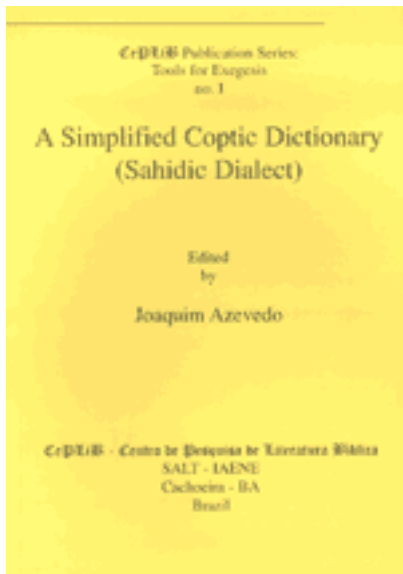


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Azevedo, Joaquim, ed.

A Simplified Coptic Dictionary (Sahidic Dialect)

Cachoeira, Brazil: Centro de Pesquisa de Literatura Bíblica, 2001. Paper. No Price Available. ISBN 8588818019.

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Joaquim Azevedo's *Simplified Coptic Dictionary* is a much-needed tool that should prove indispensable for all students wishing straightforward access to texts in the Coptic language without needing to become accomplished Coptologists themselves. With the publication and wide availability of the Nag Hammadi texts, and now especially with the increasing use of the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas* in historical Jesus studies and the debate arising therefrom, it is becoming more and more clear that the acquisition of competency in Coptic is no longer an obscure bailiwick of Egyptologists and patristic scholars. In fact, competency in Coptic is now indispensable for competent scholarship in many areas of early Christianity, including Christian origins/New Testament. Nothing could make this more clear than the spectacle of New Testament scholars commenting on *Thomas's* literary relationship to the canonical Synoptics without being able to read the text in the language in which it is preserved!

The difficulty, of course, is that the vast majority of New Testament scholars will make use of Coptic in only a limited way, certainly far less than Greek, and therefore will be rightly disinclined to invest the time and effort required for a complete mastery of the language. Azevedo's *Dictionary*, therefore, fills perfectly a genuine gap in the field: it offers a straightforward and simplified dictionary of

the Coptic words a student or scholar of early Christianity is likely to encounter in perusing the Nag Hammadi corpus, the Sahidic translations of the Old and New Testaments, or even the Coptic church fathers. The dictionary is clearly oriented to the student or to the scholar who is competent but not expert in Coptic. Most notably, it includes alphabetical listings of the various different forms of Coptic words. This is particularly helpful for students who may not immediately recognize the root of a qualitative or prepronominal form. Thus, for instance, a student looking up *sbo* will be referred directly to *tcabo*. Similarly, the Coptic spellings of Greek loanwords are listed in the body of the dictionary, in addition to a separate listing, in Greek alphabetical order, of such words. The dictionary also includes a listing of proper names, place names, numerals, and pronouns and includes tables summarizing the relative clause and the verbal conjugation.

The dictionary, therefore, includes precisely the tools that a beginner would desperately wish for and that make access to the primary texts possible even without a thorough expertise in Coptic. It is more comprehensive (in terms of both entries and definitions for each entry) and more “user-friendly” than the glossary in Thomas O. Lambdin’s *Introduction to Sahidic Coptic* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1983) but does not require either the expertise or the financial outlay needed for Crum’s lexicon. The text is therefore perfect both for students and for scholars aiming to read actual Coptic texts. It is to be hoped that this dictionary will be widely used, for it represents an important contribution to the ease with which ancient Coptic texts may be accessed.