Introduction to Papyrology (1200 BCE-800 CE)

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Course outline

1-2. Hieratic Papyri from Pharaonic Egypt (Ben Haring)
July 6: Ben Haring will introduce the students to the hieratic script and documentary conventions of the Ancient Egyptian scribes. Hieratic is the cursive script current during the entire Pharaonic and Hellenistic Period, for documentary, religious, and literary texts. In the Hellenistic Period, its use was restricted to religious contexts (hence the Greek name 'hieratic', or priestly). In the previous two and a half millennia, however, it was much more universal. Aspects that will be dealt with are, among others, the relation and differences between hieratic and the monumental hieroglyphic script, the different textual genres throughout pharaonic history, and material aspects of writing and producing papyrus manuscripts.

July 7: visit to the papyrus collection of the National Museum of Antiquities [ON CAMPUS ONLY].

3. Aramaic Papyri from Achaemenid Egypt (Margaretha Folmer)
July 8: During the Achaemenid rule of the ANE (c. 550-332 BCE) Aramaic was used as the official language of communication and administration in every corner of this vast empire. A special case is the island of Elephantine in Upper Egypt. A group of Judean mercenaries stationed on this island has left behind a particularly rich and well preserved collection of Aramaic papyri datable to the 5th c. BCE. Among the papyri are legal documents, private letters, communal letters, administrative documents and a famous literary text which until the present day circulates among native speakers of Aramaic (the story and wisdom of the wise Ahiqar). After a general introduction we will read in translation part of a correspondence concerning the destruction and rebuilding of the local Judean temple at Elephantine. We will discuss several aspects of letter writing (such as the writing material, the layout and the style used in these letters) and the historical and religious relevance of these texts.

4. Demotic Papyri (Steffie van Gompel)
July 9: The Demotic script developed in Egypt at the end of the seventh century BCE as a cursive script derived from Late Hieratic, emerging in the context of Saite administrative reforms. It stayed in use for more than seven centuries, during which Egypt became a Hellenistic kingdom ruled by a Ptolemaic dynasty, and following that, lost independence and was incorporated as a Roman province. For much of this time, Demotic was the preferred script for legal and administrative (private) documents for the majority of the population. The relatively large number of preserved Demotic papyri and ostraca form one of the best sources on everyday life in ancient Egypt. Over time, literary, religious, and instructional texts also started to be written in Demotic. Although the use of Demotic started to rapidly decline from the first century CE onwards, the last known attestation of the script comes from 452 CE. This class offers an introduction to Demotic and its use in a changing Egyptian society, which will be illustrated by a selection of texts in English translation.

5. Documents from a Decade of Persian Rule in Egypt: The Sasanian Papyri (Nima Asefi)
July 10. In 618/619 CE, Egypt came under Sasanian occupation during the reign of Khosrow II. The Sasanian occupation of Egypt lasted for approximately a decade. From

this period, more than 1,000 Middle Persian documents survive, the majority of which are fragmentary. These documents are preserved in several collections, most notably in Vienna, Berlin, Heidelberg, Philadelphia, and Moscow. They were written on various materials, including papyrus, parchment, leather, and linen; however, since the majority are written on papyrus, they are commonly referred to as the Sasanian Papyri. This lecture provides the historical context of the discovery and study of these documents, a thematic classification of the documents based on their contents, and an examination of their significance for the study of Sasanian history, as well as for our understanding of the Middle Persian language, script, and scribal practices.

6. Papyri and other writing materials from Greco-Roman Egypt (Joanne Stolk)
July 13. During this class we will visit the Leiden Papyrological Institute to look at papyrus and other writing materials (potsherds, wax tablets, wood, linen etc.) dating to the Greco-Roman period. During this period, Egypt was a multilingual society and various languages are found on these objects, such as Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic. We will read the texts (in translation), but focus especially on how the texts have been written. By studying the material aspects of these objects, we will try to understand more about how these texts were produced and used at the time. [ON CAMPUS ONLY].

