

E.g. **ΙΩΣΗΨ ΟΥΔΑΙΩΥΕ ΠΕ**
“Joseph is a carpenter”

We introduced the demonstrative pronoun in **(2.2.ii)**. Demonstrative pronouns can also be used to form nominal sentences. Those sentences always contain the copula. Once again, if the predicate is preceded by a definite article, then the copula comes in between the demonstrative pronoun and the predicate:

E.g. **ΦΑΙ ΠΕ ΠΑΝΟΥΤ** (*Exodus 15:2*)
“This is my God”

If on the other hand the predicate is preceded by an indefinite article, then the copula goes to the end of the sentence.

E.g. **ΦΑΙ ΟΥΨΗΡΙ ΠΕ**
“this is a son”

3.3. Pronoun + copula

This type is a little more tricky. It only uses a predicate and the copula. What happens to the subject? In these cases, the subject is only implied without actually being written.

So for example, **ΑΝΟΚ ΠΕ** on its own does not mean ‘I am’ but actually means ‘It is I.’ The subject here isn’t actually written in the Coptic, but is implied to be ‘it.’ The predicate, which is telling you something about the subject ‘it’ is **ΑΝΟΚ**, telling you that ‘it’ is I.

This particular construction comes up now and then. When Christ came to the apostles walking on water, He reassured them saying **ΑΝΟΚ ΠΕ**, and in the Divine Liturgy, the expression translated as ‘It is You’ or ‘You are He’ (around whom the angels stand) is **ΝΘΟΚ ΠΕ**.

Confusion Corner

You would have noticed that the copulas **πε**, **τε** and **νε** are identical to the possessive articles used for ‘you’ when speaking to a female (2.1.iii).

How do you tell which is which? One easy way is to remember that the copula will always be separate from the noun, whereas the possessive article will always be attached to it. However, this explanation is a bit artificial since separating words in Coptic is a relatively new invention. The Copts didn’t seem to believe in conventions like having spaces between words. Maybe it was to save paper,(or should I say to save ‘papyri’). In any case all their words were linked together without spaces.

The best way to recognise the difference is to have a good understanding of the grammar. Basically, if there is a copula before a noun in the sentence, the noun would already have to have an article between it and the copula. The copula cannot come directly before a noun which doesn’t already have an article. To clarify, think of this example:

ነ̅θ̅ο̅ϣ̅ πε πε̅ϣ̅η̅ρ̅ι

Notice that the **πε** occurs twice. The first **πε** is the copula, and the second is the article which comes between the copula and the noun **ϣ̅η̅ρ̅ι**.

<i>Vocab</i>			
παρθενος	Virgin (Gk,f)	ερφει	sanctuary, temple (m)
χρηστιανος	Christian (m)	χροχ	seed (m)
εαπ	judgment (m)	σα̅ι̅η̅	beautiful person (f)
α̅η̅ι	truth, justice, righteousness (f)	σα̅χ̅ι	word (m)
λα̅ς	tongue (m)	λο̅τ̅δα̅ι	Jew (m, prop.noun)
κα̅ψ̅	pen (m)	σα̅δ̅	teacher, scribe (m)
ε̅α̅α̅ϣ̅ε	Carpenter (m)	θε̅ο̅τ̅ο̅κ̅ο̅ς	Mother of God (Gk,f)

Exercise 3.1

- a) **Φαι πε πασωμα** (Luke 22:19)
- b) **ανοη εανηρηστηανος** (AmBal pg.1)
- c) **πιχροχ πε πιαχι ητε φνοϋ†** (Luke 8:11)
- d) **ανοκ πε πι $\overline{\chi\varsigma}$** (Matthew 24:5)
- e) **ηθοκ πε Π $\overline{\chi\varsigma}$** (Mark 8:29)
- f) **ανοη εανιοϋδαι** (Galatians 2:15)
- g) **νεπσωμα εανερφει ητε Φ† $\overline{\eta\pi\iota\varsigma\lambda}$ πε** (hom vatt ii pg.75)
- h) **Πιεαπ ητε Πβοις εανεαπ $\overline{\eta\mu\eta\iota}$ νε** (Psalm 18:10 19:9)
- i) **παλας ογκαϋ πε ητε οτσαδ** (Psalm 44:2 45:1)
- j) **ηθοκ πε πανοϋ†** (Psalm 117:28 118:28)
- k) **ηθο ονερ $\overline{\eta\mu\iota}$ ησαη** (Gnesis 12:11)
- l) **ανοη εανωηρι ητε $\overline{\tau\epsilon\pi\alpha\varsigma\varsigma\epsilon\lambda\iota\alpha}$** (Galatians 4:28)
- m) **ηωτεπ πε φοϋωιηι $\overline{\eta\pi\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma\mu\omicron\varsigma}$** (Matthew 5:14)
- n) **ηωτεπ πε ηεμον $\overline{\eta\pi\iota\kappa\alpha\epsilon\iota}$** (Matthew 5:13)
- o) **Φαι πε ποτρο ητε ηιοϋδαι** (Matthew 27:37)

Practice text 1

ⲥⲁⲭⲓ ⲛⲉⲙⲁⲛ pg.64

**Ⲱ ⲧⲉⲛⲙⲁⲣ ⲓ̀ⲁⲩⲓⲁ Ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ ⲓ̀ⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲁ̀ⲛⲟⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲉϣⲏⲣⲓ
ⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲏⲑⲟ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲉⲛⲙⲁⲣ. ⲁ̀ⲛⲟⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲓϣⲏⲣⲓ ⲙ̀ⲡⲉϣⲏⲣⲓ
ⲙ̀ⲙⲉⲛⲣⲓⲧ. ⲛⲑⲟϥ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲁ̀ⲛⲟⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲉϥⲉⲃⲓⲁⲓⲕ. ⲛⲑⲟϥ
ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉⲛⲓⲱⲧ ⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲁ̀ⲛⲟⲛ ⲛⲉ ⲛⲉϥⲱⲣⲓ**

Vocab

ⲁⲩⲓⲁ	saint (f, Gk)	ⲡⲁⲣⲑⲉⲛⲟⲥ	virgin (f, Gk)
ⲙ̀ⲙⲉⲛⲣⲓⲧ	beloved (adj.)	ⲟⲩⲟⲩ	and (conj)

4. LEARNING TO COUNT- NUMBERS IN COPTIC

4.1. Numbers 1-10

You can't have a language without having numbers, and Coptic is no exception. Coptic differs from English in that the characters used to represent the numbers are actually derived from the same characters used to give the alphabet. In fact, the numerical sequence largely follows that of the alphabet. However, the characters are then given a different name from the original letter, and some are given both a masculine and feminine form.

