extra r in the latter is problematic, but it can be paralleled by other examples where internal doubled consonants are resolved into r, l, or n + a single consonant.

wēba, “a grain measure (two kēlas or one-sixth of an ‘ardab),” S وينه, B وينه, “measure of grain, less than an ‘ardab.” It is apparent that the two words are related; the Arabic apparently was vocalized by analogy with كيله kēla, “a grain measure one-twelfth of an ‘ardab, considered the unit of grain measuring in Egypt.” It may be noted here that a measure of grain ضهر وفاح exists in Hebrew,7 and possibly in other Semitic


languages, but these cannot be considered an origin for Egyptian Arabic ْوебا simply because the latter Arabic form does not exist anywhere outside Egypt. Moreover, Hebrew ُخير is expected to become Arabic ِخير and not ْوебا.

Coptic loanwords included items peculiar to Coptic worship such as َانبا, "bishop," and َاجبيا, "book of prayer." They also include items that are used in remote villages not common to the main Egyptian population such as ُهناي, "a thing," and ُفاق ُلاتا, "a measure of grain." This leaves the number of Coptic loanwords used commonly in Egyptian Arabic smaller still; they mainly include names of various kinds of fish, vulgarisms, and names of cooking utensils and foods not used in Arabia.

It might be mentioned here that Turkish, which was never a vernacular of Egypt, left more lexical items in Egyptian Arabic than Coptic did. This is indicated by a partial survey of Turkish loanwords in Egyptian Arabic by E. Littmann, which includes two hundred and sixty-four words.

The limited influence of Coptic on Egyptian Arabic can only be explained as lack of widespread bilingualism in Egypt during the transition from Coptic to Arabic. This leads to the conclusion that the Copts who were converted to Islam at any one time must have been a minor segment of the population. Again it may be said that Egyptian Muslims today are right in claiming a predominant Arab ancestry.