7. Introduction to Juristic Papyrology (Quintijn Mauer)
July 14. By studying papyri legal scholars – juristic papyrologists if you will – have been able to get a glance of the law in practice. We tend to study Roman law or the law of the Greek city states by examining the important compilation of Justinian, the *Codex Iuris Civilis,* or by reading the orations of important statesmen, such as Demosthenes. The diverse legal papyrological sources, however, show us the law from a different perspective. The papyrological sources contain thousands of contracts of sale, mortgage, lease and pledge, which help us understand how the law was used in day-to-day life. In this class we will discuss what legal papyri can and cannot teach us on the legal culture in which they were drafted.

8. Coptic Papyrology and Christianity (Renate Dekker)
July 15. Late Antique Egypt (ca. 284-639 CE) was a bilingual, Christian society, in which Sahidic Coptic was increasingly adopted alongside Greek for liturgical, literary and documentary texts as well as inscriptions. Coptic is the last phase of the ancient Egyptian language, and is thoroughly influenced by Greek with regard to its vocabulary and script. Sahidic is the variety of Coptic attested in texts from the fourth till the fourteenth centuries (but was replaced by the Bohairic variant as the official church language by the eleventh century). During this session, we will read Coptic letters (in English translation) addressed to the monk-bishop Pesynthius of Koptos (599-632), who temporary fulfilled his office in the neighbouring district, supposedly out of fear for the Persians, who occupied Egypt in 619-620. Pesynthius received many petitions, even from people outside of his own diocese.

9. Life in Three Languages: Coptic, Greek, and Arabic Papyri from Early Islamic Egypt (Eline Scheerlinck)
July 16. In the first half of the 7th century, Egypt faced tumultuous times. As a province of the Byzantine empire, Egypt was occupied by foreign rulers twice. First by the Sassanids, who after a brief period were expelled again by the Byzantines. In the 640's, however, Arab warriors conquered the province and took control of Alexandria and other strategic points. Egypt was now cut off from the Byzantine empire and incorporated in the Islamic empire that was coming into existence. In the next century and a half, the cultural and linguistic landscape of Egypt transformed. Processes of Arabisation and Islamisation were set in motion. This lecture discusses the impact of the Arabic conquest of Egypt on

the basis of the papyrological documentation in the period of transformation in the 7th and 8th century AD.

10. Arabic Papyri from an Early Islamic Chancery (Jelle Bruning)
July 17: In c.700 CE, Egypt was a province in the Muslim empire of the Umayyad caliphs, whose capital was Damascus. In Egypt, many of the country's administrative elite, including a governor appointed by the caliph himself, lived and worked in Fustat, a city that was located near today's Cairo. The country's administration was trilingual: its Muslim top in Fustat communicated in Arabic and in Greek with regional administrators, who, in turn, used Greek and Coptic in their correspondences with village representatives. This meeting focuses on Arabic documents produced in the chancery of Qurra ibn Sharik, Egypt's Muslim governor between 709 and 714. They have been preserved in the archive of an Upper Egyptian pagarch named Basileios, to whom they were addressed. Thanks to the preservation of this archive, Qurra ibn Sharik's short governorate is arguably the best documented period of Umayyad rule over Egypt. His Arabic letters often concern administrative matters such as taxation and related topics. But they also deal with legal disputes, the maintenance of the Muslim soldiers in Fustat, and the organisation of wars against the Byzantine empire. In this meeting, we will study these documents for what they tell us about the scribes and couriers who worked for Qurra ibn Sharik's chancery. Who were these people? What do the documents that they wrote or delivered tell us about their origins, skills and employment? What do the documents reveal about the functioning of an Umayyad-era chancery?

Level
No previous knowledge of the languages in question is required.

Requirements
There is no homework required for this course. For an extra assignment for additional ECTS points please contact the teacher of the topic of your choice.

Materials
No textbook is required; all course documents are provided in class or sent to the students two weeks before the start of the Summer School.