Let's first take a look at the numbers one to ten.

		masculine	female
one	ⲁ̅	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲟⲩⲓ
two	ⲃ̅	Ⲛⲏⲁⲩ	Ⲛⲏⲟⲩⲧ
three	ⲅ̅	ⲭⲟⲙⲧ	ⲭⲟⲙⲧ
four	ⲇ̅	ⲉⲧⲟⲩ	ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲈ
five	ⲉ̅	ⲩⲓⲟⲩ	ⲧⲈ
six	ⲉ̅	Ⲙⲟⲟⲩ	Ⲙⲟ
seven	ⲉ̅	ⲭⲁⲭⲩ	ⲭⲁⲭⲩ
eight	ⲉ̅	ⲭⲙⲏⲏ	ⲭⲙⲏⲏ
nine	ⲉ̅	ⲭⲓⲧ	ⲭⲓⲧ
ten	ⲉ̅	ⲭⲏⲧ	ⲭⲏⲧ

So you'll notice in the table above that numbers 1-10 are simply represented as the first 10 letters of the alphabet with strokes over their heads. This also explains the mysterious ⲉ̅, which hasn't been used in any of the words up till now even though it appears in the alphabet.

4.1.i. How many?

You may be wondering why the numbers have both masculine and feminine forms. This is because Coptic numbers can be used with the attributive construction

(2.4.i) to describe how many of something in particular there are. Now, the gender of the noun at issue determines which gender of the number will be used. To see if you really understand, let's ask how would you write 'three sons.'

First, the word for son is **ⲙⲏⲣⲓ**, which is a masculine word. So you would use **ⲙⲟⲩⲧ** as opposed to **ⲙⲟⲩⲓ** for 'three'. You would then write **ⲙⲟⲩⲧ ⲏⲙⲏⲣⲓ** using the attributive construction. On the other hand, if you were to say 'three daughters', you would use **ⲙⲟⲩⲓ** as daughter' is a feminine word to give **ⲙⲟⲩⲓ ⲏⲙⲉⲣⲓ**.

Now, to say 'the three sons', you would still use the singular definite article, which in this case is the masculine definite article. In fact, the plural definite article is never used with numbers using the attributive construction.

ⲡⲓⲙⲟⲩⲧ ⲏⲙⲏⲣⲓ

Likewise, to say 'the three daughters', you would use the feminine definite article:

ⲓⲙⲟⲩⲓ ⲏⲙⲉⲣⲓ

This pattern continues for most of the other numbers.

E.g. **ⲡⲓⲩⲧⲟⲩ ⲏⲙⲏⲣⲓ**

"the four brothers"

ⲙⲁⲩⲩ ⲏⲥⲟⲡ

"seven times"

This pattern works well for numbers 3 and up, but there is a separate way for numbers 1 and 2. When saying "one of something", the attributive construction is still used, but this time the noun comes before the number, and instead of **ⲟⲩⲁⲓ** or **ⲟⲩⲓ** as you'd expect, the noun is followed instead by **ⲟⲩⲱⲧ**. So, "one man" is written as

ⲟⲩⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲏⲟⲩⲱⲧ and "one people" as **ⲟⲩⲩⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲏⲟⲩⲱⲧ** (*Genesis 34:16*)

If you were to say "two of something", you would also place the noun first, but this time you wouldn't use the attributive construction at all.

Examples: **ⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲥⲏⲁⲩ**

"two men"

ⲥⲉⲓⲙⲓ ⲥⲏⲟⲩⲓ (*Genesis 4:19*)

"two wives"

ⲗⲉⲡⲧⲟⲛ ⲥⲏⲁⲩ (*Luke 21:2*)

"two mites"

4.1.ii. Finding your place

Let's pretend you have just attended a race, and the time has come to list the finishing places of the contestants. Let's start with the winner.

There is a special word in Coptic for 'first' used for describing nouns which is 'ⲡⲱⲣⲡ'. It is also used with the attributive construction.

E.g. ⲡⲱⲣⲡ ⲙⲙⲁⲣⲧⲏⲣⲟⲥ

"The first martyr"

ⲡⲱⲣⲡ can also be used as a noun, as in *'the first'*- ⲡⲱⲣⲡ.

An alternative to saying 'the first' is ⲉⲟⲩⲏⲧ which may be used both as a noun and as an adjective. As a noun, ⲡⲓⲉⲟⲩⲏⲧ is used for masculine words and ⲧⲉⲟⲩⲏⲧ for feminine words. The plural form also has a different form and is ⲡⲓⲉⲟⲩⲁⲧ

However, for other places apart from 'the first', there is a special generic construction which uses the word ⲙⲁⲉ (which itself means 'place'). The construction takes the following form:

ⲡⲓⲙⲁⲉ + number

E.g. So, *"the third"*

is ⲡⲓⲙⲁⲉ ⲱⲟⲙⲧ

As in ⲁⲃⲃⲁ ⲱⲉⲛⲟⲩⲧ ⲙⲙⲁⲉ ⲱⲟⲙⲧ

"Pope Shenouda the third"

Lucky last is written as ⲡⲓⲃⲁⲈ *"the last"* when referring to singular masculine, and ⲡⲓⲃⲁⲈⲩ *"the last"* when referring to nouns in the plural.

