

Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern USA
St. Mary & St. Mina Coptic Orthodox Church
2930 CR 193, Clearwater, FL 33759

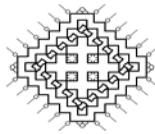
The Coptic Language

Introduction

ⲪⲁⲘⲓ

ⲚⲓⲢⲉⲩⲁⲛⲓⲛⲓ

Father Kyrillos Makar



Notes

1. The Coptic language is described by Professor Rodolphe Kasser of the University of Geneva, Switzerland as **"one of the most beautiful, most cleverly structured and most musical in the world"** *

2. These lessons are designed to teach some introductory basic principles of the "Bohairic" Coptic Dialect which is used by the church in its liturgical services.

3. The pronunciation is the traditional pronunciation that is used by the Church as well as the few families who use Coptic as their daily language.

4. There are 32 letters in the Coptic alphabet. The first 25 are derived from the Greek letters that have their origin in the Egyptian Hieroglyphic script, the last 7 letters are directly derived from the Egyptian Demotic Script.

* Kasser, R., *The Coptic Language(s)*, The Coptic Encyclopedia, Vol. 8, Atiya, A.S., ed., Macmillan Publishing Co., NY, 1991, Page 145.

LECTURE # 1

The Egyptian Alphabets;

Their relationship to other alphabets

Egyptian Contributions to the development of civilization:

The contributions to civilization made by Egypt are best described by Dr. Leonard H. Lesko who wrote¹: *"The ancient Egyptians made outstanding contributions to the development of civilization. They created the world's first national government, basic forms of arithmetic, and a 365-day calendar. They invented a form of picture writing called Hieroglyphics. They also invented papyrus, a paperlike writing material made from the stems of papyrus plants. The Egyptians developed one of the first religions to emphasize life after death. They built great cities in which many skilled architects, doctors, engineers, painters, and sculptors worked. The best known achievements of ancient Egypt, however, are the pyramids they built as tombs for their rulers. The most famous pyramids stand at Giza. These gigantic stone structures - marvels of architecture and engineering skills - have been preserved by the dry climate for about 4500 years. They serve as spectacular reminders of the glory of ancient Egypt."*

The rapid development of their writing system was facilitated by their discovery of methods to make paper and ink. Walter A. Fairservis, Jr.² states that *"One of the most important contributions made by ancient Egypt was papermaking. Paper was made from the papyrus plant that grows abundantly in the marches of the Nile Valley. Before the Egyptians invented paper, writing was done on clay tablets, which crumble, or on stone, which is heavy and hard to carve. Unlike the rest of the ancient world, the Egyptians required only a brush and some ink, and they could easily carry these materials anywhere they went."* Donald Jackson also affirms³ that *"Indeed the marriage of liquid ink, pen and paper first brought about by the Egyptians was such a revolutionary step that it is still the fundamental basis of most handwritten communication today."*

Egyptian Alphabets as the Ultimate Source of the Modern Western Alphabet:

The Egyptians developed the Hieroglyphic Writing around 3000 BC⁴. It consisted originally of signs that stood for words or ideas, but gradually each sign stood for a syllable or a sound. Hieratic, which is a simplified cursive form of the hieroglyphic, was soon developed by Egyptian scribes who used it for both religious and nonreligious purposes⁵. Around 700 BC

Demotic writing was developed. This was simpler and faster to write than the hieratic. The scribes used it for correspondence and record keeping⁵.

Around 1500 BC, the Semites developed an alphabet which is based on the Egyptian hieroglyphic system^{4,6,7}. The Phoenicians, one of the Semitic peoples perfected an alphabet around 1000 BC. The Greek alphabet, which is the progenitor of Roman (Latin) letters^{4,6} was directly derived from the Phoenician alphabet^{4,6,7,8}. The Greeks not only took the forms of letters, they also took over some Phoenician names for the letters. The first letter of the Phoenician alphabet, א, its name is aleph, meaning ox, became Α, or alpha in Greek. The second letter, ב, or beth, meaning house, became Β, or beta in Greek⁴.

Based on the above-mentioned facts, the English alphabet of today can be traced back to the sign writing of ancient Egypt. Barbara Mertz states that: *"The birds and the bees of the ancient Egyptian script may have a more direct relationship to our own alphabet than we realize"*⁹. Davies¹⁰ cites a quote by Gardiner describing this observation: *"The hieroglyphs lives on though in transmuted form within our own alphabet"*. Compton's Encyclopedia⁶ states that: *"The Latin Alphabet is a development from the Greek alphabet. The Greek alphabet, in turn, is an adaptation of a writing system which was developed among the Semites of Syria about 1500 BC. Outwardly, this first Semite writing seems to be an original and individual creation.. Its principals however, are certainly based on the Egyptian word-syllabic writing"*. Marianne Cooley⁴ states that *"The English alphabet developed from a number of early writing systems, beginning with the sign writing of Ancient Egypt"*. In the same reference⁴, she shows, in a table form, the development of each letter starting with the Egyptian (about 3000 BC) followed by Semitic (1500 BC) followed by Phoenician (about 1000 BC) followed by Greek (about 600 BC) followed by Roman (114 AD) and finally the modern alphabet. Paul Johnson, in his book *The Civilization of Ancient Egypt*¹¹, succinctly summarizes the development of modern Western Alphabet from the ancient Egyptian Alphabet in the following: *"The Egyptians mined at this Sinai site (the ancient turquoise mines) both during the Middle Kingdom and the New Kingdom. During the reign of Ammenemes III, around 1800 BC, Semitic workers were used at this site. One of them, evidently a man of creative ingenuity, became familiar with Egyptian hieroglyphic writing and determined to adapt it to his native Canaanite language, then unwritten. His stroke of genius was to select the alphabetic signs from the hieroglyphs, rejecting the consonantal groups and the ideograms. The new script survived and gradually spread north through Palestine and Syria, acquiring cursive characteristics in the process. In northern Syria, near the ancient port of Ras Shamra, it took on a cuneiform style - that is, it was adapted to the writing materials of the area, tablets and stylus. This Ras*

