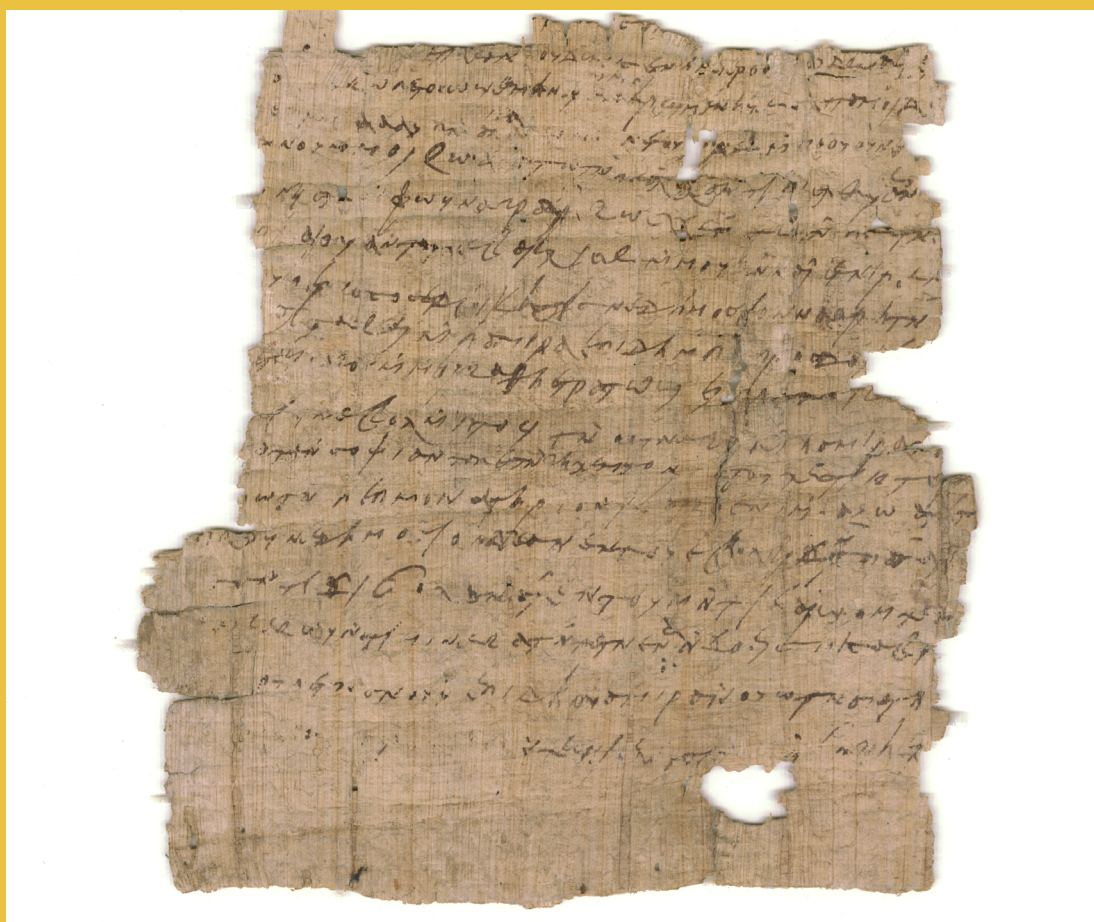


COPTICA TAURINENSIA

COPTIC PAPYRI
FROM THE MUSEO EGIZIO

Proceedings of the 7th International Summer School
in Coptic Papyrology
Turin 4th–9th September 2023



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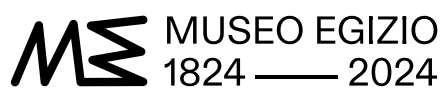
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PREFACE

*“The harvest truly is plenteous,
but the labourers are few”*

The project of the *International Summer School in Coptic Papyrology (ISSCP)* was inaugurated two decades ago, in July 2006, when Cornelia Römer, the former director of the papyrus collection of the Austrian National Library in Vienna, hosted a group of successful applicants at this collection for a week of learning under the guidance of experienced scholars who taught them how to handle, edit and interpret Coptic documentary papyri. At that time, the study of Coptic documents was still (or again, after a first blooming in the earlier twentieth century) a widely untilled field within Coptology, lagging significantly behind the progress made by other papyrologies, thus leaving virtually unnoticed an entire layer of textual evidence from Egypt at a time of crucial transformations in religion, economy and administration. Since, and partly due to, the Vienna kick-off, this situation has changed significantly. The first *ISSCP* at Vienna in 2006 was followed by a second (Leipzig, Papyrus Collection of the University Library, 2008), a third (Strasbourg, Papyrus Collection of the University and State Library, 2010), a fourth (Heidelberg, Papyrus Collection of the Institute of Papyrology, 2012), a fifth (Barcelona, Palau-Ribes Papyrus Collection, 2014), a sixth (Paris, Papyrus Collection of the Institute of Papyrology of the Sorbonne, 2018), and most recently in 2023, by the seventh *ISSCP* at the papyrus collection of the Museo Egizio at Turin.

A core didactic feature of the *International Summer School in Coptic Papyrology* from its beginning has been the dual approach of classes taught on topics in Coptic papyrology, combined with handling sessions where the participants work on unedited papyri. A prerequisite for a successful Summer

School in Coptic papyrology is thus a venue with a large collection of Coptic texts, as well as dedicated colleagues willing to accommodate a group of students and instructors for a longer period of time to actively handle and work on their papyri on site. The teaching staff and students who enjoyed the *ISSCP* at the Museo Egizio are extremely grateful for the high commitment of the keeper of its papyrus collection, Susanne Töpfer, who spared neither time nor effort to supply all the necessities and conveniences to make this Summer School a success.

The indicators of success of each single *ISSCP*, as well as of the overall concept, are manifold. A first indicator is the collaborative spirit, growing in the seminar room and during the handling sessions and developing into lasting professional networks between *ISSCP* alumni of the same and between different *ISSCP* “generations” – an instance of the celebrated *amicitia papyrologorum papyrologorumque*.

A second indicator is the benefit of the *ISSCP* regarding the academic advancement of former participants. For example, four of the main instructors and invited speakers of the seventh *ISSCP* had participated in previous ones as students.

A third indicator is the growth and prosperity of Coptic papyrology as an academic discipline and emerging field in the humanities. Over the last two decades, Coptic documentary sources have enjoyed a boost of attention from students and increasing recognition by scholars from neighboring disciplines, such as history of Late Antiquity, religious studies, patristics, literary studies, or linguistic typology. The lasting interest in the *ISSCP* may be part of both the cause and effect of this development.

Every new edition of Coptic texts signals anew the scholarly value of written evidence originating from such a geo-political key region between the Mediterranean, Asia and Africa, and testifying to such a crucial period of transition as Egypt from Late Antiquity up to the early Islamic period. Therefore, another important indicator of success is the crop of editions yielded by the *ISSCP* soil. These editions begin to take shape first, directly at the venue, as ingroup presentations; later, having undergone continuous work and review processes, they make their appearance as proper publications. Six *ISSCP* volumes have already

been published.¹ We are happy to release herewith the harvest of editions from *ISSCP 7* – the first one to appear as a freely accessible online publication.

Our thanks go to Sara Cianetti and Divina Centore for the editorial support of the volume, and to the institutional supporters of the seventh International Summer School in Coptic Papyrology, the Fondazione Museo delle Antichità Egizie di Torino, the Fondazione per le scienze religiose (Bologna), the Freie Universität Berlin, and the Department of History of the Università di Torino.

The Editors

Berlin / Bologna / Münster / Paris / Strasbourg / Turin

July 2025

1 **ISSCP 1:** Hasitzka, Monika R.M. (ed.), *Koptische dokumentarische und literarische Texte: First International Summer School in Coptic Papyrology 2006 in der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek* (CPR 31), Berlin and New York 2011; **ISSCP 2:** Boud'hors, Anne, Frederic Krueger, Almut Märker and Tonio S. Richter (eds.), *Coptica Lipsiensia. Koptische Texte aus der Papyrus- und Ostrakasammlung der Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig (P.Lips.Copt. I)* (APF 52), Berlin and New York 2024; **ISSCP 3:** Boud'hors, Anne, Alain Delattre, Cathérine Louis and Tonio S. Richter (eds.), *Coptica Argentoratensia. Textes et documents - Troisième université d'été de papyrologie copte (Strasbourg, 18-25 juillet 2010)* (CBC 19), Paris 2014; **ISSCP 4:** Boud'hors, Anne, Alain Delattre, Gesa Schenke, Georg Schmelz and Tonio S. Richter (eds.), *Coptica Palatina. Koptische Texte aus der Heidelberger Papyrussammlung (P.Heid.Kopt.), bearbeitet auf der Vierten Internationalen Sommerschule für Koptische Papyrologie, Heidelberg, 26. August - 9. September 2012)* (STHP 1), Heidelberg 2018; **ISSCP 5:** Albarrán Martínez, María J., Anne Boud'hors and Alain Delattre, *Coptica Barcinonensia. Textes et documents de la 5e université d'été de papyrologie copte (P.PalauRib.Copt. 1-29 et P.PalauRib.Arab. 1-2)* (JCoptStud 19), Louvain 2017; **ISSCP 6:** Boud'hors, Anne and Alain Delattre (eds.), *Coptica Sorbonensia. Textes de la 6e école d'été de papyrologie copte, Paris, 2-11 juillet 2018* (StudPAP 4), Paris 2022.

PAPYROLOGISTS AT WORK: COPTIC PAPYRI AND THE HISTORY OF LATE ANTIQUE AND EARLY ISLAMIC EGYPT*

Alain Delattre

The Summer School in Coptic papyrology in Turin, from which the texts published in this volume originate, was the seventh edition of a series launched almost twenty years ago. Each time, these Summer Schools have provided an opportunity to bring together students and teachers from around the world for intensive sessions of teaching and working with texts written on papyrus. Following sessions in Vienna (2006), Leipzig (2008), Strasbourg (2010), Heidelberg (2012), Barcelona (2016) and Paris (2018), this latest event was held at the Museo Egizio in Turin (2023). This location was especially fitting, as the Museo Egizio played a role in the early development of Coptic papyrology. It also offered an ideal opportunity to retrace, as attempted in the following pages, a few key moments in the history of Coptic papyrology, to show how this field of study has contributed to our understanding of Late Antique Egypt, and to reflect on its potential for future scholarship.

The birth of papyrology is commonly dated to 1788, the year in which the first Greek papyrus, the *Charta Borgiana*, was published by the Danish scholar Niels Schow.¹ The *Charta Borgiana* is a second-century tax document from Tebtynis, in the Fayum. Its significance lies above all in the fact that it is an authentic document directly from antiquity, preserved simply by chance because of Egypt's exceptionally hot and dry climate without any selection or alteration. Since the *Charta Borgiana*, some 90,000 Greek papyri and *ostraca* have been published, providing us with first-hand information on the history of Graeco-Roman Egypt, from the conquest of Alexander the Great to about a century after the Arab conquest, in other words during what papyrologists call the “papyrological millennium”.

* The present contribution is a revised version of the closing lecture delivered at the Summer School in Turin. The oral nature of the original presentation has been partly preserved. I am very grateful to my colleagues Paul Heilporn and Gesa Schenke for their comments on a preliminary version of this paper.

¹ SB I 5124; cf. also Capasso, *AnnNap* 29 (1986–1987) and Litinas, in Palme (ed.), *Akten des 23. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses*, 2007.

Such is the usual presentation of papyrology, of its scope and origins, and it is admittedly very Hellenocentric. Yet, we have papyri written in Egyptian (hieratic, Demotic, and Coptic) both long before and well after the chronological limits of the “papyrological millennium”, and Arabic papyrology extends well into the medieval period. This emphasis on Greek papyrology stems from the primacy of the study of Greek texts over those written in other languages, and from the available energy and sheer number of scholars in Classical Greek who turned their attention to papyri, thereby creating the discipline “papyrology” and developing the tools which enabled it to grow. For these historical reasons, the other branches of papyrology – whether hieratic, Demotic, Coptic or Arabic – are ultimately the offspring of Greek papyrology.

1. THE BIRTH OF COPTIC PAPYROLOGY (1850) AND ITS FIRST DEVELOPMENTS

There is no officially recognized starting date for Coptic papyrology, but we can consider – as with Greek papyrology – that it could be the date of the publication of the first Coptic papyrological document; this occurred in year 1850. Although Coptic documents were mentioned as early as the 1830s or 1840s, the first proper text edition, accompanied by a translation and commentary, of a Coptic papyrological document, more precisely an *ostrakon*, was produced by Gustav Seyffarth (1796–1885).² The German Egyptologist published the Coptic *ostrakon* Turin Cat. 7136 [Fig. 1] located in what was then the Regio Museo di Antichità ed Egizio di Torino; in other words, the first Coptic text published now in the Museo Egizio.

The text contains a short, polite message sent from the ‘sinner’ Azarias to ‘his father’ Frange and can be translated as follows:

Jesus Christ. It is me, Azarias, the sinner, who writes and greets his dear God-loving father who bears Christ in truth, Frange. I also greet my brother Phoibammon and all brothers who are staying with you. Hail in the Lord, my dear brother. [on the verso] Give it [i.e. this letter] to my father Frange

² Seyffarth, ZDMG 4 (1850) = SB Kopt. II 858 (Museo Egizio, Cat. 7136).

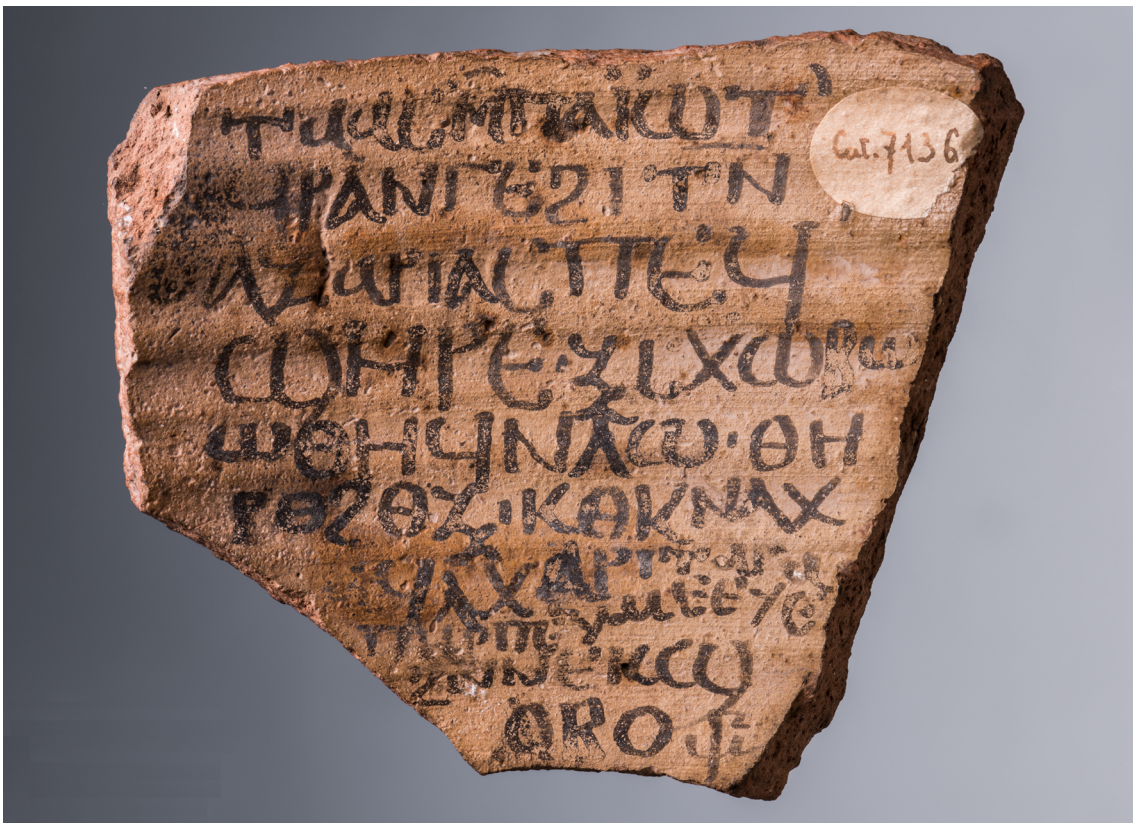
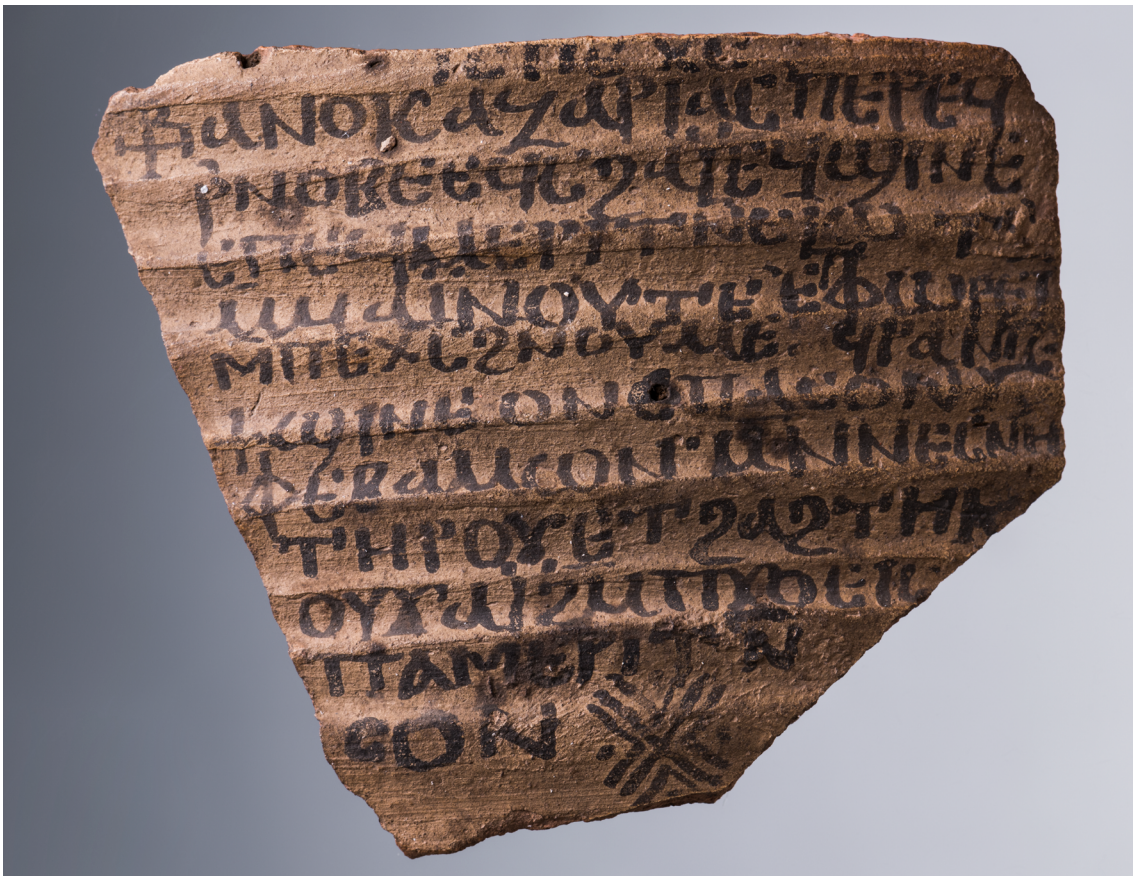


Fig. 1 SB Kopt. II 858 = O.Turin Cat. 7136. Photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila/Museo Egizio.

from Azarias his son. [in cryptographic script] Moses, Sabinos, Abraham, [in normal script] be so good as to remember them in your [in cryptographic script] prayers.

The addressee of the letter, Frange, is now a well-known figure, living in the Theban region in the first half of the eighth century, whose archives were discovered in the early 2000s, and I will come back to this in a moment. In the absence of parallel texts and faced with cryptograms, Seyffarth's edition was admittedly not conclusive.

As the years went by, in the second half of the nineteenth century, many more studies were carried out, and gradually became more consistent, standardized and reliable. Numerous Coptic texts on papyrus, parchment, paper, clay or limestone (*ostraca*) were published by scholars, such as Jacob Krall (1857–1905), Eugène Revillout (1843–1913) and Ludwig Stern (1846–1911). I cannot mention the latter's name without recording that in 1878 he was the first editor of another well-known *ostrakon* from the Turin collection, Cat. 7134 [Fig. 2], bought by Drovetti in the Theban area, later republished by Francesco Rossi in 1895.³

The very short document relates a solar eclipse and can be translated as follows:

On the 14th day of the [month] Phamenoth in the 14th year of the indiction, the sun darkened at the fourth hour of the day [on the verso] and during the year when Petros son of Palou was lashane of Djeme.

In 2006 the astronomer Gerry Gilmore and the orientalist John Ray were able to demonstrate convincingly that the only possible total eclipse observable in the Theban region, where the village of Djeme was located, on a 14th day of the month Phamenoth, occurred on March 10 in the year 601 CE, at around 10 am, which effectively corresponds to the fourth hour of the day mentioned in the document.⁴

A few years later, Chantal Heurtel was able to show that the *ostrakon* had been most likely written by the priest Mark, a highly erudite figure from this region,

³ Stern, ZÄS 16 (1878); Rossi, *Atti Torinesi* 30 (1894–1895) = SB Kopt. II 1238 (Museo Egizio, Cat. 7134);

⁴ Gilmore and Ray, ZPE 158 (2006).

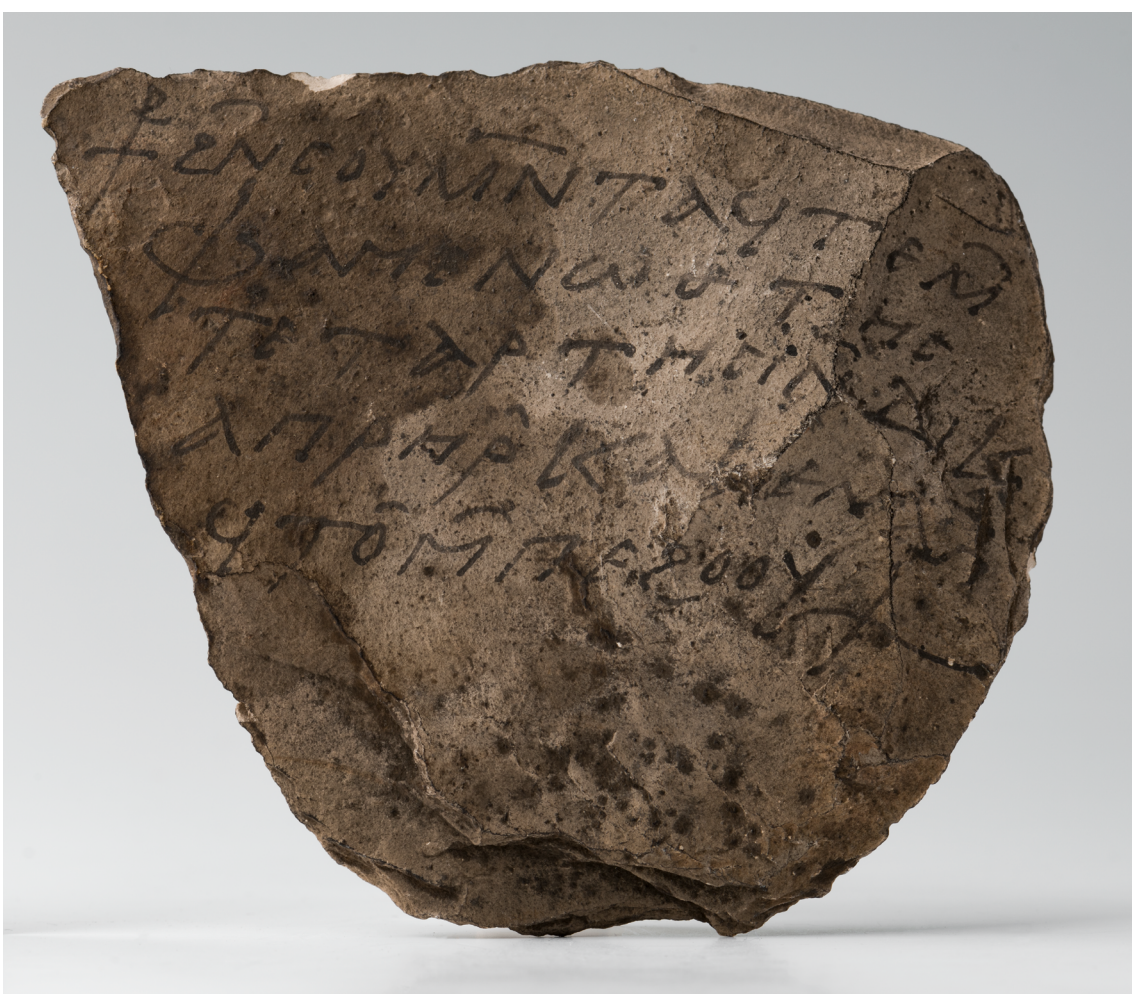
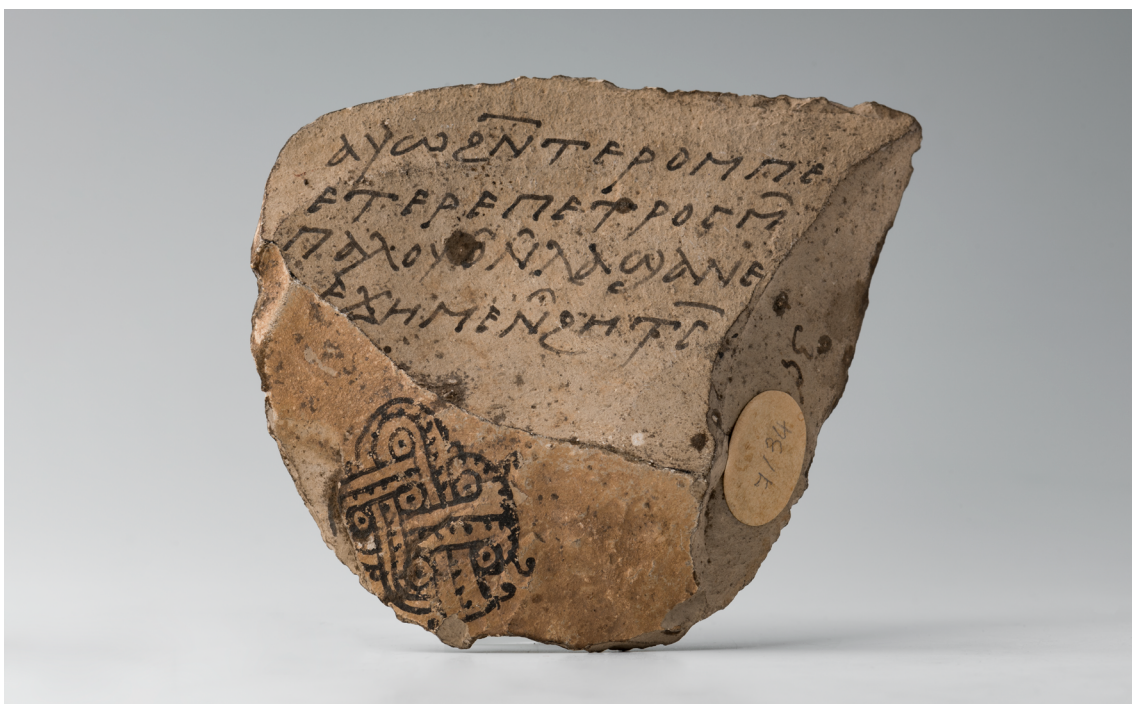


Fig. 2 SB Kopt. II 1238 = O.Turin Cat. 7134. Photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila/Museo Egizio.

who also left us a large number of other documents.⁵ From such early editions to the present day, the study of Coptic papyri and *ostraca* has grown exponentially, thanks to long-running, collective efforts. It remains necessary to go back to the texts published in the past, to revise and update them in the light of the new evidence available, and to further our understanding of their historical context.

2. WALTER EWING CRUM (1865–1944), LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS OF COPTIC PAPYROLOGY

Coptic papyrology began to develop during the second half of the nineteenth century, but was still in its infancy. A qualitative and quantitative leap forward was made in the first half of the twentieth century by Walter Ewing Crum (1865–1944). The British scholar brought Coptic papyrology, and Coptic studies in general, into the modern scholarly world. His *opus magnum* is the Coptic dictionary to which he devoted his life and which is still the ultimate reference tool for us today. To compile his dictionary, Crum tirelessly edited unpublished texts over the course of many years. According to the Trismegistos' database, there are now just over 20,000 Coptic papyri and *ostraca* published, of which Crum alone has published almost a quarter (4,500 texts).⁶

With such a huge number, it is nearly impossible to single out which text might be most emblematic and worth discussing here. Crum's edition of texts from the Theban region, and in particular from Djeme, the Coptic village set in the ruins of the temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu, is perhaps one of his most important contributions. I am thinking here of the corpus entitled *Die koptischen Rechtsurkunden aus Theben*, a collection of 120 documentary texts, many of them very long, published or republished by Walter Crum and Georg Steindorff in 1912 (P.KRU).

These texts include wills, agreements or contracts for the sale of land or houses, such as P.KRU 18, a papyrus preserved in Turin (Cat. 7129, **Fig. 3**), but the most extraordinary documents in this corpus are undoubtedly the twenty-six

⁵ Heurtel, in Boud'hors and Louis (eds.), *Études coptes XII*, 2013.

⁶ Focusing on the main text corpora, we can cite the following: P.Fay.Copt. (1893); O.Crum (1902); P.Lond. Copt. (1905); P.Ryl.Copt. (1909); P.Lond. IV (1910); P.KRU (1912); O.Crum ST (1921); P.Sarga (1922); P.Mon. Epiph. (1926); O.Crum VC (1939).

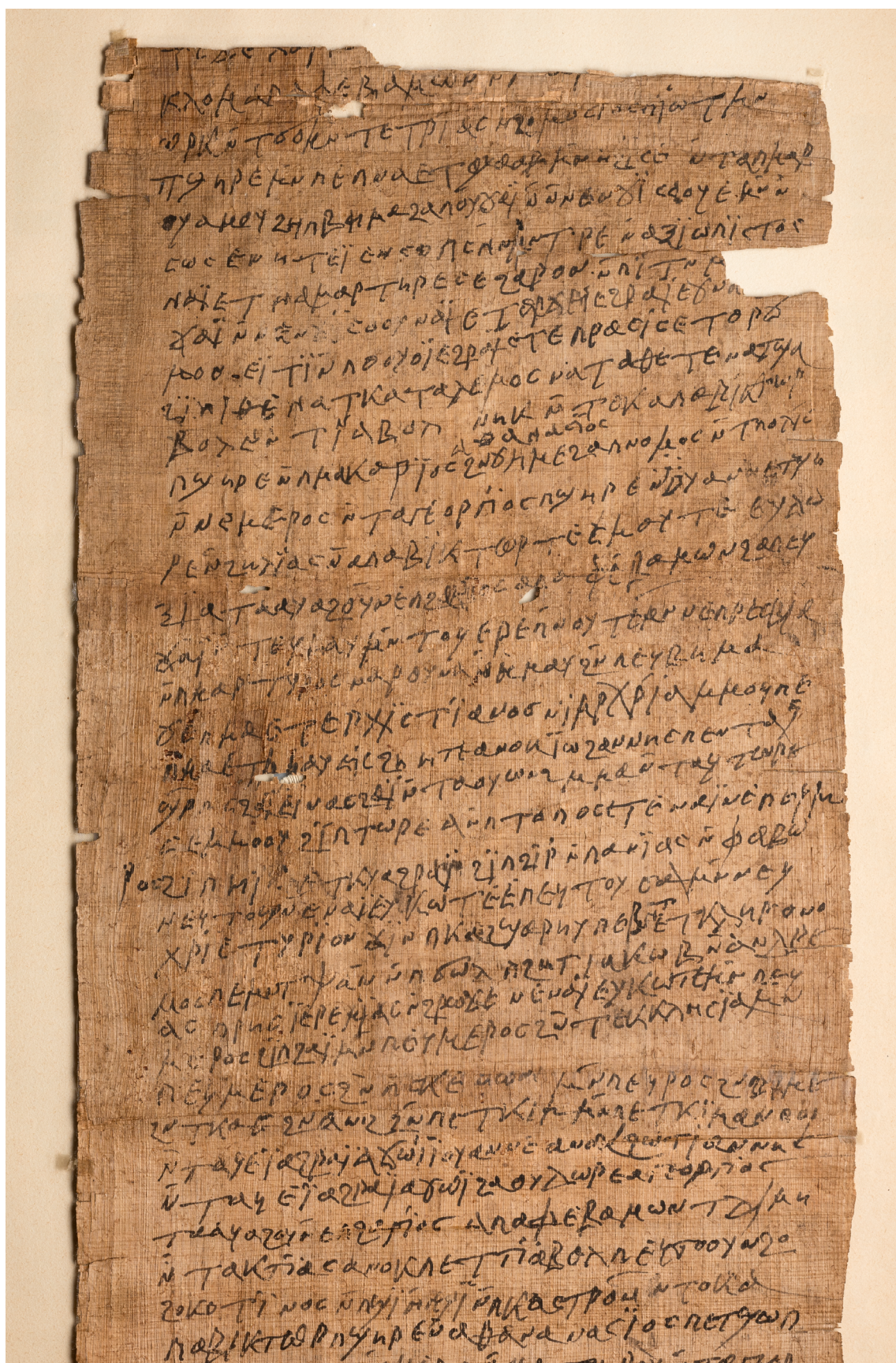


Fig. 3 Upper half of P. Turin Cat. 7129. Photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila/Museo Egizio.

child donations, i.e. contracts by which the inhabitants of the town or other nearby villages ‘gave’ their children as servants to the saint Phoibammon at his healing shrine associated with the monastery of Phoibammon set up in the ruins of Hatshepsut’s temple at Deir el-Bahari. These documents have been the subject of several studies, which offer different interpretations of this singular practice.⁷ In fact, self-donation and donation of children are frequently mentioned in collections of miracles, but only in Djeme we can actually see the legal contracts regulating these donations mentioned in literary texts. Whatever the historical and sociological reality of this practice, the documents include a particularly interesting narrative section, which serves to motivate and explain the donation, and to place it within its religious framework. The texts parallel the story of Hannah and Samuel in the Old Testament. Hannah, despairing of not being a mother, prays to God to give her a child, whom she vows to consecrate to him (1 Sam 1, 11). The child is born and becomes the prophet Samuel, who dedicates his life to God and serves in the temple. Here is a translation of the narrative part of a contract drawn up in 775 by Phoibammon, who gives his son to the monastery:

After the mercy God has ordered and my son was born, I thought of my sins and decided that, if he would live, I would give him to the monastery of Apa Phoibammon for the salvation of my soul. But when the little boy grew up and made good progress, I intended to break my vow that I had settled with God and his Saint. After that, the little boy fell into a great and very severe disease, and we had much grief about the little boy and we were envious to see all the healthy little children who are the consolation of their parents. We discussed – I and his mother – that perhaps God and his Saint had done this for us, since we had infringed the alliance that we had formed with him. We consulted together: “Let’s set off and take the little boy and go to the holy monastery and request the holy martyr: ‘Forgive us the boldness we have done!’ Perhaps he will ask God and he gives healing to the little boy.” Then we took the little boy and brought him into the holy monastery. We always besought God and his Saints, the holy Phoibammon, we cried and besought the martyr: “Forgive us the sin we have done!”, and we always received the holy Communion together

⁷ Among the most recent studies, see Papaconstantinou, *JJP* 32 (2002); Richter, *JJP* 35 (2005); Schenke, *ZAC* 20 (2016); Papaconstantinou, in Déroche et al. (eds.), *Culte des saints*, 2020.

*with the little boy, and after a period of one month, he who had listened to the prayers of the blessed Hannah, the mother of Samuel the prophet, also listened to us. He gave healing to the little boy, and we went back home, praised God and reflected: "This little boy was counted among the dead before he received healing. But now, he has got well. So he may become a servant of the holy monastery, the place where he received healing."*⁸

The biblical narrative enhances the personal experience, underlining its acceptable, moral importance amid religious, economic and social considerations.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF COPTIC PAPYROLOGY

Crum was an independent scholar without an academic post. Consequently, he had no students to continue his work. In part alongside and in part thanks to his research, Coptic papyrology gradually acquired a certain degree of maturity: editions were enriched more systematically with translations and commentary notes, which put the documents into context and, when necessary, highlighted their particular significance. As the corpus of published texts grew, thematic studies were also produced. Among the many scholars who have contributed to Coptic papyrology, two figures who were active in the 1950s and 1960s played a major role in its development.

In addition to his work on Coptic grammar and his editions of literary texts, Walter C. Till (1894–1963) was a tireless editor of Coptic documentary texts, to an extent not equal to that of Crum, but still considerable.⁹ In particular, he published a large number of texts from the major collection of the Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Papyrus Collection; his precise and useful commentaries make his editions still extremely valuable tools. Till also distinguished himself by his efforts to provide material that could be also used by papyrologists and historians beyond the circle of coptologists, as can be seen from his numerous studies of Coptic legal texts (employment contracts, guarantees, documents relating to

⁸ Translation by T.S. Richter.

⁹ Focusing on the main text corpora, we can cite the following: P.Schutzbrieft (1938); CPR IV (1958); O.Vind. Copt. (1960); O.Mon.Phoib. (1965). According to Trismegistos.org, Till published more than 1,600 Coptic texts.

inheritance law, etc.), his translations of Coptic documents – in particular his work *Die koptischen Rechtsurkunden aus Theben* – and the prosopographical and chronological study of documents from the Theban region.¹⁰

Paul Kahle (1923–1955) must also be mentioned, as he was one of the most brilliant minds in Coptic studies. Having settled in England after fleeing Nazi Germany with his family in 1938, he produced a first-rate intellectual and scholarly corpus, which was brought to an abrupt end by his tragic death at the age of just 32. His publication of the documentation from the monastery of Deir el-Bala'izah is exemplary in many respects, for its scope, for its concern to integrate Greek and Coptic documentation, and for the accompanying introduction, in particular his fundamental study of the Coptic language and its dialectal variations, in both literary and documentary texts. This study is still of great interest today and remains widely quoted.¹¹

4. SARAH JANE CLACKSON (1965–2003), BRINGING COPTIC PAPYROLOGY INTO THE PRESENT DAY

One last scholar of Coptic papyrology should be mentioned, much closer to us in time, someone whose influence has been, I believe, considerable on Coptic studies and can still be felt today: Sarah Jane Clackson, who tragically died at the age of 38. Her contribution to Coptic papyrology was mostly twofold. First, she put a strong and (hopefully) permanent end to the separation, even segregation, between Greek and Coptic papyrologies. The title of her book, *Coptic and Greek Texts Relating to the Hermopolite Monastery of Apa Apollo*, published in 2000, is a good example of this approach.¹² This is the first edition of Coptic papyri in which the choice was made to include the term “Greek” in the title. It is important to take into account texts written in both languages, as they represent two sides of the same society. This is a fundamental approach for the historian: you cannot work with one eye open to Greek and the other closed to Coptic, or *vice versa*.¹³

¹⁰ Till, *Erbrechtliche Untersuchungen*, 1954; Pap.Arbeit. (1956); Pap.Bürgsch.Copt. (1958); Till, *Datierung und Prosopographie*, 1962; Till, *Die koptischen Rechtsurkunden aus Theben*, 1964.

¹¹ Kahle, *Bala'izah*, 1954 (= P.Bal.).

¹² Clackson, *Coptic and Greek Texts*, 2000.

¹³ The same inclusive approach was used earlier for Greek and Demotic papyrologies, particularly at Leiden

The monastery of Apollo referred to in the above title is a large one, located near the village of Bawit, in Middle Egypt. This establishment is known from a number of sources, both literary, since the life of the founder, Apollo, has been the subject of several stories, and archaeological, as the site, which covers more than 40,000 square meters, was first excavated at the beginning of the twentieth century, and continues to be excavated today. Furthermore, epigraphic and papyrological sources have been found on the site: more than 1,500 inscriptions have been published to date; papyri and *ostraca* were found in large numbers during illegal excavations since the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, and then sold on the antiquities market and dispersed in dozens of collections around the world. There is hardly a collection, large or small, that does not include texts from Bawit. As a result, we have a considerable amount of information, drawn from a number of different sources, which we can and must bring together to further our knowledge of everything the site can teach us. And this is where Sarah Clackson's contribution has been decisive.

Clackson made a meticulous study of specific types of Coptic documents while carrying out so-called "museum archeology" to find out when and through whom the papyri she was studying had entered the collections. Some of these documents were definitely from the Bawit monastery, and she was able to show that the other similar documents therefore came from the same place, as well as, in all likelihood, the other documents which had been acquired at the same time. Through this approach, Clackson was able to reconstitute the archives of the Bawit monastery, which now contain almost 1,000 papyrological texts, a corpus that provides us with invaluable information about the life of this great Egyptian monastery. Her study has been fundamental and has enabled all the researchers who have followed in her footsteps to make considerable progress. Establishing the provenance of a text means restoring its context and enabling historians to make positive use of it in their research.

In the case of the Bawit monastery, the context is particularly rich and there are many connections between the sources. To illustrate this, one can start with what is often considered to be one of the masterpieces of Coptic art: the icon of

and Leuven, around the leading figures of Pieter Pestman (1933–2010) and Jan Quaegebeur (1943–1995). Sarah Clackson was probably most inspired by the example of Paul E. Kahle, to whose memory she dedicated her *Coptic and Greek Texts*. Kahle's edition of the texts from the monastery of Bala'izah included a large number of Greek texts, which were studied as carefully as the Coptic texts.



Fig. 4 Musée du Louvre, Inv. E 11565. Photo by Musée du Louvre / Georges Poncet.

Christ and Abbot Mena, in the Louvre [Fig. 4].

As old photos show, this icon came from the Bawit monastery. It was stolen from the Bawit excavations, where it was discovered in 1902, and subsequently purchased by a French collector, who donated it to the Louvre in 1918. The icon depicts two figures standing in front of a landscape: Christ is on the right and the abbot (*proestos*) Mena on the left. Christ's right hand is placed on the right shoulder of Mena as a form of protection.

Art historians have identified the Abbot Mena with a *papa Mena* painted on a wall in the monastery, perhaps an *oikonomos*, judging by the keys he seems to be

holding: he bears a striking resemblance to the portrait of the icon.¹⁴ The paintings in the monastery then show a “Mena” who was first *oikonomos* and later became superior of the monastery (*proestos*).

As a matter of fact, this man can also be found in the monastery’s epigraphic and papyrological documentation. For the epigraphical sources, one can use the information provided by the monastery’s official inscriptions, i.e. the wooden lintels placed above the doors when a building was constructed.¹⁵ These lintels are therefore part of the official program of the monastery and often mention the people who presided over the construction of the building. Two lintels, one in the Campo Santo in Rome and the other at the Coptic Museum in Cairo, mention a trio of people in charge of the monastery: a superior general, Apa Isaac, and two figures, Mena and Athanasios, who are his subordinates and whose titles change. In the Cairo lintel, Mena is *deuterarios*, i.e. the second in command, the right-hand man of the superior Isaac, while Athanasios has no title. In the Rome lintel, Mena has risen in rank: he has become superior (probably of the monastery of Bawit, while Isaac is the superior general of the monastic congregation that included Bawit and other monasteries) and Athanasios has become *deuterarios*. A third lintel, kept in the British Museum, shows an *oikonomos* with the title “Papa Mena”. Even if a coincidence cannot be ruled out, it seems highly likely that the Mena on the lintels is the same as the one of the icon of Christ and the painting on a wall.

The papyri tell us more: the eighth-century papyri from the site mention also an *oikonomos* and a superior named Mena. P.Mich.Copt. 14 (= SB Kopt. V 2166) is a letter addressed to the superior of Bawit by a certain “Papa Mēna”, *oikonomos*. Another papyrus, which was discovered during the 2012 excavation campaign at the Bawit monastery, contains interesting information. P.Cair.Mus.Copte Inv. 12837 is a contract for a plot of land, involving a large sum of money.¹⁶

Between the end of the contract and the signatures of the witnesses, we find the names of the people responsible for the transaction, who have given their agreement in their own handwriting; given the nature and the importance of the contract, they should have been high-ranking officials of the monastery.

¹⁴ Rutschowskaya, *Le Christ et l'abbé Ména*, 1998; Clédât, *Le monastère*, 1999, p. 158.

¹⁵ Delattre, in Boud'hors and Louis (eds.), *Études coptes XI*, 2010.

¹⁶ Delattre, *BIFAO* 112 (2012).

The first one is an Isaac, and the second a Mena. The combination of these two names, known in the lintels of Rome and Cairo as having held high office within the monastery at the same time, makes the identification very likely.

Therefore, we seem to have an exceptional dossier, which shows us the monk Mena first as *oikonomos*, then as *deuterarios* and finally as *proestos* of the great monastery of Bawit, with epigraphical and papyrological documents from the eighth century showing him in his various roles. There are also two figurative representations of him, one dating from one of the first positions in his career, and the second from what was undoubtedly the high end of his career, that of *proestos* of the monastery. The icing on the cake is that we even have Mena's autograph! All this research could only be completed by taking into account both archaeological and textual sources.

5. BACK TO THE BEGINNING: ANOTHER LOOK AT THE FIRST PUBLISHED COPTIC OSTRACON

The last point I would like to address in this presentation of Coptic papyrology is a recent discovery that puts the Turin *ostrakon* Cat. 7136 mentioned above into a wider context. Since 1999, archaeological excavations carried out by the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) have uncovered a Coptic hermitage in the courtyard and rooms of a New Kingdom pharaonic tomb (Theban Tomb 29). The place was inhabited in the first half of the eighth century by a monk called Frange, who lived with his disciple Moses within a monastic community that occupied the hill of Sheikh Abd el-Gourna. The monk worked as a weaver, a copyist, and a bookbinder, as the texts and the archaeological remains have shown, notably the pit of his loom, a bookbinding plate he had made, and his inkwell with his calamus still stuck in it.

Frange has left us an exceptional documentation, particularly valuable for the study of ancient epistolography: hundreds of letters he wrote himself and that he kept in his cell, and also, to a lesser extent, letters he received. A few dozen letters written by him or addressed to him and found in various places in the vicinity, such as the Turin *ostrakon*, complete the corpus of his correspondence. Nearly



Fig. 5 O.Frange 162.
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all these texts were published by Anne Boud'hors and Chantal Heurtel in 2010.¹⁷

In O.Frange 162 **[Fig. 5]**, Frange addresses Azarias as follows:

Disobedient Azarias. + The Lord said to his disciples, 'He who listens to you, listens to me'. Now if I send for you repeatedly, and you do not obey me once nor come to me to meet me for my business, WHAT IS THE USE of your coming to me at all? If it is not enough for me to ask you once for you to obey me and come to me for my business, you need not come to me at all. You have succeeded in coming this time: go to Moses. You do not obey: neither will you find peace with (us?) two.

¹⁷ Boud'hors and Heurtel, *Les ostraca coptes*, 2010 (= O.Frange).

The letter aims to intimidate and discipline Azarias, accusing him directly and without as much as a polite introduction to his message. Frange begins with a quotation from the Bible to assert his authority, threatens to cut ties with Azarias if he does not obey, and uses incisive language, notably by writing certain words in larger type to emphasise their importance (in capital letters in the translation).¹⁸ Is this Azarias with whom Frange is so utterly irritated the same Azarias who is the author of the very polite letter published by Seyffarth in 1850? We might never know, especially as the name Azarias is not uncommon, but the Turin *ostrakon* Cat. 7136, addressed to a well-known figure in the Theban region during the eighth century, is now part of a vast archive and appears therefore to be all the more representative.

6. CONCLUSION

Founded nearly 175 years ago, Coptic papyrology has developed gradually under the steering of a few key figures. Over the past two decades, an increasing number of researchers have joined forces to bring the discipline into modernity, integrating it into a broader papyrology that is conceived as a comprehensive study of Ptolemaic, Roman, Byzantine and Arab Egypt. The discipline can no longer remain narrowly defined; on the contrary, it is essential to multiply collaborations in order to encompass all available documentation, i.e. texts, whatever their language or medium, as well as archaeological remains. It is also important to open up to all the fields to which this rich documentation can lead, history, linguistics, or literary studies, but also areas like land economy, farming, transportation, education, childcare or nursing to name but a few. In this context, the summer schools, which have introduced Coptic papyrology to a wider audience for nearly twenty years, have realized their full potential by equipping future papyrologists to work confidently with Coptic materials.

¹⁸ Cromwell and Delattre, in Almansa-Villatoro and Motte (eds.), *(Im)politeness in Ancient Egypt*, 2025.

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AMEDEO PEYRON AND THE HISTORY OF COPTIC PAPYROLOGY: WITH A DESCRIPTION OF TWO UNPUBLISHED MAGICAL TEXTS FROM THE “FONDO PEYRON” OF THE BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE UNIVERSITARIA DI TORINO (MSS. 158–159)

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in collaboration with Nathan Carlig and Korshi Dosoo*

1. AMEDEO PEYRON: A SHORT PROFILE

Amedeo Peyron was born in Turin on October 2, 1785 and died there on April 27, 1870. After graduating in Greek (1808) and Theology (1814),¹ he was appointed to the Chair of Oriental Languages at the University of Turin, succeeding his teacher, Abbot Tommaso Valperga di Caluso in 1815, the year of his death. It is almost impossible to summarize his scholarly interests, which he managed to reconcile with important academic and political commitments. On the other hand, the extraordinary richness of his intellectual personality emerges from a simple consultation of the “Fondo Peyron”, which we will discuss shortly. I will limit myself to recalling that, on the philological and philosophical level, he began with a topic very dear to me: the Presocratics. As a matter of fact, he was the first in Italy to adopt the philological method of German

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¹ Peyron obtained the latter degree after being ordained a priest in 1809. See Sclopis, AAT 5 (1869–1870); Bassi, *La vita e gli studi di Amedeo Peyron (1785–1870)*, 1861; Pellé, in Capasso (ed.), *Hermae: Scholars and Scholarship in Papyrology. II*, 2010; Pezzini, in Pezzini and Rebeggiani (eds.), *Classics Scholars, Between Theory and Practice*, 2013.

Altertumswissenschaft, publishing in Leipzig the fragments of Empedocles and Parmenides.² This praiseworthy undertaking was followed by Peyron's pioneering editions of Cicero's Turin palimpsests³ and of the Theodosian Codex,⁴ which, in a way, were the prelude to his first two major papyrological works, published immediately after the founding of the then Regio Museo di Antichità ed Egizio di Torino (1824). I am referring to the *Saggio di studi sopra papiri, codici copti, ed uno stele trilingue del Regio Museo Egiziano*⁵ and, above all, to the volume *Papyri graeci [sic] Regii Taurinensis Musei Aegyptii*,⁶ which is undoubtedly one of the works of the nineteenth century that has contributed most to the knowledge of documentary papyri of the Ptolemaic age.⁷

Before outlining the figure of Peyron as a coptologist, I would like to emphasize that he never reduced papyrology to a discipline fragmented within itself or separated from the other fields of the study of antiquity, such as Egyptology, Greek literature, Graeco-Roman law, classical philology, and the history of ancient philosophy. This aspect of his scholarly method only partly depends on the times in which it was conceived and applied. I think it is more correct to ascribe it to Peyron's peculiar intellectual inclination, which, in my opinion, remains an 'epistemological' value to be transmitted to the new generations and to be safeguarded also at the level of academic teaching, especially in a world like ours, which tends instead to push us all towards a dogmatic (and very often sterile) sectorization of knowledge.

2. PEYRON AND THE COPTIC LANGUAGE

As is well known, Peyron was the author of a lexicon and a grammar of the Coptic language.⁸ Obviously, his interest in this field of study matured

² Peyron, *Empedoclis et Parmenidis Fragmenta*, 1810.

³ Peyron, *M. Tulli Ciceronis Orationum*, 1824. See Bona, in Curto (ed.), *Giornata di studio in onore di Amedeo Peyron*, 1998, p. 16.

⁴ Peyron, AAT, s. II, 28 (1824). See Moscati, in Curto (ed.), *Giornata di studio in onore di Amedeo Peyron*, 1998.

⁵ Peyron, AAT, s. II, 29 (1825).

⁶ Peyron, *Papyri graeci Regii Taurinensis Musei Aegyptii*, 1826–1827.

⁷ See Montevocchi, in Curto (ed.), *Giornata di studio in onore di Amedeo Peyron*, 1998.

⁸ Peyron, *Lexicon Linguae Copticae*, 1835; Peyron, *Grammatica Linguae Copticae*, 1841. Despite the almost two centuries that separate us from these two works, their value was also appreciated by illustrious exponents of contemporary Orientalistic Studies, such as Polotsky, the famous author of the *Études de syntaxe copte*, 1944.

thanks to his teacher and mentor. Indeed, Valperga di Caluso had already published the volume *Litteraturae Copticae Rudimentum* in 1783, curiously under the pseudonym of “Didymus Taurinensis”.⁹ This last work represents an important stage in a tradition of studies that had led to the rediscovery of the Coptic language since the Renaissance, and that only managed to give a deeper and more conscious theoretical impulse to its scholarly efforts with Jean-François Champollion.

Peyron’s early interest in Coptic had nothing to do with Coptic literature, for which he had no great affection and to which he never attributed any great “aesthetic” value.¹⁰ In the *Praefatio* to his *Lexicon Linguae Copticae*,¹¹ Peyron wrote that he had been a student of the Coptic language since his youth and that he had immediately perceived what Champollion would later demonstrate scientifically, namely that Coptic contained the key to deciphering hieroglyphics (“multum esse praesidii in Coptico sermone ad hieroglyphica aenigmata solvenda”).¹² It was this belief that prompted Peyron’s pioneering decision to arrange the entries in his *Lexicon* not in alphabetical order, but according to their consonant roots. As he himself recalled in *Note e giudizi delle proprie opere*,¹³ this work, which took him ten years to complete, soon overcame the initial mistrust of the scholarly community of the time and managed to assert itself on the methodological level as well, highlighting the flaws and inaccuracies of Henry Tattam’s *Lexicon Aegyptiaco-Latinum*, published in Oxford in the same year as Peyron’s *Lexicon*.¹⁴

⁹ Valperga di Caluso, *Didymi Taurinensis Litteraturae Copticae Rudimentum*, 1783.

¹⁰ Peyron, *Lexicon Linguae Copticae*, 1835, p. VIII. On this point, see Donadoni, in Curto (ed.), *Giornata di studio in onore di Amedeo Peyron*, 1998, and Kasser, *ibid.*

¹¹ Peyron, *Lexicon Linguae Copticae*, 1835, p. VII.

¹² This methodological aspect is clearly described by Sclopis, *AAT* 5 (1869–1870), pp. 790–93.

¹³ Published posthumous by (B.) Peyron, *Per le nozze di Teresa Peyron – Melchior Pulciano*, 1879, p. 15.

¹⁴ Tattam, *Lexicon Aegyptiaco-Latinum*, 1835. The criticism of Tattam’s work does not imply that Peyron did not hold the English scholar in high esteem, since a letter to Niebuhr dated December 1, 1830 attests that he had begun to collaborate with Tattam on the drafting of a ‘Coptic bible.’ See Pesce, *Peyron e i suoi corrispondenti*, 1997, pp. 43–44, n. 98, and pp. 194–96, brief no. 109; on the epistolary Peyron-Niebuhr, also Bona, *Eikasmos* 7 (1996). It should also be noted that, despite the obvious limitations of Tattam’s lexicon, the alphabetical criterion he adopted was taken as a model by Parthey, *Vocabularium Coptico-Latinum et Latino-Copticum e Peyroni et Tattami Lexicis*, 1844. On this last point, see Buzi, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 17.

3. PEYRON AND THE COPTIC PAPYRI

But let us move on to the relationship between Amedeo Peyron's scholarly work and the Coptic papyri. It is well known that without Peyron, the Turin collection of Coptic codices would not have had the impetus and the immediate international resonance that it already had in the first half of the nineteenth century. But there is something else to emphasise, and it has to do with the history of the collection. Since detailed studies have already been devoted to this subject, I will be very brief. Despite the scarcity of written documentation, it is certain that the Coptic codices preserved in the Museo Egizio were sold in 1824 by Bernardino Drovetti, the French Consul General in Egypt, to Charles Felix of Sardinia, Duke of Savoy and sovereign of the state of Savoy from 1821 to 1831 (the year of his death).

The Coptic papyrus material acquired by Drovetti included about nineteen fragmentary codices dating from the late seventh or early eighth century CE, which, according to the thesis supported by Tito Orlandi and other scholars, came from the library of the cathedral of This (or Thinis), modern Girga. It should be noted, however, that some papyri did not enter the Museum's collection because they were given directly to Peyron by Drovetti. We are better informed about all this today than in the past. For example, there are two sheets of Coptic papyri preserved in the Museo Egizio with the label "Dono Peyron – 1983," because they were privately owned by Peyron during his lifetime and only donated to the Museo Egizio by his heirs in 1983. These literary manuscripts, now inventoried under Provv. 8591 and Provv. 8592, have recently been published by Hubert Kaufhold.¹⁵

But there are also other Coptic papyri that are now part of the "Fondo Peyron," which I will discuss shortly. Some letters and notes found in this collection prove that all these Coptic manuscripts were a direct gift from Drovetti to Peyron. As Paola Buzi rightly points out, "despite the fact that some of them are very late and others lack literary content, and, most importantly, none are relat-

¹⁵ Kaufhold, in Behlmer et al. (eds.), *Ägypten und der Christliche Orient*, 2018, pp. 153–61. It is to these pieces that Orlandi, *Augustinianum* 53 (2013), p. 501 refers when he writes: "Peyron had taken to his private residence some folios which he was studying, that they remained unknown to Rossi, and are now in the possession of the heirs. I myself have seen them only in a photograph: the information comes from a private interview with Prof. Andreas Wittenburg of Munich." See also Traversa, *Aegyptus* 31 (1951); Buzi, *EDAL* 5 (2015–2016); Buzi, *Adamantius* 24 (2018).

ed to manuscripts preserved in the Museo Egizio, they are extremely useful in demonstrating that the operations of Drovetti's agents were not limited only to the Thebaid".¹⁶

3.1 Peyron and Rossi's Edition of the Turin Coptic Codices

Francesco Rossi transcribed and published most of the Coptic religious material in the Turin collection between 1887 and 1892.¹⁷ Despite Robert Atkinson's negative opinion of Rossi's method and results,¹⁸ and some questionable typographical choices, it must be said that this monumental work was and remains of great use. Among other things, Rossi was lucky enough to be able to study the papyri when their state of conservation was better than it is today.¹⁹ It should also be remembered that Tito Orlandi has recently rehabilitated Rossi's work on a scholarly level, recalling that

*on the whole, Rossi's reproduction of the text (his readings) is accurate, and it is rare that we find him in error, especially if we consider the amount of material. It is true that the translations are not even to be taken into consideration, but this is a minor inconvenience for the coptologist; and Rossi shows only a more scarce knowledge of the Coptic literature than the average scholarship in his times.*²⁰

3.2 The Methodology Adopted by Peyron for Studying the Coptic Material in the Museo Egizio

It is important to emphasize that the project of publishing all this material was not originally conceived by Rossi, but by Peyron himself, who brought sheets of Coptic papyrus codices to his private residence for this very purpose. It was an ambitious project of intrinsic scholarly importance (following similar work carried out in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries on other

¹⁶ Buzi, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 10. See also *ibid.*, p. 11, where Buzi hypothesises that Drovetti gave Peyron the material that he considered less valuable economically and less interesting in terms of content.

¹⁷ Rossi, *I Papiri Copti del Museo Egizio di Torino*, 1887–1892.

¹⁸ Atkinson, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 3 (1893–1896). See also Orlandi, *Le Muséon* 87 (1974), pp. 118–20.

¹⁹ Buzi, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 18.

²⁰ Orlandi, *Augustinianum* 53 (2013), p. 503.

collections by Giovanni Luigi Mingarelli²¹ and Georg Zoëga²²), although in Peyron's view this work had its practical purpose in the preparation of his *Lexicon Linguae Copticae*. On the other hand, we have already mentioned Peyron's pioneering method for carrying out this work, based on the order of the roots of the lemmata rather than their alphabetical order. It may be useful to recall that in the last part of the preface to the *Lexicon*, Peyron did not deny the initial discouragement that the precarious state of the Turin codices had caused him, and the effort with which he had managed to classify and describe seven of them (there were actually eight) on a codicological level. Among other things, he wrote:

Moreover, my codex, which was constantly being unravelled by hand, fell to pieces, and the sheets inserted between the pages tore easily and flew away; I would therefore have to spend many months laboriously describing a badly damaged codex in its entirety in order to have a book that could be handled without danger. But what is the point of so much toil, so many journeys, so many risks? For then I would return home with a barren harvest; nor, on the other hand, did I foresee that I would be able to compile many entries [for my lexicon]. Certainly there is no Bashmuri codex in Oxford or Rome that has not seen the light of day; most are Memphitic, a few Sahidic. (...) For I confess that I would have liked to deal chiefly with Sahidic codices, since they use Greek words sparingly and have always given me something new; instead, I had seven Turin codices that seem to me similar to many of the Memphitic codices of Paris, and I had at my disposal Zoëga's catalogue] and others, so that I think I have thrown much light on the Theban dialect.²³

²¹ Mingarelli, *Ægyptorum codicum reliquiae Venetiis in Bibliotheca Naniiana asservatae*, 1785.

²² Zoëga, *Catalogus codicum Copticorum*, 1810.

²³ Peyron, *Lexicon Linguae Copticae*, 1835, p. XXI: "Praeterea codex meus assidua manu pervolutatus in frustra abibat, tum schedae inter pagellas insertae facile conturbabantur atque avolabant; codicem igitur male mulcatum novo multorum mensium taedio debuissem ex integro describere, ut liber existeret, quem citra periculum tractare possem. Quorsum vero tanta taedia, itinera, ac pericula pertinuissem? Ut domum redirem cum sterili messe; neque enim augurabar me multas voces esse collecturum. Et sane nullus Oxonii, aut Romae codex Bashmuri servatur, qui lucem non viderit; maximam partem Memphitici sunt, pauci Sahidici. (...) Codices Sahidicos, fateor enim, maxime percuperem, quippe qui parce utuntur graecis vocibus, et semper novi aliquid mihi obtulerunt; verum habui septem Taurinenses, qui mihi multorum Parisiensium Memphiticorum instar sunt, habui Zoëgam, aliosque, ut Thebanae dialecto multam lucem attulisse credam."

3.3 The (Partly Unpublished) Material by Amedeo Peyron in the “Fondo Peyron” Held in the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino

Let us now turn our attention to the “Fondo Peyron” held in the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino (BNUTO), in order to understand why the material it contains is so important for appreciating the figure of Amedeo Peyron and, indirectly, for enriching our knowledge of the Turin collection of Coptic papyri. First of all, it should be remembered that most of the ‘Fondo Peyron,’ as we know it today, was formed when, in December 1969, the BNUTO purchased the books and manuscripts that were part of the private libraries of Amedeo Peyron and his nephew, Bernardino Peyron.²⁴ The inventory of all this valuable material is due to Grazia Gallo, whose work dates back to 1997 and is presented in a type-written volume kept at the BNUTO with the shelf mark “MSS. BNUTO. Gallo.2”. In the introductory lines of the premise (p. 3), the author states:

Nel presente Inventario sono descritti i sedici manoscritti e le carte d'archivio di componenti della famiglia Peyron acquistati, insieme alla relativa biblioteca, alla fine del 1969 da Maria Clotilde De Rege di Donato vedova Peyron e figlie. Al momento dell'acquisto, tutto il materiale era conservato in una proprietà della famiglia a Cavour (TO).

In reality, Amedeo Peyron himself had already donated some of his manuscripts to the library, but unfortunately in 1904 a devastating fire destroyed the section of the library where the Greek and Oriental manuscripts were kept.²⁵ This was a great loss. Gallo also clarifies that the sixteen manuscripts that now exist in the “Fondo Peyron”, although originally kept with the ones in the archives, should be considered part of the Peyron family’s book collection. It should be noted, however, that one of these manuscripts is in Coptic-Arabic.

As can be seen from the index, the manuscripts, documents, and papyri belonging to Amedeo Peyron are only one part of the “Fondo Peyron,” albeit the most conspicuous (Mss. Peyron 29–227). This material, for the most part still

²⁴ Bona, in *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia*, 1984, I, p. 179.

²⁵ Orlandi, *Augustinianum* 53 (2013), p. 507 recalls that in Vol. I, fasc. 1, p. 8 of Rossi’s edition (i.e. before 1904) refers to the existence of other codices in the National Library in Turin that were destroyed in the fire.

unpublished,²⁶ is divided into four thematic sections, structured as shown in **Table 1**.

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. Carte personali | [Mss. Peyron 29–32] |
| 2. Scritti e ricerche | <p>a) Estratti e appunti bibliografici [Mss. Peyron 33–47]</p> <p>b) Filologia biblica, Accademia dei Teosebi e siriano, <u>Miscellanea di copto</u>, filologia neotestamentaria e controversia religiosa [Mss. Peyron 48–63]</p> <p>c) Iscrizioni latine celebrative [Mss. Peyron 64–65]</p> <p>d) Filologia e lingua greca [Mss. Peyron 66–92]</p> <p>e) Arabo [Mss. Peyron 93–96]</p> <p>f) Prosa sacra [Mss. Peyron 97–108]</p> <p>g) Lingua italiana [Mss. Peyron 109–114]</p> <p>h) Fenicio [Mss. Peyron 115–117]</p> <p>i) Manoscritti bobbiesi [Mss. Peyron 118–123]</p> <p>l) Storia sabauda [Mss. Peyron 124–128]</p> <p>m) <u>Egittologia e coptologia</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Papiri documentari e iscrizioni greco-egizi [Mss. Peyron 129–134, 160] - Papiri demotici [Mss. Peyron 135–138, 160] - Scrittura ieratica e geroglifica [Mss. Peyron 139–146, 160] - <u>Copto</u> [Mss. Peyron 147–159, 161] <p>n) Politica [Mss. Peyron 162–172, 203–204]</p> <p>o) Storia e istituzioni greche [Mss. Peyron 173–191, 204]</p> <p>p) <u>Filosofia</u> [Mss. Peyron 192–204]</p> <p>q) Versi satirici in dialetto piemontese [Mss. Peyron 205]</p> <p>r) Didattica dell'italiano [Mss. Peyron 206–209]</p> <p>s) Politica scolastica [Mss. Peyron 210–215]</p> <p>t) Matrimonio presso i Romani [Mss. Peyron 216]</p> <p>u) Esegese di salmi [Mss. Peyron 217–218]</p> |
| 3. Incarichi in istituzioni culturali | <p>a) Accademia delle scienze di Torino</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classe di scienze morali [Ms. Peyron 219] - Consiglio di amministrazione [Ms. Peyron 220] <p>b) Università di Torino e Magistrato della Riforma [Mss. Peyron 221–223]</p> |
| 4. Carteggio | <p>a) Minute di lettere [Mss. Peyron 224–225]</p> <p>b) Lettere di corrispondenti [Mss. Peyron 226–227]</p> |

Table 1 The thematic sections of “Fondo Peyron”.

²⁶ For example, see Peyron's “memo”, first published by Valerio, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, pp. 65–67.

3.4 “Egittologia e coptologia”

Within this picture, the great intellectual stature of Amedeo Peyron and the incredible variety of his interests stand out. As can be seen, there are at least two folders in the “Fondo Peyron” explicitly devoted to Coptic papyri and, as I will note shortly, they also contain some unpublished Coptic papyri. For obvious reasons, I will focus only briefly on the description of the material in the section entitled “Egittologia e coptologia.”

As the diagram above shows (sub *m*), the “Egittologia e coptologia” section of the “Fondo Peyron” contains documents relating to Peyron’s study of Greek and Demotic papyri, hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts, and the Coptic language. The first part of these sheets deals with Graeco-Egyptian documentary papyri and brings to light transcriptions and notes that would later be included in the aforementioned volume on the Greek material of the Museum (1826–1827).²⁷ However, it is difficult to study these papers separately, because the notes on Greek papyri are often mixed with those on hieroglyphs (cf. Ms. Peyron 143) and on the Coptic language (cf. Ms. Peyron 150).

In any case, as far as Coptic is concerned, it is interesting to recall that this part of the “Fondo Peyron” contains the original manuscript of the *Lexicon* and an incomplete draft, enriched with numerous notes, of the *Grammatica*.²⁸ The later research concerns the papyri and manuscripts that, as we have seen, Peyron received as a gift from Drovetti. Among the latter are the papyri contained in Ms. Peyron 154. This is a small but significant part of the collection, which deserves a brief description because it allows us to broaden our view of the ‘meta-papyrological’ purposes of the method adopted by Peyron for the study of the precious material at his disposal. Indeed, Ms. Peyron 154 contains the (autograph) transcriptions of Coptic magical texts:

- a. the transcription, with partial Italian translation and brief notes, of the treatise contained in Ms. a.IV.27 of the BNUTO;²⁹ this transcription is preceded by notes on the Coptic text of the *Ecclesiasticus* (*Book of Sirach*);

²⁷ Peyron, *Papyri graeci Regii Taurinensis Musei Aegyptii*, 1826–1827.

²⁸ As Gallo remarks (MSS.BNUTO.Gallo.2, pp. 38–39), “la documentazione comprende, oltre alla trascrizione di materiale torinese, anche quella di testi della Bibliothèque nationale, copiati durante un viaggio a Parigi nel 1836, e le note marginali presenti nell’esemplare a stampa del *Lexicon*, conservato nella raccolta libraria, e nel catalogo dei manoscritti Borgiani, curato da G. Zoëga”.

²⁹ This manuscript was also given to Drovetti by Peyron after 1841. The text was first published by F. Rossi in 1894 and then by A.M. Kropp in 1931 – reprinted in Dosoo and Preininger, *Papyri Copticae Magicae*, 2023, pp. 172–219, no. 12.

- b. the transcription, with Italian translation, of a fragment of a magical prayer to be recited using an opium-based medicine;³⁰
- c. excerpts, with partial Italian translation, from the *Prayer and Exorcism* of Gregory of Nazianzus from Ms. J.385 (d'Anastasy 9) from the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden.³¹

In addition to these texts, other fragments of Coptic manuscripts on paper (Bible) and on papyrus are also recorded in this section. The latter are two sheets from Ms. 7119 of the Museo Egizio, two passages from a magical text, and an unidentified fragment, which I will discuss in a moment.³²

3.5 The (Magic) Coptic Material and Peyron's "Gnosticism"

Peyron's scholarly approach to this Coptic material is not that of a papyrologist in the strict sense. His method of investigation combines papyrological interests with literary, historical-religious, and above all historical-philosophical ones. This is an aspect that almost no one has yet explored, perhaps because, apart from the aforementioned editions of the Presocratics, Peyron's great philosophical depth is revealed precisely in the numerous still unpublished pages of the "Fondo Peyron." As we have seen, thirteen folders are devoted to philosophical topics.³³ Among these folders, we should mention here Ms. Peyron 196, which is presented in two incomplete drafts with relative notes³⁴ and is entirely devoted to 'Gnosticism' (this is the title that Peyron himself gave to these sheets).

This folder is a concrete example of how Peyron applied an 'interdisciplinary'

³⁰ To the best of my knowledge, this fragment is still unpublished. Under his translation of the text Peyron adds a useful annotation (Ms. Peyron 154/2, fol. 5r): "Il Papiro contiene una preghiera per impetrare la salute e la liberazione da un male, che intaccava le | viscere. Alla preghiera andava unito un medicamento, composto d'una mistura, in cui entravano vari ingredienti, come di Opio, e di Opio (*sic*), ed il supplicante la teneva nella sua destra. | Questo, ed altri simili Papiri ch'io viddi, appartengono a Egiziani più o meno Gnostici, i quali miscevano i nomi cabbalistici | ebraici coi egiziani, ed alla preghiera congiungevano i farmaci dei Gentili. | La lingua è sciaurata, scorretta". Erasures are not reproduced in this transcription.

³¹ This text was published by Pleyte and Boeser in 1897 and reprinted in Dosoo and Preininger, *Papyri Copticae Magicae*, 2023, pp. 109–71, no. 11.

³² MSS.BNUTO.Gallo.2, p. 39.

³³ Mss. Peyron 192–204.

³⁴ Cf. MSS.BNUTO.Gallo.2, p. 125, where it is recalled that the folder can be dated to 1852 on the basis of the references to Drovetti and also the testimony of Ascoli, *ASNP*, s. II, 28 (1959), p. 181. Gallo adds that this material "riutilizza appunti databili 1832 e convocazione della seduta 5 mag. 1833 dell'Accademia delle scienze", also referring to Mss. Peyron 193/2 and 197.

method in his research, and did so openly as a ‘philosopher,’ albeit a Christian one. Indeed, these pages begin with the following words (fol. 1r):

Nella storia del [sic] Gnosticismo dominano alcuni fatti, quanto certi per la loro storica verità, altrettanto importanti e degni d’essere meditati da un filosofo massimamente cristiano. | Io li esporrò come necessaria prefazione ai problemi, che quindi derivano, e la cui prolusione | sarà l’argomento della mia lezione. Nel primo secolo dell’era cristiana il Gnosticismo prese a fiorire con tal vigore, e divi|dendosi in fatti innumerevoli così largamente si andò ampliando, che nei due secoli consecutivi l’orbe intero era gnostico. Quest’è il primo fatto, che giova brevemente illustrare. | Etc.

Indeed, Peyron’s main concern is to understand the relationship between Gnostic and apostolic doctrines (fol. 2r). To this end, he sketches a real history of ancient “Gnosticism,” casting a discerning eye on Egypt, Judea, Syria, Phoenicia, India, and of course Greece.³⁵ As far as Greece is concerned, he regards “Gnosticism” not as a late-antique phenomenon, but rather as a cultural climate or, more specifically, as the product of a philosophical trend already inaugurated by Xenophanes and the currents that rejected the Homeric and Hesiodic myths or tried to interpret them in an allegorical way (ὑπόνοια).³⁶ According to Peyron, in the ancient world philosophy was based on reason and religion on authority; Gnosticism, however, added a third element of an irrational character, which he called “imaginative” (fol. 1 v): “La Gnosi pertanto è la cognizione delle dottrine | altissime, e la facoltà di spiegare i simboli materiali, che le (scil. quelle dottrine) esprimono in modo allegorico.”³⁷

But what is even more interesting is that on several sheets, evidently to cor-

³⁵ K. Dosoo has suggested to me that, in this broad definition of Gnosticism, Peyron could have been influenced by Matter, *Histoire critique du gnosticisme*, 1828. This idea deserves to be investigated and possibly confirmed in the near future.

³⁶ On fol. 3v, Thagenes of Rhegium and other ‘allegorists’ are explicitly mentioned. Fol. 17 collects some doxographical information on Xenophanes, which testifies to his particular interest in this Presocratic philosopher, who appears elsewhere in the folder with reference to ὑπόνοια. On fol. 39 it is worthwhile mentioning the exhortation to use allegory from a Christian point of view through the mention of St Paul (Cor. 2, 3.6). For the analogies and differences between Greeks and Jews in the use of the allegorical method, cf. foll. 13r and 61r.

³⁷ Such a definition explains the reason why Peyron, in fol. 26r, defines Gnosticism “una credenza individuale”.

roborate this reading of ancient “Gnosticism”, Peyron refers to unpublished Coptic sheets that he had received as a gift from Drovetti.³⁸ In particular, he explicitly mentions the Coptic magical texts preserved in Ms. Peyron 154, which I have already described. But there are other Coptic magical papyri in the still unpublished material of the “Fondo Peyron.” These include Ms. Peyron 158, two passages of a magical text preserved under glass with writing on both the *recto* and on the *verso*, and Ms. Peyron 159, an unidentified papyrus fragment, also under glass, but bearing writing only on the *recto*.³⁹ One of the most important things to emerge from the reconstruction work is that the new pieces do not belong to the Coptic collection of the Museo Egizio’s This library.⁴⁰ These pieces immediately caught my attention. I was lucky enough to be able to report them immediately to my colleagues Nathan Carlig and Korshi Dosoo. After their enthusiastic feedback, I provided them with high-resolution images of these papyrus texts, and they began working on an *editio princeps* on June 2023.⁴¹

In addition to being a valuable discovery for Coptic papyrology, the example of the texts preserved in Mss. Peyron 158–159 also indirectly enriches Peyron’s still unpublished pages on “Gnosticism,” reflecting his interest in the cultural, religious, and historical-philosophical aspects of this current of thought. Not only that, but more generally they allow us to appreciate the admirable method of a man who had both the technical skill and the open-mindedness to transcend the disciplinary boundaries that all too often today prevent dialogue between specialist disciplines and, as far as papyrology is concerned, frustrate any attempt to affirm (and put into practice) its substantial unity.

³⁸ Buzi, *Adamantius* 24 (2018), p. 43 refers, for example, to the unnumbered and undated sheet (fol. 1r in the sequence in which this material is ordered: cf. *supra*) where we read: “Un consimile papiro, donatomi | dal cav. Drovetti, contiene pure una preghiera indiritta al Padre onnipotente, alla mente | nascosta del padre, al primogenito di tutti gli eoni, quindi agli angeli, etc.”.