4.2. 10-100

Whereas English makes all its numbers out of a combination of only ten digits, Coptic continues to move down the alphabet as it gets letters for the higher numbers. You'll notice in the following table that now only the numbers 'ten' and 'twenty' have feminine and masculine forms.

ten	ⲓ̅	ⲙⲏⲧ	ⲙⲏⲧ
twenty	ⲕ̅	ⲭⲟⲩⲧ	ⲭⲱⲧ
thirty	ⲗ̅	ⲙⲁⲡ	
forty	ⲙ̅	ⲉⲙⲉ	
fifty	ⲛ̅	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	
sixty	Ⲛ̅	ⲥⲉ	
seventy	ⲟ̅	ⲩⲃⲉ	
eighty	ⲡ̅	ⲃⲁⲙⲛⲉ	
ninety	ⲣ̅	ⲡⲓⲥⲧⲁⲩ	
100	ⲑ̅	ⲩⲉ	

These are combined with the 1-9 digits to create the numbers in between. The masculine and feminine forms continue only for the numbers 10 and 20 and numbers between 10 and 20 which end in 1,2, 8 or 9.

E.g. ⲡⲓⲙⲏⲧ ⲉⲛⲁⲩ ⲛⲙⲁⲑⲏⲧⲏⲥ

“the 12 disciples”

4.3. Numbers 100-900

In the table below you can see that ⲩⲉ is used for the number 100 and that it is also used with other multiples of 100:

100	ⲑ̅	ⲩⲉ
200	ⲥ̅	ⲉⲛⲁⲩ ⲩⲉ
300	ⲧ̅	ⲩⲟⲙⲧ ⲩⲉ
400	ⲩ̅	ⲉⲧⲟⲩ ⲩⲉ
500	Ⲭ̅	ⲉⲧⲓⲟⲩ ⲩⲉ

600	$\overline{\chi}$	ϥⲟⲟⲩ ⲙⲉ
700	$\overline{\psi}$	ⲙⲁⲙⲣ ⲙⲉ
800	$\overline{\omega}$	ⲙⲙⲙⲙ ⲙⲉ
900	$\overline{\upsilon}$	ⲙⲓⲧ ⲙⲉ

The numbers coming in between the numbers of 100 are formed by combining them with the numbers made from multiples of 10 from the previous table. The attributive construction is sometimes used to link the two sets together:

Examples:

ⲙⲉ ϥⲉ ⲧⲓⲟⲩ ⲛⲣⲟⲙⲡⲓ ($\overline{\rho\zeta\epsilon}$)

“165 years”

ⲙⲓⲧ ⲙⲉ ϥⲉ ⲙⲓⲧ ⲛⲣⲟⲙⲡⲓ ($\overline{\upsilon\zeta\theta}$) (*Genesis 5:27*)

“969 years”

ⲙⲉ ⲛⲉⲙⲛⲉ is 180

ⲙⲉ ⲙⲃⲉ ($\overline{\rho\theta}$) is 170

ⲙⲁⲙⲣ ⲙⲉ ⲛⲉⲙⲉ ($\overline{\psi\omega}$) is 740

4.4. 1000 and beyond

Coptic finally begins to recycle the characters used for its numbers after 1000. The old **ⲁ** returns, this time with two strokes above it, to represent the number 1000.

Two strokes above the **ⲃ** gives the number 2000, and two strokes above a **ⲥ** gives 3000, and so on for all the other numbers. Note that apart from the first stroke which all numbers have, each subsequent stroke adds an other three zeros to the number, so three strokes with an **ⲁ** gives 1,000,000. The strokes may be split up to come above or beneath the character.

1000	$\overline{\overline{\alpha}}$	ⲙⲟ
10,000	$\overline{\overline{\iota}}$	ⲙⲙⲧ ⲛⲙⲟ
100,000	$\overline{\overline{\rho}}$	ⲙⲉ ⲛ ⲙⲟ
1,000,000	$\overline{\overline{\overline{\alpha}}}$	ⲙⲟ ⲛ ⲙⲟ

So You want to Learn Coptic?

<i>Vocab</i>			
ⲣⲟⲙⲡⲓ	year (f)	ⲡⲣⲉⲥⲃⲣⲧⲉⲣⲟⲥ	priest (m)
ⲙⲁⲉⲓ	cubit (m)		

Exercise 4.1

- a) ⲡⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲣⲟⲙⲡⲓ (*Genesis 5:15*)
- b) ⲱⲁⲱⲥ ⲱⲉ ⲙⲁⲡ ⲛⲣⲟⲙⲡⲓ (*Genesis 5:16*)
- c) ⲓⲃ̅ ⲛⲥⲟⲛ (*Genesis 42:13*)
- d) ⲡⲓⲕⲗ̅ ⲙⲡⲣⲉⲥⲃⲣⲧⲉⲣⲟⲥ (*Revelation 19:4*)
- e) ⲓ̅ ⲙⲙⲁⲉⲓ (*Exodus 26:16*)
- f) ⲣ̅ ⲛⲣⲟⲙⲡⲓ (*Acts 7:6*)
- g) ⲙⲉⲧ̅ ⲛⲱⲟ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲱⲧ̅ (*Numbers 26:7*)

Practice text 2

One of the hymns chanted in the presence of a Bishop is

†**ΜΗΤ ἔΝΟΥ† ἡΔΗΤΗ** (*“The twelve virtues”*).

This hymn describes the twelve virtues of the Holy Spirit which we pray will be with the Bishop. The hymn makes good use of the ranking constructions we learnt above. The relevant section of the hymn is shown below:

† ΘΟΥ† ΤΕ	† ἈΓΑΠΗ	† ΔΙΚΕΔΟΥΝΗ
† ΜΑΕ ἔΝΟΥ† ΤΕ	† ἘΛΠΙΣ	† ΜΑΕ ΨΙ† ΤΕ
† ΜΑΕ ΨΟΥ† ΤΕ	† ΠΙΣΤΟΣ	† ΜΕΤΡΕΥΡΑΥ
† ΜΑΕ ὕΤΟΥΕ ΤΕ	† ΠΙΤΟΥΒΟ	† ΜΑΕ ΜΗ† ΤΕ
† ΜΑΕ ἴΙΕ ΤΕ	† ΠΑΡΘΕΝΙΑ	† ΜΑΕ ΜΗ† ΟΥ ΤΕ
† ΜΑΕ ΣΟ ΤΕ	† ΕΙΡΗΝΗ	† ΜΕΤΡΕΨΩΟΥ ἡΔΗΤ
† ΜΑΕ ΨΑΨΥ ΤΕ	† ΣΟΦΙΑ	† ΜΑΕ ΜΗ† ἔΝΟΥ† ΤΕ
† ΜΑΕ ὤΜΗΝΙ ΤΕ		† ΕΣΚΡΑΤΙΑ

