

Fayoum University
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A Thesis submitted for Master Degree

**THE COPTIC FAYOUMIC DIALECTS:
"THE PROBLEM AND THE APPROACH"**

BY

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Abstract

Coptic language is the last stage of the ancient Egyptian language. The early forms of Coptic language called sequentially “proto Coptic”, “Pre-old Coptic” and then “Old Coptic”, while the complete form of Coptic language was known roughly since the end of 2nd CE. or beginning of 3rd CE. The Coptic language continued to be used in the daily life even after the Arab rule of Egypt in 641 CE. Coptic continues in use not only until the eleventh century with the last evidences of the Coptic documents, but also remained in some Christian communities until three tenth/fourteenth centuries. One of the most important features of the Coptic language is the inclusion of vowels and set of dialects that were documented in a lot of manuscripts as early as the 4th century. These dialects are divided into three major dialectal groups where each one includes a major dialect and number of sub-dialects which differs from each other in orthography, syntax and the lexical variations. The most important Coptic dialects are “Sahidic” and “Bohairic” with some other dialects which all are linked geographically to Fayoum province and abbreviated by the letter "F"). Fayoumic dialects are considered one of the most important dialects of northern middle Egypt.

This thesis aimed to study and determine the number of main Fayoumic dialects and their sub-dialects overcoming many challenges due to the diversity of dialects, the fragmentary of texts and the scattering of the dialects features inside the texts of Sahidic dialect. Trying to stay away from these complications, the researcher focused in this study on the dialect that has clear boundaries and textual evidences.

This study concluded that the Fayoumic dialect contains a number of main dialects (F4-F5) followed by other dialects (F46-F56) and sub-dialects (F7-V). In addition, there were some less important dialects such as (F8-F9). These all dialects differ from each other in the geographic location within Fayoum region. Each one of them has specific characteristics presented in the level of phonological and morphological side.

This study is divided into three Chapters and two appendixes:

Chapter I: The Coptic Language and Fayoumic dialect: An introduction.

Chapter II: The phonology of Fayoumic dialects.

Chapter III: The morphology of Fayoumic dialects.

Appendix I: Fayoumic vocabularies.

Appendix II: Fayoumic grammar.