*Shamra script, ancient Ugaritic, has no other connection with Sumerian or Babylonian cuneiform. It is merely a modified form of the Canaanite-Egyptian alphabetic script. It was gradually adopted by the entire region, in various forms, and above all by the Phoenicians, who had an alphabet of twenty-eight letters. In the ninth century BC, the Greeks took over the Phoenician alphabet more or less as they found it, retaining even the names of the letters. They reversed the direction of the script from right-to-left to left-to-right, but the really important change they introduced, made essential by the structure of their own non-semitic tongue, was the vowel-sign. They switched the signs for six Canaanite consonants not used in Greek to vowels, and thus gave the world the structure of the alphabet more or less as we have it today. The ultimate source of the Western alphabet, therefore, is ancient Egypt"*¹¹.

The Microsoft Encarta 96 Encyclopedia¹² traces back the origin of several English letters to their hieroglyphic origin. For example, the letter "A" is traced back to the Egyptian hieroglyph of an eagle, the letter "B" from the hieroglyph for "crane", etc.

The Development of the Coptic Alphabet:


A. The origin of the word "Coptic":

The words "Copt, Coptic" as well as the words "Egypt, Egyptian" have the same origin; and that is the old Egyptian words describing Egypt as "*E-KA-Ptah*" meaning *the House of the Spirit of Ptah*. (*E* means *House*; *Ka* means *Spirit*; and *Ptah* is *one of the famous Gods of Old Egypt*). Therefore, the words "*Coptic*" and "*Egyptian*" are linguistically one and the same word.

B. The origin of the Coptic Alphabet:

The present 32 letters of the Coptic Alphabet are derived from two sources; The first 25 letters are modified from the Greek alphabet (table 1); *it should be remembered that the origin of these Greek letters can be traced back to the old Egyptian letters*⁴. whereas the last 7 letters are a modification from Demotic letters (table 2)¹³.

C. The contribution of the Coptic Alphabet to the Russian Alphabets:

The current Alphabet of the Russian Language is known as the Cyrillic Alphabet. It was invented by Saint Cyril (826 - 869 AD) and Saint Methodius (815 - 884 AD), two Greek brothers who were missionaries to Russia during the 9th Century. They knew Coptic and they introduced, along with the Greek letters, Coptic letters such as  (written as III) into the Russian Alphabet that is still in use in Russia today¹⁴.

D. The Greek words in the Coptic Liturgy and the Coptic Language in general:

In the first few centuries of Christianity in Egypt, the Greek language was the cultural language of the world, in much the same way as the English language these days. Greek was always the language used in international councils (Ecumenical councils). Many of the Coptic Church fathers e.g. Saint Athanasius, our 20th Pope, wrote mainly in Greek because, at that time, this is how people everywhere in the world would understand. However, many other Church fathers wrote in Coptic. Many Egyptians, especially in Alexandria, spoke Greek very fluently, in addition to Egyptian (Coptic) their mother tongue.

When Saint Mark came to Egypt and started his ministry there, Greek was the language that Saint Mark used and it was the language of the Liturgy that He handed down to his successors. When the Liturgy was later translated from Greek to Egyptian (Coptic), the Church kept some Greek words and expressions, and the Copts were very familiar with the meaning of these words. However, it is very important to remember that over 90% of the Divine Liturgy service and the Praises التسبحة is in Egyptian (Coptic), and less than 10% is in Greek.

The following are few examples of words of Greek origin that are used in our Liturgy:

1. Words of Greek origin that are used by the Coptic Church and many other churches. Actually these words are now part of many languages, including the Coptic as well as the English language:

Word	pronounced	Meaning
ἈΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ	Apostolos	Apostle
ΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ	Marteeros	Martyr
ἄγγελος	Angelos	Angel
ΔΙΑΚΟΝ	Thiyakon	Deacon
ΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ	Katholikee	Catholic
ορθόδοξος	Orthodoxos	Orthodox

2. Greek words that are sometimes used but have Coptic equivalents

Greek Word		Coptic Equivalent		Meaning
θεος	(Theos)	ϥⲛⲟⲩⲧ	(Efnouti)	God
θεοτοκος	(Theotokos)	ⲙⲁⲥⲛⲟⲩⲧ	(Masnouti)	Mother of God
ⲁⲅⲓⲟⲥ	(Agyos)	ϥⲬⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ	(Fee-eth-owab)	Saint (masculine)
ⲁⲅⲓⲁ	(Agiya)	ⲑⲬⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ	(Thee-eth-owab)	Saint (feminine)
ⲉⲩⲭⲬ	(Evkee)	ϩⲗⲬ	(Eshleel)	Prayer
ⲁⲛⲉⲥⲧⲬ	(Anesti)	ⲁⲩⲧⲱⲛⲩ	(aftonf)	is risen
ⲁⲗⲬⲉⲱⲥ	(Aleethos)	ϫⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲉⲑⲙⲬⲓ	(khen oumethmee)	Truly

3. Traditionally, there are few hymns that are usually sung in Greek,

ⲗⲟⲅⲁ ⲡⲁⲧⲣⲓ	(Thoksa Patri)
ⲁⲅⲓⲟⲥ ⲟⲑⲉⲟⲥ	(Agyos o-The-os)
ⲭⲣⲓⲥⲧⲟⲥ ⲁⲛⲉⲥⲧⲬ	(Ekhristos Anestee)

But the majority of Church hymns are in Coptic e.g.