³⁹ Cf. MSS.BNUTO.Gallo.2, p. 106.

⁴⁰ See the Appendix below.

⁴¹ New multispectral and hyperspectral images of the two papyri were taken at my request by Paolo Giagheddu, thanks to the kind assistance of my colleague Giuseppe Dardanella (Director of the Digital Imaging Laboratory for Art History at the Department of Historical Studies, University of Turin), on May 8 2024. I would like to thank both of them, as well as Fabio Uliana, who has been so kind in recent months to allow the temporary transfer of the papyri from the Sala Manoscritti to the BNUTO photographic laboratory.

APPENDIX: A DESCRIPTION OF MSS. PEYRON 158–159

In addition to the two papyrus leaves published by Paola Buzi in 2018 (Ms. Peyron 157),⁴² the Peyron archive at the BNUTO holds two unpublished Coptic papyri inventoried as Mss. Peyron 158–159 [Figs. 1–6]. While a full publication is planned for next year, we offer here an initial presentation of both manuscripts, based on autopsies carried out by Nathan Carlig alone on September 7, 2023, and together with Korshi Dosoo from March 26 to 30, 2024.

(1) Ms. Peyron 158 is a papyrus manuscript in the form of a vertical roll (*rotulus*) written on both sides by two different hands, likely dating to the seventh or eighth century CE. It consists of two adjacent fragments, inventoried as c. 1 and c. 2, kept in two different glass frames. Fr. c. 1 measures 17.3 cm in width and 26.2 cm in height, while fr. c. 2 measures 17.4 cm in width and 15.9 cm in height, so that the *rotulus* can be reconstructed as 17.4 cm in width and 42.1 cm in height. Both sides preserve forty-six lines of writing.

Although it is almost complete, the papyrus is damaged and in a poor state of preservation. Fr. c. 1, the upper part, has suffered more than fr. c. 2. On the side written on the vertical fibres (↓), many fibres have been lost, especially along the lateral edges, leading to the loss of text at the beginning and end of many lines. On both sides, the papyrus is darker in colour in a 6.5 cm wide strip running from top to bottom along the right edge (↓). The papyrus is complete at the bottom, where the blank space following the text on the vertical fibres is 12 cm high, while it is only 2 cm on the side with the horizontal fibres. At the top, no margin is visible, and the text is not complete, indicating a loss of writing surface that we estimate to be around 0.5 cm high.

The restoration of the papyrus must have taken place before 1997, since it is mentioned in Gallo's description of that year. This consisted in applying a thin mesh on both sides to keep the fibres in place. We would also attribute to this restoration the joining of two small fragments to the upper parts of fr. c. 1 and fr. c. 2, respectively fr. c. 1bis and fr. c. 2bis. These are certainly misplaced and will have to be removed and placed separately. It is probable, though not entirely certain, that they do belong to Ms. Peyron 158, or, less likely, to Ms. Peyron 159.

⁴² Buzi, *Adamantius* 24 (2018), pp. 50–57 (Appendix: Edition of the leaves belonging to Codex IX preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Torino [BNT, Fondo Peyron, «Amedeo», ms. 157]).



Fig. 1 Ms. Peyron 158 (c. 1 recto). © Ministero della Cultura, BNUTO. Any reproduction is strictly forbidden.



Fig. 2 Ms. Peyron 158 (c. 1 verso). © Ministero della Cultura, BNUTO. Any reproduction is strictly forbidden.



Fig. 3 Mss. Peyron 158 (c. 2 recto) + 159 recto. © Ministero della Cultura, BNUTO. Any reproduction is strictly forbidden.



Fig. 4 Mss. Peyron 158 (c. 2 verso) + 159 verso. © Ministero della Cultura, BNUTO. Any reproduction is strictly forbidden.

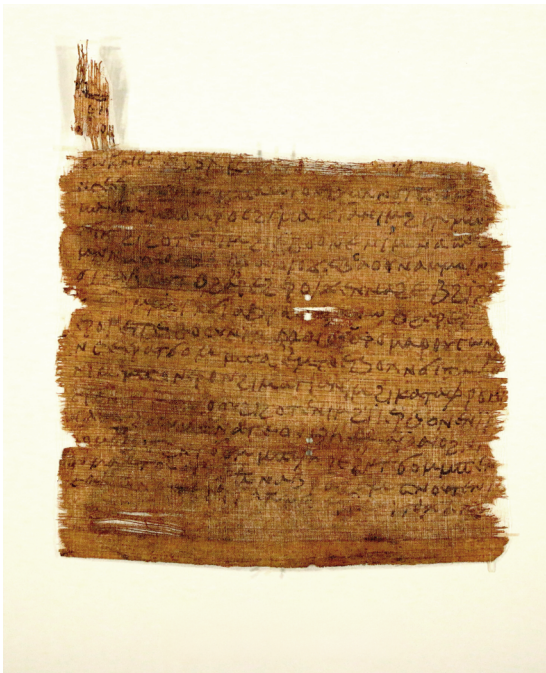


Fig. 5 Ms. Peyron 158 (c. 2 recto). © Ministero della Cultura, BNUTO. Any reproduction is strictly forbidden.

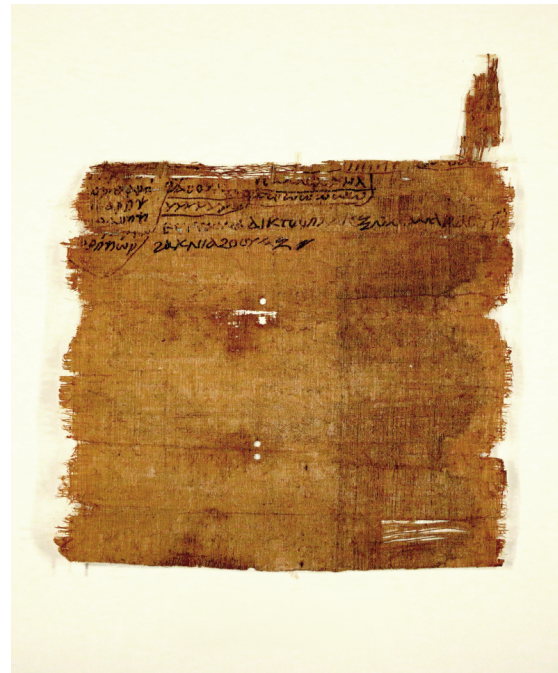


Fig. 6 Ms. Peyron 158 (c. 2 verso). © Ministero della Cultura, BNUTO. Any reproduction is strictly forbidden.

Both fragments preserve only their vertical fibres (the layer of horizontal fibres has been lost) and show some faint traces of writing. Fr. c. 1bis measures 2.8 cm in both width and height and has been pasted onto the left corner of the upper edge of fr. c. 1. Fr. c. 2bis is 1.6 cm wide and 4.2 cm high. A few letters can be identified, such as *ε* and *ο*, as well as what appear to be parallel lines. The shape of the fragment, the traces of writing, and the fact that it only shows the vertical fibres would suggest that this fragment belongs to the lower right part of the vertical fibres of Ms. Peyron 159, fr. c. 1, which has lost its layer of vertical fibres at this point, but no perfect match can be found.

There appears to be no *kollesis* in Ms. Peyron 159, but we do find thirteen horizontal creases. Six of these are more marked and are responsible for the loss of fibres and for breaking the papyrus into two fragments. These are separated by about 6.5 cm at the top and 4.6 cm at the bottom, with the distance decreasing progressively. Two worm holes are visible approximately at the centre and on either side of each of the six more pronounced horizontal folds (except for the one corresponding to the break). The remaining horizontal creases are less visible, almost equidistant from the main folds and slightly above the centre. The better preservation of the bottom of the papyrus compared to the top, and of the side with the horizontal fibres compared to that with the vertical fibres, suggests that the *rotulus* was rolled from the bottom to the top with the horizontal fibres on the inside.

The writing on the vertical fibres is majuscule and rather clumsy, with considerable variation in letter height, sometimes upright, sometimes sloping to the right. The hand shows no cursivity or ligatures, although some letters touch. It contains a magical recipe which begins with a series of word formations (triangles with their tips up)⁴³ and *charaktêres*, before providing the text of a prayer attributed to Seth, son of Adam, and then ending with a series of brief ritual instructions. Below this is what may be a second text, consisting of a series of voces *magicae*, including the names of angels (such as Raphael and Salaphouel) and sequences of Greek letters in groups of seven, followed by further ritual instructions; it is possible that this final text is intended to be used with the previous, longer ritual. In terms of content, the prayer is a magical formula of a rare type, in which the speaker asks to be granted a beautiful singing voice.

⁴³ On such letter formations, see e.g. Faraone, *Vanishing Acts*, 2012.

Similar prayers for this purpose are known from four other Coptic manuscripts, three published and one unpublished.⁴⁴ This text, while damaged, shows the use of similar language and tropes to the other examples; the speaker asks for “a throat without roughness” (ΟΥΩΒΩΒΕ ΝΑΤΓΑΘΕ = ⁵ΟΥΩΟΥΩΒΕ ΝΑΤΧΑΧΕ),⁴⁵ and is to write the prayer on an “alabaster tablet” (ΠΛΑΞ ΝΗΛΑΒΑΣΤΡΟΝ).⁴⁶

The side with the horizontal fibres is written in a smaller, sloping majuscule that shows some influence of seventh/eighth-century Greek cursive, with μ, π, and η taking their minuscule forms. β is oversized and tends to break the bilinearity by descending below the notional line. The text is another, anonymous, magical prayer for a similar purpose, asking for a beautiful voice which is exalted (ΧΙΘΕ), for grace, glory, and honour before “the race of Adam and the children of Zoe” (ΠΚΕΝΟΣ ΤΗΡΕΒ ΝΑΤΑΜ ΜΗ ΝΕΩΕΡΕ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΝΩΗ),⁴⁷ and for protection from “every evil spirit, every magical (attack), every demon, every fear, and every evil eye” (ΠΝΕΟΥΜΑ ΝΙΜ ΜΠΟΝΕΡΟΣ ΖΪ ΜΑΚΙΑ ΝΙΜ ΖΙ ΤΕΜΩΝ ΝΙΜ ΖΪ ΖΟΤΕ ΝΙΜ ΖΙ ΕΡΒΟΟΝΕ ΝΙΜ), ending with an invocation of the power of the Trinity. This side contains no ritual instructions, but an intriguing mention of an “egg” may link it to the ritual instructions accompanying the prayer on the other side, which lists the “egg (of) the day” (ϞΟΟΥΖΕ ΠΕΖΟΥ) as one of the ingredients to be used in the ritual.⁴⁸

As this brief description suggests, these texts display many interesting religious, ritual, and linguistic characteristics; certain orthographic features suggest a Middle Egyptian dialectal influence.

(2) Ms. Peyron 159 [Figs. 7–8] consists of a single papyrus fragment measuring 8.8 cm in width and 16.8 cm in height. It is mutilated at the top, at the bottom, and on the right. It preserves the beginning of eleven lines of text written on one side only, across the fibres (↓). The other side was left blank. The letters are ca. 5 mm high and the interlinear space ca. 6 mm, so that a sample of 5 lines

⁴⁴ These are PCM I 17 front ll. 1–35, back ll. 1–28 (TM 98065; 8th century CE); BL Or 6794 (Kropp, *Ausgewählte koptische Zaubertexte*, 1931 [TM 100017; 6th/7th century CE?] no. E; KYP M306); BKU I 8 ll. 1–39 (TM 63027; 8th century CE?); P.Palau Rib. inv. 137 (unpublished; TM 874261).

⁴⁵ Cf. BL Or 6794: ll. ΗΓΓ ΝΑΪ ΟΥΓΡΟΟΥ... ΝΑΤΧΑΧΕ (“...and may he give to me a voice... without roughness”; ll. 29–30); ΤΙ ΝΟΥΓΛΟΘ ΕΤΑΩΟΥΟΥΩΒΕ (“give sweetness to my throat”; ll. 48–49).

⁴⁶ Cf. BL Or 6794: ΘΑΚΣΖΑΪ ΝΗΦΛΑΚΤ/ ... ΕΥΠΛΑΞ ΝΗΛΑΒΑΣΤΡΟΝ (“you write these phylacteries on an alabaster tablet”; ll. 56–57).

⁴⁷ On this phrase, see the discussion in Dosoo, *JCoptStud* 20 (2018), pp. 20–21.

⁴⁸ For this term, cf. Chassinat, *Un papyrus médical copte*, pp. 287–88, in which the “egg of the day” (ϞΟΟΥΖΕ ΠΤΕ ΠΕΖΟΥ) is to be drunk with other ingredients by someone with a disease affecting their testicles.

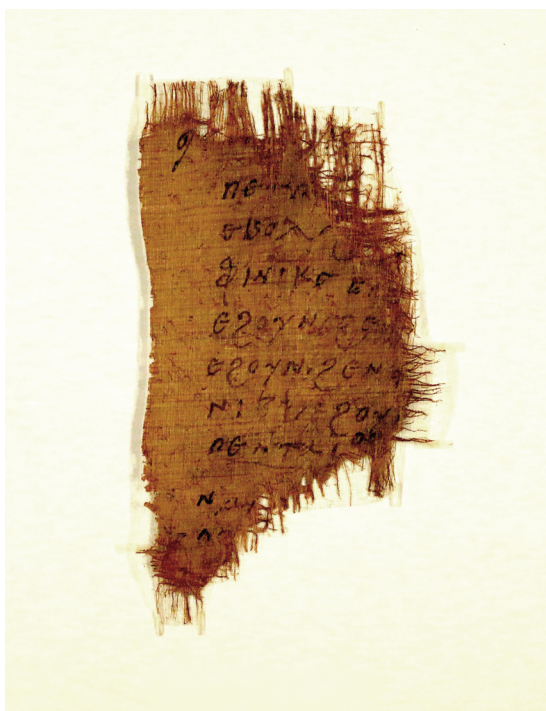


Fig. 7 Ms. Peyron 159 recto. © Ministero della Cultura, BNUTO. Any reproduction is strictly forbidden.



Fig. 8 Ms. Peyron 159 verso. © Ministero della Cultura, BNUTO. Any reproduction is strictly forbidden.

is ca. 6.5 cm high. The left lateral margin is preserved, 2.5 cm in width, and contains a sign whose function is not yet clear (perhaps an elaborate *diple*). No *kollesis* is visible. The script is a right-sloping majuscule without ligatures.

Unlike Ms. Peyron 158, the text of Ms. Peyron 159 shows no connection with magic. The main detail that may allow its identification is the presence, at least once, of the word $\phi\iota\iota\kappa\epsilon$ (l. $\phi\iota\iota\kappa\epsilon$) in l. 4. Another occurrence of the word is perhaps to be found at the beginning of l. 7, which can be read either as $-\text{N}\text{I}\text{Z}$, or $\text{N}\text{I}\text{B}\text{I}$ “all, every” (F; NIM S). The word clearly comes from Gr. $\phi\omicron\iota\nu\iota\xi$, which can designate either a Phoenician or a Carthaginian, an object related to Phoenicia, certain trees such as the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera* L.) or the dwarf palm (*Chamaerops humilis* L.) and their derivatives (perfume, etc.), a fish, a hoof disease, or, of course, the famous bird which rises from its own ashes. This last meaning might suggest that we are dealing here with a text related to the *Physiologus*, which we know circulated in Coptic,⁴⁹ or with a literary text which drew upon it, such as the homily *In Mariam Virginem* by Theophilus of Alexandria (CC 0396),

⁴⁹ Suciú, in Macé et Gippert (eds.), *The Multilingual Physiologus*, 2021.

which contains a description of the phoenix based on that of the *Physiologus*.⁵⁰ We may also mention the existence of a Homeric hero named Φοῖνιξ, a teacher of Achilles and part of the delegation sent to him along with Ajax and Odysseus in *Iliad* IX,⁵¹ as an alternative, though less likely, possibility.

⁵⁰ Van den Broek, *The Myth of the Phoenix*, 1972, pp. 33–47.

⁵¹ The translation of Homeric texts into Coptic is only fragmentarily documented: 1) quotation of *Od.*, I, 48-59; IV, 260-263, 558 in *Exegesis de anima* (CC 0668; Nag Hammadi Codex II, p. 136 l. 29 – p. 137 l. 5; Nag Hammadi, fourth century CE), 2) *Scholia Minora* to *Il.*, II, 70-82 of P.Oxy. LXXXIV 5414 (MP³ 1170.11; Oxyrhynchus, sixth century CE), and 3) some entries of the Greek-Coptic glossary P.Lond.Lit. 188 (MP³ 354.11; Aphrodite, third quarter of the sixth century CE) from the archive of Dioscorus of Aphrodite (on the spelling of the name of this village, see Fournet, *REG*, 105 [1992]); some items are taken directly from the Homeric poems or even from P.Aphrod.Lit. II (MP³ 1170), the copy of the *Scholia Minora* to the *Iliad* kept in Dioscorus' library (see Carlig and Ricciardetto, in Boud'hors et al. [eds.], *Études coptes XVIII*, Louvain, in press).

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THE COPTIC PAPYRI IN THE MUSEO EGIZIO: AN OVERVIEW

Susanne Töpfer

1. INTRODUCTION

Most of the papyri in the Museo Egizio were acquired in 1824 by King Charles Felix of Sardinia from Bernardino Drovetti (1776–1852), then French consul in Egypt, whose agents obtained the bulk of his antiquities in Thebes. The rest of the papyrus collection originates from early twentieth-century excavations conducted by the Turin Museum at Gebelein, Asyut, and Western Thebes, under the direction of Ernesto Schiaparelli (1856–1928) and Giulio Farina (1889–1947).¹ Many of the Coptic manuscripts have attracted scholarly attention over the past two centuries, as evidenced by numerous publications. Even in recent years, many of these texts have been re-edited in light of new research. They are now also featured in several online databases and palaeographic studies.

The aim of this essay is to provide an overview of the Coptic manuscripts already known, but also to present briefly the yet unpublished fragments with Coptic texts from the Turin Papyrus Collection. Furthermore, the article aims to clarify the different designations of Turin papyri in older publications and their actual inventory numbers in the Museo Egizio: both older and more recent publications in print or online usually refer to the designation of a papyrus as given in the *editio princeps*, but these are mostly short designations of the authors, not the museum's internal numbering. This very often leads to confusion in the identification of manuscripts if no illustrations are included in the publication – which was usually the case. Coptic scholars usually cite the designations of the first publications; from a museum and curatorial point of view, however, it is essential to give the correct inventory number, as this not only serves as documentation, but also provides information about the acquisition of the papyri.

¹ For an overview of the acquisition of the New Kingdom Hieratic material in the Museo Egizio cf. Demichelis et al., in *Crossing Boundaries* (ed.), *New Kingdom Hieratic Collections*, 2024; for the Demotic papyri cf. Töpfer, in Miniaci et al. (eds.), *The Materiality of Ancient Egypt*, 2024.

The Museo Egizio in Turin has five main series of mutually exclusive inventory numbers for the papyri quoted here:

1. Cat. (also C.), or “Catalogo”, i.e. the numbers assigned to the museum’s objects until their publication in the catalogue by Fabretti, Rossi and Lanzone (1882 and 1888), notably including the Drovetti collection;
2. Suppl. (also S.), i.e. “Supplemento”, for objects acquired after the publication of the catalogue by Fabretti, Rossi and Lanzone 1882, largely from Schiaparelli’s purchases and excavations (1901–1920), but also including objects acquired earlier during his tenure as director of the Museo Egizio, or before it but after the publication of the catalogue by Fabretti, Rossi and Lanzone 1882;
3. Prov. (also P.), for “Provvisorio” (provisional), assigned to objects since the 1950s whose original inventory number is no longer known;
4. CGT for “Catalogo Generale Torino”, as additional numbering system has also been in use since 1965; it was originally assigned to objects when they were published but has been employed more recently only for the inventorying of papyri (including unpublished ones);²
5. CP for “Cartelline Papiri”, i.e. the numbers assigned to 210 cardboard folders containing thousands of formerly undocumented (now documented) papyrus fragments from the Drovetti collection and the early twentieth century excavations, that were in the museum but had no inventory tag.

2. THE COPTIC CODICES OF THE MUSEO EGIZIO (CAT. AND CGT)

A catalogue of the antiquities from the Drovetti collection preserved in the Museo Egizio, compiled by Ariodante Fabretti (1816–1894), Francesco Rossi (1827–1912) and Ridolfo Lanzone (1834–1907), was published in 1882 and 1888, with a section by Rossi on the papyri.³ In the first volume, Rossi listed manuscripts based on their script and textual genre and assigned inventory numbers to papyri with Egyptian (hieratic and cursive-hieroglyphs), Demotic and Greek texts (Cat. 1768–2160). The Coptic papyri and one parchment man-

² The numbered series starting with CGT 54000 was assigned to the hieratic papyri, while the CGT 55000s were assigned to the figured papyri, and the CGT 56000s were assigned to the funerary papyri; the Coptic codices received the collective CGT 63000; see Curto, *Storia del Museo Egizio*, 1976.

³ Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo di Torino*, 1882, pp. 207–86.

uscript (Cat. 7117–7129) were listed separately from papyri with Egyptian, Demotic and Greek script in the second volume under the section “Monumenti copti e greco-egizi”.⁴

Amedeo Peyron (1785–1870) was the first to catalogue and study the Coptic codices Cat. 7117–7126 (CGT 63000) soon after their arrival in Turin, mainly in preparation for his *Grammatica linguae copticae*, published in 1841.⁵ Although he copied only some of the Coptic papyri, he published a first overview with some transcriptions in 1825, followed by an edition of the Greek papyri from the Drovetti collection in 1827.⁶ Peyron’s notes on and classification of the Coptic papyri were used later by Eugène Revillout (1843–1913), who was interested in the historical and apocryphal texts,⁷ and by Francesco Rossi for his foundational publication of the Coptic codices in two volumes in 1887 and 1892.⁸ Tito Orlandi visited the Museo Egizio for the first time between 1971 and 1973 with the purpose of not only studying the Coptic codices, but also of ordering the glasses according to the original codicological units, which were partly lost when the folios were mounted in the past. Orlandi focused his work mainly on the materiality and contextualisation of the codices, published in 1974 and 2013, which is crucial for the understanding of those manuscripts. However, he published several texts himself between 1966 and 1984.⁹ After Orlandi’s reevaluation and reclassification, several new studies focused on the Turin codices, primarily in the form of articles. Following Rossi’s transcription and translation of the Turin manuscripts, only one monographic edition of a codex was published: Heike Behlmer’s 1996 edition of *De iudicio supremo*, attributed to Shenoute of Atriipe (Cat. 7124 = CGT 63000/004).¹⁰

A critical study of the 817 glasses of Coptic codices in Turin was recently edited by Orlandi together with Paola Buzi in 2023.¹¹ This volume is divided into

⁴ Fabretti et al., *Regio Museo di Torino*, 1888, pp. 309–11.

⁵ Peyron, *Grammatica linguae copticae*, 1841.

⁶ Peyron, *Papyri Graeci*, 1827.

⁷ Revillout, *JournAs* 1 (1873); Revillout, *AMSL* 3/4 (1877), pp. 444–94; Revillout, *RdÉ* 3 (1885), pp. 27–37.

⁸ Rossi, *I papiri copti*, 1887–1892. For the systematization and analysis of Rossi’s publication, see Orlandi, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, pp. 30–36.

⁹ Orlandi, *Muséon* 87 (1974), pp. 115–27; Orlandi and Vandoni, *Vangelo di Nicodemo*, 1966; Orlandi, *Testi copti* 1, 1968; Orlandi and Campagnano, *Vite di monaci*, 1984; Orlandi, *Augustinianum* 53 (2013), pp. 501–30.

¹⁰ Behlmer, *Schenute*, 1996.

¹¹ Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023.

two sections. The first section provides an overview of the history of studies on the twenty-one Coptic papyrus manuscripts from This, tracing their journey to Turin, their literary content, and their significance within the broader context of Coptic literary production (Paola Buzi and Tito Orlandi). While the primary focus is on the papyrus codices from This (Cat. 7118-7126), dating to the seventh-eighth centuries (Nathan Carlig), the volume also includes a chapter dedicated to a parchment codex (Cat. 7117) of unknown provenance with biblical content, which Drovetti acquired in Egypt (Francesco Valerio). For the first time, the book-bindings (Provv. 5055, Provv. 5058-5063, Provv. 6204-6206, Provv. 6266-6267), likely detached from the papyrus codices, are analysed in detail (Eliana Dal Sasso). The second section offers a thorough codicological description of both the book-bindings (Eliana Dal Sasso) and the papyrus codices. In some cases, this analysis has led to a reconsideration of the composition of the codicological units (Nathan Carlig). Carlig has compiled a comprehensive, analytical catalogue of the Turin papyrus codices, identifying individual leaves and fragments, providing brief descriptions of each, and referencing existing editions.¹² This straightforward overview serves as a foundation for ongoing and future research. The PATHs project¹³ has adopted a holistic approach, considering all aspects of the library, starting with an in-depth analysis of the codicological features, which are essential for any further advancements. The results of this approach are freely accessible through the PATHs database and are included in the open-access repository and collaborative platform, the “Turin Papyrus Online Platform” (TPOP).

| | TPOP | Turin Inv. Nos. | PATHs ID | TM |
|----------|------------|--|------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Doc ID 664 | Cat.7120/001 Cat.7122/001 CGT63000/001 | CLM 45 – GIOV.AA | TM 10817 |
| 2 | Doc ID 665 | CGT63000/002 Cat.7118 | CLM 46 – GIOV.AB | TM 108413 |

¹² Carlig, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, pp.136–201; see also *ibid.*, pp. 19–25.

¹³ PATHs – Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths. An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature. Literary Texts in Their Original Context. Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage: → <http://paths.uniroma1.it> (last access 15/10/2024).

| | TPOP | Turin Inv. Nos | PATHs ID | TM |
|-----------|-------------|---|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3 | Doc ID 666 | Cat.7122/002 Prov.8586 CGT63000/003 Cat.7120/002 | CLM 47 – GIOV.AC | TM 108414 |
| 4 | Doc ID 667 | Cat.7124 CGT63000/004 | CLM 48 – GIOV.AD | TM 108415 |
| 5 | Doc ID 668 | CGT63000/005 Cat.7121 | CLM 49 – GIOV.AE | TM 108416 |
| 6 | Doc ID 669 | Cat.7123/001 CGT63000/006 | CLM 50 – GIOV.AF | TM 108362 |
| 7 | Doc ID 670 | CGT63000/007 Prov.8587 | CLM 51 – GIOV.AG | TM 108417 |
| 8 | Doc ID 671 | Cat.7122/003 | CLM 52 – GIOV.AH | TM 108418 |
| 9 | Doc ID 672 | Cat.7126 | CLM 53 – GIOV.AI | TM 108419 |
| 10 | Doc ID 673 | Cat.7119 CGT63000/009 Prov.8591 Prov.8592 | CLM 54 – GIOV.AJ | TM 108363 |
| 11 | Doc ID 674 | CGT63000/010 | CLM 55 – GIOV.AK | TM 108366 |
| 12 | Doc ID 675 | CGT63000/011 | CLM 56 – GIOV.AL | TM 108420 |
| 13 | Doc ID 676 | Cat.7125 CGT63000/012 | CLM 57 – GIOV.AM | TM 108393 |
| 14 | Doc ID 677 | CGT63000/013 | CLM 58 – GIOV.AN | TM 108421 |
| 15 | Doc ID 678 | CGT63000/014 | CLM 59 – GIOV.AO | TM 108364 |
| 16 | Doc ID 679 | CGT63000/015 | CLM 60 – GIOV.AP | TM 108422 |
| 17 | Doc ID 680 | CGT63000/016 | CLM 61 – GIOV.AQ | TM 108423 |
| 18 | Doc ID 681 | CGT63000/017 | CLM 62 – GIOV.AR | TM 108424 |
| 19 | Doc ID 682 | Cat.7123/002 | CLM 6564 – GIOV.AF | TM 108362 |
| 20 | Doc ID 683 | CGT63000/008 | CLM 6559 – GIOV.AI | – |
| 21 | Doc ID 685 | Cat.7117 | CLM 1131 – GIOV.AS | TM 107951 TM 108562 TM 108563 |

Table 1 Overview of stable identifiers of the Coptic literary codices (TPOP Doc ID, → <https://collezionepapiri.museoegizio.it/>), Turin inventory numbers, unique identifier of Coptic literary manuscripts (CLM, → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu>) and Trismegistos Database (TM, → <https://www.trismegistos.org/>).

There are still hundreds of smaller papyrus and parchment fragments containing Coptic literary/biblical texts that may either belong to these codices or to other, as yet unidentified works. These fragments are part of the numerous

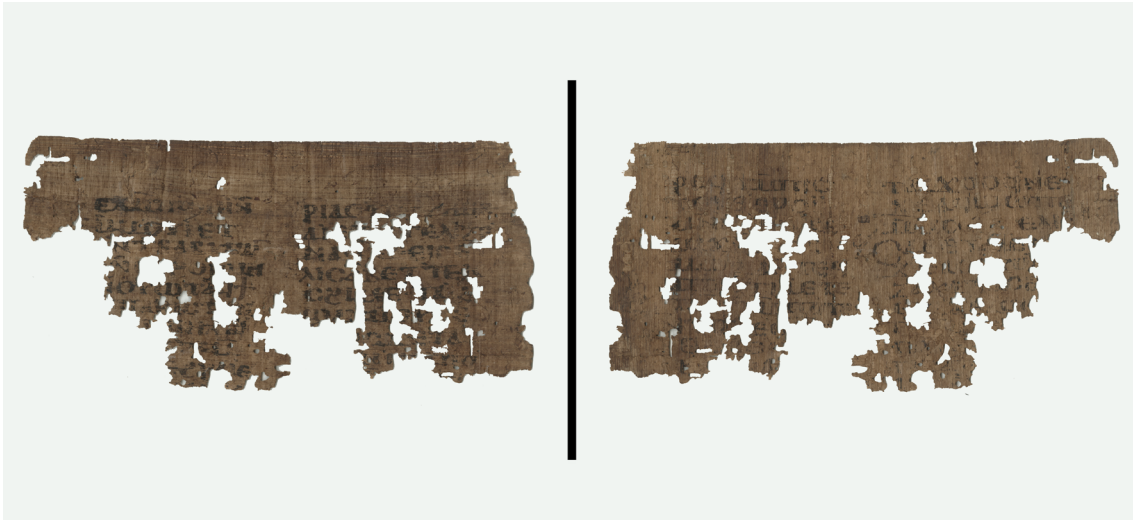


Fig. 1 CP 184/352 recto (left) and verso (right). Scan by Museo Egizio.

undocumented pieces that were previously stored in cardboard folders labelled “CP” (Cartelline Papiri). They have now been restored, consolidated between glass frames, scanned and are partly uploaded to TPOP. Nathan Carlig has already identified three bigger fragments (CP 184/352 **[Fig. 1]**, CP 184/353, CP 184/354) as belonging to the Coptic codices from This.

3. UNPUBLISHED COPTIC FRAGMENTS FROM EXCAVATIONS (CP AND SUPPL.)

The details surrounding the original acquisition of hundreds of CP fragments – labelled with sub-numbers under CP 172, 173, 177, 180, 182, 183, 184, and 191 – remain uncertain. These fragments may have arrived either as part of the Drovetti Collection in 1824 or during the early twentieth century excavations. The identification of three fragments (CP 184/352, CP 184/353, CP 184/354; TPOP Obj IDs 484209-484211, **[Fig. 2]**) containing Coptic text on both sides, written in an uncial hand, as belonging to the Coptic codices from This (see above) confirms that at least some of the fragments were acquired by Bernardino Drovetti. However, the identification of Coptic texts on the remaining hundreds of papyrus and parchment fragments from codices is still pending.

The Coptic fragments were stored alongside Demotic, Greek, and Arabic fragments. Notably, certain Arabic documentary texts reference Ashmunein (Hermopo-

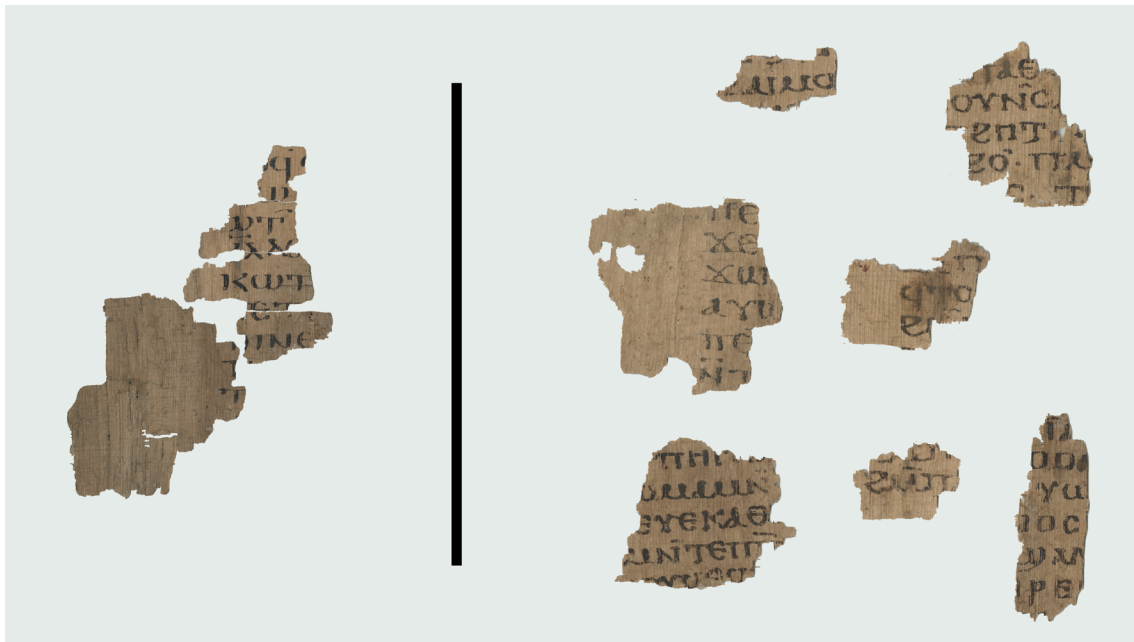


Fig. 2 Joined fragments Suppl. 9485/162-166 (left); fragments in layer 3 of CP 183 (right). Scan by Museo by Egizio.

lis) (e.g. CP173/A4_1), while some of the Demotic fragments stored with the Coptic ones are linked to a business archive from the temple of Hathor at Pathyris (Gebelein) (e.g. CP180/Layers 2-5).¹⁴ The Italian Archaeological Mission (M.A.I.) conducted excavations at Ashmunein¹⁵ and Gebelein under Ernesto Schiaparelli in the early twentieth century,¹⁶ making it likely that at least some of the Coptic together with Arabic, and Demotic fragments arrived in Turin as part of these excavations. Several fragments with literary/biblical Coptic texts in CP183 (SN1, Layers 1-3; **Fig. 2** [right]) have a certain similarity in terms of their state of preservation, the writing material, and handwritings to fragments found during Ernesto Schiaparelli's excavations in Assiut between 1906 and 1912, labelled with inventory number Suppl. 9485 (e.g. Suppl. 9485/162-166, **Fig. 2** [left], Suppl. 9485/145+149). However, as Nathan Carlig

¹⁴ The information on the Arabic fragments is based on the study of Petra Sijpesteijn (Leiden). Whereas the Demotic fragments from Gebelein were first identified by Giuseppe Botti and later by Juan José Jaime Aloisio Archidona Ramírez (Leiden); cf. Töpfer, in Miniaci et al. (eds.), *The Materiality of Ancient Egypt*, 2024, p. 171.

¹⁵ This is supported by the fact that several Coptic codices in other collections, such as London BL Or 7594, can be attributed to Hermopolis; see Trismegistos TM 107763 (→ <https://www.trismegistos.org/text/107763>) and PATHs CLM 1371 (→ <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts/1371>) with more information. Other papyrus and parchment codices from Hermopolis are listed under PATHs CLM 719, 1067, 1068, 1371, 1703, 4722, 6768, 6786.

¹⁶ Moiso, *Storia del Museo Egizio*, 2022, pp. 66–105; Del Vesco and Moiso (eds.), *Missione Egitto*, 2017, pp. 149–75.

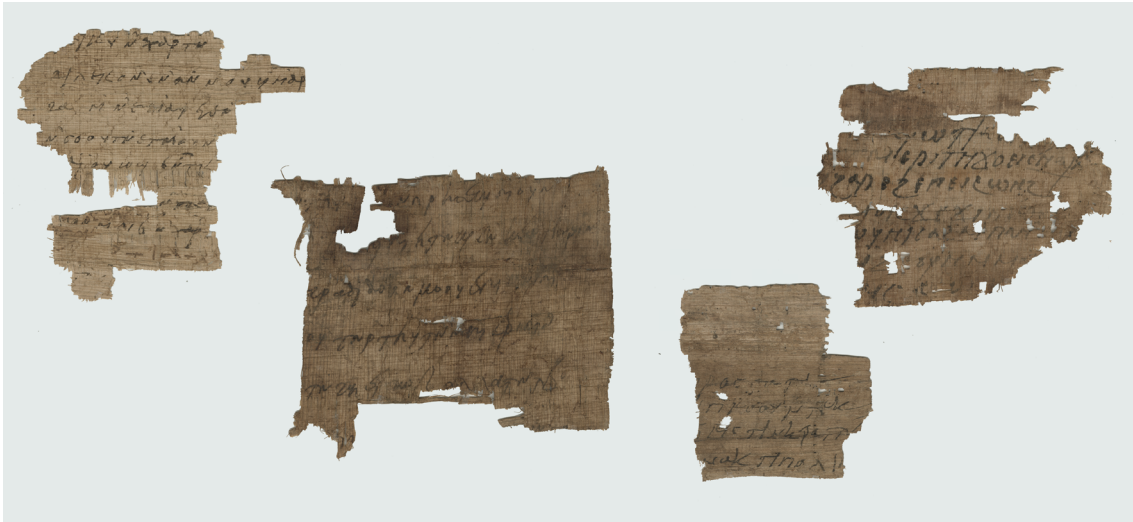


Fig. 3 Fragments of private letters, CP183/173. Scan by Museo Egizio.

pointed out to me, these are quite ordinary features in Coptic book production of the seventh and eighth century, for which we also have examples among Theban manuscripts.¹⁷ The folder CP183 contains, in addition to copies of religious texts on papyrus and parchment, several fragments of private letters (see e.g. CP183/173, **[Fig. 3]**).

The box labelled with inventory number Suppl. 9485 contains 193 fragments of papyrus, parchment, and paper, featuring texts in Coptic, Greek, and Arabic (all uploaded in TPOP), all mixed together with pieces of calamus and grains of wheat. Over 130 fragments contain documentary and literary/religious texts (as mentioned above). Particularly noteworthy is the text on parchment fragment Suppl. 9485/179, identified by Frank Feder and Alin Suciu as containing the conclusion of 2 Thessalonians 3:18 and the beginning of 1 Timothy 1:1–2. The manuscript can be dated to the sixth or seventh century. As Alin Suciu has pointed out, one particularly noteworthy feature of this copy is that it is not written in the Sahidic dialect, but in Bohairic – apparently an early variety of it.

Fragments Suppl. 9485/183+186 **[Fig. 4]** are part of a protocol. As suggested by Nathan Carlig, it might be a late Byzantine protocol, even though its state of preservation is quite poor to be sure. However, Carlig is more certain that the fragments assembled in CP191 SN **[Fig. 5]** belong to the group of late Byzantine

¹⁷ See Boud'hors, in Brakke and Davis (eds.), *From Gnostics to Monastics*, 2017.



Fig. 4 Fragments Suppl. 9485/183+186 recto and verso, part of a protocol. Scan Museo by Egizio.



Fig. 5 Fragments CP191 SN, part of a protocol (position to each other uncertain). Scan by Museo Egizio.



Fig. 6 Details of Suppl. 2200/003, illustrated papyrus with figures and floral motifs (preparatory drawing for *tabula*). Photo by Nicola Dell'Aquila/Museo Egizio.

protocols with five or six lines, roughly datable to the second half of the sixth or early seventh century.¹⁸

Catalogued under the designation Suppl. 2200/002-006 are five papyrus fragments bearing illustrations, originating from Schiaparelli's 1903 excavations at Ashmunein. These five illustrated papyrus fragments, datable to the Late Roman-early Byzantine period (fourth–seventh century), constitute a rare and significant corpus of design material related to textile production in Late Antique Egypt. Rendered in polychrome or in monochrome inks with occasional white-grey highlights, the drawings feature alternating figural and vegetal motifs arranged within structured formats – medallions, bands, and framed squares – closely aligned with the compositional schemes of embroidered textile elements such as *tabulae*, *clavi*, and *orbiculi*. Fragments 003–006 can be interpreted as preparatory drawings, functioning as visual templates in the manu-

¹⁸ See examples such as P.Cair. Masp. II 67151 (TM 18905) or P.BL Or 5001 (TM 107789). On the typology of Byzantine protocols, see Diethart et al., *Tyche* 9 (1994), pp. 30–35 and Delattre, in Frösen et al. (eds.), *Proceedings*, 2007, pp. 215–20.

facturing process of tunic decorations [Fig. 6]. As recent scholarship has shown, such drawings reveal a fluid and transferable visual lexicon circulating across media and craft practices.¹⁹ Collectively, these fragments illuminate the operative role of drawing within Late Antique artisan workshops, underscoring the interdependence of artistic conception and technical execution in the visual culture of the eastern Mediterranean.

Many of the unpublished Suppl. and CP fragments containing Coptic religious and documentary texts as well as drawings are exceptional and significant pieces. Some of these fragments can likely be joined together, potentially forming new textual units or completing manuscripts already identified in the Turin collection. A more detailed and systematic study of these fragments is essential to fully understand their content, context, and potential interconnections.

4. COPTIC PAPYRI WITH PROVISIONAL INVENTORY NUMBERS (PROVV.)

The details surrounding the original acquisition of approximately fourty manuscripts and papyrus fragments containing Coptic texts, labelled as “Provisorio” remain unknown. As for the CP numbers, these documents may have entered the collection either as part of the Drovetti acquisition in 1824 or sometime during the twentieth century. Four inventory numbers (Provv. 8586, Provv. 8587, Provv. 8591, and Provv. 8592) can be attributed to three Coptic codices from This, which arrived with the Drovetti Collection. Likewise, the book bindings Provv. 5055, Provv. 5058–5063, Provv. 6204–6206, and Provv. 6266–6267 are also part of the This library (see above). Additionally, the PAThs team has associated several other fragments from the *Provv.* material as possibly belonging to the Coptic codices from This²⁰ – for example: Provv. 5066,²¹ Provv. 5075, Provv. 6208, Provv. 6267, and Provv. 8584.

¹⁹ See Stauffer, *Antike Musterblätter*, 2008; Elsner, *The Art Bulletin* 102(3) (2020).

²⁰ Cf. Buzi, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, pp. 9–10, n. 11.

²¹ Tiny fragments of papyri with remnants of what are probably literary texts. Some fragments are blank. Portions of a leather cover and binding cord are also preserved (Provv. 5066/3–4). These items were mixed together haphazardly with tubular faience beads, some of which are still threaded onto the cord (Provv. 5066/2). Among the materials, a modern papyrus roll (?) was also identified, consisting of a core of cords later wrapped in papyrus. The same box contains numerous small paper and transparent plastic envelopes holding papyrus fibers and other fragments. Restoration is planned for 2026.

The content, palaeography, and linguistic features of some documentary manuscripts with Provv. numbers suggest a provenance from Middle Egypt. Specifically, the two letters Provv. 6268 and Provv. 6269 are attributed by the authors (→ Amory and Iacono) to the bilingual archive of Dioscorus of Aphrodito from the sixth century.²² This attribution supports the hypothesis that the two manuscripts were acquired in the twentieth century, as the settlement of Kom Ashkaw – built over the ancient site of Aphrodito – was only discovered in 1905.²³ It is highly likely that Ernesto Schiaparelli either acquired the papyri on the antiquities market or discovered them himself during his excavations at Qau el-Kebir in 1905 or 1906. The two letters Provv. 8577 (→ Matta and Theilemann) and Provv. 8540 (→ Laver and Kennedy) are attributed by the editors to the region around Ashmunein (Hermopolis), based on palaeographical and linguistic features. Schiaparelli and his team worked at this site from 1903 to 1904 and again in 1909 (see above). Other texts are assigned by the editors to the area of Thebes (Provv. 8582; → Nakshara and Scharfenberger), Kellis (Dakhleh Oasis) (Provv. 8547; → Schrauder) and the White Monastery at Sohag (Provv. 8546; → Wormstädt, Atanassova and Richter). Fragment Provv. 8548 contains a model subscription to vows delivered at the church of St John the Baptist in Thinis (→ Schenke), the site from which the Coptic codices from the Drovetti collection are coming (see above).

| TPOP | Turin Inv. No. | Content |
|---------------|--------------------|---|
| Obj ID 698 | Provv. 5066 | Several fragments with Coptic literary texts |
| Obj ID 677 | Provv. 5067 | Several fragments with Coptic text |
| Obj ID 616 | Provv. 5075 | Seven fragments with Coptic text (codex) |
| Obj ID 608 | Provv. 5099 | Several fragile fragments with Coptic text |
| Obj ID 575 | Provv. 5110 | Several fragments with Coptic text |
| Obj ID 523 | Provv. 6208 | Several fragments from a Coptic text (codex?) |
| Obj ID 484168 | Provv. 6267 | Several fragments from a Coptic text (codex?) |
| Obj ID 679 | Provv. 6268 | Coptic letter |

²² → TM Author id: 257 (Dioscorus of Aphrodito); → TM Arch id: 72; → TM Geo 237.

²³ See with references Ruffini, *A Prosopography of Byzantine Aphrodito*, 2011.

| TPOP | Turin Inv. No. | Content |
|---------------|--------------------|---|
| Obj ID 483927 | Provv. 6269 | Coptic letter |
| Obj ID 680 | Provv. 8539 | Coptic religious text |
| Obj ID 681 | Provv. 8540 | Coptic letter |
| Obj ID 682 | Provv. 8541 | Coptic letter |
| Obj ID 683 | Provv. 8542 | Coptic letter |
| Obj ID 684 | Provv. 8543 | Coptic letter |
| Obj ID 685 | Provv. 8544 | Coptic documentary text |
| Obj ID 483928 | Provv. 8545 | Coptic religious text |
| Obj ID 483929 | Provv. 8546 | Coptic religious text |
| Obj ID 686 | Provv. 8547 | Coptic letter and documentary text |
| Obj ID 483886 | Provv. 8548 | Model subscription to vows |
| Obj ID 690 | Provv. 8571 | Coptic documentary texts |
| Obj ID 691 | Provv. 8572 | Coptic documentary text |
| Obj ID 692 | Provv. 8573 | Coptic and Greek legal documents |
| Obj ID 693 | Provv. 8576 | Coptic letter |
| Obj ID 694 | Provv. 8577 | Coptic letter |
| Obj ID 695 | Provv. 8578 | Coptic letter |
| Obj ID 483936 | Provv. 8579 | Stripes of a Coptic codex cover |
| Obj ID 483937 | Provv. 8580 | Stripes of a Coptic codex cover |
| Obj ID 483935 | Provv. 8581 | Stripes of a Coptic codex cover |
| Obj ID 696 | Provv. 8582 | Various tiny fragments with Coptic text |
| Obj ID 697 | Provv. 8583 | Coptic letter |
| Obj ID 483931 | Provv. 8584 | Several fragments with Coptic text (codex) |
| Obj ID 483930 | Provv. 8585 | Coptic letter |
| Obj ID 483869 | Provv. 8586 | Part of Coptic Codex Doc ID 666 |
| Obj ID 483872 | Provv. 8587 | Part of Coptic Codex Doc ID 670 |
| Obj ID 483932 | Provv. 8588 | Several fragments with Coptic text (codex?) |
| Obj ID 483938 | Provv. 8590 | Several fragments with Coptic text (codex?) |
| Obj ID 483866 | Provv. 8591 | Part of Coptic Codex Doc ID 673 |
| Obj ID 483865 | Provv. 8592 | Part of Coptic Codex Doc ID 673 |
| Obj ID 483933 | Provv. 8598 | Coptic letters |
| Obj ID 483934 | Provv. 8600 | Coptic letter |

Table 2 Overview of the coptic papyri with provisional inventory numbers (Provv.). The numbers highlighted in bold are edited in this volume.

5. COPTIC TEXTS AMONG GREEK FRAGMENTS (T.GR.)

In the papyrus storeroom, there are forty papyri (T.Gr. 001–040) and one parchment fragment (T.Gr. 101), all categorized under the inventory label “T.Gr.”. No other objects in the Museo Egizio are registered under this type, and no documentation explaining its meaning has been preserved. However, since the papyri contain primarily Greek documentary texts and were catalogued according to Peyron’s system as P.Taur. 27–66, it is highly likely that “T.Gr.” stands for “Testo Greco” (Greek text) or “Torino Greco” (Greek Turin). Although we have no concrete documentation regarding the acquisition of the T.Gr. fragments, it is probable that at least some of them originated from the Drovetti Collection. This is further supported by the contribution from → Berkes and Vanthieghem concerning T.Gr. 36 and T.Gr. 37. While most fragments are labelled as Greek texts, some are bilingual, and the parchment fragment contains a Coptic religious text.

| TPOP | Turin Inv. No. | Description |
|---------------|--------------------------|--|
| Obj ID 483825 | T.Gr. 4/002 = Prov. 6293 | Recto: Demotic text Verso: Greek text |
| Obj ID 483844 | T.Gr. 40 | Recto: Coptic letter Verso: Greek account |
| Obj ID 483926 | T.Gr. 101 | Recto and Verso: Coptic religious text |

Table 3 Overview of the Greek fragments.

Most of the T.Gr. fragments remain unpublished, with the exception of those included in this volume (T.Gr. 36, 37, and T.Gr. 40) and T.Gr. 1 (= TPOP Doc ID 660), a Greek copy of Septuagint, Psalm 01.1. For some fragments, it remains unclear whether the texts are written in Greek or Coptic due to the poor preservation of the cursive script, the presence of numerous diacritics, or the fact that only a few characters have survived.

6. SUMMARY

The paper presents an extensive overview of the Coptic manuscripts and fragments preserved at the Museo Egizio in Turin, highlighting their provenance, in-

ventory categorization, and state of scholarship. Despite decades of research on major Coptic codices – especially those from the Drovetti collection and the This library – a considerable portion of the material remains unpublished and unstudied, particularly the hundreds of papyrus and parchment fragments stored under provisional or CP (Cartelline Papiri) inventory numbers. These fragments include both literary and documentary texts, some potentially belonging to known codices, while others may constitute previously unidentified works.

The digitization and classification efforts through platforms like TPOP and PATHs have paved the way for systematic study, but the identification, reassembly, and contextualization of these fragments remain a significant task for future scholarship. The paper emphasizes the importance of continuing this work to fully understand the collection's historical and cultural value.

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LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE DE THIS ET LA PRODUCTION LIBRAIRE COPTE DANS L'ANTIQUITÉ TARDIVE : BILAN ET PERSPECTIVES*

Nathan Carlig

1. INTRODUCTION

Le fonds des manuscrits coptes sur papyrus également connu sous le nom de « Bibliothèque de This », d'après sa provenance probable, la ville de This, en Haute-Égypte, actuelle Ġirġā,¹ se compose actuellement de centaines de feuillets et de fragments de papyrus conservés au Museo Egizio de Turin dans 820 cadres de verre inventoriés CGT 63000, I-XVII, suivi du numéro de verre et, éventuellement, du fragment (817 verres), et CP 184 A33-35 (352-354) (3 verres).² À ceux-ci s'ajoutent deux feuillets conservés à la Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria de Turin inventoriés Ms. Peyron Amedeo 157.³ Ils sont datés des VII^e/VIII^e siècles.⁴ À la suite du réexamen effectué dans le cadre du projet ERC « PATHs »,⁵ les feuillets et fragments ont pu être attribués à 21 *codices* désormais identifiés au moyen d'une notice « Coptic Literary Manuscript » (CLM) dans l'*Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature* : ce sont

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¹ L'établissement de la provenance se fonde exclusivement sur les informations tirées de deux souscriptions appartenant au fonds, mais qu'il n'est pas possible de relier à un manuscrit en particulier. Sur ce point, voir *infra*, p. 77. Voir aussi Buzi, *Adamantius* 24 (2018), p. 42 et Buzi, dans Buzi et Orlandi (éd.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 11-12.

² Repérés parmi des fragments non identifiés et restaurés en mars 2024, les fragments ont été autopsiés par mes soins le 26 mars 2024 et seront publiés prochainement.

³ Les deux feuillets ont été publiés pour la première fois par Buzi, *Adamantius* 24 (2018), p. 43-45 et 50-57.

⁴ Sur la datation de la bibliothèque, voir Buzi, dans Buzi et Orlandi (éd.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 12-13.

⁵ ERC Advanced Grant (2015) n. 687567 « PATHs – Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature. Literary Texts in Their Geographical Context: Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage », Sapienza Università di Roma (P.I.: Paola Buzi).

CLM 45-62, 6558, 6559 et 6564.⁶ Ces 21 manuscrits contiennent au moins 39 œuvres littéraires coptes répertoriées dans la *Clavis Patrum Copticorum* ou *Clavis Coptica* (CC).⁷ La bibliothèque de This serait l'exemple le plus tardif d'une bibliothèque exclusivement composée de manuscrits de papyrus.

Dès leur arrivée à Turin en 1824,⁸ les manuscrits ont suscité l'intérêt d'Amedeo Peyron (1785-1870), qui, le premier, tenta de reconstruire les *codices* à partir des feuillets et fragments épars et tira parti de la richesse textuelle afin d'alimenter son *Lexicon Linguae Copticae* publié en 1835.⁹ Cette première étape a ouvert la voie à 200 ans de recherches sur la bibliothèque de This, qui se sont développées selon deux approches.

La première approche, dite « globale », consiste à étudier le fonds dans son ensemble et prévoit le classement des feuillets et des fragments, leur attribution à des manuscrits en vue de leur reconstruction et l'étude des textes, afin d'identifier les contextes de production et d'utilisation des manuscrits ainsi que les conditions et les étapes de formation de cette bibliothèque. À la suite des travaux d'A. Peyron sur lesquels il se fonde, Fr. Rossi a publié, à quelques dizaines de fragments et feuillets près, l'intégralité des textes de la bibliothèque de This entre 1884 et 1893.¹⁰ Quoique critiquée dès sa publication¹¹ et ne répondant plus aux critères actuels d'une édition, cette entreprise monumentale reste, à ce jour, la seule édition globale de la bibliothèque et la seule de certains des textes qui y sont contenus. Alors que Fr. Rossi ne s'était intéressé qu'aux textes, T. Orlandi contribua au classement plus précis des feuillets et fragments et à une reconstruction des *codices* plus fine que celle proposée par A. Peyron. Dès 1974, il identifia dix-sept *codices*, qu'il numérotait en chiffres romains, de I à XVII, et qu'il décrivit brièvement du point de vue matériel et textuel.¹² Affinant

⁶ Accessibles gratuitement en ligne à l'adresse → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts> (dernière consultation le 1^{er} juillet 2024).

⁷ Accessibles gratuitement en ligne à l'adresse → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/works>, ainsi que sur le site web du *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari*, à l'adresse → http://www.cmcl.it/~cmcl/chiam_clavis.html (dernière consultation le 1^{er} juillet 2024). See also → Töpfer.

⁸ Sur les conditions d'achat et d'arrivée des manuscrits à Turin et au Museo Egizio, voir Buzi, *Adamantius* 24 (2018), p. 39-45 et Buzi, dans Buzi et Orlandi (éd.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 9-11.

⁹ Peyron, *Lexicon*, 1835.

¹⁰ Rossi, *I papiri copti*, Vol. 2, 1887-1892 et Rossi, *Atti Lincei* 5 (1893).

¹¹ Atkinson, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 3 (1893-1896) et von Lemm, *Kleine Koptische Studien*, 1972 et *Koptische Miscellen*, 1972.

¹² Orlandi, *Muséon* 87 (1974).

ses résultats, il a finalement établi, en 2013, une liste de dix-huit *codices*, identifiés selon le système en vigueur dans le *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari*, au moyen des lettres « GIOV » suivies d'un coefficient de deux lettres allant de AA à AR.¹³ Dans le cadre du projet ERC « PATHs », un examen à nouveaux frais de la bibliothèque de This a été effectué entre 2017 et 2019. En 2023, la publication du volume *The Coptic Codices of the Museo Egizio, Turin. Historical, Literary and Codicological Features*, sous la direction de P. Buzi et T. Orlandi,¹⁴ a pour la première fois proposé un inventaire raisonné du fonds et la description des vingt-et-un *codices* identifiés,¹⁵ ainsi qu'une étude innovante des restes de reliures, qui appartiendraient aux *codices* de la bibliothèque de This.¹⁶

L'autre approche, dite « spécifique », vise à fournir l'édition d'un manuscrit ou d'un texte en particulier conservé dans la bibliothèque de This, ou à en effectuer une collation dans le cadre d'une édition critique. C'est à cette approche qu'appartiennent, par exemple, les travaux d'E. Revillout sur les *Actes* du concile de Nicée (CC 0019 et 0021),¹⁷ ceux de L.Th. Lefort sur l'homélie *De sancta genitrice dei Maria* d'Athanase d'Alexandrie (CC 0050),¹⁸ ceux de T. Orlandi sur plusieurs textes du fonds,¹⁹ sans oublier la magistrale édition du *De iudicio supremo* de Chénouté (CC 0367) par H. Behlmer.²⁰ Dans le cadre d'éditions critiques de certaines œuvres, le texte copte conservé dans le manuscrit de Turin a été collationné, comme c'est notamment le cas de l'homélie chrysostomienne *De Davide et Saule III*, par F.P. Barone²¹ et de l'homélie *In Crucem* de Théophile d'Alexandrie (CC 0395), par A. Suci.²² De la même manière, le codex CLM 58, qui contient les *Canons* du Pseudo-Basile (CC 0090), est collationné en vue de l'édition critique du texte que prépare A. Camplani.²³

¹³ Orlandi, *Augustinianum* 53 (2013).

¹⁴ Buzi et Orlandi (éd.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023.

¹⁵ Carlig, « Codicological Description » et « Catalogue », dans Buzi et Orlandi (éd.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023.

¹⁶ Dal Sasso, « Bookbindings » et « Catalogue », dans Buzi et Orlandi (éd.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023.

¹⁷ Revillout, *Le Concile de Nicée*, 1881-1899.

¹⁸ Lefort, *Muséon* 71 (1958).

¹⁹ Par exemple : Orlandi, *Testi copti*, 1968 ; Orlandi, dans Melaerts (éd.), *Papyri*, 2000 ; Orlandi, *Cirillo di Alessandria*, s.d.

²⁰ Behlmer, *Schenute*, 1996.

²¹ Barone, *OCP* 75 (2009).

²² Suci, *ZAC* 16 (2012).

²³ Camplani et Contardi, dans Barone et al. (éd.), *Philologie*, 2017 et Camplani et Contardi, *Adamantius* 24 (2018).

Si l'édition à nouveaux frais de nombreux textes transmis dans la bibliothèque de This est un *desideratum* de la communauté scientifique internationale, les progrès récents obtenus grâce à l'approche globale, spécialement dans le cadre du projet « PATHs », permettent de formuler un certain nombre de conclusions préliminaires et d'ouvrir des pistes de recherches futures susceptibles d'éclairer d'un jour nouveau les conditions de formation et d'évolution de la bibliothèque de This. Celles-ci s'appuient sur l'analyse d'aspects matériels de la bibliothèque, tels que les formats libraires et la fabrication du support d'écriture, le contenu des manuscrits, la typologie des titres et des colophons, les écritures et les dispositifs de mise en page.

2. FORMATS ET FABRICATION DES CODICES

Si l'on se limite aux dix-sept *codices* dont le format est conservé intégralement ou restitué avec un haut degré de certitude,²⁴ on constate que tous les manuscrits de la bibliothèque présentent un format semblable, expliquant qu'aucune des reliures conservées ne peut être attribuée avec certitude à un codex plutôt qu'à un autre. Ce format se caractérise par la forme rectangulaire des feuillets qui mesurent entre 20 à 22,5 cm de large et 30 à 32 cm de haut.

Si le format des *codices* est très semblable, le procédé de fabrication ne l'est pas tout autant. Comme on le sait, les *codices* de papyrus étaient fabriqués à partir de rouleaux de papyrus vierges, un produit de papeterie²⁵ constitué de morceaux de papyrus (κολλήματα) juxtaposés les uns à la suite des autres et légèrement superposés créant des jointures (κολλήσεις) verticales entre chaque morceau. On peut observer de telles jointures dans les *codices* CLM 45, 47, 52, 53, 55, 58, 59, 61 et 6558. Ce rouleau vierge est ensuite découpé en feuilles, qui sont superposées puis pliées en deux, de sorte à former un cahier composé de quatre feuilles pliées (un quaternion), soit huit feuillets, soit seize pages. La multiplication des cahiers permet d'augmenter la capacité du codex. À la hauteur du codex, 30 à 32

²⁴ Un léger degré d'incertitude demeure, causé par la variation qui peut exister dans les dimensions des marges des pages, d'une part, et par les éventuelles usures du codex dues à son utilisation, voire à un rognage dans l'Antiquité, d'autre part.

²⁵ Sur le concept de rouleau comme produit de papeterie, à distinguer du produit de librairie, voir Blanchard, dans Maniaci et Munafò (éd.), *Ancient and Medieval Book*, I, 1993, p. 15.

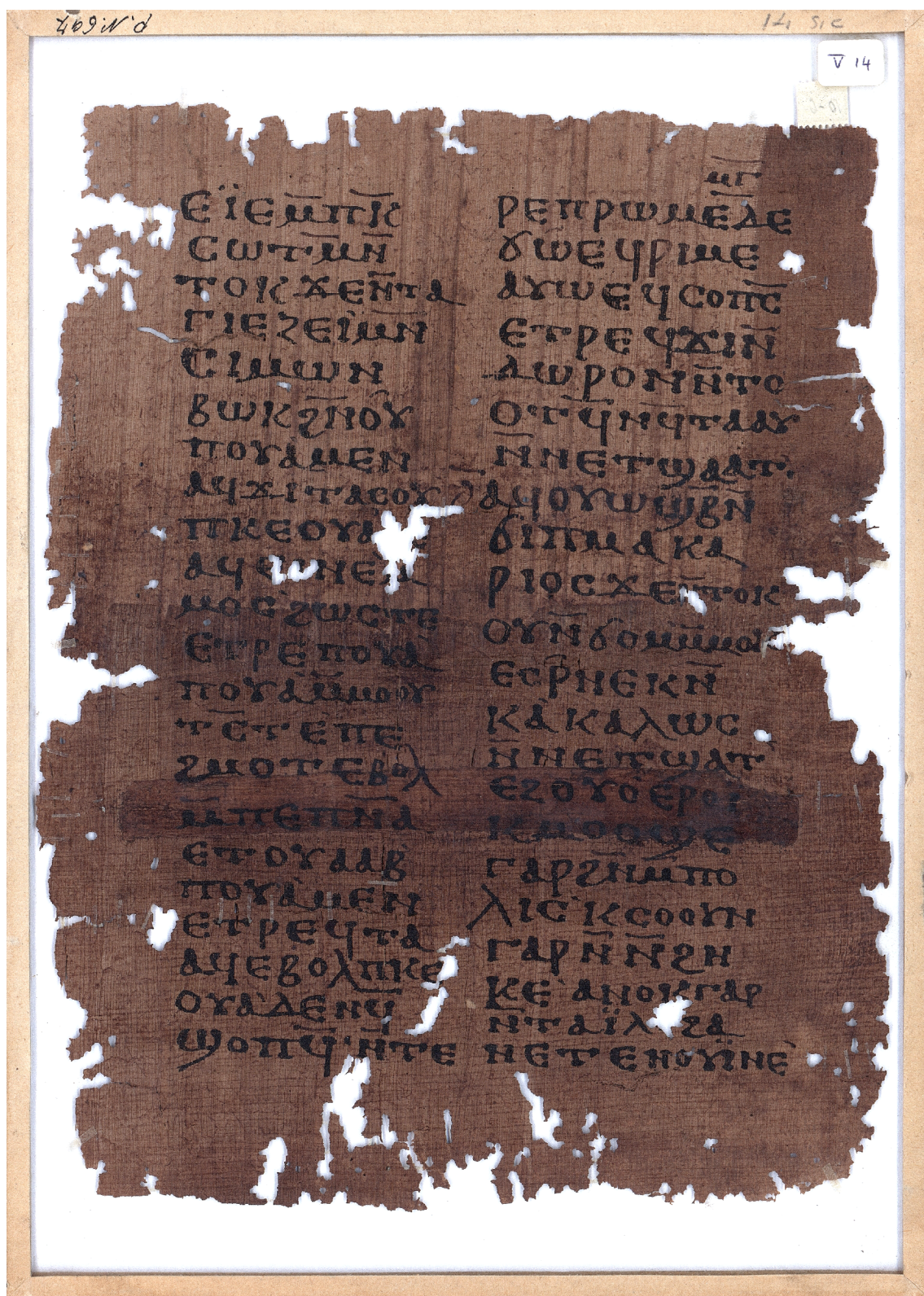


Fig. 1 CLM 49, f. 24 recto (CGT 63000, V, 14v) : une kollësis horizontale est visible à mi-hauteur de la page. La page est copiée par la 1^{re} main intervenue dans CLM 49 dans une majuscule bimodulaire. Scan par Museo Egizio.

cm dans le cas de la bibliothèque de This, correspond ainsi la hauteur du rouleau utilisé, hauteur standard depuis l'époque romaine, et la jonction des feuilles pliées le composant permet de reconstituer le rouleau original.²⁶

En revanche, dans les *codices* CLM 46, 49 et 60, les κολλήσεις courent non verticalement, mais bien horizontalement, à mi-hauteur de chaque feuillet [Fig. 1]. Il faut donc supposer qu'au moment de superposer les feuilles découpées à partir du rouleau, celles-ci ont été tournées de 90° avant d'être pliées en deux. En conséquence, la largeur de la feuille pliée, soit entre 40 et 45 cm (20-22,5 cm x 2), correspond à la hauteur du rouleau originel, soit 10-12 cm de plus que la hauteur standard.²⁷

3. CONTENU

Les trente-neuf œuvres littéraires identifiées²⁸ jusqu'à présent dans la bibliothèque de This montrent une grande variété dans les genres littéraires, donnant l'image d'une bibliothèque très riche, voire disparate. En raison de l'absence de titre ou de parallèle dans la littérature grecque ou copte, un certain nombre de fragments ou de feuillets doivent toutefois encore être identifiés précisément. À cela s'ajoute le caractère fragmentaire de certains manuscrits, en particulier CLM 6558 et 6559, dont aucune des œuvres qu'ils contiennent n'a pu être identifiée actuellement.

Si quatre manuscrits sont trop lacunaires (CLM 52, 59, 6558 et 6559) pour déterminer combien d'œuvres ils contenaient, sept en contenaient sûrement une seule, à savoir CLM 56 et 62, tous deux bibliques, ainsi que CLM 48-50, 58 et 60. Les dix manuscrits restants sont des manuscrits à textes multiples (*multiple-texts manuscripts*), un type de manuscrit copte qui se diffusera très largement avec la révolution du livre du IX^e siècle.²⁹ Ce sont CLM 45-47, 51, 53-55, 57 et 61 et 6564. Ils contiennent jusqu'à cinq textes, à l'instar de CLM 45, 47 et

²⁶ Voir, par exemple, la reconstruction proposée des rouleaux ayant servi à fabriquer CLM 61 par Carlig, dans Capasso et al. (éd.), *Proceedings*, 2019, p. 265 et Carlig, « Codicological Description », dans Buzi et Orlandi (éd.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 97-98.

²⁷ Cette possibilité était déjà évoquée, de manière spéculative, par Turner, *The Typology*, 1977, p. 53.

²⁸ Voir la liste fournie par Carlig, « Catalogue », dans Buzi et Orlandi (éd.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 135.

²⁹ Buzi, dans Bausi et al. (éd.), *The Emergence*, 2019. Les papyrologues utilisent plus fréquemment l'appellation *codices miscellanei*.

55. Trois d'entre eux montrent clairement une unité de sujet. CLM 53 contient trois homélies de Jean Chrysostome, *In Ioseph Patriarcham* (CC 0171), *In Susanam* (CC 0178) et *In David et Saul III* (CC 0168). Dans CLM 55, les cinq homélies portent toutes sur la nativité. L'état fragmentaire du manuscrit rend toutefois l'identification précise de certains textes et l'attribution à un auteur plus difficiles. Trois titres initiaux avaient déjà été identifiés par Fr. Rossi, ceux des homélies de Cyrille d'Alexandrie (CC 0099), de Sévérin de Gabala (attribuée dans CLM 55 à Proclo de Cyzique ; CC 0329) et d'Athanase d'Alexandrie (CC 0452), tandis qu'un quatrième a été identifié par mes soins dans le cadre du réexamen du fonds et correspondrait à une seconde homélie *De Nativitate* attribuée à Athanase d'Alexandrie.³⁰ Chaque titre initial étant précédé de la fin d'un texte, il faut donc supposer une cinquième homélie sur le même sujet, dont le titre initial a été perdu. Enfin, CLM 61, l'un des *codices* les mieux conservés de la bibliothèque, est un recueil de *passiones*, toutes identifiées grâce aux titres initiaux ou finaux qu'elles comportent.³¹

Les œuvres identifiées s'inscrivent toutes dans les genres littéraires et la périodisation de la littérature copte définis par T. Orlandi,³² typologie récemment affinée par Fr. Berno.³³ Deux manuscrits contiennent des textes bibliques, à savoir le livre des *Proverbes* de CLM 56 et celui de *Job* de CLM 62. À cela s'ajoute la copie en grec – le seul texte grec de la bibliothèque – du *Psaume* 109, au verso des colophons de CLM 61. Seize textes sont des homélies. Neuf d'entre elles remontent à la période de traduction du grec du V^e/VI^e siècle, comme les trois homélies chrysostomiennes de CLM 53 et les deux homélies *De Nativitate* de Sévérin de Gabala (CC 0329) et de Cyrille d'Alexandrie (CC 0099) dans CLM 55. Les sept autres homélies auraient été composées directement en copte à partir

³⁰ La proposition d'Orlandi, *Coptic Texts*, 2008, p. 50 d'utiliser ce titre (CGT 63000, X, 45, fr. 2) pour compléter celui de l'homélie de Cyrille d'Alexandrie CC 0099 (CGT 63000, X, 45, fr. 3) ne tient pas, dans la mesure où les titres sont écrits sur la face aux fibres horizontales (fr. 2) et verticales (fr. 3) respectivement. Voir Carlig, « Catalogue », dans Buzi et Orlandi (éd.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 179.

³¹ Sur les titres de CLM 61, voir *infra*, p. 73 et Carlig, dans Capasso et al. (éd.), *Proceedings*, 2019, p. 265 et Carlig, « Codicological Description », dans Buzi et Orlandi (éd.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023.

³² Orlandi, dans Camplani (éd.), *L'Egitto cristiano*, 1997. Cette périodisation de la littérature copte a également été adoptée par Boud'hors, dans Fitzgerald Johnson (éd.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, 2012.

³³ Berno, dans Buzi (éd.), *Coptic Literature*, 2020. C'est cette version de la typologie qui est adoptée dans l'introduction à la section « Works » de l'*Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature* accessible à l'adresse → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/works>.

du VI^e siècle, d'après la typologie de T. Orlandi³⁴ : c'est le cas par exemple des homélies attribuées à Athanase d'Alexandrie *De Nativitate* (CC 0452 et CC Add.) de CLM 55 et *De sancta genetrice Dei Maria* (CC 0050) de CLM 50, de l'homélie *De Nativitate* de Damien d'Alexandrie (CC 0127) de CLM 45 et des deux homélies sur Jean-Baptiste attribuées à Proclus de Cyzique et à Cyrille d'Alexandrie dans CLM 47. On compte également un texte apocryphe, les *Acta Pilati* (CC 0035) dans CLM 46, ainsi que trois textes canoniques : deux sont liés aux *Actes* du Concile de Nicée, respectivement dans CLM 47 (CC 0019) et dans CLM 54 (CC 0021), tandis que CLM 58 contient les *Canons* attribués à Basile de Césarée (CC 0090). Au milieu monastique peuvent être rattachés la *Vita Aphou* (CC 0407) de CLM 47 et le *De iudicio supremo* de Chénouté (CC 0367), qui occupe tout le codex CLM 48. Deux textes appartiennent au genre des plérrophories, à savoir l'*Historia Eudoxiae* (CC 0201) de CLM 45 et la *Vita Athanasii* (CC 0408) de CLM 54. La *Vita Epiphanii episcopi Salaminae* (CC 0413) de CLM 60, en revanche, s'inscrit dans le mouvement des traductions de textes patristiques. Enfin, douze œuvres appartiennent au genre hagiographique. À l'exception de la *Vita Hilarionis* (CC 0156) de Jérôme, toutes sont *adespota* et sont copiées dans les codices CLM 45, 47, 51, 52 et, surtout, 61. Leur composition remonte aux V^e/VI^e siècles, à l'exception de la *Passio Ptolemaei* (CC 0306) de CLM 6564 et la *Passio Christodori* (CC 0504) de CLM 51, qui sont plus tardives.

4. TITRES ET COLOPHONS

Pour autant que son début soit conservé, chaque œuvre est précédée d'un titre initial. Dans certains cas, comme dans CLM 57 et 61, un titre final, parfois limité à la mention de l'auteur, conclut la copie de l'œuvre.

D'après la typologie des titres de P. Buzi,³⁵ la plupart sont des titres-sujets (*subject titles*), et des titres à structure simple (*simple structure titles*). Les titres-sujets sont brefs, exprimés en peu de mots qui décrivent le sujet du texte, comme le titre de CC 0395 dans CLM 46 [Fig. 2] : ΟΥΕΞΗΓΕΣΙC ΝΤΕ ΠΑΓΙΟC ΘΕΟΦΙΛΟC

³⁴ Voir toutefois les réserves exprimées récemment par Boud'hors, dans Moawad (éd.), *Coptic Literature*, 2022, sur les limites de la périodisation de T. Orlandi.

³⁵ Buzi, *Titoli e autori*, 2005. Pour la terminologie anglaise de la typologie, voir Buzi, dans Immerzeel et Van der Vliet, *Proceedings*, 2004.



Fig. 2 CLM 46, f. 42 verso (CGT 63000, II, 42→) : titre initial de CC 0395. Scan par Museo Egizio.

παρχιεπισκοπος εαχταγογος ετβε πεςϣος μ̄ν πλυστης (« Exégèse [ἐξήγησις] d'Apa Théophile, archévêque [ἀρχιεπίσκοπος] de Rakote. Il l'a prononcée au sujet de la croix [σταυρός] et du larron [ληστής] »).

Les titres à structure simple sont les plus fréquents dans la bibliothèque de This. Fournissant des informations complémentaires sur l'auteur ou le contenu du texte, ils sont plus détaillés que les titres-sujets, comme, par exemple, le titre de l'homélie *In Ioseph patriarcham* (CC 0171) du codex CLM 53 [Fig. 3] : οὐζομοιλια ντε πμακαριος ἀπα ἰωβαννης παρχιεπισκοπος κωνσταντινουπολις ετβε πατριάρχης ἰωσὴφ ἀγῶ ετβε τσωφροςύνη (« Une homélie [ὁμιλία] sur le bienheureux [μακάριος] Apa Jean, archévêque [ἀρχιεπίσκοπος] de Constantinople, sur le patriarche [πατριάρχης] Joseph et sur la tempérance [σωφροσύνη] »).

À la même typologie appartient également le titre de l'homélie *De Nativitate* d'Athanase d'Alexandrie (CC 0452), dans CLM 55 [Fig. 4] : ζομοίως οὐεξηγησις' εαχταγος ἡ̄βι ἀπα ἀθανασιος παρχιεπισκοπος ἡ̄ρακοτε' ετβε προϋμιε μ̄πε(ν) χοε̄ις ἰ̄ς πεχ̄ς ἡ̄σογχογτ̄ψ̄ις ἡ̄χοαικ̄ς (« De la même manière [ὁμοίως], une exégèse [ἐξήγησις] qui a été prononcée par Apa Athanase, archévêque [ἀρχιεπίσκοπος] de Rakote, sur la naissance de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, le 29 Choiak »).

Deux cas méritent une attention particulière. Dans CLM 57, les titres initiaux de l'homélie *De Passione* attribuée à Évode de Rome (CC 0149) et du *Sermo in Lazica II* mis sous le nom de Basile de Césarée (CC 0083) sont les seuls titres à structure complexe (*complex structure titles*) de la bibliothèque de This. Beaucoup plus fréquents dans la production libraire après la révolution du livre du IX^e siècle, ils se caractérisent par leur longueur en raison du nombre de détails qu'ils fournissent sur divers aspects du texte, comme l'occasion de sa composition ou de sa déclamation. C'est pour cette raison probablement qu'ils ont été écrits à pleine page, alors que les textes sont copiés à deux colonnes par page [Fig. 5].

