

The Coptic Language

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Lesson 1

Table 1: The 25 Coptic Letters adapted from Greek Letters

Coptic			Greek			English		Arabic
Letter	Cap	Small	Letter	Cap	Small	Cap	Small	
Alpha	Ⲁ	ⲁ	Alpha	A	α	A	a	آ
Veeta	Ⲃ	ⲃ	Beta	B	β	B	b	ب
Gamma	Ⲅ	ⲅ	Gamma	Γ	γ	G	g, gh, n	غ ج ن
Delta	Ⲇ	ⲇ	Delta	Δ	δ	D, Z	d, z	ذ
Ei	Ⲉ	ⲉ	Epsilon	E	ε	E	e	كسرة
Soo	Ⲋ	ⲋ	Not used	as a Greek	Letter	6		6
Zeeta	Ⲍ	ⲍ	Zeta	Z	ζ	Z	z	ز
Eeta	Ⲏ	ⲏ	Eeta	H	η	E	y	ي
Theeta	Ⲑ	ⲑ	Theta	Θ	θ	TH	th	ت ث
Iota	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Iota	I	ι	I	i	كسرة
Kappa	Ⲕ	ⲕ	Kappa	K	κ	K	k	ك
Laula	Ⲗ	ⲗ	Lambda	Λ	λ	L	l	ل
Mei	Ⲙ	ⲙ	Mu	M	μ	M	m	م
Nei	Ⲛ	ⲛ	Nu	N	ν	N	n	ن
Eksee	Ⲝ	ⲝ	Xi	Ξ	ξ	X	x	إكسي
O	Ⲟ	ⲟ	Omicron	O	ο	O	o	ضمة
Pee	Ⲡ	ⲡ	Pi	Π	π	P	p	ب
Ro	Ⲣ	ⲣ	Rho	Ρ	ρ	R	r	ر

Seema	Ϣ	ϣ	Sigma	Σ	σ	S	s	س
Tav	Ϥ	ϥ	Tau	T	τ	T	t	ت
Epsilon	Ϧ	ϧ	Upsilon	Υ	υ	I, V		ف كسرة
Fei	Ϩ	ϩ	Phi	Φ	φ	PH		ف
Kei	Ϫ	ϫ	Chi	X	χ	K, SH	k, sh	ك ش
Epsie	Ϭ	ϭ	Psi	Ψ	ψ	PS		بس
OO	Ϯ	ϯ	Omega	Ω	ω	O		أو

**Table 2: Coptic Letters derived directly from older Egyptian Scripts
(no Greek equivalence)**

Letter	Hiero-glyphic	Hieratic	Demotic	Coptic Cap	Coptic Small	English Sound	English Small	Arabic عربي
Shai						Sh		ش
Fai						F	f	ف
Khai						Kh		خ
Hori						H	h	ه
Ganga						J	g	ج
Cheema						Ch		تش
Tee						tee		تي

The Definite Article (The)

In Coptic, as is the case in French and German, the definite article can be different depending on whether the noun is masculine, feminine or plural.

a) For masculine nouns, the main article is π , (some names take π or ϕ)

Examples: Masculine nouns that take π

$\pi\iota\sigma\omicron\eta$ = the brother (الأخ)

$\pi\iota\kappa\lambda\epsilon\eta$ = the earth or the land (الأرض)

Masculine nouns that take π

Πωρι (ἄωρι) = The Son (الابن)

ἄωρο = the king (الملك)

Masculine nouns that take φ

Φιωτ (ἄιωτ) = The father (الآب)

ἄραν = the name (الاسم)

b) For feminine nouns, the main article is † (some names take ἄ or ἑ)

Examples: Feminine nouns that take †

†παρθενος = the virgin (العذراء)

†ωρω = the queen (الملكة)

Feminine nouns that take ἄ

ἄφε = the Heaven (السماء)

ἄωρι = the daughter (الابنة)

Feminine nouns that take ἑ

ἑωωτ = the mother (الأم)

ἑωη† = the middle (المنتصف)

Exercise: Read the Following

<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
παιωτ	My father أبي	τωωωτ	My mother أمي
πεκιωτ	Your father (s. m.) أبوك	τεκωωτ	Your mother (s. m.) أمك
πειωτ	Your father (s. f.) أبوكي	τεωωτ	Your mother (s. f.) أمك
πεωιωτ	His father أبوه	τεωωωτ	His mother أمه
πεωιωτ	Her father أبوها	τεωωωτ	Her mother أمها
πενιωτ	Our father	τενωωτ	Our mother أمنا
πετενωιωτ	Your father (plural) أبوكم	τετενωωτ	Your mother (plural) أمكم
ποτωιωτ	Their father أبوهم	τωτωωωτ	Their mother أمهم

Exercise: Read the Following

ἄβοτ	Month شهر	ἄφε	Head رأس
βωκ	Servant خادم	βαλ	Eye عين
ηι	House بيت	λας	Tongue لسان
κοϛζι	Little صغير	ϥωι	Hair شعر
ἐβολ	From من	ϣδα	Nose أنف
νοβι	Sin خطية	κας	Bone عظم
αλωμ	Cheese جبنة	οϣωμ	to eat يأكل
ἄλολι	Grapes عنب	ναϣ	to see يري
ωικ	Bread خبز	ςωβι	to laugh يضحك

Exercise: Read the Following

Ϡενοϣωϣτ ἕμοκ ὠ Πιχριστος
 νεμ Πεκιωτ ἡἄσαθος νεμ Πιπνευμα
 εθοϣαβ ϣε ακι (ακτωνκ) ακςωϣ ἕμμον
 ναι ναν.

We worship You, O Christ, with Your good Father and the Holy Spirit, for you have come (risen) and saved us. Have mercy on us.

نسجد لك أيها المسيح، مع أبيك الصالح والروح القدس، لأنك أتيت (قمت) وخلصتنا. ارحمنا.

Exercise: Read the Following

Χερε νε Χαρια: ϣδρωπι εθνεςως:
 θεἑταςμικι ναν: ἕφνοϣϣ Πιλοσος.

Hail to you, O Mary, the beautiful dove, who has born to us God the Logos.

السلام لك يا مريم الحمامة الحسنة التي ولدت لنا الله الكلمة.

Κςμαρωϣτ ἄληθως: νεμ Πεκιωτ
 ἡἄσαθος: νεμ Πιπνευμα εθοϣαβ: ϣε
 ακι ακςωϣ ἕμμον ναι ναν.

Blessed are You indeed, with Your good Father and the Holy Spirit, for You have come and saved us. Have mercy on us.

مبارك أنت بالحقيقة مع أبيك الصالح والروح القدس، لأنك أتيت وخلصتنا. ارحمنا.