ϫⲉⲛ ϥⲣⲁⲛ	(Khen-efran)
ⲡⲟⲩⲣⲟ	(Ep-ouro)
ⲧⲁⲓⲱⲟⲩⲣⲓ	(Tai-shouri)

It should be remembered that the Coptic Language represents the final development of the Egyptian language. Cyrus Gordon, in his book, "Forgotten Scripts", states that: "The Coptic Church still preserves the native Egyptian language written in Greek characters, so that we have an unbroken tradition of Egyptian texts spanning about five thousand years"¹⁵. As a matter of fact, the Coptic language was the real key to the deciphering of the hieroglyphic and Demotic scripts by Champollion^{16, 17}. As a French teenager living in Grenoble, France, Champollion dreamed of being the one who would unlock the secrets of the Rosetta stone. He studied both ancient History and Coptic language. Christine Hobson in her book "*The World of the Pharaohs*"¹⁸ describes Champollion as "*A genius with a gift of languages, including Coptic which he mastered early, believing correctly, that it would be the key he would need one day to understand Egyptian*". Later on, he used his knowledge of the Coptic language to decipher the hieroglyphic writings on Rosetta stone. This great accomplishment of Champollion widely opened the doors to the unlocking of the glorious mysteries of Pharaonic Egypt^{15, 16, 17}.

The importance of the Egyptian (Coptic) language.

1. It represents the final stage of the development of the Egyptian tongue, and in the words of Cyrus Gordon¹⁵, we have "an unbroken tradition of Egyptian texts spanning about 5000 years". Coptic language was the spoken language in Egypt until the 11th Century when it was gradually replaced by Arabic. There are some historical records indicating that it was still the spoken language in some areas of Upper Egypt until the 17th century¹⁹.
2. It was the language that Jesus - as a baby visiting Egypt with Saint Mary and Saint Joseph - heard and spoke. Egypt was the only country Jesus visited outside his home country. Therefore, we feel that our old country and our language were blessed through this visit.
3. Although the Coptic language, at the present time, is no longer used by significant number of Egyptians, it still lives on in the hundreds of words in the Egyptian Arabic dialect spoken everyday in Egypt²⁰.
4. The Bible was translated to the Coptic language around the second century by the Egyptian scholars of the theological School of Alexandria, who were very fluent in both Greek and Coptic. Therefore the Coptic translation is considered one of the most reliable and accurate translations available.
5. The original writings of several early Church fathers were in Coptic, e.g. the writings and teachings of Saint Antony, the first Christian monk in the world, and those of Saint Shenouda the archmandrite were all in the Coptic language²¹.

Bibliography

1. Lesko, Leonard H., *The World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 6, World Book Inc., Chicago, 1991, Page 133.
2. Fairservis, Walter A. Jr., *Egypt; Gift of the Nile*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1963, Pages 74 - 75.
3. Jackson, Donald, *The Story of Writing*, Taplinger Publ. Co., Inc., New York 1981, Pages 19 - 20.
4. Cooley, Marianne, *The World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, World Book Inc., Chicago, 1991, Pages 382 - 383.
5. Snyder, John W., *The World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, World Book Inc., Chicago, 1991, Pages 228 - 229.
6. *Compton's Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2. E. F. Compton Company (Division of Encyclopedia Britannica), Helen Hemingway Benton, Publisher, 1974, Page 284.
7. Gelb, I.J. and Whiting, R.M., *Academic American Encyclopedia*, Vol. 20, Grolier Inc., Danby, Connecticut, 1992, Page 293.
8. Reference 3, Page 26.
9. Mertz, Barbara, *Temples, Tombs and Hieroglyphs: A History of Ancient Egypt*, Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, 1978, Page 258.
10. Davies, W.V. *Egyptian Hieroglyphs*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California 1987, Page 60.
11. Johnson, Paul, *The Civilization of Ancient Egypt*, Atheneum, New York, 1978, Pages 164 - 165.
12. *Microsoft® Encarta® 96 Encyclopedia*. 1993 - 1995 Microsoft Corporation; Funk & Wagnalls Corporation.
13. "A Reference Book in the Grammar of the Coptic Language", (Arabic Reference) Publications of the Society of Saint Mina the Miracle-Maker, Alexandria, Egypt, 1969, Page 18.

المرجع في قواعد اللغة القبطية - من مطبوعات جمعية مار مينا العجايبى
بالأسكندرية سنة ١٦٨٦ ش ١٩٦٩ م

14. Reference 13, Page 34.
15. Gordon, Cyrus H., *Forgotten Scripts: Their Ongoing Discovery and Decipherment*, Dorset Press, New York, 1987, Page 23.
16. Reference 5, Pages 229 - 230.
17. Reference 13, Pages 34 - 35.
18. Hobson, Christine, *The World of the Pharaohs*, Thames and Hudson Inc., New York, 1991, Page 157.
19. Bishop Yoannis, *The History of the Coptic Church following the Council of Chalcedon*, El Ra-ed Publication Corporation, Staten Island, NY 1989. (Arabic Ref.), Pages 48 - 50.
تاريخ الكنيسة القبطية بعد مجمع خلقيدونية - لنيافة الأنبا يؤانس
أسقف الغربية الراحل الناشر : كنيسة رئيس الملائكة ميخائيل
ومار مينا ومطبعة الرائد - ستاتن أيلاند - نيو يورك ١٩٨٩ م
20. Guirguis, Pisenti Rizkallah, *Coptic Words in the spoken Arabic Dialect (of Egypt)*, Quased Kheir Publication Co., Cairo, Egypt, 1975, Pages 1 - 115. (Arabic Reference)
موجز قاموس الكلمات القبطية المتداولة في اللهجة العربية العامية
للأستاذ بسنتي رزق الله جرجس مطبعة قاصد خير القاهرة ١٩٧٥ م
21. Reference 13, Pages 27 - 28

