Vocab

ἈΓΑΠΗ	love (Gk,f)	ΠΙΣΤΟΣ	faith (Gk,f)
ΕΣΚΡΑΤΙΑ	asceticism (Gk,f)	ΣΟΦΙΑ	wisdom (Gk,f)
ΔΙΚΕΔΟΥΝΗ	righteousness (Gk)	ΤΟΥΒΟ	purity (f)
ΜΕΤΡΕΥΡΑΥ	meekness (Gk,f)	ἘΛΠΙΣ	hope (Gk,f)
ΜΕΤΡΕΨΩΟΥ ἡΔΗΤ	long suffering (Gk,f)	ΕΙΡΗΝΗ	peace (Gk,f)
ΠΑΡΘΕΝΙΑ	virginity (Gk)	ΕΥΠΟΜΟΝΗ	patience (Gk,f)

So You want to Learn Coptic?

5. INTRODUCING VERBS

5.1. The first present

From the Coptic point of view, the sentences introduced in chapter 3 didn't really use a verb. While the copula in English is considered to be a form of the verb 'to be', in Coptic the copula doesn't actually fit under the normal definition of a verb.

So what exactly is a verb? A verb represents an action, so for example *building* is the verb in "I am building" and *reading* is the verb in "Mark is reading a book."

To help us find its place in the sentence, we'll bring back the example we looked at in (3.)

"they	built a sandcastle"
what the sentence is about	statement made about the subject
SUBJECT	PREDICATE

The verb in the sentence above is 'built', which is part of the predicate. Looking more closely at the sentence, we can see that the action of the subject (they) was directed towards something (the sandcastle). The sandcastle is thus called the *object* of this sentence, as the action of the verb is directed towards it. So in another example, "Jack hit the ball"

"Jack" is the subject, "hit" is the verb, and "ball" is the object.

So if we look at our sample sentence again, we find we can divide it into the following parts of speech:

"they	built	a sandcastle"
	VERB	OBJECT
what the sentence is about	statement made about the subject	
SUBJECT	PREDICATE	

Now there are two major types of verbs in Coptic: *transitive* and *intransitive*. Transitive verbs are those that take an object. E.g. "to hit" is a transitive verb because you can hit an object such as a ball. "I sit" on the other hand is an intransitive verb because you can't "sit something."

Both transitive and intransitive verbs have what are called different *tenses*. What exactly is meant by 'tense'? To help answer this question, consider the following sentences:

"I am making", "I made", I will make."

You will notice that there are similar words representing the same verb in each of these, but that the form of the verb is not quite the same. This is because they refer to different *times* in which the verb is performed. In other words, the form of the verb

changes according to the tense. The first tense refers to the present, the second to the past and the third to the future.

5.1.i. Intransitive verbs

Now let's take a look at an example of an intransitive verb in what is called the "first present tense."

Consider the phrase "I am walking", this tells you that "I am walking" at this very moment, hence it represents the present tense. There may still be this question nagging at the back of your mind. "but, why is this tense called the *first* present?" Well, later on we'll discover that there are also a *second* present (12.1) and a *third* present tense (7.2), but for now, we'll concentrate on the first present.

"To walk" is the base form of the verb, from which other verbs are derived. It is called "the infinitive."

The infinitive in Coptic is ⲙⲟⲩⲩ. Certain letters are then added in front of the infinitive to indicate different subjects as you can see in the table below. These letters represent the *dependent personal pronoun*. They're called pronouns because they indicate the subject, and they're dependent because they have to be attached to the verb, that is they can't stand on their own.

ⲧⲙⲟⲩⲩ	I am walking
ⲭⲙⲟⲩⲩ	You are walking (m)
ⲧⲉⲙⲟⲩⲩ	You are walking (f)
ⲉⲙⲟⲩⲩ	He is walking
ⲉⲙⲟⲩⲩ	She is walking
ⲧⲉⲛⲙⲟⲩⲩ	We are walking
ⲧⲉⲧⲉⲛⲙⲟⲩⲩ	You are walking (pl)
ⲓⲉⲙⲟⲩⲩ	They are walking

Here is another example, this time with the verb **caxi** (to speak).

ʃcaxi	I am speaking
ḵcaxi	You are speaking (m)
ʦecaxi	You are speaking (f)
ʦeʦencaxi	You are speaking (plural)
ḡcaxi	He is speaking
ḥcaxi	She is speaking
ʦencaxi	We are speaking
cecaxi	They are speaking

Now a more general term for the letters that appear before the verb is the *subject prefix*. Did you notice how the subject prefix for you (m) changed from **ḵ** to **ḵ**? A simple rule guides the choice, which is that words starting with one of the *vilminor* letters (2.1.i) use **ḵ**, and those starting with any other letter use **ḵ**.

Hang on...didn't we already have different words for representing the subject like **anok**, **ḡoq** etc? Confused? You've come to the right place. See confusion corner below:

Confusion Corner

Dependent vs. independent personal pronouns

(Reference Plumley pg. 56)

In (3.1) we talked about the independent personal pronouns like **ⲁⲛⲟⲕ**, **ⲏⲩⲟⲩ**, **ⲁⲛⲟⲛ** which had meanings like ‘I, he and we.’

In the section above, we introduced the dependent personal pronouns, like **ⲥ**, **ⲩ** and **ⲥⲉⲛ**, which also have the meanings of ‘I, he and we.’

So how do you know which to use?

The dependent personal pronouns are used most of the time, with the independent personal pronoun being used only in the following cases:

- e. In the simple subject + predicate type sentences E.g. **ⲏⲩⲟⲕ ⲡⲁⲩⲏⲣⲓ**
- f. when the sentence is based around the copula. E.g. **ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲣⲟⲥ**
- g. The independent personal pronoun may be used in addition to the dependent for added emphasis E.g. **ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲥⲩⲱ ⲏⲩⲟⲥ**
“ I say to you”
- h. The independent personal pronoun sometimes also comes after another part of speech with which it shares the same number and gender to emphasise its meaning. E.g. **ⲧⲁⲉⲓⲣⲏⲛⲏ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ**. Even though this phrase would seem to be translated as ‘my peace I’, the actual meaning is a little different. As the personal pronoun is used here to emphasise the meaning of the possessive article, which in this case means ‘my’ the combination comes out as: “*my own peace*”

Personal pronouns which look like other things

Take a look at the word for ‘we’ in the first present tense table above and the word for ‘our’ in the table for the possessive articles (2.1.iii). You’ll notice that they both use the word **ⲥⲉⲛ**.