Dans CLM 61, le recueil de *passiones*, des titres initiaux et des titres finaux ont été copiés au début et à la fin des textes. L'analyse détaillée du point de vue textuel, paléographique et de la mise en texte a révélé que c'étaient les titres finaux qui avaient été copiés au départ, suggérant que le modèle de ce codex présentait encore les titres finaux, selon la manière antique, alors que les titres initiaux ont été ajoutés postérieurement dans CLM 61, afin de conformer le codex avec l'usage des titres initiaux en vigueur dans l'Antiquité tardive.³⁶

³⁶ Carlig, dans Capasso et al. (éd.), *Proceedings*, 2019.



Fig. 3 CLM 53, f. 3 recto (CGT 63000, VIII, 1→) : titre initial de CC 0171, noté en majuscule inclinée à droite. Scan par Museo Egizio.

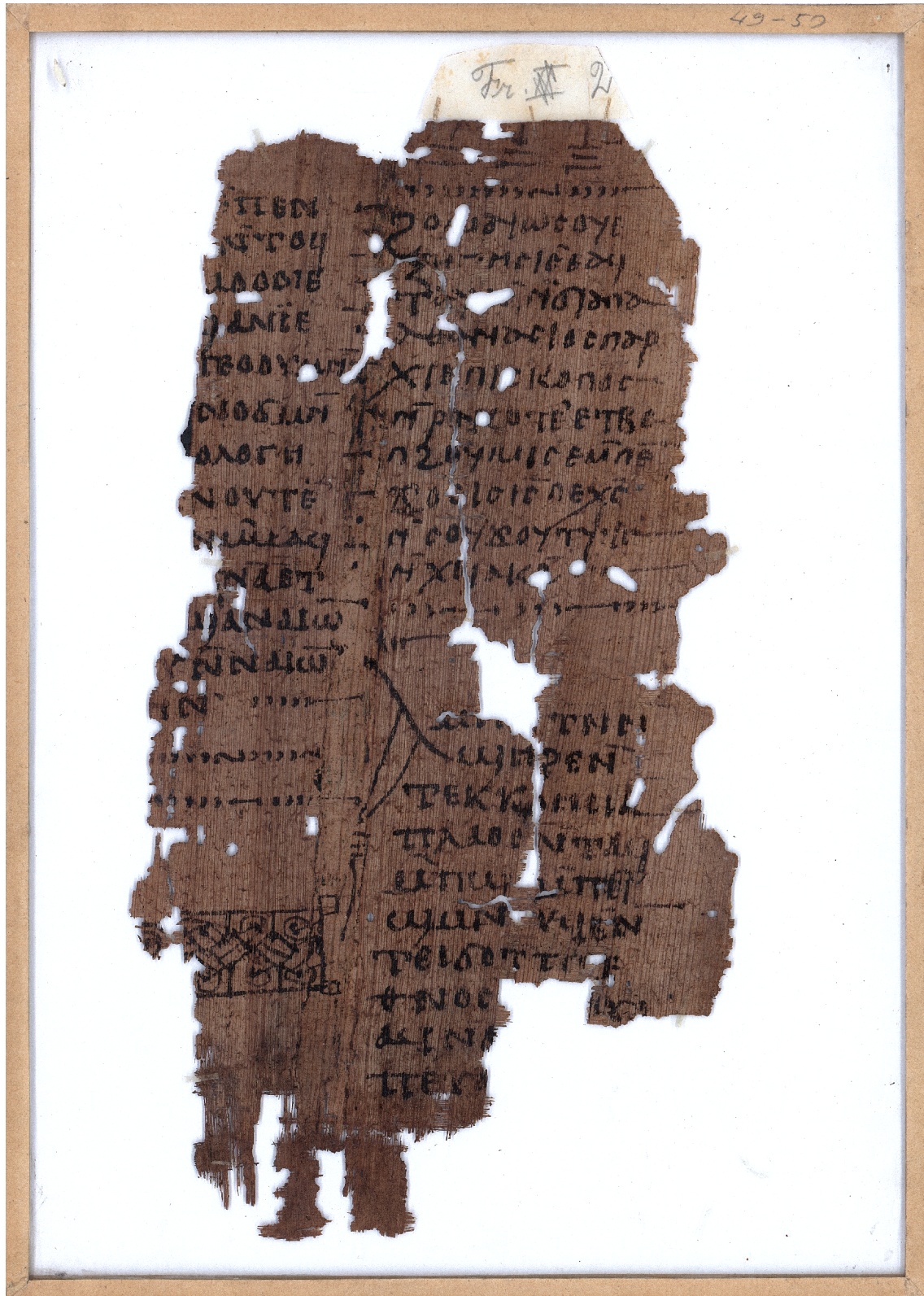


Fig. 4 CLM 55 (CGT 63000, X, 2J) : titre initial de CC 0452. Scan par Museo Egizio.



Fig. 5 CLM 57, f. 36 verso (CGT 63000, XII, 35→) : titre initial de CC 0083, écrit à pleine page. Scan par Museo Egizio.

La bibliothèque de This contient également quatre souscriptions qui se révèlent être parmi les plus anciens colophons coptes connus.³⁷ Deux d'entre eux, complets, qui avaient déjà été repérés par E. Revillout et Fr. Rossi, ont été édités par A. van Lantschoot dans son recueil de colophons coptes sahidiques,³⁸ et, enfin, récemment par A. Soldati, où ils portent les identifiants 96 et 97 dans la base de données des colophons de l'*Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature*.³⁹ Malheureusement, aucun des deux ne peut être attribué de manière certaine à un manuscrit de la bibliothèque. Le colophon n° 96 est assez bref et informe que le livre dans lequel il était noté appartenait à l'église catholique de This. Il est suivi par une liste de titres de quatorze œuvres littéraires, dont seule l'avant-dernière, la *Passio Joore* (CC 0282), est attestée dans un manuscrit de la bibliothèque, CLM 45. Le colophon n° 97 enregistre la donation du livre qui le portait au monastère de Jean-Baptiste à This. Si les deux colophons mentionnent deux institutions distinctes, l'église catholique et le monastère, à This, il reste possible que toutes deux aient été liées et aient, par exemple, partagé la même bibliothèque.

Les deux autres souscriptions ont été découvertes récemment, à la faveur du réexamen du fonds, et seront publiées prochainement par mes soins. Quoique mutilées dans leur moitié de gauche, elles appartiennent à coup sûr au codex CLM 61, le recueil de *passiones* et sont notées, l'une à la suite de l'autre, sur le même feuillet du manuscrit. La première souscription mentionne « Eudoxie et Thanaël », suggérant que, à l'instar du colophon n° 97, il puisse s'agir d'une donation ou, à la rigueur, d'une commande de privés. La seconde souscription, dont il ne reste que la fin des lignes, mentionne un copiste (ΓΡΑΦΕΥΣ, gr. γραφεύς), peut-être celui qui a copié le manuscrit.

5. PALÉOGRAPHIE

La copie des textes de chaque manuscrit de la bibliothèque de This a été exécutée par une seule main, à l'exception de CLM 49, où deux mains sont intervenues, l'une couvrant les pages 1 à 71 du codex [Fig. 1], la seconde prenant le

³⁷ Sur les plus anciens colophons coptes, voir Soldati, *Adamantius* 24 (2018).

³⁸ van Lantschoot, *Recueil*, 1929, p. 180-181 (n°s CV et CVI).

³⁹ → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/colophons/96> et → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/colophons/97> (dernière consultation le 1^{er} juillet 2024). Voir aussi Soldati, *Adamantius* 24 (2018), p. 198-199.

relais à partir de la p. 72 jusqu'à la fin [Fig. 6]. Les écritures attestées dans les manuscrits correspondent au cadre général de la paléographie copte de haute-époque (IV^e-VIII^e siècles), qui se caractérise par une opposition entre écritures unimodulaires et bimodulaires, et par l'usage d'une majuscule inclinée comme écriture distinctive, notamment pour noter les titres dans certains manuscrits.⁴⁰

Les écritures unimodulaires sont des majuscules d'axe droit, où les traits verticaux généralement plus épais alternent avec des traits horizontaux et obliques plus fins et où les lettres s'inscrivent dans un module carré. Elles s'inspirent de la majuscule biblique grecque. À ce type appartient l'écriture de treize manuscrits. Celles de CLM 45, 53, 54 et 56, ainsi que, dans une certaine mesure, 6559, sont les plus semblables à la majuscule biblique grecque. Par le contraste extrême entre pleins et déliés et la présence de petits empattements, l'écriture de CLM 45 évoque la majuscule nitriote [Fig. 7], qui se développe pleinement dans le Nord de l'Égypte à partir du IX^e siècle.⁴¹ Plus rapides et informelles, montrant même une tendance à la bimodularité, mais présentant toujours un contraste entre pleins et déliés, sont les écritures des manuscrits CLM 47, 48, 50, 58-60 et 6564. Ces dernières sont si semblables les unes aux autres dans leur aspect, leur tracé et leur module que, dans le cas de fragments non attribués, il est difficile, sur base de l'écriture seule, d'identifier à quel manuscrit les raccorder. L'usage de mêmes signes de structuration, comme la paragraphos *caudata*, renforce cette impression [Fig. 8].⁴² L'écriture de CLM 55, globalement unimodulaire et plutôt informelle se distingue de toutes les écritures de la collection par l'extension horizontale dans la marge latérale de certaines lettres en fin de ligne, comme *alpha* ou *upsilon* et l'usage de l'apostrophe afin d'éviter l'hiatus. À ce même groupe appartient également la première main de CLM 49 [Fig. 1], bien reconnaissable entre toutes par la présence d'empattements et son module assez grand.

Les écritures bimodulaires sont également des majuscules à axe droit carac-

⁴⁰ Sur la paléographie copte, spécialement de haute époque, voir Buzi, dans Bausi (éd.), *Comparative Oriental Manuscripts*, 2015 et Boud'hors, dans Davies et Laboury (éd.), *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptian Epigraphy and Palaeography*, 2020. Dans l'analyse des mains des manuscrits de la bibliothèque de This, Orlandi, dans Buzi et Orlandi (éd.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 47-48 adopte un classement légèrement différent du mien.

⁴¹ Sur la majuscule nitriote, voir Boud'hors, dans Déroche et Richard (éd.), *Scribes et manuscrits*, 1997, p. 120 et Boud'hors, dans Buzi et Proverbio (éd.), *Coptic Treasures*, 2012, p. 65. Sur son origine dans la majuscule biblique, voir aussi Valerio, dans Buzi (éd.), *Detecting Early Mediaeval Coptic Literature*, 2019, p. 27-28.

⁴² Sur ce signe, voir McNamee, dans Nocchi Macedo et Scappaticcio (éd.), *Signes dans les textes*, 2017, p. 131-133 et Albrecht et Matera, *Néa 'Pwmy* 14 (2017).

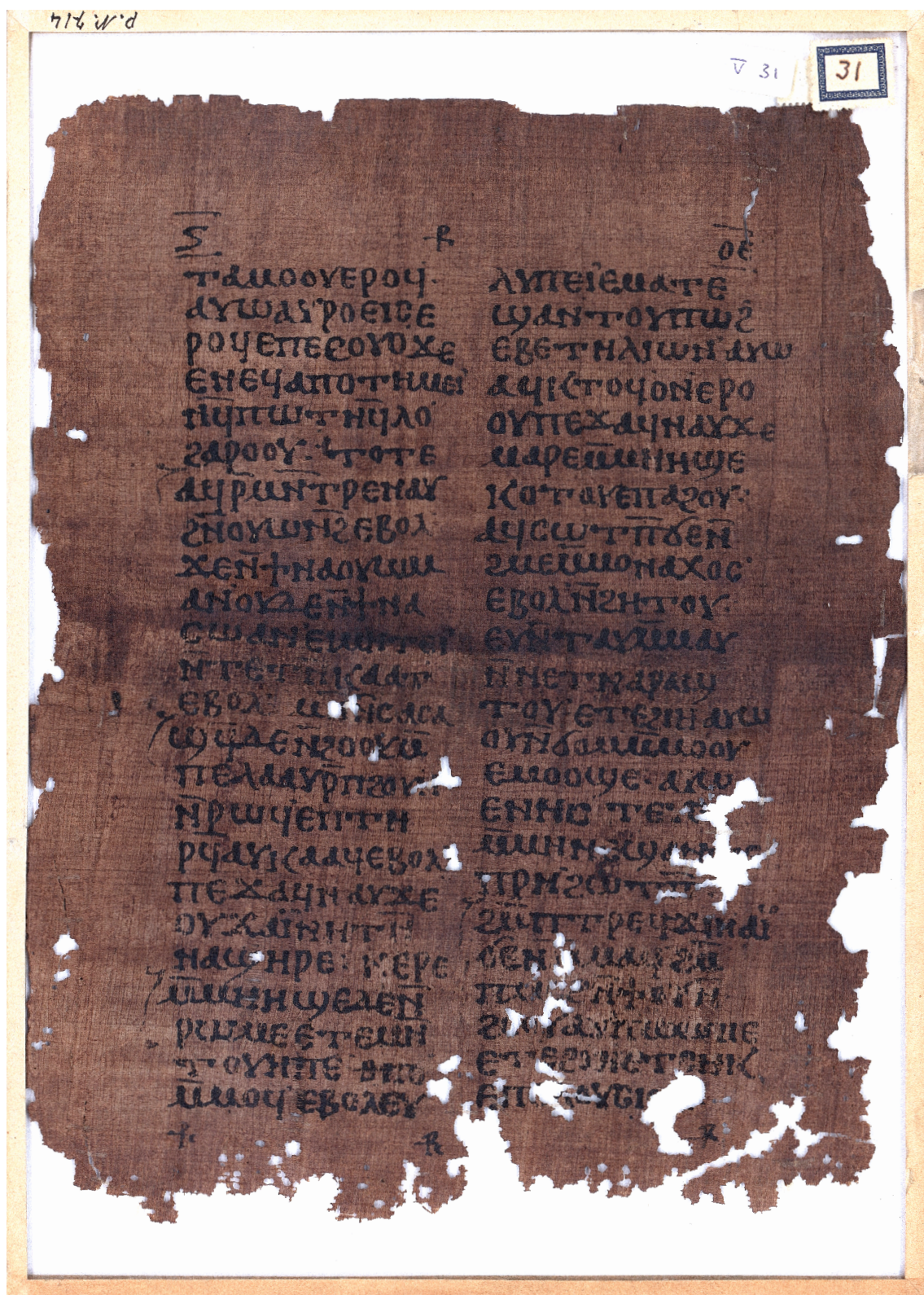


Fig. 6 CLM 49, f. 41 recto (CGT 63000, V, 31↓) : la page a été copiée par la 2^{de} main intervenue dans CLM 49. Scan par Museo Egizio.

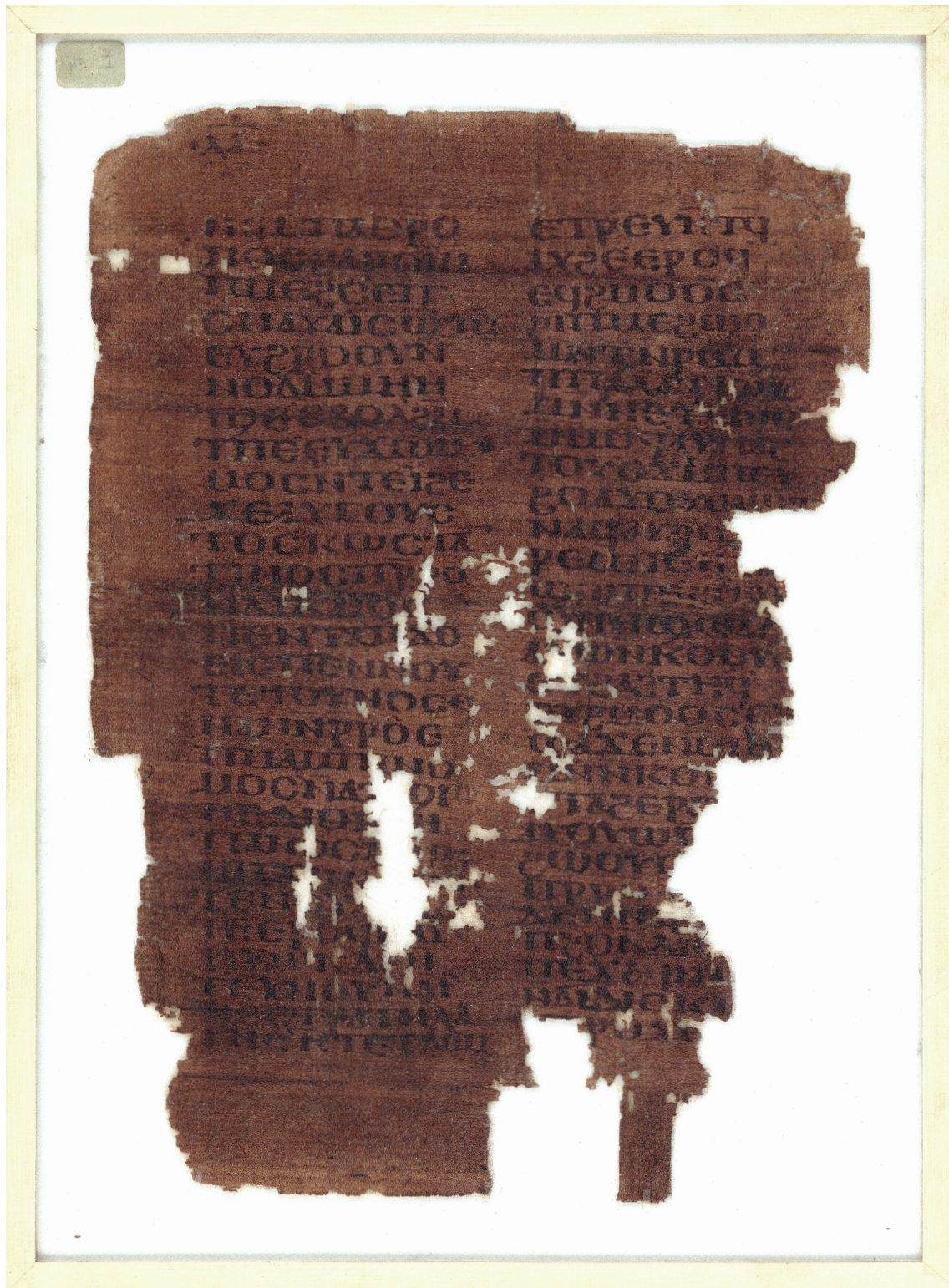


Fig. 7 CLM 45, f. 30 verso (CGT 63000, I, 14→), folioté **xx** (31). Scan par Museo Egizio.



Fig. 8 CLM 50, f. 48 recto (CGT 63000, VI, 47↓). Scan par Museo Egizio.

térisées, quant à elles, par un contraste entre lettres étroites, comme *epsilon*, *omicron* et *sigma*, et lettres larges, en particulier *mu*, *nu* et *omega*. Ce type d'écriture tire son origine de la majuscule alexandrine. Parmi les manuscrits de la bibliothèque de This, le contraste bimodulaire peut varier. Si, dans CLM 51, 61, 62 et 6558, le contraste est peu marqué, il l'est nettement dans CLM 46, 52 et 57, annonçant le développement de la majuscule copte dans la production libraire après la révolution du livre du IX^e siècle [Fig. 2].⁴³ Dans une certaine mesure, la seconde main de CLM 49 écrit également dans une écriture bimodulaire.

La majuscule inclinée à droite (aussi appelée majuscule penchée), tirée de la pratique documentaire contemporaine, est attestée ici comme écriture distinctive,⁴⁴ spécialement pour les titres initiaux et finaux et les colophons, dans CLM 53, 55 et 61 [Fig. 3].

6. MISE EN PAGE

Les modalités de mise par écrit et d'organisation d'un manuscrit sont également révélatrices de son contexte de production. Deux dispositifs retiendront l'attention ici : la mise en page à une ou deux colonnes et la typologie de la pagination.

Cinq manuscrits sont écrits à pleine page, où les lignes mesurent 16-17 cm de large : CLM 53, 54, 56, 61 et 62. Dans les seize autres les pages présentent deux colonnes de 7-8 cm de large chacune, séparées par un entrecolonnement : CLM 45-52, 55, 57-60, 6558, 6559 et 6564. Dans la mesure où tous les manuscrits présentent plus ou moins une largeur de feuillet semblable, de 20 à 22,5 cm,⁴⁵ c'est soit la typologie de texte, soit la finalité de la copie qui a conditionné la mise en page à une ou deux colonnes. Ainsi, les textes bibliques, attestés dans CLM 56 et 62, sont copiés à pleine page, d'autant plus dans le cas des *Proverbes* de CLM 62, dont la nature poétique requiert des lignes longues. Par ailleurs, la mise en page à deux colonnes deviendra très fréquente après la révolution du livre du IX^e siècle, lorsque la littérature copte sera recyclée à des fins liturgiques : à cet égard, la mise

⁴³ Sur la majuscule copte, voir Boud'hors, dans Déroche et Richard (éd.), *Scribes et manuscrits*, 1997, p. 120.

⁴⁴ Sur la majuscule inclinée à droite comme écriture distinctive, voir Boud'hors, dans Déroche et Richard (éd.), *Scribes et manuscrits*, 1997, p. 125-129.

⁴⁵ Cf. *supra*, p. 67. Des manuscrits carrés de petite taille ou très étroits et allongés (max. 16 cm de large), comme ceux du IV^e siècle, n'offrent généralement pas d'autre possibilité que la copie à pleine page.

en page en colonnes étroites facilite grandement la lecture. Ce pourrait être le cas des manuscrits à deux colonnes par page de la bibliothèque de This. Sans doute le codex hagiographique CLM 61, qui est écrit à pleine page, n'était pas destiné originellement à l'usage liturgique, ce que suggère le colophon informant qu'il a été copié (ou commandité) par des personnes privées.

Là où les marges supérieures sont suffisamment bien conservées, des traces de pagination sont observées. Celle-ci est notée dans le coin supérieur externe de chaque page. La numérotation des cahiers est effectuée dans le coin supérieur interne de la première et de la dernière page de ceux-ci et est généralement accompagnée de croix ou de staurogrammes, tracés dans le centre de la marge supérieure, parfois aussi dans la marge inférieure. Dans ce panorama très stable, le codex CLM 45 se distingue par une numérotation tout à fait spécifique dans la mesure où, dans les neuf premiers cahiers, la numérotation est exprimée de manière continue sur la page de gauche d'une double page, donc sur le verso des feuillets, ainsi que sur le recto du premier feuillet, donc la première page du cahier [Fig. 7]. Ce système de numérotation hybride, faisant ainsi se succéder, dans un même cahier, la pagination du premier feuillet (par exemple, recto numéroté α et verso, β) et la foliotation du reste du cahier (numérotation continue, à partir de γ, uniquement au verso des feuillets), évoque une combinaison en vigueur dans les manuscrits bohaïriques produits après le IX^e siècle dans le Nord de l'Égypte, à relier peut-être à la pratique libraire arabe.⁴⁶

7. CONCLUSION

L'examen des principales caractéristiques matérielles, textuelles et de mise en page des vingt-et-un *codices* qui composent la bibliothèque de This, datables globalement des VII^e/VIII^e siècles, a révélé un format de codex relativement uniforme, alors que la fabrication des *codices*, le contenu – textes, titres et colophons –, la paléographie et les dispositifs de mise en page montrent une plus grande variété. Ainsi, les *kollèseis* horizontales dans CLM 46, 49 et 60 attestent une fabrication du codex prévoyant de tourner les feuilles de 90° avant de les plier pour

⁴⁶ Buzi et Emmel, dans Bausi (éd.), *Comparative Oriental Manuscripts*, 2015, p. 146. Voir aussi les exemples analysés par Zanetti, dans Hoffmann (éd.), *Recherches de codicologie comparée*, 1998, p. 178-179 et par Boud'hors, dans Buzi et Camplani (éd.), *Christianity in Egypt*, 2011, p. 107 et 108-110.

former des cahiers. Les trente-neuf œuvres littéraires identifiées appartiennent à au moins cinq genres littéraires – biblique, homilétique, historico-doctrinal, canonique et hagiographique – et remontent à différentes phases de développement de la littérature copte, entre les IV^e/V^e siècles et le VII^e siècle, qu'il s'agisse de traductions du grec ou de textes composés directement en copte. De la même manière, la typologie des titres ne se limite pas aux seuls titres-sujets et titres à structure simple, puisque, dans CLM 61, les titres finaux ont été apposés préalablement aux titres initiaux, témoignant d'une pratique libraire antique, d'une part et que, dans CLM 57, les titres très longs évoquent les développements plus tardifs des titres d'œuvres coptes, d'autre part. Du point de vue paléographique également, les écritures sont variées, même si le groupe des *codices* CLM 47, 48, 50, 58-60 et 6564 semble se distinguer par une unité dans l'écriture, l'usage de signes et les dispositifs de mise en page. Du point de vue de la mise en page, si la majorité des *codices* est copiée à deux colonnes par page, cinq d'entre eux, dont deux bibliques, le sont à pleine page. Enfin, la pagination est standard dans tous les *codices*, sauf dans le cas de CLM 45, où elle est combinée à une foliotation, évoquant des pratiques plus tardives attestées dans le Nord de l'Égypte.

Ces observations suggèrent une variété chronologique dans la production des manuscrits de la bibliothèque de This, où certains manuscrits témoigneraient de pratiques plus anciennes, tandis que d'autres annoncent la révolution du livre du IX^e siècle. Par ailleurs, une variété géographique semble aussi se dessiner grâce à CLM 45, dont l'écriture rappelle la majuscule nitriote et qui pourrait avoir été copié sinon dans le Nord de l'Égypte, du moins par un copiste provenant de cette région. Enfin, une variété contextuelle peut être entrevue : alors que CLM 47, 48, 50, 58-60 et 6554 partagent suffisamment de traits communs pour y voir un groupe cohérent, peut-être produit dans un même environnement, les données tirées des colophons suggèrent que certains manuscrits, comme CLM 61, ont été commandités ou donnés par des privés à des institutions religieuses de This.

C'est par un réexamen approfondi de tous les manuscrits de la bibliothèque de This, comprenant également l'édition à nouveaux frais des textes déjà publiés et l'édition *princeps* des pièces inédites, que l'on complètera et nuancera le cadre qui vient d'être esquissé : celui d'un ensemble de livres vivant, loin d'être figé, reflétant les traditions libraires antérieures et annonçant les évolutions à venir.

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THE *DIDASCALIA PATRUM NICAENORUM*: A PIECE OF CANONICAL LITERATURE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE COPTIC CODICES OF THE MUSEO EGIZIO, TURIN

Costanza Bianchi

1. INTRODUCTION

The present contribution offers a preliminary reflection on the Coptic transmission of the *Didascalia Patrum Nicaeanorum*. This work, which I will address in detail in the following paragraphs, is one of those texts generally defined as canonical literature. The expression “canonical literature” refers not to a specific literary genre but to a series of works with certain content-related characteristics. As defined by scholars such as Alberto Camplani and Federico Contardi in their essay on the Canons of Basil of Caesarea,¹ canonical literature encompasses a broader range of texts beyond those strictly related to canon law. In the study of such sources within the Egyptian context, two contributions are particularly significant. The first is Tito Orlandi’s study of Coptic manuscripts that transmit at least one canonical work.² This study is valuable for two main reasons: it provides a comprehensive overview of the canonical works that circulated in Egypt in Late Antiquity and the Medieval period, and it highlights which works were transmitted alongside canonical literature within the same codicological units. The second contribution is by Hubert Kaufhold, who offers a history of the evolution of canonical literature in the Eastern Churches from its origins to the 1500s. Kaufhold’s study pays special attention to the contexts in which these works were transmitted and used, emphasizing the variety and richness of these sources.³

Before addressing the specifics of the *Didascalia Patrum*, it is pertinent to examine the common characteristics of works pertaining to the field of canonical

¹ Camplani and Contardi, *Adamantius* 24 (2018), pp. 150–64.

² Orlandi, *Coptic Texts*, 2016.

³ Kaufhold, in Hartmann and Pennigton (eds.), *The History of Byzantine and Canon Law*, 2012, pp. 215–342.

literature, particularly those transmitted to Egypt. Orlandi, in his contribution *Coptic Texts Relating to Church Canons*, includes texts of different literary genres under the umbrella of canonical works: the corpus of works attributed to Agathonicus of Tarsus, the *Didascalia Patrum Nicaenorum* (cc0018), the *Sententiae* (or *gnomai*) attributed to the Council of Nicaea (cc0021), *Canones Apostolorum per Clementem* (cc0088), *Canones Athanasii* (cc0089), *Canones Basilii* (cc0090), *Canones Apostolorum* renamed in the CML database as *Canones Ecclesiastici* (cc0091), the canons of the councils included in the Antiochene *Corpus Canonum* (Nicaea, Ancyra, Neocaesarea, Gangra, Antioch, Laodicea plus Constantinople and Ephesus), the *Anathemata Nicaena* (cc0956) following the Nicene Creed and preceding the list of names of the Nicene bishops, the *subscriptio* of Paulinus of Antioch, two epistles, attributed respectively to Epiphanius of Salamis and Rufinus, (cc00958, cc0959, cc0960) dealing with doctrinal questions, the account *De Spiritu Sancto in Concilio Nicaeno* (cc0961). Despite their varied content, literary genre, and structure, these texts share a common denominator that makes them all definable as canonical: they all contain and transmit texts that serve to regulate the behaviour of the Christian community. As such, these texts possess normative authority over both doctrine and conduct for both clergy and laity. The *Didascalia Patrum Nicaenorum*, like other works, follows a dual structure. It opens with a doctrinal exposition, often referred to as an *ekthesis*, which begins with the creed of Nicaea followed by a doctrinal commentary and a series of anathemas. Subsequently, it presents a normative section outlining rules for Christian life.

2. THE DIDASCALIA PATRUM NICAENORUM: RESEARCH AND STUDIES

The *Didascalia Patrum Nicaenorum*, as preserved in Coptic, is identified in the *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* (CPG) by two distinct entries: CPG2298 (*Didascalia Patrum Nicaenorum*) and CPG2264 (*Syntagma ad monachos*, alternately known as *Syntagma Doctrinae*). These two versions differ primarily in the presence or absence of the Nicene creed and its commentary in the *Syntagma ad monachos*. For a comprehensive overview of these works, the pseudepigraphic letter to the monks of the Thebaid and the nomos of Arsinoe attributed to Anthony (CPG 2346) should also be considered, as this epistle shares content with both CPG

2298 and CPG 2264.⁴ In this study, the focus will primarily be on the *Didascalia Patrum Nicaenorum*, hereafter referred to as the *Didascalia*, since the *Syntagma* alone is currently not known in Coptic.

The first published edition of the *Syntagma ad monachos* (CPG 2264) dates to 1685, published by André Arnold and attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria.⁵ Very early on, the Athanasian authorship was questioned, in particular by Bernard de Montfaucon.⁶ Arnold's edition was later included in *Patrologia Graeca* (PG 28, 836–845) by J.-P. Migne with Athanasius' spurious works. The *editio princeps* of the *Didascalia* was published by Giovanni Luigi Mingarelli in 1784 and is based on codex *Nanianus LXIII* (today *Marcianus gr. II, 42*),⁷ where it is introduced by the following incipit: "Faith of the 318 holy Fathers, divinely inspired, in Nicaea and a truly marvellous and salvific teaching (*didascalia*) concerning the Holy Trinity".⁸ Mingarelli's edition is later included in the *addenda* to Athanasius in the *Patrologia Graeca* (PG 28, 1637–1644). In 1887, Pierre Batiffol published a new edition of the *Didascalia* based on three new witnesses.⁹ Three years later he proposed a new edition of the *Syntagma*, using the same manuscript as Arnold and adding a summary that came from another codex (Vat. gr. 733).¹⁰ This contribution is relevant because Battifol provides an in-depth introduction and substantial commentary, proposing a possible *stemma codicum* to elucidate the relationship between the *Didascalia* and the *Syntagma*, as well as suggesting a connection with the work transmitted in Coptic. Finally, Rudolf Riedinger and Hans Thurn proposed a new critical edition of the *Didascalia* in Greek, based on the manuscript Paris. gr. 1115.¹¹

Giuseppe L. Dossetti, in his volume on the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople, dedicates a few pages to the *Didascalia*, inserting all the sources necessary to propose a possible dating. In particular, he fixes the *terminus ante quem* at

⁴ Garitte, *Muséon* 55 (1942), pp. 97–123.

⁵ S. *Athanasii archiep. Alex. syntagma doctrinae ad clericos et laicos*, 1685.

⁶ De Montfaucon, S. *Athanasii archiepiscopi Alexandriae opera omnia*, 1698. The *Syntagma* is included in the spurious works.

⁷ Mingarelli, *Graeci codices*, 1784.

⁸ Πίστις τῶν ἁγίων τριακοσίων δέκα καὶ ὀκτὼ ἁγίων θεοφόρων Πατέρων τῶν ἐν Νικαίᾳ· καὶ διδασκαλία πάνυ θαυμαστὴ καὶ σωτήριος περὶ τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος. Mingarelli, *Graeci codices*, 1784, p. 107 (pp. 107–14).

⁹ Batiffol, *Didascalia CCCXVIII patrum*, 1887.

¹⁰ Batiffol, *StudPatr* 11 (1890), pp. 117–60.

¹¹ Riedinger and Thurn, *JÖB* 35 (1985), pp. 75–92.

435/436 because that was when the Armenian Catholicos Isaac, in a letter to Proclus of Constantinople, cited several passages of the *Didascalia* to demonstrate the orthodoxy of his faith.¹²

The text of the *Didascalia* is also known in other languages besides Greek and Coptic. The Armenian version was transmitted under the name of Evagrius Ponticus and is found in several manuscripts.¹³ There is also a version of the text of the *Didascalia* in Ge'ez, handed down in the collection of the *Sēnōdōs* which was published and translated by Alessandro Bausi.¹⁴ Finally, the *Didascalia* is also known in Arabic, but this version is still unpublished. According to Michael Kohlbacher, that version is part of the dogmatic collection entitled “The Faith of the Fathers” with a collection of synodal canons.¹⁵ Kohlbacher is the first to try to trace the history of this text, hypothesizing not only about its development and subsequent diffusion but also about where it was initially conceived and written. He locates the period of production in the third quarter of the fourth century, probably in circles close to Epiphanius of Salamis. His hypothesis is supported, in his opinion, by two elements: first, the points of contact between the *ekthesis* of the *Didascalia* and the second symbol of faith in the *Ancoratus* (119); second, the evidence of an Egyptian background for the part concerning moral precepts which would have gone through a phase of reworking in the Palestinian monastic *milieu*. In support of the hypothesis of a Palestinian editing, Kohlbacher references Epiphanius’ trips to Egypt to meet the most important exponents of monasticism in the area and to familiarize himself with their lifestyle. It is probable that Epiphanius, once back in Palestine, brought with him texts regarding the ecclesiastical order that then underwent this reworking and the addition of the initial dogmatic part.¹⁶ Finally, the most recent study of the *Didascalia* is an article by Lincoln H. Blumell which identified its oldest witness: a papyrus fragment in Greek dated, on palaeographic grounds, to the fifth century.¹⁷

In summary, the *Didascalia*, originally composed in Greek, was widely used in

¹² Dossetti, *Il simbolo*, 1967. See, in particular, pp. 56–65.

¹³ Catergian, *De fidei symbolo*, 1893; Sarghissian, *Sancti Patris Evagrii Pontici vita et scripta*, 1907, pp. 131–41; Muyldermans, *Handēs Amsorya* 41 (1927), pp. 687–700.

¹⁴ Bausi, in Zanetti and Lucchesi (eds.), *Aegyptus Christiana*, 2004, pp. 225–48.

¹⁵ Kohlbacher, in Emmel et al. (eds.), *Ägypten und Nubien*, 1999, pp. 144–54.

¹⁶ Kohlbacher, in Emmel et al. (eds.), *Ägypten und Nubien*, 1999, pp. 150–51.

¹⁷ Blumell, *JTS* 68/2 (2017), pp. 607–20.

various versions in Late Antiquity in the Mediterranean area and beyond, as evidenced by the numerous translations (Coptic, Armenian, Ge'ez, Arabic) that have come down to us. However, no translations into Latin or Syriac are currently known, with the exception of a single surviving fragment (in Syriac). The various codices attribute the work to Athanasius, the 318 Fathers of Nicaea, Evagrius Ponticus, and Basil of Caesarea.¹⁸

3. THE COPTIC TRANSMISSION OF THE *DIDASCALIA PATRUM NICAENORUM*

3.1 State of the question

The *Didascalia Patrum Nicaenorum*, identified in *Clavis Coptic* as 0019, is transmitted in Coptic by two manuscript witnesses;¹⁹ the text of the work is not complete due to physical gaps in both codices. In 1810 Georg Zoëga published the text of the *Didascalia* for the first time, using a version contained in some sheets in the collection of Cardinal Stefano Borgia in Velletri.²⁰ These sheets, which come from the White Monastery of Atripe and are dated in the colophon to 1002/1003,²¹ are part of the CMCL reconstructed codex MONB.EF which is also identified with the new nomenclature CLM (*Coptic Literary Manuscripts*) 359.²² The *Didascalia* appears here to be transmitted with numerous works related to the Council of Nicaea, forming a sort of Nicene dossier. In particular, CLM 359 contains, in the following order, the Nicene Creed (cc0555), an appendix of anathemas to the creed (conventionally defined as *Anathemata Nicaena*, cc0956), the *Nomina Patrum Nicaenorum* (cc0956), the canons of Nicaea (cc0957), the *Didascalia Patrum Nicaenorum*, the epistle of Epiphanius (cc0959), the epistle of Rufinus (cc0960), a narrative on the presence of the Holy Spirit at the council

¹⁸ For the attribution to Basil of Caesarea, see Kohlbacher, in Emmel et al. (eds.), *Ägypten und Nubien*, 1999, p. 147.

¹⁹ In addition to the two witnesses, there is a fragment of the normative section that has been studied by Matthias Müller in his contribution on the Coptic papyri preserved in the University Library of Basel. Müller in Huebner et al., *Papyri of the University Library of Basel*, p. 288.

²⁰ Zoëga, *Catalogus Codicum Copticorum Manuscriptorum*, 1810, pp. 246–47 and pp. 573–77.

²¹ van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons*, I, 1930, colophon no. LXX, pp. 116–17.

²² The reconstruction of this codex was first proposed by Walter E. Crum, then expanded by René-Georges Coquin, and, finally, systematized by Tito Orlandi. Crum, *Der Papyruscodex*, 1915, p. XIV; Coquin, *Orientalia* 50 (1981), pp. 40–86; Orlandi, *Coptic Texts*, pp. 10–11. See also the PATHs page dedicated to CLM 359:

→ <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts/359>.

(cc0961), and the so-called *Gnomai/Sententiae* of the Nicene council (cc0021), which was followed by the Antiochene *Corpus canonum* with the canons of Antioch (cc0962), Antioch (cc0963), Laodicea (cc0964), and Constantinople (cc0965), together with the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed (cc0558) and the decree of Ephesus concerning Cyprus' autocephaly (cc0558).²³

Thirty years later, the Nicene material published by Zoëga was used by Charles Lenormant to propose a first analysis of the Nicene (and Ephesian) material transmitted in Coptic, also suggesting some corrections to the text published by Zoëga.²⁴ In 1873, Eugène Revillout identified a second manuscript, preserved at the Museo Egizio in Turin which contained some works from the Nicene dossier of CLM 359, specifically the *Didascalia Patrum Nicaenorum* and the two epistles.²⁵ Here Revillout published only the *ekthesis* (or *expositio fidei*) of the *Didascalia*, omitting the normative section. Two years later, he returned to this material and started to work on the new Turin witness, corresponding to CLM 47 and also identified as the reconstructed codex CMCL GIOV.AC,²⁶ publishing all the Nicene texts of this codex together with a new edition of the works of CLM 359.²⁷ The codex CLM 47 comes from the monastery of St John the Baptist at This in the Thebaid region and was probably produced between the seventh and eighth centuries.

About ten years after Revillout's publication, Francesco Rossi proposed a new edition of these Nicene texts with an Italian translation because:

²³ All the works listed appear more or less incomplete due to the dispersion of the manuscript sheets. In fact, at the moment out of the 101 sheets that originally made up the codex, 49 are known and preserved in various libraries and institutes around the world. In addition, the so-called *corpus* of Agathonius of Tarsus is also present in CLM 359. For a detailed list of works, preserved sheets, and places of conservation, see → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts/359>.

²⁴ Lenormant, *Mémoires de l'Institut national de France* 19/2 (1853), pp. 202–65.

²⁵ Revillout, *JournAs* 1 (1873), pp. 210–88. Revillout identified also the *Sententiae/Gnomai* attributed to the Council of Nicaea in another codex (CLM 54 and CMCL GIOV.AJ) preserved at the Museo Egizio in Turin. It is also worth mentioning that the very first systematic organisation of the materials related to Nicaea preserved there was carried out by Amedeo Peyron, who gathered all the sheets under the title “Sententiae Synodi Nicaenae,” corresponding to his fourth codex. Peyron, *Lexicon Linguae Copticae*, 1935.

²⁶ For all the codicological information relating to this codex, see the recent publication: Carlig, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, pp. 74–76. See also the PATHs page dedicated to CLM 47: → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts/47>.

²⁷ Revillout, *JournAs* 5 (1875), pp. 1–77, pp. 209–66 (the relevant texts are published here) and pp. 501–63 and 6 (1875), pp. 473–560. Then these contributions were published again by Revillout, *Le concile de Nicée*, I, 1881 and II, 1899.

*Il signor Revillout diede nel sovramenzionato opuscolo la trascrizione continuata, senza seguire l'ordine e la disposizione delle pagine e delle linee. Ciò non ostante io mi Sarei astenuto dal ristamparli, se in questa trascrizione egli avesse mostrato maggior fedeltà all'originale. Ma avendola collazionata coi nostri papiri, trovai che oltre all'omissione di alcuni brani, che egli disse illeggibili, e che io tuttavia riuscii a leggere, egli modificò ancora in vari luoghi il testo.*²⁸

Robert Atkinson revisited the Nicene fragments, expressing reservations about Rossi's translation of the *Didascalia*. Atkinson's criticism is based on Rossi's extensive reliance on Batiffol's Greek text, often disregarding the meaning transmitted in the Coptic text.²⁹ The sheets belonging to the CLM 47 codex have been reorganized by Orlandi in the aforementioned contribution *Coptic Texts Relating to Church Canons* in such a way as to overcome the confusion generated by the work of Revillout and Rossi.³⁰ The most recent and most relevant publication for the study of the manuscript is the volume published by the Museo Egizio *The Coptic Codices of Museo Egizio, Turin*; in particular, the two essays by Nathan Carlig are essential for their careful codicological and palaeographic description of the codices, as well as the work of reconstruction of the codices and the precise description of the individual panes preserved at the museum.³¹

3.2 The Coptic manuscript tradition of the *Didascalia* and related texts

The *Didascalia Patrum Nicaenorum*, as already mentioned, is transmitted by CLM 359 and CLM 47, unfortunately, both these codices have physical gaps, and only by comparing the two codices can we have a roughly complete view of how the Coptic version must have been organized, considering, however, the textual variants that distinguish the two manuscripts. The sequence of texts transmitted in CLM 47 and in some way linked to the memory of the Council of Nicaea is as

²⁸ Rossi, *Memorie della Reale accademia delle scienze di Torino* 36 (1885), p. 92 (pp. 89–158). Rossi's edition can be found on pages 147–54, while the translation was published in Rossi, *I papiri copti*, I, 1887, pp. 53–57. See the correspondence elaborated by Orlandi between the passages published by Rossi and the number of the glasses as preserved now in the Museo Egizio: Orlandi, *The Coptic Codices*, pp. 27–50 (p. 33).

²⁹ Atkinson, *PRIA* 3 (1893), pp. 24–99 (*Didascalia* pp. 67–72).

³⁰ Orlandi, *Coptic Texts*, pp. 14–15.

³¹ In addition to the contribution already mentioned in note 24, see also Carlig, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, pp. 133–201.

follows:³² *Didascalia Patrum Nicaenorum*, the *Subscriptio* of Paulinus of Antioch (cc0958), the letter of Epiphanius (cc0959), the letter of Rufinus (cc0960), and an anecdotal account of the presence of the Holy Spirit at the Council (cc0961).³³ CLM 359 exhibits lacunae at both the beginning and end of the *Didascalia*. The latter lacuna likely encompassed the *Didascalia*'s conclusion, the *Subscriptio* of Paulinus of Antioch, and the beginning of Epiphanius' letter.

It is noteworthy that Epiphanius' letter (beginning again in the lacuna), Rufinus' letter, and the account of the Holy Spirit are also transmitted in a single sheet, now preserved at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris (BnF, copt. 129.14.86). This sheet was probably part of the reconstructed codex CMCL MONB.FT/CLM 393, which contained the *Sententiae/Gnomai* attributed to the Council of Nicaea and the Antiochene *Corpus canonum*.³⁴

In summary, two distinct manuscript witnesses, different in provenance – CLM 359 from the White Monastery of Atri (dated to 1002/1003) and CLM 47 from the Monastery of St John the Baptist of This (7th/8th century) – transmit a consistent textual block comprising the *Didascalia*, the *Subscriptio* of Paulinus, two letters attributed to Epiphanius and Rufinus, and, in conclusion, the text on the Holy Spirit at Nicaea. A third witness, which includes the two letters and the Holy Spirit text, complements the available sources for this textual collection. Given the manuscript's physical lacunae, it is likely that this third witness originally contained additional Nicene texts, potentially including the *Didascalia* and the *Subscriptio*.

4. SOME REMARKS ON TITLES, CONTENTS, AND TRANSMISSION OF THE *DIDASCALIA* AND ITS RELATED TEXTS

As previously noted, the structure of the *Didascalia* consists of two main sections: the first contains the text of the Nicene creed followed by an in-

³² Before the *Didascalia* in CLM 47, there are two texts on John the Baptist, one attributed to Cyril of Alexandria (cc0840) and one to Proclus of Constantinople (cc0390), and then the life of Aphou (cc0407). At the end of the Nicene material, there is the Passion of Herai (cc0276) with which the codex ends.

³³ It is interesting to note that the *Didascalia* is transmitted together with Paulinus' *Subscriptio* in the Armenian version as well.

³⁴ It should be noted that both in the reconstruction offered by Orlandi and in the one presented on PATHs, *De Spiritu Sancto in concilio Nicaeno* (cc0961) is not included among the texts contained in this reconstructed codex. However, although the material conservation of the sheet is not optimal, the title and the beginning of the work can be read easily: → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/manuscripts/393>.

depth explanation of the right faith, and the second is a series of norms addressed to the clergy, monks, and laity. The same structure is also maintained in the Coptic version. Unfortunately, in CLM 359, the first lines of the work are missing due to a gap in the manuscript; therefore, the title of the work has not been preserved.³⁵ However, in manuscript CLM 47, the title of the work has been preserved and reads: “the synod of Nicaea concerning the safe Faith” (ΤΟΥΝΣΟΔΟΥ ΝΙΚΑΙΑ ΕΤΒΕ ΤΗΙΣΤΙΣ ΕΤΟΥΧ).³⁶ In the title transmitted in this codex, there is no reference to the number of Nicene Fathers, but only to the council and the “safe faith”, a theme dealt with at Nicaea. Furthermore, there is no further specification describing the second regulatory part that highlights this content. By contrast, the Greek version explicitly refers to the dual content: ἔκθεσις πίστεως (first part) and διδασκαλία (second part).³⁷ The doctrinal section of the *Didascalia*, as in the Greek version, follows the series of anathemas proper of the Nicene Creed and addresses two main themes: first, the relationship between the three divine persons and the one substance; and second, the theme of the Incarnation, which echoes the early stages of the Apollinarian controversy.

The second part of the *Didascalia* is introduced by the following phrase in Coptic: “concerning the life of the sons of the Catholic Church, especially the anchorites who are in it” (ΕΤΒΕ ΠΒΙΟΣ ΘΕ ΝΝΩΗΡΕ ΝΤΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΝΣΟΥΟ ΔΕ ΝΑΝΑΧΩΡΙΤΗΣ ΕΤΝΣΗΤΣ).³⁸ The *Didascalia* in the Greek version presents a more detailed sentence that mentions as users of the provisions present in the text “bishops, clerics, monks, and Christians and even their children”.³⁹ The list of recipients of the norms transmitted in Greek is more structured than that present in the Coptic witness. However, the beginning of the *Syntagma* reads: “The life of the sons of the Catholic Church, and especially that of the anchorites and

³⁵ Regarding the question of titles in Coptic, see Buzi, in Buzi (ed.), *Detecting Early Medieval Coptic Literature*, 2019, pp. 62-72.

³⁶ III, 46 verso.

³⁷ This is true for the title reported in the various codices published so far (Mingarelli, Batiffol, Thurn, and Riedinger) which have some variants but always contain this bipartite structure.

³⁸ Napoli, Bibl. Naz. Vittorio Emanuele III, IB.10.11, p. 51. All the Coptic transcriptions are by me, as are the translations of the passages into English.

³⁹ ἔστι δὲ ὁ βίος τῆς αὐτῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ μάλιστα ἐπισκόπων καὶ κληρικῶν καὶ μοναζόντων καὶ χριστιανῶν καὶ ἕως τοῖς υἱοῖς αὐτῶν. Riedinger and Thurn, *JÖB* 35 (1985), p. 86. The version in Batiffol's edition has some variations, but in substance the beginning of this section is the same (Batiffol, *Didascalia CCCXVIII patrum*, p. 10).

monks in it, is like this.”⁴⁰ It is immediately evident that this version of the incipit more closely resembles the one found in the Coptic tradition. For instance, both include a reference to anchorites, which is entirely absent from the Greek text of the *Didascalia* in all the manuscripts used for the critical editions. This analogy between the *Didascalia* in Coptic and the *Syntagma* in Greek could suggest a closeness between these two versions of the texts. As with the other versions, the provisions listed in this section cover every aspect of monastic life and beyond: from when it is appropriate to fast to how to behave when lending money, from the prohibition of beard tonsure to abstinence from wine. These indications appear as a set of “general moral instructions, church order, and monastic rule”.⁴¹ For this second part, Kohlbacher emphasizes that it is clear that the editor drew from the *Didache*, but, as Revillout also pointed out, also from the canons of the councils of the fourth century, in particular Gangra and Laodicea. On the other hand, there are the provisions that Epiphanius himself includes in his practical compendium placed at the end of the *Panarion*. Some of the topics that he treats briefly there coincide with those that are addressed in the *Didascalia*.

The conclusion of the *Didascalia* is unfortunately very incomplete in both codices. In CLM 359, the sheets that conveyed the conclusion of the work have not been preserved,⁴² while for the CLM 47 codex the leaf was previously composed of two fragments: III, 63, fr. 2, and XIV, 11, fr. 1. We can now add to these two an unpublished fragment that I identified while researching this article: XIV, 13, fr. 2 (→ TPOP Doc ID 666; [Fig. 1]). This new fragment is of particular importance not only because it preserves the last sentences of the *Didascalia* but also because, on the *verso*, the *incipit* of the *Subscriptio Paulini*, hitherto unknown in Coptic, is still readable.⁴³

In Coptic, the *Subscriptio* is known only in this context, accompanying the *Didascalia* and the other two epistles. In Greek, however, the situation is different. It appears in two different works: the earliest is in the so-called *Tomus ad Antio-*

⁴⁰ ἔστιν ὁ βίος τῶν υἱῶν τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ μάλιστα τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ ἀναχωρητῶν ἦτοι μοναχῶν οὕτως. Batiffol, *StudPatr* 11 (1890), p. 121.

⁴¹ Kohlbacher, in Emmel et al. (eds.), *Ägypten und Nubien*, 1999, p. 150.

⁴² The gap of 2 leaves (pp. 65–68) must have contained both the end of the *Didascalia* and the *Subscriptio Paulini* as well as the beginning of Epiphanius' letter.

⁴³ I discuss below the content of this newly discovered fragment, and include the fragment itself, while the critical edition of this textual unit (*Didascalia*, *Subscriptio*, the two epistles, and the account of the Holy Spirit at Nicaea) will follow in a future publication.

chenos by Athanasius of Alexandria,⁴⁴ while later it is found in the *Panarion* of Epiphanius of Salamis.⁴⁵ The Trinitarian question is the predominant theme in the *Subscriptio*, but there is also a reflection on the incarnation of Christ which, according to Paulinus, could not be “without soul, sensibility, or intellect”.⁴⁶ Paulinus refers to the central points of the *Tomus* to emphasize his orthodox faith and accompanies his *subscriptio* with a series of anathemas against Sabellius and Photinus and against all those who do not profess the faith of the Nicene Fathers.

In the *Tomus*, the *subscriptio* begins: “And after this tome had been sent from Alexandria, signed by those mentioned above, they also signed it thereafter. I, Paulinus, hold this view [...]” (Καὶ μετὰ τὸ ἀποσταλῆναι ἀπὸ Ἀλεξανδρείας τὸν τόμον τοῦτον οὕτως παρὰ τῶν προειρημένων ὑπογεγραμμένον μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ αὐτοὶ ὑπέγραψαν. ἐγὼ Παυλῖνος οὕτως φρονῶ [...]).⁴⁷ The text reported by Epiphanius in the *Panarion* is introduced by the expression “Copy by the hand of Paulinus, the bishop. I, Paulinus the bishop, hold this view [...]” (ἀντίγραφον <διὰ> χειρὸς Παυλίνου τοῦ ἐπισκόπου. Ἐγὼ Παυλῖνος ὁ ἐπίσκοπος οὕτω φρονῶ [...]).⁴⁸ In the Coptic version, the beginning of the text is marked by a zeta-shaped *paragraphos*, indicating the start of a new section in the codex,⁴⁹ although no initial title appears – unlike the one preceding the *Didascalia*. The beginning of the *subscriptio* in Coptic reads: “The copy of Paulinus, archbishop of [...]” (ⲡⲁⲛⲧⲓⲁⲣⲁⲫⲟⲛ ⲙⲡⲁⲩⲛⲟⲥ ⲡⲁⲣⲭⲓⲉⲡⲓⲥⲕⲟⲡⲟⲥ ⲛⲧ[...]).⁵⁰ Notably,

⁴⁴ The *Tomus ad Antiochenos* is the primary source for the Council of Alexandria in 362, comprehensively addressing the key issues raised during the episcopal gathering. Athanasius addressed the tome to five bishops – Eusebius of Vercelli, Lucifer of Cagliari, Asterius of Arabia, Cimatius of Palto, and Anatolius of Berea – tasked to settle the complex Antiochian question. Beyond the official bishop Euzoius, this complex situation involved Paulinus and Meletius as leaders of the Nicene party and Vitalis, appointed bishop of the city by Apollinaris of Laodicea. See *Introduzione* in Athanasius, *Lettera agli antiocheni*, 2016, pp. 11–44.

⁴⁵ *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, 11; Epiphanius, *Panarion*, 77, 20–23. Epiphanius recounts in the *Panarion* his visit to Antioch where he had been called to settle the controversy that had arisen between Paulinus and Vitalis. At first, he suspended communion with both parties and requested that each “bishop” submit a written confession of faith to demonstrate their orthodoxy. It is precisely at this point that the *Subscriptio Paulini* occurs in the *Panarion*, proposed by Paulinus himself as evidence in his favor. Vitalis, by contrast, was subjected to a close interrogation, at the conclusion of which he declared that Christ had assumed σὰρξ and ψυχή, but not νοῦς.

⁴⁶ Οὔτε γὰρ ἄψυχον οὔτε ἀναισθητόν οὔτε ἀνόητον σῶμα εἶχεν ὁ σωτήρ. Athanasius, *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, 11, 2.

⁴⁷ Athanasius of Alexandria, *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, 11, 1–2.

⁴⁸ Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion*, 77, 21,1. Greek text: Epiphanius von Salamis, *Panarion*, 1915–1933.

⁴⁹ “New sections of the texts are marked by an enlarged initial written in *ekthesis*, a *paragraphos* or a zeta-shaped *paragraphos*. Initial titles of the literary works are decorated with *paragraphoi* and *diplai* (>) upwards, downwards and in the lateral margin”. Carlig, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 75.

⁵⁰ XIV, 13, fr. 2 verso [Fig. 1].

while Paulinus here calls himself “archbishop”, the *Panarion* calls him “bishop”. This shows that, in the Coptic tradition, Paulinus is identified not merely as a bishop, but specifically as an archbishop. Furthermore, the Coptic term used to describe Paulinus’ text, ⲁⲛⲧⲓⲣⲁⲫⲟⲛ (“copy”), corresponds to the Greek ἀντίγραφον, which is employed in the *Panarion* to introduce the *subscriptio*. These lexical parallels suggest a closer affinity between the Coptic version of Paulinus’ *subscriptio* and the *Panarion* text than with the *Tomus* text.

Another noteworthy point is that the conclusion of the *Didascalia*, as known from the Greek tradition, is not present immediately before the beginning of the *Subscriptio* in the Coptic version. The Coptic text of the *Didascalia* corresponding to the Greek ends in column *a* on page 152 (P¹⁵²), corresponding to XIV, 11, fr. 1 *verso*. The final clause found in the Greek version – where reference is again made to the salvific teachings (σωτήριοι διδασκαλῖαι) of the 318 Nicene Fathers⁵¹ – appears to be absent in the Coptic. Instead, the Coptic *Didascalia* concludes with a formula more like that found in the *Syntagma*: “[...] believe, he will be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. This [is] the glory of the Father with the Son with the Holy Spirit [...] forever and ever, amen” ([...] ΠΙΣΤΕΥΕ [ϣ]ΝΑΩΩΠΕ [Μ]Μ[Δ]ΘΗΤΗΣ ΜΠΧΟ[ΕΙC] ΤC ΠΕΧC · [ΠΔ]Ι ΠΕΘΟΥ [ΠΕ] . . ΜΠΕΙ[ΩΤ] ΜΝΠΩΗ[ΡΕ] ΜΝΠΕΠΝΔ [ΕΤ]ΟΥΔΑΒ [ΩΔΕ]ΝΕZ Ν[ΕΝΕ]Z ΔΑΜΗΝ).⁵² This conclusion of the *Didascalia*, as already mentioned, appears in the middle of column *a*, while the beginning of the *Subscriptio* occurs in the second part of column *b*. This suggests the presence of an intervening text – likely an extension of the *Didascalia* – between the two. Fragment III, 63, fr. 2 must be inserted into this gap and provides a part of the text: “Know that the Lord has taught all these things which we have said [...]” (ΕΙΜΕ ΧΕΡΕΠΧΟΕΙC † CΩ ΕΤΒΕ ΝΑΪ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΕΝΤΑΝΧΟΥ).⁵³ This connecting text appears in the Armenian version of the *Didascalia*, placed precisely between the latter and Paulinus’ *subscriptio*.⁵⁴ The parallel with the Coptic is therefore especially compelling.

51 Καὶ αὐταὶ μέν εἰσιν αἱ σωτήριοι διδασκαλίαι τῶν ἁγίων τη' πατέρων αἱ ὁδηγοῦσαι εἰς τὴν αἰώνιον ζωὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ· αὐτῶ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. ἀμήν. Riedinger and Thurn, *JÖB* 35 (1985), p. 92.

52 Here I give only the transcription of the parts of the fragment that can be read with certainty. XIV, 11, fr. 1 verso. *Syntagma's* conclusion: μεθ' οὗ τῷ πατρὶ σὺν ἀγίῳ πνεύματι ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων ἀμήν. Batiffol, *StudPatr* 11 (1890), p. 128.

53 III, 63, fr. 2 verso.

54 I owe the information about the presence of this text in Armenian to Federico Alpi whom I sincerely thank for his help and support for the drafting of this contribution.

The text after the *Subscriptio* of this textual unit is the letter of Epiphanius. While the epistle attributed to Epiphanius had been thought to be unattested in the Greek tradition, I have identified the Greek text as the final part of a letter in the *Panarion* section concerning the Antidicomarianites (*Panarion* 78, 24). The beginning of the letter, preserved in fragment XIV, 13, fr. 3 *verso*, is marked here by an enlarged letter in the word *ekthesis*, beside which we read: “Απα Epiphanius, archbishop, writes” (ἀπα ἐπιφάνιος παρχημίσκοπος ἐκ[ε]ταί).⁵⁵ In the fragmentary lines preceding Epiphanius’ letter, the text makes reference to Athanasius of Alexandria.⁵⁶ A similar mention is also found in the Greek version of the *Subscriptio* transmitted in the *Panarion*. As with the *Subscriptio*, the letter is not preceded by a new title but is instead introduced as a continuation of the same textual unit. Once again, the letter addresses the Trinitarian question and the doctrine of the Incarnation, with particular emphasis on Christ’s assumption of the human intellect, in addition to body and soul.

At the end of Epiphanius’ letter, the epistle attributed to bishop Rufinus is given. This text too is currently known only in its Coptic version. The author’s name is itself a matter of debate: in CLM 47 and CLM 359, he appears as ρουφίνος/ρουφινος, while in CLM 393 he is given as ρουφῖανος and is referred to as archbishop of Rome.⁵⁷ This attribution, however, finds no support in the historical lists of bishops of that city. On the other hand, this otherwise unattested bishop might be the addressee of Athanasius’ *Epistula ad Rufinianum*. In that letter, Athanasius responds to Rufinianus’ inquiry by clearly outlining the decisions taken at the council of Alexandria in 362 regarding those who had accepted the homoian creed in 360. Athanasius addresses him simply as συλλειτουργός without any mention of his episcopal see. In CLM 47, the beginning is also preceded by a zeta-shaped *paragraphos* indicating the beginning of a new section. As in the previous letter, the introductory formula reads: “Rufinus, the archbishop, writes” (ρουφίνος παρχιεμίσκοπος ἐκ[ε]ταί).⁵⁸ The same sentence in CLM 359 is graphically treated as an initial title, i.e. the use of right-sloping majuscule and the decoration with *paragraphoi* upwards and

⁵⁵ XIV, 13, fr. 3 *verso*.

⁵⁶ III, 73 *verso* and XIV, 13, fr. 3 *verso*.

⁵⁷ CLM 47: III, 60 *verso*; CLM 359: BAV, Borg. copt. 109, cass. XXIX, fasc. 159.8 *recto*; CLM 393: BnF, copt. 129.14.86 *recto*.

⁵⁸ III, 60 *verso*.

downwards. The content likewise treats the Trinity and the completeness of Christ's soul (ϣϣϣϣ).⁵⁹

The last text of this textual unit is the account *De Spiritu Sancto in concilio Nicaeno*, also known only in Coptic. In CLM 47, it is introduced by the title: “The letter written at Nicaea by the Holy Synod” (ⲧⲉⲛⲓⲥⲧⲟⲗⲏ ⲛⲧⲁⲥⲱⲱⲛⲉ ⲛⲛⲓⲕⲁⲓⲁ ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ ⲛⲧⲥϣⲛⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲟϥⲁⲗⲗⲥ).⁶⁰ A similar title appears also in CLM 393, though it refers directly to the “faith of Nicaea” rather than to an epistle.⁶¹ In CLM 359, the text lacks a proper title but is set apart from the preceding letter of Rufinus by a series of upward-facing *paragraphoi*. Additionally, what appears to be a final title is preserved – written in right-sloping majuscule and decorated with *paragraphoi* – which reads simply: “The synod of Nicaea” (ⲧⲥϣⲛⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲛⲛⲓⲕⲁⲓⲁ).⁶² The account on the Holy Spirit in CLM 47 ends in fragment XIV, 19, fr. 2, which Nathan Carlig, based on palaeographic observations, has proposed assigning to this codex. The content of the fragment supports this attribution, since the *recto* contains a passage also found in CLM 359, albeit with some variants.⁶³ On the *verso*, one can clearly see the characteristic decorative marks used in this codex to indicate the end of a work and the beginning of a new text with different content [Fig. 2]. This detail is significant, since no such visual division appears elsewhere within this textual unit, which contains, as already pointed out, the *Didascalia*, Paulinus' *subscriptio*, the two letters, and the text on the Holy Spirit.

⁵⁹ It should be noted that the version of the letter transmitted by CLM 393 differs considerably from the other two witnesses. In fact, in this witness any reference to the humanity of Christ disappears. It is possible to hypothesize a targeted intervention by a copyist, perhaps worried about a possible Chalcedonian interpretation of the sections concerning the humanity of Christ.

⁶⁰ III, 62 recto.

⁶¹ ⲧⲁⲓ ⲧⲉ ⲧⲏⲓⲥⲧⲟⲗⲏ ⲛⲧⲁⲥⲱⲱⲛⲉ ⲛⲛⲓⲕⲁⲓⲁ ⲧⲡⲟⲗⲓⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲧⲥ ⲛⲧⲥϣⲛⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲟϥⲁⲗⲗⲥ · ⲛⲛⲟϥⲉⲣⲏⲏ ⲛⲁⲙⲏⲏ. BnF, copt. 129.14.86 verso.

⁶² BAV, Borg. copt. 109, cass. XXIX, fasc. 159.8 verso.

⁶³ ⲙⲡⲟϥⲱⲛⲉⲛⲉⲛ ⲡⲱⲃⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲡⲉϥϣⲱⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉϥϣⲱⲕ · ⲟϥⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲟ ⲛⲟϥⲟ ⲙⲡⲟϥⲉⲙⲉ ⲉⲡⲉⲣⲁⲛ. BAV, Borg. copt. 109, cass. XXIX, fasc. 159.8 verso. See the edition of the fragment XIV, 19, fr. 2 at the end of this contribution. ⲉⲧⲱⲛⲉⲛ ⲙⲡⲟϥⲱⲛⲉⲛⲉⲛ ⲡⲱⲃⲥ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲡⲉϥϣⲱⲕ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲉϥϣⲱⲕ · ⲟϥⲁⲗⲗⲥ ⲡⲉⲧⲟ ⲛⲟϥⲟ ⲙⲡⲟϥⲟϥⲱⲛⲉⲛ ⲡⲉⲣⲁⲛ. XIV, 19, fr. 2 recto.

5. FINAL REMARKS

Much work remains to be done on the *Didascalia* and the accompanying texts transmitted together with it in the Coptic tradition. Nevertheless, several significant insights have emerged. In its Coptic version, the *Didascalia* is attributed to the work of the Council of Nicaea as indicated by the initial title in CLM 47 and the final title in CLM 359. Alongside this work, several other texts are transmitted: the *Subscriptio*, two letters of Epiphanius and Rufinus, and the text *De Spiritu Sancto in concilio Nicaeano*. In the surviving Greek witnesses, however, the *Didascalia* is not accompanied by the *Subscriptio*, the epistles, or the text on the Holy Spirit. Some of these texts – Rufinus’ letter and the Holy Spirit text – are attested and known exclusively in Coptic.

All these texts appear to function as a coherent collection. This hypothesis seems to be strengthened by the absence of distinct titles separating the *Subscriptio* and the two letters from the preceding text. Instead, they are merely marked off by paragraph signs or an enlarged letter in the word *ekthesis*, unlike the text on the Holy Spirit, which may represent a later addition to the earlier textual unit.

Moreover, the presence of Paulinus’ *subscriptio* after the *Didascalia* in the Armenian tradition further supports the idea of a coherent textual unit comprising at least the *Didascalia* and the *Subscriptio*. Additionally, both the Coptic and Armenian versions of the *Didascalia* feature a final section not attested in the Greek tradition. Probably, an extended version of the *Didascalia*, together with the *Subscriptio*, was already circulating in Greek, from which both the Armenian and Coptic versions ultimately derive. The absence of the two letters – and the Holy Spirit text – from the Armenian version suggests two different trajectories in the later textual transmission. One possibility is that the earliest stage of this unit included only the *Didascalia* and Paulinus’ *Subscriptio*, to which the two epistles were later added due to their doctrinal coherence with the preceding texts. Alternatively, the Coptic version may preserve the original form of this textual collection, while the Armenian version may reflect a later adaptation that omits the two additional epistles. However, it is still not possible to determine with certainty which version reflects the earlier stage of transmission. Finally, the text on the Holy Spirit appears in two out of three witnesses – CLM 47 and CLM 393 – with a proper title, which may indicate, as previously said, that this

text was originally an independent composition, subsequently incorporated into the broader textual unit.

These new insights, along with the recent identification of “new” fragments (XIV, 13, fr. 2 and XIV, 19, fr. 2) belonging to CLM 47, rekindle scholarly debate about the Coptic version of the *Didascalia* and the broader context in which this textual unit was compiled and disseminated.

A systematic reconstruction of the Nicene textual unit fragments of CLM 47 is presented below. Each entry will include the manuscript page number, the fragments’ ID number of the glasses as catalogued by the Museo Egizio, the corresponding textual content, and the works’ *Clavis Coptica* number.

| Original page number (preserved or supposed) | Glass ID | Content | <i>Clavis Coptica</i> |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|
| pp. 151 (↓)–152(→) | III, 63, fr. 2 XIV, 11, fr. 1 XIV, 13, fr. 2 | End of the <i>Didascalia</i> and <i>Subscriptio</i> of Paulinus of Antioch | cc0019, cc0958 |
| pp. 153 (→)–154 (↓) | III, 73 III, 59 XIV, 13, fr. 3 | <i>Subscriptio</i> and beginning of Epiphanius’ letter | cc0958, cc0959 |
| pp. 155(→)–156(↓) | III, 60 XIV, 13, fr. 1 | Epiphanius’ letter and Rufinus’ letter | cc0959, cc0960 |
| pp. 157(→)–158(↓) | III, 62 III, 61 XIV, 19, fr. 2 | <i>De Spiritu Sancto in concilio Nicaeno</i> ⁶⁴ | cc0961 |

Table 1 Overview of the Nicene textual unit fragments of CLM 47.

⁶⁴ The work *Herai Passio* begins on the verso of the *folium*, but the text is not the subject of this study.



Fig. 1 Codex CGT63000, XIV, 13, fr. 2 recto and verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.



Fig. 2 Codex CGT63000, XIV, 19, fr. 2 recto and verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

XIV, 13, fr. 2 / *Didascalia Patrum Nicaenorum* and *Subscriptio Paulini* [Fig. 1]

Recto (↓) p. 151:

1 [ΟΥ]
 2 ΗΗΒ ΕΤΒΕ
 3 ΝΕΠΡΟΨΦΟ-
 4 ΡΑ· ΑΛΛΑ ΕΚ-
 5 ΩΔΑΝΝΑΥ Ε-
 6 ΡΟΨ ΕΨΠΑΡΑ-
 7 ΒΑ ΠΩΤ ΝΑΚ
 8 ΕΚΕΜΑ ΕΤΜ-
 9 ΚΡΙΝΕ· *vac.*
 10 [3].ΝΕΙΡΕΞ
 11].Ν

Verso (→) p. 152:

1 [2]. [1]. [
 2 Τ[.]ΥΨ ΞΝΚΕ-
 3 ΑΝΤΙΓΡΑ-
 4 ΦΟΝ ΨΝΑΨΛΟ-
 5 ΓΟΨ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ
 6 ΨΠΑΝΤΙΓΡΑΦΟΝ
 7 ΜΠΑ`Υ`ΛΙΝΟΨ
 8 ΠΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΨ-
 9 ΚΟΠΟΨ ΝΤ
 10 . . . [

[...] sacred concerning the offerings. [...] in another copy, he will give ac-
 However, should you see him trans- count to God. The copy of Paulinus,
 gress, flee to another place so as not the archbishop [...]
 to judge him. [...]

XIV, 19, fr. 2⁶⁵ / *De Spiritu Sancto in concilio Nicaeno* (recto)⁶⁶ and *Passio Heraï* (verso) [Fig. 2]

Recto (→):

- 1] ετβ[ε]
- 2 [παλ] ἸΠΟΥΕΩ-
- 3 [νε]z πzωβ
- 4 εβολ χεογνρ
- 5 πε πεγχωκ·
- 6 ογδε πετο
- 7 νzογο ἸΠΟΥ-
- 8 σογν πεγ-
- 9 ραν· εγωδαν-
- 10 πωz [ε]ρργ ε

Verso (↓):

- 1] . . . [
- 2 ωινε [
- 3 λcπλζε [
- 4 μντε . . [

*conclusion signs*⁶⁷

Regarding this, they had not been able [...] greet [...] welcome [...] to set apart the total number, nor had they known the name of the one who was in excess. If they reached him, [...]

⁶⁵ This fragment is numbered as fr. 2 of the glass by Carlig, but it is actually fr. 1.

⁶⁶ The reconstruction of the fragmentary text of *De Spiritu Sancto in concilio Nicaeano* has been facilitated, in part, by comparison with the parallel manuscript witness (BAV, Borg. copt. 109, cass. XXIX, fasc. 159, 8 verso).

⁶⁷ A series of *paragraphoi* are used to mark the end of the work.

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SWEARING A VOW. INTERACTIONS WITH THE DIVINE AT THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN THINIS: RE-EDITION AND DISCUSSION OF P. TURIN PROV. 8548

Gesa Schenke

Inv. No.: Prov. 8548

Other Number: P.N. 605

TPOP Obj ID: 483886

Dimensions: H 22.0 cm x W 17.0cm

Date: seventh century

1. INTRODUCTION

The single papyrus sheet is written along the fibres. Twelve fragmentary lines of text are preserved on the recto [Fig. 1]. The verso shows only a few blotches of ink [Fig. 2]. The text on the recto, though slightly abraded, is complete. Following a broad upper margin, a wavy line of ink marks the beginning of the text, at the end of which a broad lower margin is left. Only one to two letters seem to be missing at the beginning of most lines, while the line endings are complete, leaving a fairly wide right-hand margin which may originally have also extended to the left of the papyrus.

The papyrus shows a non-bilinear script, written in black ink, now partially faded. The letters seem to be a slightly more cursive version of the literary script employed by the scribes of a collection of codices housed at the Museo Egizio, with which this papyrus sheet is said to have been discovered.¹ These codices have been dated to the late seventh/early eighth century.² In particular, letters

¹ Buzi, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 12.

² See Buzi, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 12; as well as Buzi et al., *RiME* 1 (2017), p. 169.



Fig. 1 Prov. 8548 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.



Fig. 2 Provv. 8548 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

such as Shai, Fai, Mu and Alpha look very similar. Kappa and Hori, however, are still the same size as the other letters, rather than enlarged, and Kappa is not yet split, which strongly suggests a date prior to the eighth century, making the seventh century a more likely time of origin.

The text has previously been edited by Revillout,³ Rossi⁴ and Lantschoot,⁵ and more recently by Soldati as part of the Paths project.⁶ Since this papyrus sheet was allegedly found “on top of the leaves of codex III”,⁷ it has been closely linked with this codex and its text believed to concern a book donation, following Revillout who took the text as a “donation votive dont une telle femme a pris soin”, and added: “Nous avons certainement affaire à une donation, probablement des livres qui composent notre bibliothèque, faite, d’après le vœu de son mari, par une riche veuve égyptienne de Thébaïde”.⁸

2. VOWS AND DONATIONS: FORMAL INTERACTIONS WITH THE SAINT

The purpose of Provv. 8548 is explicitly stated in the first line as a vow (εῖρη). No donation as such is mentioned in the text. The interpretation of this document as a donor’s note rests entirely on the assumption that the vow sworn to the saint at the sanctuary of St John the Baptist in Thinis concerned the donation of a codex, because the single document was found among codices.

A vow in and of itself, particularly one sworn at a church or the sanctuary of a saint, was an important religious act of speech, a solemn event with potentially far-reaching private and social repercussions. Much like swearing an oath, a vow was a formal declaration calling upon divine witnesses with regard to a dispute, a problematic situation, or proper conduct, and in the process established a

³ Revillout, *JournAs* 1 (1873), pp. 218–19.

⁴ Rossi, *I papiri copti*, 1887–1892, p. 167.

⁵ van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons*, 1929, pp. 181–82, no. 106.

⁶ See Soldati, → <http://paths.uniroma1.it/atlas/colophons/97>.

⁷ See now Buzi, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 12; as well as the text and comments in Buzi et al., *RiME* 1 (2017), pp. 165–75, esp. 171. So also presented by Suciu, → <https://alinsuciu.com/2012/01/27/rossis-edition-of-the-coptic-papyrus-codices-in-the-egyptian-museum-in-turin-1/> (last accessed 3 May 2024).

⁸ Revillout, *JournAs* 1 (1873), p. 219.

binding contract with a divine entity.⁹ As ritual acts, oaths and vows were widespread in society and played a vital role in the lives of men and women.¹⁰

Swearing oaths and vows in churches while touching codices, particularly while holding a codex of the Gospels, had become a frequent feature of religious Christian conduct already in the fourth century. John Chrysostom laments such misuse of altar, church and scripture by people making appeals and declarations via oaths and vows over the Gospels placed on the altar.¹¹ Vows and books were linked very closely, thus discovering a document regarding a vow amongst codices from the church of St John the Baptist in Thinis should come as no surprise.

The noun **ερητ**, “vow”, as well as the verb **ερητ**, “to vow”, along with its equivalent expression **†-ερητ**, “to give a vow”, all occur in Coptic literary texts where pilgrims make solemn promises to saints in their churches, shrines and sanctuaries. Such vows given to a saint are likewise mentioned in several of the donation documents (**ΔΩΡΕΑΚΤΙΚΟΝ**) from the Theban region. Many of these documents do concern offerings linked to vows previously made to St Phoibammon at his sanctuary located on the mountain of Djeme.¹² These documents, however, distinguish very clearly between an initial vow (**ερητ**) given to the saint in the hour of need, and the eventual gift (**προσφορά**) documented.¹³ The time period between vow and donation often spanned several years, thus swearing a vow

⁹ The boundaries of oath and vows seem to have been as fluid in antiquity as they are today, see for example Steymans, in Breed et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 2023, p. 1043; Vahrenhorst, in Breed et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 2023, p. 1048; or Sommerstein, in Sommerstein and Torrance (eds.), *Oaths and Swearing in Ancient Greece*, 2014, pp. 1–5.