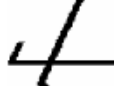


Table 1
The 25 Coptic Letters adapted from Greek Letters

Coptic			Greek		
Letter	Cap	Small	Letter	Cap	Small
Alpha	Ⲁ	ⲁ	Alpha	Α	α
Veeta	Ⲃ	ⲃ	Beta	Β	β
Gamma	Ⲅ	ⲅ	Gamma	Γ	γ
Delta	Ⲇ	ⲇ	Delta	Δ	δ
Ei	Ⲉ	ⲉ	Epsilon	Ε	ε
soo	ⲉ	ⲉ	Not used as a Greek Letter		
Zeeta	Ⲋ	ⲋ	Zeta	Ζ	ζ
Eeta	Ⲍ	ⲍ	Eta	Η	η
Theeta	Ⲏ	ⲏ	Theta	Θ	θ
Iota	Ⲑ	ⲑ	Iota	Ι	ι
Kappa	Ⲓ	ⲓ	Kappa	Κ	κ
Lavla	Ⲕ	ⲕ	Lambda	Λ	λ
Mei	Ⲗ	ⲗ	Mu	Μ	μ
Nei	Ⲙ	ⲙ	Nu	Ν	ν
Eksee	Ⲛ	ⲛ	Xi	Ξ	ξ
O	Ⲝ	ⲝ	Omicron	Ο	ο
Pee	Ⲟ	ⲟ	Pi	Π	π
Ro	Ⲡ	ⲡ	Rho	Ρ	ρ
Seema	Ⲣ	ⲣ	Sigma	Σ	σ, ς
Tav	Ⲥ	ⲥ	Tau	Τ	τ
Epsilon	Ⲧ	ⲧ	Upsilon	Υ	υ
Fei	Ⲩ	ⲩ	Phi	Φ	φ
Kei	Ⲫ	ⲫ	Chi	Χ	χ
Epsee	Ⲭ	ⲭ	Psi	Ψ	ψ
OO	Ⲯ	ⲯ	Omega	Ω	ω

Note that most Coptic letters are written in a somewhat different way than the corresponding Greek Letters.

Note also that the Coptic names of the letters are in many cases different from the Greek names

Table 2
Coptic Letters derived directly from
older Egyptian Scripts

Letter	older Scripts			Coptic	
	Hiero- glyphic	Hieratic	Demotic	Cap	Small
<i>Shai</i>					
<i>Fai</i>					
<i>Khai</i>					
<i>Hori</i>					
<i>Ganga</i>					
<i>Cheema</i>					
<i>Tee</i>					

**Table 3. Summary of the
Names and Pronunciation of the Coptic Alphabet**

Letter		pronunciation	
Alpha	Α α	A	as in <u>f</u> ather , or as in <u>f</u> an
Veeta	Β β	V, B	based on position in the word
Gamma	Γ γ	G, N, GH	based on position in the word
Delta	Δ δ	TH, D	TH as in <u>th</u> en, (D in names)
Ei	Ε ε	E	as in <u>p</u> en, or as <u>r</u> ain
Soo	Ϛ ϛ		it is the numeral 6
Zeeta	Ζ ζ	Z	as in <u>z</u> ebra
Eeta	Η η	EE	as in <u>m</u> ee <u>t</u>
Theeta	Θ θ	TH	as in <u>th</u> ink
Iota	Ι ι	I, Y	based on position in the word
Kappa	Κ κ	K	as in <u>c</u> ook
Lavla	Λ λ	L	as in <u>l</u> ook
Mei	Μ μ	M	as in <u>m</u> other
Nei	Ν ν	N	as in <u>n</u> ancy
Eksee	Ξ ξ	X	as in <u>b</u> ox
O	Ο ο	O (Short)	as in British <u>no</u> t
Pee	Π π	P	as in <u>p</u> eter
Ro	Ρ ρ	R	as in <u>r</u> oom
Seema	Ϛ ϛ	S, Z	based on position in the word
Tav	Τ τ	T	as in <u>t</u> ake
Epsilon	Ϛ ϛ	V, I, O	based on position in the word
Fei	Φ φ	F	as in <u>f</u> an
Kei	Χ χ	K, SH, KH	based on position in the word
Epsee	Ψ ψ	PS	both p and s are pronounced
Oo	Ω ω	O(Long)	as in <u>th</u> row
Shai	Ϡ ϡ	SH	as in <u>sh</u> ake
Fai	Ϝ ϝ	F	as in <u>f</u> an
Khai	Ϟ ϟ	KH	as in Arabic <u>Kh</u>
Hori	Ϡ ϡ	H	as in <u>h</u> ouse
Ganga	Ϙ ϙ	J, G	based on position in the word
Cheema	ϛ Ϝ	CH	as in <u>Ch</u> urch
Tee	Ϟ ϟ	TEE	as in <u>tea</u>
Jinkim	Ϡ ϡ		Makes the letter a Separate syllable