Now take a look at the word for ‘you’ plural, and that for ‘your’ plural female object. They both share the same Coptic word **ⲥⲉⲧⲉⲛ**.

So how would you know which meaning to choose if you saw either **ⲥⲉⲛ** or **ⲥⲉⲧⲉⲛ** in a text?

Technically, if it comes before a noun, you would translate it as the

possessive article, and if it comes before a verb, you translate it as the first present tense. Practically, you'd use which ever makes more sense.

For example, if you were to see **ⲧⲉⲛⲛⲁⲩ**, knowing **ⲛⲁⲩ** means 'see', you'd translate the expression to mean 'we see' as saying 'our see' wouldn't make sense.

You'll also notice that the first person personal pronoun **ⲧ** is identical to one of the female definite articles (2.1.i). Here's it's easy to tell them apart. The article will only ever appear before a noun, whereas the pronoun will only come before a verb.

The postponed subject indicator

Have you ever been postponed? I have. All the time in fact. One of the characteristics of modern day Egyptians is that they are often postponed.

In keeping with the spirit, Coptic has its own special postponed subject indicator which is **ⲏⲭⲉ**. In what we have seen so far, the subject has been coming before the verb. However, when **ⲏⲭⲉ** is used, the subject comes late, that is it comes after the verb. As an example consider the following sentence:

ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲩⲉⲙⲥⲓ

"the man is sitting"

As you can see here, the subject **ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ** comes before the verb. An alternate way to give the same meaning using **ⲏⲭⲉ** is **ⲩⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲏⲭⲉ ⲡⲓⲣⲱⲙⲓ**, so that now the subject comes after the verb. **ⲏⲭⲉ** usually remains untranslated, however if you really wanted to translate it, you would say "who is."

People often ask why Coptic has **ⲏⲭⲉ** at all, that is why couldn't the Copts have simply always placed the subject in front of the verb. A possible reason was to preserve the word order from the Greek originals from which the Coptic was translated. You see, Greek word order doesn't always come in the sequence we're used to in English, and the subject often comes after the verb. So, it's possible that the Coptic scribes who wanted to translate from Greek introduced **ⲏⲭⲉ** to retain the Greek word order as much as possible.

Being Negative

Suppose you wanted to say “he is *not* speaking” or “they are *not* speaking.” There are two ways by which you could do this. The first involves a convenient word in Coptic called **ⲁⲛ**. This word simply follows the verb to put the sentence into the negative.

E.g. **ⲕⲉⲁⲙⲓ ⲁⲛ**

“you are not speaking”

The other method is almost the same, but also involves placing the prefix **ⲛ** before the verb. So in this example, we get:

ⲛⲕⲉⲁⲙⲓ ⲁⲛ

Which also means *“you are not speaking.”*

Using nouns or names in the first present

Up to this point, we’ve only seen the dependent personal pronoun come before the verb. You can also place a noun or a name before the verb in the sentence. In these cases, the dependent personal pronoun usually still appears in between the subject and the verb:

E.g. **ⲫⲓⲱⲧ ⲉⲙⲉⲓ** (*John 5:20*)

Although this sentence would be literally translated as “the Father He loves”, the meaning would be understood as just “the Father loves.”

However, the dependent personal pronoun isn’t always used. For example, the following phrase is also from the Gospel of John, with exactly the same meaning as the previous example, but it doesn’t use the **ⲉ**.

ⲫⲓⲱⲧ ⲙⲉⲓ (*John 3:35*)

5.1.ii. The Qualitative

There is a special form of Coptic verb called the qualitative. It is a bit hard to come to terms with, but basically it expresses a state or a quality which has come about as a result of the completed action of a verb.

To clarify, compare the words ‘to multiply’ and ‘to be abundant.’ Notice how the first word expresses the action itself, whereas the second expresses the *result* of that action having been completed?

Also, compare the following phrases; “to turn white” and “to be white.” In these examples, the first phrase corresponds to the infinitive while the second corresponds to the qualitative. In the following table, there are some more examples of the infinitive and qualitative forms of some intransitive verbs.

Infinitive	Qualitative	Infinitive	Qualitative
ḌIḌI	OI	ḌUOY	ḌUḌPWOYT
to grow, multiply	to be abundant	to bless	to be blessed
IBI	OB I	TḌIO	TḌIH OYT
to become thirsty	to be thirsty	to honour	to be honoured
INI	ONI	TOYBO	TOYBH OYT
to liken	to be like	to purify	to be purified
KENI	KENIWOYT	ḌONT	ḌENT
to become fat	to be fat	to approach, come near	to be near
UOY	UWOYT	ḌEI	ḌIWOYT
to die	to be dead	to fall	to be fallen
NAḌṬ	ḤḌOT	ḌKO	ḌOKEP
to believe	to be believing	to hunger	to be hungry
OYBAḌ,	OYOBḌ	ḌWIḌI	ḌḌḌH OYT
to become white	to be white	to lodge	to be lodging
OYOP^{††}	OYḌḌ	ḌICI	ḌOCI
to become holy	to be holy	to exalt	to be exalted

Where to use the qualitative

Most qualitative verbs may be used in the present tense as in the following examples:

CEUOY “*they die*”

CEUWOYT “*they are dead*”

ḌIBI “*he is becoming thirsty*”

^{††} The infinitive **OYOP** seems to have been replaced by **TOYBO** in Bohairic. However, **OYOP**

continues to remain in Sahidic, suggesting that the qualitative **OYḌḌ** was originally derived from it.

ϣⲟⲃⲓ “he is thirsty”

ϥⲁⲓ ϣⲁⲗⲏⲟⲩⲧ “this (he) is lodging” (Acts 10:5)

The qualitative may also be used in the *imperfect* past tense (7.1), but not in the *perfect* past tense (5.2). We will meet both later.

