

CALL FOR PAPERS

LANGUAGE TYPOLOGY AND EGYPTIAN-COPTIC LINGUISTICS

**International conference organized by the Egyptological Institute of the University of
Leipzig and the Max-Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology,
2 – 5 October 2008**

The Egyptian-Coptic language, attested for more than 4000 years from the early development of the hieroglyphic writing system before 3000 BCE up to its obsolescence and extinction as a spoken language around 1300 CE, is not only one of the earliest attested human languages, it may justly be called the most long-lived language that is available for study by linguists.

Its uniqueness in terms of age and longevity and the evidence for long-lasting processes of language change it provides, including a change in typologically basic traits, such as word order correlation, make the Egyptian-Coptic language a most worthwhile object for general linguistics, regardless of philological and methodological obstacles usually connected to the study of dead corpus languages.

However, while the Coptic language has been an important source of inspiration and information for pioneers of language typology such as Chajim Steintal, encounters between Egyptian and general linguistics have become scarce and sporadic during the last century. Although the Berlin school of Egyptology adopted grammatical categories and terminology of the advanced linguistics of Semitic languages since the 1880s, and although Hans Jakob Polotsky started applying terms and concepts of linguistic structuralism to Egyptian and Coptic by the mid-20th century, and despite even occasional flirtation with generative grammar, Egyptian linguistics hardly contributed to, and was no longer asked for its evidence by general linguistics.

The aim of our conference is to stimulate, or re-intensify, mutual perception of Egyptologists and general linguists. We hope to approach this by addressing an issue of obvious significance and considerable breadth – the behaviour of the Egyptian-Coptic language in its different phases in terms of language typology.

We request papers within this general perspective, dealing with data from any period, branch and part of the Egyptian-Coptic language, including fields and issues such as areal linguistics, phonology, word formation, morphology, syntax, language change and language contact typology. Papers are welcome both by Egyptologists that are interested in a more general typological perspective, and by typologists that have been intrigued by data from Egyptian-Coptic and would like to discuss their broader significance.

Please submit your proposal containing a provisional title of your talk and a 500 words abstract, by 31 March 2008 to typology.of.egyptian@rz.uni-leipzig.de. Notification of acceptance is by 15 April 2008.

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