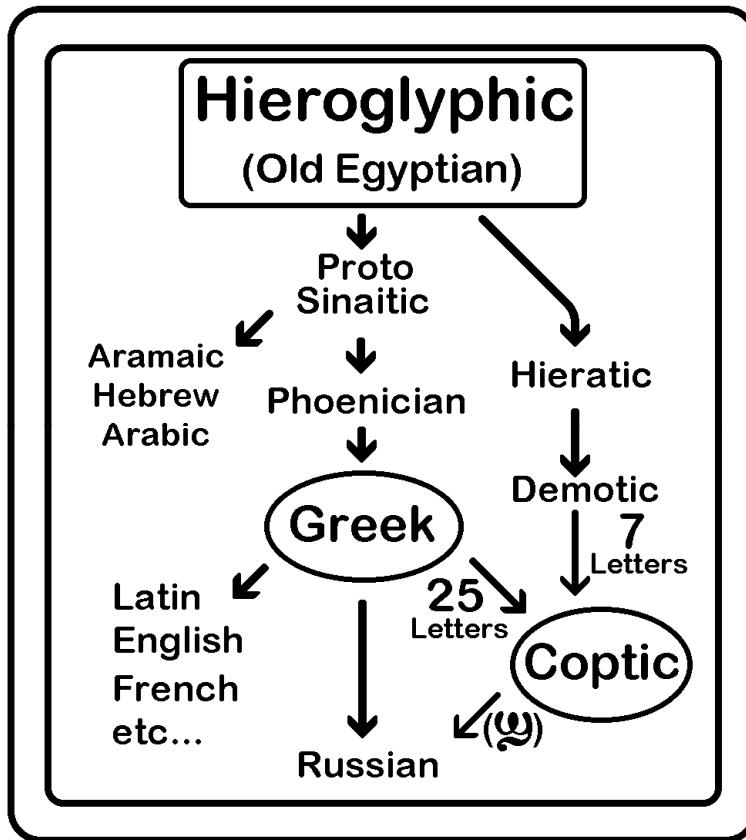
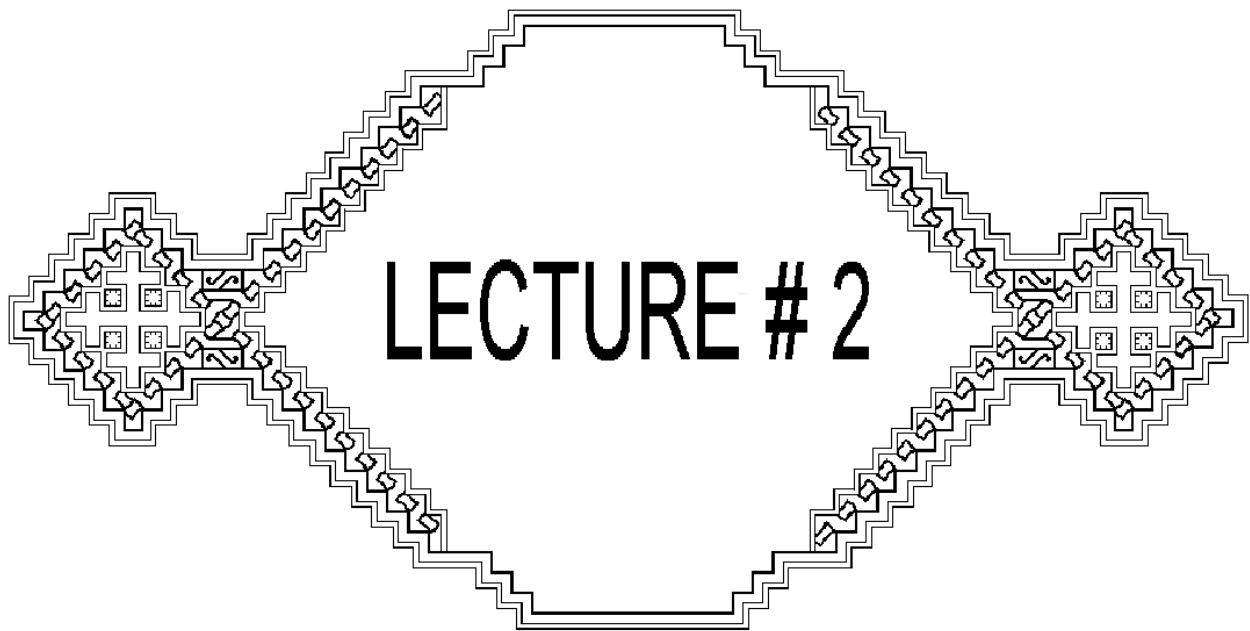


Figure 1
A flow chart showing the development
of several alphabets from
the Egyptian Hieroglyphic Script



1. Consonant Letters

ㄴ (n)	ㅍ (f)	ㅑ (r)
ㄷ (t)	ㅎ (h)	ㅓ (z)
ㄱ (k)	ㅇ (g or J)	

2. Vowel Sounds

ㅏ (a)	ㅓ (ai)	ㅣ (i)
ㅑ (ee)	ㅗ (o)	ㅜ (oo)
ㅜ (ou)		









Jinkim 

A little slash on top of letters to make them pronounced as "separate syllables".

