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TOWARDS DIGITAL COPTIC: SEARCHING AND VISUALIZING COPTIC MANUSCRIPT DATA (AMIR ZELDES)

The Coptic language of Hellenistic Egypt has been chronically underrepresented in the digital humanities landscape despite the masses of material available and general multidisciplinary interest in Egypt in the first millennium for ancient history, religious studies and the classics. In this talk we present some of the first efforts to offer an open infrastructure for the online representation of Coptic texts using automated tools which have become commonplace for Classical Greek and Latin in the last decade. The talk is divided into two parts, discussing searching and visualizing Coptic data respectively. In the first part we discuss challenges related to segmentation, normalization and metadata annotation of Coptic, given the agglutinative nature of the language, varying conventions on splitting scriptio continua and the physically disjoint state of many Coptic papyri and codices, sometimes available in multiple copies. The second part will present our solutions to visualizing both structural properties of manuscripts encoded based on TEI conventions and linguistic information, such as morphological, syntactic or semantic information. These issues are complicated by the need for conflicting segmentation layers, reconciling line or page breaks in mid-word and the different levels of Coptic morphology.