Some exceptional qualitative verbs

In the above examples we saw that both the infinitive and qualitative can be used for the present tense. For the following verbs however, *only* the qualitative form can be used in the present tense, whereas the infinitive can be used for the past tense but not the present.

Infinitive		Qualitative	
ⲃⲱⲕ	to go	ⲃⲏⲕ	to be gone
ⲓ	to come	ⲏⲏⲟⲩ	to be coming
ϥⲱⲧ	to run, flee	ϥⲏⲧ	to be running, fleeing
ⲉⲓ	to fall	ⲉⲓⲱⲟⲩⲧ	to be fallen

So for an example, to say “he is coming” (which is in the present tense), you can only use the qualitative form so you’d say ϣⲏⲏⲟⲩ. However, to say “he came” (past tense), you’d have to use the infinitive form.

<i>Vocab</i>			
ⲉⲙⲁⲱⲱ	very (adv)	ⲣⲓⲙⲓ	to cry (v.i)
ⲉⲣⲏⲏⲥⲧⲉⲩⲏ	to fast (Gk)	ϥⲁⲣⲓⲥⲉⲟⲥ	Pharisee (Gk,m)
ⲕⲁⲧ	to understand (v.t)	ⲱⲱⲙ	summer (m)
ⲏⲉⲙ	and (conj.)	ⲉⲛ	in (prep.)
ⲏⲉⲭⲓ	womb (f)	ⲉⲟⲧ	fear (f)
ⲟⲩⲧⲁⲉ	fruit (m)		

Exercise 5.1

- a) **τεριμι** (*John 20:13*)
- b) **τεβοσι** (*Sunday Theotokia Midnight praises*)
- c) **ἔθεντ ἥξε Π̄σ̄** (*Psalms 33:19 34:18*)
- d) **†ḡo† ἥτε Πβοис ἔτογβηoγ†** (*Psalms 18:10 19:9*)
- e) **ἄνον νεμ μιφapiceoc τεπεpνηcτεpιν** (*Matthew 9:14*)
- f) **τεḗμαpωoγ† ἥo θεν μιḡιòμι oγoḡ ἔḗμαpωoγ† ἥξε
ḡoγ†αḡ ἥτε τενεxι** (*Luke 1:42*)
- g) **ceνηoγ ἥξε ḡαnḗḡoογ** (*Acts 21:6*)
- h) **ceκα† θεν πογḡη†** (*Matthew 13:15*)
- i) **ἔθεντ ἥξε πιωωμ** (*Matthew 24:32*)

5.1.iii. *Those “in between words”- prepositions*

So far we’ve talked about nouns and verbs. Now let’s look at another type of part of speech. Take a look at the sentence below:

“The man walks on the street.”

When we break it down, we can see that:

‘The’ is the definite article

‘Walk’ is the verb

‘Street’ is the noun

And “On” is the... What is “on”?

‘On’ fits into the same category as other words such as “to”, “in” and “from.”

These words go before nouns to indicate their relation to other words in the sentence.

These words are called **Prepositions**

There are two basic types of prepositions in Coptic:

- 1) Simple
- 2) Compound

Compound prepositions are made from smaller words which have been linked together. In fact, many of them involve simple prepositions in their make up. You can refer to **(Appendix 3-where do compound prepositions come from)** to see how they’re constructed. Simple prepositions are the base elements so to speak, and cannot

So You want to Learn Coptic?

be broken down any further. The most common simple and complex prepositions are shown in the tables below:

Simple

ἐ	to, for, in regard to	ἕν	in
ἵ	in, from, with	ἐϑε	because of
νε	and, with	ὑ	to, toward, till
ἐ	on	ἐ	like, as
ἐ	to, under	ἵ	from, since
οὔτε	between, among	μενε	after
ἑ	below		

Compound

ἐ	on, above	ἐ	away from
ἵ	behind	ἐ	inside
ἐ	upon, on behalf of	ἐ	through
ἐ	upwards	ἐ	facing, in front of
ἐ	downward		

Nominal sentences can be built around these prepositions without them needing a Coptic equivalent for the word ‘is.’

E.g. **πρω** **ἐ** **πρω**

This sentence is understood to mean “*the man is on the road*”, without the need for the copula to come before the preposition . The same applies for the next example:

ἑ **ἑ** **ἑ**

“the woman is inside the house.”

Greek prepositions

Apart from the above ‘pure’ Coptic prepositions, there are also prepositions directly imported from Greek. The most common of these are:

ΚΑΤΑ	according to
ΠΑΡΑ	against, opposite, behind
ΧΩΡΙΣ	without
ΩΣ	as

These retain the same word order as you’d expect in English:

οὐρῳμι ΚΑΤΑ ΠΑΡΗΤ (*Acts 13:22*)

“a man according to my heart”

It’s worth noting that a noun that follows **ΧΩΡΙΣ** loses its article:

E.g. **ΠΙΚΑΔΙ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΣΕΝΤ** (*Luke 6:49*)

“the land without foundation”

<i>Vocab</i>			
ἀποστολος	Apostle, messenger, (m)	πύλη	gate (Gk,f)
ἀψαλ	Abundance	σεντ	foundation (f)
βαλ	eye (m)	ἐνοϋ	blood (m)
βημα	platform, step (Gk,m)	τοτс	chair (m)
ἐκκλῆσια	Church (Gk,f)	τραπεζα	table (f)
ερφει	sanctuary (m)	χερουβιμ	Cherubim (Gk,m)
ερχη	prayer (Gk,f)	ωοτ	glory (f)
θυμη	righteous person (m)	ϣαλ	to raise, carry (v.t)
μετсαιε	beauty	δρωοτ	voice (m)

πετρα	rock (Gk,f)	ⲭⲟⲙ	power (f)
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Exercise 5.2

