

By [The Coptist](#):

An interesting point about ⲙⲁⲩ is that there is good reason to say that the proper classical spelling should be ⲉⲁⲩ.

The word appears in Bohairic only in medieval vocabularies. It is listed in the Scala Magna as ⲡⲓⲱⲁⲩ = القط, الهر "male cat" — this is Crum's source — as well as some other late vocabularies (probably) all dependent on the Scala Magna. The same word probably also appears in a love spell written in Sahidic with Mesokemic features. Here is an extract including the relevant section (edited [here](#)):

3. ... ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲁⲩⲁ ⲡⲓ ⲁⲩⲁ ⲛⲟⲉ
4. ⲛⲟⲩⲱ ⲉⲥⲁ ⲡⲱ ⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩⲧⲥⲉ
5. ⲉⲁ ⲡⲭⲉⲩ ⲟⲩⲟⲩⲁⲁⲣⲓ ⲉⲁ ⲡⲟⲩ-
6. ⲉⲁⲣ ⲉⲥⲁⲛⲁⲛ ⲉⲛⲟⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲉⲧⲁⲁⲣⲓ
7. ⲉⲥⲃⲏⲕⲃⲏⲕ ⲛⲟⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲃⲁⲙⲉⲩⲁⲓ
8. ⲉⲥⲁⲃⲓ ⲛⲟⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲁⲃⲁⲓ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲟⲩ-
9. ⲉⲛⲥⲁⲉ ⲉⲥⲓⲱⲓ ⲉⲃⲁⲁ ⲉⲁ ⲧⲉⲡⲓⲟⲉ-
10. ⲙⲓⲁ ⲙⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲱⲱ ⲉⲛⲁⲩⲁ ⲡⲓ ⲁⲩⲁ
11. ⲛⲟⲉ ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉⲭⲧⲓⲁⲓ ⲙⲁⲩ ⲉⲥⲁⲱⲓ
12. ⲉⲡⲓⲃⲓ ⲛⲟⲩⲕⲉⲧⲟⲩⲥ ⲉⲣⲉⲟⲩⲁ
13. ⲉⲱⲱⲧ ⲉⲛⲥⲱⲥ ⲉⲃⲛⲉⲥⲧⲉⲩⲉ
14. ⲉⲛ ⲡⲕⲁⲩⲥⲱⲛ ⲉⲡⲱⲱⲛ

"(The thought of God and fear of Him will leave her, and her thoughts and her counsel and her mind will have devilish thoughts, so that she clings to lust and desire and disturbance) because of NN, the son of NN, like [4] a female donkey under the male donkey, a female cat [5] under the male cat, a female dog under the [6] male dog, and she whinnies like a mare, [7] and she chews like a she-camel, [8] as she is crazed like a she-bear and a [9] crocodile, and she clings to lust [10] and desire for NN the son of NN [11] like for a drop of water clinging [12] to the edge of a jar when one [13] looks at it while fasting [14] in the burning heat of summer!"

The context suggests that ⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩⲧⲥⲉ ⲉⲁ ⲡⲭⲉⲩ means a female animal and a male animal of the same species respectively. The difficulty is that ⲛⲟⲩⲧⲥⲉ is not otherwise attested so the meaning is not certain but editors generally read it as "a female cat under a male cat". In his review of Crum, Drescher (BSAC XVI, p. 288) connected Bohairic word ⲡⲓⲱⲁⲩ "male cat" with this word ⲡⲭⲉⲩ and this was accepted by Westendorf in his etymological dictionary.

If this is the case, which I think is reasonable, then I think there is a good argument for amending the Scala Magna's πῑϣΔΥ entry to πῑϚΔΥ on the basis that (1) Sahidic/Fayyumic ϣ corresponds to Bohairic ϣ or Ϛ but not ϣ̣; and (2) it is very common for relatively uncommon letter Ϛ (but not ϣ) to be (mis)spelled/replaced with the relatively common letter ϣ̣ in late texts, due to the fact that both commonly came to be pronounced /ʃ/.