1. Consonant Letters

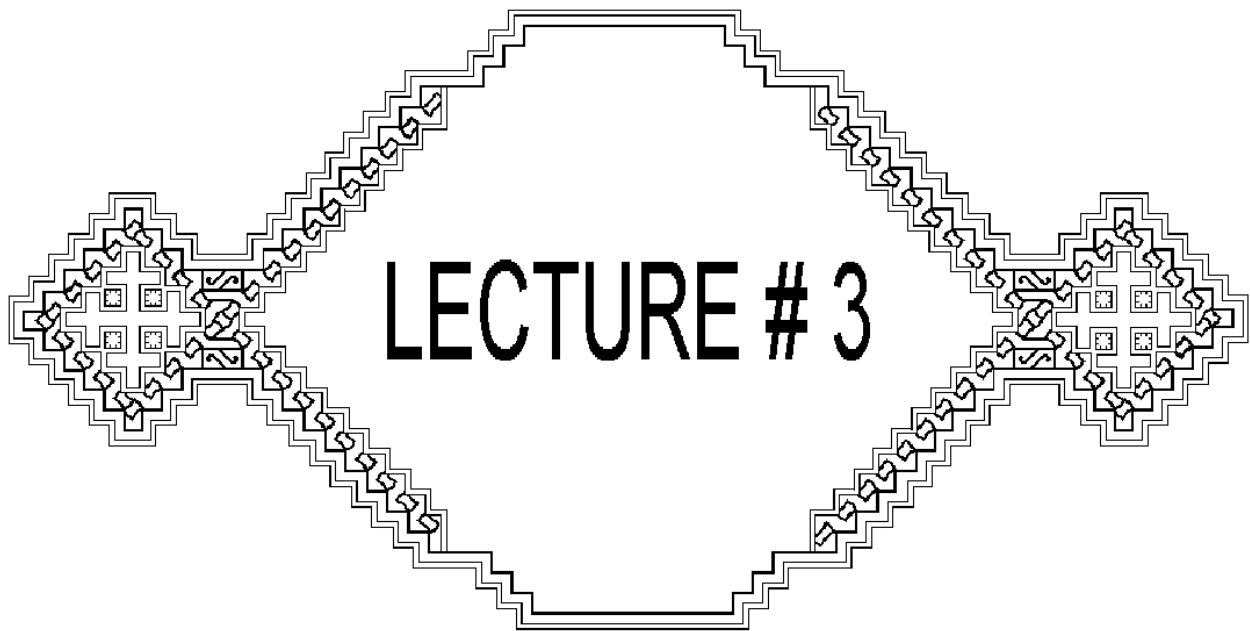
Letter	Name	Pronunciation	How to write it
ᠨ	Nei	N (as in <u>N</u>o)	
ᠹ	Fay	F (as in <u>F</u>ish)	
ᠷ	Ro	R (as in <u>R</u>oom)	
ᠲ	Tav	T (as in <u>T</u>ake)	
ᠬ	Hori	H (as in <u>H</u>ouse)	
ᠬ	Kappa	K (as in <u>c</u>ook<u>k</u>)	
ᠵ	Zeeta	Z (as in <u>Z</u>one)	
ᠵ	Ganga	J (as in <u>J</u>im) If followed by ᠡ, ᠢ, ᠬ G (as in <u>G</u>o) all other situations.	

2.Vowel Sounds

Vowel (s)	Name	Pronunciation	How to write it
Ἀ	Alpha	A (as in F <u>a</u> ther) (or as in F <u>a</u> n)	
Ἐ	Eyy	E (as in R <u>a</u> in) (or as in P <u>e</u> n)	
Ἰ	yota	I Or Y (as in D <u>i</u> d, K <u>i</u> ng) (as in <u>y</u> ellow) if followed or preceded by another vowel	
Ἡ	Eeta	EE (as in M <u>ee</u> t)	
Ἢ	o	Short O (as in n <u>o</u> t)	
Ἣ	oo	Long O (as in Br <u>oo</u> d) (<i>open long O</i>)	
Ἤ		Long O (as in Br <u>oo</u> m) (<i>closed long O</i>) Note: When Ἤ is followed by another vowel, it is pronounced as if there is a w between them e.g. ἬἈ is pronounced owwa ἬἸ is pronounced owwi ἬἩ is pronounced owwee	
Ἦ	Jinkim	makes separate syllable (n = en)	

Read and study the following words using the letters of Lesson 2

Word	<u>Approx.</u> pronunciation in English	Meaning
ნოყრი	nofri	Hi or Good
ნანე	na-nai (as in rain)	Good
ატოვი	a-to-owwi	morning
როვი	rouhi	evening
ნანე ატოვი	na-nai a-to-owwi	Good morning
ნანე როვი	na-nai rouhi	Good evening
ეზოო	e-ho-oo	day
ეგორე	e-gorh	night
ნოყრი ეზოო	nofri e-ho-oo	Good Day
ნოყრი ეგორე	nofri e-gorh	Good Night
ნაი	nay (as in buy)	have mercy
ნან	nan	upon us
ეე	jai (as in rain)	Coptic conjunction article
ეე ნაი ნან	jai nay nan	have mercy upon us
ერენე (Greek word)	ereenee	peace
ანზებ	anzeeb	school
იოტ	y <u>o</u> at (as in <u>bo</u> at)	father
ოვოე	owwoh	and
ოვაი	owway	one
ეტო	ef-too	four
გოტ	goot	twenty
გოტ ეტო	goot efoo	twenty four
ოვგაი	oo-gay	By – So long



Consonant Letters (cont.)

ལ (l)

མ (m)

ཁ (x)

པ (p)

ཅ (s/z)

ཕ (f)

ཤ (sh)

ཧ (kh)

ཇ (ch)

ཏ (ti)

Consonant Letters (cont.)

Letter	Name	Pronunciation	How to write it
λ	Lavla	L (as in <u>L</u> ook)	
μ	Meyy	M (as in <u>M</u> other)	
ξ	Eksee	X (as in <u>x</u>)	
π	Pee	P (as in <u>P</u> epper)	
Ϸ	Seema	Z (as in <u>Z</u> one) (in words of Greek origin when followed by the letter M) S (as in <u>S</u> ame) In all other situations.	
ϕ	Feyy	F (as in <u>F</u> an)	
ϗ	Shai	SH (as in <u>S</u> hake)	
ϛ	Khai	Kh (as in German <u>A</u> chtung).	
Ϟ	Cheema	Ch (as in <u>C</u> hurch)	
†	Tee	Tee (as in <u>T</u> ea)	

Read and study the following words using the letters of Lessons 2 & 3

Word	<u>Approx.</u> pronunciation in English	Meaning
ΠΑϚΙ	passi	to all
ΙΡΗΝΗ ΠΑϚΙ (Gr. word)	ereenee passi	peace to all
ΨΛΗΛ	eshleel	pray
ΑΧΠ	agp	hour
ΑΧΠΙΑ	agpia	Book of the hours
ΨΑΙ	shay (as in buy)	Feast, sunrise
ΝΟΦΡΙ ΨΑΙ	nofri shay	happy feast
ΠΕΝΙΩΤ	pen-yoat	our father
ΝΟΦΡΙ ΠΕΝΙΩΤ	nofri pen-yoat	Hi Abouna
ΝΟΦΡΙ ΕΧΩΡΖ	nofri e-gorh	Good Night
ΞΕΝ	khain (as in rain)	in, by, through
ΦΡΑΝ	ef-ran	the name
ΦΙΩΤ	ef-yoat	the father
ΞΕΝ ΦΡΑΝ ΕΦΙΩΤ	khain ef-ran em-efyoat	In the name of the father
ΝΕΩ	naim (as in rain)	and, with
ΨΗΡΙ	sheeri	Son
ΨΕΡΙ	shairi (as in rain)	daughter
ϚΟΝ	Son (as in British hot)	brother
ΠΑϚΟΝ	pa-son	my brother
ϚΩΝΙ	soani (as in boat)	sister
ΤΑϚΩΝΙ	ta-coani	my sister
ΕΝΑΥ	esnav	two
ΨΟΜΤ	shomt	three