- a) ⲉⲭⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲡⲉⲧⲣⲁ *(Luke 8:6)*
- b) ⲃⲉⲛ ⲫⲣⲁⲛ ⲙⲫⲓⲱⲧ
- c) ⲉⲓⲭⲉⲛ ⲡⲕⲁⲉⲓ ⲧⲏⲣⲥ *(Psalm 8:18:1)*
- d) ⲕⲣⲁⲱⲓ ⲉⲭⲉⲛ ⲉⲁⲛⲱⲏⲣⲓ *(hom vatt ii pg.239)*
- e) ⲛⲉⲛⲃⲁⲗ ⲙⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲭⲉⲛ ⲛⲓⲑⲙⲏⲓ *(Psalm 33:16 34:16)*
- f) ⲉⲓⲧⲉⲛ ⲛⲓⲉⲩⲭⲏ ⲏⲧⲉ ⲙⲁⲣⲕⲟⲥ ⲡⲓⲁⲡⲟⲥⲧⲟⲗⲟⲥ
- g) ⲉ̅ ⲏⲱⲟ ⲏⲣⲱⲙⲓ ⲭⲱⲣⲓⲥ ⲁⲗⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲉ̅ⲉⲓⲙⲓ *(Matthew 14:21)*
- h) ⲁⲥⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲉⲓ ⲡⲓⲃⲏⲙⲁ *(John 19:13)*
- i) ⲡⲃⲟⲓⲥ ⲉ̅ⲉⲙⲥⲓ ⲉⲓⲭⲉⲛ ⲛⲓⲭⲉⲣⲟⲩⲃⲓⲙ
- j) ⲥⲁⲓ ⲏⲛⲉⲧⲉⲛⲡⲩⲗⲏ ⲉ̅ⲡⲱⲱⲓ *(Psalm 23:7 24:7)*
- k) ⲡⲃⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲟⲥ ⲉⲓⲭⲉⲛ ⲛⲓⲙⲱⲟⲩ ⲡⲃⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲟⲥ ⲃⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲭⲟⲙ
ⲡⲃⲣⲱⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲟⲥ ⲃⲉⲛ ⲟⲩⲛⲓⲱⲧⲓ ⲙⲙⲉⲧⲥⲁⲓⲉ *(Psalm 28:3 29:3)*
- l) ⲉⲑⲃⲉ ⲡⲉⲕⲣⲁⲛ ⲡⲃⲟⲓⲥ *(Pslam 142:11 143:11))*
- m) ⲡⲓⲉⲛⲟⲥ ⲉ̅ⲥⲏⲏⲏⲟⲩ ⲉ̅ⲡⲉⲥⲏⲧ ⲉⲓⲭⲉⲛ ⲡⲓⲕⲁⲉⲓ *(Luke 22:44)*
- n) ⲭⲱⲣⲓⲥ ⲃⲟ ⲛⲉⲙ ⲓ̅ⲧⲥⲟ *(Sunday Theotokia, 7th section)*

Confusion corner

Reference: (Matter pg.241)

The many meanings of the ‘simple’ preposition ⲩⲁ

ⲩⲁ is a little word which is used in many different places and always seems to have a different meaning each time.

It’s various uses and meanings can be summarised as follows:

- to mean “under”
- to mean “towards the direction of”
- used in “apposition”, that is it comes in between two nouns to tell you that they both refer to each other. E.g. ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲩⲁ ⲡⲓⲣⲉϣⲉⲣⲛⲟⲃⲓ “I the sinner”
- to mean “for the sake of” or “concerning”
- to mean ‘against’, as in the sense of talking against someone.

5.1.iv. Transitive verbs

The verbs we met above are all examples of *intransitive* verbs, which are verbs that don’t take an object. We’ll now look at transitive verbs, which are verbs that do take an object.

In order to deal with transitive verbs, you have to understand a special letter construction called the ‘object marker.’

This is basically a letter that sits before the object. Consider the following example:

“I understand the truth”

For a word for word translation in Coptic, you’d have:

ⲧⲕⲁⲧ ⲧⲙⲉⲑⲙⲏⲓ

However, this would not be enough in Coptic. Here the object is ⲙⲉⲑⲙⲏⲓ, and it requires an object marker before it. The object marker in this case, using this particular verb and object, is ⲛ̇.

So, the correct way of writing this sentence is:

ⲧⲕⲁⲧ ⲛ̇ⲧⲙⲉⲑⲙⲏⲓ

(You’ll notice that the ⲛ̇ was used earlier in the attributive construction in (2.4.i), but here it means something quite different). As mentioned, the object marker is not constant. For instance, ⲙ̇ is used as the object marker instead of ⲛ̇ when the object begins with one of the following letters.

ⲁ ⲡ ⲃ ⲥ Ⲧ

E.g. ⲧⲕⲁⲧ ⲁⲛⲓⲕⲁⲛⲓ

“I understand the word”

Now suppose you wanted to say “He created Him” or “He created them.” In these cases, the object is actually a pronoun rather than a noun. Here you need to use a special pronoun form for the object marker. The pronoun form for ⲁ/ⲛ depends on the person and number of the object, as shown in the following table:

	object being indicated
ⲁⲁⲟⲓ	me
ⲁⲁⲟⲕ	you (masculine)
ⲁⲁⲟ	you (feminine)
ⲁⲁⲟϥ	him (masculine)
ⲁⲁⲟϥ	her (feminine)
ⲁⲁⲟⲛ	us
ⲁⲁⲟⲧⲉⲛ	you (plural)
ⲁⲁⲟⲧ	them

So, “I understand him” becomes

ⲧⲕⲁⲧ ⲁⲁⲟϥ

Some other verbs which take ⲁ/ⲛ as their object marker are shown below:

ⲧⲱⲃⲉ	ⲁ/ⲛ	to pray to
ⲛⲓⲙⲓ	ⲛ (ⲁ) ⲁⲁⲟ	to find

E.g. ⲧⲉⲛⲧⲱⲃⲉ ⲁⲁⲟⲕ ⲛⲉⲛ ⲡⲉϥⲣⲁⲛ *(Absolution of ninth hour prayer, Liturgy of the hours)*
“we pray to you in His name.”

While ⲁ and ⲛ are the most commonly used object markers, they are not the only ones. The most commonly used after them is ⲉ.