¹⁰ See Thoma, *AncSoc* 53 (2023), pp. 99–138, with some of the latest literature; as well as Fletcher, in Sommerstein and Torrance (eds.), *Oaths and Swearing in Ancient Greece*, 2014, pp. 156–79.

¹¹ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Statues* 15.14, → <https://catholiclibrary.org/library/view?docId=/Fathers-EN/Chrysostom.OnStatues.en.html;chunk.id=00000031>. For this and other examples see the discussion by Blidstein, *Asdiwal* 12 (2017) p. 69; as well as Blidstein, in Breed et al. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 2023, p. 1059; and more generally Blidstein, *ARG* 20 (2018).

¹² See vows mentioned in P.KRU 78,19; P.KRU 79,64.65; P.KRU 80,16–17.18. 25.46–47; P.KRU 81,45; P.KRU 82,11; P.KRU 85,13–17; P.KRU 86,19–22; P.KRU 88,5; P.KRU 89,4.9.42; P.KRU 91,10; P.KRU 93,12–14.18–19.42.44; P.KRU 96,23–25.78; P.KRU 97,5.42; P.KRU 99,13; P.KRU 100,18.22–23.58; P.KRU 102,8; P.KRU 104,48; P.KRU 114,5–7.

¹³ P.KRU 79,64–65: **πειερητ μν τεπροσφορά παι νταιερητ μμοσ μπνουτε**, “this vow and the offering, this vow which I swore to God”; P.KRU 81,45: **πενειερητ μν τεμπροσφορά παι ντανειερητ μμοσ μν πνουτε**, “our vow and our offering, this pledge which we made with God”; P.KRU 82,11: **ανερητ μμοσ μπνοτε χιν νποου ντανχποσ**, “We pledged him to God from the day we begot him”; P.KRU 93,42.44: **παερητ**, “my vow”, **ταπροσφορά μν παερητ μπνουτε**, “my offering and my vow to God”; P.KRU 96,78–79: **περητ μπχοεис** “the vow to the Lord”; P.KRU 97,5: **πνερητ**, “our vow”; P.KRU 97,42: **χε ντανειερητ μμοσ εφ2N νεβινΔινο[с]**, “because we vowed it, while he was in danger.”

and making a donation were two distinct formal interactions with the saint,¹⁴ in which the latter did not necessarily need to follow the former.

The vow mentioned in Provv. 8548, which according to lines 3–4, [Δ]ΥΤΑΛΛ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΤΟΠΟΣ ΜΠΖΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΠΑ [ἰω]ΖΑΝΝΗΣ ΠΒΑΠΤΙΣΤΗΣ ΝΤΙΝ, “was presented at the sanctuary of St John the Baptist in Thinis”, shows similar phrasing to a vow uttered by John, son of Victor, from Castrum Jene, described in KRU 78,19–20: ΔΙΕΡΗΤ ΜΜΟΨ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΤΟΠΟΣ [ΝΦΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΠΑ] ΦΟΙΒΑΜΜΩΝ ΝΠΤΟΟΥ ΝΧΗΜΕ, “I vowed it at the sanctuary [of saint Apa] Phoibammon on the mountain of Djeme.” In both documents, the verbs ΕΡΗΤ and †-ΕΡΗΤ are followed by the preposition ΕΞΟΥΝ Ε- before the place where the vow was sworn. In KRU 78,20–23, John, son of Victor, even quotes the words of the vow that he gave: ΕΙΧΩ Μ[ΜΟΣ] ΧΕ ΕΡΩΔΑΝ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΝΦΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΠΑ ΦΟΙΒΑΜΜΩΝ ΧΑΡΙΖΕ ΝΑΨ ΝΠΤΑΛΛΟ ΟΨΑΙΔΩΡΙΖΕ ΜΜΟΨ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΡΟΨ, “as I was saying: ‘If God of saint Apa Phoibammon grants him healing, I will donate him to it (i.e. the sanctuary).’” Both phrases ΔΙΕΡΗΤ ΜΜΟΨ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΤΟΠΟΣ, “I vowed it at the sanctuary”, and ΟΨΑΙΔΩΡΙΖΕ ΜΜΟΨ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΡΟΨ, “I will donate him to it”, make it clear that vow and donation took place at different times.

While vows were in effect oral donations offered to a saint, they often remained conditional. John, son of Victor, makes it very clear that he will make a donation only in case his son Victor recovers from his illness, ΕΡΩΔΑΝ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΝΦΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΠΑ ΦΟΙΒΑΜΜΩΝ ΧΑΡΙΖΕ ΝΑΨ ΝΠΤΑΛΛΟ, “if God of saint Apa Phoibammon grants him healing” (KRU 78,21–22). Other documents contain similar phrasing of vows sworn at a time much earlier than the donation recorded in the document.¹⁵

¹⁴ See for example P.KRU 89, P.KRU 91, or P.KRU 93.

¹⁵ P.KRU 85,13–18: ΛΟΠΟΝ ΔΙΕΡΗΤ ΝΤΕΙΖΕ ΔΝΟΚ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ ΜΝ ΛΕΙΑ ΤΨΜΑΔΥ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΝ ΠΨΜΑΡΤΕΡΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΠΖΑΓΙΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΑΠΑ ΦΟΙΒΑΜΜΩΝ ΜΠΤΟΟΥ ΜΠΚΑΣΤΡΟΝ ΝΧΗΜΕ ΧΕ ΕΡΩΔΑΝ ΤΕ ΠΕΚΝΑ ΤΑΨΩ ΠΕΝΜΕΡΙΤ ΝΨΗΡΕ ΠΑΝΕΙΑΣ ΝΓΤΟΥΝΩΨΨ ΝΔΑΝ ΨΝ ΠΝΟΨ ΝΨΩΝΕ ΕΤΑΜΑΨΤΕ ΕΨΡΑΙ ΕΧΩΨ ΟΨΑΝΤΑΔΨ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΕΚΤΟΠΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΝΨΨΕΝΤΕΛΕ ΜΠΨΙΨΕ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΤΟΠΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΟΨΑ ΕΝΕΨ, “So, we swore in this way, I, Severus and Lia, his mother, to God and his holy martyr, the holy saint Apa Phoibammon on the mountain of Castrum Jeme: ‘If your mercy now reaches our beloved son Paneias and you raise him for us from this severe illness that has taken hold of him, we will donate him at your holy shrine (*topos*) and he will contribute his labour to the holy shrine (*topos*) eternally.’”

P.KRU 86,19–22: ΔΙΕΡΗΤ ΜΜΟΨ ΝΨΔΟΥΟΝ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΝΑΠΑ ΦΙΒΑΜΜΩΝ ΜΠΤΟΟΥ ΝΧΗΜΕ ΧΕ ΕΡΩΔΑΝ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΤΟΥΧΩΨ ΕΠΜΟΥ †ΝΑΤΑΔΨ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΤΟΠΟΣ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ, “I pledged him as a servant at the holy monastery of Apa Phoibammon on the mountain of Djeme: ‘If God saves him from death, I will donate him at the holy shrine (*topos*).’”

P.KRU 93,12–14: ΛΟΠΟΝ ΔΙΕΡΗΤ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΠΖΑΓΙΟΣ ΦΟΙΒΑΜΜΩΝ ΧΕ ΕΨΩΔΑΝΧΑΡΙΖΕ ΝΑΨ ΜΠΤΑΛΛΟ ΟΨΑΙΤΑΔΨ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΕΙΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΤΟΥΔΑΒ ΨΩΨ ΔΑΨΟΝ ΟΨΑ ΕΝΕΨ, “So, I swore to God of saint Phoibammon: ‘If he grants him healing, I will donate him at this holy monastery as a servant until eternity.’”

P.KRU 93,18–19: ΔΝΟΥΕΨΜ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΙ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΧΕ ΕΨΩΔΑΝΚΤΟΨ ΕΧΩΝ ΤΙΝΑΨΧΩΚ ΠΔΕΡΗΤ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΜΑ

Once a vow was uttered and the conditions of such an oral offering were met by the mercy of God and his saint, these vows were ideally fulfilled at the earliest opportunity. Failure to do so, to ignore or break a vow given to a saint, could result in severe punishment, often in the form of illness or death, as described in many of the documents relating to the sanctuary of St Phoibammon.¹⁶

What kind of solemn declarations were made at the *topos* of St John the Baptist in Thinis, we do not know. The vow mentioned in Prov. 8548 is not specified. It is also not linked to any particular individual. No personal name is given. Instead, it appears to be a formulary for a vow sworn by a married or rather widowed woman, as her husband, mentioned in line 5, is said to be **ΜΑΚΑΡΙΟΣ** (“blessed/deceased”). The formulary nature of this document has already been pointed out by Orlandi, who understood the text as a model formulary for colophons.¹⁷ Unless this was a model formulary for single use only, its reference exclusively to widows as donors of codices would suggest that vowing to donate codices was common practice for widows at Thinis, so much so that the word “book” (**ΠΧΩΜΕ**) as the object of such donations could be omitted altogether.

3. DONATIONS FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Donations of codices acknowledged in colophons commonly refer to the book itself, sometimes by its title, other times by its function as a tool for reading and instruction in church, or generally as a gift that keeps on giving.¹⁸ Forming part of the codex itself, colophons can simultaneously act as donation

ΕΤΟΥΔΔΒ, “We beseeched God again: ‘If he will return to us, I will fulfil my vow at the holy place.’”

P.KRU 114,5–7: **ΔΝΕΡΗΤ ΖΝ ΠΕΝΣΗΤ ΤΗΡΗ ΕΠΝΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΤΜΜΔΥ ΧΕ (Ε)ΡΩΔΝ ΤΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΒΟΗΘΕ ΕΡΟΝ**, “We vowed wholeheartedly at that monastery: ‘If now God helps us [...]’”

16 P.KRU 80,16–17: **ΔΙΟΥΩΩ ΕΠΑΡΑΒΔ ΜΠΕΡΗΤ ΠΔΙ ΝΤΑΙΣΜΝΤΗ ΜΝ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΝ ΠΕΠΕΤΟΥΔΔΒ**, “I desired to break the vow, the one I had made with God and his saint”; P.KRU 80,25: **ΠΡΟΣ ΠΩΟΡΠ ΝΕΡΗΤ ΝΤΑΙΕΡΗΤ ΜΜΟΦ** “according to the first vow I made”; P.KRU 96,23–25: **ΔΙΟΥΩΩ ΕΠΑΡΑΒΔ ΜΠΕΡΗΤ ΠΔΙ ΝΤΑΙΣΜΝΤΗ ΜΝ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΝ ΠΕΠΕΤΟΥΔΔΒ**, “I desired to break the vow, the one I had made with God and his saint”; P.KRU 100,18: **ΔΙΟΥΩΩ ΕΠΑΡΑΒΔ ΜΠΕΡΗΤ ΠΔΙ ΝΤΑΙΣΜΝΤΗ ΜΝ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΝ ΠΕΠΕΤΟΥΔΔΒ**, “I desired to break the vow, the one I had made with God and his saint”; P.KRU 100,22–23: **ΜΕΩΔΚ ΠΕΡΗΤ ΠΕΝΤΑΝΠΑΡΑΒΔ ΜΜΟΦ ΜΝ ΝΣΥΝΘΗΚΗ ΝΤΑΝΣΜΝΤΟΥ ΜΝ ΠΠΕΤΟΥΔΔΒ**, “perhaps it is the vow which we have broken and the arrangements we have made with the saint.”

17 See the discussion and note by Buzi, in Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 12, n. 34.

18 A recent overview and discussion on the subject is offered by Hypszer, in Atanassova et al. (eds.), *Pharaonen, Mönche und Gelehrte*, 2023, pp. 395–418.

document and manufacturing note providing date and place of production. Book donations made by women are not uncommon and all the colophons refer to the object of their donation more or less explicitly as having been accomplished through their own effort¹⁹ and for the well-being and salvation of themselves, often with their immediate family.²⁰ The term “vow” (ερητ) occurs in colophons mainly in a phrase expressing hopes that someone’s vow or dedication will be repaid in the heavenly Jerusalem,²¹ a common wish not limited to the donation of books.

The only example among the colophons referring to a female donor in which the initial vow (περητ) is mentioned alongside the final gift (πλωρον) provided, is a donation made in the year 982/3 by a woman named Kountite, presumably the sister or a close sister in Christ of the scribe himself, the deacon Markos, due to the possessive article used (παι πε περητ δω πλωρον εναπερατον νταμαιοϋτε νκωνε κοϋντιτε τωερεε μμμακαριος [...] εν τοπολις ρμωντ, “This is the vow and the continuous gift of my pious sister Kountite, the daughter of the blessed [name of her father] from the city of Hermonthis”).²² Her book donation, a parchment codex containing an encomium for the feast of the archangel Michael by Theodosius of Alexandria, as well as lessons to be read in church on the feast of St Michael,²³ is presented at his church or sanctuary (τοπος)²⁴ in a place starting

¹⁹ See Hypszer, in Atanassova et al. (eds.), *Pharaonen, Mönche und Gelehrte*, 2023, pp. 400, 402–04, 406–07, and 414–15, with donations nos. 2, 4, 5, 8, 12 and 15.

²⁰ See the list of sixteen examples discussed in Hypszer, in Atanassova et al. (eds.), *Pharaonen, Mönche und Gelehrte*, 2023, pp. 401–07. The last text included in this list is Prov. 8548 as no. 16 on p. 407 with no. 51, which stands out from this list as the only text written on papyrus. The document itself is also not part of a codex and due to its date in the seventh century precedes most colophons by hundreds of years.

²¹ Cf. van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons*, 1929, pp. 173–77, no. 102, esp. p. 176, col. 2, line 60, with a translation by Alcock, “Colophons of Coptic Manuscripts II”, 5; as well as Hypszer, in Atanassova et al. (eds.), *Pharaonen, Mönche und Gelehrte*, 2023, pp. 401, 402–03 and 406, with donation no. 2 made by Thanasia, daughter of Anastasia (van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons*, 1929, p. 72, col. 2, l. 42), donation no. 4 made by Takhaon (van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons*, 1929, p. 77, l. 2), as well as donations no. 5 (van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons*, 1929, p. 99, col. 2, l. 48) and 12 (van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons*, 1929, p. 61, ll. 16–17).

²² See van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons*, 1929, p. 145, col. 1, l. 1; no. 8 in Hypszer, in Atanassova et al. (eds.), *Pharaonen, Mönche und Gelehrte*, 2023, p. 404, with no. 42.

²³ See Layton, *Catalogue of Coptic Literary Manuscripts*, 1987, pp. 131–32, no. 119.

²⁴ A *topos* is not automatically a monastery. Large sanctuaries like the one in Abu Mina are a *topos*. Abu Mina is referred to as the *topos* of St Apa Mena in the many miracle stories connected to his famous healing shrine. For many other churches and sanctuaries of saints the term *topos* is frequently used in literary as well as documentary texts.

with the letter **π** followed by a lacuna of about three letters.²⁵ Kountite made an arrangement for the continuous gift (ΠΑΩΡΟΝ ΕΝΑΠΕΡΑΤΟΝ) through her own efforts (ΑΣΧΗ ΠΕΦΡΟΟΥΨΩ 2Ν ΝΕC2ΙCΕ ΜΜΙΝ ΕΜΜΟC). She presented it at the church of the archangel Michael in [place name] for the salvation of her soul, that of her husband and that of her children (ΑΣΤΑΔ4 Ε2ΟΥΝ ΕΠΤΟΠΟC ΜΠΑΡΧΑΓΓΕΛΟC ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΜΠ[...]) 2Δ ΠΟΥΧΔΙ ΝΤΕCΨΥΧΗ ΜΝ ΤΔ ΝΕC2ΔΙ ΜΝ ΤΔ ΝΕCΩΗΡΕ), so that the archangel Michael shall bless her together with her husband and her children just as he blessed their forefathers, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, together with Sarah, Rebecca, Lea and Rachel (ΕΡΕ ΠΑΡΧΑΓΓΕΛΟC ΜΙΧΑΗΛ ΝΑCΜΟΥ ΕΡΟC ΜΝ ΝΕC2ΔΙ ΜΝ ΝΕCΩΕΡΕ ΝΘΕ ΝΤΑ4CΜΟΥ ΕΝΕΝΕΙΟΤΕ ΜΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΗC ΑΒΡΑ2ΔΜ ΜΝ ΙCΔΚ ΜΝ ΙΑΚΩΒ ΜΝ CΑΡΡΑ ΜΝ 2ΕΒΕΚΚΑ ΜΝ ΛΙΑ ΜΝ 2ΡΑΧΗΛ). What follows is a long list of eternal favours the saint should bestow upon her and her family members in exchange for her gift, once they depart this life.

The similarities with the roughly 300 years older papyrus document Provv. 8548 are striking. The main difference being that Provv. 8548 seemingly only intends to record a vow presented to saint John the Baptist at his *topos* in Thinis, a first step oral offering that might be followed up in due course with a physical gift, such as a codex, measures of oil for the lamp on the altar, vessels of wine, or other typical offerings presented at saints' shrines, possibly even the gift of pious acts of servitude.

4. INVOKING DIVINE POWER AT CHURCHES AND SHRINES

The text of Provv. 8548 states not only explicitly where the vow was to be sworn (lines 3–4: ΕΠΤΟΠΟC ΜΠ2ΔΓΙΟC ΑΠΑ [ΐΩ]2ΑΝΝΗC ΠΒΑΠΤΙCΤΗC ΝΤΙΝ “at the church (*topos*) of Saint Apa John the Baptist in Thinis”), but also for whose benefit this arrangement was made (lines 4–12: 2Δ ΠΟΥ[ΧΔ]ΐ ΝΤΕ[C]ΨΥΧΗ ΜΝ ΝΕCΜΑΚΑΡΙΟC [Ν-] 2Δΐ ΜΝ ΝΕCΩΗΡΕ ΜΝ ΝΕCΡΩΜΕ [Τ]ΗΡΟΥ ΚΑΤΑ ΝΕΥΡΑΝ ΧΕΚΑC ΕΡΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΝ Π2ΔΓΙΟC ΑΠΑ ΐΩ2ΑΝ[Ν]ΗC ΝΑCΜΟΥ ΕΡΟΟΥ ΜΝ ΝΕΚΛΗ[Ρ]ΟC ΤΗΡ4 ΜΝ ΝΕΥΗΙ ΤΗΡ4 ΚΑΤΑ [ΝΕ]CΜΟΥ ΝΑΒΡΑ2ΔΜ ΜΝ ΐCΔΔΚ ΜΝ [ΐΑ]ΚΩΒ “for the salvation of [her] soul, together with her deceased husband, as well as her children and all her family members by their

²⁵ Possibly **π[coi]**, since this codex is said to have been found in Edfu; see Hypszer, in Atanassova et al. (eds.), *Pharaonen, Mönche und Gelehrte*, 2023, p. 404, no. 42.

names, so that God and Saint Apa John shall bless them together with the entire body of heirs and their whole household, in accordance with the blessing of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”). As soon as the woman’s name would be added in exchange of the place holder (line 1: $\overline{\text{NIM}} \{ \overline{\text{N}} \} \text{C2IM6} \langle \overline{\text{NNIM}} \rangle$ “someone, wife of someone”), her vow would be registered as a personal invocation of divine power. The statement following the name of the supplicant (line 2: $\overline{\text{NXOIC}} \overline{\text{NNOYTE}} \overline{\text{COOYN}} \overline{\text{NNEYPAN}}$, “The Lord God knows their names”) indicates that the promise made at the sanctuary becomes a binding arrangement entered by this individual on behalf of her well-being and that of her family. Through her formal interaction with the saint, she is now personally bound to fulfill the promise offered in her spoken vow. Failure to do so risks severe divine punishment for swearing a false vow to St John. Divine power invoked through the agency of a saint could just as easily identify the supplicant as a perjurer.

The specific nature and personal phrasing of her vow would presumably have preceded the formulary statement preserved in Provv. 8548. The initial sentence of the text starting with $\overline{\text{NAI}} \overline{\text{NE}} \overline{\text{NEPT}}$ “This is the vow” not only seems to communicate as much, but also the line of ink heading the text itself appears to indicate that the statement was intended to be added to something else. Such a vow sworn at the church of St John the Baptist in Thinis would presumably have been witnessed by bystanders and recorded by a scribe.²⁶

Numerous such oaths ($\overline{\text{ANAW}}$) and vows ($\overline{\text{EPHT}}$) were sworn at churches and shrines of famous saints according to Coptic miracle stories, frequently associated with well-known Egyptian cult centres, all commonly referred to as *topos*, such as the healing shrines of Menas at Abu Mina, of Kollouthos at Antinopolis, or of Phoibammon at Assiut, at Touho, or on the mountain of Djeme.²⁷ At these famous shrines, the miracle stories recorded donations of objects, such as money, jars of oil or wine, plants, fields, houses, animals and people as gifts or offerings ($\overline{\text{PROCFORA}}$) to the saint, most often following a successful recovery

²⁶ The line of ink preserved might even indicate that a master copy was consulted, in which different sections of model testimonies and formularies were distinguished from one another. For a discussion of such formularies concerning invocations and magical texts see now Dosoo and Preininger, *Papyri Copticae Magicae*, 2023, pp. 20–21. For dividing lines between different healing formularies see e.g. PCM I 23, PCM I 31, PCM I 33 and PCM I 35 in Dosoo and Preininger, *Papyri Copticae Magicae*, 2023, pp. 274–79, 413–19, 432–35 and 447–53 with plate 15.

²⁷ For the use of the terms $\overline{\text{ANAW}}$, $\overline{\text{EPHT}}$ and $\overline{\text{WPK}}$ in documentary texts see examples in Richter, *Rechtssemantik*, 2008, pp. 182–84, 194 and 303.

from illness and suffering, or even near-death experiences.²⁸ In these miracle stories, oaths and vows are recorded as having been sworn in the presence of the saint inside these shrines and sanctuaries as a means of settling financial disputes or making a promise with regard to future conduct. Besides performing healing miracles, these saints acted as judges in disputes between opposing parties, and frequently punished those who swore a false oath in their presence or failed to keep their vows. This is related, for example, in the miracle stories dedicated to St Phoibammon, who punished a man for swearing a false oath at his shrine in Assiut, and eventually forgave and healed him. The former offender and patient then remained as a life-long servant at Phoibammon's martyr shrine in Assiut.²⁹

Such oaths, sworn in the name of a saint at his *topos*, usually concern financial conflicts. A typical example is found among the miracles in the encomion on Kollouthos, attributed to Isaak, bishop of Antinoopolis, and presented on the saint's feast day at his *topos* in Antinoopolis. At the centre of the story lies a dispute over a large sum of money lent to a scribe by a businessman, which leads both parties to approach Kollouthos at his *topos*, where the deceitful scribe swears a false oath claiming not to owe any money. As a result, the saint punishes the perjurer with death.³⁰

Similar practices regarding St John the Baptist are related by Gregory of Tours in his *Glory of the Martyrs*. An oath is sworn at the altar of a church in Tours dedicated to Mary and St John the Baptist. The oath turns out to be false, and the perjurer is likewise punished with an injury. Numerous other people who swore false oaths at the same altar are punished with death by the two saints.³¹

Swearing by and thus invoking the name of St John is also mentioned in P.Mon.Epiph. 162, a letter datable to the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century. In this letter from an archdeacon named Joseph to Apa

²⁸ See for example the end of the third miracle of Apa Mena, ed. Drescher, *Apa Mena*, 1946, p. 21, col. II, l. 30 and p. 22, col. I, l. 5: ΔΑΤ ΜΠΠΙΝΑΞ ΣΝΑΥ ΝΣΑΤ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΕΥΤΟΠΟΣ ΜΝ ΠΚΕΚΟΥΙ ΝΣΜΣΑΛ ΕΤΡΕΥΘΩ ΕΥΔΙΑΚΟΝΕΙ ΟΥΔ ΠΕΞΟΥ ΜΠΕΥΜΟΥ, "He donated the two silver plates to his *topos* and also the young servant boy, so that he would remain serving (there) until the day of his death." Numerous other examples are listed and summarized by Schenke, *Cult of Saints*, E01222, → <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E01222>.

²⁹ See the summary of the Ninth Miracle, Fol. 28r I,3–29r II,25, The False Oath (healing miracle) and others at Schenke, in *Cult of Saints*, E00240, → <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E00240>.

³⁰ See Schenke, in *Cult of Saints*, E00666, → <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E00666>, §§ 98–108.

³¹ See the entry by Tycner, in *Cult of Saints*, E00474, → <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E00474>.

Epiphanius, Joseph explains that he cannot come to visit, because he is very ill and bedridden. He hopes that Apa Epiphanius, his addressee, will pray for him, and underlines his condition in line 13 by adding $\epsilon\lambda\iota\omega\rho\kappa\ \bar{\mu}\pi\epsilon\lambda\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \bar{\iota}\omega\lambda\alpha\eta\eta\eta\varsigma\ \chi\epsilon\ \mu\alpha\bar{\iota}\beta\omega\kappa\ \epsilon\pi\omega\mu\mu\omicron$, “as I have invoked St John, because I am unable to travel.”³² Presumably, this was an invocation to receive healing, unless Joseph just tried to emphasize that he was indeed too ill to travel, “as I swore by St John that I cannot travel.”

In any case, the Coptic encomion on John the Baptist, attributed to John Chrysostom, claims that the name of St John the Baptist has healing powers that act like a medicine.³³ Gregory of Tours, in his *Glory of the Martyrs*, recounts the healing miracles that took place when he deposited relics of John the Baptist in an oratory at the forecourt of the church of St Martin in Tours. In the vicinity of the saint’s relics, a blind man could suddenly see, and a man possessed by a demon was healed.³⁴ Miraculous events related to the desire to obtain relics of St John the Baptist, as well as miracles caused by the blood dripping from his thumb, are likewise related.³⁵

A parallel to a possible application of the Turin formulary is O.Crum 131, an ostrakon dated to 17 March 701, which records the oath ($\lambda\alpha\lambda\omega$) sworn by a woman named Susanna as part of a financial dispute over inheritance. Susanna swears her oath at a sanctuary by the power of God and in the presence of her son Petros as the opposing party, claiming that she had not given anything to her other son Pses. Following the date of the recorded oath, the text continues in line 6 with the statement $\pi\alpha\iota\ \pi\epsilon\ \pi\alpha\lambda\omega\ \eta\tau\alpha\ \varsigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\alpha\eta\eta\eta\ \omicron\rho\kappa\epsilon$ “This is the oath that Susanna swore.”

| | |
|---|---|
| + $\omega\epsilon\ \pi\epsilon\iota\tau\omicron\pi\omicron\varsigma\ \epsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\lambda\lambda\alpha\beta$ | ‘By this holy sanctuary (<i>topos</i>), |
| $\omega\epsilon\ \tau\epsilon\chi\omicron\sigma\omicron\mu\ \mu\pi\epsilon\bar{\iota}\dagger\ \lambda\alpha\gamma\epsilon\ \eta\psi\eta\varsigma$ | by its authority, I have not given |
| | anything to Pses, |
| $\pi\alpha\psi\eta\eta\epsilon\ \omicron\upsilon\gamma\alpha\epsilon\ \mu\pi\epsilon\ \pi\epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\omega\tau\ \dagger$ | my son, and neither did his father give |
| $\eta\lambda\epsilon$ | him |

³² See Schenke, in *Cult of Saints*, E02438, → <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E02438>.

³³ See Schenke, in *Cult of Saints*, E06907, → <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E06907>.

³⁴ See Tycner, in *Cult of Saints*, E00466, → <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E00466>.

³⁵ See Tycner, in *Cult of Saints*, E00387, → <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=E00387>. For an overview of the range of cult activities around St John the Baptist see → <http://csla.history.ox.ac.uk/record.php?recid=S00020>.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 4 | ΕΙΜΗΤΙ ΕΥΖΟΛΟΚ(ΟΤΤΙΝΟΣ) ΝΟΡΘΟΝ ΜΜΑΤΕ ΖΑ ΧΑΤ ἔγρά(φη) Φαμενωθ κα ἰνδ(ικτίονος) τεσσαρεσκαι- δεκάτης Ϡ ΠΑΙ ΠΕ ΠΑΝΔΩ ΝΤΑ CΟΥCΑΝΝΑ ΟΡΚΗ ΝCΑ ΠΕΤΡΟΣ ΠΕCΩΗΡΕ ἐπὶ Ζαχαρία | (anything) except for only one proper solidus for a bridal gift.' Written on 21 Phamenoth of the 14th indiction. This is the oath which Susanna swore, opposing her son Petros, at the time of Zacharias, |
| 8 | Σαμουηλίου τοῦ τιμιωτ(άτου) πρωτοκομήτου + | son of Samouelios, the most honorable village headman. |

Susanna's oath is first recorded verbatim, followed by the date of the event. A second statement then provides the name of the person who invoked the power at the saint's sanctuary with her oath, followed by the reason for the oath, in this case a suspicious son. A scribe recorded her oral testimony in writing, and thus turned the oath into an official document.

In a similar way, the Turin formulary would have been intended to follow a personal vow made by a widow at the sanctuary of St John the Baptist. Vows sworn by widows seem not only to be in line with Scripture, as suggested e.g. in Num 30:9, "Also any vow of a widow or a divorced woman, by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her" (NKJV), but were most probably made at a time of financial as well as moral conflict. Family and kinship arguments frequently erupt over inheritance issues, particularly the inheritance of a deceased husband and *pater familias*. Widows may have faced severe financial scrutiny and disputes, which could best be settled not just before a secular authority, but ideally before the divine authority of God through the agency of his saint. It is thus very likely that we are dealing here with a blank formulary to be added to specific vows made by widows at the sanctuary of St John the Baptist in Thinis, presumably in the presence of members of their family, which would be recorded, dated and signed in a similar way to the oath sworn by Susanna in O.Crum 131. Such records and formularies would naturally be kept in the archives of the church amongst the books and papers, testifying to a variety of activities involving scribes.

The verb *ωρκ*, "to swear", with the noun *ἀνάω*, "oath", as used in O.Crum 131, are both commonly attested in hagiographical texts, but not only in relation to

the settlement of financial disputes. They likewise occur in relation to all sorts of promises made, as is the case in the miracles of Kollouthos, where a woman swears an oath (ἀναῶ) to become a servant at the shrine (*topos*) of St Kollouthos,³⁶ or another woman swears (ὠρκ) an oath (ἀναῶ) to her dying husband to bury him with his military coat placed under his feet.³⁷

The verb ἰ, “to give”, with the noun ἐρητ, “vow”, used in the Turin text, frequently occurs in hagiographical texts when mistreatment or suffering are concerned. In the miracles of St Phoibammon, for example, when a couple falsely blame their longtime servant for the theft of a bracelet that they later find still located in their own home, they are so ashamed of their behaviour that they bring offerings to the shrine of St Phoibamon at Touho, pray there for forgiveness and vow to better themselves: ἀγχι νοῦνος μπροςφορα μν οὐανζολομα ἀγβωκ ἐπτοπος μπζαγιος ἀπα φοιβαμων ἀγῶλη ἀγῖ πεγερητ ἀγκτοοὺ ἐπεγνι ζν οὐεῖρηνη ἐγῖεοοὺ μπνοῦτε μπζαγιος ἀπα φοιβαμων μν νετογὰδ τήρου ῶα ἐνεζ,³⁸ “They brought a large offering and provisions. They went to the shrine of St Apa Phoibamon. They prayed, swore their vow and returned home in peace, glorifying God through St Apa Phoibamon and all the saints eternally”.

5. FULFILLING A VOW

While ἐρητ is the vow or the act of promising something, what one vows or promises could be an activity as well as an object. If an object, πενταερητ, “what was promised” could then be donated to the shrine of a saint, such as the martyr shrine of St Kollouthos: μννσα ναῖ ἀπογα πογα εῖνε μπενταερητ μμογ ζμ πεγνῖ · ἀγταδγ ἐπμαρτηριον μπζαγιος κολογθος · ἀγογωμ ἀγσω ζμ πεττοπος · ἀγβωκ ἐπεγνῖ ζν οὐεῖρηνη ἐγῖεοοὺ μπνοῦτε μν πζαγιος κολογθος,³⁹ “Afterwards, each one brought what he had promised from his house. They gave it all to the martyr shrine of St Kollouthos. They ate and drank in his shrine (*topos*). They returned home in peace, glorifying God and St Kollouthos”.

³⁶ See ed. Schenke, *Kollouthos*, p. 264, col. I, ll. 8–26.

³⁷ See ed. Schenke, *Kollouthos*, p. 270, col. II, ll. 12–26.

³⁸ Verrone, “Mighty Deeds”, 2002, pp. 36, 26r ll, 28–35.

³⁹ See the miracles of Kollouthos, ed. Schenke, *Kollouthos*, p. 244, col. I, 21–II, 12.

An indication of the frequency with which such vows (ἐρητ) were made and then potentially ignored, thus turning them into dangerous false vows, is provided by a miniature parchment codex offering advice on typical concerns of ordinary people. Among a group of thirty-seven guiding statements provided in the name of Mary, the mother of Jesus, datable to the sixth century, two are concerned with swearing and fulfilling vows. These guidelines are entitled ΠΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΝΗΕΚΛΗΡΟΣ ΜΜΑΡΙΑ ΤΜΑΔΥ ΜΠΧΟΪΣ ΙΣ ΠΕΧΣ ΤΕΝΤΑ ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ ΠΑΡΧΗΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΕΙΝΕ ΝΑΣ ΜΠΩΕΝΟΥΧΕ, “The good news from the lots of Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, she to whom the archangel Gabriel delivered the good news”.⁴⁰

Advice 25 of this codex urges the user as follows: ΒΩΚ ΝΓΤ ΝΗΕΚΕΡΗΤ ΔΥΩ ΠΕΝΤΑΚΣΟΜΟΛΟΓΙ ΜΜΟΧ ΧΟΚΨ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ ΟΥΣΟΟΥΤΝ · ΝΚΤΜΡΖΗΤ ΣΝΔΥ · ΧΕ ΟΥΩΔΑΝΣΤΗΥ ΠΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΝΤΟΧ ΠΕΤΝΑΤΟΥΕΙΟ ΝΑΚ ΜΠΕΚΑΙΤΗΜΑ · ΝΨΒΩΛ ΕΒΟΛ ΝΤΕΘΛΨΙΣ ΕΤΣΜ ΠΕΚΣΗΤ,⁴¹ “Go and swear your vows. Whatever you have proclaimed, complete it right away and do not be doubtful, for God is merciful. It is he who will repay you with your request and who will dissolve the suffering in your heart”.

Advice 10 makes a similar statement, addressing the importance of not ignoring a sworn vow: ΤΡΗΝΕ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΝΑΨΩΠΕ ΝΜΜΑΚ ΔΥΩ ΚΝΔΟΥΧΔΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ ΤΕΘΛΨΙΣ ΕΝΤΑΣΤΑΣΟΚ · ΠΕΝΤΑΚΕΡΗΤ ΜΜΟΧ ΧΟΚΨ ΕΒΟΛ · ΧΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΕΨΠΙΡΑΖΕ ΝΛΑΔΥ ΝΤΟΚ ΜΜΑΤΕ ΠΕΤΟ ΝΑΤΣΩΤΜ,⁴² “The peace of God will be with you. You will recover from the suffering that has come upon you. Whatever you have vowed, fulfill it, for the Lord never tricks anyone. It is you alone who is disobedient”.

Both references in Mary’s interactive guidebook emphasize the importance of keeping one’s word. A vow sworn must be fulfilled, otherwise the arrangement with the divine might quickly be dissolved, typically to the disadvantage of the former supplicant. Moreover, both examples indicate that vows were sworn to alleviate personal suffering. Women, particularly widows swearing a vow to St John the Baptist at Thinis would presumably have done so for a similar purpose. Whether they vowed to fulfil a particular duty or to make an offering in exchange for a helping hand, as supplicants they were clearly hoping for divine intervention on their behalf to secure benefits for themselves and their families.

These types of personal interactions with the divine through the power of

⁴⁰ Luijendijk, *Forbidden Oracles?*, 2014, VII, 1 and 89 offering a slightly different translation.

⁴¹ Luijendijk, *Forbidden Oracles?*, 2014, p. 131.

⁴² Luijendijk, *Forbidden Oracles?*, 2014, p. 113.

the saints in their churches and shrines constitute a core element of the cult of saints developed during the early phase of Christianity all over the former Roman Empire. The Turin formulary to register a vow sworn by a widow in the church of St John the Baptist at Thinis is a prime example of the workings of the cult of saints in Egypt.

6. EDITION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

6.1 Text

→

vac.

-
- [+ π]Δῖ ΠΕ ΠΕΡΗΤ ΝΤΑ ΝΙΜ ΝCΣΙΜΕ ΞΙ ΠΕϞ-
 [ΡΟ]ΟΥΨ ΠΧΟΕΙC ΠΝΟΥΤΕ CΟΟΥΝ ΝΝΕΥΡΑΝ
 [Δ]CΤΑΔϞ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΤΟΠΟC ΜΠΞΑΓΙΟC ΑΠΑ
 [ΪΩ]ΞΑΝΝΗC ΠΒΑΠΤΙCΤΗC ΝΤΙΝ ΞΑ ΠΟΥ-
 5 [ΧΔ]Ϊ ΝΤΕ[C]ΨΥΧΗ ΜΝ ΠΕCΜΑΚΑΡΙΟC
 [Ν]ΞΑΪ ΜΝ ΝΕCΩΗΡΕ ΜΝ ΝΕCΡΩΜΕ
 [Τ]ΗΡΟΥ ΚΑΤΑ ΝΕΥΡΑΝ ΧΕΚΑC ΕΡΕ
 ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΝ ΠΞΑΓΙΟC ΑΠΑ ΪΩΞΑΝ-
 [Ν]ΗC ΝΑCΜΟΥ ΕΡΟΟΥ ΜΝ ΠΕΚΛΗ-
 10 [Ρ]ΟC ΤΗΡϞ ΜΝ ΠΕΥΗΝΙ ΤΗΡϞ ΚΑΤΑ
 [ΠΕ]CΜΟΥ ΝΔΒΡΑΞΑΜ ΜΝ ΪCΑΔΚ ΜΝ
 [ΪΔ]ΚΩΒ ΞΝ ΟΥΞΙΡΗΝΗ ΞΑΜΗΝ
vac.

3 τόπος || 3, 8 ἅγιος. || 4 Βαπτιστής || 5 ψυχή | μακάριος || 7, 10 κατά || 9–10 κλῆρος
 || 12 εἰρήνη | ἀμήν

6.2 Translation

¹ This is the vow for which *someone, wife of someone*, made ² arrangement. The Lord God knows their names. ³ She presented it at the sanctuary (*topos*) of Saint Apa ⁴ John the Baptist in Thinis for the salvation ⁵ of [her] soul, and for her deceased ⁶ husband, as well as for her children and all her family members

|⁷ according to their names, so that |⁸ God and Saint Apa John |⁹ shall bless them together with the |¹⁰ entire body of heirs and their whole household in accordance with |¹¹ the blessing of Abraham, Isaac and |¹² Jacob. In Peace. Amen.

6.3 Commentary

1. 1 [+ n]αῖ νε νερητ The beginning of the text was presumably marked by a cross, as the scribe and reader Georgios in the Turin text Prov. 6266 had done: + παῖ νε πχωωμε ντκαθολίκη εκκλησια ντιν ζν ουγειρηνη ντε πνουτε ζαμην, “This is the book for the catholic church in Thinis. In God’s peace. Amen,” as well as was done in O.Crum 131 (17 March 701), the explanatory statement following the oath of Susanna in lines 6–7: ⲡ παῖ νε παναω ντα ουγαννα ορκϥ “This is the oath that Susanna swore.”

νιμ ν̄ςζιμε, according to the family context with husband and children mentioned, appears not to refer to “some woman” or “someone female”, but was an abbreviated version of νιμ {ν̄}ςζιμε <ν̄νιμ> or rather νιμ τεςζιμε ν̄<νιμ> “someone, woman of someone”, a typical placeholder for a personal name to be added later, such as νιμ πωηρε ν̄νιμ or ΔΔ “someone, son of someone”, particularly common in medical and magical texts. See for example PCM I 10, a prayer for pregnancy, likewise from the seventh century, now in Dosoo and Preininger, *Papyri Copticae Magicae*, 2023, p. 106, where line 9 has νιμ πωε νιμ “someone, son of someone” and line 11 μεωε νιμ τωε ν̄νιμ “anyone, daughter of someone”. It is also less likely that νιμ ν̄ςζιμε stands for ςζιμε νιμ “any woman”, likewise in view of the widowed state mentioned in lines 5–6.

ϥι νεϥ[ρο]ογϥ “make arrangement for it” refers to the vow as the formal interaction with the saint through which an agreement is reached regarding the (oral) offering and the expected favour in return. The expression ϥι νεϥροογϥ or ϥι προογϥ occurs frequently in colophons, see the latest discussion by Hypszer, in Atanassova et al. (eds.), *Pharaonen, Mönche und Gelehrte*, 2023, p. 400, where they acknowledge book donations to saints at their churches or sanctuaries. Such donations were presumably arranged with the saint through a preceding vow. In O.Frange 641, 11–13, such an arrangement seems to have been made by a widower on behalf of his deceased wife to ensure her salvation: παῖ νε πχωωμε εντα απα διος ϥῖ νεϥροογϥ ετεκκ(λησια) ντρκωτ ζα πρμεεγε νταχηλ τεϥςζιμε, “This is the book for which Apa Dios made arrangement at the church in Terkot regarding the memory of his wife Tachel”. See also the recent discussion of this

text in Kotsifou, in Atanassova et al. (eds.), *Pharaonen, Mönche und Gelehrte*, 2023, pp. 436–37.

1. 2 Ed. Soldati, → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/colophons/97>, only has [p]oγϣ.

1. 3 Following the perfect tense in line 1, reading [Δ]ϙΤΑΔϣ, “She presented it”, would be in line with the female nature of the suppliant offering the vow. [Δ]ΥΤΑΔϣ as a passive, “It [was] presented” or “It [was] sworn”, might seem more likely in view of the all-inclusive formulary nature of the text. Some remnants of ink still seem to be visible, possibly the top right-hand hasta of γ or the top of a c. Reading [Δ]ϙΤΑΔϣ, however, may seem more likely, particularly with respect to the possessive articles in lines 5–6: ΠΕCΜΑΚΑΡΙΟC [N̄]ṣāī MN ΝΕCΩΗΡΕ MN ΝΕCΡΩΜΕ, “her deceased husband together with her children and her family members”. Possible alternatives like [N̄]ΤΑΥΤΑΔϣ “[That] they delivered it, ...”, [ϣΔ]ΥΤΑΔϣ “They [typically] deliver it” or [ΕΥΕ]ΤΑΔϣ “It [shall] be delivered” appear too long for the lacuna. Ed. Soldati, → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/colophons/97>, reads [ΔC]ΤΑΔϣ and ΖΙΧΝ ΕΠΤΟΠΟC, “She put it upon to the place (τόπος)”.

II. 3–4 This sanctuary or church (*topos*) of St John the Baptist in Thinis was presumably identical with the principal church at Thinis mentioned in Prov. 6266 as ΤΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΝΤΙΝ, from where the group of codices now in the Museo Egizio in Turin most likely originate. See Buzi, *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, p. 11, and Soldati, → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/colophons/96>. There is no reason to assume that the *topos* of St John the Baptist mentioned here refers to a monastery, as most major shrines of saints, among them the famous pilgrimage centre at Abu Mina, are referred to as “*topos*”. The widow would swear her vow most likely at the altar of the saint’s church.

1. 4 The π in ΝΒΑΠΤΙCΤΗC looks more like ν, as if the scribe was about to write ΝΤΙΝ too early. Ed. Soldati, → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/colophons/97>, even transcribes ΔΠ[Δ | ΙΩ]ΖΑΝΝΗC ΝΒΑΠΤΙCΤΗC. Likewise, the π in ΠΟΥ[ΧΔ]ī appears to be corrected from an accidental second Δ following ΖΔ-.

II. 9–10 ΠΕΚΛΗ[Ρ]ΟC ΤΗΡϣ In view of the clear family context, κληρoс (→ κλήρoс) should be understood not as “clergy” (see → <https://atlas.paths-erc.eu/colophons/97>) but as “inheritance”, either referring to the entire inherited estate or, more likely, to the collective body of inheritors which would directly correspond to the offspring mentioned in line 6. Alcock, “Colophons of Coptic Manuscripts”, II, p. 7, no. 106, translates ΠΕΚΛΗ[Ρ]ΟC ΤΗΡϣ ΜΝ ΠΕΥΗΙ ΤΗΡϣ as “their whole farm and household”.

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THREE MID-EIGHTH-CENTURY GREEK TAX-DOCUMENTS FROM THE APA IEREMIAS MONASTERY AT SAQQARA (P. TURIN T.GR. 36, T.GR. 37 AND PROVV. 6292)*

Lajos Berkes, Naïm Vanthieghem

1. THE CONTEXT OF THE DOCUMENTS

We present here the edition of three Greek tax documents written on papyrus from the mid-eighth century, relating to the Monastery of Apa Ieremias at Saqqara. These documents record tax payments made by at least three individuals, whose names are given as Kallinichos, son of Ouennophrios, Sambas, son of Kallinichos, and Kelloutz, son of Elias.

Our documents indicate that the taxpayers were inhabitants of a monastery dedicated to Apa Ieremias, several of which are known to have existed in Egypt.¹ However, the individuals listed are also attested in two Arabic safe-conducts (P.Ragib Sauf-Conduits 5 and 7), and possibly a third (P.Ragib Sauf-Conduits 6), where their names appear as Qallinīk, son of Wanāfar, Sambā, son of Qallinīk, and Qlūj, son of Hiliya.

In addition to providing physical descriptions of the taxpayers – Qallinīk, son of Wanāfar, for example, is described as corpulent, fair-skinned, with two moles on his face –, these Arabic documents state that the individuals resided in the pagarchy of Memphis, at the Monastery of Apa Ieremias. This monastery was located near the Pyramid of Unas at Saqqara, where the men lived either as laymen or monks. Kelloutz, son of Elias, is identified as a fuller in line 1, recto 2 (1.r.2), which may suggest that he was a layman; otherwise, we would expect him to be described as a “monk and fuller”.²

* We thank Nikolaos Gonis and especially Federico Morelli for comments and corrections on an earlier version of this paper. Their generosity and sense of *amicitia papyrologorum* has helped to bring greater clarity and historical depth to these challenging documents.

¹ Cromwell, ZPE 201 (2017), p. 251.

² Cf. e.g. BGU XIX 2796.3–4 (Herm., sixth c. [?]): Φαῦστος ἐλάχιςτος μονάζων (καὶ) διάδοχος or BGU XIX 2788.5 (Herm., 607–608): Λ[εό]ντιος ὁ ἐν μακαρία τῇ μνήμῃ μονάζων καὶ καλλιγράφος γενόμενος.

None of the three Turin papyri contains a Hijri year, but they record payments made primarily for the first indiction, and occasionally for the second. The safe-conducts in which our taxpayers are mentioned help determine the indiction cycles referenced in the Greek documents. Since the Arabic texts are precisely dated to Rabīʿ I 133 / October 750 (P.Ragib Sauf-Conduits 5) and Shawwāl 133 / May 751 (P.Ragib Sauf-Conduits 7), the second indiction of the Greek documents must correspond to 747/748 or 762/763.³

2. PROVENANCE

As mentioned earlier, these documents concern the same taxpayers as those named in P.Ragib Sauf-Conduits 5 and 7, which might suggest that all three were discovered at the same time as these two safe-conducts. As it happens, we know precisely where P.Ragib Sauf-Conduits 7 was found, thanks to a letter sent by Bernardino Drovetti's nephew – also named Bernardino Drovetti – to the arabist Antoine Silvestre de Sacy. In this letter, he states that the document, along with P.Ragib Sauf-Conduits 6 and another unpublished document,⁴ was

*found on the surface of a tomb (or well), sealed in a small terracotta vase, buried in the sand in the mountains of the city of Memphis, near the pyramids of Zaccara, and very close to the place where I worked to bring out the granite sarcophagus which is in your city, at the consignment of Mr Chayolle, and of which Mr Champollion gives a very learned explanation.*⁵

The use of jars that could be sealed with stoppers represents a well-known method of document storage in Egypt.⁶ The letter thus informs us that the dis-

³ These documents can be placed in a larger archival context, which we will discuss in a forthcoming contribution.

⁴ P.ParisBnF Inv. Ar. 4635 seems to be the end of an Arabic letter, with only the last four lines preserved.

⁵ This letter is preserved in Antoine Silvestre de Sacy's correspondence at the Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France under the inventory number Ms 2375, fo 186 bis. Its text is partially copied in Silvestre de Sacy, *JournSav* (1825) p. 467.

⁶ Such practices are attested for the Arab period notably by the Papas jar found in Edfu and by the jar discovered in the Fayoum, which contained the archive of Banū Bifām of Damūya. See Marchand, in Bader and Ownby (eds.), *Functional Aspects*, 2013, pp. 333–34 and Gaubert and Mouton, *Hommes et villages du Fayyoun*, 2014, pp. 5–6. The practice dates back to Pharaonic times and is attested elsewhere in the Mediterranean. See Lönnqvist and Lönnqvist, in Lange et al. (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2011.

covery occurred not far from the location where a large granite sarcophagus was found. This can only refer to the sarcophagus – now housed in the collections of the Louvre – of Djedor, son of Padiheka, who served as prophet of the statues of Pharaoh Psamtik I (664–610 BCE).⁷ Unfortunately, the exact location of his tomb remains unknown.

If Drovetti's account is to be trusted, the Turin documents may well have originated from the same vessel. At the time he sent the Arabic documents to Silvestre de Sacy, Drovetti may have retained the few Greek pieces, possibly hoping to sell them to another museum. It is also entirely plausible that Drovetti deliberately withheld information from Silvestre de Sacy regarding the presence of a third Arabic safe-conduct (P.Ragib Sauf-Conduits 5) in the same jar – this document later entered the private collection of Alphonse Raifé (1802–1860), before being acquired by the British Museum in 1867.⁸

3. TAXES

The three papyri record tax payments made by one, two, or three individuals over extended periods. They were issued by tax collectors, as suggested by documents **1** and **3**, in which the term *apaitetes* – i.e. tax collector – designates someone speaking in the first person singular, apparently identifying the issuer of the documents. These texts essentially follow the structure of tax receipts, listing the names of the payers, the types of taxes, the amounts paid, and the name of the tax collector. However, they are not receipts in the strict sense, as they were not issued on a single occasion but instead record payments in a detailed fashion over several months.⁹

⁷ On this sarcophagus, see PM III.2, pp. 765–66 and Guichard, *Lettres de Bernardino Drovetti*, 2003, pp. 72 and 474–77.

⁸ Alphonse Raifé likely acquired this document during his journey to Egypt in 1830. The Baron de Slane provided the first translation in the inventory of the Raifé collection, recognizing it as belonging to the same genre as P.Ragib Sauf-Conduits 6–7 – which, at the time, was only known through the edition by A. Silvestre de Sacy. See Lenormant, *Description des antiquités*, 1867, pp. 53–54, no. 438bis. In his *Essai sur la propagation de l'alphabet phénicien dans l'ancien monde* (1872, p. 153, no. 2), Lenormant further suggested that the document now held at the British Museum most likely originated from the same find as the two other safe-conducts.

⁹ We find similar tax documents, even if they are much shorter, from the 730ies in the Fayyum, thus just south of the Memphite pagarchy. See Berkes, *Tyche* 38 (2023). A further parallel is also the Arsinoite SPP XX 208, which was originally dated to the seventh century, but no doubt belongs to the (probably not too early) eighth century, as suggested by its handwriting (cf. the image available through the DDbDP).

The documents offer an impressive overview of the fiscal obligations an Egyptian was required to fulfill under the Arab administration around the mid-eighth century. We provide below a tabular overview of the taxes paid in **1**, the most detailed document:

| Line | Paid for | Amount | Paid through | Date of Payment |
|------|--|--|---|----------------------|
| 1–4 | gold taxes of Choiak of the 1st ind. | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ s. | Enoch, s.o. Phoibammon, tax-collector | - |
| 5 | <i>tablion</i> of Tybi | $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{12}$ s. | through the same person | - |
| 6 | <i>tablion</i> of Mecheir | 1 s. | - | 21 Mech. |
| 7 | for the same <i>tablion</i> | 1 s. | through Ps... | 28 Mech. |
| 8-9 | <i>tablion</i> of the 30th of Mecheir | 1 $\frac{1}{12}$ s. | - | Mech.–8 of Pharm. |
| 10 | <i>tablion</i> of Pharmouthi | 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ s. | - | - |
| 11 | for the same <i>tablion</i> | $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ s. | - | - |
| 12 | <i>tablion</i> of Pachon | 3 $\frac{1}{12}$ s. | - | - |
| 13 | <i>tablion</i> of Pauni to 8th Epeiph, | 3 $\frac{1}{24}$ s. | - | - |
| 14 | <i>tablion</i> of Mesore | 3 $\frac{1}{12}$ s. | through Ieremias, deacon | - |
| 15 | <i>tablion</i> of Thoth | $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ s. | - | 15 Thoth, 2 ind. |
| 16 | for the same <i>tablion</i> | 1 s. | - | 19 Thoth, 2 ind. |
| | Total | 18 $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{6}$ $\frac{1}{24}$ s. | | |

Table 1 Overview of the taxes paid in **1**, recto. Abbreviations used in the table: ind. = indiction; s. = solidus; s.o. = son of; Mech. = Mecheir; Pharm. = Pharmouthi.

| Line | Paid for | Amount | Paid through | Date of Payment |
|------|---|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1–2 | ... of the 1st indiction | $\frac{1}{3} \frac{1}{24}$ s. | Enoch, s.o. Phoibammon, tax-collector | - |
| 3 | wages of copper | $\frac{1}{8}$ s. | | until 8 Pharm., 1 ind. |
| 4 | wages of sailors of the Cursus of the Sea | 1 s. | - | - |
| 5 | <i>akatenaria</i> and sailors of Klysmā | $\frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{4}$ s. | through Ps... | 24 Pharm., 1 ind. |
| 6 | wages of workers on account of the ..., the dikes of Sephy-, the sailors of; Klysmā, and the sailors of the Cursus ... | $\frac{1}{6} \frac{1}{8}$ s. | - | until Epeiph, 2 ind. |
| 8 | fraction of the <i>tablion</i> of Tybi, 1 ind.–Pauni, 2 ind. | $\frac{1}{3}$ s. | - | - |
| 9 | ? | $\frac{1}{6} \frac{1}{48}$ s. | - | - |
| 10 | price of oil and vinegar | $\frac{1}{4} \frac{1}{48}$ s. | - | - |
| | Total | 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ s. | | |

Table 2 Overview of the taxes paid in **1**, verso. Abbreviations used in the table: ind. = indiction; s. = solidus; s.o. = son of; Mech. = Mecheir; Pharm. = Pharmouthi.

A central concept in these texts is that of the *tablia* (sing. *tablion*), to which the payments refer. The word *tablion* has multiple meanings. Strictly speaking, it denotes “a list” or “a register,” particularly in a fiscal context.¹⁰ Much like the Arabic word *dīwān*, which originally referred to a tax register before acquiring the metonymic meaning of “the office where tax records were kept”,¹¹ *tablion* appears to have undergone a similar semantic shift. Several occurrences in Greek and Coptic suggest that over time it came to refer to a physical location. For Harold I. Bell, the term denoted the local treasury (*sakella* or *bayt al-māl*),¹² but this interpretation seems overly restrictive. It is more accurate to identify it with the local tax office (*dīwān al-kharāj*). A third meaning derives from the Arabic *ṭabl* (pl. *ṭubūl* or *aṭbāl*) – itself a borrowing from Greek – which signifies “a levy” or “an installment”.¹³

¹⁰ See the discussion of Berkes, *APF* 68 (2022), pp. 371–75 and Garel and Vanthieghem, in Berkes (ed.), *Christians and Muslims in Early Islamic Egypt*, 2022, p. 110.

¹¹ Lane, *Lexicon*, 939b-c; Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire*, I, 755a.

¹² P.Lond. IV, p. 232 no. 4.

¹³ Garel and Vanthieghem, in Berkes (ed.), *Christians and Muslims*, 2022, p. 111.

Even though **1** provides a highly detailed payment schedule, it remains difficult to fully understand the extent of the fiscal obligations it represents. Two factors contribute to this difficulty: on the one hand, the use of the term *tablion*, as discussed above, obscures the specific taxes to which the payments refer; on the other hand, **1** was issued for three individuals, whose payments are recorded collectively rather than individually. Furthermore, the fragmentary condition of the papyrus leaves the identification of the taxpayers on the verso uncertain.

Nonetheless, the list offers insight into the scale of taxation to which these individuals were subject. Over a period of just under a year – payments appear to be concentrated in the second half of the first indiction and at the very beginning of the second – the three individuals together paid nearly 23 solidi, averaging approximately 7.66 solidi per person. The document also illustrates the range of fiscal obligations in meticulous detail. Some of these represent regular taxes, such as the *chrysika* (gold taxes), and perhaps those grouped under the heading *tablia*. Others appear to be supplementary charges, such as payments for copper wages (*chalkomata*) or dike maintenance (*parachomata*).

It is worth noting the amounts the three taxpayers paid for several requisitions related to the Arab fleet. Requisitions of this type are well known, particularly from the time of Qurra bin Sharīk (in office 709–715), but they are much more sparsely attested in the following decades.¹⁴ One might attempt to contextualize the requisitions recorded in our papyrus within the broader framework of military history. According to the *Chronicle* of Theophanes the Confessor (d. 817 or 818), the Arab fleet of Egypt suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of the Byzantines at the Battle of Keramaia at Cyprus in 746.¹⁵ If we assume that our documents belong to the earlier of the two possible indiction cycles (see above) – i.e. dating to 747/748 rather than 762/763 – could the requisitions noted in these accounts reflect an attempt by the Arab authorities to rebuild their fleet in the aftermath of the defeat at Keramaia? However, it remains entirely possible that we are simply dealing with routine requisitions that are underrepresented in the papyrological record after the early eighth century.

¹⁴ See Bruning, in Berkes (ed.), *Christians and Muslims*, pp. 41–44.

¹⁵ Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, 1997, p. 586.

4. THE PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENTS

The purpose of these documents is not immediately clear. However, the fact that they were likely found together with safe-conducts issued to the same individuals may suggest a connection between the Greek and Arabic texts, even if they were not written in the same year. For any application for a safe-conduct, taxpayers were required to provide a guarantor – someone who would stand surety in case the applicant failed to return from their trip and attempted to evade their tax obligations. Additionally, they had to prove that their taxes for the previous year had been fully paid. Only once these two conditions were fulfilled could the monastery administration write to the office of the director of finances to request a safe-conduct.¹⁶ This context may suggest that the Greek documents were compiled to demonstrate to the tax authorities that the applicants had settled their tax debts. This hypothesis aligns well with the impression that **1** and **2** were compiled in multiple phases – perhaps after the scribe consulted more than one tax register to gather all relevant payments made by the individuals requesting the document. Assuming that these documents were produced as part of the safe-conduct application process could also explain why multiple individuals appear in them: the tax collector may have summarized all their payments in a single document, since they were applying together for a travel permit. It is even possible that travellers needed to present these tax documents in addition to their travel permits while on their journey – though this remains a plausible but not necessary assumption.

5. FORMAT AND SCRIPT

The three documents have a format approximately twice as tall as they are wide (originally around 30 cm x 13 cm). This type of layout resembles that of Arabic registers known as *daftar*-s, a few examples of which survive from the Abbasid period¹⁷ and many more from the Fatimid era. How these pages were originally

¹⁶ On the process for obtaining safe-conducts, see Rāḡib, *Annales islamologiques* 31 (1997); Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim State*, pp. 96–98, 241–44, 311–12; Vanthieghem, *Der Islam* 91 (2014), and Delattre, in Delattre et al. (eds.), *Authority and Control in the Countryside*, 2019.

¹⁷ For instance, the three sheets published in Tillier and Vanthieghem, *Islamic Law and Society* 25 (2018).

arranged remains uncertain: did they form part of a codex, perhaps preserved in a flap binding similar to that which enclosed the papyrus P.Lond. IV 1442, or were they simply loose pages? As things stand, it is impossible to determine.

All three documents are written in a rapid, heavily abbreviated professional minuscule, slightly slanted to the right. The script exhibits characteristics typical of mid- to late-eighth-century Greek documents¹⁸ – for example, the use of plural forms to abbreviate personal names, as in 1.r.1: οὐεν^ον^ο for Οὐέννο(φρίου).¹⁹ Another notable feature is the abbreviation for κ(α)τ(έ)β(α)λ(εν) found in 1.r.5–9 and 2.r.6: a kappa with an abbreviation loop leading to slightly superscript beta, atop which sits a lambda with a tau joined to its left vertical stroke. The same abbreviation appears in CPR XXII 23, an account dated after 3 January 788, in lines 1 and 10. The script is highly cursive, with some sections written hastily and containing unusual abbreviations that we have not been able to interpret or resolve with certainty.

DOC. 1. TAX DOCUMENT ISSUED TO THREE INDIVIDUALS

Inv. No.: P. Turin T.Gr. 37

Other Number: P.Taur. 63

TPOP Obj ID: 731

Dimensions: H 26.4 cm x W 12.7 cm

Date: not before 25 June 748/763

Description

The document is written against the fibers on the recto [Fig. 1] and along the fibers on the verso [Fig. 2]. The large unwritten spaces – particularly on the recto – were likely intended to provide structure to the document, though their precise function remains difficult to determine, especially the blank area at the top of the verso. The overall layout is further complicated by the fact that the payments recorded on the verso fall chronologically between the first and last payments listed on the recto.

¹⁸ These are studied in detail in a forthcoming article by L. Berkes (“The Greek Minuscule in Documentary Papyri from Abbasid Egypt”).

¹⁹ For this see Berkes, *APF* 68 (2022), pp. 377–78.

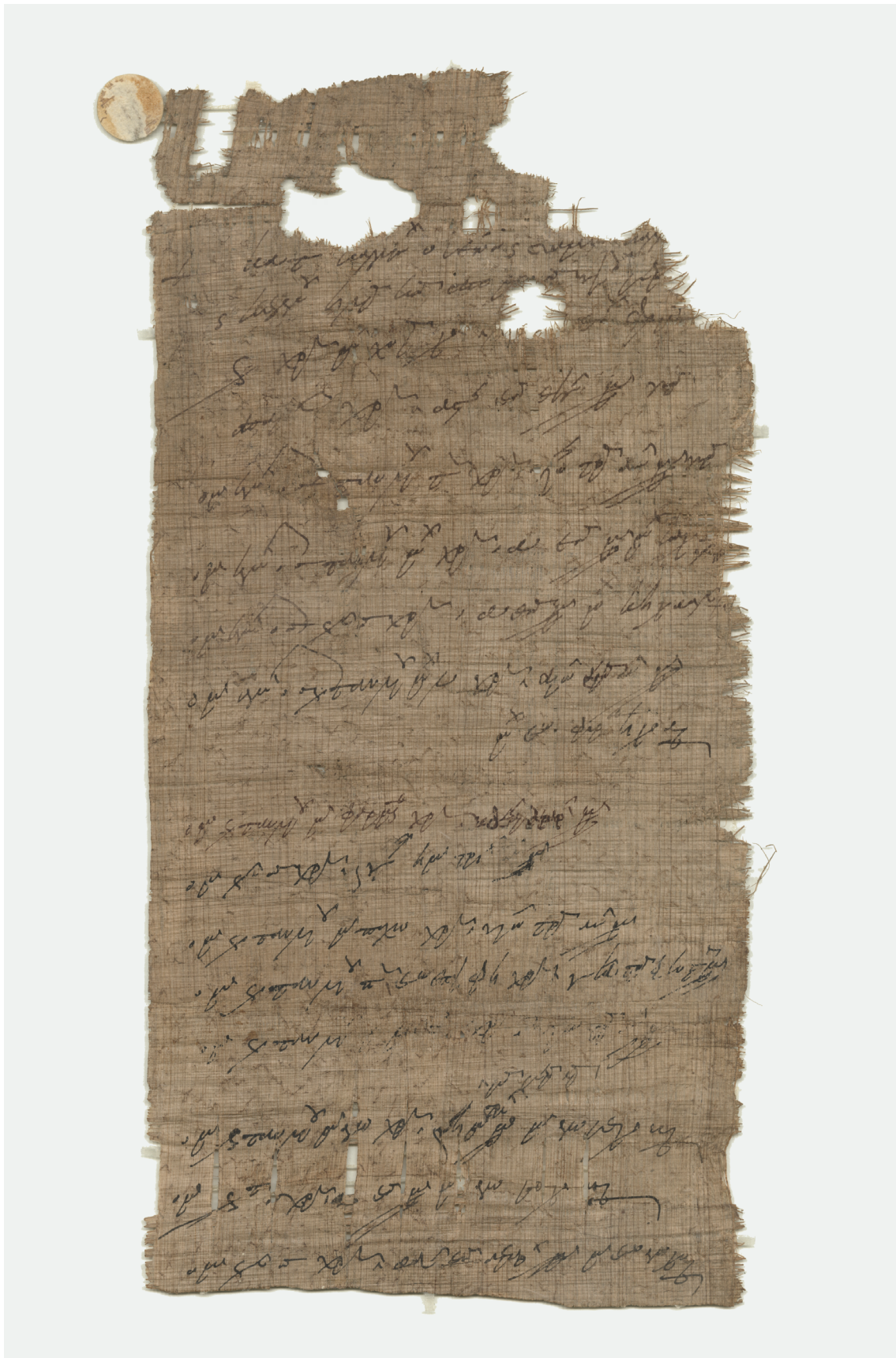


Fig. 1 T.Gr. 37 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.

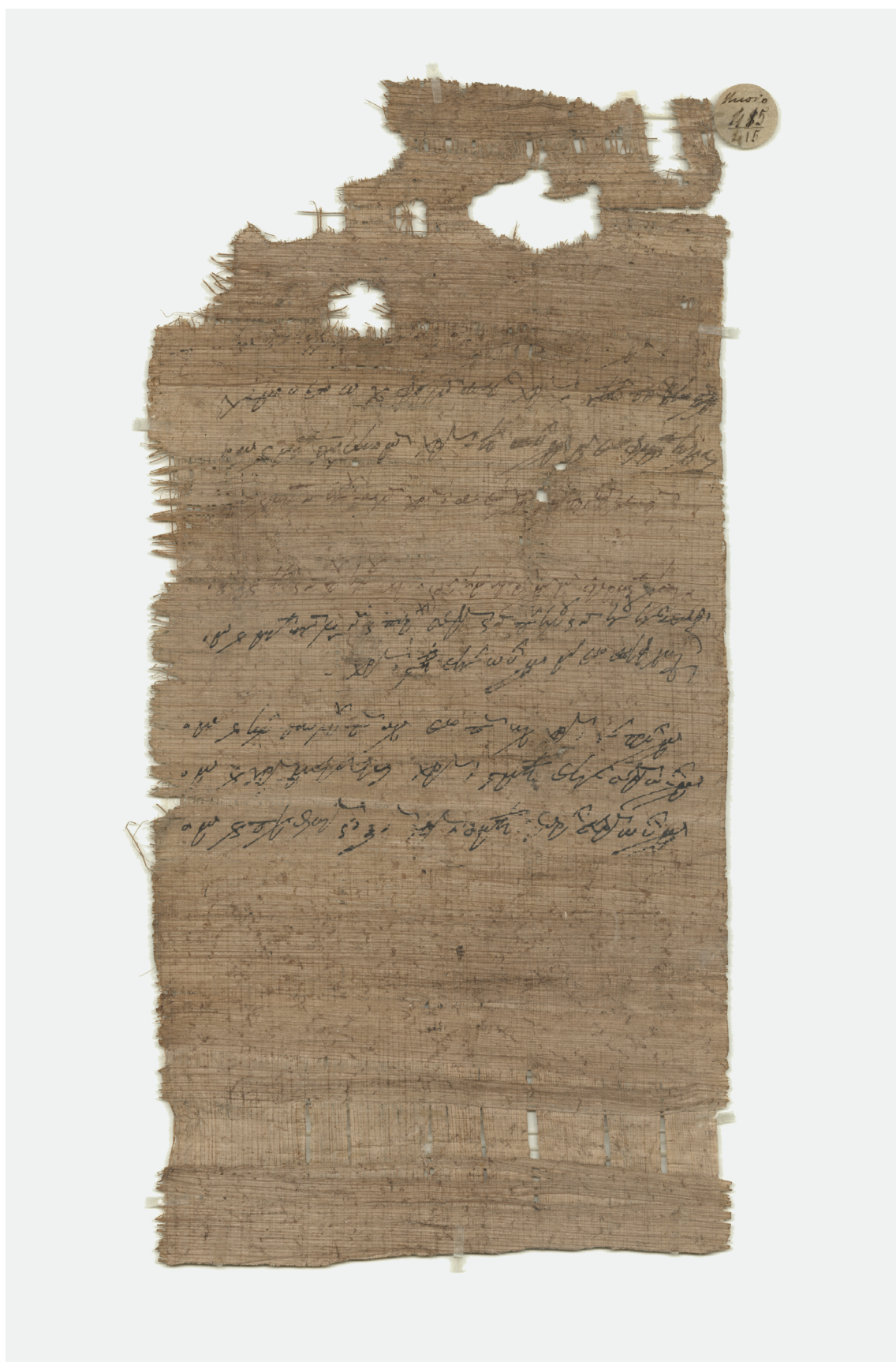


Fig. 2 T.Gr. 37 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

In addition, the document appears to show changes in ink, suggesting that it was compiled in multiple phases. On the recto, lines 1–7 are written in brownish ink, while lines 8–9 are in a more reddish tone. From line 10 onwards, the text is penned in black ink. On the verso, lines 1–3 may have been written in the same brownish ink as recto lines 1–7; the reddish ink reappears in lines 4–5, followed by the same black ink used from recto line 10 onwards. However, it should be noted that the ink changes are not always clearly visible in the available image, and a scientific ink analysis would be required to confirm these observations. The content of the lines written in different inks does not appear to follow a strict thematic or chronological division, which may suggest that the scribe added information at various stages – possibly after consulting different tax ledgers. This incremental process could also explain the presence of blank spaces: the scribe may have deliberately left room to insert additional data upon accessing sources that were not yet available at the time of writing.

Edition

Recto:

- ↓ + κατέ(βαλον) Καλλίν(ι)χ(ος) Οὐεννο(φρίου) (καὶ) Σαμβᾶς Καλλ[ιν(ί)χ(ου)]
(καὶ) Κελλου(τζ΄) Ἡλία κνα(φεύς) ἀπὸ μονα(στηρίου) Ἀγίου Ἱερ[ημίου]
(ὑπὲρ) χρυσικῶν μ(ηνὸς) Χοια(κ) ἰ(νδικτίωνος) α δ(ι΄) [ἐμοῦ] Ἐνὸχ
Φοιβά(μμωνος)
ἀπαιτ(ητοῦ) χρυσ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) α ς' ἕνα ἔκτ(ον) μό(νον) δι(ὰ) τ(ο)ῦ αὐτ(οῦ).
5 ὁμο(ίως) κ(α)τ(έ)β(α)λ(εν) ὁ αὐτ(ὸς) ταβλίου Τυβι χρυσ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) γ' ιβ' τρίτ(ον)
δωδ(έκατον) μό(νον) δι(ὰ) τ(ο)ῦ αὐτ(οῦ).
ὁμο(ίως) κ(α)τ(έ)β(α)λ(εν) ὁ αὐτ(ὸς) ταβλίου Μ(ε)χ(ειρ) χρυσ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) α ἕνα
μό(νον). Μεχειρ κα ἰ(νδ.) [α] /δι(ὰ) τ(ο)ῦ αὐτ(οῦ).
ὁμο(ίως) κ(α)τ(έ)β(α)λ(εν) ὁ αὐτ(ὸς) ὑπὲρ τ(ο)ῦ αὐτ(οῦ) χρυσ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) α ἕνα
μό(νον) Μ(ε)χ(ειρ) κη ἰ(νδ.) α δι(ὰ) τ(οῦ) Ψ . [
ὁμο(ίως) κ(α)τ(έ)β(α)λ(εν) ὁ αὐτ(ὸς) (ὑπὲρ) ταβλίου Μ(ε)χ(ειρ) λ χρυσ(σοῦ) νο(μ.)
α ιβ' [α ιβ'] ἕνα δωδ(έκατον) μό(νον).
vac. Μ(ε)χ(ειρ) ἕω(ς) Φαρ(μου)θ(ι) η ἰ(νδικτίωνος) α. + vac.
10 ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) ταβλίου μ(ηνὸς) Φαρ(μου)θ(ι) χρυσ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) β δ' [τέταρ]
[τέταρτ(ον)] δύο δέταρτ(ον) μό(νον).
ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) τ(οῦ) αὐτ(οῦ) χρυσ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) ζ γ' [ι[β]] ἥμι(συ) τρ(ί)τ(ον)
[δωδ(έκατον)] μό(νον).

ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) ταβλίου μ(ηνὸς) Παχω(ν) χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) γ ιβ' τρ(ί)α
δωδ(έκατον) μό(νον).

ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) ταβλίου Π(α)υ(νι) ἔω(ς) Επιφ η χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) γ κδ' τρ(ί)α
εἰκοστ(ο)τ(έταρτον) μό(νον).

ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) ταβλίου μ(ηνὸς) Μεσο(ρη) χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) γ ιβ' τρ(ί)α
δωδ(έκατον) μό(νον) /διὰ τ(οῦ) Ἱερε(μίου) δια(κόνου)\.

- 15 ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) ταβλίου μ(ηνὸς) Θω(θ) χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) ζ γ' ἥμ(ισυ) \τρ(ί)τ(ον)/
μό(νον). μ(ηνὸς) Θω(θ) ιε ἰ(ν)δ(.) β. +
ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) τ(οῦ) ἀϋ[τ](οῦ) χρυ(σοῦ) νό(μ.) α ἕνα μό(νον). μ(ηνὸς) Θω(θ) ιθ
ἰ(ν)δ(.) β. +
ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) τ(οῦ) ἀντ(οῦ) χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) α δ' ἕνα δέταρτ(ον) μό(νον).
μ(ηνὸς?) ἔω(ς) Θω(θ) ἰ(νδ.) β. +

Verso:

- + κατέ(βαλον) Καλλίγ(ι)[χ(ος)] [Οὐ]ἐνο(φρίου) (καὶ) traces α ἰνδ(.)
δ(ι') ἐμοῦ Ἐνὼχ Φοιβά(μμωνος) ἀπαιτ(ητοῦ) χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) γ' κδ' τρ(ί)τ(ον)
εἰκοστ(ο)τ(έταρτον) μό(νον).
ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) μι(σ)θ(οῦ) χαλκώμα(τος) χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) η' ὥγτ(οον) μό(νον).
μ(ηνὸς?) ἔω(ς) Φαρμ(ου)θ(ι) η ἰ(νδικτίωνος) α. +
[δ]μο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) μι(σ)θ(οῦ) ν(αυ)τ(ῶν) κούρ(σου) θαλά(σσης) χρυ(σοῦ) νό(μ.) α ἕνα
μό(νον). δ[(ιὰ)] Πιτζικρα()? (ὑπὲρ) ε αρα().

vac.

- 5 ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) ἀκ(α)τ(ηναρίων) (καὶ) ν(αυ)τ(ῶν) τοῦ Κλού(σματος) χρ[υ](σοῦ)
νο(μ.) ζ δ' ἥμ(ισυ) δέταρτ(ον) μό(νον). μ(ηνὸς) Φαρμ(ου)θ(ι) κδ ἰ(νδ.) α. +
ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) μι(σ)θ(οῦ) ἀγγα(ρευτῶν) λ(ό)γ(ω) ν() . () (καὶ) παρ(α)χ(ωμάτων)
Σεφ(θεως?) (καὶ) ν(αυ)τ(ῶν) τ(οῦ) Κλού(σματος) (καὶ) ν(αυ)τ(ῶν) κούρ(σου)
κ()τ() αεα . αξι +
vac. χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) ς' η' ἔκτ(ον) ὥγτ(οον) μό(νον). μ(ηνὸς?) ἔω(ς) Ἐπιφ ἰ(νδ.) β. +
ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) κλ(άσμα)τ(ος) ταβλίου Τυ(βι) α ἰ(ν)δ(.) ἔω(ς) Π(α)υ(νι) β ἰ(νδ.)
χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) γ' τρίτ(ον) μό(νον).
ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) χρυ(σικῶν) Μερσερσζ χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) ς' μη' ἔκτ(ον) σερα(κοστ)
ώγτ(οον) μό(νον).
10 ὁμο(ίως) (ὑπὲρ) τι(μῆς) ἐλαί(ο)υ (καὶ) ὄξου(ς) χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) δ' μη' τέταρτ(ον)
σερα(κοστ)ώγτ(οον) μό(νον).

