Prof. Dr. Zlatko Pleše   Fall 2019
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INTRODUCTION TO SAHIDIC COPTIC

This compact course is designed as a survey of elementary grammatical categories of Coptic, the last stage of Egyptian language as it was written in the late ancient and Byzantine period. Participants will learn basic patterns of structuring words, phrases, and sentences in this 'polysynthetic' language, and they will do so by reading and analyzing original manuscript pages of the Coptic (Sahidic) *Gospel of Thomas* (Nag Hammadi Codex II,2). Some knowledge of ancient Greek is desirable. Participants are expected to come to each session reasonably prepared.

LITERATURE: B. Layton, *Coptic in 20 Lessons* (2007) (pdf)
R. Smith. *A Concise Coptic-English Lexicon* (1983, 1999²) (pdf)
U.-K. Plisch, *Einführung in die koptische Sprache* (1999) (pdf)
Handouts on selected grammatical topics (pdf, Word)
B. Layton, ed., *Coptic Gnostic Chrestomathy* (2004) (pdf)
Facsimile edition of the *Gospel of Thomas* (NHC II,2) (pdf)
H.-G. Bethge, *Evangelium Thomae copticum* (koptisch/deutsch/english) (pdf)

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

SESSION ONE (3.10.2019):

Introduction and course objectives; Coptic alphabet and sound values; Coptic words and their building blocks ('morphs'); early Coptic manuscripts: material, layout, ruling, script, diacritics, and decoration

SESSION TWO (4.10.2019)

Textual tradition of the *Gospel of Thomas*; linguistic, dialectal, and stylistic features of the text; making sense of a manuscript page and its content; Coptic articles and nouns; expressing relations between nouns

SESSION THREE (7.10.2019)

Nominal sentence patterns in Coptic; adjectives and adjectival predicates; attributive construction

SESSION FOUR (8.10.2019)

Coptic personal pronouns: independent forms, personal prefixes and suffixes; possessive articles and pronouns; prepositions and their principal forms ('states')

SESSION FIVE (9.10.2019)

Coptic verb: transitivity, tense, aspect, mood, and voice; principal forms ('states') of Coptic verbs; durative-descriptive (bipartite) sentence pattern;

SESSION SIX (9.10.2019)

Non-durative (tripartite) sentence pattern; direct object constructions (*'Stern-Jernstedt Rule'*); causative infinitive; 'verboids'; impersonal predicates

SESSION SEVEN (10.10.2019)

Sentence conversion in Coptic: its functions and basic forms; cleft-sentence; purpose and result clauses