When is **ἐ** used as opposed to **ἰ** / **ὁ**? The choice of the object marker depends completely on the verb, that is certain verbs take certain object markers. It so happens that the verbs of perception (those which have something to do with the senses) most commonly take **ἐ** as their object marker, as shown in the table below:

verb	object marker	
ἵδω	ἐ ἐπο //	to see
αἰσθάνομαι	ἐ ἐπο //	to hear
	ὁκούω ὁκούω //	to obey
ὀσφραίνομαι	ἐ ἐπο //	to smell

So, “I see the man” is **ἵδω ἄνδρα ἐπιπύκνω**

And “he sees the woman” is **ὁκούω γυναῖκα ἐπιπύκνω**

You’ll notice in the table above that the meaning of **αἰσθάνομαι** changes depending on which object marker it uses. This is an important point, because it means that the meaning of the verb depends on the object marker that it takes.

There is also a pronoun form for **ἐ**, which is as formed as follows:

	Object being indicated
ἐμοί	me
ἐποῖ	you (m)
ἐπὶ	you (f)
ἐποῖ	him
ἐπὶ	her
ἐπὶ	us
ἐπὶ	you (plural)
ἐπὶ	them

So for example, *we see them*”, would be: **ⲧⲉⲛⲛⲁⲩ ⲉ̀ⲣⲱⲟⲩ**. The table below shows some other verbs which take **ⲉ̀** (**ⲉ̀ⲣⲱ**) as their object marker:

Vocab		
infinitive	object marker	translation
ⲉ̀ⲙⲓ	ⲉ̀ ⲉ̀ⲣⲱ	to know, understand
ⲕⲁⲩ	ⲉ̀ ⲉ̀ⲣⲱ	to understand
ⲉ̀ⲱⲟⲩ	ⲉ̀ ⲉ̀ⲣⲱ	to praise
ⲉ̀ⲙⲟⲩ	ⲉ̀ ⲉ̀ⲣⲱ	to bless
ⲩⲉ̀ⲟ	ⲉ̀ ⲉ̀ⲣⲱ	to ask

Now if the verb is already using a preposition, then the preposition functions as the object marker.

E.g. . **ⲧⲉⲛⲱⲧⲉⲙ ⲛⲕⲁ ⲛⲓⲉⲛⲧⲟⲗⲏ**

“We obey the commandments”

Here you can see that the preposition **ⲛⲕⲁ** functions as the object marker

As mentioned above, the same verb can sometimes use different object markers/prepositions. In these cases, the meaning of the verb often changes.

For example, **ⲧⲉⲛⲱⲧⲉⲙ ⲉ̀ⲧⲉⲣⲉ̀ⲙⲏ**

is *“we hear His word”*.

Whereas **ⲧⲉⲛⲱⲧⲉⲙ ⲛⲕⲁ ⲧⲉⲣⲉ̀ⲙⲏ**

is *“we obey His word”*

As you can see, verbs are quite complicated. And this is only the start! So let’s take a moment to summarise what we’ve learnt so far:

- The two major categories of verbs are **transitive** and **intransitive**. Transitive verbs take an object whereas intransitive verbs don’t.
- Transitive verbs require an object marker or a preposition between the object and the verb. The object marker is usually **ⲉ̀** or **ⲛ** (**ⲉ̀**), but it can also be a different preposition. The meaning of the verb may change depending on which object marker or preposition is used.

Some examples of verbs whose meaning changes depending on the preposition they use are shown in the table below:

Vocab			
κωτ		φωτ	
ἐ	to surround, seek, visit	ψα	to flee, run to
ἑ- ἑἑο/	to turn self, return	ἥσα	to pursue
ἥσα	to seek		
ἑοψι		ωψ	
ψα	to walk to	ἐ	to cry to, to cry for, to read to
ἥσα	to walk behind	ἐβολ	to cry out
σαχι		γι	
ἐ	to speak, talk to	ἑ- ἑἑο/	to take, receive
νεἑ	to speak with	νεἑ	to touch
ἐ/ εθβε/ ῥα	to speak about		
ἥσα/ οἳβη/ οἳβε	to speak against		

It's well worth noting that some verbs always appear with a particular preposition. In some of those cases, a word for word translation of the verb with the preposition doesn't give you the true intended meaning of the combination.

E.g. In **χωκ ἐβολ**, **ἐβολ** on its own would be translated as 'away', however, when it appears with **χωκ**, the combination means "to complete" or "to perfect" so that the

ἐβoλ doesn't seem to contribute to the final meaning of the verb. Another example is ϣαl ϥα, which doesn't mean "to carry under", but simply "to carry".

Confusion corner

Note that when the object marker **ἐ** is followed by the indefinite article, the combination is contracted to form **εϣ**.

For example:

ἐ οϣωτηρια is contracted to **εϣωτηρια**

<i>Vocab</i>			
ερετιν ἡ(ἁ)	to ask, inquire (v.t Gk)	νωον	them (ind. obj) (5.7)
κοσμος	world (Gk,m)	οϣωϣτ ἡ(ἁ)	to worship, kneel unto (v.t)
ἡἡἡἡ	sign, wonder (m)	οϣειἡἡἡ	Greek person (m)
ἡονϣ ἐροϣ	to call (v.t)	σοϣια	wisdom (Gk,f)

Exercise 5.3

- ϣϣϣ ἐρωτεἡ** (*Ephesians 4:1*)
- ἡἡονϣαl σεερετιν ἡϣαἡἡἡἡἡ οϣοϣ ἡἡοϣειἡἡἡ σεκωϣ ἡσα ϣσοϣια** (*1 Corinth 1:22*)
- πικοσμος ἡοϣ ἡἡωτεἡ** (*John 15:18*)
- σεσωτεἡ ἐπιϣαϣἡ ἡτε ϣἡονϣϣ** (*Luke 8:21*)
- ϣϣϣβω ἡπιἡωἡἡ ἡτε ϣἡονϣϣ** (*Matthew 22:16*)
- σεϣωον ἡωον ἡϣε ἡἡἡἡἡ** (*Matthew 6:2*)
- ἡἡἡονἡ σεσαϣἡ ἡἡωον ἡἡἡονϣϣ** (*Psalms 18:2 19:1*)
- ἡϣκαϣ ἐροϣ αἡ** (*Matthew 13:19*)