R: 4, 6–9, 16–17 l. ἔν || 10, 17 l. τέταρτ(ον) V: 3, 7 l. ὀγδοον || 4 l. ἔν || 5–6
Κλύ(σματος) || 9–10 l. τεσσαερακοστόγδοον

Translation

Recto: |¹ + Kallinichos, son of Ouennophrios, Sambas, son of Kallinichos, |² and Kelloutz (?), son of Elias, fuller from the monastery of Saint Ieremias |³ have paid for the gold taxes of the month Choiak of the 1st indiction through me (?), Enoch, son of Phoibammon, |⁴ tax-collector, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ gold solidus, one, one sixth only through the same (person) (?). |⁵ Similarly, the same has paid, for the *tablion* of Tybi, $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{12}$ gold solidus, one third one twelfth only, through the same (person) (?). |⁶ Similarly, the same has paid, for the *tablion* of Mecheir, 1 gold solidus, one only. 21st of Mecheir of the 1st indiction, through the same (person) (?). |⁷ Similarly, the same has paid, for the same (*tablion*), 1 gold solidus, one only. 28th of Mecheir of the 1st indiction, through Ps... |⁸ Similarly, the same has paid, for the *tablion* of the 30th of Mecheir, 1 $\frac{1}{12}$ gold solidus, one one twelfth only. |⁹ Mecheir to 8th of Pharmouthi of the 1st indiction. + |¹⁰ Similarly, for the *tablion* of the month Pharmouthi, 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ gold solidus, two one fourth only. |¹¹ Similarly, for the same (*tablion*), $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ gold solidus, half one third only. |¹² Similarly, for the *tablion* of the month Pachon, 3 $\frac{1}{12}$ gold solidus, one third (?) one twelfth only. |¹³ Similarly, for the *tablion* of Pauni to 8th Epeiph, 3 $\frac{1}{24}$ gold solidus, three one twenty-fourth only. |¹⁴ Similarly, for the *tablion* of the month Mesore, 3 $\frac{1}{12}$ gold solidus, one third one twelfth only, through Ieremias (?), deacon. |¹⁵ Similarly, for the *tablion* of the month Thoth, $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ gold solidus, half one third only. 15th Thoth of the 2nd indiction. |¹⁶ Similarly, for the same (*tablion*) 1 gold solidus, one only. 19th Thoth of the 2nd indiction. |¹⁷ Similarly, for the same (*tablion*) 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ gold solidus, one one fourth only. Until Thoth of the 2nd indiction.

Verso: |¹ + Kallinichos, son of Ouennophrios and ... have paid ... of the 1st indiction |² through me, Enoch, son of Phoibammon, tax collector $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{24}$ gold solidus, one third one twenty-fourth only. |³ Similarly, for the wages of copper $\frac{1}{8}$ gold solidus one eighth only. Until 8th Pharmouthi of the 1st indiction. + |⁴ Similarly, for the wages of sailors of the Cursus of the Sea 1 gold solidus, one only. ... for ... |⁵ Similarly, for the *akatenaria* and sailors of Klysma $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ gold solidus, half one fourth only. On the 24th of the month Pharmouthi of the 1st indiction. + |⁶ Similarly, for the wages of workers on account of the ... and the dikes of Se-

phy-, the sailors of Klysmā, and the sailors of the *Cursus* ... |⁷ $\frac{1}{6}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ gold solidus, one sixth one eighth only. Until Epeiph of the 2nd indiction. + |⁸ Similarly, for a fraction of the *tablion* of Tybi of the 1st indiction to Pauni of the 2nd indiction $\frac{1}{6}$ gold solidus, one third only. |⁹ Similarly, for the gold taxes of Merserz $\frac{1}{6}$ $\frac{1}{48}$ gold solidus, one-sixth one forty-eighth only. |¹⁰ Similarly, for the price of oil and vinegar $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{48}$ gold solidus, one-sixth one forty-eighth only.

Commentary

Recto:

1. 1 Καλλίν(ι)χ(ος): The downward return of the second stroke of the superscript χ results from a hastily written attached sinusoid that served as an additional marker for the abbreviation, cf. e.g. the same sequence in the word Αβδελμ(ελε)χ in CPR XXII 17v *passim*.

1. 2 Κελλου(τζ?): The resolution of the name, a variant of κογλωχε (TM Nam 37819), is not entirely certain. We follow SPP X 297, another account from the same monastery from the early Arab period, where the name is spelled as Κλουτζ (r., col. 1.2 and col. 2.11).

κνα(φεύς): The abbreviation suggests a singular, since in the case of a plural we would expect the last consonant and the superscript letter to be doubled. This suggests that only Κελλου(τζ?) was a fuller, and not all the persons listed before.

1. 3 μ(ηνός) Χοια(κ) ἰ(ν)δικτίωνος α: 27 November–26 December 747/762.

1. 5 ταβλίου Τυβι: The levy of 27 December 747–26 January 748 or 27 December 762–25 January 763.

11. 6–7 ταβλίου Μ(ε)χ(ειρ) ... Μεχειρ κα ... Μ(ε)χ(ειρ) κη: Payments for 27 January–25 February 748 on 16 and 23 February 748 or for 26 January–24 February 763 on 15 and 22 February.

1. 8 ταβλίου Μ(ε)χ(ειρ) λ: A levy on 25 February 748 or 24 February 763.

1. 9 Μ(ε)χ(ειρ) ἔω(ς) Φαρ(μου)θ(ι) η ἰ(ν)δικτίωνος α: 27 January–3 April 748 or 26 January–3 April 763. One could possibly read kappa instead of eta, in which case the payment would have occurred between 27 January and 15 April 748, or between 26 January and 15 April 763.

α ιβ' [α ιβ'] ἔνα: The scribe wrote the sequence twice, then realized his mistake and wrote large epsilon on α ι and used beta as nu.

1. 10 ταβλίου μ(ηνός) Φαρμ(ου)θ(ι): Payments for 27 March–25 April 748/763.

What follows is not easy to decipher: it appears that the scribe initially began by

writing β τέταρ, before realizing he had omitted the fraction $\frac{1}{4}$ in its numerical form. He then altered the tau of τέταρ into a delta followed by a slash (in other words, δ/), and rewrote τέταρτ(ον) directly beside it. However, upon noticing that he had neglected to write the number “two” in full, he modified the fraction τέταρτον into δύο, forgetting in the process to reinsert the sequence τέταρτ(ον) once again after this δύο.

l. 12 ταβλίου μ(ηνός) Παχω(ν): The levy of 26 April–25 May 748/763.

l. 13 ταβλίου Π(α)υ(νι) ἔω(ς) Ἐπιφ η: Payments for 26 May–2 July 748/763.

l. 14 ταβλίου μ(ηνός) Μεσο(ρη): Taxes for 25 July–23 August 748/763.

διὰ τ(οῦ) Ἰερε(μίου): The reading is difficult. We tentatively read a fully written διὰ ligatured with superscript tau, followed by ιερ with a superscript abbreviation mark.

ll. 15–16 ταβλίου μ(ηνός) Θω(θ) ... μ(ηνός) Θω(θ) ιε ἰ(ν)δ(.) β ... μ(ηνός) Θω(θ) ιθ: Payments for 30 August–28 September 748 on 13 and 17 September or for 29 August–27 September 763 on 12 and 16 September.

l. 17 μ(ηνός?) ἔω(ς) Θω(θ): The word μ(ηνός), if we have resolved the abbreviation correctly, is misplaced. However, since the same abbreviation recurs also elsewhere (verso 3, 7, 2.2–3, 6), we left it in the text.

Verso:

l. 3 μι(σ)θ(οῦ) χαλκώμα(τος): The phrase is probably shorthand for the “wages of (the workers processing) copper”. We find numerous references to copper in the early eighth-century Aphrodito papyri, sometimes connected to the Arab naval raids, which also occurs in our document. See Morelli, *I prezzi dei materiali e prodotti artigianali*, pp. 125–27.

μ(ηνός?) ἔω(ς) | Φαρμ(ου)θ(ι) η ἰ(ν)δικτίωνος α: Until 3 April 748/763. For the abbreviation μ(ηνός?), see recto 17n.

l. 4 (ὕπερ) μι(σ)θ(οῦ) ν(αυ)τ(ῶν) κού(ρσου) θαλά(σσης): For the phrase, cf. P.Heid. X 454.15 (Aphrodito [?], late seventh–early eighth c.) μισθ(οῦ) ναυτ(ῶν) κού(ρσου) Αἰγ(ύπτου) ἰνδ(ικτίωνος). The word κούρσον, from Latin *cursus*, refers to naval raids, often in connection with a geographical unit, such as Egypt. The phrase κούρσον θαλάσσης occurs elsewhere (P.Cair.Masp. III 67359, 2; P.Lond. IV 1434, 224; P.Lond. IV 1435, 80; and P.Lond. IV 1451, 40), but remains unclear: Harold I. Bell hypothesized that it might be connected in some way with Egypt (see P.Lond. IV, pp. XXXII–XXXIII). Our document provides the latest attestation of a κούρσον after P.Lond. IV 1436.Fr.3.r.1 (Aphrodito, 719).

δ[(ιὰ)] Πιτζικρα()[?] (ὑπὲρ) ε αρα(): The name of the intermediary Πιτζικρα() recalls the name Πτζίκρες attested in P.Bingen 143.4 (Arsinoite, seventh–eighth c.). In the subsequent passage, the word (ὑπὲρ) can be discerned, though the remainder is unclear. If our reading of ε αρα() is correct, we may resolve the sequence as (ὑπὲρ) ε Ἀρά(βων), though the meaning remains unclear. Alternatively, (ὑπὲρ) Ἐβρα(ίων) could also read, although the first interpretation seems preferable in terms of meaning.

1. 5 (ὑπὲρ) ἀκ(α)τ(ηναρίων) (καὶ) ν(αυ)τ(ῶν) τοῦ Κλού(σματος): Requisitions for Klysma are well attested in documentary papyri of the eighth century, esp. in the Aphrodito-papyri, cf. e.g. P.Lond. IV 1439.2 (Aphrodito, early eighth c.) μισθοῦ ν(αυτῶν) ὀν(ομάτων) \γ/ (λ(ό)γ(ω) ναυτικοῦ πλοίων τ\οῦ/ Κλύ(σματος). *Akatenaria*, “one-banked auxiliary vessels” of the Arab fleet are well attested in papyri of our period, see Bruning, in Berkes (ed.), *Christians and Muslims in Early Islamic Egypt*, p. 41, with further references in n. 86.

μ(ηνὸς) Φαρμ(ου)θ(ι) κδ ἰ(νδ.) α: 19 April 748/763.

1. 6 μι(σ)θ(οῦ) ἀγγα(ρευτῶν) λ(ό)γ(ω) ν() . () (καὶ) παρ(α)χ(ωμάτων) Σεφν(θεως[?]): Payments for work(er)s on dikes are attested in other tax documents of the period, cf. e.g. CPR XXII 45.5 (provenance unknown, early eighth c.) μισθ(ὸς) ἀγγ(αρευτῶν) τῶ(ν) παραχ(ωμάτων). The first abbreviation ν() . () eludes us. There are one or two superscript letters written above it that could perhaps be identified with two gammas, but this does not seem to produce a good reading. One would expect to find the term διωρύγω(ν) following the word παραχ(ωμάτων), as the two are frequently coordinated (see, for instance, P.Lond. IV 1433.73; 1434.72; 1441.81 and SB X 10458.6). However, the traces that remain on the document appear to be incompatible with such a reading. Σεφν(θεως[?]), if correctly read, is presumably a toponym. A toponym Tephutheos (Τεφύθεως) is attested in the papyri – particularly in connection with παραχώματα – but it is located in the region of Aphrodito (**TM Geo 7571**). Identifying it with the place name in our text would require assuming that the scribe miswrote the initial tau, a hypothesis that appears unlikely. By contrast, a toponym spelled Saṭṭ Nāḥiya – known today as Ṣaṭṭ al-Laban and situated approximately 1.5 km northwest of Giza – could perhaps correspond to the location mentioned in our papyrus. For Saṭṭ Nāḥiya, see Halm, *Ägypten nach den mamlukischen Lebensregistern*, 1982, p. 235.

ν(αυ)τ(ῶν) τ(οῦ) Κλού(σματος) (καὶ) ν(αυ)τ(ῶν) κού(ρσου): See above v.4n. The

κοῦρσον is unspecified here, unless the following passage contained a designation, see the subsequent note.

κ()τ() αεα .αξι: An enigmatic sequence. We have considered deciphering α ἔνα μό(vov) at the end of the line, assuming a *Verschleifung*, but the reading is not convincing and does not account for what is written before. Alternatively, one could perhaps read κ(α)τ(ὰ) ἃ ἔδεξ(άμην) “according to what I have received”, although we would expect καθ’ ἧ. In this case, what we read as iota would be an abbreviation stroke.

1. 7 μ(ηνὸς?) ἔω(ς) Ἐπιφ ἰ(νδικτίωνος) α: Until 25 June–24 July 748/763. For the abbreviation μ(ηνός?), see recto 17n.

1. 8 κλ(άσμα)τ(ος) ταβλίου Τυ(βι) α ἰ(ν)δ(.) ἔω(ς) Π(α)υ(νι) β ἰ(ν)δ.): The term κλάσμα denotes a “fraction”, i.e. partial payment, see the detailed discussion of Élodie Mazy in the introduction to P.Sorb.Copt. 16, esp. pp. 99–101. The payments are made for 28 December–24 June 748 or 27 December–24 June 763.

1. 9 (ὑπὲρ) χρυ() Μερσερσζ: Μερσερσζ baffles us. It could be perhaps an unattested personal name, which would imply that a payment is made for his gold taxes, or a toponym.

σερα(κοσ)τώγτ(οον): On this form, see the discussion of J. Gascou, in P. Pintaudi 27.5n.

1. 10 (ὑπὲρ) τι(μῆς) ἐλαί(ο)υ (καὶ) ὄξου(ς): Oil and vinegar are often figured together in lists of requisitions, cf. e.g. P.Lond. IV 1449r.col. 3 *passim* (Aphrodito, after 26 May 711).

DOC. 2. TAX DOCUMENT**Inv. No.:** Provv. 6292**Other Number:** T.Gr. 4/001; P.Taur. 30**TPOP Obj ID:** 732**Dimensions:** H 27.3 cm x W 11.8 cm**Date:** not before 27 March–25 April 748/763**Description**

The document is written against the fibres [Fig. 3] and its back is blank [Fig. 4]. The text is written in a different ink beginning from l. 5, but l. 9 still belongs to the original ink. As l. 9 repeats the sums of ll. 1–4, ll. 5–8 must be later additions, cf. also the description of **1**. The rectangular hole at the bottom could suggest that the papyrus was sealed.



Fig. 3 Provv. 6292 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.



Fig. 4 Provv. 6292 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

Edition

- ↓ + κα[τ]έ(βαλε) . ω . ων Καλλινίχ(ου) . π () (ὕπερ) . [χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) < δ['] [ῥ]μ(ισυ) [τ]έτ[α]ρτ(ον) μό(νον). μ(ηνός?) ἔ[ω](ς) . . . [. ἰ(νδ.)] β. [+]
- [ὁ]μο(ίως) (ὕπερ) ταβλίου Τυ(βι) χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) α < γ' ἕνα ῥμ(ισυ) τρ(ί)τ(ον) [μό(νον).]
- vac.* μ(ηνός?) ἔω(ς) Τυ(βι) ἰ(νδ.) β. +
- 5 ὁμο(ίως) (ὕπερ) [τ(οῦ)] αὐτ(οῦ) χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) ε' ἔκτ(ον) μό(νον). μ(ηνός) Φαρμ(ου)θ(ι) ἰ(νδ.) β. +
- ὁμο(ίως) κ(α)τ(έ)β(α)λ(εν) ὁ αὐτ(ός) ταβλίου Μ(ε)χ(ειρ) λ χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) β δίο μό(νον). μ(ηνός?) ἔω(ς) Φαρμ(ου)θ(ι) ἰ(νδ.) β + 'δ(ιὰ) Καλλινίχ(ου).¹
- vac.*
- [[ὁ]μο(ίως) (ὕπερ)]]
- vac.*
- vac.* νο(μ.) < δ' νο(μ.) α < γ' [[. .]]

3 l. ἕν || 6 l. δύο

Translation

¹+ ..., son of Kallinichos ... has/have paid ... for ... ² ½ ¼ gold solidus, half fourth only. Until ... of the 2nd indiction + ³ Similarly, for the *tablion* of Tybi 1 ½ ⅓ gold solidus, one, half, one third only. ⁴ Until Tybi of the 2nd indiction. + ⁵ Similarly, for the same (*tablion*) ⅓ gold solidus, one sixth only. In the month of Pharmouthi of the 2nd indiction. + ⁶ Similarly, payment of the same, for the *tablion* of the 30th Mecheir 2 gold solidi, two only. Until Pharmouthi of the 2nd indiction . + Through Kallinichos. ⁸ Similarly for ⁹ ½ ¼ solidus, 1 ½ ⅓ ...

Commentary

1. 1 ω . ων Καλλινίχ(ου) . π () : A possible reading of the patronymic is [Σαρ]-απάμων(ος), although the space available for accommodating the sequence Σαρ appears rather limited.

11. 2–3, 6 μ(ηνός?): For this abbreviation, see 1.r.17n.

1. 4 ἔω(ς) Τυ(βι) ἰ(νδ.) α: Until 28 December 748–25 January 748 or 27 December 748–25 January 763.

1. 5 Φαρμ(ου)θ(ι) ἰ(νδ.) β: 27 March–25 April 748/763.

1. 6 ἔω(ς) Φαρμ(ου)θ(ι) ἰ(νδ.) β: See the preceding note.

1. 9 The two amounts recorded on this line repeat the figures from the first two entries on the page. What follows these two amounts could be interpreted as a faint and somewhat unclear rendering of the abbreviation γί(νονται). The smeared ink at the end of the line may contain the calculated total of the two figures.

DOC. 3. TAX DOCUMENT

Inv. No.: T.Gr. 36

Other Number: P.Taur. 62

TPOP Obj ID: 733

Dimensions: H 4.1 cm x W 11.4 cm

Date: around 747/748 or 762/763 (?)

Description

The document is written against the fibres [Fig. 5] and the back is blank [Fig. 6].

Edition

↓ + σὺν Θεῷ. κατέ(βαλον) Καλλίν(ι)χ(ος) Οὐενο(φρίου) (καὶ) υἱὸ(ς) (ὑπὲρ)
 μέρ(ο)υ(ς) χρυσικῶν) τ[
 δημο(σίων) ταβλ(ίου) μ(ηνὸς) Ἐπιφ β ἔω(ς) Παυ(νι) β ἰ(ν)δ(.) [
 δ(ι') [ἐ]μοῦ Φοι[βά(μμωνος)] Φιλ(οθέου) ἀπαιτ(ητοῦ) χρυ(σοῦ) νο(μ.) [. . .][ca.2]
 .. [

Translation

|¹ + With God. Kallinichos, son of Ouenophrios and (his) son (?) for a part of the gold taxes ... |² (for the?) public taxes of the *tablion* of 2nd Epeiph to Pauni of the 2nd indiction. |³ Through me, Phoibammon, son of Philotheos, tax collector ... gold solidus ...

Commentary

1. 1+ σὺν Θεῷ: This is the only document introduced by this phrase.

υἱό(ς): The reading is uncertain. One could also think of Στέ(φανος), but the

lack of patronymic would be surprising.

(ὕπὲρ) μέρ(ο)υ(ς) χρυσικῶν τ[...] | δημο(σίω)ν: We would expect δημο(σίω)ν to follow immediately after χρυσικῶν, cf. CPR VIII 73.2–3 (Arsinoite, 694); SPP VIII 1198.3 (Heracleopolite, 694 or 709); and SB XVIII 13711.12 (Heracleopolite, 707). We may be dealing with two separate charges.

1. 2 ταβλ(ίου) μηνὸς Ἐπιφ β ἔω(ς) Παυ(νι) β ἰ(ν)δ(.): Payments for the period 26 June–27 May. As the new indiction would have started inbetween, on 6 Pachon (1 May), this period does not completely fall in the second indiction. Is the β in Ἐπιφ β perhaps an α with a long decorative extension standing for α ἰ(ν)δ(.)?

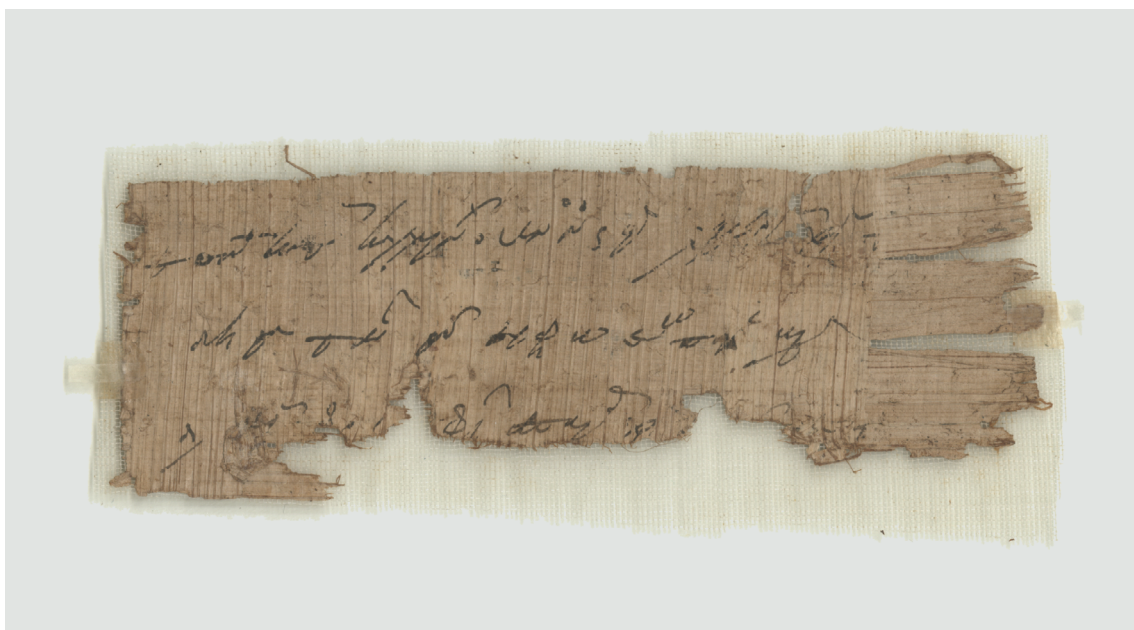


Fig. 5 T.Gr. 36 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.

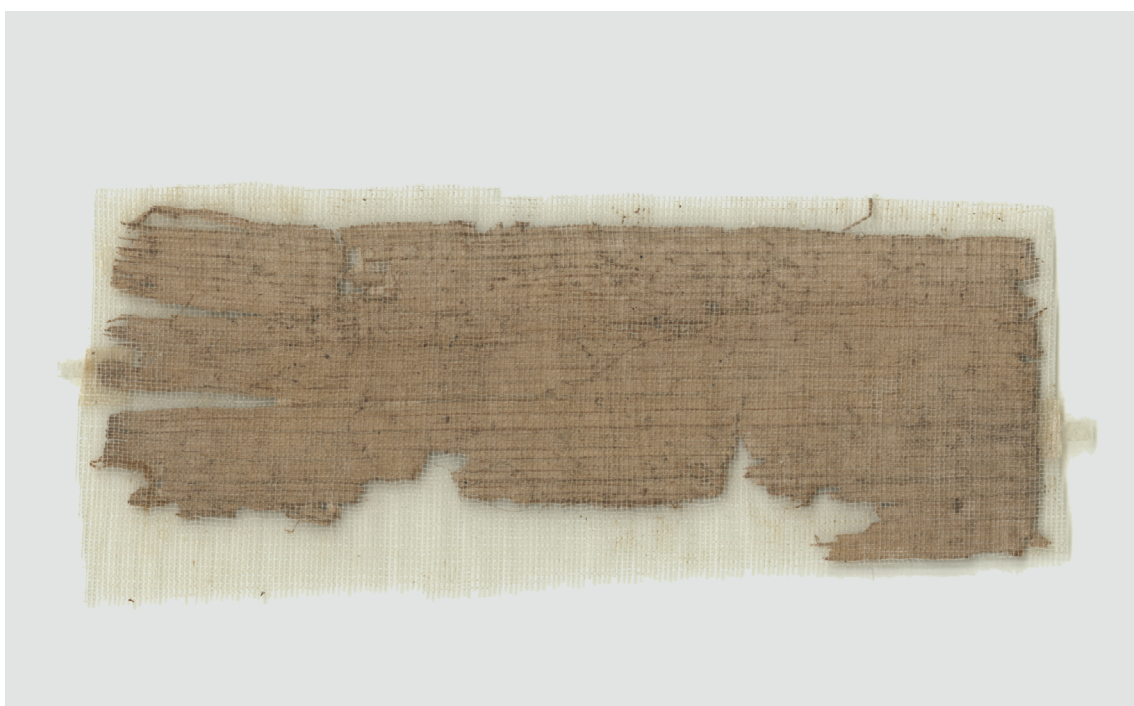


Fig. 6 T.Gr. 36 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

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A DIRECTORY OF BIBLICAL PERICOPES (P. TURIN PROV. 8546)

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Tonio Sebastian Richter

Inv. No.: Prov. 8546

TPOP Obj ID: 483929

Dimensions: H 13.0 cm x W 11.5 cm

Date: eleventh/twelfth century (?)

1. MATERIAL DESCRIPTION AND PALAEOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF PROV. 8546

Prov. 8546 is small piece of rag paper of brownish colour, measuring 13.0 cm in height by 11.5 cm in width. Both sides [Figs. 1–2] of the leaf display pagination (ⲡⲗⲁ “131”, ⲡⲗⲃ “132”) which proves that Prov. 8546 formed part of a larger codex.

The state of preservation is fairly good, except for the lower part. The edges are slightly frayed, there are some water stains, and a vertical crack in the middle of the leaf was patched with tape, to prevent further deterioration. The upper margin as well as the left and right margins seem to be nearly complete. At the left margin, *ekthesis* (outdent) is used to structure the entries. The bottom part of the manuscript is broken off. On the lower part of page 131, a small number of letters at the left (ll. 14–17) and right margin (ll. 15–17) are missing. On the lower part of page 132, one to two letters are missing at the left margin of line 16 while more text is missing at the right margin (ll. 14–16). After line 16, three decorative lines and traces of a letter underneath, maybe ⲛ, are still visible. These decorative lines are likely to separate the entries of one month from those of the next, so that the following lost lines might have formed the beginning of the first entry of Mesore. Comparison with liturgical paper codices from the White Monastery shows that leaf formats of 11–13 cm in width by 15

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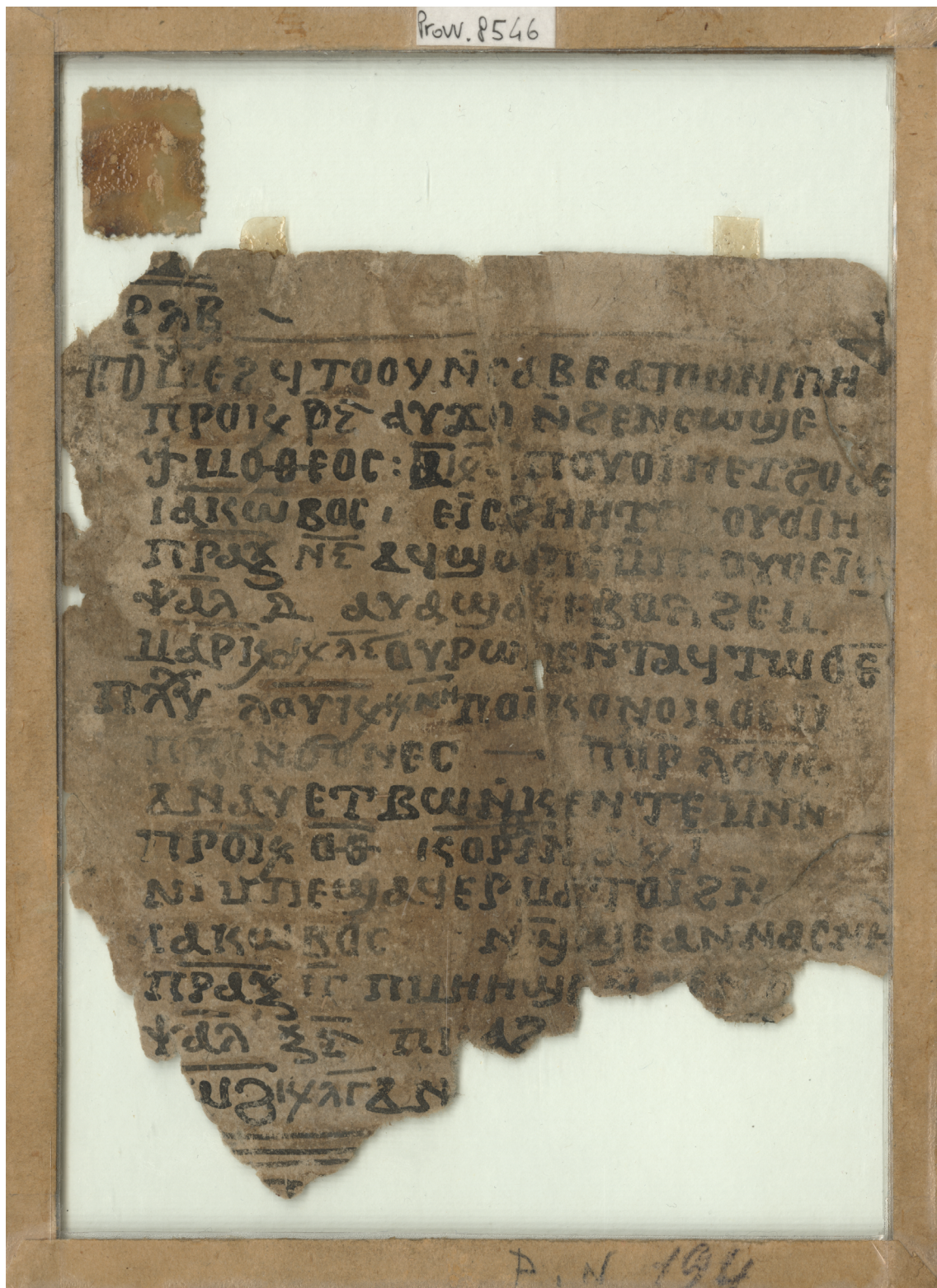


Fig. 1 Prov. 8546 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.

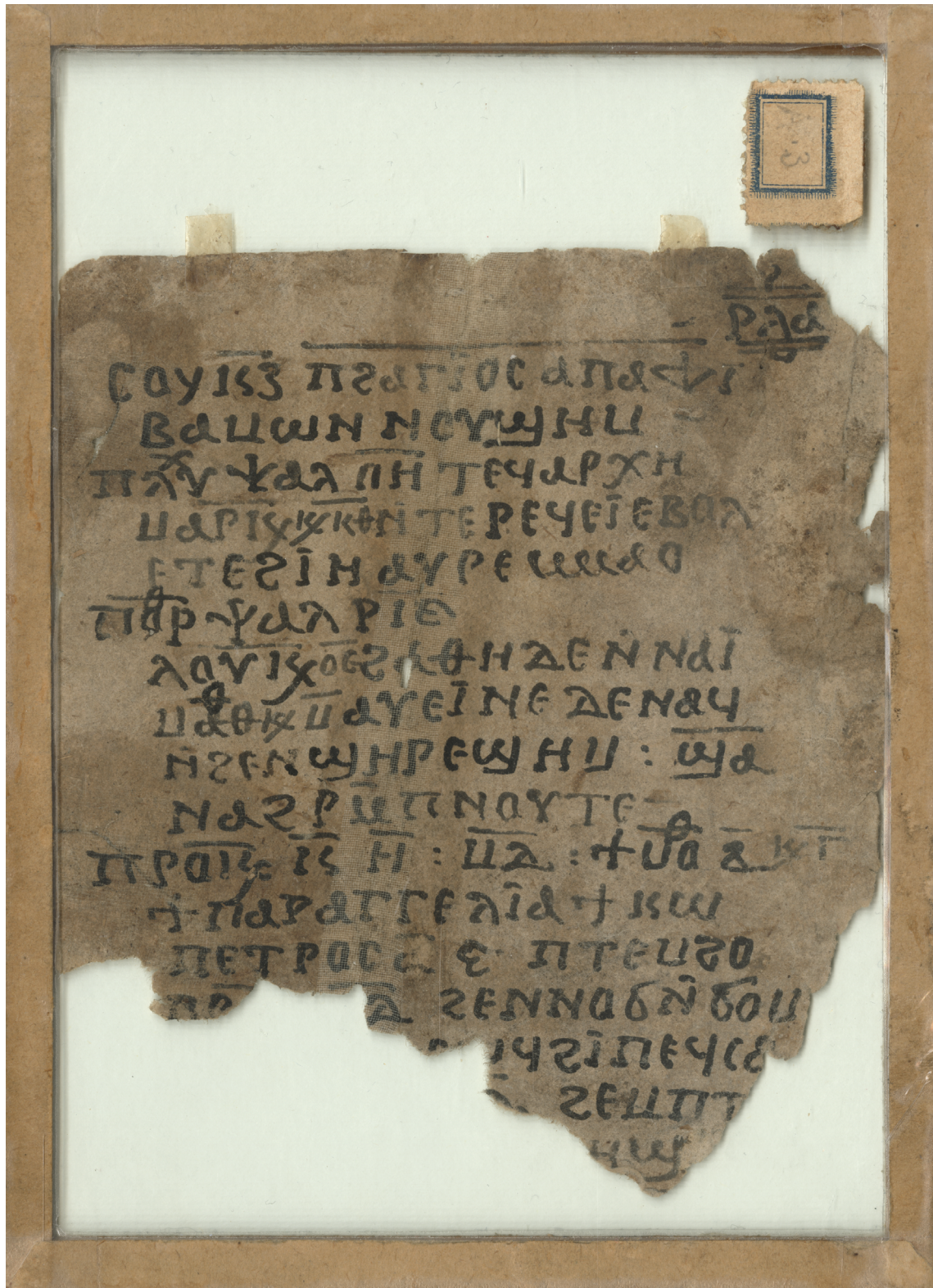


Fig. 2 Provv. 8546 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

up to 18 cm in height were quite usual, so that a section of two up to five centimetres might be missing.¹

The text is written in black-coloured ink and generally well legible. The script displays a slight slope to the right; it is bilinear (all letters tend to keep within the same height) and bimodular (Epsilon, Omicron, and Sigma are significantly smaller than other letters).² It can be classified as sloping majuscule, the type of script typically used in the layout of later Coptic manuscripts for paratextual units such as titles, page numbers, colophons, and regularly found as matrix script of liturgical manuscripts, such as Prov. 8546.³ Typical single letter features of sloping majuscule are the split Kappa (small space between the vertical stroke and the rest of the letter) and the angular “flat” shape of the letter μ (with the horizontal bar lying on the baseline: μ). This “flat” type of Mu⁴ and the use of paper as writing material are relevant for the dating of Prov. 8546 (see below).

The scribe uses colon, trema, supralinear signs, and several strategies of abbreviating words. *Colons* (and spaces) are used to keep the different types of references (biblical books, chapters, incipits) apart from each other. *Trema* is employed above Iota (regardless of its consonantal or vocalic function), several times the scribe produces one short stroke rather than two dots.

Supralinear signs can take the shape of dots or small strokes if marking syllabic sonorants. A few times syllabic sonorants are not marked by a supralinear sign, but “vocalized” with Epsilon (e.g. p. 131,16 and 132,6: $\chi\epsilon\mu$ -, p. 131,5: $\rho\epsilon\mu\mu\alpha\omicron$, p. 132,10: $\kappa\epsilon\tau\epsilon$) as usual for later manuscripts. Longer strokes are used to mark numbers and highlight names (e.g. $\overline{\pi\chi\alpha\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \alpha\pi\alpha\ \phi\iota}$, “the Saint Apa Phi(bamon)”, $\overline{\tau\iota\mu\omicron\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma}$ Timothy, $\overline{\iota\alpha\kappa\omega\beta\omicron\varsigma}$ James). They can also be used to mark abbreviations, be it in addition to the oblique stroke (e.g. $\overline{\pi\rho\omicron\kappa}$ / $\overline{\pi\rho\kappa\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu}$) or alone (e.g. $\overline{\pi\rho\alpha\zeta}$ $\overline{\pi\rho\alpha\zeta\epsilon\iota\varsigma}$; $\overline{\psi\alpha\lambda\mu\omicron\varsigma}$). *Abbreviation* is also indicated by other markers: the last letter can be put as superscript sign above the word, as in $\lambda^{\chi}\gamma$ $\lambda\upsilon\chi\nu\iota\kappa\omicron\nu$, $\pi\omicron^{\rho}$ $\omicron\rho\theta\rho\iota\nu\omicron\nu$, $\mu\alpha^{\theta}$ Matthew, $\tau\iota\mu^{\omicron}$ Timothy, $\kappa\omicron\rho^{\omicron\iota\eta}$ Corinthians. And

¹ Compare, e.g. the paper leaves of mainly liturgical content, originating from the White Monastery which are rebound together under the shelf mark Ms.or.oct. 409 of the Berlin State Library (VOHD XXI,7, Buzi and Bausi, *Coptic Manuscripts*, 2014), according to Buzi dating to the eleventh century or later.

² Boud'hors, in Davies and Laboury, *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptian Epigraphy and Palaeography*, 2020, pp. 628–29; Richter, in Cromwell and Grossmann (eds.), *Scribal Repertoires in Egypt*, 2018, pp. 299–301.

³ Boud'hors, in Davies and Laboury, *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptian Epigraphy and Palaeography*, 2020, p. 631.

⁴ Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 2019, pp. 15–17.

abbreviations with the last outspelled letter Kappa are marked by an oblique stroke, such as $\overline{\mu\alpha\rho\kappa}$ /Markos, $\overline{\lambda\omicron\gamma\kappa}$ /Lukas, $\overline{\pi\rho\omicron\kappa}$ /προκειμένον. The letter Kappa alone with the oblique abbreviation marker ($\kappa/$) stands for κεφάλαιον. This way of indicating chapters is not found in the typika from the White Monastery but it is rather known from later Bohairic lectionaries. Eventually, words can be abbreviated without any marker (notably $\Psi\alpha\lambda$ *psalmos*) which often occurs in the typika of the White Monastery. On page 132 (e.g. p. 132,8 above $\lambda\omicron\gamma\kappa[\lambda\alpha\varsigma]$), supralinear strokes marking names and numbers are written, or re-drawn, with a lighter, probably originally red (today rather brownish) ink. Long horizontal lines are used to separate entries, as on p. 132 above line 1 and underneath line 16. All the palaeographical characteristics described apply to both pages of the manuscript, which were clearly written by the same hand. An orthographic peculiarity is the spelling $\omicron\gamma\omicron\iota\eta$ (two times instead of $\omicron\gamma\omicron\epsilon\iota$ “farmer”: p. 132,3.4).

2. PROV. 8546 IN THE LIGHT OF CONTENT AND MIS-EN-PAGE OF DIRECTORIES OF PERICOPE

Prov. 8546 stands out from the Coptic papyri of the Museo Egizio by its liturgical content. The text correlates calendar date: day 27 of Epep, the (second) feast day of St Phoibamon of Letopolis, and the subsequent fourth (i.e. last) Saturday and Sunday of this month, their liturgical services (*orthrion*, *luchnikon*, and the Mass) and biblical passages to be read on them.

Such liturgical texts are known in Coptology as “directories”, “indices”, or “typika”.⁵ We use the term “typikon” to refer to the type of liturgical codex from which a leaf stems.⁶ The term “directory” describes the specific content of the leaf, or in other words, to which part of the codex (or “libellus”, as liturgiologists say) it belongs. In contrast to a lectionary, which provides the full text to be read by the lector during the service, a directory contains only the incipits (or

⁵ Atanassova, *Coptica* 9 (2010), p. 2; Brakmann, in Immerzeel and van der Vliet (eds.), *Coptic Studies*, 2004, pp. 589–91; Quecke, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Stundengebet*, 1970, p. 76 n. 132; Zanetti, *Les lectionnaires*, 1985, pp. 14–21.

⁶ Atanassova, in Groen et al. (eds.), *Rites and Rituals of the Christian East*, 2014, p. 66; Atanassova, *Coptica* 9 (2010), p. 2.

sometimes the desinits) of liturgical texts to be sung (“directory of hymns”) or read (“directory of pericopes”) during the service, arranged in the order of the liturgical calendar.⁷ The directories of pericopes from the White Monastery indicate the readings for the Liturgy of the Word during the Mass and for morning and evening praises as well.

Prov. 8546 belongs to such a typikon codex. It cannot be connected to other extant leaves and is thus the only leaf thus far known of this codex. Prov. 8546, presents part of a “directory of pericopes” for the month Epep (25 June – 24 July according to the Julian Calendar). It provides the readings for Mass as well as readings for the services of the Evening praise (*luchnikon*, i.e. the “lamp-lighting” hour, from the Greek word *λύχνος* “lamp”) and the Morning praise (*orthrinon*, from the Greek word *ὄρθρος* “morning”), also known as the Liturgy of Hours.⁸ These types of services contain all readings of biblical texts and are practiced in the Coptic Liturgy up to the present day.⁹

A directory of pericopes provides usually incipits of pericopes from the New Testament and chants from the Psalter, arranged in a specific order (on which see below).¹⁰ Psalms are generally performed as chants during Mass and the Liturgy of Hours,¹¹ and can occupy two positions within the Liturgy of the Word. In the first instance, the psalm precedes the Pauline Epistles, in this position called *prokeimenon*. In the second instance, the psalm comes before the Gospel reading.¹² The Copts do not have a special term for such psalms; they call them *Ψαλμος* (usually spelled in abbreviation).

⁷ See also the differentiation of Stephen Emmel, who defines a typikon as “a book containing a list of lections for the church services, arranged according to the liturgical calendar. As distinct from a lectionary, a typikon gives not the full text of any lection, but only the opening words and a cross-reference to where the full text can be found.” Emmel, *Shenoute’s Literary Corpus*, 2004, p. 75.

⁸ Atanassova, *Coptica* 9 (2010), p. 3; Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 2019, pp. 56–57 and 66–71; Zanetti, *Irénikon* 88/3 (2015), pp. 369–70.

⁹ Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 2019, pp. 66–67.

¹⁰ In addition to biblical pericopes, the directories of pericopes could include also readings of Christian authors, such as Shenoute of Atripe (in the White Monastery) and ecclesiastical chants, cf. Atanassova, *Coptica* 9 (2010), pp. 3–4, and Atanassova, *FS Stephen Emmel*, pp. 27–75.

¹¹ In Coptic liturgy, only one psalm has ever been used as a reading instead of a homily: Ps 34:1–28. See Atanassova, *FS Peter Nagel*, pp. 16–21 for more information. In all other cases, psalms should be designated as chants or hymns, rather than readings.

¹² Atanassova, *Coptica* 9 (2010), pp. 3–4; for the use of Psalms as hymns see also Quecke, in Rosenstiehl (ed.), *Christianisme d’Égypte*, 1996, pp. 101–14.

The number of lectures, chants, or hymns to be read or sung depends on the importance of the services.¹³ Based on sequence, composition, and number of the pericopes, Heinzgerd Brakmann differentiated between two orders of readings: The *ordo minor* consists of two pericopes: one from the Pauline Epistles and one from the Gospels. Psalm chants always precede the Gospel and cannot be designated as pericopes. *Prokeimena* (psalms preceding the Pauline Epistles) may occasionally occur within the *ordo minor* as well. The *lychnika* and *orthrina* of Prov. 8546 contain even less components and categories of readings. The evening praise on 27 Epep contains only one reading from Mark, accompanied by a Psalm chant. The morning praise on the same feast day contains two readings, as usual preceded by a Psalm chant: one from Luke and one from Matthew. The evening service on Saturday and the morning service on Sunday of the last *sabbato-kyriakai* of Epep have just one reading from the gospels, both times from Luke. We cannot give an explanation for the missing psalm chants.

The *ordo maior*, reserved for solemnities, consists of more extensive sequences of four biblical readings in the following order: 1) the Pauline Epistles, 2) the Catholic Epistles, 3) the Acts of the Apostles, and 4) the Gospels.¹⁴ A *prokeimenon* usually precedes the first reading, and an obligatory psalm has to be chanted before the Gospel reading. This is also the consistent pattern in the three instances of *ordo maior* in Prov. 8546, one on the feast day of St Phoibamon, and one on each day of the last *sabbato-kyriakai* of Epep.

The *mise-en-page* of typika could be structured in two different ways:¹⁵

- a. the more common one is the arrangement in two or three columns. The first column provides references to the biblical book to be read from. Either directly following or in a second column, the number of the *kephalaion* (chapter) is added.¹⁶ This number is followed by the incipit or (much less frequently) by the desinit of the reading, which is presented in the (second or) third column.

¹³ Feast days of higher rank ("solemnities") may thus include considerably higher numbers of hymns.

¹⁴ Brakmann, in Immerzeel and van der Vliet (eds.), *Coptic Studies*, 2004, p. 591; Atanassova, in Groen et al. (eds.), *Rites and Rituals of the Christian East*, 2014, pp. 52–53.

¹⁵ For the following see Atanassova, *Coptica* 9 (2010), pp. 4–5.

¹⁶ There were competing systems of *kephalaia* division in use, and the Coptic New Testament manuscripts provide systems different from common Greek practices. The one attested e.g. by Codex Alexandrinus (Matthew – 68, Mark – 48, Luke – 83, John – 18 chapters) was especially influential and became standard in the later Greek tradition (Kreinecker, *Das Wissenschaftliches Bibellexikon im Internet* [2017]).

There is usually some space left between the columns so that the directory looks like what it actually is, a table. This type of *mise-en-page* is often found in the parchment typika of the White Monastery;¹⁷

- b. in the second type of *mise-en-page*, all information is organized in one single column with the references to biblical books, chapter numbers, and incipits immediately following one another, while the functional structure is provided by ekthesis (outdent), colon, space, and often also by the employment of different colours, notably yellow and red, in order to differentiate between the different types of references. This type is more common for the paper typika of the White Monastery.¹⁸

This second *mise-en-page* is the one attested by Provv. 8546. There, the whole text is written in the same black colour, although some categories of information are marked by coloured strokes. The different types of references are distinguished by *ekthesis* (outdent), colon and space. The beginnings of entries for different services (*orthrinon* “morning praise”, *luchnikon* “evening praise”, or Liturgy of the Word during the Mass) are usually marked by *ekthesis*.¹⁹

3. PROVENANCE AND DATE OF PROV. 8546

As indicated by the “provisional” inventory number, nothing is known about the acquisition of Provv. 8546, nor does the content provide criteria to determine its provenance in any secure way.

However, the combination of material and palaeographical features gives us hints about the possible date of the manuscript. *Termini post quem* are the later type of Mu (“flat Mu”), not attested before the tenth century,²⁰ and the use of paper as writing material suggests a date not before 1000 CE.²¹ The produc-

¹⁷ Atanassova, *Coptica* 9 (2010), p. 4.

¹⁸ Atanassova, *Coptica* 9 (2010), pp. 4–5.

¹⁹ Cf. Provv. 8546, p. 131, ll. 3, 6, 11; p. 132, ll. 1, 8.

²⁰ Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 2019, pp. 15–17.

²¹ While paper in Egypt has driven out papyrus in the sphere of documentary writing by the mid-tenth century, its use in the scriptoria is not attested before the eleventh, see Boud'hors, in Zerdoun Bat-Yehouda (ed.), *Le papier au Moyen-Âge*, 1999.

tion and use of Sahidic liturgical manuscripts, notably in the White Monastery, lasted as late as the fourteenth century,²² thus providing a *terminus ad quem* for Provv. 8546. Relatively similar typikon codices, such as MONB.WT, MONB.WJ and MONB.WS, have been dated to the eleventh to the twelfth centuries,²³ and this date is proposed here for Provv. 8546 too.

Although Provv. 8546 shares some textual, layout, and palaeographical features with the typika of the White Monastery,²⁴ we tend to exclude this fragment from the White Monastery's corpus of typikon codices. Given the purpose and content of these texts, however, similarities between Provv. 8546 and the White Monastery typika are to be expected. Codices including typika are also known from other places in Egypt, such as Cheikh Abadeh (Antinoe).²⁵ Another important factor in our decision is that experts on the White Monastery library, such as Alin Suciu, do not recognise the handwriting of Provv. 8546 as belonging to any of the known scribes.²⁶ Last but not least, the Museo Egizio in Turin is not known to host fragments from the White Monastery.²⁷ The peculiar spelling $\text{o}\gamma\text{o}\iota\text{h}$ for $\text{o}\gamma\text{o}\epsilon\iota\epsilon$ “farmer” (p. 132,3.4) may point to a place of origin distinctively more northern than the White Monastery.²⁸

²² Boud'hors, in Zerdoun Bat-Yehouda (ed.), *Le papier au Moyen-Âge*, 1999, p. 84.

²³ Buzi and Bausi, *Coptic Manuscripts*, 2014, pp. 200–02, 204, 208–09; see also PATHs Database on MONB.WS: → <http://paths.uniroma1.it/atlas/manuscripts/709>, on MONB.WJ: → <http://paths.uniroma1.it/atlas/manuscripts/692> and on MONB.WT: → <http://paths.uniroma1.it/atlas/manuscripts/687> (last accessed on 29 April 2024).

²⁴ Cf. MONB.WT, a Sahidic liturgical paper codex of similar format (13 cm by 17 cm), which contains, *inter alia*, a directory of hymns presented in one column.

²⁵ Cf. the codex leaf with pag. 61/62 Cairo, CM, n° 3846 in Munier, *ASAE* 21 (1921), p. 83, N. 9.

²⁶ Alin Suciu informed us in personal communication that Provv. 8546 “does not look like a White Monastery hand”.

²⁷ Alin Suciu, who has gathered thirty-nine library collections including fragments from the White Monastery in an unpublished investigation, provided us with this information in personal communication. In Italy, only the libraries in Rome, Naples and Venice hold such fragments.

²⁸ Similar spellings are found in Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, 1939, p. 473a, but this particular form has been indicated by Kasser, *BIFAO* 64 (1966), p. 45b as the one found in the later Coptic dialect of Hermopolis (dialect H, P.Morgan M636).

4. EDITION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

4.1 Page 131

4.1.1 Transcription

ῥλᾱ

Coγ κ̄ζ̄ π̄ραγῑος ἀπα φ̄ι-

βαμων νογ̄ωημ

Πλ̄χ(νικον) ψ̄αλ(μοc) π̄η τεφ̄αρχη

μαρκ(οc) κ(εφαλαιον) κ̄θ̄ ἡ̄τερεφ̄εῑ εβολ

5 ε̄τερ̄η̄ ἀγ̄ρεμμαο

Πορ̄θ(ρινον) ψ̄αλ(μοc) π̄ιε̄

λογ̄κ(αc) ο̄ε̄ ρ̄αθ̄η̄ Δ̄ε̄ ἡ̄νᾱῑ

μαθ̄θ(αιος) κ(εφαλαιον) ἡ̄ ἀγ̄ε̄ῑνε̄ Δ̄ε̄ νᾱφ̄

ἡ̄ρ̄ενω̄ηρε̄ ω̄ημ: ω̄ᾱ

10 νᾱρ̄π̄ π̄νογ̄τ̄ε̄

Προκ(ειμενον) κ̄ ἡ̄ : ἡ̄Δ̄: †μοθ̄(εοc) ᾱ κ(εφαλαιον) γ̄

†παρ̄αγγ̄ελ̄ιᾱ †κ̄ω̄

πετ̄ροc ᾱ ς̄ π̄τεμ̄ρο

πρ̄[ᾱξ̄(ιc) ἡ̄]Δ̄ ρ̄εν̄νοc ἡ̄βο̄μ

15 [ψ̄αλ ἡ̄Δ̄ ε̄νε̄]ς̄ω̄φ̄ ρ̄ῑ πεφ̄σα

[λογ̄κ/κ/ ἡ̄]Δ̄ ρ̄ε̄μ̄ π̄τ̄[ρε̄]

[νε̄τ̄βα Δ̄ε̄ ἡ̄μ̄η̄]η̄ω̄[ε̄]

1 π̄ραγῑος ἀπα φ̄ῑ ἁ̄γιος || 3 λ̄*γ̄ λυχνικόν | ψ̄αλ ψαλμός | ἀρχή || 4 μαρκ/ | κ/ κεφάλαιον || 6 πο^ορ̄ ὀρθρινόν | ψ̄αλ ψαλμός || 7 λογ̄κ/ || 8 μαθ̄θ | κ/ κεφάλαιον || 11 προκ̄/ προκειμένον | †μ^ο | κ/ κεφάλαιον || 12 παραγγελία || 14 πρ̄[ᾱξ̄] πράξεις 15 ψ̄αλ ψαλμός || 16 λογ̄κ(αc) | κεφάλαιον || 17 δε

4.1.2 Translation

|¹ Day 27 – the holy Apa Phi- |² bamon of Oušēm. |³ The luchnikon: Psalm 88 – its beginning; |⁴ Marc, chapter 29 “After he went out |⁵ on the way, a rich man”. |⁶ The orthrinon: Psalm 115; |⁷ Luke, (chapter) 75: “In this way, however, these”; |⁸ Matthew, chapter 40: “But they brought to him |⁹ some little children” up to |¹⁰ “under the gaze of God”. |¹¹ Prokeimenon: (psalm) 20 (psalm) 8: (psalm)

44: 1Timothy, chapter 3: |¹² “This rule, I give”; |¹³ 1Peter, (chapter) 5: “The heat”; |¹⁴ Acts, (chapter) [5]4: “Great miracles”; |¹⁵ [Psalm 44: “Hand]some is he in his beauty” |¹⁶ [Luke chapter 4]4: “Mean[while] |¹⁷ [thousands of pe]op[le]”]

4.1.3 Commentary

II. 1–2 The two saints bearing the name Ph(o)ibamon are disambiguated by the addition of the origo “of οΥΩΗΜ” (= Letopolis, modern Awsīm),²⁹ so that the saint who suffered the martyrdom during the persecution under emperor Maximian must be meant.³⁰ St Phoibamon of Letopolis is honoured on two days in the Coptic liturgical calendar. His main feast day is on the 27th of Tobe (22 January).³¹ On the 27th of Epep, thus exactly 6 months later, Copts celebrate the consecration of the Church of St Phoibamon.³² As the leaf Provv. 8546 (as per 132,1) refers to the month of Epep (25 June – 24 July) and “day 27”, this must mean this second feast day dedicated to the consecration of the church. Provv. 8546 presents therefore the earliest and most crucial witness to the second feast day of St Phoibamon of Letopolis.

I. 3 The first reading of the evening prayer (*luchnikon*) is Psalm 88. After the number of the Psalm follows not the incipit but the instruction to start at its beginning.³³

II. 4–5 The second reading is from the Gospel of Mark. The *kephalaion* mentioned is 29, equivalent to Mark 10:17–34. The passage quoted afterwards is Mark 10:17: ⲡⲧⲉⲣⲉϥⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲧⲉⲗⲓⲛ ⲁⲟϣⲁ ⲡⲟⲩ ⲁϥⲡⲁⲗⲧⲩ ⲗⲓⲗⲏ ⲙⲙⲟϥ etc., the story of the rich young man wanting instruction on how to enter the kingdom of God. The directory quotes the incipit up to ⲁⲟϣⲁ, but replaces the indefinite pronoun by (ο)Υⲣⲉⲙⲙⲁⲟ to make explicit who is meant by ⲟϣⲁ.

I. 6 Here starts the list of readings for the morning praise (*orthrinon*). The first reading is Psalm 115. There is no incipit or any further remark, so that all the verses of the psalm are to be read.

²⁹ Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten*, 1992, pp. 2986–93.

³⁰ O’Leary, *The Saints of Egypt*, 1937, pp. 229–31.

³¹ O’Leary, *The Saints of Egypt*, 1937, p. 35.

³² The spelling of the saint’s name is not easily recognisable in later sources such as Basset, *Le Synaxaire arabe jacobite*, 2003, p. 693 (Abou Bifâm) and Forget, *Synaxarium Alexandrinum*, 1926, p. 243 (Abū Bafāmi). See also Papaconstantinou, *Le Culte des saints en Égypte*, 2001, pp. 204–14, 414. Nowadays, St Phoibammon can be found as “St Abe-Fame, the Soldier” on various electronic Coptic websites.

³³ Atanassova, *OrChr* 94 (2010), pp. 109–10.

I. 7 The reading following the Psalm is the Gospel of Luke. The abbreviation for *kephalaion*, mostly present, is missing here; only the chapter number 75 (= Luke 21:5–38) is given. The incipit of the reading corresponds to Luke 21:12: $\zeta\alpha\theta\eta\ \Delta\epsilon\ \bar{\nu}\nu\alpha\dot{\iota}$..., the scribe quoting the Sahidic standard text.

II. 8–10 The third reading is a passage from the Gospel of Matthew, *kephalaion* 40 (= Matt 19:3–15). The quoted incipit corresponds to Matt 19:13: $\alpha\gamma\epsilon\iota\eta\epsilon\ \bar{\nu}\alpha\upsilon\ \bar{\nu}\zeta\epsilon\bar{\nu}\omega\eta\rho\epsilon\ \omega\eta\mu$. The phrase $\omega\alpha\ \bar{\nu}\alpha\zeta\rho\bar{\mu}\ \bar{\pi}\nu\omega\gamma\tau\epsilon$, “up to: under the gaze of God” indicates the end of the reading, namely $\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\alpha\zeta\rho\bar{\mu}\ \bar{\pi}\nu\omega\gamma\tau\epsilon\ \Delta\epsilon\ \mu\bar{\nu}\ \lambda\alpha\alpha\gamma\ \omicron\ \bar{\nu}\alpha\tau\omicron\omicron\mu$, “but with God nothing is impossible” (Matt 19:26).

I. 11 This line stands in *ekthesis* which marks a new entry, that for the liturgy of the feast day. The abbreviated word *prokeimenon* refers to psalms performed as chants and preceding a reading from Pauline Epistles. Three subsequent numbers directly following one another, separated only by a space and a colon, thus refer to numbers of psalms (Ps 20, Ps 8, Ps 44).

II. 11–12 The three chants are followed by a reading from the Pauline Epistles, namely from the third *kephalaion* of the first letter of Timothy (1Tim 1:18–20). The incipit corresponds to 1Tim 1:18: $\tau\epsilon\dot{\iota}\bar{\pi}\alpha\rho\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\iota\alpha\ \bar{\tau}\kappa\omega\ \bar{\mu}\mu\omicron\varsigma$... The only difference to the standard version is that the scribe spells the demonstrative article $\bar{\tau}$ - instead of $\tau\epsilon\dot{\iota}$ -.

I. 13 The following reading is from the first Letter of Peter. As in line 7, the abbreviation for *kephalaion* is missing, but its number is given: chapter 6 (= 1Pet 4:12 seqq.). The quoted incipit $\bar{\pi}\tau\tau\epsilon\bar{\mu}\zeta\omicron$ is indeed found in the first sentence of *kephalaion* six ($\bar{\pi}\tau\bar{\tau}\bar{\mu}\zeta\omicron\ \epsilon\tau\bar{\eta}\zeta\eta\tau\ \tau\eta\gamma\tau\bar{\eta}\ \epsilon\tau\omega\omicron\omicron\pi\ \bar{\nu}\eta\tau\bar{\eta}\ \epsilon\gamma\chi\omega\bar{\nu}\tau$) “the heat (among you which happened to you as a trial)”, although the beginning of the verse ($\bar{\nu}\alpha\mu\epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\ \bar{\mu}\bar{\pi}\bar{\rho}\bar{\omega}\pi\eta\rho\epsilon\ \bar{\mu}$ -, “Beloved, don’t be astonished about...”) is missing. According to the typika of the White Monastery, this was the standard incipit to refer to this reading.³⁴

I. 14 The first two letters of the line can be identified as Pi and Rho, and indeed after reading from the Pauline and Catholic letters, one from the Prax(eis) ought to come. The *kephalaion* number is partly destroyed, only its second digit $\bar{\Delta}$ ‘4’ is still legible. The incipit $\zeta\epsilon\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\omicron\varsigma\ \bar{\nu}\omicron\omicron\mu$ is found twice in Acts, namely in Acts 8:13 ($\bar{\mu}\bar{\nu}\zeta\epsilon\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\omicron\varsigma\ \bar{\nu}\omicron\omicron\mu$) and Acts 19:11: $\zeta\epsilon\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\omicron\varsigma\ \bar{\nu}\omicron\omicron\mu\ \epsilon\rho\epsilon\bar{\pi}\bar{\nu}\omega\gamma\tau\epsilon$... Acts 19:11 corresponds indeed to chapter 54 and might therefore be meant here.

³⁴ Cf. MONB.WP, Ann Arbor, UML, P.Mich. inv. 4969.5v, ll. 5–6: $\bar{\pi}\tau\bar{\tau}\bar{\mu}\zeta\omicron\epsilon\tau\bar{\eta}\zeta\eta\tau\bar{\tau}\tau\eta\gamma\tau\epsilon\bar{\nu}$.

II. 15–17 In the typika of the White Monastery, Psalm 44:3 is often chanted before a reading from *kephalaion* 44 of the gospel of Luke (= Luke 12:1–12). The last three lines can thus be identified and reconstructed as Ps 44:3 and Luke 12:1.³⁵ In the typika in question, the pericope begins with Luke 12:4, which is not problematic as the length of a reading can vary.³⁶ As in Prov. 8546, the examples in the typika of the White Monastery come from feasts for martyrs and soldiers. There is a slight difference between the incipit of Psalm 44:3 as quoted in Prov. 8546 on the one hand and the Septuagint text of this verse and the wording in the typika of the White Monastery on the other: [ενε]ϣωϣ ρι πεϣα as opposed to ενεωϣ ρ̄ι πεϣα παρᾱνωρη. Minor alterations in the phrasing of biblical quotations are not uncommon, when comparing the typika incipits with the *textus receptus* of the Old or New Testaments. A similar difference in wording can be seen for example in the incipit for Mark 9:9: ε̄νηϣ δε̄ ενε̄ϣτ̄ ρῑ πτο̄οϣ in MONB.AW³⁷ as opposite to ε̄νηϣ δε̄ ενε̄ϣτ̄ ρ̄ιχ̄̄ πτο̄οϣ in the Sahidic New Testament.³⁸

4.2 Page 132

4.2.1 Transcription

ⲡⲗⲃ (Horizontal line)

ⲡ{ⲟ}ⲙⲉⲗϣⲧⲟⲟϣ ⲛⲥⲁⲃⲃⲁⲧⲟⲛ ⲛⲉⲡⲛⲫ
 ⲡⲣⲟⲕ(ⲉⲓⲙⲉⲛⲟⲛ) ⲡⲥ̄ ⲁϣϣⲟ ⲛⲗⲉⲛⲥⲱⲱⲉ
 ⲧⲙⲟⲑⲉⲟⲥ:ⲗⲗ̄ ⲃ ⲕ(ⲉⲫⲁⲗⲁⲓⲟⲛ) ⲗ̄ ⲡⲟϣⲟⲓⲛ ⲉⲧⲗⲟⲥⲉ
 ⲓⲁⲕⲱⲃⲟⲥ· ⲉⲓⲥⲗⲛⲛⲧⲉ ⲡⲟϣⲟⲓⲛ
 5 ⲡⲣⲁⲗ(ⲓⲥ) ⲛⲥ̄ ⲁϣⲱⲱⲡⲉ ⲛⲡⲉⲟϣⲟⲉⲓⲱ
 ⲧⲁⲗ(ⲙⲟⲥ) ⲗ̄ ⲁϣⲱⲱⲁⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ρⲉⲙ
 ⲙⲁⲣⲕ(ⲟⲥ) ⲕ(ⲉⲫⲁⲗⲁⲓⲟⲛ) ⲗⲥ̄ ⲟϣⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲛⲧⲁϣⲧⲱⲃⲉ
 ⲡⲗϣ(ⲛⲓⲕⲟⲛ) ⲗⲟϣⲕ(ⲁⲥ) ⲕ(ⲉⲫⲁⲗⲁⲓⲟⲛ) ⲛⲛ̄ ⲡⲟⲓⲕⲟⲛⲟⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̄
 ⲡⲗ̄ⲓⲛⲃⲟⲛⲉⲥ — ⲡⲟⲣⲑ(ⲣⲓⲛⲟⲛ) ⲗⲟϣⲕ(ⲁⲥ)

³⁵ Cf. Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament*, Vol. II, 1911, pp. 236–40.

³⁶ Cf. the feast of St Mena the Martyr and Soldier on the 15th of Hathor (11 November) in MONB.WA, Wien, ÖNB, P.Vindob. K 9733v, ll. 23–27.

³⁷ Cf. MONB.AW, Paris, BnF, Copte 129.20, f. 165, l. 25.

³⁸ Cf. Wells, *Sahidica*, 2007, p. 115. This version of Mark was produced based on P.Palau Rib. Inv.Nr. 182 and PML, M 569. It differs from Horner's edition, which, like Prov. 8546, also has the preposition ρι, cf. Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament*, Vol. I, 1911, p. 490. In any case, this example shows us that some biblical manuscripts use a different preposition than liturgical sources.

- 10 ἀναγ ετβω ἡκέντε ἡν
 πρὸκ(εἰμένον) ὁθ κορινθ(ιογς) ᾱ κ(εφαλαιον) ἱ
 nim πε <ε>ωαφερματοῖ ῃ
 ιακωβος · ἡωωε αν νασνηγ
 πραζ(ις) ἡ πμηνωε ἡ [
- 15 ψαλ(μος) ζς πκαρ [
- [ι]ωζ(αnnης) κ(εφαλαιον) λγ αν[
- (Three horizontal lines)
-]π[

1 σάββατον || 2 πρὸκ/ || 3 ἡμοθεος | [[α]]β | κ/ κεφάλαιον || 4 ἱακωβος || 5 πρᾶξ
 || 6 ψαλ || 7 ἡαρκ/ | κ/ κεφάλαιον || 8 πλχγ | λογκ/ | κ/ κεφάλαιον | οἰκόννομος ||
 9 ποερ ὀρθρινόν | λογκ/ || 11 πρὸκ/ | κορθιν | κ/ κεφάλαιον || 13 ἱακωβος | νασνηγ
 || 14 πρᾶξ || 15 ψαλ || 16 [ι]ωζ | κ/ κεφάλαιον

4.2.2 Translation

p. 132

|¹ The fourth Saturday of Epep: |² Prokeimenon: (psalm) 106: “They planted some fields” |³ 2Timothy, chapter 4(?): “The hardworking farmer” |⁴ James: “Look, the farmer” |⁵ Acts 55: “It happened at this time” |⁶ Psalm 4: “They multiplied through” |⁷ Mark, chapter 35: “A man who planted” |⁸ The luchnikon: Luke, chapter 58 “The steward |⁹ of unrighteousness”; – The orthrinon: Luke: |¹⁰ “See the fig tree and the” |¹¹ Prokeimenon: (psalm) 79; 1Corinthians: |¹² “Who serves as soldier for” |¹³ James: “It isn’t right, my brothers”; |¹⁴ Acts 13: “The crowd [|¹⁵ Psalm 65: “The earth [|¹⁶ John, chapter 33: “We [|17 ...] ... [...

4.2.3 Commentary

1. 1 Page 132 starts with the readings of the mass on the fourth Saturday of Epep (the spelling επηφ with final φ being a common Sahidic variant).³⁹ Together with the following Sunday it forms a liturgical unit, the so-called *sabbato-kyriakai*. It is remarkable that this *sabbato-kyriakai* includes two masses, one on Saturday and one on Sunday. In terms of the Julian calendar, Epep runs from 25 June to 24

³⁹ Crum, *Coptic Dictionary*, 1939, p. 57b.

II. 9–10 The morning praise (*orthrion*); the entry follows immediately after the entry for evening praise, without line break or *ekthesis*. Without reference to chapter, another reading from the Gospel of Luke is indicated, the incipit is Luke

⁴⁰ In Horner edition on the Sahidic Acts (Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament*, Vol. VI, 1922, p. 452) the chapter corresponding to Acts 19:23 is number 55, the manuscript of the Bohairic version of Acts (Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament*, Vol. IV, 1905) providing other, even more diverging systems of chapter counting.

21:29: $\alpha\eta\alpha\gamma \epsilon\tau\beta\omega \bar{\eta}\kappa\bar{\eta}\tau\epsilon \bar{m}\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\omega\eta\eta$ etc. “Look at the fig tree and the trees ...”, another passage thus far unattested in the typika from the White Monastery.

II. 11–12 In these two lines, two readings are listed: First, the *prokeimenon* Psalm 79. The lack of an incipit might indicate the reading of the entire 20 verses of this psalm. Second, a reading from the Pauline Letters, namely 1Cor 9:7: $\eta\mu \pi\epsilon \epsilon\omega\alpha\varphi\bar{\rho}\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\iota \bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\epsilon\varphi\omega\eta\iota\omega\eta$ etc. “who serves as soldier for pay from his own ...”

I. 13 The reading of Catholic Letters is from the letter of James. No chapter number is indicated. The quoted incipit is James 3:10 (the Sahidic standard text reads $\overline{\omega}\omega\epsilon \alpha\eta \eta\alpha\varsigma\eta\eta\gamma$, without the front part $\bar{\eta}$ - of the bipartite negation).

I. 14 The next reading after the Catholic letters is from the Acts of the Apostles. Without the tag κ /the chapter number is indicated: $\overline{\iota\tau}$. The following $\bar{\eta}$... delimits the possible verses to a handful. The only verse starting with $\pi\eta\eta\eta\omega\epsilon$ is Acts 4:32: $\pi\eta\eta\eta\omega\epsilon \Delta\epsilon \eta\tau\alpha\gamma\pi\iota\varsigma\tau\epsilon\gamma\epsilon \eta\epsilon\gamma\omicron \eta\omicron\gamma\eta\eta\tau \eta\omicron\gamma\omega\tau \alpha\gamma\omega \omicron\gamma\gamma\chi\eta \eta\omicron\gamma\omega\tau$, indeed the start of chapter 13 according to Horner’s edition.⁴¹

I. 15 The following Psalm reading is Ps 65. Only the first word of the incipit is readable: $\pi\kappa\alpha\lambda$ “the earth”. In fact, two verses of this psalm (1 and 4) start with this word. The typika from the White Monastery do not help to make the decision, though it seems to be more reasonable to start with the beginning of the Psalm.

I. 16 A reading from the gospels ought to come here, and the first legible letters, Omega and Hori, suggest John. The *kephalaion* number is $\overline{\lambda\tau}$ (= 33). In the Sahidic manuscripts,⁴² this chapter runs from John 14:1 to 14:25. This chapter contains a number of aretalogical statements which in Coptic would start with $\alpha\eta\omicron\kappa$ “I (am)”, such as John 14:6: $\alpha\eta\omicron\kappa \tau\epsilon \tau\epsilon\gamma\eta\eta \alpha\gamma\omega \tau\eta\epsilon \alpha\gamma\omega \pi\omega\eta\eta$; 14:10: $\alpha\eta\omicron\kappa \dagger\eta\mu\pi\alpha\epsilon\iota\omega\tau \alpha\gamma\omega \pi\alpha\epsilon\iota\omega\tau \eta\eta\eta\tau$; 14:16 $\alpha\eta\omicron\kappa \gamma\omega \dagger\eta\alpha\varsigma\epsilon\pi\iota\varsigma \pi\omega\tau$ etc. The typika and lectionaries from the White Monastery do not have this chapter among their gospel readings, so as to facilitate our search for a verse starting with $\alpha\eta$ [. There are, however, pericopes starting with John 14:26 (= chapter 34). Part of this chapter is John 15:1 $\alpha\eta\omicron\kappa \pi\epsilon \tau\beta\omega \eta\epsilon\lambda\omicron\omicron\lambda\epsilon \mu\mu\epsilon \alpha\gamma\omega \pi\alpha\iota\omega\tau \pi\epsilon \rho\omicron\gamma\omicron\omicron\iota\epsilon$, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman”, which would match with the topic of husbandry figuring so prominently in the earlier readings of the day. John 17:4 with *kephalaion* $\overline{\lambda\varsigma}$ (=36) should also be taken into account: $\alpha\eta\omicron\kappa$

⁴¹ Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament*, Vol. VI, 1922, p. 80.

⁴² Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament*, Vol. III, 1911, p. 234.

ⲁⲓⲧⲉⲟⲟⲩ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲉⲓⲁⲛⲡⲓⲕⲁⲛ, which is indeed attested by White Monastery typika for a range of feast days.⁴³ Maybe, the copyist read ϣ instead of ϣ?

1. 17 The traces visible here seem to be part of the letter π. The three decorative lines between lines 16 and 17 indicate the shift from month Epep to Mesore.

5. CONCLUSION

The two pages of the paper leaf Provv. 8546 record liturgical readings of services in the last days of Epep (25 June – 24 July Julian calendar). It begins with the second feast of St Phoibamon of Letopolis on the 27 Epep (21 July), the day on which the consecration of a church for this saint was celebrated according to the Synaxarion. The Turin leaf is thus an early witness to this celebration. After the feast day for the saint follows the fourth *sabbato-kyriakai* (i.e. the last Saturday and Sunday) of the month Epep. For both liturgical occasions, the pericopes for the *lychnikon* “evening praise”, the *orthrinon* “morning praise”, and for the proper Mass with its *ordo maior* are recorded. The feast day for the saint starts, as usual on such occasions, with the *lychnikon* on the eve before. The *ordo maior* has the usual structure – a *prokeinemon*, followed by four readings from the Pauline Epistles, from the Catholic Epistles, from the Acts, and from the Gospel, as well as the obligatory Psalm chant before the Gospel. The fourth *sabbato-kyriakai* starts on Saturday not with a plain *orthrinon* but with a fully-fledged mass. The inclusion of *lychnika* and *orthrina* is a particularly interesting feature of Provv. 8546 because it is rarely attested in the typika of the White Monastery. Provv. 8546 is a significant testimony to our understanding of the southern Egyptian liturgy of the Coptic Church at the beginning of the second millennium AD. To provide the readership with an overview of the structure of Provv. 8546, and notably scholars of Eastern liturgies with a comparandum, we add here a liturgical summary of the contents of the Turin leaf Provv. 8546.

⁴³ E.g. MONB.WP, Cairo, IFAO, Copte 279Av, l. 16, indicates *kephalaion* ⲛⲓⲥ (=36) which is not recorded in Horner's edition: [ⲓ]ⲱⲉ ⲛⲓⲥ [ⲁ]ⲛⲁⲕ ⲁⲓⲧⲉⲟⲟⲩ.

LITURGICAL SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS OF THE TURIN LEAF PROVV. 8546

Recto P. 131

Evening praise

Ps 88:1

Mark 10:17

Morning praise

Ps 115

Luke 21:12

Matt 19:13–26

(Mass)

Prokeimenon Ps 20; Ps 8 und Ps 44

1Tim 1:18

1Pet 4:12

Acts 19:11

Ps 44:3

Luke 12:1

Verso P. 132

Fourth Saturday of (the month of) Epep

(Mass)

Prokeimenon Ps 106:37

2Tim 2:6

James 5:7

Acts 19:23

Ps 4:7

Mark 12:1b

(Fourth Sunday of the month of Epep)

Evening praise

Luke 16:8

Morning praise

Luke 21:29

(Mass)

Prokeimenon Psalm 79

1Cor 9:7

James 3:10

Acts 4:32

Ps 65:1 or Ps 65:4

John 14 (?)

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LETTER OF THE “ANONYMOUS BILINGUAL SCRIBE” FROM APHRODITO (P. TURIN PROV. 6268)*

Yasmine Amory, Francesca Iacono

Inv. No.: Prov. 6268

TPOP Obj ID: 679

Dimensions: H 23.5 cm x W 17.5 cm

Date: from 537/538 to 546/547?

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is a private letter from an anonymous sender to his “beloved and venerable brother” (l. 18). The names of these two persons are not preserved anywhere on the papyrus; yet, it is still possible to make plausible assumptions on their identity. On the basis of the palaeography and of specific features in the phraseology and structure of the letter (see more in detail below), it has in fact been possible to identify the sender with the so-called “anonymous bilingual scribe” from the sixth-century archive of Dioscorus of Aphrodito.¹ Moreover, since the circumstances surrounding the discovery of this archive are well-known, the arrival of these papyri in the Museo Egizio’s collection can now be dated to after 1905, when the archive was found.

Even though a small dossier of letters, both in Coptic and in Greek,² has been now associated with the hand of this scribe, his name is still unknown, as the right part of the external address, which usually contains the sender’s name,

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¹ For a general introduction to the archive of Dioscorus of Aphrodito (→ TmArch id: 72), see more recently Ruffini, *Life in an Egyptian Village*, 2018. For the identification and a portrait of the “anonymous bilingual scribe”, see Amory, “Communiquer par écrit”, 2018, I, pp. 50–58.