1. Consonant Letters (cont.)

ᄁ (b/v) **ᄃ** (g/n/gh) **ᄅ** (d/th)

ᄇ (th/t) **ᄉ** (k/sh/kh) **ᄋ** (ps)







ᄍ (v / i / "o")

ᄏ (The numeral 6 – is not a letter)

2. Some grammatical notes

1. Some Consonant Letters (cont.)

Letter	Name	Pronunciation	How to write it
Ბ	Veeta	<p>V (as in <u>v</u>ase) when followed by a vowel</p> <p>B (as in <u>b</u>aby) when it is the last letter of the word</p> <p>Note: If followed by a consonant, it is pronounced B <u>in most cases</u>. - The following are examples of words where b is followed by a consonant but pronounced V</p> <p>ᲐᲑᲑᲐ (ava) Bishop's title ᲠᲞᲑᲗ (tovh) ask, pray ᲑᲑᲠᲓ (evshi) slumber ᲠᲑᲑᲠ (tevt) fish</p>	
Დ	Gamma	<p>G (as in <u>G</u>o) if followed by Ბ, Რ, Დ, Თ</p> <p>N (as in <u>N</u>o) if followed by Დ, Რ, Თ, Ი</p> <p>GH (As in Arabic غ) in all other situations</p>	
Თ	Delta	<p>D (as in <u>D</u>o) in proper names</p> <p>Th (as in <u>th</u>is) in all other cases</p>	
Პ	Theeta	<p>T (as in <u>T</u>ake) if preceded by Ბ, Რ</p> <p>Th (as in <u>Th</u>ink) in all other cases</p>	
Რ	Epsee	PS	

Letter	Name	Pronunciation	How to write it
	Keyy	<p>K (as <u>coo</u>k) <i>In all Coptic words</i> (or in <i>Greek words that borrowed into the Coptic language</i>) e.g. ⲬⲬⲙⲓ (keemi) Egypt Ⲭⲱ (ko) put ⲈⲮⲬⲬ (evkee) ask, pray (sometimes pronounced evshee) ⲠⲮⲬⲬ (psikee) soul (sometimes pronounced psishee)</p> <p>SH (as in <u>Sh</u>ake) in <i>Greek words</i> when followed by Ⲉ, Ⲭ, ⲓ or Ⲯ e.g. ⲬⲈⲣⲈ (shere) Hail</p> <p>KH (as in German <u>Ach</u>tung) in <i>Greek words</i> in other situations e.g. ⲡⲓⲬⲣⲓⲥⲧⲠⲠⲠ (pikhristos) Christ</p>	
	Epsilon	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> long o as in <u>roo</u>m If preceded by ⲟ (See Page 1 – 2) as in ⲠⲛⲟⲮⲧ, ⲡⲟⲮⲣⲟ V as in <u>V</u>ase If preceded by ⲁ or Ⲉ as in ⲈⲮⲁ, ⲘⲁⲮⲓⲘ i as in <u>di</u>d in all other situations. as in ⲒⲮⲙⲛⲟⲥ, ⲙⲁⲣⲧⲮⲣⲟⲥ 	
	So-o	This is not a letter, It denotes the numeral 6.	

Read and study the following words using the letters of Lessons 2, 3 & 4

Word	Approx. pronunciation in English	Meaning
ψαλλωοο (Gr. word)	psalmos	psalm
λοξα (Gr. word)	thoksa (as in <u>th</u> em)	glory
λοξα πατρι (Gr.)	thoksa patri	glory to the father
μαυ	mav	mother
ταμαυ	ta-mav	my mother
φαι πε μηνα	fay (as in <u>bu</u> y) pe mina	This is mina
θαι τε μαρια	thay te mariyya	This is mary
παρθενος (Gr. word)	parthenos	virgin
πιχριστος	pi-ekhrastos	Christ
αφτωνυ	Af-tonf	is risen
ξεν ουμεθυμι	khain ou-methmee	truly
φνουτ	ef-nooti	God
πε οιο	ep-choys	The Lord
πορο	ep-ooro	The King
τορω	ti-ooroa (as in <u>bo</u> at)	The Queen
χημι	keemi	Egypt
ρενηχημι	raim-en-keemi	Egyptian (Coptic)
ρενηαμερικα	raim-en-amerika	American
ρενηχριστιανος	raim-en-ekhrastiyanos	Christian
αγγελος	angelos (as in <u>g</u> o)	angel

Notes

1. Coptic Definite articles

(equivalent to "the" in English)

3 for singular masculine

ΠΙ	e.g. ΠΙΤΟΥΤΣ	the chair
ϸ	e.g. ϸΙΩΥ	the father
Π̀	e.g. Π̀ΩΗΡΙ	the son

3 for singular feminine

Ⲛ	e.g. ⲚΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΣ	the virgin
ϸ̀	e.g. ϸ̀ΜΑΘ	the mother
ϸ̀Ⲛ	e.g. ϸ̀ⲚΩΕΡΙ	the daughter