² More in detail, he has drafted six letters in Coptic and three in Greek. See respectively P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 3 and 16, for the editions of two of his Coptic letters (the others are waiting to be published), and Amory, “Communiquer par écrit”, 2018, II, pp. 49–80, for the Greek ones.

is either lost or irremediably faded in all the letters. This is unfortunately also the case for our text. Nevertheless, this small epistolary dossier informs us that this cultivated scribe was part of a monastic community, very likely the one of Apa Charisios,³ and was in a tight epistolary relationship with Apollos, Dioscorus’ father. Apollos is in fact the addressee of most of the letters belonging to this corpus,⁴ where, at least in P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 3 (currently stored in the Egyptian Museum of Ismailia), he is addressed as $\tau\epsilon\tau\bar{\nu}\mu\bar{\nu}\tau\bar{\mu}\alpha\iota\bar{\nu}\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ (l. 3), “your Piety”, and as $\pi\alpha\mu\epsilon\rho\iota\tau\ \bar{\nu}\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\omicron}\bar{\nu}\ \epsilon\tau\tau\alpha\epsilon\iota\eta\gamma\ \lambda\gamma\omega\ \epsilon\tau\iota\omicron\gamma\lambda\omega\bar{\iota}$ (l. 17), “my beloved venerable brother whom I love”. As the sender of our letter addresses his epistolary correspondent in a very similar way (see l. 2, 16: $\tau\epsilon\tau\bar{\nu}\mu\bar{\nu}\tau\bar{\mu}\alpha\iota\bar{\nu}\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$, and l. 18: $\pi\alpha\mu\epsilon\rho\iota\tau\ \bar{\nu}\bar{\varsigma}[\bar{\omicron}]\bar{\nu}\ \epsilon\tau\tau[\lambda\alpha\epsilon\iota]\eta\gamma$), we might consider that the addressee of our letter is once again Apollos. The clear references to a monastic context (see especially the final greetings in ll. 16–18) might be an additional element to confirm this proposition, since Apollos spent the last years of his life in the monastery he founded.⁵ If this is correct, it could be possible to date the letter to this specific period, which spans from around 537/538 to 546/547.

According to the well-read profile of the scribe, the language is standard Sahidic with little to no deviation, with an elaborate prose, rich in Greek loanwords – some of them (l. 6, $\tau\gamma\gamma\alpha\nu\iota\zeta\epsilon\varsigma\theta\alpha\iota$, and l. 7, $\epsilon\eta\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\varsigma\iota\alpha$) making here their first appearance in Coptic documentary sources. That being said, only the right half of the letter is preserved, which makes attempting to understand the context quite complex. Among some obscure allusions to a soldier (l. 3), a problem that seems to bother the addressee (l. 6), and some instructions that have been taken care of by the sender (ll. 11–12), a few epistolary topoi can be recognized: in particular, the complaint about not having received any letter (l. 4), the sender(s)’s relief upon hearing some good news (ll. 7–8), and the final greetings to the addressee and his community (ll. 15–18). The central topic of the letter is, though, an affair that needs to be settled by the addressee (ll. 13–15). While the precise subject of the matter is not clear, it involves different people, including a certain Paulos (l. 13). The sender begs the addressee to arrange the issue, probably through a settlement, which recalls a Greek letter

³ Apa Charisios is in fact greeted as the scribe’s monastic ‘father’ in P.Stras. IV 279, 12.

⁴ He seems to be the addressee of all the Greek letters and of P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 3.

⁵ See Wipszycka, in Fournet (ed.), *Les archives de Dioscore d'Aphrodité*, 2008, pp. 261–74.

from the same scribe, P.Stras. IV 279, where Apollos is asked to judge the problem of a tenant of a monastery.⁶ As for our text, Apollos might have been solicited to settle the affair in his capacity as an ecclesiastic authority and, perhaps, for his concurrent other role as *prôtokômêtês*.⁷ It is interesting to notice how the “anonymous bilingual scribe” addresses Apollos in both languages, without differentiating them on the basis of specific topics or requests, showing thus a perfect degree of bilingualism.

2. MATERIAL AND PALAEOGRAPHICAL ASPECTS

The document [Figs. 1–2] is a fragment of a light brown papyrus, which is broken off on the left but still preserves the original upper, right and lower margins, the latter one being only partially visible. The top and bottom margins are 2 cm each. The average width of a late antique letter on papyrus (ca. 30 cm),⁸ together with the presence of $\chi\mu\gamma$ on the top of our document, a Christian symbol that was usually drafted right in the centre of the document,⁹ allows us to estimate that a little bit less than half of the letter is missing.

The papyrus presents some damages, mostly in the lower part and along the horizontal and vertical folds, suggesting that the letter was rolled horizontally and then folded two times vertically. The letter broke off along the central vertical fold. The ink is at times faded, especially in the first five lines.

The letter is written in a regular bilinear handwriting, slightly inclined to the right. It is worth noting that the handwriting, usually fluid and confident, becomes more hesitant and shakier in ll. 8–10. As this is limited to a few lines,

⁶ See Amory “Communiquer par écrit”, 2018, II, pp. 49–56, for the identification of the addressee and a new edition of the document.

⁷ On his double role, see Wipszycka, in Fournet (ed.), *Les archives de Dioscore*, 2008, pp. 265–66, and Vanderheyden, in Huebner et al. (eds.), *Living the End of Antiquity*, 2020, pp. 122–23.

⁸ See Fournet, in Delmaire et al. (eds.), *Correspondances*, 2009, p. 31.

⁹ This much-debated symbol can be found in many Greek and Coptic documents from late antique Egypt, and, at large, from the Byzantine world. It seems to indicate a Christian milieu of production: a common interpretation takes the three letters as an acronym for $X(\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\nu) M(\alpha\rho\iota\acute{\alpha}) \gamma(\epsilon\nu\eta)$ or $X(\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma) M(\alpha\rho\iota\acute{\alpha}\varsigma) \gamma(\epsilon\nu\eta\alpha)$. In other popular interpretations, the enigmatic letter sequence would stand for $X(\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma) \mu(\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\upsilon\varsigma) \gamma(\epsilon\nu\eta\tau\alpha\iota)$, which would be particularly fitting for legal documentation, or could represent an isopsephism with the same numerical value as the phrase $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma \beta\omicron\eta\theta\acute{o}\varsigma$ or $\eta \acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\alpha \tau\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$. For an examination of the symbol, see Derda, *JJP* 22 (1992), and, more recently, Nongbri, *HTR* 104 (2011), pp. 66–68, and Blumell, *Lettered Christians*, 2012, pp. 47–48.

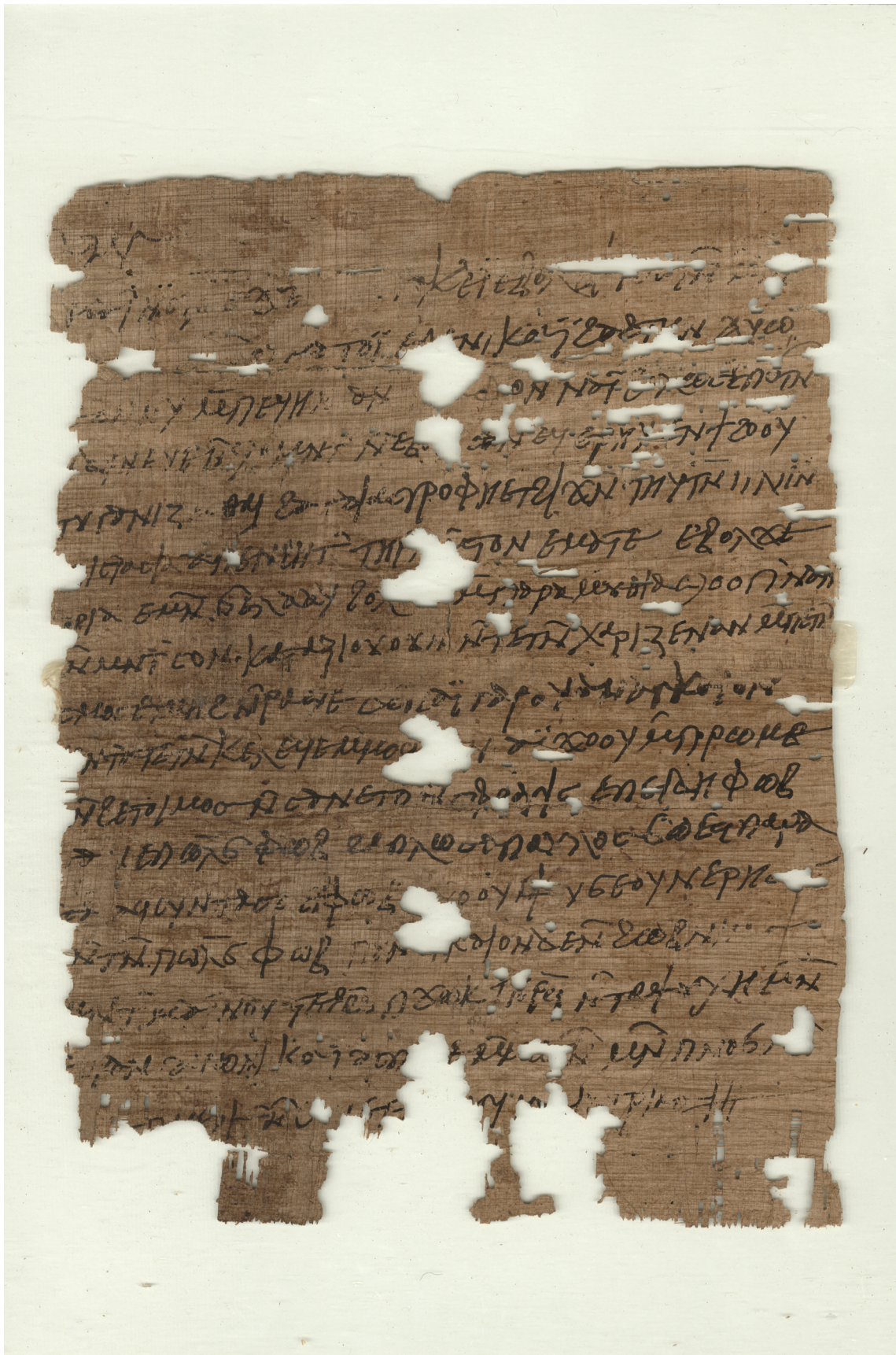


Fig. 1 Provv. 6268 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.



Fig. 2 Provv. 6268 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

the reason behind it must not be related to the scribe’s skills, but rather to the uneven surface that was serving as a support for the papyrus (a wooden plank, or even the legs of the scribe?). The repeated and confident use of ligatures, especially in Greek loanwords (see, e.g. l. 6, ΔΙΑΣΤΡΟΦΗ), suggest an in-depth familiarity of the scribe with the cursive Greek writing style.

The writer’s attention to the layout of the document goes through the extension of the last letter of the line (see, e.g. ll. 7, 11, 13, 14), as to justify the text, and through the use of small blank spaces (see l. 7) and separators (see l. 8, ΩΟΟΠ’ΝΑΝ, and l. 9, ΤΕΤ]ΝΜΝΤ̄CΟΝ.ΚΑΤΑΞΙΟΥ) to facilitate the reading. Superlinear strokes have different shapes: they can be short horizontal strokes or rounded ones, either on top of one or two letters (usually above the sequences ΜΝ or ΤΝ). Finally, a few small corrections in the text (see ll. 4, 5, 12, 14) point towards the fact that the sender went through the text one last time before preparing it for delivery.

All of these elements, together with the extensive use of Greek loanwords and a refined writing style, suggest that the scribe was well-read and trained in both languages. On a couple of occasions, the scribe favors Greek loanwords over their Coptic equivalents (see l. 8, n.), possibly indicating a greater familiarity with Greek. At the same time, he is capable of using Greek and Coptic equivalent expressions within the main text (see ll. 13 and 14), which might reflect a deliberate stylistic choice rather than mere linguistic habit.

The palaeographical analysis [Table 1] has enabled us to identify the sender of the letter with the “anonymous bilingual scribe” from the archive of Dioscorus, another perfectly bilingual individual who is known for having penned letters in Coptic and in Greek.¹⁰ The following table compares samples of the Coptic handwriting of the “anonymous bilingual scribe” with the handwriting of our text, proving the identification of the hand and, thus, of our sender:

¹⁰ See n. 1 and 2. For an analysis of the Coptic hand of this scribe, see Vanderheyden, P. *Aphrod. Let. Copt.*, pp. 35–38. We would like to thank Lorelei Vanderheyden for noticing and pointing out to the authors that the Turin letter was drafted by the same scribe.

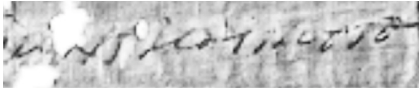

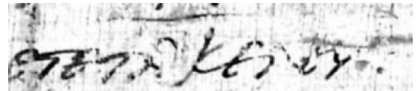

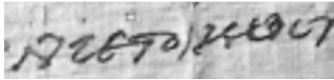
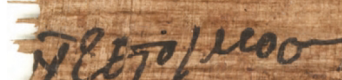
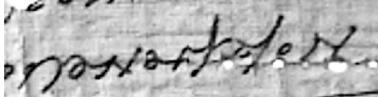

| | Coptic hand of the “anonymous bilingual scribe” | Coptic hand of Provv. 6268 |
|-------------|---|--|
| ΜΝΤΜΑΙΝΟΥΤΕ |  P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 3, l. 3 |  l. 15 |
| ΤΕΤΝΚΕΛΕΥΕ |  P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 16, l. 10 |  l. 11 |
| ΝΣΕΤΟΙΜΟC |  P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 3, l. 11 |  l. 12 |
| ΠΑΝΑΓΚΑΙΟΝ |  P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 3, l. 11 |  l. 15 |

Table 1 Comparison between the Coptic hand of the “anonymous bilingual scribe” and the hand of Provv. 6268. The images have been modified to enhance readability.

In addition to the palaeographical aspect, the identification can be proved on other levels: the letter contains not only some linguistic features that are specific to the “anonymous bilingual scribe” (e.g. the use of the intensifier *εματε* [l. 7] instead of *τωνογ*)¹¹ but also the same stylistic characteristics. In particular, the “anonymous bilingual scribe” is known for deviating from the common structure of a Coptic letter; he does not begin his correspondence with a prescript or some preliminary greetings, as expected, but prefers to draft his extensive greetings towards the end of the message.¹² The same structure appears to be adopted in our letter as well, which might not have a prescript, but has quite developed greetings at ll. 15–18.

¹¹ See Vanderheyden, *P.Aphrod.Let.Copt.*, p. 37.

¹² See Vanderheyden, “*Les lettres coptes*”, 2015, I, pp. 85–86. This peculiarity might have been influenced by the structure of the Greek letter at that time (on this, see Amory, “*Communiquer par écrit*”, 2018, I, p. 55).

3. EDITION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

3.1 Transcription

Recto:

↓] χμΓ
 [±21 ΤΕΤΝΜΝΤ]ΜΑΪΝΟΥΤΕ ΧΕ [ΧΙΝ]ΤΑΚΕΪ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΟΥΤΗΝ ΜΠΕ-
 [±28] . . [.] . . [.] ΝΟΥΜΑΤΟΪ ΕΙΔΕ ΝΙΚΟΥΪ ΖΑΣΤΗΝ. ΑΥΩ
 [±28] Ε . . . Υ ΜΠΕΨΗΝ ΑΝ[†ΓΡ]ΑΦΟΝ ΝΑΪ ΖΟΛΩΣ ΕΠΟΤΗΝ
 5 [ΠΕ ±24 ΚΙ]ΝΔΥΝΕΥΕ ΝΩΟΜΝΤ ΝΕΒΟΤ ΕΤΗΝΕΥΕΡΗΥ ΕΝ† ΖΟΟΥ
 [±28] ΤΥΓΑΝΙΖΕΨΘΑΙ ΖΑ ΤΔΙΑΣΤΡΟΦΗ ΕΤΣΙΧΗ ΤΗΥΤΗ. ΠΛΗΝ
 [±27 Ε]ΠΙΣΤΑΣΙΑ. ΑΠΕΝΖΗΤ ΤΗΡΗ ΜΤΟΝ ΕΜΑΤΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΧΕ
 [±28] . . ΡΙΑ· ΕΜΝ· ΕΕ ΛΑΔΥ ΖΟΛ[ΩΣ] ΜΠΑΡΑΜΥΘΙΑ ΨΟΟΠ ΝΑΝ
 [±25 ΤΕΤ]ΝΜΝΤΣΟΝ. ΚΑΤΑΞΙΟΥ ΟΥΝ ΝΤΕΤΗΧΑΡΙΖΕ ΝΑΝ ΜΠΕΤΗ-
 10 [±24 ΑΣΠΑ]ΣΜΟΣ ΕΤΜΗΖ ΝΡΑΨΕ ΧΕ ΠΑΪ ΓΑΡ ΟΥΑΝΑΓΚΑΙΟΝ
 [±28] . ΕΝΤΑΤΕΤΗΝΚΕΛΕΥΕ ΜΜΟΧ [ΝΑ]Ν ΑΪΧΟΟΥ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ
 [±27 Ο] ΝΖΕΤΟΙΜΟΣ ΝΣΑ ΝΕΤΟ ΝΣΦΡΑΓΙΣ. ΕΠΕΙΔΗ ΦΩΒ
 [±28] . Α· ΕΠΩΛ· ΦΩΒ. ΖΑΠΛΩΣ ΑΠΑΥΛΟΣ ΕΩ ΕΠΑΡΑ-
 [±28] ΕΣΑ ΑΨΥΝΤΑΣΣΕ ΝΦΩΒ. ΔΙΟ ΟΥΝ †ΥΓΕ ΟΥΝ ΕΡΗΣ
 15 [±28] ΝΤΗΠΩΛ· ΦΩΒ. ΠΑΝ[Α]ΓΚΑΙΟΝ ΔΕ ΝΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ †-
 [±24 ΤΕΤΝ]ΜΝΤΜΑΪΝΟΥΤΕ ΖΜ ΠΧΩΚ ΤΗΡΗ ΝΤΑΨΥΧΗ ΜΝ
 [±23 ΚΑΤΑ Ν]ΕΥΡΑΝ ΑΥΩ ΝΙΚΟΥΪ ΑΣΠ[ΔΖ]Ε ΜΜΩΤΗΝ ΜΝ ΠΝΟΕ Ν-
 [±17 ΟΥΧΑΙ ΖΜ ΠΧΟΕ]ΙΣ· ΠΑΜΕΡΙΤ Ν[Σ]ΟΝ ΕΤΤ[ΔΕΙ]ΗΥ. Η ΑΓΙΑ ΤΡΙΑΣ. †††

Verso:

→ † ΤΑΑΣ ΜΠΑΜΕΡΙΤ Ν[Σ]ΟΝ . [

3 εἴτε || **4** ἀντίγραφος, ὅλως || **5** κινδυνεύειν || **6** τηγανίζειν, διαστροφή, πλήν || **7** ἐπιστάσια || **8** ὅλως, παραμυθία || **9** καταξιούν, οὖν, χαρίζειν || **10** ἀσπασμός, γάρ, ἀναγκαῖον || **11** κελεύειν || **12** ἐτοῖμος, σφραγίς, ἐπειδή || **13** ἀπλῶς || **14** συντάσσειν, διό, οὖν, διοικεῖν, οὖν || **15** ἀναγκαῖον, δέ || **16** ψυχή || **17** ἀσπάζειν || **18** ἀγία, τριάς

4 ΑΝ . ΑΦΟΝ: recharge of ink after the φ; ΕΠΟΤΗΝ: ε corrected upon a c || **5** ΕΤΗΝΕΥΕΡΗΥ: the first η has been added afterwards || **7** ΕΜΑΤΕ: after ΕΜΑΤΕ there is a one letter wide blank space || **8** ΨΟΟΠ·ΝΑΝ pap. || **9** ΤΕΤ]ΝΜΝΤΣΟΝ.ΚΑΤΑΞΙΟΥ pap. || **12** ΝΣΦΡΑΓΙΣ: Ν corrected upon an ι || **14** ΝΦΩΒ: the Ν has been added afterwards

3.2 Translation

Recto: |¹ ... (Your) Piety that, since you departed from us |² ... did not³ |³ ... of a soldier either these little ones who are with us. And |⁴ ... he did not bring any reply of yours to me at all. |⁵ ... to be liable of three months together. As we |⁶ ... to be “grilled” for the problem that is upon you. Moreover, |⁷ ... the authority. Our whole heart was greatly relieved because |⁸ ... given that there is not any other consolation at all for us |⁹ ... Your Brotherhood. Thus, deign to grant us your ... |¹⁰ ... joyful greeting, for this (i.e. the greeting) is necessary |¹¹ ... as you ordered us, I sent the man |¹² ... [... be] ready except (?) those that are sealed. Because the matter |¹³ ... settle the matter. In short, Paulos continued to ... |¹⁴ he arranged the matter. ... Therefore, make arrangements southward. |¹⁵ ... and we settle the matter. Then, the important thing above all: I [...] Your Piety with all the fullness of my soul and |¹⁶ ... [according to their] name, and these little ones greet you and the great |¹⁷ ... Greetings in the Lord, our beloved and venerable brother. The Holy Trinity.”

Verso: “Deliver to our beloved brother...”

3.3 Commentary

l. 2 ΤΕΤΝ̄ΜΝΤ̄]ΜΑΙΝΟΥΤΕ: The beginning of the line could be filled in thanks to l. 16, ΤΕΤΝ̄]ΜΝΤ̄ΜΑΙΝΟΥΤΕ. As the sender usually refers to the addressee with the plural second person (see e.g. l. 9, ΝΤΕΤΝ̄ΧΑΡΙΖΕ, and l. 11, ΝΤΑΤΕΤΝ̄ΚΕΛΕΥΕ), we have restored ΤΕΤΝ̄- in ll. 2 and 16 as well.

The anonymous bilingual scribe also refers to the addressee as “your Piety” in other two letters of his hand, one addressed to Apollos, Dioscorus’ father (P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 3), and the other one to an anonymous ecclesiastic authority (P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 16).

As this is the first line of the letter, ΤΕΤΝ̄ΜΝΤ̄]ΜΑΙΝΟΥΤΕ could be part of the missing prescript, if the letter did contain one.

ⲭⲉ [: Between ⲭ and ⲉ, there is an additional stroke, which reminds the use of pseudo-ligatures. The stroke was perhaps added afterwards to reduce the distance between the two letters.

l. 3] ΝΟΥΜΑΤΟΪ: The indefinite article points out that ΜΑΤΟΪ here refers to the noun “soldier” rather than the personal name Matoï (TM Nam 10551). As the sender complains in the following line that he did not receive any letter from the addressee, we might wonder whether the soldier was responsible for delivering

letters. On the role of soldiers as messengers, see Schmidt, in Edmund and Sijpesteijn (eds.), *Mechanism of Social Dependency*, 2024, with examples on p. 177, n. 12.

ΕΙΔΕ ΝΙΚΟΥΙ: If we accept the reading ΕΙΔΕ for εἴτε (see more examples of this spelling in Förster, *Wörterbuch*, 2002, s.v.), we would expect another instance of ΕΙΔΕ before ΝΟΥΜΑΤΟΙ, either in the lacuna or at the beginning of the line.

Here and in l. 17, ΚΟΥΙ is introduced by the affective demonstrative, which can be used to express “emotional appreciation or involvement” (see Layton, *A Coptic Grammar*, 2004, pp. 48–49).

l. 4 ΜΠΕϞΗΝ ΔΝ[ΤΓΡ]ΑΦΟΝ: The spelling ΔΝ[ΤΓΡ]ΑΦΟΝ has been preferred to ΔΝΤΓΡΑΦΟΝ for a matter of space. ΜΠΕϞΗΝ is the negative perfect I (as in l. 9, ΜΠΕΤΝ-, and probably l. 2, ΜΠΕ-) of ΗΝ, the constructed form of ΕΙΝΕ.

l. 5 ΕΝ† ΖΟΥΥ: This sequence can be interpreted as a relative with † ΖΟ followed by the suffix //ΟΥ, meaning “that we beseech (them)”, but a relative does not fit very well with the preceding text. Another option, which we have preferred, is to start a new sentence and consider the sequence as † ΖΟΥΥ, “spend day”, a form that, although attested only once, appears in Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 1939, s.v. ΖΟΥΥ.

l. 6 ΤΥΓΑΝΙΖΕΘΑΙ ΖΑ ΤΔΙΑΣΤΡΟΦΗ: This is the first attestation in Coptic of ΤΥΓΑΝΙΖΕΘΑΙ, while the noun τήγανον, “frying pan”, is already attested as a loanword in three Coptic papyri, mainly lists and inventories (see Förster, *Wörterbuch*, 2002, s.v.). The verb τηγανίζω means “to fry on a τήγανον” or, in the medio-passive, “to be grilled”, and can allude to a kind of torture or to the sufferings of Hell, especially in the writings of the Church Fathers (see Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1961, s.v., 1). In Greek papyri, it is attested twice, both in a metaphorical way: in the private letter O.Did. 333 (Didymoi, 88–92 CE), ἐτηγανίζου γάρ, “for you were burning” (l. 9), seems to refer to the “suffer[ing] from burning desire”, as the editor A. Bülow-Jacobsen suggests; in BGU II 665 (Arsinoites, I CE), someone seems “to be on fire” to go up (l. 3: [ἐ]τηγανίζετο ἀναβῆναι). As for the latter, it has been commented that [ἐ]τηγανίζετο should stand for “burning with zeal” (see Olsson, *Papyrusbriefe*, 1925, p. 193: “Medium (Passivum) hier muss im Sinne von etwa “vor Eiferbrennen” stehen. Herwerden: “incendere, incitare”. Vgl. καίομαι, ἐκκαίομαι (Röm. 1, 27)”). On the meaning and attestations of τηγανίζω in documentary and literary Greek sources, see Skarsouli, *Honigsüße Briefe*, 2023, pp. 61–67.

Despite the fragmentary context of our letter, the verb is to be interpreted in a figurative way here as well, and might refer to the suffering with which the

sender (?) sympathizes in regards to a certain problem encountered by the addressee. For a simile of burning as an unpleasant situation, see also the letter P.Oxy. XVI 1842, 6–7 (Oxyrhynchos, VI CE): $\mu\acute{\alpha}$ τὴν δὲ δύναμιν | τοῦ θεοῦ οὕτως εἰμὶ ὥς εἰς κρῖβανον μένων ἑνταῦθα μίαν ὥραν, “By the power of God, I am as it were in an oven if I remain here for a single hour”.

On the late antique meaning of διαστροφή as “problem”, which adds to the three interpretations of the word already proposed by Förster, *Wörterbuch*, 2002, p. 188, see N. Vanthieghem’s on-point comment in Boud’hors et al., *BIFAO* 117 (2018), p. 106. For a new attestation of διαστροφή as “difficulty” in Greek papyri, see P.Lond. inv. 1320, 1 (Hermopolite, ca. 643/644; edition in Berkes and Claytor, *ZPE* 216 (2020), pp. 255–57).

I. 7 ἐπιστάσια: This is the first attestation in documentary Coptic sources of the Greek loanword ἐπιστάσια, which appears in six Greek papyri, all from the Byzantine period, with respect to the “authority” or the “oversight” of an official or a master (see e.g. P.Ant. II 96, 2 [?, VII] and PSI VIII 939, 2 [Aphrodito, ca. 553, according to Amory, “Communiquer par écrit”, 2018, II, p. 99]). As for Coptic literary sources, it is rendered one as μετεπιστατης (B for S ΜΝΤΕΠΙΣΤΑΤΗΣ) in Ps.-Demetrius of Antioch, *In Isaiam* (ed. De Vis, *Homélies coptes* I, 130).

II. 7–8 ἀπενζητ̄ τηρ̄ ἄτον ἐματε ἐβολ̄ χε: On this epistolary cliché and other attestations in Coptic letters, see O.Frange, II, p. 72, section 11, “Les intermit- tences du cœur”.

The following line might continue this epistolary topos, perhaps alluding to the fact that the sender has heard or found out that the addressee is in good health – something that has relieved his heart (see a similar situation in O.Frange 628, 3–5: $\chi\epsilon$ παοεις σοογν | ἀπαζητ̄ ἄτον ἐματε | βηνταισν̄μ̄πεκογ̄χαι, “for the Lord knows (that) my heart is greatly relieved since I found out about your health”). Following this hypothesis,] . . ρια in l. 8 might refer to σωτηρια, evoking situations common in Greek letters.¹³ In Coptic papyri, σωτηρια is never used in this kind of context, but we shall not forget that our sender is a perfectly bilingual scribe capable of employing loanwords in an innovative way.

¹³ See, e.g. P.Tebt. II 583, 10–11 (Pannonia?, III): [ἀλλ̄] οὐ[δ]έποτε μοι ἐγράψ[α]τε πε[ρὶ] τῆς ἡμετέρας (l. ὑμετέρας)· σωτ[ηρείας] (l. σωτ[ηρίας]) [π]ὼς ἔχετε. [ἐγὼ δ[έ] μεριμνῶ περὶ ἡμῶν (l. ὑμῶν) ὅτι λαβόν<τες> ἀ[π̄] ἐμοῦ γράμματα (l. γράμματα) πολλάκις (l. πολλάκις) | οὐδέποτε μοι ἀντ[ε]γράψατε εἴνα (l. ἵνα) εἰδῶ[τ]ες (l. εἰδῶ[τ]ος) πὼς ἡμᾶς (l. ὑμᾶς). “But you never wrote to me concerning your health, how you are doing. I am worried about you because although you received letters from me often, you never wrote back to me so that I may know how you ...”. Edition and translation by Adamson, *BASP* (49), 2012, p. 85.

ΠΑΡΑΜΥΘΙΑ: This is the second attestation of the Greek loanword παραμυθία in documentary sources (see Förster, *Wörterbuch*, 2002, s.v.), the first one being in the guarantee P.Lond. IV 1497 (Aphrodito, 708–09), where the writer says that he has received 46 sailors, each one with their own ΠΑΡΑΜΗΘΙΑ (l. 10). The editor associates, albeit with doubt, the term with φιλοτιμία, and translates it by “gratuity”. Yet, in more private contexts such as letters, the word is commonly associated to a feeling of “consolation” to look forward during a difficult time (see e.g. P.Flor. III 332, 18–20 [Apollonopolites Heptakomias, 113–20]: γράφε μοι συνεχῶς περὶ τῆς | ὑγίας ὑμῶν, ἵνα ἔχω παραμύθιον τῆς | προελεύσεώς μου, “write to me constantly about your health so that I can have consolation for my trouble”, and P.Giss.Apoll. 10, 8–11 [Apollonopolites Heptakomias, 113–20]: σεαυ[τὸ]ν διάγ[α]γε μέχρι οὗ πρ[. . .]τα[θ]ωσι αἱ | τοῦ καιροῦ τούτου ταραχαὶ | καὶ . . . α]παντᾶς ἡμῖν εἰς παραμύ[θιον], “behave yourself until the disturbances of this time are gone and you can meet us to console us”; translations by Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women’s Letters*, 2006, pp. 147 and 141). This seems to be the most appropriate meaning for our text. Esther Garel pointed out to us that the Coptic equivalent of παραμυθία, namely *coxcx*, is used in Coptic letters in the same context (cf., e.g. O.Frange 773, 26–27: *παῖ γὰρ πὲ ἐτ|ρεν̄ς̄λ̄ς̄λ̄νε̄νε̄ρηγ̄ ν̄ζητ̄τηγ̄τ̄ν̄*, “in fact, it [the greeting] is meant to comfort each other through you”). If our proposition and comment about *σωτηρία* (see l. 8, n.) are correct, that would be the second instance where our sender prefers rarely attested Greek words in Coptic documentary sources over their Coptic equivalents.

l. 10 *ᾱσπα]σμο̄ς ε̄τμη̄ς̄ ν̄ρᾱω̄ς*: This appears to be the second object of the request in l. 9, *κατᾱσιογ̄ οὐγ̄ν̄ ν̄τε̄τ̄νη̄χᾱριζε̄ νᾱν̄ μ̄πε̄τ̄ν̄*-, the first being introduced by *μ̄πε̄τ̄ν̄*-. The sentence would translate as “Thus, deign to grant us your ... and your joyful kiss”. A similar phrasing can also be found in the letter P.Louvre Bawit 55, l. 2 (Bawit, VII–VIII): *αἰ̄ρᾱω̄ς̄ ε̄χμ̄ πε̄κᾱσπᾱσμο̄ς*, “I was delighted by your greeting”.

The expression seemed also to be attested in another fragmentary letter from Aphrodito, S.R. 3733.39, l. 3: *απο̄λᾱγε̄ ο̄ν̄ μ̄πε̄τ̄ν̄ᾱσπᾱσμο̄ς̄ ε̄τμη̄ς̄ μ̄πᾱρᾱ[ω̄ς̄*, “again to enjoy your greeting that fills my joy”.¹⁴ However, also in light of our text, Anne Boud’hors has suggested to read *χε̄κᾱς̄ ε̄νᾱαπο̄λᾱγε̄ ο̄ν̄ μ̄πε̄τ̄ν̄ᾱσπᾱσμο̄ς̄ ε̄τμη̄ς̄ μ̄πᾱρᾱ[μ̄γ̄θ̄ιᾱ*, “so that we enjoy again your salutation that is full of consolation”.

¹⁴ This is the improved reading by Vanderheyden (see “Les lettres coptes”, 2015, III, p. 37) of a line previously edited in MacCoull, *Muséon* 106 (1993), n. 23.

ⲭⲉ ⲡⲁⲓ ⲓⲁⲣ ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲁⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲛ: The following line probably started with **ⲛⲉ** to complete the nominal sentence. Cf. P.Sorb.Copt. 26, 8–9 (Hermopolites, VI): **ⲡⲁⲓ ⲟⲩⲛⲟⲥ | ⲛⲁⲛⲁⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲛ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲉ**, “this is very important to me”, where the sender alludes to the fact that he read about the addressee’s good health in a recent letter (ll. 6–8).

l. 11] . ⲉⲛⲧⲁⲧⲉⲧⲛⲕⲉⲗⲉⲩⲉ ⲙⲙⲟⲩ [ⲛⲁ]ⲛ: At the beginning of the line, perhaps **ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲙⲉ** or **ⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲙⲉ**, with the meaning of “According to what you ordered us...”.

l. 12 ⲟ] ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲓⲙⲟⲥ: Before the lacuna, there must have been the name of a person, or perhaps an object, that is ready. If it refers to a person, we expect a verbal form following **ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲓⲙⲟⲥ**, meaning “ready to...”.

ⲛⲥⲁ ⲛⲉⲧⲟ ⲛⲥⲫⲣⲁⲓⲥ: The **ⲛ** of **ⲛⲥⲫⲣⲁⲓⲥ** has been written over a **ⲓ**. The scribe initially wrote the **ⲓ** after **ⲛⲉⲧⲟ**, likely under the influence of **ⲛⲉⲧⲟⲓⲙⲟⲥ**, which he had just written, and then corrected himself. The expression might refer to a document that is authenticated with a seal, or to a sum of money which waits to be secured through a seal, e.g. rents, as in P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 7, 18–19, or a bag of coins, as in P.Sorb.Copt. 26, 9 and 12–15 (Hermopolites, VI). On the practice of sealing a sum of money, usually after being weighted and put in a bag or a little box, see P.Sorb.Copt. 16, 6n. and P.Sorb.Copt. 26, 9n.

l. 13 ⲉⲡⲱⲗⲥ ⲫⲱⲃ: The sender uses this expression here and in l. 15: **ⲛⲧⲛⲡⲱⲗⲥ ⲫⲱⲃ**. Another attestation can be found in O.Sarga 102, 8–9 (Wadi Sarga, VI–VIII): **ⲛⲧⲉⲛⲡⲉⲗⲥⲟⲩ ⲛⲉⲱⲩ ⲙⲡⲉⲓⲭⲟⲓ**, “so that we may arrange the matter of this ship”. One of the meanings of the verb **ⲡⲱⲗⲥ** is “to deliver, decide, settle” an affair, and as such has been compared to the Greek verb **ἀπαλλάσσω** (see Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 1939, s.v. **ⲡⲱⲗⲥ**). Thus, **ⲡⲱⲗⲥ ⲫⲱⲃ** is the perfect translation of **ἀπαλλάσσω τὸ πρᾶγμα**, one of the key sentences that are used in some Greek letters to ask the addressee to solve a dispute (see Morelli, in Cantarella [ed.], *Symposion 2005*, pp. 360–61). It is interesting to notice that the “anonymous bilingual scribe” uses the Greek expression in P.Cair.Masp. I 67064, where he asks Apollo to settle the affair of some documents belonging to Phanachumios’ son (ll. 15–16: **Καταξιώσατε δὲ ἀπαλλάξαι τὸ | πρᾶγμα τῶν δοθέντων ὑμῖν παρ’ ἐμοῦ χαρτίων περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ Φαναχυμίου**).¹⁵

ⲁⲡⲁⲓⲕⲟⲥ ⲥⲱ ⲉⲡⲁⲣⲁ-: Paulos, the only person called by his name in the text, seems to be involved with the matter that needs to be settled. It would be tempting to identify this person with the Paulos that sends his greetings at the end

¹⁵ For the edition of this text, see Amory, “Communiquer par écrit”, 2018, II, pp. 57–66.

of P.Cair.S.R. 3733.42, another letter by the hand of the “anonymous bilingual scribe” (see a *descriptum* of the text in P.Aphrod.Let.Copt., p. 340). Yet, the name is too common – there are at least 41 persons named Paulos in Aphrodito –, ¹⁶ and the circumstances too vague, to prove the connection.

ⲉⲡⲁⲣⲁ-: Doubtless, the beginning of a Greek verb, although the fragmentary context does not allow to propose anything.

l. 14 ⲁⲩⲥⲢⲛⲧⲁⲥⲥⲉ ⲛⲫⲱⲃ: The Greek loanword συντάσσω is here attested for the first time with the spelling ⲥⲢⲛⲧⲁⲥⲥⲉ (cf. the other spellings in Förster, *Wörterbuch*, 2002, s.v.), which corresponds to the correct Greek form. Coptic usually employs ⲥⲢⲛⲧⲁⲥⲉ, as if derived from *συντάζω. This minor detail once again highlights the scribe’s expertise and confidence in Greek. The verb is usually followed by the dative of a person that receives the order; yet, in our text, it is followed by an accusative, with the meaning of “settling, arranging” the affair (see *LSJ*, s.v., II, and Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1961, s.v., B, for the direct construction). We might wonder if the verb ⲥⲢⲛⲧⲁⲥⲥⲉ has a different nuance as compared to ⲡⲱⲗⲥ, which is used in ll. 13 and 15, or if, in the mind of a perfectly bilingual scribe as our sender, they are synonyms.

ⲁⲓⲟ ⲟⲩⲛ ⲛⲓⲥⲉ: There is a short superlinear stroke above what we interpret as an ι, with a very irregular ductus; we do not know how to interpret the stroke. The reading ⲛⲓⲥⲉ is confident, even though this does not correspond to a known Coptic word. The more likely explanation, which is also phonetically more plausible, appears to be a spelling variation of ⲁⲓⲟⲓⲕⲉⲓ for διοικέω, a verb attested with multiple spellings in Coptic (e.g. ⲁⲓⲛⲕⲉ, ⲛⲓⲟⲓⲕⲉ, ⲧⲓⲩⲩⲓ). ¹⁷ Nevertheless, the transition from κ to ⲥ seems inconsistent with the scribe’s mastery of the Greek language.

l. 15 ⲡⲁⲛ[ⲁ]ⲣⲕⲁⲓⲟⲛ ⲁⲥ ⲛⲓⲱⲃ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲥⲉ: This expression, or a variation of it, usually introduces the final greetings of a letter, both in Coptic (see e.g. O.Crum 48, 10–11 [?, VII]: ⲡⲁⲛⲁⲣⲕⲁⲓⲟⲛ ⲛⲓⲥⲉⲛⲁⲓⲟⲛ) and in Greek (see e.g. P.Cair.Masp. I 67085 + P.Cair.Masp. I 67086, 6–7 [Aphrodito, VI; edited in Amory, “Communiquer par écrit”, 2018, II, pp. 201–06]: Τὸ δὲ ἀναγκαῖον | τῆς ἐπιστολῆς, πλεῖστα ὥς πα[ρών]). In Coptic letters, it is either followed by the verb ⲁⲥⲡⲁⲥⲉ or ⲱⲓⲛⲉ; likewise, the beginning of l. 16 probably included one of these options.

¹⁶ See Ruffini, *A Prosopography*, 2011, pp. 421–26.

¹⁷ See Förster, *Wörterbuch*, 2002, s.v. A letter from Aphrodito, P.Aphrod.Let.Copt 14, attests another different form (l. 11, ⲛⲓⲕⲉⲓ).

It is also worth noticing that the “anonymous bilingual scribe” usually introduces the final greetings of his Greek letters with the unusual expression τὸ δὲ μείζον πάντων (on this, see Amory, “Communiquer par écrit”, 2018, I, p. 52, and II, p. 70), which seems to be the adapted Greek translation of ΠΑΝΑΓΚΑΙΟΝ ΔΕ ΝῶΘ ΝΙΜ.

II. 16–17 ΤΕΤΝ]ΜΝΤΜΑΪΝΟΥΤΕ ΖΜ ΠΧΩΚ ΤΗΡΨ ΝΤΑΨΥΧΗ ΜΝ | [±? ΚΑΤΑ Ν]ΕΥΡΑΝ ΔΥΩ ΝΙΚΟΥΪ ΔΣΠ[ΔΖ]Ε ΜΜΩΤ̄Ν ΜΝ ΠΝΟΘ Ν-: Between lines 16 and 17, there must be a mention of (a group of) people that are greeted “according to their name”. At least the first part of the greetings recalls P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 3, where the “anonymous bilingual scribe” greets ΝΜΟΨ ΖΝ ΠΧΩΚ ΤΗΡΨ ΝΤΑΨΥΧΗ ΜΝ ΝΕCΝΗΥ ΤΗΡΟΥ | ΕΤ̄ΝΝΕΜΑΨ ΚΑΤΑ ΝΕΥΡΑΝ (ll. 13–14). Yet, several other options are possible, from “all the people who are with you” to “all the brothers/men/little ones who are with you” (see a complete list in O.Frange, II, 69, section 3: “Salutations qui associent d’autres gens au récipiendaire”).

At the end of l. 17, the “little ones”, possibly the novices, are greeting the addressee together with a ΠΝΟΘ Ν-, who might possibly be a ΠΝΟΘ ΝΡΩΜΕ, a “great man”, a monastic dignitary with ecclesiastic and civil authority.¹⁸ If our suggestion is right, this would be the third attestation of a “great man” in the documentation from Aphrodito. The first attestation appears in the Coptic letter P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 21, 7–8 and 20 (560 or 567/568?), where a “great man” promises to deliver to the sender Petros some goods, among which cereals and a coat; the second one is at the end of the settlement in double copy P.Cair.Masp. III 67353 r° – P.Alex. inv. 689 (both in preparation by A. Boud’hors and J.-L. Fournet), where Dioscorus is supposed to send the final draft of the document to the pious great men of the monastery of Pharoou and those of the village. Considering the monastic context of our letter, it would be tempting to associate our “great man” with one of those ecclesiastic authorities from the monastery of Pharoou (on this monastery, which was founded by Dioscorus’ father Apollos, see Wipszycka, in Fournet, *Les archives de Dioscore d’Aphrodité*, 2008, pp. 261–74).

I. 18 ΟΥΧΔΙ ΖΜ ΠΧΟΕ]ΙC· ΠΑΜΕΡΙΤ ΝC[Ο]Ν ΕΤΤ[ΔΕΙ]ΝΥ. Η ΔΓΙΑ ΤΡΙΑC. †††: The beginning of the line can be restored with some confidence thanks to parallels with other letters, such as P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 17, 17 (Aphrodito, ca. 573?): ΟΥΧΔΙ ΖΜ ΠΧΟΕ]ΙC ΠΑΜΕΡΙΤ ΝCΟΝ ΕΤΑΙΝΟΥ //. The papyrus is quite damaged next

¹⁸ On this, see Crum and Winlock, *The Monastery of Epiphanius*, 1926, p. 131, and Boud’hors in O.Frange, I, p. 17. For a review of the attestations of the “great men” in papyri, as well as their functions, see also very recently Boud’hors and Delattre in P.Sorb.Copt., pp. 10–11.

to $\epsilon\tau\tau[\lambda\epsilon\iota]\eta\gamma$, but it can still be noticed that the scribe directed the horizontal stroke of the first τ upwards, so that the two taus could be easily differentiated.

The formula $\text{ΟΥΧΑΙ ΖΗ ΠΧΘΕΙΣ Η ΔΙΑ ΤΡΙΔΣ}$ has long been considered as typical of seventh- and eighth-century texts belonging to the Theban region (see Biedenkopf-Ziehner, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Briefformular*, 1983, pp. 106–07 and 252–53). However, it has been shown that the expression can also be found in earlier texts from Middle Egypt, in particular from sixth-century Aphrodito (see MacCoull, *Tyche* 6 [1991], pp. 109–11, and Vanderheyden in *P.Aphrod.Let.Copt.*, pp. 52–56). Another recent attestation of the formula can be found in *P.Ghent. inv. 48, 14* (Aphrodito?, VI; for its edition, see Amory and Stolk, *ChronEg* 99 [2024]). The formula seems to be particularly favored by the “anonymous bilingual scribe”, as, in addition to the current text, it appears in other two letters drafted by him, *P.Cair.S.R. 3733.42, 13*, and *P.Cair.S.R. 3733.B, 27*. The last one is also followed by three crosses (see Vanderheyden in *P.Aphrod.Let.Copt.*, p. 53).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The article presents the first edition of the Coptic letter *Provv. 6268*. Through a thorough palaeographical, structural, and linguistic analysis, we were able to attribute the document to the so-called “anonymous bilingual scribe” from the sixth-century archive of Dioscorus of Aphrodito. While this scribe is already known to have written a small corpus of letters in both Greek and Coptic, this newly identified document provides valuable insights into his bilingual competence. He, in fact, employs Greek loanwords in a private context for the first time, even when Coptic equivalents are available. At the same time, in other instances, he demonstrates the ability to alternate between Coptic expressions, showcasing a high level of proficiency in both languages.

The letter’s content suggests that the sender is addressing Apollos, Dioscorus’ father, requesting his intervention in settling an affair concerning a certain Paulos.

The attribution of this letter to Dioscorus’ archive allows us to date the arrival of the papyrus in the Museo Egizio’s collection to after 1905, the year of the archive’s discovery. As a result, together with *Provv. 6269* and *Provv. 8576* (other two documents from the same archive), this letter contributes to providing new insights into the history of the museum’s papyrological collection.

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LETTER OF APOLLOS TO HIS “BELOVED BROTHERS” (P. TURIN PROV. 6269)*

Yasmine Amory

Inv. No.: Prov. 6269

Other Numbers: A.8, 210

TPOP Obj ID: 484168

Dimensions: H 30.9 cm x W 14.2 cm

Date: ca. 537-546/547

1. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Large fragment of a dark brown papyrus, with lighter stains. The recto [Fig. 1] is overall lighter in colour and better preserved than the verso [Fig. 2], where the text is illegible, as almost faded, in some parts. The papyrus is broken off on the top, on the left, and on the upper part of the right side. The lower margin and the end of the last lines on the right are preserved. A *kollêsis* can be spotted below l. 14 (12,6 k 18,3 cm). The papyrus is opisthographic: the whole verso has been used to draft the continuation of the message, which is written upside down in relation to the recto. This means that, once the author of the letter arrived at the end of the recto, he flipped the papyrus and proceeded to write. The external address of a letter, which usually appears on the verso, is missing, meaning that it was probably written on the (lost) upper part of the papyrus, once it was rolled bottom up. Another possibility is that the letter is a draft and never had the address written on it.

The papyrus shows regular horizontal breakings, which are probably due to the folding of the letter. As a result, the document is broken along most of the folds, the different fragments having been secured together in modern times with Japanese paper. Nevertheless, some panels have been arranged incorrectly, as the

* This research has been funded by the Special Research Fund of Ghent University and the Collège de France. I would like to thank the editors of the volume for their helpful comments on an earlier version of the edition.

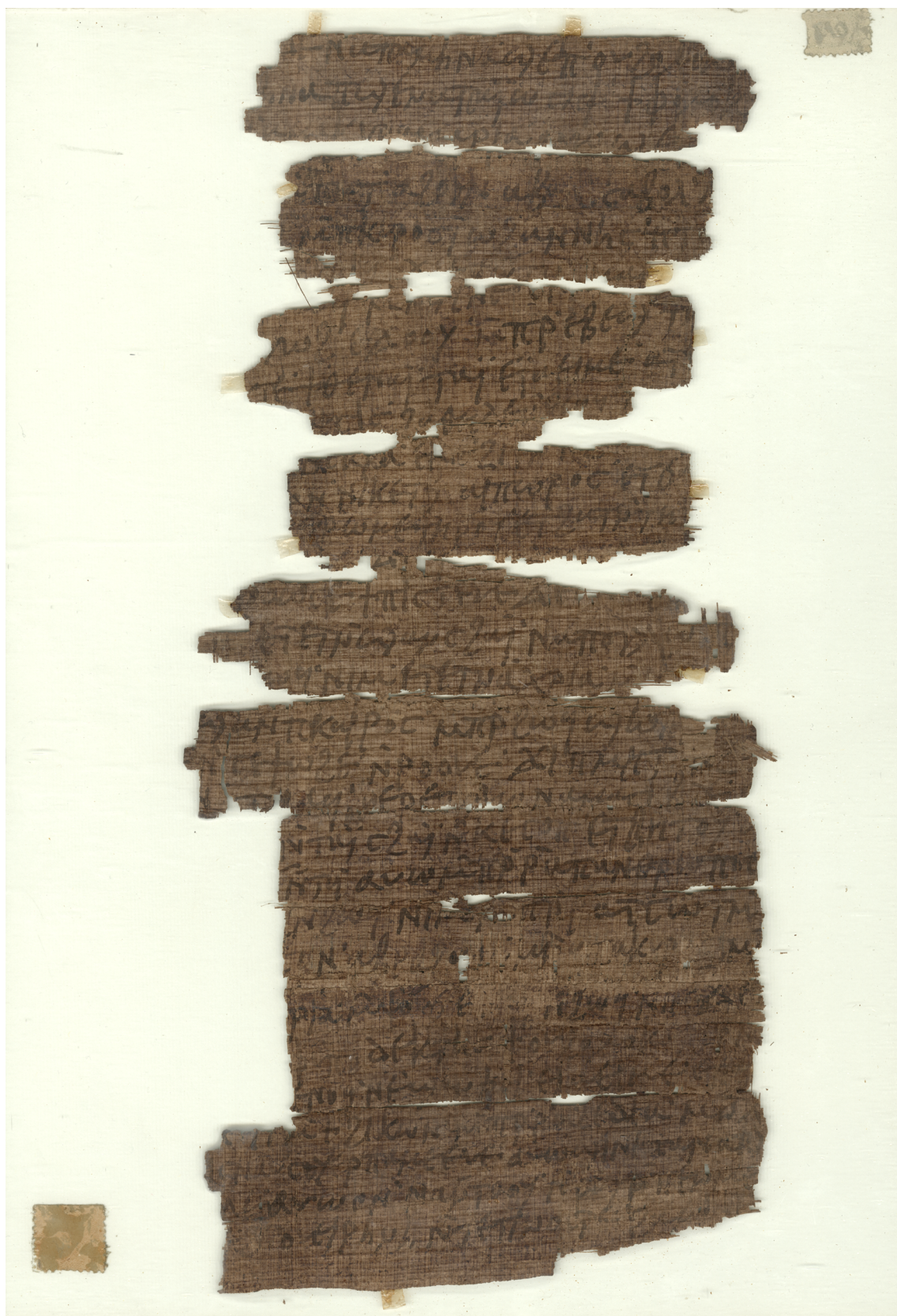


Fig. 1 Provv. 6269 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.



Fig. 2 Provv. 6269 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

traces of the letters above and below the break do not correspond (see especially between ll. 8-9, 16-17, or again 48-49). Moreover, the last lines on the verso (ll. 66-69) show a larger handwriting than the lines before, where the handwriting is squeezed, as it usually happens when the writer is approaching the end of the papyrus. The last panel on the verso – which corresponds to the first panel on the recto – is thus misplaced. Different types of evidence help shedding light on the original structure of the text: these include the typical phraseology of a letter (e.g. $\sigma\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota\ \bar{\epsilon}\mu\ \pi\chi\omicron\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ [l. 64] concludes the message), as well as the palaeography (the handwriting, both on the recto and the verso, is more compressed towards the end of the sheet). Yet, it is still quite complex to find the right order of the fragments. For this reason, I preferred to transcribe the text as it is, and to indicate with a discontinued line (- - -) the transition from one fragment to another. All of this also complicates re-establishing the original dimensions of the papyrus, since the fragments may not necessarily be placed on top of each other. That being said, if we consider that a letter from the Byzantine period was approximately 30 cm wide,¹ we can assume that almost half of the document on the left is lost.

2. PALAEOGRAPHY

The letter is written in a regular bilinear hand leaning to the right with curvilinear elements (see in particular the ductus of μ , η within Greek loanwords, and γ , especially when ligatured to ι , ρ , π or τ). Other ligatures are also present, mostly in Greek loanwords (see e.g. $\theta\lambda$ in l. 60, $\mu\pi\bar{\rho}\lambda\iota\beta\epsilon$; $\pi\omicron\lambda\lambda$ in ll. 19 and 62, $\lambda\pi\omicron\lambda\lambda\omega$; $\lambda\iota$ in l. 21, $\epsilon\rho\lceil\omega\lambda\eta\pi\kappa\alpha\iota\rceil\rho\omicron\varsigma$). The author uses superlinear strokes above syllabic consonants, and *diaeresis* on iota, both in initial (ll. 7, 29, 60, 62) and consonant position (ll. 11, 14, 19, 24, 37, 40, 46, 54). But the most striking feature is the systematic use of high dots, either as word dividers (after verbs, see e.g. in l. 2, $\omega\epsilon\pi\cdot$, and l. 51, $\lambda\epsilon\tau\cdot$; after a nominal group, see e.g. l. 2, $\lceil\epsilon\ \lambda\alpha\pi\alpha\ \mu\eta\eta\lambda\cdot$; l. 3, $\mu\lceil\eta\eta\lambda\ \pi\omega\epsilon\ \lambda\alpha\pi\alpha\ \iota\omega\chi\eta\phi\cdot$; l. 7, $\lceil\ \bar{\mu}\pi\kappa\gamma\rho\omicron\varsigma\ \iota\omega\eta\lambda\eta\eta\eta\chi\cdot$), or to mark different parts (for grammatical sections, e.g. between verbal prefix and verb, see l. 10, $\bar{\mu}\pi\rho\cdot\epsilon\beta\epsilon\omega\ \tau\eta\lceil$; l. 65, $\bar{\mu}\pi\rho\cdot\omicron\omega\cdot$; for expressions, see e.g. l. 34, $\lceil\epsilon\cdot\ \bar{\epsilon}\mu\ \omicron\gamma\epsilon\iota\rho\eta\eta\eta\ \bar{\eta}\tau\epsilon\ \pi\eta\omicron\upsilon\gamma\tau\epsilon\cdot$). High dots are also used to divide two following words that start and finish with the same

¹ See Fournet, in Delmaire et al. (eds.), *Correspondances*, 2009, p. 31.

letter (e.g. l. 14, ⲓⲟⲛⲉⲛⲓⲕⲉⲧⲁⲗⲁⲓⲡⲱⲣⲟⲥ; l. 33, ⲟⲛⲉⲛⲁ; l. 37, ⲛⲉⲛⲉⲣⲉ; l. 63, ⲛⲉⲣⲱⲙⲉⲛⲉⲣⲱⲁⲛⲭⲣⲓⲁ). The words ⲛⲱⲛ and ⲛⲓⲙ, usually coupled, are consistently followed by a dot (see ll. 12, 20, 26, 28, 45). As the text is too fragmentary to impose modern punctuation, I have chosen to retain the original punctuation of the document.

These exact palaeographical characteristics belong to Apollos, father of Dioscorus of Aphrodito, who is known to have penned four other Coptic letters.² After comparing samples of the handwriting belonging to this epistolary corpus with our letter (see Table 1 below), and in the light of the proximity of the linguistic features between the author of Provv. 6269 and Apollos, as well as the monastic context of the letter (see below), we can assume that Apollos also drafted the Turin letter. The palaeographical resemblances are quite close, as shown by the following table [Table 1]:

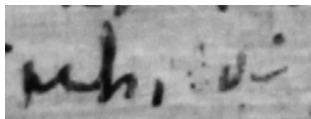

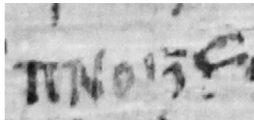

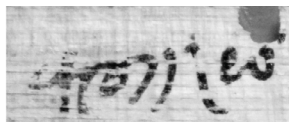
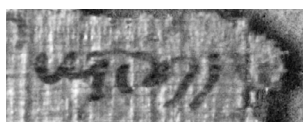
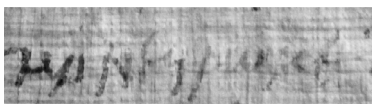

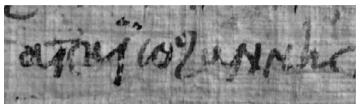

| | Apollos' Coptic hand | Coptic hand of Provv. 6269 |
|-----------------|--|---|
| ⲙⲏⲛⲁ |  P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 7, l. 19 |  l. 2 |
| ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ |  P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 7, l. 21 |  l. 68 |
| ⲁⲡⲟⲗⲗⲱ |  P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 7, l. 28 |  l. 62 |
| ⲙⲛⲉⲣⲱⲙⲉ |  P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 8, l. 31 |  l. 63 |
| ⲁⲡⲁ ⲓⲱⲏⲁⲛⲛⲏⲥ |  P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 8, l. 31 |  l. 60 |

Table 1 Comparison between Apollos' Coptic hand and the hand of Provv. 6269. The contrast of the images has been modified to improve readability.

² P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 7–10. For an analysis of Apollos' Coptic hand, see Vanderheyden, P.Aphrod.Let.Copt., pp. 32–33.

The identification of Apollos as the author and sender of the text here examined also enables me to fit some of the material details that have been previously ascribed to Apollos' epistolary practices. Although the original measures of our papyrus cannot be determined, they seem to point towards a big and possibly square format, which is also characteristic of Aphrod.Lettres.Copt. 8 (H 32.3 x W 27.2 cm). Moreover, like our letter, Aphrod.Lettres.Copt. 7 and 9 are opisthograph-ic. As this phenomenon is less common in letters on papyrus – where the main message is usually written only on the recto and then folded to prevent others from reading it –, it deserves to be noted, as it may indicate a personal preference in communication practices.

3. LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

The letter is written in standard Sahidic, with a few characteristics from the region of Aphrodite,³ or, more generally, from Upper Egypt. In particular, the change of vowel *ε* in *α* (especially in prepositions or adverbs, such as *αζΟΥΝ* for *εζΟΥΝ* and *αβαλ* for *εβαλ* in l. 6), together with the non-standard conjunctive with omission of initial *ν*- (see l. 32, *coγep*), is specific of Southern dialects,⁴ while the vocalization *ε* of the unstressed syllable (see l. 10, *μηρ·εβεω τη*[]) or of the syllabic consonant (l. 32, *coγep* for *coγp*) are typical features of Middle Egypt.⁵ Furthermore, the non-standard future *εγασωτμ*⁶ (see the second future *εια-* in ll. 11 and 30, *ειαεμε*), as well as the non-standard form of conjunctive *coγ-* for the third-person plural (see again l. 32, *coγep*)⁷, are typical of the so-called "region D", to which Aphrodito belongs.⁸ The neutralization of the vowel quantity *ο* = *ω* (see probably l. 10, *εχοογ*, and l. 47, *εροτ* and *μμοτν*) is also characteristic of this region.

³ For an overview of the linguistic features from this region, see Kahle, P.Bal., pp. 48–192, and Vanderheyden, P.Aphrod.Let.Copt., pp. 163–80, with a focus on the language of the Coptic letters from the Dioscorus archive.

⁴ See Kahle, P.Bal., pp. 68–70, § 21, and Vanderheyden, P.Aphrod.Let.Copt., p. 165.

⁵ See Kahle, P.Bal., pp. 52–54, § 1A, and Vanderheyden, P.Aphrod.Let.Copt., p. 163.

⁶ On this, see Vanderheyden, P.Aphrod.Let.Copt., pp. 168–69.

⁷ Other examples of this peculiar non standard conjunctive can be found in Vanderheyden, P.Aphrod.Let.Copt., p. 165.

⁸ See Kahle, P.Bal. I, pp. 151–58, and Boud'hors, in Fournet, *Les archives de Dioscore d'Aphrodité*, 2008, p. 71.

On another side, the apocope of the initial \mathfrak{n} - (see $\mathfrak{c}\mathfrak{a}$ instead of \mathfrak{nca} , in ll. 32 and 51) and the non-assimilation of syllabic \mathfrak{n} - (see l. 68, $\mathfrak{z}\bar{\mathfrak{n}}\ \mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{e}\ \bar{\mathfrak{n}}\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{n}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{y}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{e}$) seem to be rather related to the scribal practices or stylistic preferences of the sender.⁹

4. CONTENT AND CONTEXT

Despite the poor conditions of the papyrus Provv. 6269, the sender appears to be engaging with a monastic community: by making use of a wide range of Christian expressions and allusions to God, he mentions through the whole text several persons that are qualified with a monastic title (“apa”, and the female equivalent “ama”), and addresses his final greetings to his “beloved brothers” (l. 64), likely a monastic community. Mentions of a group of people related to monasteries (l. 33) and an offering to a church (l. 44) are also present. Beyond that, the text includes a few allusions to a *solidus* (ll. 2, 3, 29, 59), which seems to be linked to Iohannes the *hypodektês* (ll. 29, 62), a receiver of taxes, as well as to the time of working (l. 21) and to some land (l. 22). However, interpreting the text is challenging for several reasons, including the uncertain order of the fragments and the unconventional style of Apollos. The relationship between the sender and the addressees is somehow clearer: the sender repeatedly asks, almost begging, the “brothers” not to be negligent and not to forget to take care of something or someone, probably with reference to an earlier request (see l. 24).

That being said, it is still possible to establish with a high degree of probability the provenance and approximate date of the papyrus. Evidence related to the material and palaeographical aspects, the linguistic characteristics, the prosopography, and the “museum archaeology”,¹⁰ contributes to assigning the letter to the archive of Dioscorus of Aphrodito, the largest bilingual papyrological archive from the Byzantine period.¹¹ The papyrus is of a very dark brown colour, which is characteristic of the Aphrodito papyri,¹² and, as previously demonstrated, the

⁹ The first phenomenon ($\mathfrak{c}\mathfrak{a}$ for \mathfrak{nca}) can be occasionally spotted in a letter of Apollos, Dioscorus’ father, P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 7, 21.

¹⁰ On this concept, see Vandorpe, *EVO* 17 (1994).

¹¹ → TmArch id: 72. The bibliography on this archive cannot be resumed exhaustively in a single footnote. For a recent and general introduction on Aphrodito and its papyri, see Ruffini, *Life in an Egyptian Village*, 2018.

¹² See Fournet, P.Aphrod.Lit. I, p. 10.

hand has been assigned to Apollos, the father of Dioscorus, while the linguistic characteristics are typical of the region of Aphrodito.

Among the many persons that are mentioned in the letter, a few are already well attested in the Dioscorus archive, in particular the *hypodektês* Iohannes, whose accounts have been preserved (see commentary *ad hoc* below). Finally, the presence in the Turin collection of at least two other Coptic papyri (Provv. 6268 and Provv. 8576) belonging to the archive of Dioscorus of Aphrodito, in addition to the fact that their inventory number is very close to the one of this letter, strengthens the provenance's hypothesis, while suggesting that these papyri were bought together as a lot from the same antique dealer. This new piece of information is also relevant to the history of the Turin collection, since little is known about the documents that have been identified with a "Provv." ("provisorio", i.e. temporary) number. As the archive of Dioscorus was fortuitously discovered in 1905, with the papyri being illegally sold to worldwide collections as a result,¹³ this date also serves as a *terminus post quem* for the acquisition of P. Turin Provv. 6269 for the Turin collection. All of these different elements converge to safely attribute the letter to the Dioscorus archive, providing a new piece to be added to the Coptic epistolary dossier.¹⁴

The presence of the *hypodektês* Iohannes in the text is not only useful as additional proof of the relationship of the letter to the Dioscorus archive, but also to date the papyrus itself. As Iohannes is attested in other papyri that are dated between ca. 537–551 (see l. 29, n.), the letter can consequently be dated to the same period. But it is possible to be even more precise. Indeed, as the letter is penned by Apollos and clearly refers to a monastic context, it can be dated to the period going from Apollos' retirement in the monastery he founded, around 537, to his death, which happened in 546/547. During these years, Apollos was acting as a *prôtokômêtês* and living as a secular apa in the monastery.¹⁵ This double role might explain the combination of a monastic and fiscal context.

¹³ See the report by Gustave Lefebvre, the local antiquities inspector of that time, in Lefebvre, *Fragments d'un manuscrit*, 1907, pp. IX–XI.

¹⁴ On the Coptic letters from the Dioscorus archive, see more recently Vanderheyden, in Schubert (ed.), *Actes du 26^e Congrès*, 2012, pp. 793–96, and Vanderheyden, *P.Aphrod.Let.Copt.*

¹⁵ See Wipszycka, in Fournet (ed.), *Les archives de Dioscore*, 2008, pp. 265–66, and Vanderheyden, in Huebner et al. (eds.), *Living the End of Antiquity*, 2020, pp. 122–23.

[illegible]

Verso, upside down:

→

35]· 2̄M̄ ΠΟΥΩΨ· M̄ΠΝΟΥΤΕ Ε...
ΠΟΥΩΨ⁷] M̄ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΕ N̄N̄ΚΕΛΕΥΕ· ΝΤ.
]ΟΤ4· ΕΪ 2̄M̄ ΜΑ ΓΑΡ· ΝΙΜ· ΝΟΥΙ ΝΕ· ΕΡΕ-
]Ε... \ΕΙΕ/ ΜΠ̄ΡΑΜΕΛΕΙ N̄ΤΕΤN̄B̄...
]†ΟΨ· N̄ΝΟΒΕ ΖΙΤN̄ N̄ΝΟ6 Ν[
40]ΜΝT̄ΚΟΥΪ ΔΥΨ ΟΝ ΕΤΒΕ ΤΕ.[
]ΩC M̄... Δ... ΟΟ... ΔΥΨ[
]. Ψ. Ο. N̄6Ω ΝΜM̄ΗT̄N̄... ΝΕT̄N̄.
]ΔΥ ΧΙΝ †ΝΟΥ...[...].
ΠΡΟ]CΦΟΡΑ· N̄ΤΕΚΛΗCΙΑ ΤΑΔ4· ΟΝ ΔΥΨ
45 †Π]ΔΡΑΚΑΛΕ ΔΕ 2Δ ΘΗ N̄2Ω4· ΝΙΜ· ΧΕ Κ.[
]. ΔΤΡΕT̄N̄ΚΑ... 2̄N̄ ΤΕΤN̄...
]ΟΪΤ ΕΡΟΤN̄ ΕCCKΕΠ[Δ]ΖΕ M̄ΜΟΤN̄[.]P̄Ψ.
]. ΤΕΤN̄...[...].

]. . ΠΝΟΥΤΕ Ο...[
50]. ΤΕΝΟΥ ΧΕ †ΤΑΜΨ M̄ΜΩT̄N̄ ΧΕ.
]. ΝΗΥ· Δ4†· 2ΟΟΥ CΔ 2ΟΟΥ· ΔΝ6Ψ· ΨΔ...[
]. . ΝΕΜΑΔΡ· ΜN̄...[
]...[
]. . Τ· ΕΤΒΕ N̄[.]· ΥΪ N̄Τ.....

- 55] β̄ . ἡ̄σων ᾱᾱ . ε̄γ̄†μ̄
] *traces* [
] *traces* [
] β̄ε̄ . ᾱμα ἡ̄κγρ̄α μᾱρια ν̄ η̄φ̄ς[
] . ᾱγ̄ . ἡ̄μαγ̄ ε̄τετ̄η̄σ̄η̄ θε̄ . † φ̄ολο̄ς[ΟΤΤΙΝΟΣ
 60] ᾱγω ἡ̄π̄θ̄λιβε̄ νᾱπα ἰ̄ω̄ζ̄αν[ΝΗΣ]

] *traces* [
] ἰ̄ω̄ζ̄αννης φ̄ϋ̄ποδε̄κτης ἡ̄ν̄ απο̄λλω [
] τ̄ωνε̄ . ἡ̄ν̄ νε̄φ̄ωμε̄ . ε̄φ̄ω̄αν̄χριᾱ . η̄ς[
 ΟῩΧΑΙ 2Μ] π̄χο̄εις̄ ἡ̄με̄ρᾱτε̄ . ἡ̄ς̄νη̄γ̄ ᾱγω ἡ̄ . [
 65] . . . ἡ̄π̄ρ̄σ̄ω̄ [. . .]

] *traces* [
] ἡ̄π̄κο̄ςμο̄ς μᾱγ̄με̄τ̄η̄μ̄μο̄οῡ [
] . ἡ̄το̄ϋ̄ 2ἡ̄ θε̄τε̄ ἡ̄π̄νο̄ῡτε̄ ἡ̄ . [
traces

2 ἅπα, ὀλοκόττινος || 3 ἅπα, ὀλοκόττινος || 4 ἅμμα, κυρία || 7 κύριος || 12 δέ ||
 14 ταλαίπωρος || 18 πιστεύειν || 20 χρεία || 21 καιρός || 22 ὀλοκόττινος || 23 ἅμμα ||
 25 ἀπάνθρωπος || 27 ἅπα || 29 ὑποδέκτης, ὀλοκόττινος || 31 εἰκόν || 32 ἅπα || 34 εἰρήνη,
 ἀμήν || 36 κελεύειν || 37 εἰ, γάρ || 38 ἀμελεῖν || 44 προσφορά, ἐκκλησία || 45 παρακαλεῖν,
 δέ || 47 σκεπάζειν || 58 ἅμμα, κυρία || 59 ὀλοκόττινος || 60 θλίβειν, ἅπα || 62 ὑποδέκτης ||
 63 χρεία || 67 κόσμος

5.2 TRANSLATION

Recto: ... to apa Mena. Take a *solidus* ... Mena, son of apa Ioseph. Give the *solidus* ... ama lady Maria and ... |⁵ ... Go in, out, (and) off? ... the lord Iohannes ... |¹⁰ ... to say/about them. Do not forget ... God gives me the means to come, I will thereby know ... And before anything else ... Rebekka ... these other miserable ones that ... |¹⁵ all the men who are with you ... I believe that ... if you write to Apollos

the ... |²⁰ whatever you will need ... if the moment of working is ... arousa of (corn) stubble. Take ten *solidi* ... give it ... ama Sible ... I wrote another time about them ... |²⁵ ... and do not be unhuman ... anything else do not disobedient ... brother Abraham with apa Kyros with ... of Psouche. Before anything else: ... Iohannes the *hypodektês* gives one *solidus* |³⁰ ... I will know ... of the image of the emperor ... and ... two. Shall they remember me and ask the apa ... and again, those of the monasteries shall be the person (?) ... in God's peace. Amen.

Verso: |³⁵ ... by God's will ... It is God's will that he orders to ... If indeed they are mine in every place ... do not be negligent and ... the sins from the big ... |⁴⁰ the smallness. And again about the ... and ... stay ... from now ... the offering of the church. So, give it and ... |⁴⁵ And I ask before anything else that ... you ... in your ... you ... (God?) protects you ... you ... God ... |⁵⁰ now that I let you know that ... he gave day after day, we stayed until ... for ... |⁵⁵ ... [...] ama and lady Maria ... there that you find means, give the *solidus* ... and do not be afflicted about apa Iohannes ... |⁶⁰ [...] ... Iohannes the *hypodektês* and Apollo ... and his men. If he needs you ... [Greetings in] the Lord, my beloved brothers and ... do not continue ... |⁶⁵ ... the world ... again in the fear of God...

5.3 Commentary

1. 2] ε ΑΠΑ ΜΗΝΑ: It does not seem possible to read η]ϣε at the beginning of the line. In the Dioscorus archive, an apa Menas is mentioned in the estate expense account P.Cair.Masp. II 67141, fol. 5, r, l. 26, where he receives a payment in artabae. The date of the text (before 547/548, according to Fournet, in Fournet (ed.), *Les archives de Dioscore d'Aphrodité*, 2008, p. 318) suits the date of our letter, pointing to a possible identification of this person.

1. 3 Μ]ΗΝΑ ΠΩΕ ΝΑΠΑ ΊΩΣΗΦ: A certain Menas son of Iosephios is attested three times in the archive of Dioscorus between 539 and 549 (see Menas 36 in Ruffini, *A Prosopography*, 2011, p. 376), but, as Iosephios is never qualified with the title apa in these texts, the identification cannot be proved.

1. 4 ΑΜΑ ΚΥΡΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ: This person is also mentioned in l. 57. This other attestation is useful to dismiss the possibility that we are dealing with the double name Kyra Maria (on female names in Kyra from the late antique period, see Fournet and Gascou, *ZPE* 135 [2001], pp. 146-49), in favor of an ama and lady Maria (cf. l. 56, ΑΜΑ ΝΚΥΡΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ). On the meaning and use of the title ΑΜΑ, the equivalent of ΑΠΑ, to refer to women leading monastic communities, see Albarrán Martínez,

JCOptStud 17 (2015), p. 14. Together with *ama*, the terms *προεστῶσα*, *κύρα*, and *μεγάλη* could also be used to express the same concept (see *eadem*). In our text, *κγρ* is combined with *αμα* to reinforce it. Something similar appears in P.Cair. Masp. I 67061 (VI), where the sender of the letter summons Apollos and the other *prôtokômêtai* of Aphrodite and prompts them to go to the *notarios* Kollouthos or to the great *ama* Maria (l. 3, *πρὸς τὴν μεγάλην ἄμα Μαρίαν*; on the identification of *ama* Maria here as a physical person rather than the name of a church, see Amory, “Communiquer par écrit”, 2018, vol. II, pp. 32–33). In the whole bilingual documentation from Aphrodite, this is the only other attestation of a woman named *ama* Maria. If we accept *κγρ* and *μεγάλη* as perfect equivalents, we may then identify the *ama* lady Maria of our text with the great *ama* Maria of the Greek letter. However, since the context of our letter is fragmentary, we cannot exclude that *αμα κγρ μαρια* might refer to the holy church of *ama* Maria in Aphrodite, attested in a few byzantine papyri (P.Cair.Masp. II 67138, P.Cair.Masp. III 67238, P.Aphrod.Reg.).

l. 6 . \ . /πωτ: Perhaps *μ\η/πωτ*, “of the course, flight”.

l. 7 πκγρoс ἰωzαννηc: The name and the qualifier are too widely attested to attempt to identify this person.

l. 10 εχooy: This could refer either to the verb “to say” or to a form of *εχωoy*, with the neutralization of the vowel quantity (ο = ω), one of the most characteristic linguistic features of the Aphrodite region (see Kahle, P.Bal., p. 82, § 44).