2 for plural

ΝΙ	e.g. ΝΙΑΣΣΕΛΟΣ	the angels
ΝΕΝ	e.g. ΝΕΝΩΗΡΙ Ἀϸ̀ΝΟΥⲚ	the sons of God

2. How to say the numbers in Coptic

1	one	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	owway
2	two	ⲀⲚⲁⲩ	esnav
3	three	ⲩⲟⲙⲧ	shomt
4	four	Ⲁⲩⲧⲟⲩ	eftoo
5	five	Ⲁⲩⲟⲩ	etyoo
6	six	Ⲁⲟⲟⲩ	so-oo
7	seven	ⲩⲁⲩⲩ	shashf
8	eight	ⲩⲙⲙⲎ	eshmeen
9	nine	ⲩⲩⲧ	psit
10	ten	ⲙⲙⲧ	meet
11	eleven	ⲙⲙⲧ ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	meet owway
12	twelve	ⲙⲙⲧ ⲀⲚⲁⲩ	meet esnav
20	twenty	ⲭⲟⲩⲧ	goot
21	twenty one	ⲭⲟⲩⲧ ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	goot owway
24	twenty four	ⲭⲟⲩⲧ Ⲁⲩⲧⲟⲩ	goot eftoo
30	thirty	ⲙⲁⲡ	map
40	forty	ⲉⲙⲉ	ehmai (as in <u>rain</u>)
50	fifty	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	taivi (as in <u>rain</u>)
60	sixty	Ⲁⲉ	sai (as in <u>rain</u>)
70	seventy	ⲩⲃⲉ	eshvai (as in <u>rain</u>)
80	eighty	ⲩⲁⲙⲎⲉ	khamnai (as in <u>rain</u>)
90	ninety	ⲡⲓⲀⲩⲧⲁⲩ	pistav
100	hundred	ⲩⲣⲉ	shai (as in <u>rain</u>)
1000	thousand	ⲩⲣⲟ	sho



Je penyot

The Lord's Prayer

أبانا الذي في السموات

**ՋԵ ԲԵՆԻՕՄ ԵՄՃԵՆ ՆԻՓԻՈՎԻ ՄԱՐԵՎՏՕՎՈ ԸՆՋԵ ԲԵԿՐԱՆ
Je penyot et khen niffee-owwi mareftoovo enje pekran**

چي پنيوت إتخين نيفي أوي مارف طوفو إنچي پكران
Our Father Who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name أبانا الذي في السموات ليتقدس اسمك

**ՄԱՐԵՇԻ ԸՆՋԵ ԿԵԿՄԵՏՕՎՐՕ ՍԵՏԵՂՆԱԿ ՄԱՐԵՎՍՊԻ
Mares-ee enje tekmet-ooro petehnak maref shopi**

مارس إي إنچي تكمت أورو پتهناك مارف شويي
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done ليأت ملكوتك لتكن مشيئتك

**ԱՓՐԻՒՂ ՏԵՆ ԴՓԵ ՆԵՄ ԶԻՋԵՆ ՍԻԿԱԶԻ ԲԵՆՕՅԿ ԸՆՏԵ ԲԱՇԴ
Em-ef-reeti khen etfe nem hijen pikahi, pen-oyk ente rasti**

إمفريتني خين إتفي نيم هيچين پيكاهي بين أويك إنتي راستي
On earth As it is in Heaven, Our daily Bread كما في السماء كذلك على الأرض خبزنا الذي للغد

**ՄԻՓ ՆԱՆ ԵՄՓՕՎ ՕՎՕԶ ԿԱ ՆԻԵՏԵՐՈՆ ՆԱՆ ԵՅՕԼ
Meef nan em-fo-oo, Owwoh ka nee-eteron nan evol**

ميف نان إمفووو أووه كاني إتيرون نان إقول
Give us this day, and forgive us our trespasses أعطنا اليوم واغفر لنا ذنوبنا

**ԱՓՐԻՒՂ ԶՕՆ ԸՄԵՆԿՕ ԵՅՕԼ ՆԻԻԵՏԵ ՕՎՕՆ ԸՄՏԱՆ ԵՐՕՎՕ
em-ef-reeti hon entenko evol ennee-ete owwon entan ero-oo**

إمفريتني هون إنتين كو إقول إنني إتني أوون إتان إرووو
as we forgive those who trespass against us كما نغفر نحن أيضاً للمذنبين إلينا

**ՕՎՕԶ ԱՓԵՐԵՆՏԵՆ ԵՃՕՎՆ ԵՍԻՐԱՇՄՕՍ ԱԼԼԱ ՆԱԶՄԵՆ
Owwoh emper-enten ekhoon epirazmos, alla nahmen**

أووه إمپرانتن إخون إبي رازموس آلا ناهمين
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us ولاتدخلنا في تجربة لكن نجنا

**ԵՅՕԼԶԱ ՍԻՓԵՄՉՕՎՎ. ՏԵՆ ՍԻՃՐԻՇՏՕՍ ԻՆՇՕՎՍ ԲԵՆՇՕԻՍ
evol ha pi pet-ho-oo, khen pi-ekhristos Eesoos penchoys**

إقول هابي پتهووو خين بي إخرستوس إيسوس بين شويس
from the evil one, In Christ Jesus our Lord من الشرير بالمسيح يسوع ربنا

**ՋԵ ԹՕԿ ԿԵ ԴՄԵՏՕՎՐՕ ՆԵՄ ԴՃՕՄ ՆԵՄ ՍԻՕՎՎ ՍՃ ԵՆԵԶ ԱՄԻՆ
je thok te ti-met-ooro, nem ti-gom nem pi-o-oo sha eneh, Ameen**

چي ثوك تي تي مت أورو نيم تي جوم نيم بي أوو شا إنيه آمين
for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever, Amen لأن لك الملك والقوة والمجد إلى الأبد آمين