μπρεβeω τη[: Perhaps *τη[νε*, as in another letter from Apollos, P.Aphrod.Let. Copt. 8, 29: *μπρεβeω τηνε*, or the more standard *τη[γτη*.

l. 11 πno]γτε· †θε ναϊ ταϊ εϊδαime: The first part of this sentence could be in the first perfect (*απno]γτε· †θε ναϊ*, “God gave me means”), followed by a first-person conjunctive (*τα-ει*, “to come”). However, this interpretation makes it difficult to understand its relationship with the rest of the line. If we instead consider *πno]γτε· †θε ναϊ ταϊ* as a conditional for *ερωαν πno]γτε· †θε ναϊ ταϊ*, then the second future *εϊδαime* could serve as the apodosis of the conditional sentence, yielding the translation “If God gives me the means to come, I will thereby know...”.

l. 12]γciс: End of a Greek loanword.

zα θη Δε· n̄zωφ· n̄[im: As the formula *zα θη (μεν) n̄zωb nim* usually introduces the opening greetings of a letter (see e.g. Choat, in Papaconstantinou, *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt*, 2010, pp. 167–69), we could suppose that, in our

letter, 𐩣𐩁 𐩈𐩢 𐩁𐩇 𐩢𐩣𐩠𐩣 𐩢𐩠𐩢 was followed by 𐩠𐩠𐩢𐩢 𐩇-/𐩇𐩣𐩠= and a series of names or groups of people. If this is correct, the name 𐩣𐩇𐩢𐩇𐩢𐩢𐩢 at the beginning of l. 12 could be one of the persons greeted by the sender of the letter. Nevertheless, the phrase only appears in the fourth line of the fragment, which is too far into the text to be considered part of the letter’s opening. The particle 𐩁𐩇 seems then to indicate the introduction of a new topic in the course of the letter.

l. 13 𐩣𐩇𐩢𐩇𐩢𐩢𐩢: Among the five persons listed under the name Rebekka in Ruffini, *A Prosopography*, 2011, pp. 523–24, there is an ama Rebekka *monachê* (Rebekka 4), who would fit well the monastic context of our letter. She is mentioned in P.Cair.Masp. II 67141 (before 547/548), where she receives payment in artabae (fol. II, v, l. 17). As this payment appears in an account, it has been suggested that ama Rebekka was acting as the representative member of a monastery (see Albarrán Martínez, *JCoptStud* 17 (2015), pp. 19–20).

l. 20 𐩢𐩠𐩢𐩠𐩣 or 𐩢𐩠𐩢𐩠𐩣𐩠𐩣.

l. 22 𐩠𐩇 𐩢𐩇𐩇𐩠𐩠𐩢𐩢 𐩢𐩣𐩠𐩣𐩢: The word 𐩇𐩠𐩠𐩢𐩢, equivalent to the Greek ἄρουρα (see Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary*, 1939, s.v. 𐩇𐩠𐩠𐩢𐩢), was probably preceded by a numeral. This line of the papyrus is quoted by Crum under the entry 𐩣𐩠𐩣𐩢 as “Turin pap A 8”, which corresponds to the label still visible on the papyrus glass.

l. 23 𐩁𐩢𐩁 𐩇𐩢𐩠𐩢: This is the first attestation of the name Sible, the Coptic variant of Sibylla, in the Dioscorus archive, while it appears in a later text from Aphrodito, P.Lond. IV 1595 (VIII), ll. 2 and 6. The name is mostly attested in papyri from Upper Egypt from the second century CE, with a peak from the sixth century (→ TM Nam 5753).

l. 25 𐩢𐩠𐩢𐩢 𐩁𐩢𐩁𐩢𐩠𐩣𐩢𐩢: This is the first attestation of the Greek loanword ἀπάνθρωπος in Coptic documentary sources. As for Greek papyri, the same word, together with the abstract noun ἀπανθρωπία and the adverb ἀπανθρώπως, is attested in ten documents, mostly letters, dating up to the fourth century. With the exception of SB V 7600 (? 16), where Akanas asks the addressee to take care of his horse once again, knowing that it will not be mistreated crudely (ll. 7–8: ὅτει (l. ὅτι) οὐκ ἀπανθρώπως (l. ἀπανθρώπως) ἄριτα (l. ἄρρητα) πνεῖς (l. ποιεῖς)), the term is usually associated with an individual’s inadequate behavior. Thus, the addressee is commonly reproached because he has neglected to do something that he has already been asked for, as in P.Flor. II 226 (Theadelphia, ca. 247–260); or he has been disregarding the correspondents, either by not meeting them (P.Sorb. I 33 [Arsinoites, mid III BCE]) or by not replying to previous letters (P.Flor. III 367

[Arsinoites?, III]; see, in particular, Theoninos’ reproach to Didymos in ll. 3–4: ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ μιμήσομαί (l. μιμήσομαί) σε οὐδὲ τ[ὰς ἀ]πανθρώπους σου ἐπιστολάς, “I will not imitate you, nor will I return your inhumane letters”). It is worth noting that the letters, which in antiquity are traditionally associated with a written conversation (see Ps.-Lib. *Epist.Charact.* 2) and, as such, are a substitute of the individual (see e.g. Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie*, 1956, pp. 38–42), are here defined as “inhumane”, since the addressee is not writing back and, as a result, a part of the epistolary correspondence is missing and intangible.

In one other case (SB XXIV 16335 = P.Harris I 104 [?, II–III]) the sender asks the addressee not to think of him as inhuman (ll. 12–13: μὴ | ὑπολάβ[ης μ]αι (l. μ]ε) ἀπάνθρωπον). Due to the fragmentary context, it is difficult to understand the reasons behind this sentence, but they seem to be related to a delayed delivery of information or to a temporary lack of communication (cf., right after, ll. 13–15: καιρῷ μα[θήσει πόσον ἐξωδίασα ἀργύριον ἕως προ|κόψω). In our text, the request not to be inhuman (l. 24, αγω ᾠπῖρ ἀπανθρώπος) comes after the sender mentions that he has already written to the addressee about a certain matter (l. 23,] ΝΤΑΪC2ΔΙ ΝΚΕCΟΠ· ΕΤΒΗΤΟΥ). The request might therefore be an invitation to take this into account.

l. 26] . Ν2Ωϣ· ΝΙΜ: Perhaps 2Δ ΘΗ Δ]ε Ν2Ωϣ· ΝΙΜ once again.

l. 27 Π]CΟΝ· ΑΒΡΑ2ΔΑΜ· ΜΝ̄ ΑΠΑ ΚΥΡΟC: Because of the fragmentary text and the banalities of the two names, these two persons cannot be identified. So far, an apa Kyros only appears as a toponym in P.Cair.Masp. I 67109, 30–31 (Aphrodito, 565): τῆς ἐπαύλεω\ς / Ἄπα Κύρου Βησαρίωνος.

l. 28]ΡΙΑ· ᾠΨΟΥCε:]ΡΙΑ could be the ending of ΜΑΡΙΑ, which is already attested in the document. After that, I confidently read ᾠΨΟΥCε. The reading does not correspond to any known Coptic word, but could represent the first Coptic attestation of a place name or a personal name. The name Ψουκε (→ TM NamVar 45660), a variant of the name Ψουκιος (→ TM Nam 13101), appears in three eighth-century papyri from Aphrodito (P.Lond. IV 1420, 73; the *descriptum* P.Lond. IV 1468; and P.Ross.Georg. IV 22, v, 1), matching the provenance of our text. ΨΟΥCε could be an alternative Coptic spelling of Ψουκε, with a simple σ/κ alternation. This interpretation would also align with the context of the document, as the previous line contains a list of names (l. 27: Π]CΟΝ· ΑΒΡΑ2ΔΑΜ· ΜΝ̄ ΑΠΑ ΚΥΡΟC ΜΝ). Thus,]ΡΙΑ· ᾠΨΟΥCε, meaning “Maria (?), daughter of Psouke”, would logically follow in continuation.

l. 29 ἸΩ2ΑΝΝΗC] ΦΥΠΟΔΕΚΤΗC: The *hypodektês* Iohannes is well attested in the Dioscorus archive (see Ruffini, *A Prosopography*, 2011, s.n. Ioannes 19), and is

especially known for a series of accounts belonging to him (see Zuckerman, *Du village à l’empire*, 2004, pp. 40–51). He was active between ca. 537 and 551.

† ΟΥΖΟΛΟΚΟΤ[ΤΙ]Ν[ΟC]: The *hypodektês* Iohannes might be the subject of this sentence, or we might have a new sentence starting with the imperative †, since orders to give a *solidus* already appear in ll. 3 and 59.

l. 31] . . . ᾠ†ΖΙΚΩΝ ᾠΠΡ·ΡΟ ΖΕΔΕΛ: In †ΖΙΚΩΝ, † could either function as the determiner of the noun or as the verb. The proximity of the expression ΖΙΚΩΝ ᾠΠΡ·ΡΟ, attested here for the first time, to the *solidus* mentioned in l. 29 suggests that ΖΙΚΩΝ ᾠΠΡ·ΡΟ might refer to the emperor’s portrait on the imperial coin (on this practice and on ancient people’s perception on the link between an emperor and his coins, see Lendon, *Klio* 72 (1990), pp. 112–19). Mentions of the illustration on a coin are not frequent in papyri, but allusions to coins with two figures (δίζῳδον) can be found in six Greek documents from the fourth century (BGU I 316, P.Gen. I² 12, P.Ross.Georg. III 9, P.Lips. I 13, P.Rain.Cent. 86, and P.Math.).

After ᾠΠΡ·ΡΟ, I read with some difficulty ΖΕΔΕΛ, which could indicate either a personal name or a Greek loanword. However, I could not link it to any attested personal name. As for a possible loanword, the most immediate connection would be ἕδος, “seat, seated statue, act of sitting”, potentially referring to the iconography of the emperor on the coin. However, we would expect the singular form ΖΕΔΟC instead of the plural, as well as the rectional element ν- to mark the relationship with the preceding word.

l. 34]ε Ζᾠ ΟΥΓΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΝΤΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΖΑΜΗΝ: This seems to be part of a more extended epistolary formula such as ΠΕΝΧΟΕΙC НСМОУ ЕРОК НЧЗАРЕЗ ЕРОК Ζᾠ ΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ ΕΘΟΟΥ Ζᾠ ΟΥΓΕΙΡΗΝΗ, “Que Notre Seigneur (et les prières de tous les saints) te bénisse et qu’il te garde de tout mal (dans la paix)”, (translation by A. Boud’hors in O.Frange, vol. II, p. 70, where she also gathers various formulae related to blessings and wishes). An extended version of this formula, ending with Ζᾠ ΟΥΓΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΝΤΕΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΖΑΜΗΝ, is attested in O.Frange 127 (Thebes, 700–750), ll. 6–15. Apollos uses a variation of this formula in P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 8, 29: ΟΥΧΑΪ Ζᾠ ΠΧΟΕΙC Ζᾠ ΟΥΓΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΝΤΕ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΩΛΗΛ ΕΧΩΝ.

For Christian epistolary clichés involving the trust in God, the favour and the peace of God, together with wishes for blessings, see also Biedenkopf-Ziehner, *Enchoria* 23 (1996), *passim* and pp. 27–29.

l. 35 Ζᾠ ΠΟΥΩΩ· ᾠΠΝΟΥΤΕ: This expression is listed among the so-called “précutions oratoires” in O.Frange, vol. II, p. 71.

ll. 36-37 At l. 36, a new sentence begins, as indicated by the presence of ϣαρ. We can interpret εἰ as the Greek particle εἰ, introducing a protasis, with \εἰε/ in l. 36 marking the apodosis. Alternatively, we could understand l. 36 as follows: “For I am in all places, they are mine”. However, this latter proposition, which carries some literary reminiscences, appears inconsistent with Apollos’ style.

l. 44 προ]ςφορα· ντεκλησια: On the practice of ecclesiastic offerings and donations, see Wipszycka, *Les ressources et les activités*, 1972, pp. 64–92.

l. 45 †π]αρακαλε δε σα θη νρω· νιμ· χε: From this line in particular, it seems clear that Apollos uses the expression σα θη νρω νιμ to reinforce his request rather than in its more common use as an opening formula for epistolary greetings.

l. 46] . . . ατρετνκα . . . : Perhaps μν]νσα τρετνκα . . . , “after you...”. The sequence κα . . . suggests a form of the verb κω.

l. 47]οῖτ ερωτν̄ εσκειν[α]ζε̄ μμοτν̄: If the reading is correct, this would be the fourth attestation of the Greek loanword σκεπάζω, “to protect, to cover”, in Coptic documentary papyri (see Förster, *Wörterbuch*, 2002, s.v.). The verb σκεπάζω might here be in combination with χι μοετ, as in P.Fay.Copt. 23, 19 (Deir el-Hammam, VIII-IX): χι μοετ νακ νσκειπαζε μακ, “(The Lord) lead thee and shield thee”. Thus, the line would possibly read as follows: πνογτε/πχοεις χι μ]οῖτ ερωτν̄ εσκειν[α]ζε̄ μμοτν̄. Nevertheless, χι μοετ is commonly constructed with ν-, να//, rather than with ε-, ερω//.

l. 51 ανσφ· ω . . . [: Perhaps ωαν[at the end.

l. 55 ετβε̄ ν̄[. . .] γῖ: Possibly [κ]ογῖ.

l. 60 μπρ̄ολιβε̄ ναπᾱ ῖωξαν̄[ν̄ης]: In Ruffini, *A Prosopography*, 2011, five different Iohannes are listed with the title apa (s.n. Ioannes 64, Ioannes 195, Ioannes 198, Ioannes 205, and Ioannes 209). Among them, Ioannes 198 corresponds to apa Iohannes, *boêthos*, who is mentioned in P.Aphrod.Let.Copt. 6, 9 (540–547?). The lack of information in our text does not enable to identify this person further.

l. 63]τωνε̄· μ̄ν̄ νερωμε̄: Perhaps the name αντωνε̄ (→ TM NamVar 52818) at the beginning of the line. The name Antonius is attested once in byzantine Aphrodito, in the Greek marriage contract P.Lond. V 1711 (ca. 566–570/573).

l. 64 ογχᾱῑ ζμ] πχοε̄ις̄ ναμερατε̄· ν̄ςν̄ηγ̄ αγω̄ ν̄ [: For another example of a developed final greeting in a Coptic letter, see also O.Frange 197 (VIII), ll. 8–11: ογχᾱῑ ζμ | πχοε̄ις̄ ναςν̄ηγ̄ | ετανιτ̄ αγω̄ μ|μ̄αινογτε̄.

l. 65 μπρ̄ω: In letters, μπρ̄ω is commonly followed by νωγ- / νογεω- and the infinitive to convey a sense of urgency and insistency (on this, see O.Frange,

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INVOCATION FOR PROTECTION (P. TURIN PROV. 8539)

Nesreen Monir

Inv. No.: Prov. 8539

Other Number(s): P.N. 192

TPOP Obj ID: 680

Dimensions: H. 7 cm x W. 10.4 cm

Date: sixth/seventh century (?)

This small preserved papyrus fragment [Figs. 1–2] represents the upper margin of a document and preserves four fragmentary lines of text, written along the fibers. The verso is blank. While the left and lower margins are broken off, the right margin appears to be partially preserved. The lines are irregularly spaced, and the script displays a number of palaeographic features of note. The letter γ appears in a V-shaped form; the letter ϣ in line 1 seems to have been erroneously inserted by the scribe; and the ligature αϊ, found in lines 2–3 within the word ϣαϊβεϥ, is noteworthy. While an exact date remains uncertain, the script, particularly the forms of ϣ, γ, and the αϊ ligature, suggests a palaeographic date in the sixth or seventh century.¹

The text appears to constitute an invocation for comprehensive protection from various demonic forces.² The speaker is an individual, though their gender remains undetermined, seeking safeguarding through the intercession of seraphim, who are invoked to shield them with their wings, likely against female demons, as attested in parallel sources (e.g. PCM I 12, 25).

¹ Stegemann, *Koptische Paläographie*, 1936, p. 9.

² For protection spells cf. Frankfurter, in Meyer and Smith (eds.), *Ancient Christian Magic*, 1999, pp. 105–09. And for anges in magical texts cf. Dosoo, in Lauritzen (ed.), *Inventer les anges de l'Antiquité à Byzance*, 2021, pp. 403–34.

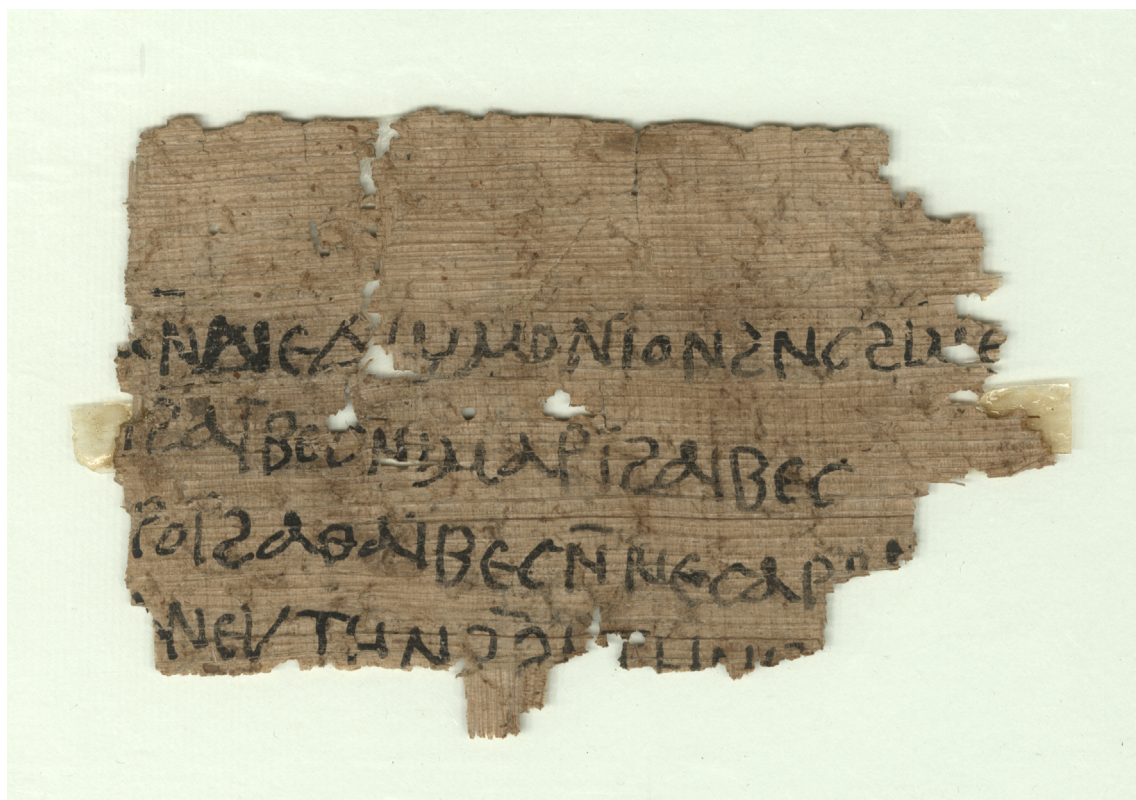


Fig. 1 Provv. 8539 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.



Fig. 2 Provv. 8539 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

TRANSCRIPTION

→

[- - -] ΜΝ ΝΕΔΕΥΜΟΝΙΟΝ {2} ΝCΖΙΜΕ
 [- - - ΔΡ]Ι ΖΑΙΒΕC ΝΙΜ ΔΡΙ ΖΑΙΒΕC
 [- - - Ε]ΡΟΙ ΖΑ ΘΑΙΒΕC ΝΝΕCΑΡΡΑ[ΦΙΜ]
 [- - - Ζ]Δ ΝΕΥΤΗΝΖ ΖΑΤΗΥ Ψ[Δ ΕΝΕΖ?]

1 δαιμόνιον || 3 σεραφίμ

TRANSLATION

[¹ [...] together with the female demons. [² [...] Provide] any protection. Provide protection [³ [...] for me, under the protection of the Seraphim, [⁴ [...] under their wings, with them [eternally?].

COMMENTARY

1. 1 The scribe uses the full form of the plural article ΝΕ- instead of Ν-, here, as well as in l. 3. Ν itself appears to have been corrected from an earlier Δ.

The spelling of the word ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΝ seems to appear instead as ΔΕΥΜΟΝΙΟΝ, unless one opts to read ΔΙΜΟΝΙΟΝ, which would imply a strangely written extra My and a missing Alpha. Reading ΔΩΜΟΝΙΟΝ is even less likely given the line of ink descending, which might belong either to the lower part of a malformed ε or a repaired γ.

Presumably, the intended reading here is ΝΕΔΕΥΜΟΝΙΟΝ ΖΝCΖΙΜΕ for ΝΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΝ ΝCΖΙΜΕ, as attested, for example, in PCM 1 12 (ΤΕΜΟΝ ΝCΖΙΜΕ) and 25. The female demons might have been preceded by male demons in the lacuna of the first line, i.e. [- - - ΝΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΝ ΝΖΟΟΥΤ] ΜΝ ΝΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΝ ΝCΖΙΜΕ. It may also correspond to the common formula ΕΙΤΕ ΝΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΝ ΝΖΟΟΥΤ ΕΙΤΕ ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΝ ΝCΖΙΜΕ (as in PCM 1 12, l. 20; also Kropp, *Angelicus. Ausgewählte koptische Zaubertexte*. Vol. 1, ll. 36–37, or ΕΙΤΕ ΠΝΑ ΝΤΙΕΜΟΝΙΟΝ ΝΖΟΟΥΤ ΕΙΤΕ ΠΝΑ

NTIEMONION NCZIME (PCM 1 12, l. 18).³

1. 2 The reading $\alpha\rho\bar{\iota}$ might be supported by the following expression at the end of the line, suggesting an emphatic repetition: $\alpha\rho\bar{\iota}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\beta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\iota}\bar{\mu}$ $\alpha\rho\bar{\iota}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\beta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}$ | [$\bar{\nu}\bar{\iota}\bar{\mu}$], or one might expect specific examples of protection to follow in line 3. For $\alpha\rho\bar{\iota}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\beta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}$ followed by the vocative $\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\bar{o}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\tau}\bar{\epsilon}$ see PCM 1 11.

1. 3 For $\varsigma\alpha\rho\alpha\phi\bar{\iota}\bar{\mu}$ or $\varsigma\alpha\rho\alpha\phi\bar{\iota}\bar{\nu}$ see e.g. British Library MS Or 5986 (KYP T70), Berlin P.22191 a, b (KYP T73), P.Hermitage Copt.70 (KYP T682), and IFAO Copte 451(KYP T382); → <https://www.coptic-magic.phil.uni-wuerzburg.de/index.php/texts-search/>. It is worth noting that the text likely draws inspiration from apotropaic prayers in Psalms: see Sanzo, “In the Beginnings”, pp. 41–49, especially Ps. 90: 4 ($\bar{\chi}\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\rho}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\beta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\rho}\bar{o}\bar{\kappa}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}$ $\bar{\tau}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\chi}\bar{\mu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\tau}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\gamma}\bar{\omega}$ $\bar{\kappa}\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\tau}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\chi}\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\varsigma}$). Also Ps.16:8 ($\bar{\kappa}\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\rho}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\beta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\rho}\bar{o}\bar{\iota}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\nu}$ $\bar{\theta}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\beta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\kappa}\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\varsigma}$),⁴ Ps. 56:2 ($\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\tau}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}$ $\bar{\theta}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\beta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\kappa}\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\omega}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\nu}\bar{\tau}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\tau}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\nu}\bar{o}\bar{\mu}\bar{\iota}\bar{\alpha}$ $\bar{\varsigma}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\tau}\bar{\tau}$, and Ps. 60:5 ($\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\delta}\bar{o}\bar{\iota}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\kappa}\bar{\mu}\bar{\alpha}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\omega}\bar{\omega}\bar{\nu}\bar{\epsilon}$ $\bar{\omega}\bar{\alpha}$ $\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\nu}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\chi}\bar{\iota}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\beta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}$ $\bar{\theta}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\beta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\nu}\bar{\nu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\kappa}\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\varsigma}$ $\bar{\delta}\bar{\iota}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\psi}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\lambda}\bar{\mu}\bar{\alpha}$).

1. 4 The spelling $\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\nu}\bar{\varsigma}$ for $\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\varsigma}$ might indicate Fayumic influence. What follows could perhaps be restored as $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\gamma}$ for $\bar{\alpha}\bar{\iota}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\tau}\bar{\eta}\bar{\gamma}$, although the reading of both $\bar{\alpha}$ and $\bar{\gamma}$ remain uncertain. If the remaining ink at the end of the line could be restored to $\bar{\omega}[\bar{\alpha}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\varsigma}]$, this might represent the conclusion of the invocation, where another or the main text might have followed.

³ Cf. Dosoo and Preininger (eds.), *Papyri Copticae Magicae*, 2023, p. 211 (nn. 18–20).

⁴ → <https://crosswire.org/study/passagestudy.jsp?key=Ps.16%3A8> (last accessed April 10, 2025).

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LETTER TO A MONASTIC COMMUNITY REGARDING AGRICULTURAL MATTERS (P. TURIN PROV. 8540)

Thomas Laver, Alex Kennedy

Inv. No.: Prov. 8540

Other Number: P.N. 199

TPOP Obj ID: 681

Dimensions: H 16.2 cm x W 10.2 cm

Date: sixth–eighth century

1. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The document [Figs. 1–2] is written on a medium-brown papyrus, in ink that appears dark brown and slightly faded in places, as is indicative of an iron-gall pigment. The papyrus had evidently been used for other purposes before being washed for re-use, with various letter traces evident on the verso upon close inspection. It is the rightmost third of a document which is nonetheless intact on the top and bottom, as shown by the use of typical opening and closing formulae on the first and last lines, the empty space above the first line, and the large *vacat* at the end of the final line. The papyrus seems to be intact on the right side, given the long strokes and empty spaces at the end of ll. 1, 4, 5, and 9.

2. CONTENT

This papyrus contains a letter to a *proestos* Apa Apollo, likely working on behalf of the monastery he leads. The very partial remains of the document and the informal tone of the letter leave much of the content unclear, but we can nonetheless determine that the *proestos* is being written to by local agents who deal with managing land and making payments. The recipients appear to be



Fig. 2 Provv. 8540 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

given both reports and instructions by their local agents, which seem to relate in some way to a group of shepherds, as well as a field of Abeue (a newly attested toponym if word separation in l. 6 is correct). Perhaps there is some matter relating to land that is being occupied, split, or otherwise used by others, given the mention of fields being in the possession of particular individuals (l. 6), and a “half” being kept (l. 3). This may have required the invocation of support from others in the city to resolve the issue (ll. 8–9), who could make a decision (l. 10) and send letters or commands to resolve it (l. 12).¹

More generally, this connects to a broader trend of monasteries being closely engaged with the agricultural economy of Egypt, either as figures that had a personal stake in it – as may be the case here, should it be their own land they are managing – or as figures who could be appealed to for assistance in resolving local matters. Notably, if the resolution of ll. 1–2 is to be seen as “the poor brothers” who are writing to the *proestos*, we might even suggest that they do so using monastic agents, and perhaps monastic labourers.² Regardless of the precise context of this letter, this document shows a Middle Egyptian monastery closely intertwined in the business of the agricultural economy.

Despite the appearance of the name Apa Apollo in a monastic context, this is the name of a monastic superior rather than the patron of a monastic community: thus, we cannot necessarily connect this papyrus with the monasteries of Apa Apollo at Aphrodito, Bala’izah, or Bawit. The palaeography and non-Aphroditan toponyms also mean that we probably cannot identify this individual with Apa Apollo, the father of Aphrodito’s famous Dioskoros. However, the name Apollo does suggest a Middle Egyptian provenance for the text, as does the first appearance of the name Palladios in Coptic: both names were especially popular in Middle Egypt (particularly the Hermopolite Nome), and much less so in Upper Egypt.

¹ Our thanks to Frederic Krueger for this suggested reconstruction.

² On monastic agriculture, see especially Richter, in Anne Boud’hors et al. (eds.), *Monastic Estates*, 2009, and Wegner, *Monastic Communities in Context*, 2021, particularly pp. 167–72, 177–87, and 225–38. Regarding monastic labour, see also P.KölnÄgypt II 21 for “brothers” of the Bawit monastery working away from the main compound to help with the harvest.

3. PALAEOGRAPHY AND LINGUISTIC FEATURES

The scribe writes in a generally right-sloping majuscule, and in quite an irregular style: he does not form letters uniformly – particularly κ, η & ϣ – nor does he use ligatures, tachygraphic marks, or abbreviations (with one exception on l. 2, which is left unmarked), and portions of the text are written more upright rather than right-sloping. The lower skill-level of the scribe means that dating the hand is tricky due to the irregular formation of letters, but the formation of some – especially kappa – might start to suggest a seventh/eighth century provenance by comparison to the hands described by Stegemann.³ However, such a dating cannot be entirely certain, with similarities to sixth/seventh century Middle Egyptian texts meaning that a broad sixth–eighth century dating is most appropriate. To emphasise that the document likely does not relate to Apa Apollos of Aphrodito, we can see that the hand is not one of those identified by Vanderheyden in her study of the village’s scribes.⁴

The document has no distinctive dialectic features, with only one variation from standard orthography: substitution of kappa for gamma, a common variation found across Egypt.⁵

4. EDITION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

4.1 Transcription

Recto:

↓

]ΜΑΝΗΥ ΝΤΟΟΤΝ ΝΖΗ-
] ΑΠΑ ΑΠΟΛΛΩ ΠΡΟΕΣΤ(ΩΣ) Μ
]ΚΑ ΠΑΨΕ ΝΤΟΟΤΝ ΝΕΥΨ-
]ΕΥ<Ε> ΕΒΟΛ ΝΡΩΜΕ ΝΑΔ<Δ>Ψ

³ Stegemann, *Koptische Paläographie*, 1964, pp. 9–14.

⁴ Vanderheyden, “Les lettres coptes”, 2015, pp. 48–60 for identification of Aphroditan hands. Soon to be updated and supplemented in her forthcoming book.

⁵ Kahle, *Bala'izah*, 1954, p. 95.

5] . . ΜΠΑΛΛΑΤΕ
] ΝΙΩΣΕ ΝΑΒΕΥΕ ΝΤΟΟΤΝ
] ΜΜΟϣ ΧΕ ΜΠΩΡ†
] ΟΥ ΔΡΙ ΤΑΚΑΠΗ ΟΥΝ
] ΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΤΕΤΝΤΙ ΤΕ-
 10 €]ΤΤΩϣ ΕΡΟϣ ΕΩΩΠΕ
] . Ε[ΡΟ]ϣ ΝΤΕΤΝ{Ν}ΒΩΚ
 ΕΠΙΣ]ΤΟΛΗ ΝΤΟΟΤϣ ΝΚ-
 ΟΥΧΔΙ ΣΜ Π]ΧΟΙΣ *vacat*

2 προεστώς || 4]ΕΓΕΒΟΛ, ΝΑΔϣ ραρ. || 8 ἀγάπη, οὖν || 9 πόλις || 12 ἐπιστολή

Verso:

↓

+ ΤΑΔΣ ΝΝΑΜΕΡΑΤΕ ΝCΝ[ΗΥ

4.2 Translation

Recto: |¹ [...] shepherds for us, ... |² [...] Apa Apollo, *proestos* of |³ [...] we²] keep half for ourselves. Their ... |⁴ [...] ... the men will do/make it |⁵ [...] ... Palladios? |⁶ [...] the fields of Abeue from our possession |⁷ [...] what NN said,] saying, “Do not give |⁸ [...].” Therefore, be so kind as to |⁹ [...] city, and you (pl.) give the |¹⁰ [...]] decides it. If |¹¹ [...] ... to it, and you (pl.) go |¹² [...] let]ter from him and ... |¹³ [...] farewell in the] lord.

Verso: |¹⁴ Give it to my beloved broth[ers ...]

4.3 Commentary

II. 1–2 ΝΣΗ[... : This is possibly the term “the poor brothers” (ΝΣΗ[ΚΕ ΝCΝ]), a designation sometimes used by monks (e.g. O.Frange 99, ll. 5–6: ΠΙCΟΝ ΝΣΗΚΕ “this poor brother”), possibly indicating the monastic identity of the letter writers, particularly in the context of this letter addressing itself to a *proestos*. However, it is also possible that this is ΝΣΗ[Τ as a resumptive pronoun.

I. 2 ΑΠΑ ΑΠΟΛΛΩ ΠΡΟΕCΤ(ΩC) Μ: Unmarked abbreviation by suspension. It does not seem likely that Apa Apollo is the name of the monastic institution, since

the term *proestos* – a title for monastic leaders – appears after the name in the usual position for a personal identifier: see Delattre, in Depauw and Coussement (eds.), *Identifiers and Identification Methods in the Ancient World*, 2014 for further discussion of such identifiers. As such, Apa Apollo is not the name of an institution (such as a “monastery”, *topos*, or “mountain”), but the name of the *proestos* involved in the business of this letter, possibly as the addressee. The following ⲙ̄ also suggests that he is about to be described as *proestos* “of” a particular institution, whose name is unfortunately lost. Apa Apollo is a personal name known at a number of different monastic communities in Egypt, but while many of these figures held significant administrative positions in their own monasteries, this is the first Apa Apollo we are aware of that is explicitly identified as *proestos*: we therefore cannot link this document to any particular monastic community by prosopography.

1.4 -ⲉϣ<ⲉ> ⲉⲃⲟⲗ: Vanishingly few words end -ⲉϣ, so likely a haplography with the following ⲉⲃⲟⲗ creating -ⲉϣ<ⲉ>. This may be a noun denoting something that is to be taken from the men (e.g. ⲉϣⲉϣ<ⲉ> for ⲉϣⲉϣⲉ “equipment”/“goods”); perhaps ⲁⲃⲉϣⲉ, a toponym attested later in the text (see commentary on l. 6); a Greek verb loaned into Coptic; or even the verbal phrase ⲙⲉⲉϣⲉ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ “consider”/“meditate”. However, nothing can be read to suggest one interpretation over any other.

ⲛⲁⲗ<ⲁ>ⲛ: The string ⲛⲁⲗⲛ cannot be reconstructed without assuming dialectal features, scribal error, or non-standard orthography. The reconstruction favoured here is a haplography of Alpha, giving a first future construction “the men will do/make it”. Alternative reconstructions could be a dittography of alpha to make the dative ⲛⲁⲛ “(give X) from the men to him”, or an unprecedented dialectal form of ⲙⲁⲗⲃ “thirty” – with a lost genitival marker allowing us to reconstruct ⲛⲣⲟⲙⲉ ⲛ ⲙⲁⲗⲃ “the thirty men” – but both appear less likely. The appearance of ⲉⲃⲟⲗ preceding the phrase may cause some difficulties to the favoured reconstruction, but as we cannot fully reconstruct the word preceding it, it remains best to assume a haplography.

1.5 ⲙⲡⲁⲗⲗⲁⲧⲉ: likely the name Palladios, transformed into a Coptic form with the usual substitution of -ios for Epsilon (e.g. Makare), and a standard substitution of Delta for Tau. This would be the first known attestation of the name in Coptic, and point towards a Middle Egyptian provenance given the prevalence of the name in fourth–seventh century Greek papyri from the region. Our thanks to

Frederic Krueger for this suggestion.

l. 6 ιωζε: The scribe writes a premature Hori after the Iota, and attempts to hide this by writing Omega over it. It is unusual to see the word ιωζε used for a field with a name attached – ζοι or μα are more common – but it is not unparalleled: CPR XXXI 17 has νειωζε ν̄φυποτεκτ(ης) (l. 13) “the fields of the hypodektes”, and P.KRU 107 has πειωζε μην̄αγιος ανᾱ ζατη̄η “the field of the holy Apa Hatre” (ll. 14–15).

αβεγε: A currently unattested toponym, possibly also appearing on l. 3. An alternative resolution of the word as a form of αβοογε (sg. αβω “net”) can be considered – with zen then an attached indefinite article – but this does not fit the remainder of the line. It is nonetheless possible that the toponym is etymologically related to αβω.

l. 7] μμοϣ̄ χε: The lack of a dummy object in the reporting of speech (μμοϣ, not μμοϣ) suggests the end of a substantivized relative clause πετ(ερε) ... χω] μμοϣ “what NN said”, reporting an order or general instruction given by someone else, an order which in this case begins μπωϣ̄† “do not give...”. In the Theban region we sometimes find that the object of χω becomes masculine rather than neuter – see Winlock and Crum, *Monastery of Epiphanius, Part 1*, 1926, p. 252, and Kahle, *Bala’izah*, 1954, pp. 150–51 (our thanks to Frederic Krueger for this note) – but the names featured in the text speak against inferring a Theban provenance for the document. On this basis, the substantivized relative is the more likely reason for this masculine object.

l. 8 τακαπη: Substitution of Kappa in place of Gamma is common across regions: see Kahle, *Bala’izah*, 1954, p. 94. It seems especially well attested in the Frange corpus from Thebes (e.g. O.Frange 270, 279, 299), but examples from Middle Egypt are also known (e.g. O.Sarga 100 & 370; P.KölnÄgypt II 54).

l. 9 ντετντι: Irregularity in the scribe’s use of † and τι – compare to μπωϣ̄† in l. 7 – but significant other irregularities in the scribe’s writing do not preclude seeing this as the same verb written two different ways.

l. 11 ντετν{ν}βωκ: Likely a dittography on the central ν, for what is otherwise a second person plural conjunctive.

l. 12 εν̄ιτολη: Note that εν̄ιτολη “command” is also possible, and would fit the context equally well.

νκ-: It would be unusual for this to be the start of a second-person (singular) conjunctive verb conjugation, given that the second person plural is often used

throughout the letter. It is more likely to be either a plural definite article and noun beginning with Kappa – which would then mark the start of a new phrase, given that the singular $\kappa\tau\omicron\omicron\tau\epsilon$ precedes it – or $\bar{\kappa}$ followed by a name.

l. 13 $\chi\omicron\iota\epsilon$: Use of Iota for Epsilon-Iota is common across Egypt: see Kahle, *Bala'izah*, 1954, p. 80. While Kahle suggested that it was less prominent in the Theban region, the Frange *ostraca* prove it was very prevalent there also (e.g. O.Frange 80), with the same authors even using $\chi\omicron\iota\epsilon$ interchangeably with $\chi\omicron\epsilon\iota\epsilon$ (e.g. O.Frange 186).

Verso: $\tau\alpha\lambda\epsilon\ \bar{\eta}\eta\alpha\mu\epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\ \kappa\epsilon\eta[\eta\gamma]$: A common address formula, which is usually followed by a list of names: see for instance O.Frange 341 (to brothers) or O.Frange 793 (to sons).

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FRAGMENTS OF A PRAYER (P. TURIN PROV. 8542+8543)

Nesreen Monir

Inv. No.: Prov. 8542+8543

Other Number(s): P.N. 191, 197

TPOP Obj ID: 736

Dimensions: H 47.9 cm x W 11.2 cm (as reconstructed)

Date: seventh or eighth century (?)

Three papyrus fragments [Fig. 1] of different sizes belong to the same prayer for a single (male) individual. Based on the alignment of the text and the papyrus fibers, the three fragments can be directly joined to form a single document. The text is written on the recto along the horizontal fibers, the verso is blank. The top, bottom, and left-hand margins are partially preserved, with twenty-eight fragmentary lines of text. Most of the text to the right, however, is lost.

The left-hand margins of the top and bottom fragments show a repair strip added to the papyrus sheet at a 90° angle so that the fibers run vertically on that side. Such patched writing material is not uncommon; many examples exist in the papyrus collection of the Museo Egizio in Turin, such as codices CLM 49, 59, and 61.¹ A *kollesis* is well visible on the verso after 39 cm from the top.

The prayer itself appears to have been composed for a marriage, as suggested by the word γάμος in line 4. The lower part of the papyrus sheet preserves additional lines of text written in a different hand, rotated 90° counterclockwise relative to the main text. Consequently, the writing runs *contra fibras*, i.e. *transversa charta*, indicating a reuse of the papyrus sheet in a secondary context. The extant content appears to represent the closing of a short note, possibly a delivery order, announcing the arrival of fruit accompanied by two women. This secondary entry is unrelated to the main literary text and likely represents a later use of the generous lower margin.

¹ Buzi and Orlandi (eds.), *The Coptic Codices*, 2023, pp. 213, 248, 254, figs. 37, 72, 78.



Fig. 1 Provv. 8542+8543 recto and verso. Scan by Museo Egizio (digital reconstruction by Susanne Töpfer).

The main text is written in a professional literary hand with a bilinear script, and palaeographically dates to the seventh or eighth century.

The script of the additional text is clumsy, with four irregular lines. It mentions two Greek personal names, and the most attested texts of these names can refer to the provenance in Middle Egypt (?) and may also suggest that the date backs probably to the eighth century. The text could be an order delivery.

The script of the additional text is less controlled, comprising four irregular lines written in a more cursive and informal hand. The Coptic text takes the form of a brief prayer or benediction, invoking divine blessing and mercy upon a marriage, as well as protection and fruitfulness, possibly referencing offspring or agricultural produce. The recurring invocation of God's mercy and the formulaic "Amen, Amen, Amen" suggest a liturgical or devotional register. The text also refers to a message or news and includes fragmentary references to sand and stone, possibly metaphoric or symbolic, and concludes with an expression of divine protection. Based on palaeographic features and the formulaic content, a date in the eighth century is likely.

On the lower part of the sheet, rotated 90° to the left (*transversa charta*), a brief Greek note is added in a different hand. It appears to be the ending of a message mentioning a field and the delivery of fruits, accompanied by two women named Euphemia and Doris. This annotation is likely unrelated to the Coptic text and may reflect a practical reuse of available writing space.

TRANSCRIPTION

→ ερε ηε[ΝΧΘΕΙC ΠΝΟΥΤΕ]
 ΠΕΙΩΤ [ΜΠΤΗΡ4 ΡΘΕΙC]
 ΕΧΩΚ [ΕΘΕCΜΟΥ ΕΠΕΚ-]
 ΓΑΜΟC [ΩΔ ΕΝΕ2 2N]
 5 ΤΕΧΑΡΙ[C ΜΠΧΘΕΙC Ε-]
 ΡΕ ΤΑΓ[ΔΠΗ ΜΝΟΥΤΕ]
 ΧΙΤΚ [Π-]
 ΕΤΜΝΝ[CΩ4 ΕΡΕ?]
 ΠΝΟΥΤ[Ε]

- 10 [N̄]T̄MH[TE?]
 [.]NEK̄KAP[POC? n-]
 [O]YΩ ΔΕ [n-]
 [P]EYΩM̄Ω[Ε M̄ΠNOY-]
 TE AYM . []
 15 [O]YΩM M̄N [OYNE-]
 [T]PΔ ETBE []
 [.] . Δ EP E NE[]
 [.]E M̄MOK N̄[]
 [.]E EP E PX[OEIC NA?]
 20 [BΛ]APT̄EI [MMOK AN]
 [ZM] ΠNΔ N̄EP[Ε]
 [.] . .] TΔΔY [NAK?]
 [ZΔ]M̄HN ZAMH[N]
 [Z]AMHN []
 25 N . . . AN EP OY[OEIΩ?]
 N̄KEPOMΠ[Ε]
 EKΩM̄ΩE [ZM̄ NOYΩ?]
 [M̄]ΠNOYT[Ε ZAMHN?]

4 γάμος || 5 χάρις || 11 καρπός || 12 δέ || 15–16 πέτρα || 23–24, 28 ἀμήν

↓

[. . .] . .
 [. . .] AΓ̄P[OC?] . . . NT̄ĀNNIK-
 APOC MN EYΦ̄HM̄IΔ MN
 ΔΩPIC

2 ἀγρός || 2–3 καρπός

TRANSLATION

[¹ May [our Lord God,] |² the Father [of the All watch] |³ over you. [May he bless your] |⁴ marriage [eternally with] |⁵ the mercy [of the Lord.] |⁶ May the [love of

God] |⁷ lead you [...] |⁸ what follows [...] May] |⁹ God [...] |¹⁰
 [in] the midst [...] |¹¹ your fruit/your offspring? [...] |¹² But [the] news/
 message [..., the] |¹³ servant [of God] |¹⁴ ... [...] |¹⁵ sand and [stone?] |¹⁶
 regarding [...] |¹⁷ [...] May the [...] |¹⁸ [...] ... you [...] |¹⁹ [...] ... The [Lord will] |²⁰ [not]
 harm [you] |²¹ [due to] mercy [...] |²² [...] give it [to you? ...] |²³ Amen. Amen. |²⁴
 Amen. [...] |²⁵ ... not. Regarding the [time? ...] |²⁶ in another year [...] |²⁷ as you are
 serving [in the will] |²⁸ [of] God. [Amen.?)

Papyrus turned 90° to the left: |¹ [...] ... |² [...] field ... and I will bring those
 |³ fruits together with Euphemia and |⁴ Doris.

COMMENTARY

I. 1 One might also consider reading $\epsilon\rho\epsilon \eta\chi[\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma]$. Reconstructions of the lacunae are *exempli gratia*, assuming roughly ten to sixteen letters per line.

II. 2–3 $\rho\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma \epsilon\chi\eta\text{--}$, Crum, CD 301a.

I. 4 The context is unclear. $\gamma\alpha\mu\omicron\varsigma$ seems to be certain; it is attested in different contexts in some literary texts: Davis et al., *The Feast of the Desert of Apa Shenoute*, 2020, p. 158; Lundhaug, *Images of Rebirth*, 2010, pp. 109, 275.

I. 5 As in 1Cor 23 $\tau\epsilon\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma \mu\eta\pi\eta\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon \omicron\tau \tau\epsilon\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma \mu\eta\pi\epsilon\eta\chi\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma \iota\eta\varsigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \eta\mu\mu\alpha\kappa$.

II. 12–14 $\rho\epsilon\chi\omega\mu\omega\epsilon \mu\eta\pi\eta\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ appeared in many biblical quotations as “ $\eta\rho\epsilon\chi\omega\mu\omega\epsilon \mu\eta\pi\eta\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ ”, in Ex. 18: 21, Job 1:1, 8, or “ $\tau\mu\eta\tau\rho\epsilon\chi\omega\mu\omega\epsilon \mu\eta\pi\eta\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ ”, in Job 28:28, II Peter 1: 6–7.

II. 23–24 The word $\gamma\alpha\mu\eta\eta\eta$ was most likely written three times. This assumption provides an estimate of the amount of text lost to the right, allowing for some degree of reconstruction.

I. 25 $\eta\omicron\chi[\theta\epsilon\iota\omega]$ “time” might be a preferable reading over other possibilities like $\eta\omicron\chi[\omega\omega]$ “wish” or $\eta\omicron\chi[\theta\epsilon\iota\eta]$ “light” due to the time period of another year mentioned in the following line.

Papyrus 90° turned left

1. 2 The conjunctive ⲛⲧⲗ- looks more likely than ⲧⲛⲗ-, so one would need to assume an imperative somewhere in the preceding traces. A reference to “field” makes sense in connection with the possible reading of “fruits” or agricultural products following.

1. 3 The name ⲉϥϥⲙⲓⲁ (Εὐφημία) is attested in Coptic documents, cf. Heuser, *Die Personennamen der Kopten*, 1929; Hasitzka, *Namen in koptischen dokumentarischen Texten*, 2007, p. 32, and Boud’hors, *JJP* 47 (2017), p. 46.

1. 4 The name ⲁⲱⲣⲓϥ has so far not shown up in Coptic documents but appears in Greek texts, especially from Kom Aushim and Thebes, such as in TM. 61219, 96720.

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PAPER FRAGMENT: *EPITHETON CHRISTI* WITH BLESSING (P. TURIN PROV. 8545)*

Julia Schwarzer

Inv. No.: Prov. 8545

Other Number: P.N. 200

TPOP Obj ID: 483928

Dimensions: H 2.0 cm x W 7.5 cm

Date: tenth/eleventh century

1. DESCRIPTION

The text is written in black ink on a brown paper sheet. The ink appears thick, with some variation in shading [Fig. 1]. The text is only partially preserved; three fragmentary lines remain. The sheet was most likely cut or carefully torn, horizontally splitting the first line in half. The beginning of line three is mutilated. While the upper and lower margins are damaged, the left and right margins appear to be complete. The verso is blank [Fig. 2].

The script is a sloping bilinear majuscule. The Upsilon has an asymmetric shape, and the flat Mu is written in one stroke (cf. ll. 1 and 2). Both are typical features of the slanted majuscule; flat Mu suggests a date in or after the tenth century.¹ Superlinear strokes are used, and a mid-dot may distinguish between two words. The hand is regular, suggesting an experienced scribe, and resembles a book hand. A potential parallel is colophon 1 in BL Or. 3581B (70)r, internally dated to 1035/1036.²

The material is paper, introduced to Egypt in the late ninth century and widely used from the tenth century onwards, largely replacing papyrus.³ This supports the palaeographic dating. The fragment's provenance is unknown.

* I warmly thank the editors and Vincent Walter for their comments.

¹ Mihálykó, *The Christian Liturgical Papyri*, 2019, pp. 85–86, 90, 16–18.

² The PATHs database has assembled more information on this colophon and manuscript on its webpage: → <http://paths.uniroma1.it/atlas/colophons/8> (last accessed 30/05/2025).

³ Dosoo and Preininger, *Papyi Copticae Magicae*, 2023, p. 27; Boud'hors, in Zerdoun Bat-Yehouda (ed.), *Le papier au Moyen-Age*, 1999, pp. 75–76, 79, 82; Bloom, *Paper Before Print*, 2001, pp. 74–85.

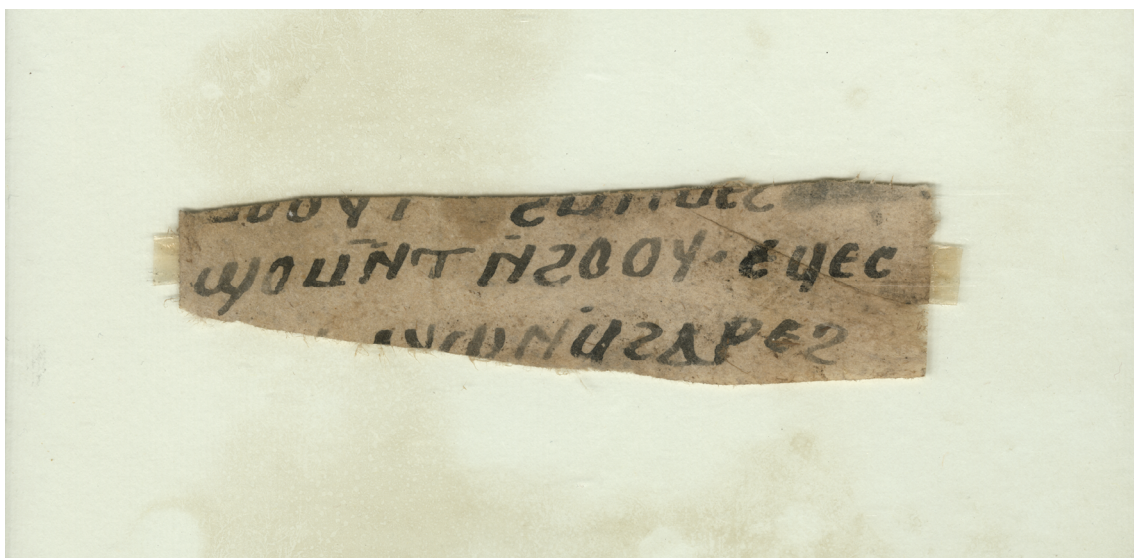


Fig. 1 Provv. 8545 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.



Fig. 2 Provv. 8545 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

2. CONTENT AND INTERPRETATION

Despite its fragmentary state, Provv. 8545 provides clear evidence of Christian liturgical or devotional language. The text includes the phrase “[he who rose from the] dead on the third day,” a formulation that resonates strongly with the core belief in Christ’s resurrection. While this phrasing closely reflects expressions found in the New Testament (e.g. Luke 24:46; 1 Cor. 15:4), it is not a *verbatim* quotation. Notably, the Coptic verb ⲙⲟⲟϣⲧ (“to die” in its stative form) does not occur in the resurrection passages cited, suggesting that the wording here is a paraphrase or adapted formulation rather than a direct scriptural citation.

The combination of resurrection language with the verbs ⲙⲟⲩϣ (“to bless”) and ⲁⲛⲣⲉⲁ (“to keep” or “watch over”) is particularly striking. These terms evoke the Priestly Blessing in Numbers 6:24 (“The Lord bless you and keep you”), a passage that held enduring significance in Christian liturgy and private devotion. Their presence suggests that the fragment may belong to a genre of texts where Biblical language was not quoted directly but adapted into blessings, prayers, or formularies.

The regular, sloping majuscule hand and the use of paper (rather than papyrus) both point to a tenth–eleventh century date. The script resembles that of literary or formal hands used in codices, but the small size and fragmentary condition make it difficult to determine its original format with certainty. While it is unlikely that this fragment came from a Biblical manuscript proper, it is consistent with usage in liturgical settings, such as a blessing formula, a prayer, or a marginal note associated with a sermon or (festal) letter.

The text’s content reflects a Christian context in which the resurrection of Christ and divine blessing were central themes. The structure and phrasing support its identification as a liturgical or devotional fragment, most likely intended for public recitation or personal prayer. It also reflects the flexibility with which Coptic scribes integrated scriptural language into other textual forms during the later phases of the Coptic tradition.

3. EDITION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

3.1 Transcription

[ca. 8 ? ΠΑΙ ΝΤΑϣ
ΤΩΟΥΝ ΖΝ ΝΕΤ- ?]

ΜΟΟΥΤ̣ ΖΜ ΠΜΕΖ-
ΩΟΜΝΤ̣ Ν̄ΖΟΟΥ ΕϣΕC-
[ΜΟΥ] ΔΥΩ Ν̄ΖΔΡΕΖ [ΕΡΟΚ / ΕΡΟΝ?]

3.2 Translation

[he who rose from the] ¹ dead on the ² third day. He shall ³ [bless?] and watch over [you?/ us?]

3.3 Commentary

I. 1 There is a black smudge following ΠΜΕΖ, perhaps indicating a correction.

II. 2–3 ΕϣΕC[ΜΟΥ] ΔΥΩ Ν̄ΖΔΡΕΖ: Given the size of the letters, it is likely that there are only three letters missing at the beginning of line 3.

The verb ΔΡΕΖ suggests restoring CΜΟΥ. This sequence most likely recalls the Aaronic Blessing, cf. Num. 6:24 as discussed above, frequently found in late Coptic letters, see a list of “peculiarities of late Coptic letters”, such as the use of ΔΡΕΖ and CΜΟΥ, in Richter, AS/EA LXII 3 (2008), p. 767. For combinations of ΔΡΕΖ and CΜΟΥ cf.: O.CrumVC 101, 3–7 (sixth–eighth centuries); O.Frange 25, 9–12 (675–725); O.Frange 98, 12–15 (700–750); O.Frange 30, 12–15 (700–750); P.Ryl.Copt. 373, 3–8 (paper; tenth–eleventh centuries). Due to its late date, P.Ryl.Copt. 373 is an exception to the usually earlier dated Coptic letters containing both the terms for blessing and keeping. It is, however, not completely relevant as the phrases dealing with keeping and blessing are quite far removed from one another, making it difficult to consider them one expression, cf. P.Ryl.Copt. 373, 3; 8.

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FRAGMENTS OF CORRESPONDENCE AND CONTRACT (P. TURIN PROV. 8547)

Julienne Nadège Schrauder

Inv. No.: Prov. 8547

TPOP Obj ID: 686

Other Number(s): P.N. 202

Dimensions: *a* H 11.3 cm x W 6.7 cm and *d* H 12.2 cm x W 6.6 cm; *b* H 9.7 cm x W 6.3 cm; *c* H 11.1 cm x W 8.1 cm and *e* H 9.8 cm x W 7.1 cm; *f* H 5.4 cm x W 3.6 cm

Date: fourth century

1. LETTER REFERRING TO THE DELIVERY OF A GIFT

Fragments *a* and *d* clearly form part of the same document. Fragment *a* appears to preserve the top margin, while the left margin is preserved on both fragments. Fragment *d*, however, belongs to the lower portion of the document and may preserve the bottom edge of the papyrus sheet [Fig. 1].

The main body of the text is written along the fibers, but three additional lines were added in the left-hand margin after the papyrus sheet was rotated 90° counterclockwise. This addition was clearly made by the same scribe to continue the message and is reminiscent of numerous letters from Kellis.¹ The script displays very few ligatures, mostly involving Alpha connected to a following Iota or Nu. It is a largely bilinear script, with a few exceptions,

¹ See P.Kell.Copt. I 16, 19 and 20 (transverse lines continue on the backside right), P.Kell.Copt. I 22 and 23 (transverse lines continue on the backside right), P.Kell.Copt. I 25 and 26 (transverse lines continue on the backside left), P.Kell.Copt. I 28 (cont. backside right), P.Kell.Copt. I 30, 31 (cont. backside right), P.Kell.Copt. I 37 and 39 (cont. backside right), P.Kell.Copt. I 40 (cont. backside left), P.Kell.Copt. I 50 (cont. backside right), P.Kell.Copt. II 61, P.Kell.Copt. II 64, 65 and 66 (cont. backside right), P.Kell.Copt. II 67 (cont. backside lower right), P.Kell.Copt. II 70, 71, 72, 73 and 75 (cont. backside upper right), P.Kell.Copt. II 76 (cont. backside lower right), P.Kell.Copt. II 77, 78 and 79 (cont. backside upper right), P.Kell.Copt. II 80, 93 and 122.

most notably Rho, Shai and Phi (fragment *b*), executed by a highly experienced scribe.

The verso of the fragmentary papyrus sheet, which has an overall sandy color with occasional reddish and darker brown hues, is blank. Together, fragments *a* and *d* preserve the beginning of twenty-five lines on the recto, including the three marginal lines.

The layout and script, as well as the large vertical format – characteristic of many known letters from Kellis – suggest a fourth-century date. These features might even support a Kellis provenance, were it not for the fact that the preserved text appears to be in standard Sahidic.² The only potentially non-Sahidic element is the uncertain reconstruction of $\text{ϣ}\text{Ν}\text{Δ}[\overline{\text{P}}]\text{ϩ}\text{O}[\text{ΜΟΛΟΓΕΙ?}$ “He will [agree ...” at the beginning of line 22.

Only a few letters are preserved at the beginning of most lines, making the content of the letter difficult to interpret. In fact, the three marginal lines are the main source of information about the relationship between sender and recipient. Their names are lost, and the verso bears no address due to the fragmentary nature of the document.

What little remains indicates that the sender was a single individual (l. 24) from a larger community (l. 23), writing to another individual (ll. 2, 17, 23, 25) from a different community (l. 23). The letter mentions a village (l. 8), a house (l. 10), and a *topos* – a place such as a room, field, or other noteworthy location (l. 6). There is also a reference to a year (l. 7) and a delivery made by the sender (l. 24), which he insists the recipient should accept as a gift (l. 25).

The nature of the communities to which sender and recipient belonged – whether familial, village-based, or monastic – is difficult to determine. Letters from Kellis, in particular, demonstrate that members of village communities often addressed one another as brother, sister, sibling, mother, father, son, or daughter, using familial terms according to age and generational hierarchy.

² There are texts, including a few letters from Kellis written in Sahidic, such as P.Kellis Copt. II 127 and 128, as well as two other letters found in house 4 which use variants of “southern regional Sahidic” according to Gardner, Alcock and Funk: P.Kell. VII, 272 [123]; 276 [124].

1.1 Edition, Translation and Commentary

1.1.1 Transcription

↓
 πειϖ[τ]
 ν̄τεκ[μν̄τ̄con]
 ετ̄ξ[ε]
 κατα []
 5 ρος ρ[αρ]
 τοπος []
 δε · ξ[]
 μ̄η†μ[ε] 2N
 [τ]ρομ[πε]
 10 η̄η̄ . []
 [. .] . []

Uncertain number of lines missing

. []
 . []
 ξ[]
 15 μεν[ncωc?]
 ετ. []
 εκε[]
 ων[]
 ωμ[]
 20 ογο[]
 . ο[]
 · 4NΔ[ρ]ξο[μολογει?]

90° turned to the left:

→
 τ̄ν̄ω̄ινε̄ εν̄ε̄c̄νη̄[γ̄ τη̄ρο̄ῡ ν̄μ̄μᾱκ̄ ᾱγ̄ω̄ νε̄nc̄]νη̄γ̄ ω̄ινε̄ ε̄ρο̄κ̄ †
 ᾱγ̄ω̄ κε̄λε̄γε̄ [] π]εν̄τᾱϊ̄χο̄ο̄γ̄4̄ χ̄ι[τ]̄ς̄
 25 ξ̄N̄ ο̄γ̄ο̄γ̄ρο̄[τ̄] νο̄γ̄τ̄]ᾱϊ̄ο̄ ν̄τε̄κ̄μ̄ν̄τ̄ς̄[ον̄]

4 κατά || 5 γάρ || 6 τόπος || 7 δέ || 22 όμολογέω || 24 κελεύω

1.1.2 Translation

|¹ The father [...] |² to your [fraternity ...] |³ about [...] |⁴ according to [... For] |⁵ ...
[...]|⁶ place (*topos*) [...] |⁷ however ... [...] |⁸ at the village [... during] |⁹ the year [...]
|¹⁰ the house ... [...] |¹¹ ... [...]

|¹² ... [...] |¹³ ... [...] |¹⁴ ... [...] |¹⁵ Afterwards [...] |¹⁶ ... [...] |¹⁷ you shall [...] |¹⁸ ... [...] |¹⁹
... [...] |²⁰ ... [...] |²¹ ... [...] |²² He will [agree ...]

(90° turned to the left) |²³ We are greeting [all] the siblings [with you. Our] siblings
greet you.

|²⁴ Demand [...]. What I have sent, receive it |²⁵ gladly [... as a] gift to your fraternity.

1.1.3 Commentary

1. 1 One could either expect a mention of the Holy Trinity here, or a reference to the sender of the letter, a father x, possibly together with others, writing to y.

1. 2 ΝΤΕΚ[ΜΝΤCΑΝ might be considered with respect to the similarities with letters from Kellis. Presumably a reference to the addressee, cf. the end of line 25.

11. 4–5 Here, a name ([ΠΕΤ-]ΡΟC) or a title ([ΠΡΕCΒΥΤΕ-]ΡΟC) might have stood, though it cannot be reconstructed with certainty.

1. 6 The letter π appears to have been corrected over an Omikron written too early, a suggestion made by Lena Krastel.

1. 15 ΜΕΝ[ΝCΑ ΝΑΙ equally possible.

1. 22 The start of the last preserved line written against the fibers is placed further to the left than all preceding lines, possibly indicating that this is also the last line at the bottom of the papyrus sheet, before the scribe turns the sheet 90° to the left to add greetings and afterthought.

Lines written in the margin, after the papyrus was turned 90° to the left:

1. 23 The senders extend their greetings to the members of the community around the addressee, before the members of the community around the senders greet the addressee directly. The line seems to end with a cross, marking the end of the greetings.

1. 24 Here an afterthought was added with another request directed at the addressee.

1. 25 ΝΤΕΚΜΝΤC[ΟΝ] Considering that this seems to be the end of the last line of the text, there would only be enough space for three letters. ΝΤΕΚΜΝΤC[ΑΝ] might be worth considering.

2. CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING PAPYRUS AND MONEY

Papyrus fragment *b* has a sandy color with a darker brown hue. Nine fragmentary lines are preserved on the recto, written along the fibers; the verso is blank. The names and titles of the individuals involved in this exchange are lost, but the sender writes in the first person singular (l. 7), and the addressee appears to be male (l. 2). The text suggests a disagreement or dispute, possibly concerning the papyrus itself, money, and perhaps other commodities, though the precise details are unfortunately lost.

2.1 Edition, Translation and Commentary

2.1.1 Transcription

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-----
[  ΕΤΕΚ]ΦΙΛΑΝ[ΘΡΩΠΙΑ          ]
[  ΛΙΤΟΒ]ΣΚ · ΕΣΩ[ΩΠΕ          ]
[      Ε]ΩΩΠΕ ΤΔ[                ]
[  ΝΤ]ΔΕΥΦΡΑΝΕ [                ]
5 [  ] ΜΠΧΟΕΙC .[                ]
[  Χ]ΔΡΤΗΣ ΕΝΤΔ[Ι                ]
[  ΑΤΜΟΚ]ΜΚ ΜΠΠΕ[ΙΘΕ          ]
[  ] ΜΝ <N>ΣΟΜΤ [                ]
[  Π]ΕΙΘΕ ΔΝ ΕΡΡΩ[σθαί σε εὔχομαι]
-----

```

1 φιλανθρωπία || 4 εὐφραίνω || 6 χάρτης || 7, 9 πείθεσθαι

2.1.2 Translation

¹ [... regarding your] kindness [...] ² [... I have entreated] you. May it happen [...] ³ [...] if my [...] ⁴ [... and I will] be happy [...] ⁵ [...] of /in the Lord [...] ⁶ [...] papyrus which [I] have [...] ⁷ [... inconceivable]. I was not [convinced ...] ⁸ [...] and the money [...] ⁹ [...] not convinced. [I pray for your] health [...]

2.1.3 Commentary

1. 1 ΕΤΕΚ]ΦΙΛΑΝ[ΘΡΩΠΙΑ. Presumably here we have a reference to the addressee,

possibly as part of the greeting formula ⲧⲱⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲓⲫⲓⲗⲁⲛⲓⲟⲣⲱⲡⲓⲁ or ⲧⲱⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲙⲛⲧⲓⲫⲓⲗⲁⲛⲓⲟⲣⲱⲡⲓⲁ at the beginning of the letter, or as a vocative further down. In any case the sender of the letter seems to communicate a request. A reading of the name ⲫⲓⲗⲁⲙⲓⲙⲱⲛ or ⲫⲓⲗⲁ ⲛⲓ, attested in P.Kell.Copt. I 19.71; 20.29; 24.50; 25.62,65; 33.25 could perhaps also be considered.

II. 2–3 ⲉϥⲱⲓⲟⲛⲉ presumably here for ⲉϥⲉⲱⲓⲟⲛⲉ “May it happen.” Alternatively, ⲉϥⲱⲓⲗⲁⲛ “if it happens” or other forms are also conceivable.

I. 6 Who did what with the papyrus is lost, but one might assume that it was sent by the sender to the addressee, or vice versa.

I. 7 The verb ⲡⲉⲓⲟⲉ is restored with a view to line 9.

I. 8 If ⲙⲛ is read correctly here, one would need to assume haplography, since otherwise it should be ⲛⲓ ⲛⲟⲙⲧ. Bronze/copper/coins are frequently mentioned in the Kellis texts. P.Kell.Copt. I 22.41, for example, has ⲡⲛⲛⲉⲛ ⲙⲛ ⲛⲛⲁⲙⲧ. Despite a number of occurrences of copper/money and some palaeographic resemblances, none of the Kellis letters appears directly connected to the letter at hand.

I. 9 For the frequent use of the greeting formula ⲉⲣⲣⲱⲥⲟ or ⲉⲣⲣⲱⲥⲟⲁⲓ ⲥⲉ ⲉϥⲭⲟⲙⲁⲓ at the end of the main part of Coptic letters from Kellis see e.g. P.Kell.Copt. I 11.27, P.Kell.Copt. I 21.30–31, as well as P.Kell.Copt. II 65, 75, 84, 86, 103, and 105. This might have been the end of the message, but then the letters from Kellis are often followed by additional greetings to many people.

3. FRAGMENT PERHAPS OF A LEGAL DOCUMENT

Papyrus fragments *c* and *e* exhibit a sandy color with a more pronounced reddish undertone. A dark fiber strand is visible along the right-hand edge. The text is written along the fibers, and the verso is blank. Only the line endings and the right-hand margin of the document are preserved. The final two lines appear to be written in a different hand and may represent the signatures of witnesses.

3.1 Edition, Translation and Commentary

3.1.1 Transcription

→

| | | | | |
|----------|-------|-------|-----|-----------------|
| | [|] | π[|] |
| | [|]σ[| ει[|] . . |
| | [|] [. | τ] | ἀμον ἐτεπιστή |
| | [μῆ | | |] νοῦοῦε[ι]ω |
| 5 | [| | |] τοῦ τηροῦ |
| | [| | |] οὐαυαγκῆ |
| | [| | |] νετεωωε |
| | [| | |] . . . |
| | ----- | | | |
| | ----- | | | |
| | [| | |] ἐκείρε |
| 10 | [| | |] ἀπέδε |
| | [| | |] ωα |
| | [| | |] ἐν |
| | [| | |] .εὑπχε |
| | [| | |] [. |
| 15 | [| | |] ἐρ εβολ ζ[Ν] |
| | [| | |] . ἐντακχ[ω] |
| 2nd hand | [μμοσ | | |] † εὔ- |
| | [| | |] . . . [.] μ † |
| | ----- | | | |

3 ἐπιστήμη || 6 ἀνάγκη

3.1.2 Translation

|¹ [...]... [...] |² [...] ... [...] ... |³ [...tell us of] the knowledge |⁴ [...] at a time |⁵ [...] ... all |⁶ [...] urgently |⁷ [...] things suitable |⁸ [...] ...

|⁹ [...] as you act |¹⁰ [...] ... |¹¹ [...] ... |¹² [...] ... |¹³ [...] ... |¹⁴ [...] ... [the] rest |¹⁵ [...] out of |¹⁶ [...] what you have said |¹⁷ [...] ... |¹⁸ [...] ...

3.1.3 Commentary

1. 3 [Τ]ΔΜΟΝ “tell us” seems more likely than the name ΔΜΟΝ here.

1. 10 Since the lengthening of the stroke indicates the end of a phrase rather than its beginning, ἐπειδὴ seems unlikely. Possible readings might be η]ΔΠΕ ΔΕ or ΔΓ]ΔΠΕ ΔΕ.

1. 17 In the lacuna one would assume that the first witness signs the document in the form + ΔΝΟΚ name †Ο ΜΜΝΤΡΕ] “I so and so act as a witness.”

4. ADDITIONAL FRAGMENT

For one smaller fragment, *f*, currently attached to the bottom of fragment *e*, neither content nor placement can be given, except that it should be placed elsewhere. Its recto is written along the fibers, the verso is blank; it measures 3.2 x 2.4 cm. The fragment appears to preserve the lower margin of the document and would therefore fit somewhere below the possible signatures of the witnesses.

→ -----
 []ΜΟ []
 [] .Τ[]
 vac.

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A LETTER WRITTEN BY DIOSCORUS OF APHRODITE (P. TURIN PROV. 8576)

Florian Rösch, Maxime Thérond

Inv. No.: Prov. 8576

TPOP Obj ID: 693

Dimensions: H 8.5 cm x W 31.5 cm

Date: ca. 550

1. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

This medium brown document measures approximately 31.5 cm x 8.5 cm [Figs. 1–2]. Three margins have been preserved, and the missing top part deprives us of the beginning of the letter. It is therefore impossible to estimate the size of the lacuna. The document is inscribed on both sides, and in both cases the texts are written perpendicular to the fibres. As a result, the text on the verso is written in an unusual oblong format. The text on the recto consists of fifteen lines and that on the verso of forty-one lines plus one line inscribed along the left margin due to lack of space. The best-preserved side has to be identified as the recto, as it seems to correspond to the beginning of the text. The horizontal form of the document and its length of 31.5 cm are in accordance with the standards of the time. The upper part of the verso is badly abraded, making the text difficult to read. A vertical deterioration in the middle of the recto indicates a rolling mark.

2. CONTENT

The identification of Dioscorus as the scribe of our document is motivated by the peculiar ductus of some letters, such as the ω ending with a loop and ϵ with

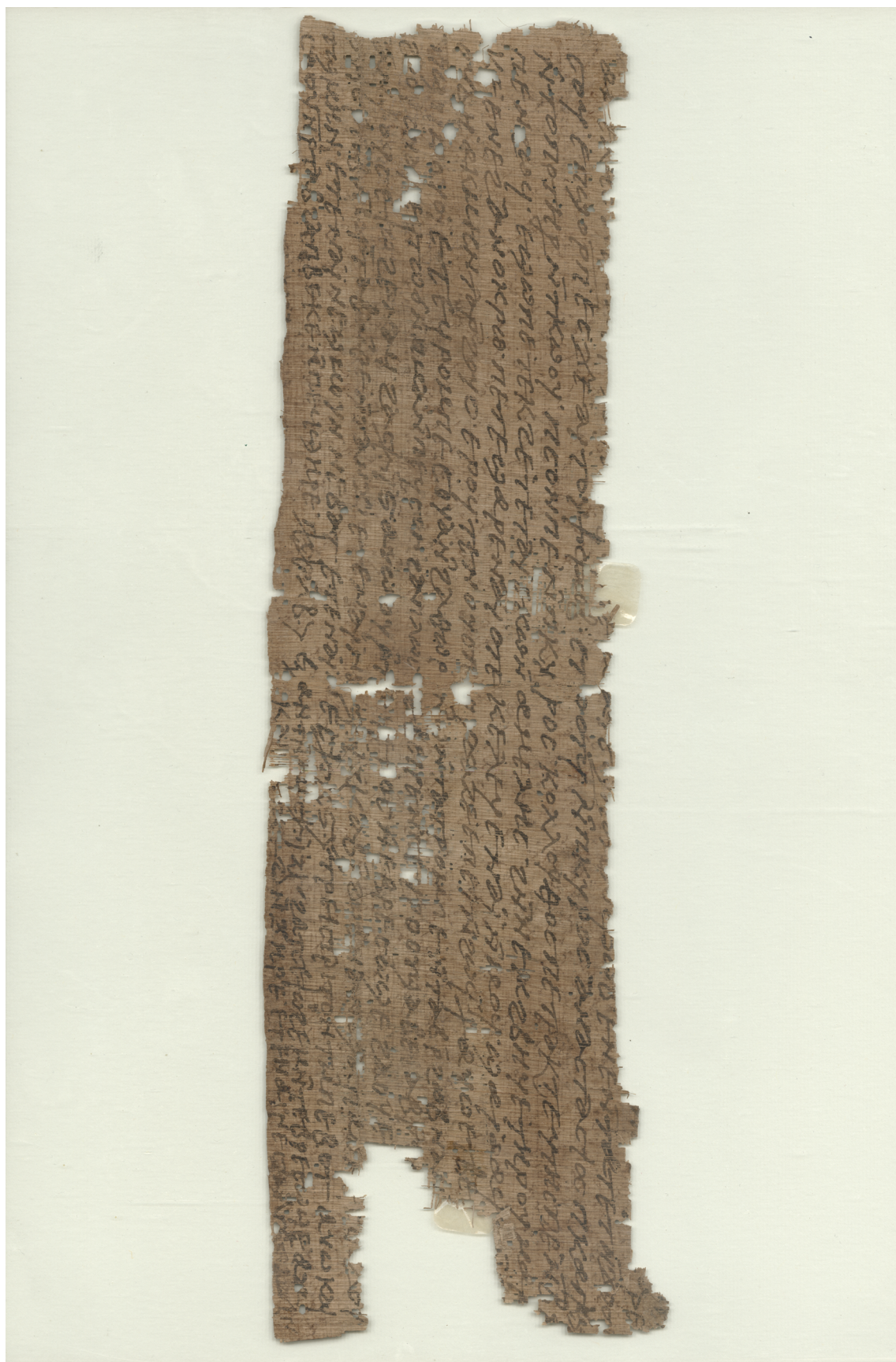


Fig. 1 Provv. 8576 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.

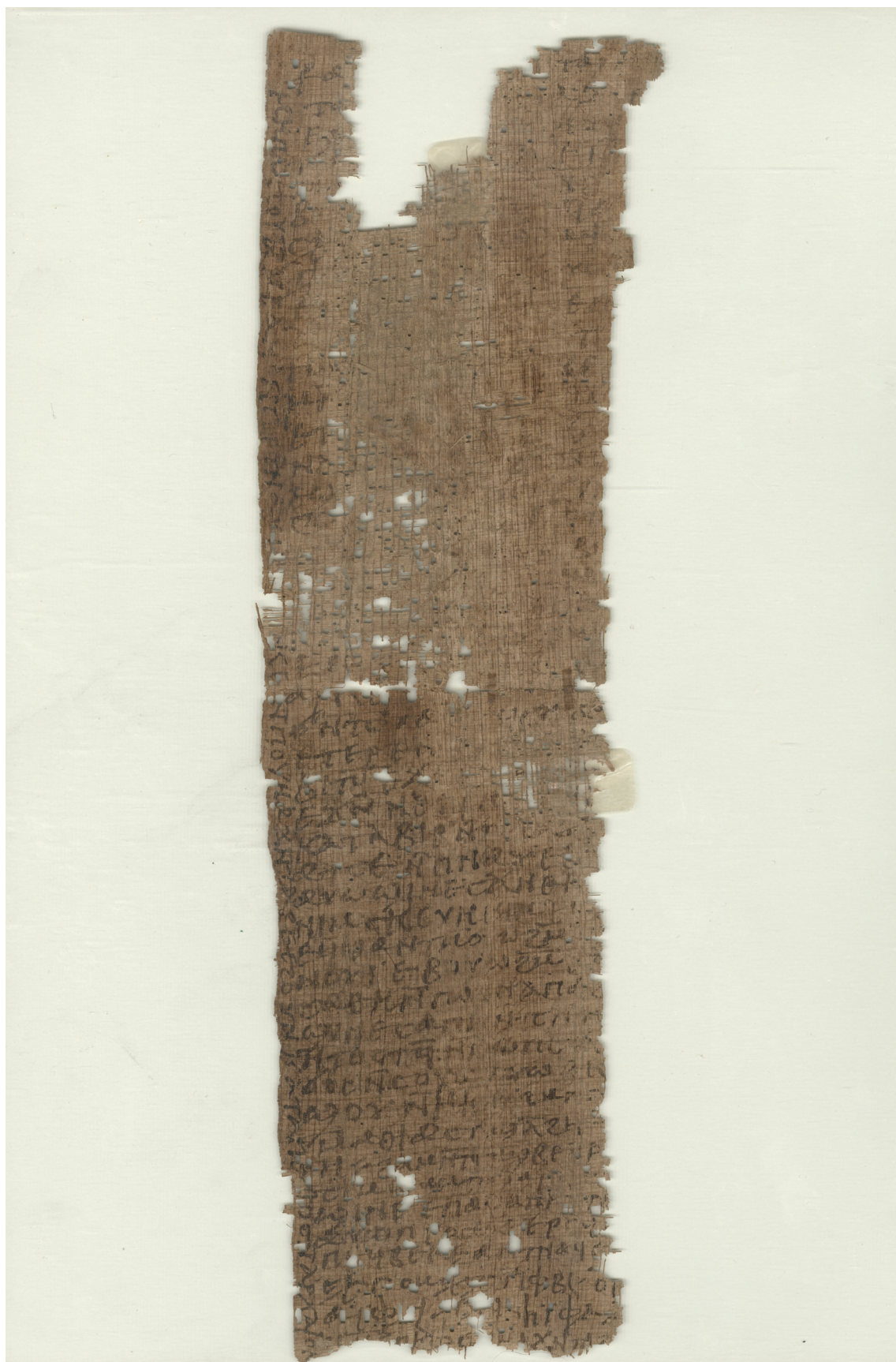


Fig. 2 Provv. 8576 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

a long median bar.¹ Our papyrus bears witness to the two types of Dioscorus's "main littéraire"²: most of the text on the recto is written in a bilinear script sloping to the right,³ and from the end of l. 13 to the end of the text on the verso, the letters are written in a non-sloping uncial.⁴ As Jean-Luc Fournet has pointed out, Dioscorus used this type of writing in Coptic documents because "l'écriture copte ne connaissait pas encore, au VI^e siècle, de tracé cursif et devait se conformer à l'écriture en onciales non ligaturée qui se trouve être l'apanage des textes littéraires grecs".⁵ Some Alphas (ΑΜΕΛΗC, l. 6; ϠΑἰΛΛϠ, l. 7) and Upsilon (ΑΥΩ, l. 13) have cursive shapes taken from Greek scripts. As the document belongs to the Dioscorus archive, it must be dated between 525 and 573 CE. And even more, Kollouthos the *trakteutes* mentioned in l. 5 is known in a document dated around 550.⁶ Since the identification is probable, we therefore suggest that this document can be dated in the same period.

The letter deals with two different issues. The first one is developed between ll. 1–8 and provides one of the only three known Coptic letters of Dioscorus' archive dealing with administrative matters (with P.Aphrod.Lettres-Copt. 1 and 15). Thus, our document gives one of the few early examples of the use of Coptic in administration. It implies Anastasios the *cancellarius* and *topoteretes*⁷ of Tkoou (= Antaeopolis). The mention of such an official shows the implication of the ducal officium. In fact, the *topoteretai* were the duke's representatives in the pagarchy.⁸ Thus, like most of the *cancellarii* attested in papyrus from the Byzantine period, Anastasios must be identified as an employee of the duke,⁹ working in the offices of the pagarchy.¹⁰ He is described

1 See P.Aphrod.LettresCopt., II. C. b. 2.

2 P.Aphrod. Lit. I, p. 246.

3 Which Fournet categorizes as A^1 (P.Aphrod. Lit. I, p. 246).

4 Which Fournet categorizes as A^2 (P.Aphrod. Lit. I, p. 246).

5 P.Aphrod.Lit., p. 245, n. 14.

6 The datation of this document is still discussed (see the commentary of ll. 4–5 below).

7 For other instances of individuals bearing both titles see: BGU II 669 (sixth century, Hermonthis): τῷ (...) Μαρκέλλῳ καγκ(ελλαρίῳ) (καὶ) τοποτηρ(ητῇ), l. 2; P.Gen. IV 167 (sixth century): Φοιβάμμωνι καγκελαρ(ίῳ) καὶ τοποτηρητῇ, ll. 2–3.

8 CPR XXIV 31, commentary of l. 6.

⁹ Benaïssa, *APF* 55 (2009), p. 60.

10 Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 1964, p. 48.

by Dioscorus as the “brother” (= “colleague”) of Kollouthos, who was himself a *trakteutes* (ΠΤΡΑΚΤΕΥΤΗΣ, l. 5). C. Zuckerman notes that several *trakteutai* are involved in the pagarchy *officium* as “lieutenants locaux du tractator préfectoral”, whose title they bear.¹¹

Even if the concrete matter is now lost, it is obvious that Dioscorus is blaming his recipient for his carelessness (ΕΩΩΠΕ ΤΕΚΖΕ ΤΕ ΤΑΙ ΕΚΩ ΝΑΜΕΛΗΣ· ΖΝ ΝΕΚΖΒΗΥΕ ΤΗΡΟΥ, “If it is your habit to be careless in all your affairs”, l. 6). He then specifies that he himself always carefully follows the orders of his “fathers” (ΑΝΟΚ ΡΩ· ΠΕΤΕΩΑΡΕΝΑΙΟΤΕ ΚΕΛΕΥΕ ΝΑΪ ΝΜΟΦ· ΩΑΪΑΑΦ· ΝϚ[Π-]ΟΥΔΗ·, “Then, as for myself, what my fathers command me, I do it with care.”, ll. 7–8), which presumably have to be identified with his hierarchical superiors in the state administration mentioned above. Another interpretation would be to understand *ιοτε* as a designation of monks, which would imply that our document dates from the monastic period of Dioscorus (between 573 until his death at the beginning of the 580’s).¹² The sender concludes his rebuke by ordering the receiver to be stricter (ΤΕΝΟΥ ΣΠΟΥΔΑΖΕ, “Now be rigorous”, l. 8).

Immediately after this accusation the second theme of the letter begins, introduced by an internal cross¹³ and the prepositions ΔΥΩ ΕΤΒΕ (“And concerning ...”, l. 8). Dioscorus refers to a certain “Pshoi the farmer” (ΠΩΟΪ ΠΟΥΟΪΕ, l. 9). More precisely, the text refers to Pshoi’s wages after a year’s work on behalf of Dioscorus and his colleagues or community (ΝΤΑΒΡ ΖΩΒ ΝΑΝ, “he worked for us”, l. 9). The sender writes about a continuous work of “two days being attached instead of his brother” (ΖΟΟΥ ΣΝΔΥ ΕΥΤΩΒ ΝΠΜΑ ΝΠΕΥΣΟΝ, l. 10) and then compliments Pshoi’s behaviour (ΖΑΠΛΩΣ ΔΒΕΙΡΕ ΝΠΕΥΡΟΟΥΩ, “In one word, he worked with care”, l. 10). As we can see from the incomplete text, the wage was 33 ½ artaba. This is as follows: Pshoi worked for eight months (Hathor to Paone) with a monthly salary of 3 1/3 (= 26 ½). In addition, he received six artaba as a salary for his son.

The verso of the document may well be the continuation of the text written on the recto since there are other references to payments in wheat. However, the

¹¹ P.Aphrod.Reg., pp. 125–27.

¹² On the end of Dioscorus’s life and his monastic period, see Fournet, in Fournet and Magdelaine (eds.), *Les archives de Dioscore d’Aphrodité*, 2008, especially p. 29.

¹³ On the use of crosses separating parts of a letter containing several orders, see Amory, in Ghignoli et al. (eds.), *Segni, sogni, materie e scrittura*, 2023, pp. 60–61.

cross at the beginning of the first line may indicate that Dioscorus is introducing a similar but entirely new letter, as suggested by the sequence ⲡ ⲁ[...] as a beginning, which would be understood as a typical ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲁ ⲉϣⲥⲁⲓ ⲛ-Ⲑ¹⁴ formula.

3. PALAEOGRAPHY AND LINGUISTIC FEATURES

The scribe writes in a standard Sahidic dialect with very few dialectal variations. We can first note that the scribe wrote ⲉϥⲭⲉ for ⲉϣⲭⲉ, l. 4, which is a linguistic peculiarity perhaps attested in the letter sent to Dioscorus P.Aphrod. LettresCopt. 18, l. 11. We can also notice the spelling ⲉϥⲱ for ⲉϥⲟ, l. 6. This vocalisation is typical of region D (the southern part of Middle Egypt),¹⁵ as is the vocalisation ⲁ instead of ⲟ (ⲉⲃⲁⲧ for ⲉⲃⲟⲧ, l. 13).¹⁶ There is also the unusual form ⲧ for the verb ⲧ “to give” (ⲁⲛⲧ ⲛⲁϥ, l. 52), already attested in P.Lond. V 1709,¹⁷ an arbitration written by Dioscorus himself.

We can also find common phenomena of Coptic documents such as isoglossy (e.g. ⲉⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲱⲉ for ⲉⲡⲉⲧⲛⲁⲱⲃ, l. 8; ⲁⲃⲉⲓ for ⲁϥⲉⲓ, l. 10) or the absence of assimilations (ⲡⲃⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲡⲉϥⲱⲛⲣⲉ, l. 14).

The writer also added diairesis to diphthongs (e.g. ⲱⲁⲓⲁⲁϥ, l. 7; ⲡⲟϥⲟⲓⲉ, l. 9) and used abbreviations for Greek titles (ⲕⲁⲓⲕⲉⲗⲁⲣⲓⲟⲥ, l. 4; ⲧⲟⲡⲟⲧⲉⲣⲉⲧⲓⲥ, l. 5) and Greek words used in a fiscal context (ⲥⲓⲧⲟⲩ, l. 11, 12 *et passim*; γίνονται, l. 14, 23; ἄρταβή, ll. 12, 14). In the Coptic sections, the latter can be written in two different ways: ⲡⲧⲟϥ (l. 11) and ⲡⲧⲁⲃ (ll. 12 and 14) according to the vocalization ⲁ for ⲟ and the isoglossy mentioned above.

Supralinear strokes are used in a standard way, but it is noteworthy that some of them appear specifically on the first letter of anthroponyms (ⲡⲱⲟⲓ, l. 9; ⲙⲁⲑⲓⲁⲥ, l. 47).

¹⁴ For an example of two letters written on the same document, see SB VI 9616 (Antin.; 550–558?) or, in the Dioscorus archive, P.Aphrod.LettresCopt. 9.

¹⁵ P.Bal. I, p. 82.

¹⁶ P.Bal. I, p. 80.

¹⁷ P.Bal. I, p. 131.

4. EDITION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

4.1 Transcription

Recto:

[illegible]

Verso:

- ↓ ϙ λ[.....]τα...[±?]
 τα[±9] .. λ χε ..[±?]
 ε[±9] . ϙ . ε ..[±?]
 τι[±9] .. εἶ[±?]
- 20 ..[±3]... ϙΥ²[±?]
 β..... ϙλ ..[±?]
 σί(του) ω[±?]
 γί(νονται) ϙΥΟ[±?]
 ε..... ελϙ[±?]
- 25 λ..... τι[±?]
 τω..... χε[±?]
 λῖ..... μ[±?]
 ετ..... ζλ[±?]
 ν..... ν̄ ..[±?]
- 30 εω..... Υ ..[±?]
 π..... τ[±?]
 σ̄ντο τα [.] . μογλ[±?]
 ετερετ.[.....] ..[±?]
 βιτῑ εχ.[.][±?]
- 35 εχ̄ν νο . ιη ..[±?]
 κα ταβιρ ν̄τ[±?]
 λτσε ν̄πναγ ε ..[±?]
 λγω ωινε κα νει[±?]
 νιμ σκευη νιμ[±?]
- 40 εϙωαντ̄μογω²μ̄ ..[±?]
 νογι εβογω²μ̄ ..[±? ωινε]
 κα θη ν̄γω . ναπαζ[±?]
 ωινε κα π . ντςν̄ ..[±?]
 ν̄τοοτῑ ν̄ . οπςλ̄ .[±?]
- 45 σος ν̄σογο λγω βε .[?]
 ωογ ν̄μι .. ζλ . σ .[±?]
 μ̄αθιας πωλ²η .[±?]
 η̄ ζλ μ̄ντςλωβε . ρ[±?]
 σιμ ωαλς .. λῖ[±?]

- 50 ωινε επα . αν . τ . [±?]
 αγω προσεχε εροϋ . [±?]
 πεφθεκε αντ ναϋ . [±?]
 σί(του) (άρτάβαι) γ όμοί(ως) ίφ(ίω) βλ . [±?]
 α ίφ(ίω) σί(του) (άρτάβαι) . . σί(του) . η ίφ(ίω) α . [±?]
 55 ςτ . . ίφ(ίω) . . ναχ νταζ[ε ±?]
 μη π . . του η̄π . ραν ππρτναγ̄ . . . κε̄ η̄πογναχ̄ η̄ταζε̄ εζογν̄ κατᾱ πλογος̄
 η̄αρχαιον̄.

3 άμελής || 4 εσχε αϊτογ† l. εωχε αϊτρεγ† | κύριος | καγκελλ ραρ. καγκελλάριος ||
 4 φωβ· ραρ. || 5 τοποτηρ ραρ. τοποτηρητής | η̄τκωογ· ραρ. | πε· ραρ. | η̄πκγρος· ραρ.
 κύριος | τρακτευτής | πε· ραρ. || 6 πενζω· ραρ. | η̄αμελης· ραρ. άμελής || 7 ρω· ραρ. |
 κελεύειν | η̄μοϋ· ραρ. | ωαϊδαϋ· ραρ. || 7–8 η̄ς[η̄]ογδη· ραρ. σπουδή || 8 άκμήν | ζογο·
 ραρ. | εροϋ· ραρ. | σπογδαζε· ραρ. σπουδάζειν || 9 πογοϊε η̄ corr. ex. η̄ | πογοϊε· ραρ.
 | η̄ωντατρομπε l. η̄ωαντετρομπε || 10 άπλως || 11 ναϋ· ραρ. | σ̄ ραρ. | άρτάβη || 12
 άρτάβη | άρτάβη | σ̄ ραρ. | ϯ ραρ. || 12–13 χογτωμην· ραρ. || 13 σ̄ ραρ. | ϯ ραρ. ||
 14 η̄ρταβ· ραρ. άρτάβη | η̄πεϋωηρε· ραρ. | γ̄ ραρ. | σ̄ ραρ. | ϯ ραρ. | εξ̄ ραρ. | αντ ναϋ
 l. αν† ναϋ | σ̄ | ϯ ραρ. | σωφε· ραρ. || 15 σ̄ ραρ. || 17 . . λ· ραρ. || 22 σ̄ ραρ. | ϯ ραρ.
 || 23 γ̄ ραρ. || 39 σκεδος̄ || 41 νογι· ραρ. || 45 η̄σογο· ραρ. || 51 προσέχειν || 53 σ̄ ραρ.
 | ομοι ραρ. || 56 κατά | λόγος | άρχαίος

4.2 Translation

Recto: |¹ ... |² ... |³ careless ...and the thing if you had indeed send |⁴ them at first, then I would have made them entrust the thing to the lord Anastasios the cancellarius |⁵ and topoteretes of Tkôou (he is the brother of the lord Kollouthos who is the trakteutes) so that he could deal with (lit.: “do”) |⁶ our affairs. If it is your habit to be careless in all of your affairs, ... |⁷ ... always. As for myself, what my fathers command me, I do it zealously. |⁸ I do even more than this. Now, be zealous for your affair. + And regarding [...] |⁹ Pshoi the peasant: his year (beginning) at the first day of the month of Hathor, until the year he worked for us [...] |¹⁰ two days being attached instead of his brother. In one word, he worked carefully. He arrived and he worked [...] |¹¹ We gave him an aroura corresponding to 16 (artaba of) wheat and one artaba on top of it, composed by seed-corn corresponding to one [...] |¹² ... an artaba, as we took, that is to say 17 1/2 artaba. He

worked for us until the 28th day of the month of Paone, ^{|13} that is to say ... each month, which is equivalent to 26 1/2 artaba. (That makes) 3 1/3 each (?) month and ^{|14} six other artaba for his son's wage. Total of 32 1/2 measures as exodiasmos. We gave him 17 1/2 measures of artaba for the aroua and the seed-corn. And ^{|15} other ... of threshed wheat. These are 33 ... measures of artaba.

Verso: ^{|16} ... [...] ^{|17} ... [...] ^{|18} ... [...] ^{|19} ... [...] ^{|20} ... [...] ^{|21} ... [...] ^{|22} measures of ... [...] ^{|23} in sum: ... [...] ^{|24} ... [...] ^{|25} ... [...] ^{|26} ... [...] ^{|27} ... [...] ^{|28} ... [...] ^{|29} ... [...] ^{|30} ... [...] ^{|31} ... [...] ^{|32} ... [...] ^{|33} ... [...] ^{|34} bring it to ... ^{|35} on ... ^{|36} put my basket (?) [...] ^{|37} ... at the time [...] ^{|38} and look for these [...] ^{|39} each, each equipment [...] ^{|40} if he doesn't answer [...] ^{|41} mines if he answers [... look] ^{|42} for the thing of ... [...] ^{|43} look for the ... [...] ^{|44} by him ... [...] ^{|45} and a half of wheat. And ... [...] ^{|46} worthy of ... [...] ^{|47} Mathias ... [...] ^{|48} 8 for seventeen ... ^{|49} ... ^{|50} greet my ... ^{|51} And look after him [...] ^{|52} his wage. We gave him [...] ^{|53} 3 artaba of wheat, idem ... 2 1/3 [...] ^{|54} 1. ... artaba of wheat; ... 3 1/2 [...] measures ... ^{|55} ... send in my way [...] ^{|56} ... name ... they did not send in my way according to the ancient account."

4.3 Commentary

1. 4 εϰχε ἀπογϑι: It should be interpreted as an apodosis introduced by εϰχε (see Crum, *CD*, p. 64a) with a following Perfect I. in the function of an irrealis.

ΠΚΥΡΟΣ ΔΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΟΣ ΠΚΑΓΚΕΛ(ΛΑΡΙΟΣ) ΝΤΟΠΟΡΤΗΡ(ΗΤΗΣ) ΝΤΚΩΟΥ: Although there are several persons with the name Anastasios attested at Aphrodite (seven according to Ruffini, *A Prosopography*, 2011, pp. 22–27), none of them bears these titles. It is therefore possible that the Anastasios of our document has not been attested. The fact that Dioscorus felt the need to identify him more precisely (by writing that he was the “brother” of Kollouthos the *trakteutes*) may indeed suggest that the correspondents did not usually deal with Anastasios. On a palaeographical note, the epsilon and lambda of καγκελλάριος are written in a cursive way.

1. 5 ΠΚΥΡΟΣ· ΚΟΛΛΟΥΘΟΣ ΠΕΤΡΑΚΤΕΥΤΗΣ: This individual is attested only once according to Ruffini, *A Prosopography*, 2011, pp. 313–14. See P.Cair.Masp. I 67058 (549–550), col. 3, l. 8: Κολλο(ύ)θω τρακ[τ](ευτη).

1. 6 μαρ[ε . . ±2]: The end of the line should be an Optative, probably in the 2nd pers. sg. m.

1. 7 ενεε: Since the previous gap makes it impossible to determine whether the preceding verb form could be a negative optative or not, it must be borne in mind that ενεε could be translated as always or never.

l. 8 ΔΚΜΗΝ: This word is rarely used in Coptic texts, as it does not appear in Förster's *Wörterbuch*, nor in the letters P.Aphrod.LettresCopt. This word is even rare in Greek documents, with only three attestations during the sixth–seventh centuries (P.Gen. I 14, l. 13; P.Stras. VII 680, l. 5; P.Oxy. LVI 3871, l. 9). The only attestation in a Coptic text known to us appears in Shenoute of Atripe, Canon 7 (ed. Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Vita et Opera Omnia IV*, Paris 1913, p. 12, l. 21).

l. 9 ⲡⲱⲟⲓ ⲡⲟϥⲟⲓⲉ: The name Ψόις is well attested in Aphrodite and can take several forms according to Ruffini, *A Prosopography*, 2011, pp. 516–17. None of the Psois listed in the latter are mentioned as “peasants.”

ⲡⲱⲛⲧⲁⲧⲣⲟⲙⲛⲉ: The exact meaning of ⲡⲱⲛⲧⲁ is unclear. Based on the context and the syntactic position, it is interpreted as an irregular orthography for the verbal prefix ⲡⲱⲁⲛⲧⲉ- “until”, which is rarely attested in Sahidic.

l. 10 ⲉϥⲧⲱⲉ: This is possibly a spelling for the verb ⲧⲱⲉⲉ, but such a form is not attested elsewhere and does not occur in the CD. As in the letter O.Frange 93, l. 13, it could correspond to the verb ⲧⲱⲕ, “kindle”, “stoke” or “heat” (see Crum, CD, pp. 404a–404b), but such a sense is unlikely in our case, unless it refers to a particular action or work to which Pshoï has been attributed.

ⲁⲃⲣ ⲛⲱ[ⲃ ±5]: It would be possible to propose ⲁⲃⲣⲛⲱ[ⲃ ⲛⲁⲛ]. Such a restitution does not fill the lacuna completely, but the number of letters missing is not absolute, as it is the end of the line.

ll. 11–12 ⲛⲁ ⲟϥⲉ[±7] | ⲟϥⲧ̄ ⲛⲱⲧ̄ⲁⲃ ⲛⲟϥⲧ̄ⲁⲃ: Since Pshoï has been given 16 artaba of wheat and, on top of this, one artaba of seed corn for a total of 17 1/2, it is likely that the extra artaba of seed-corn corresponds to one and a half regular artaba. This would explain the final number which is higher than it should (17 1/2 instead of 17). With this in mind, it is possible to suggest the following reconstruction: ⲛⲁ ⲟϥⲉ[ⲣⲧⲟⲃ ⲟϥⲉⲟⲥ] | ⲟϥⲧ̄ⲉ ⲣⲧⲟⲃ ⲛⲟϥⲧ̄ⲟⲃ, “corresponding to one [artaba and a half], and not (one) artaba for one artaba.” However, the lacuna at the end of l. 11 seems to be too short for such a restitution, and an epsilon in the section ⲟϥⲧ̄ⲉ would be unlikely, on palaeographical grounds.

l. 13 ⲟϥⲉⲧ̄ⲱⲉ: For the meaning “aroura” of the word ⲉⲧ̄ⲱⲉ (which reappears at l. 14), see the comment of P.Bru.x.Bawit. 45, l. 3.

ⲧ̄ⲙⲡⲉⲃⲟⲧ: The particle ⲧ̄ⲙ- is here understood as ⲧ̄ⲛ-, usually used in ⲧ̄ⲛⲣⲟⲙⲛⲉ “each year.” Such a construction, with another word than ⲣⲟⲙⲛⲉ and the use of an article, is unattested elsewhere.

l. 14 ⲛⲁ ⲡⲉⲃⲉ ⲛⲡⲉⲃⲱⲙⲣⲉ: γί(νονται) σί(του) λβ ζ̄ ἑξ(οδιασμοῦ): According to the

editor of the account P.Bad. IV 95, l. 62 (Herm.; 500–525), the word ἐξοδισμός has the general meaning of “expense.” It is noteworthy that – in this very document – the ἐξοδισμός-expense is regularly related to salaries and, according to three examples, to “the salary of the sons” (which reminds the sequence $\mathfrak{z}\lambda\ \mathfrak{n}\mathfrak{b}\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{k}\mathfrak{e}\ \mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{c}\mathfrak{w}\mathfrak{h}\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{e}$ of our text): see the entry at l. 62 where one can read ἐξ(οδισμοῦ) τῆς κύρ(ας) ὑπ(ὲρ) ὠψωνί(ου) (= ὠψωνί(ου)) τῶν παίδ(ων) [...], “Expense of the Lady for the salary of the sons [...]” See also ll. 74 and 75 for similar examples.

l. 15 $\kappa\lambda\iota$: This word, which marks the beginning of the line, is written in the middle of the document’s length.

l. 22 $\sigma\acute{\iota}(\tau\omicron\upsilon)$: Among the dotted letters, one can expect a numeral value (see ll. 12, 13, and 14) or the abbreviation for artaba (see l. 14).

l. 23 $\gamma\acute{\iota}(\nu\omicron\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota)$ $\omicron\gamma\omicron$: It is tempting to consider $\gamma\acute{\iota}(\nu\omicron\upsilon\tau\alpha\iota)$ to be followed by $\sigma\acute{\iota}\tau\omicron\upsilon$ and a number (as at l. 14), the sequence $\omicron\gamma\omicron$ being possibly the end of the word $\mathfrak{c}\omicron\gamma\omicron$ “wheat”.

l. 32 $\overline{\sigma\mathfrak{n}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{o}}$: Do we have to identify the presuffix form of the verb “find” ($\sigma\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{n}\mathfrak{e}$, $\sigma\mathfrak{n}\mathfrak{t}$), followed by the 3rd person plural $\mathfrak{o}\langle\gamma\rangle$? The long supralinear stroke above these letters suggests that they should be read as a whole.

l. 33 $\mathfrak{b}\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{c}\ \mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{x}$ [...]: The remaining traces of the pointed letter do not allow to recognize a \mathfrak{n} . We should thus read an omega for the presuffix form $\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{x}\omega$. On the verb $\mathfrak{c}\mathfrak{i}\ \mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{x}\mathfrak{n}$ “bring upon/for”, see Crum, *CD*, p. 620b.

l. 36 $\kappa\lambda\ \tau\alpha\mathfrak{b}\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{p}$: $\mathfrak{b}\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{p}$ regularly occurs as a masculine noun, but exceptions from this are however possible (cf. Crum, *CD*, p. 41b or Westendorf, *KoptHWb*, p. 26), including the form $\mathfrak{b}\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{e}$. This makes it possible to recognize the possessive article in $\tau\lambda$, which follows the st. nom. of the verb $\kappa\omega$. Since the end of the previous line is destroyed, it is uncertain whether it is an imperative or a subject was expressed before.

ll. 36–37 $[\pm?]\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{c}\mathfrak{e}$: According to the context of labour and wage, we can suggest that it is the end of $\kappa\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{c}\mathfrak{e}$, a form of $\kappa\mathfrak{e}\mathfrak{p}\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{n}$ attested in the corpus of the monk Frange (see for example O.Frange 119, l. 3) or in the Hermopolite nome (*CPR* IV 151, l. 8). If this form is not yet attested in Aphrodite, a similar case can be found in this documentation with the P.Ismaila. inv. 2240, l. 12 (edited in Vanderheyden, “Les lettres coptes”, 2015), and the spelling $\mathfrak{z}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{l}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{k}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{c}\mathfrak{e}$ for $\delta\mathfrak{l}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{k}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{n}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{s}$.

ll. 44–45 $[\pm?]\mathfrak{o}\gamma\text{--}[\mathfrak{b}\mathfrak{o}\mathfrak{c}\ \mathfrak{n}\mathfrak{c}\mathfrak{o}\gamma\mathfrak{o}]$: We can expect to see a number that measures the amount of wheat. There are several possibilities for the number. First, we can accept $\mathfrak{m}\mathfrak{n}\mathfrak{t}\mathfrak{c}\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{w}\mathfrak{b}\mathfrak{e}$ “seventeen” and a half, if Dioscorus is referring to the wage

already given to the worker (see l. 12 or l. 14 and l. 48 for the spelling of the word). The amount $\chi\omicron\gamma\omega\tau\varsigma\omicron\omicron\gamma$ “twenty-six” and a half could be a reference to the wage for eight months of work (see l. 13). Finally, it is also possible to restore $\mu\alpha\beta\alpha\varsigma$ “thirty-six” and a half for the whole wage, including the six artaba “for his son’s wage” (l. 14).

l. 47 $\bar{\mu}\alpha\theta\iota\alpha\varsigma\ \eta\omega\lambda\eta$: For the numerous attestations of anthroponym Mathias in Byzantine Aphrodite, see Ruffini, *A Prosopography*, 2011, pp. 364–67. The sequence that follows remains unclear. A parallel can be found in the P.Christ. Musl. 16, ll. 2–3, where one of the senders is identified as $\mu\alpha\kappa\alpha\rho\iota\ \eta\sigma\epsilon\varsigma\ \eta\omega\epsilon\lambda\eta$. The editor of the latter document suggests that such a section could refer to a toponym or to the action of “setting a mark” or “tracing a line” ($\eta\omega\lambda\eta$, Crum, *CD*, p. 562a).

l. 48 $\varsigma\alpha\ \mu\eta\tau\varsigma\alpha\omega\beta\epsilon$. $\rho[\pm?]$: The word in the lacuna might be $\alpha\rho[\tau\alpha\beta]$, maybe followed by $\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ (see ll. 44–45) for a reference to the 17 1/2 artaba mentioned at ll. 12 and 14. Such an orthography for $\alpha\rho\tau\alpha\beta\eta$ does not appear elsewhere in the text.

l. 50 $\eta\eta\eta\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\alpha\ \alpha\eta\ \tau$: The letter between the alphas could be read as a \omicron . A sequence $\eta\alpha\omicron\alpha$ or $\eta\alpha\omicron\alpha\eta$ would perhaps recall the anthroponym $\Pi\alpha\omicron\varsigma$, attested in Aphrodite (Ruffini, *A Prosopography*, 2011, pp. 409–10).

l. 52 $\alpha\eta\tau\ \eta\alpha\eta$. $[\pm?]$: The last letter before the lacuna might be read as an omicron but it would be larger than the others. It could be the beginning of an indefinite word ($\omicron\gamma$ -), maybe a measure for the wheat quantified in Greek in the next line.

l. 53 $\eta\phi(\eta\phi)\ \beta\eta$: The $\eta\phi\iota\omicron\varsigma$ measure, which reappears in the next line, is specific to Aphrodite and usually occurs in accounts. It is noteworthy that this measure is mainly associated with number 2, as in our text, and sometimes with 1 or 3. For examples of $\eta\phi\iota\omicron$ followed by β , see P.Cair.Masp. II 67138 r°, Fol. 2, ll. 15, 16, 17 and 28. The measure has been identified by J. Maspero as an equivalent of Coptic $\omicron\eta\epsilon$, which can refer to a container of wheat (as in the P.Stras.Copt. 17, ll. 4–5 and P.Stras.Copt. 22, l. 6). Thus, should we understand this section as “2 1/3 of a (certain type of) wheat container”? According to Maspero, the $\eta\phi\iota\omicron\varsigma$ measure specifically corresponds to a quarter of an artaba in sixth century texts from Aphrodite (see the comment of P.Cair.Masp. III 67308, l. 4); W.E. Crum states that the $\omicron\eta\epsilon$ is equivalent to a sixth of an artaba (Crum, *CD*, p. 265a). In our case, a fraction would be difficult to understand since the word is already followed by the third symbol. Should we read the latter as the $\eta\pi\epsilon\rho$ symbol?

l. 56 $\bar{\nu}\pi\omicron\gamma\bar{\nu}\alpha\chi \bar{\nu}\tau\alpha\bar{\nu}\epsilon$: The τ has a curious flattened shape (did Dioscorus want to avoid the small degradation below?). If the reconstruction is correct, we should recognize an influence of the southern dialect in the form $\nu\alpha\chi$ - of the verb $\nu\omicron\gamma\chi\epsilon$ (A², according to Crum, *CD*, p. 247a). This verb already appears at line 55.

l. 57 $\lambda\omicron\gamma\tau\omicron\varsigma$: It has been translated provisionally as “account”, which is one of the regular meanings of this word, particularly in a context of payments.

$\alpha\rho\chi\alpha\iota\omicron\nu$: According to Förster, *WB*, p. 103, the word $\alpha\rho\chi\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$ is mostly attested in legal documents.

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LETTER TO THE ARCHDEACON KERONTE FROM BESARION OF TEMENKYRKIS (P. TURIN PROV. 8577)

Youhanna Matta, Conrad Theilemann

Inv. No.: Prov. 8577

TPOP Obj ID: 694

Dimensions: H 8.6 cm x W 19.6 cm

Date: seventh/eighth century

1. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The papyrus sheet is generally well preserved, apart from a major lacuna in the upper middle part. All the margins are present, but a large piece of the upper right corner is missing and its adjacent parts are somewhat abraded. Several vertical creases, along which the papyrus is slightly damaged, provide indication that the leaf was probably folded at least twice towards the middle.

Twelve lines in black ink are written on the recto of the papyrus *transversa charta* [Fig. 1]; the verso contains the address [Fig. 2].

2. PALAEOGRAPHY AND LINGUISTIC FEATURES

The text is written in a professional right-sloping cursive hand, which mostly remains quadrilinear. It can probably be assigned to the late seventh or eighth century. For comparable hands, see P.Köln X 427 and CPR XXXVI 43 (Greek).¹ Abbreviations and diaereiseis are scarcely used,² but there are several supralinear strokes, primarily on α .

¹ We thank Maxime Thérond for suggesting these texts.

² Diaereiseis are used exclusively on ι after α .

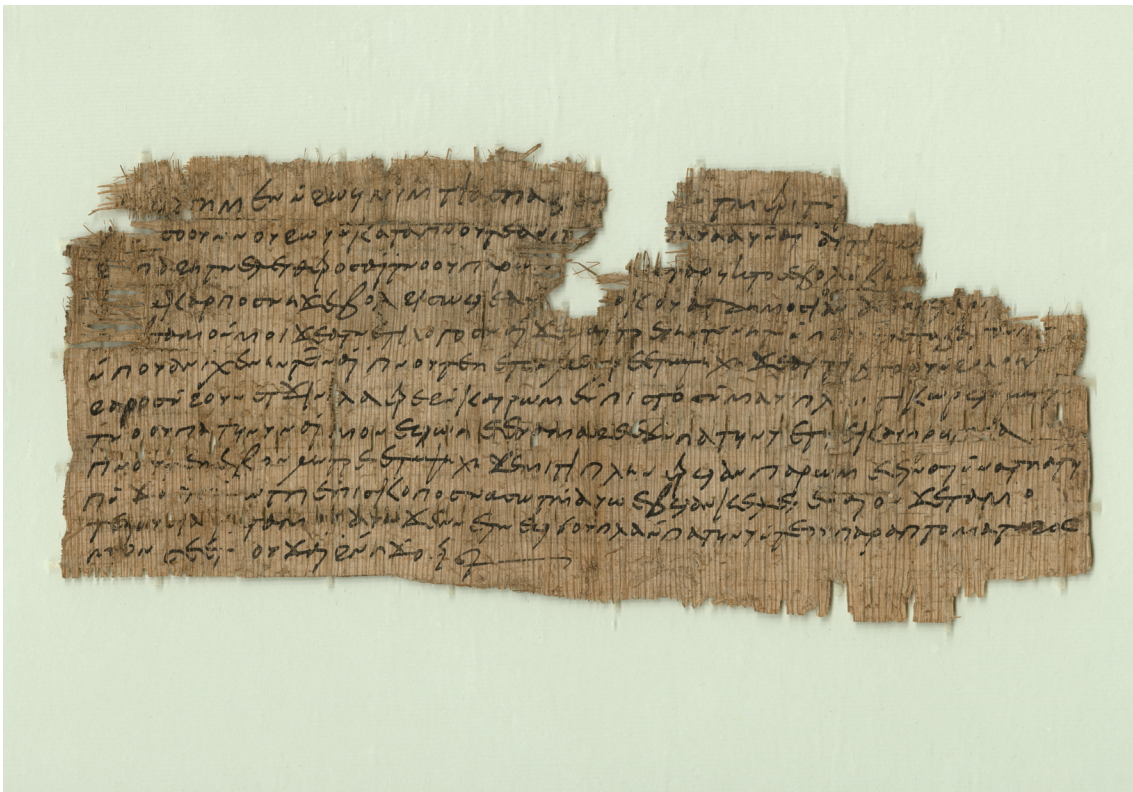


Fig. 1 Provv. 8577 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.

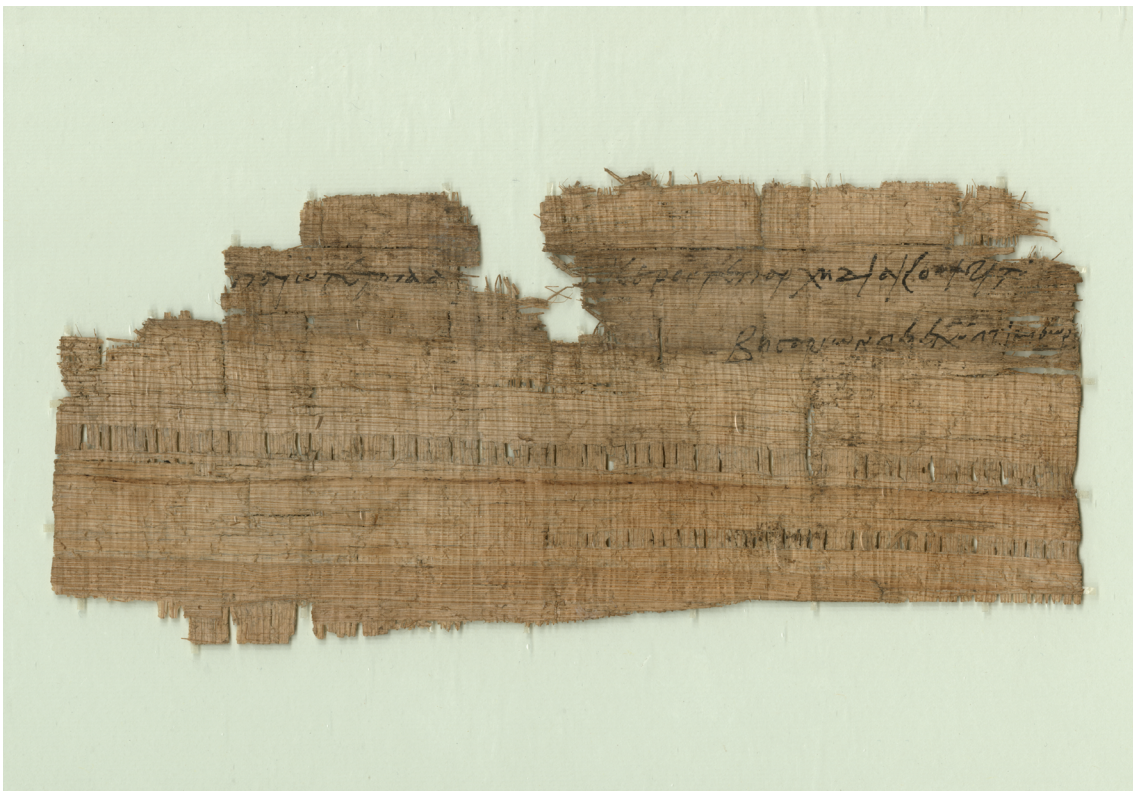


Fig. 2 Provv. 8577 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

Ⲫ is often large, protruding both above and below the line. ⲙ is written in majuscule, but at times displays the Greek minuscule form, starting with a long stroke from well below the line. The ⲫ is also conspicuous: it resembles a cross, with a thick and short horizontal stroke and a long, narrow vertical stroke.

There are a couple of ligatures, the most notable being the combination ⲉⲣ, bearing resemblance to the “as de pique” ligature. ⲧ and ⲥ are ligatured in peculiar fashion, with the horizontal stroke of the tau curving down, and then upwards, forming the lower stroke of the sigma. The scribe uses a similar ligature to connect ⲧ and ⲉ.

The toponyms ⲭⲓⲛⲓⲗⲁ (Σελιλαῖς or Σενιλαῖς) and ⲧⲓⲙⲉⲛⲕⲱⲣⲓⲥ (Τέμενκυρκis)³ suggest a Hermopolite provenance. There are two villages named Τέμενκυρκis in the Hermopolites, Τέμενκυρκis Ποιμένων and Τέμενκυρκis Ἀλιέων.⁴ Even though the full name is not mentioned here, it can be assumed that we are dealing with Τέμενκυρκis Ποιμένων, as the former is not attested after the fourth century.

The text is composed in Sahidic Coptic but features a plethora of linguistic peculiarities that are typical of Middle Egypt and thus in line with a Hermopolite origin. Among these, the omission of the second ⲛ of ⲧⲛⲛⲟⲟⲩⲩ (ⲧⲛⲟⲟⲩ), the rendering of the second person plural prefix ⲧⲉⲧⲛ as ⲧⲛⲉ, and the dissimilation of ⲛ before labials (e.g. ⲛⲙⲁⲩ) are most notable.⁵ Also, Ⲫ and ⲩ are often interchanged. Twice, the scribe writes ⲕⲁⲓ for ⲕⲉ.

3. CONTENT DESCRIPTION

The text preserved is a letter, sent by a certain Besarion to his superior, the *archidiakonos* Apa Keronte (a Coptic variant of Γερώντιος). Besarion laments having been unfairly treated (ll. 1–2) and requests the return of his property, an animal (ll. 7–8).⁶ Apparently, he had sent it away, subsequently trying to have it returned through an agent to bring in his harvest (ll. 3–4). It seems that Besari-

³ TM Geo 2945 and 2927, respectively. See Drew-Bear, *Le Nome Hermopolite*, 1979, pp. 236–37 (Σελιλαῖς) and 275–77 (Τέμενκυρκis Ποιμένων).

⁴ TM Geo 10125.

⁵ See the introduction to P.Bal., pp. 111–12, 163–64, 98–100.

⁶ The animal (ⲧⲃⲛⲏ, spelled ⲧⲩⲛⲏ in the text) is first mentioned as such in l. 8. Before, it is referred to by the feminine suffix ⲥ. Although ⲧⲃⲛⲏ is grammatically masculine, using the feminine suffix is possible, especially as the animal itself is female.

on is dependent on receiving his animal in order to be able to fulfil his financial obligations, as he mentions not being exempt from tax and not being able to pay should his animal be confiscated (ll. 4.8–9). It remains unclear whether Besarion was successful in retrieving his animal, but it is obvious that at the time of the letter's composition, it is Keronte who is in possession of it, and Besarion's issue is far from resolved (ll. 7–8). The urgency of the situation is evident from the fact that Besarion threatens to inform ecclesiastical and secular authorities (ll. 10–11).⁷ Here, the letter documents an interesting aspect of the relationship between these different authorities, as it suggests a practice of calling on the *εξογία* in disputes that could not be resolved within the church.

A possible interpretation of the letter's content could be based on the hypothesis that Besarion had leased land through or directly from Keronte. He might have been unable to pay the full lease, which in turn could have caused Keronte to retain Besarion's animal.⁸ Church institutions leasing land are well attested in papyri.⁹ Keronte could have been in charge of collecting rent for his institution.¹⁰ Based on this hypothesis, a possible context for the letter could be the archive of the episcopal church of Hermopolis.¹¹

Alternatively, it is possible that Besarion tried to sell or loan the animal to Keronte, but was unsatisfied with the negotiations, deciding to terminate or revoke the transaction.¹² The mention of the animal's original purchase price and fertility (ll. 6.12) could thus be interpreted as his negotiation tactics. Furthermore, this would shed some light on Besarion's accusation against Keronte of cheating with his animal (l. 11): Keronte could have suggested a price unacceptable to Besarion. In any case, he seems to have retained the animal against the will of the latter.

The fact that Besarion has a cleric working under him suggests that he himself is an ecclesiastical official, which is further supported by the style of the

⁷ The latter is referred to with *εξογία*, see Förster, *Wörterbuch*, 2002, s.v.

⁸ Keronte could also simply be Besarion's creditor, as Frederic Krueger points out. In both cases, the animal could have acted as collateral.

⁹ Richter, in Boud'hors et al. (eds.), *Monastic Estates*, 2009, pp. 207–08; see also Schmelz, *Kirchliche Amtsträger*, 2002, pp. 171–83.

¹⁰ A deacon has this responsibility in P.Lond.Copt. 1049, representing the *δίκαιον* of a monastery.

¹¹ See Berkes in the introduction to P.Heid. XI 462. Drew-Bear, *Le Nome Hermopolite*, 1979, p. 275 (cf. BL VIII 327), suggests reading [Τεμεν]κύρ<κ>ε(ως) in SB IV 7369.5 (29.8.–27.9.512), which would thus entail the priest of the church of Hermopolis owning land in Τεμενκυρκίς. Even though the text is from the sixth century, this would provide an interesting parallel.

¹² This idea was suggested by Gesa Schenke.

letter and the use of biblical vocabulary. He could perhaps be a deacon, as he is subordinate to Keronte but superior to at least one other official.¹³ P.Lond.Copt. 1049.2 attests a deacon referring to himself as $\pi\epsilon\lambda\alpha\chi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$, the same epithet used by Besarion in the address.¹⁴

4. EDITION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

4.1 Transcription

Recto:

- ↓ [+]
 [+] $\xi\alpha\theta\eta\ \mu\epsilon\bar{n}\ \bar{n}\zeta\omega\chi\ \bar{n}\bar{i}\bar{m}\ \tau\iota\alpha\varsigma\pi\alpha\zeta\epsilon\ \bar{n}[\tau\epsilon\tau\bar{n}\epsilon\bar{m}]\bar{n}\tau\bar{m}\epsilon\rho\iota\tau\ \bar{n}[\omega\tau\ \pi\bar{n}\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon]\ \bar{n}\epsilon[\tau]\varsigma\omicron\omicron\omicron\gamma\bar{n}\ \bar{n}\omicron\gamma\zeta\omega\chi\ \bar{n}\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\ \pi\bar{n}\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\ \alpha\bar{n}\ \bar{n}\epsilon\ [\pi\alpha\iota\ \pi\epsilon\bar{n}]\tau\alpha\gamma\alpha\alpha\chi\ \bar{n}\alpha\bar{i}\ \alpha\iota\tau\iota\ \tau\omega\bar{n}\ [ca. 7]\ \bar{\zeta}[\bar{n}]\ \pi\alpha\zeta\eta\tau\ \bar{n}\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\theta\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma\ \alpha\bar{i}\tau\bar{n}\omicron\omicron\omicron\gamma\ \pi\alpha\rho\omega\bar{m}[\epsilon\ \epsilon\bar{v}\omicron\lambda]\ \dots\ \bar{n}\tau\alpha\rho\kappa\kappa\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \epsilon\bar{v}\omicron\lambda\ \bar{n}\bar{b}\eta\bar{n}\tau\bar{i}[\varsigma\ \bar{n}\alpha\iota\ ca. 4]\ \chi\epsilon\ [\pi]\alpha\kappa\alpha\rho\omicron\varsigma\ \bar{n}\eta\chi\ \epsilon\bar{v}\omicron\lambda\ \bar{\zeta}\iota\ \varsigma\omega\omega\epsilon\ \alpha\gamma[\omega\ \alpha\bar{n}]\omicron\kappa\ \omicron\gamma\alpha\tau\alpha\eta\mu\omicron\varsigma\bar{i}\omicron\varsigma\ \alpha\bar{n}\ \alpha\pi\alpha\kappa\lambda\eta\rho\iota\kappa[\omicron\varsigma\ \epsilon\iota]\$
- 5 $\bar{n}\tau[\alpha]\beta\tau\alpha\mu\omicron\ \bar{n}\bar{m}\omicron\iota\ \chi\epsilon\ \alpha\tau\bar{n}\epsilon\tau\iota\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma\ \bar{n}\alpha\bar{i}\ \chi\epsilon\ \psi\alpha\bar{i}\tau\bar{r}\epsilon\gamma\eta\bar{n}\tau\varsigma\ \bar{n}\eta\tau\bar{n}\ \bar{n}\bar{\pi}\omicron\omicron\upsilon\gamma\ \epsilon\tau\epsilon\ \psi\alpha\bar{v}\alpha\tau\omicron\bar{n}\ \bar{n}\epsilon\ \bar{n}\bar{\pi}\omicron\gamma\alpha\bar{n}\iota\chi\epsilon\ \bar{n}\eta\bar{n}\tau\varsigma\ \bar{n}\alpha\bar{i}\ \pi\bar{n}\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\ \pi\epsilon\tau\omicron\ \bar{n}\bar{m}\bar{n}\tau\bar{r}\epsilon\ \epsilon\tau\alpha\psi\eta\chi\eta\ \chi\epsilon\ \alpha\iota\tau\iota\ \bar{v}\tau\omicron\omicron\gamma\ \bar{n}\bar{\zeta}\omicron\lambda\omicron\kappa(\omicron)\bar{\iota}\tau\bar{\iota}(\tau\iota\bar{n}\omicron\varsigma)\ \bar{\zeta}\alpha\rho\omicron\varsigma\ \bar{n}\bar{\zeta}\omicron\gamma\bar{n}\ \epsilon\tau\chi\iota\bar{n}\iota\lambda\alpha\ \epsilon\rho\epsilon\ \bar{\zeta}\bar{n}\kappa\alpha\iota\rho\omega\bar{m}\epsilon\ \bar{n}\bar{\pi}\iota\varsigma\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \bar{n}\bar{m}\alpha\gamma\ \pi\lambda\eta\bar{n}\ \tau\iota\kappa\omega\rho\omega\ \bar{n}\bar{m}\omega\tau\bar{n}\ \tau\bar{n}\omicron\omicron\gamma\ \pi\alpha\tau\chi\bar{n}\gamma\ \bar{n}\alpha\bar{i}\ \bar{m}\omicron\bar{n}\ \epsilon\omega\omega\pi\epsilon\ \epsilon\gamma\alpha\bar{m}\alpha\bar{\zeta}\epsilon\ \epsilon\chi\bar{n}\ \pi\alpha\tau\chi\bar{n}\gamma\ \epsilon\tau\chi\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\pi\rho\alpha\gamma\mu\alpha\ \bar{v}\alpha\varsigma.\ \pi\bar{n}\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\ \pi\epsilon\bar{v}\omicron\ \bar{n}\bar{m}\bar{n}\tau\bar{r}\epsilon\ \epsilon\tau\alpha\psi\eta\chi\eta\ \chi\epsilon\ \bar{m}\iota\tau\iota\ \pi\lambda\eta\bar{n}\ \epsilon\rho\omega\alpha\bar{n}\pi\alpha\rho\omega\bar{m}\epsilon\ \epsilon\iota\ \bar{n}\alpha\iota\ \bar{n}\bar{n}\alpha\tau\langle\iota\rangle\ \pi\alpha\tau\chi\bar{\iota}\bar{n}\gamma\bar{\iota}$
- 10 $\pi\bar{n}\chi\omicron\epsilon\bar{i}\varsigma\ \bar{n}\bar{i}\omega\tau\ \pi\epsilon\pi\iota\varsigma\kappa\omicron\pi\omicron\varsigma\ \bar{n}\alpha\varsigma\omega\tau\bar{m}\ \alpha\gamma\omega\ \epsilon\bar{v}\omega\alpha\bar{n}\kappa\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\ \bar{n}\alpha\iota\ \omicron\bar{n}\ \chi\epsilon\ \tau\alpha\mu\omicron\ \tau\epsilon\bar{\zeta}\omicron\gamma\varsigma\iota\alpha\ \tau\alpha\tau\alpha\bar{m}\omicron\varsigma\ \alpha\gamma\omega\ \chi\epsilon\ \bar{n}\bar{n}\epsilon\tau\bar{n}\epsilon\omega\ \bar{\varsigma}\omicron\gamma\ \pi\lambda\alpha\langle\bar{n}\alpha\rangle\ \bar{n}\bar{\pi}\alpha\tau\chi\bar{n}\gamma\ \bar{n}\tau\epsilon\pi\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\pi\tau\omicron\mu\alpha\ \tau\alpha\bar{\zeta}\omicron\varsigma\ \bar{m}\omicron\bar{n}\ \varsigma\epsilon\epsilon\tau\ \omicron\gamma\chi\alpha\bar{i}\ \bar{\zeta}\bar{n}\ \pi\chi\omicron\epsilon\bar{i}\varsigma\ +$

Verso:

[+ $\tau\alpha\alpha\varsigma\ \bar{n}]\pi\alpha\bar{i}\omega\tau\ \epsilon\tau\omicron\gamma\alpha\alpha[\bar{v}\ loc. sig. \alpha\pi]\alpha\ \kappa\epsilon\rho\omicron\bar{n}\tau\epsilon\ \pi\alpha\rho\chi\eta\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\bar{n}(\omicron\varsigma)\ +\ \bar{\zeta}\iota\tau\bar{n}\ \bar{b}\eta\varsigma\alpha\rho\iota\omega\bar{n}\ \pi\epsilon\iota\epsilon\lambda(\alpha\chi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma)\ \bar{n}\bar{\pi}\tau\bar{i}\bar{m}\epsilon\bar{\varsigma}\omega\rho[\varsigma]\ +$

¹³ For the hierarchy of ecclesiastical officials, see Schmelz, *Kirchliche Amtsträger*, 2002, p. 37.

¹⁴ See also CPR IV 41.1: $\alpha\bar{n}\omicron\kappa\ \pi\alpha\gamma\lambda\epsilon\ \pi\epsilon\lambda\alpha\chi\langle\iota\varsigma\rangle\tau(\omicron\varsigma)\ \bar{n}\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\bar{n}.$

1 ἀσπάζεσθαι || 2 κατά || 3 ἐλεύθερος || 4 καρπός, δημόσιος || 5 λόγος || 6 ἀνέχειν, ψυχή, ὀλοκόττινος | ρολοκ^ρ pap. || 7 l. ἡνέκρωμε | πιστός, πλήν || 8 l. πατβνη, κεπραγμα | πράγμα || 9 ψυχή, πλήν | l. πατβνη || 10 ἐπίσκοπος, κελεύειν || 11 ἐξουσία, πλανᾶν | l. πατβνη | παράπτωμα || 13 παρχηδιακο^ν pap. | ἀρχιδιάκονος || 14 πειε^λ pap. | ἐλάχιστος

4.2 Translation

Recto: |¹ First of all, I greet your fatherly belovedness. It is God |² who knows that what has been done to me is an ungodly thing. I debated ... |³ in my guilt-free heart. I have sent my agent out ... so that he may return it and bring it to me ... |⁴ since my crop is lying thrown out on the field and I am not exempt from taxes. My cleric came, |⁵ who informed me that you have given me a guarantee that I shall let it be brought to you. Today, which is Saturday, |⁶ they did not agree to bring it to me. God is my witness that I have paid four *holokottinoi* |⁷ for it in Senilais, where there are other trustworthy men. At any rate, I entreat you to |⁸ send me my animal. For if my animal should be confiscated because of another thing, |⁹ God is my witness that I cannot pay. At any rate, if my agent comes to me, I shall not hand over my animal. |¹⁰ Our fatherly lord, the bishop, will hear about it and if he orders me again, saying: “Inform |¹¹ the authority!”, I will inform it. So, you shall be unable to continue cheating with my animal, and no transgression shall obtain it. |¹² It is pregnant indeed. Farewell in the Lord!

Verso: Give this (letter) to my holy father, Apa Keronte, the *archidiakonos*. From Besarion, this most humble one of Temenkyrkis.

4.3 Commentary

1. 1 [+]: Given the large space before the following letters, supplementing [P] also seems possible.

ⲛ[ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲉⲙ]ⲛⲧⲙⲉⲣⲓⲧ: See e.g. Delattre et al., *JCoptStud* 20 (2018), p. 7, ll. 1–2: ⲛⲧⲟϥⲙⲛⲧⲙⲉⲣⲓⲧ ⲛⲉⲱⲛⲉ ⲙⲛ ⲡⲁϭ[ⲟⲉⲓⲥ] ⲛⲥⲟⲛ ⲡⲕϥⲣ(ⲓⲟⲥ) and P.Brux.Bawit 41.5:]ⲧⲉⲕⲙⲛⲧⲙⲉⲣⲓⲧ ⲛⲁⲟⲩⲟⲧ(ⲁⲧⲟⲥ).

11. 1–2 ⲛⲓ[ⲱⲧ ⲡⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ] | ⲡⲉ[ⲧ]ⲥⲟⲟϥⲛ: Compare the similar expressions in ll. 6 and 9. Following this supplementation, a new sentence would begin after ⲓⲱⲧ.

See also the parallels O.Frange 213.12–13: ⲡⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲟⲟϥⲛ and O.Frange 768.28: ⲡⲕⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲟⲟϥⲛ. The variant ⲡⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ ⲥⲟⲟϥⲛ is more commonly attested in the corpus of Frange.

1. 2 ⲛⲟϥⲩⲱⲥ ⲛⲕⲁⲧⲁ ⲡⲛⲟϥⲧⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲡⲉ: For the syntax, see O.Frange 331.1: ⲟϥⲩⲱⲟϥ.

ΔΝ ΠΕ ΠΡΩΜΕ and P.KRU 104.46: ΟΥΔΙΚΑΙΟΝ ΔΝ ΠΕ.

The phrase ΚΑΤΑ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ occurs several times in Coptic, see O.Frange 14.11–12: ΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ ΚΑ|ΤΑ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΚΟCΜΟC, O.Frange 327.7–8: ΠΑ|ΝΟC ΝCΟΝ ΠΕ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ, and P.KRU 75.77–78: ΝΝΔΕΙΟΤΕ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΝΟΥ|ΤΕ. The phrase is also attested in Greek papyri, see e.g. P.Berl.Sarisch 16.6: κατὰ θεὸν μνησθαί (l. μνήσαι) μου and P.Cair.Masp. I 67078.7: ὧν τὴν [αἴτ]ησιν κατὰ Θεὸν οὐκ ἡῦρον ἀπειπεῖν. The Greek version seems to be semantically closer to the clause in question. This use of the phrase may go back to St. Paul, who uses κατὰ θεόν (Romans 8,27; 2 Corinthians 7,9.10.11) to describe actions or events influenced by God's will. We thank Lajos Berkes for his help in analysing this as well as other phrases.

ΔΙΤΙ ΤΩΝ [ca. 7]: The lacuna could be supplemented as follows: ΔΙΤΙ ΤΩΝ [ΔΕ ΝΜΜΔΙ] (“I, however, debated with myself”). Cf. for the use of † ΤΩΝ with ΜΝ-Crum, *Dictionary*, 1929, s.v.

l. 3 ΔΙΤΝΟΟΥ ΠΑΡΩΜ[Ε ΕΒΟΛ] . . . ΝΤΑΡΚΤΟC ΕΒΟΛ ΝΒΗΝΤ[Ε ΝΔΙ ca. 4]: We expect a dative with ΝΔ= after the first lacuna. ΝΗΤΝ would fit syntactically, as the scribe regularly addresses Keronte with the second person plural, but it remains difficult to interpret the traces. An alternative reading could be ΔΙΤΝΟΟΥ ΠΑΡΩΜ[Ε ΕΒΟΛ] ΝΔΚ ΤΑΡΚΤΟC, as the curved stroke attached to the crossbar of the first τ in ΤΑΡΚΤΟC recalls the combination of κτ within this word. However, there is no instance of Besarion referring to Keronte with the second person singular.

l. 4 ΑΠΑΚΛΗΡΙΚ[ΟC ΕΙ]: This cleric seems to be identical with the agent mentioned in l. 3. The title suggests that he was probably a member of the lesser clergy, cf. Schmelz, *Kirchliche Amtsträger*, 2002, pp. 33–40. The clergy can also act as a separate entity, see the letter of the clergy of the episcopal church of Hermopolis published by Schmelz, in Bernhard Palme (ed.), *Akten des 23. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses*, 2007, pp. 648–50.

l. 5 ΝΤ[Α]ΒΤΑΜΟ: Both horizontal and vertical strokes of the presumed τ are visible, forming a characteristic angle. Next to the τ, below the rupture, there is a spot of ink which could belong to the ν, taking into account that the fibres were probably torn apart. Gesa Schenke suggested the alternative reading ΝΠΕΒΤΑΜΟ.

l. 6 ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΕΤΟ ΝΜΝΤΡΕ ΕΤΑΨΗΧΗ: This phrase occurs again in l. 9, although differing grammatically: ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΕΒΟ ΝΜΝΤΡΕ. T. Sebastian Richter drew our attention to this parallel expression that illustrates the synonymous meaning of the cleft sentence.

This witness formula has Greek parallels, see P.Gen. I (2nd edition) 14.9:

μ[ά]ρτυς μου ὁ Θεός and SB XVI 12474.2: μαρτυρῶν τῇ ἐμῇ ψυχῇ. The expression could be an allusion to *Romans* 1,9.

l. 7 ΤΙΚΩΡΩ Ν̄ΜΩΤΝ: The use of this verb is characteristic of Hermopolite texts, see Richter, *Rechtssemantik*, 2008², p. 211.

l. 8 ΕΩΘΠΕ ΕΥΑΜΑΖΕ ΕΧΝ ΠΑΤΗΝΥ ΕΤΗΕ ΚΑΙΠΡΑΓΜΑ: This phrase may suggest that the animal acted as some sort of collateral or deposit. In ΚΑΙΠΡΑΓΜΑ, we are dealing with an itacistic misspelling of the particle κε, see also ΖΝΚΑΙΡΩΜΕ (l. 7).

l. 9 ΝΝΑΤ(Ι)ΠΑΤΗ`ΝΥ´: Gesa Schenke pointed this reading out to us. An alternative could be to take ΑΤΠΑΤΗ`ΝΥ´ as an adjective introduced by a reduplicated ν, but forming an adjective with ΑΤ- and a noun preceded by a possessive prefix is irregular. Compare, however, MPER V 42.12: ΝΑΤΠΕΚΒΙΟΥΣ (l. ΧΘΕΙΣ).

l. 11 ΝΝΕΤΝΕΩ ΒΟΥ ΠΛΑ(ΝΑ) Ν̄ΠΑΤΗΝΗΥ Ν̄ΤΕΠΠΑΡΑΠΤΟΜΑ ΤΑΖΟΣ: We owe the reading ΒΟΥ ΠΛΑ(ΝΑ) to Gesa Schenke, interpreting ΒΟΥ as a variant of ΒΩ.

ΠΑΡΑΠΤΩΜΑ frequently occurs in the Sahidic version of the OT and Pauline as well as pseudo-Pauline letters, cf. e.g. Ezekiel 14,13 and Galatians 6,1.

ll. 13–15 [+ΤΑΔΣ Ν]ΠΑΪΩΤΕΤΟΥΔΔ[Β loc.sig. ΔΠ]Δ ΚΕΡΟΝΤΕ ΠΑΡΧΗΔΙΑΚΟΝ(ΟΣ) + ΖΙΤΝ̄ | ΒΗΣΑΡΙΩΝ ΠΕΙΕΛ(ΑΧΙΣΤΟΣ) Ν̄ΠΤΙΜΕΩΡ[Ω] | †: For the ΔΡΧΗΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΣ, see Schmelz, *Kirchliche Amtsträger*, 2002, p. 37. Besarion (TM Nam 9008) is a rare name, but the person cannot be identified with any known eponymous individual.

For the toponym ΤΙΜΕΩΡ[Ω], see Drew-Bear, *Le Nome Hermopolite*, 1979, pp. 275–77. We interpreted the traces of ink below this word as a cross.

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A COPTIC-GREEK LETTER RECONSIDERED (P. TURIN PROV. 8578)

Naomi Yigal

Inv. No.: Prov. 8578

Other Number: A 6

TPOP Obj ID: 695

Dimensions: H 7.2 cm x W 24.5 cm

Date: ca. sixth century

1. DESCRIPTION

Papyrus Turin Prov. 8578 is a light-brown papyrus document. The text is written on a rectangular sheet and includes a six-line letter on the recto (including the cross on top) and a one-line address on the verso.

The left and bottom edges of the document are intact. Notably, the right side of the papyrus is incomplete, with two large lacunae in the central area. It is estimated that the original dimensions were 7.2 x 30 cm. On the missing content, a loss of about 6–7 cm can be inferred. The centrally placed cross within the letter also suggests that only a few centimetres are missing.

The recto [Fig. 1] contains six lines written in Coptic using dark brown ink. The handwriting varies in density: the beginning of the letter is more lightly written, while the writing becomes denser towards the end. The fourth line is significantly more difficult to read, possibly due to greater damage from the letter having been folded along this line. The verso [Fig. 2] contains the address written in Greek.

The author addresses the recipient directly, urging prompt action and requesting a meeting. The letter closes with greetings and a farewell, marked by the common phrase “be safe by God”¹ and a concluding cross. In the fifth line the author asks the recipient to allow Zekiel, another individual, to bring the money.

¹ Choat, in Tovar and Monferrer-Sala, *Cultures in Contact*, 2013, p. 89.

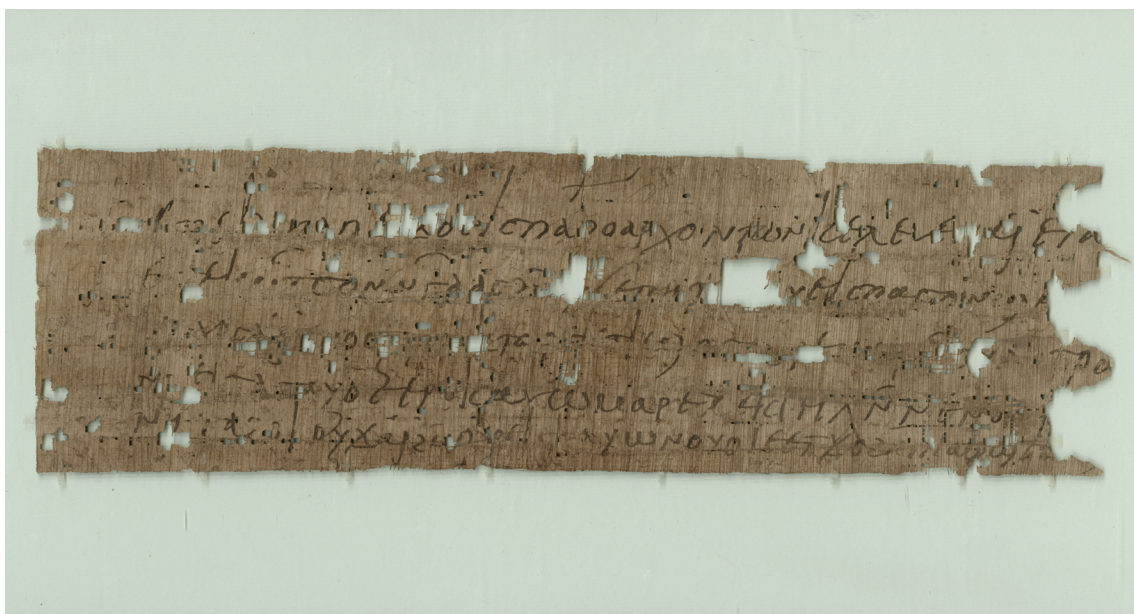


Fig. 1 Provv. 8578 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio.

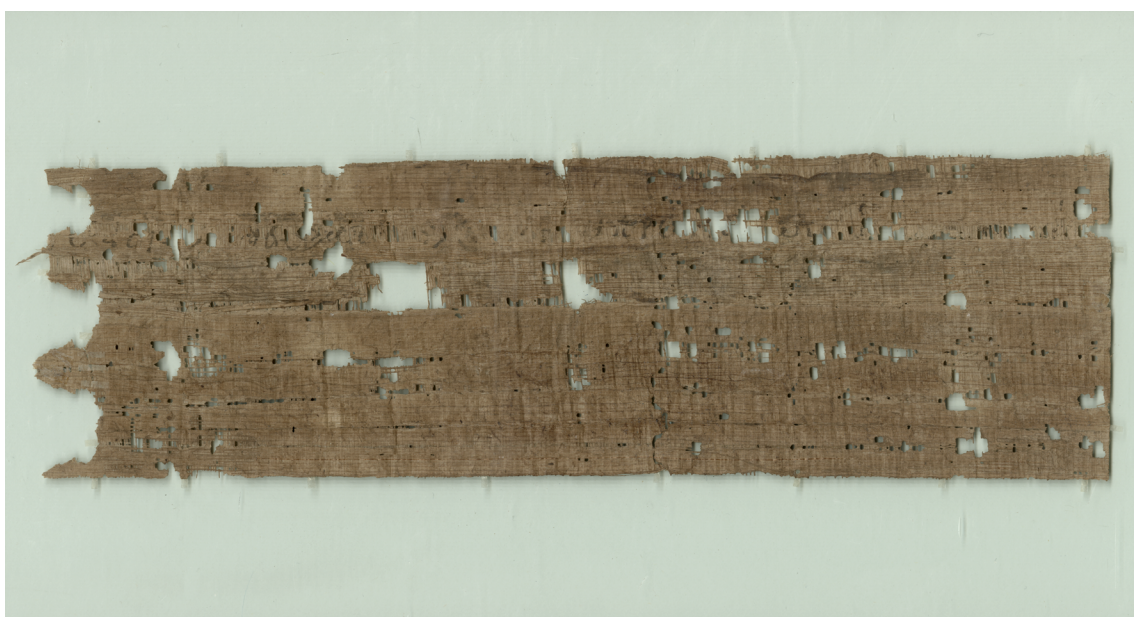


Fig. 2 Provv. 8578 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio.

The handwriting is skilled and follows a bilinear style, incorporating both uncials and connected letters. Ligatures are present throughout, particularly the tendency to join the letter ε to the following character. Additionally, the letter γ appears in two forms: a standard form and one with a curly ending. The omission of the curly variant may be due to space constraints, as observed in the last line at the bottom of the papyrus. Furthermore, the letters κ and ι are especially bold and clearly distinguishable.

The language of the letter is Sahidic Coptic, with some notable peculiarities. For instance, ⲙⲧⲥⲠⲚ is used instead of the more common ⲙⲛⲧⲥⲠⲚ, and ⲁⲓⲧⲛⲟⲟϣⲛ appears with only one ⲛ. An interesting linguistic feature is the use of the Greek letter υ in the borrowed verb κελεγε.

Both the content and the script suggest a later dating, possibly the sixth century. The document likely originates from Middle Egypt, as indicated by the absence of the particle ⲛ in ⲙⲛⲧⲥⲠⲚ and the single ⲛ in ⲁⲓⲧⲛⲟⲟϣⲛ.²

2. EDITION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

2.1 Transcription

†

† εⲓⲡⲉⲓⲁⲛ ⲁⲓⲉⲛⲭⲟⲓⲥ ⲡⲁⲡⲟⲁⲣϣⲟⲛⲧⲱⲛ ⲕⲉⲗⲉⲕⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲁ[
 ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲙⲧⲥⲠⲚ ⲛⲧⲁⲁⲥ ϩ̅ⲛ [ⲟ]γⲉⲉⲡⲛ ⲧ[ⲉⲛⲟ]γ ⲉⲓⲥ ⲡⲁⲥⲟⲛ ⲟⲩⲉ[ⲛⲟγⲧⲉ ⲡⲥγⲙ-]
 [ⲛ]ⲁⲭⲟⲥ ⲁⲓⲧⲛⲟⲟϣⲛ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲧⲁⲣⲉⲕⲧⲓ ⲟⲩⲓⲧⲱⲣⲉ ⲙⲥⲣ.ⲉ.λ..ⲧⲣⲁ[
 ⲛⲓⲉⲓ ⲧⲁⲧⲁγⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ⲁγⲱ ⲙⲁⲣⲉⲗⲉⲕⲓⲛⲗ ⲛ̅ ⲛⲉⲛⲟγⲃ [

5 ⲛⲓⲧⲁⲗⲟⲓ ⲟγⲭⲁⲓ ϩ̅ⲛ ⲡⲭⲟⲓⲥ † ⲁγⲱ ⲛⲟγⲟⲓⲉ ⲉⲧⲭⲟ ϩ̅ⲛ ⲡⲁⲥⲟⲩⲱⲉ ⲁ[

2.2 Translation

Recto: |¹ “Since our lord the *apoarchontōn* ordered me [...] your brotherhood and make it quickly, now. Behold, my brother Shen[oute, the |² messen]ger, |³ I sent him to you, and you will give me guaranty [...] |⁴ I send it to you and may Zekiel bring the money [...] |⁵ and join me. Be safe by God. And the peasants who sow in my field (?) [...]”

Verso: . . . ἀδελφ(ῶ) . . . locus sigilli πρ.[.].[ca.2]ω.[ca.2].[ca.3].[ca.2]..

² Information kindly provided by Anne Boud'hors.

2.3 Commentary

The letter commences with the opening *ἐπεὶ δὲ*,³ borrowed from Greek. The writer refers to its superior using an intriguing term, *ἀποαρχοντων*. While *αρχων*, meaning ruler, nobleman or provincial governor, is a well-known title in Coptic,⁴ here we encounter a higher degree of this title, meaning ‘the former archon’ with the addition of the Greek preposition *ἀπό*. It is the first attestation of this title in Coptic; however, there are Greek parallels for this term.⁵

The initial portion of the sentence reveals the latter half of the word *συμμαχος*, meaning “messenger”. This omission raises the possibility that Shenoute, who is referred to earlier as “my brother”, may be the writer’s biological sibling, a fellow monk, or simply an expression of closeness. However, the writer includes a postscript, adding another sentence concerning the peasants in the messenger’s field.

³ Biedenkopf-Ziehner, *Untersuchungen*, 1983, p. 215.

⁴ → <https://coptic-dictionary.org/entry.cgi?tla=C8486> (last access: 12/06/2025).

⁵ → [https://papyri.info/search?STRING=\(%22απο+αρχο](https://papyri.info/search?STRING=(%22απο+αρχο) (last access: 12/06/2025).

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A LETTER CONTAINING A REQUEST FOR INTERCESSION (P. TURIN PROV. 8583)

Ahmed Nakshara, Philipp Scharfenberger

Inv. No.: Prov. 8583

Other Number(s): P.N. 212

TPOP Obj ID: 697

Dimensions: H 18.7 cm x W 47.5 cm

Date: seventh/eighth century

The two papyrus fragments, catalogued under inventory number Prov. 8583, represent the left and right parts of the same letter. The fragments can be directly joined, revealing the upper, lower, and left text margins, as well as part of the right margin. The recto [Fig. 1] contains eleven lines of text, while the verso [Fig. 2] features a single line. However, due to abrasions, holes in the papyrus, and a lacuna between the fragments, some of the text is lost. The text was written *transversa charta* in black ink on light brown papyrus. A *kollesis* of circa 2 cm is visible below the upper margin.

The letter was written by a trained hand in a bilinear script, slightly sloping to the right with a few irregularly used ligatures. Single supralinear strokes appear above the initial \aleph , the φ -Suffix (l. 9), the Mu of the negation $\neg\tau\mu$ (l. 6), the Tau of $\epsilon\tau\lambda\iota\tau\varphi$ (l. 10), the prenominal ρ - (l. 10), and the Nu in $\mu\eta$ (l. 8), while $\mu\eta$ in $\mu\eta\eta\epsilon\omega\epsilon$ (l. 2) is marked with a combining supralinear stroke. Only in lines 3 and 6 is a middle dot used (both times after $\aleph\lambda$ “mercy”). Sometimes, the Iota receives a *trema*. The Upsilon is the v-shaped Greek minuscule Upsilon. Alpha appears in two forms: as a three-stroke alpha with a pointed belly, or as a two-stroke alpha with an open belly. The Mu is the four-stroke Coptic Mu. The scribe consistently left even spacing between lines. Of the eleven lines, lines 5 to 7 are especially difficult to read due to the nearly faded ink. The verso contains traces of the address. An unknown person (possibly named John) wrote this letter to a certain Abba Theodoros. The latter is being asked for prayers on behalf of the

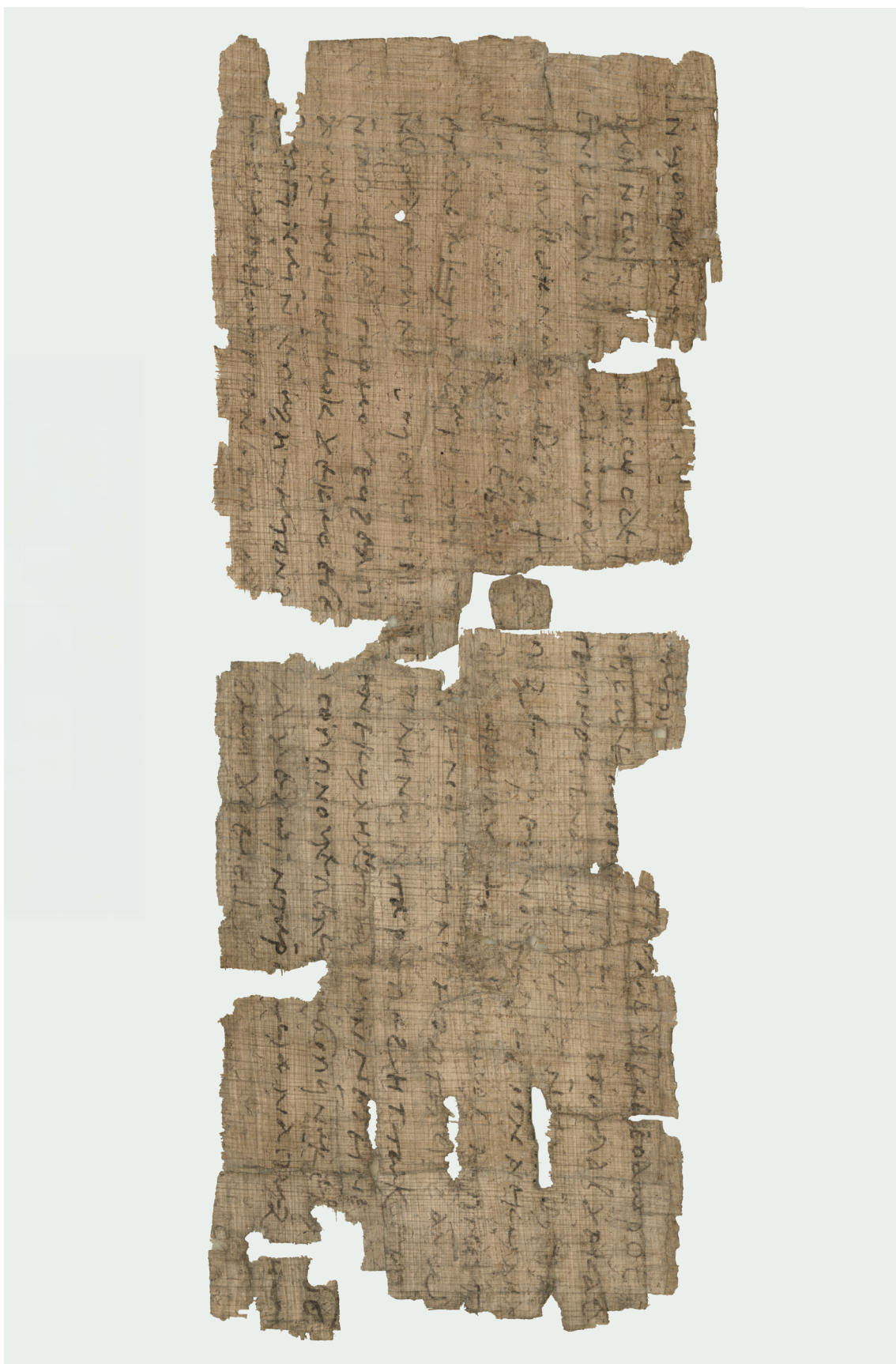


Fig. 1 Provv. 8583 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio (digital reconstruction by Susanne Töpfer).

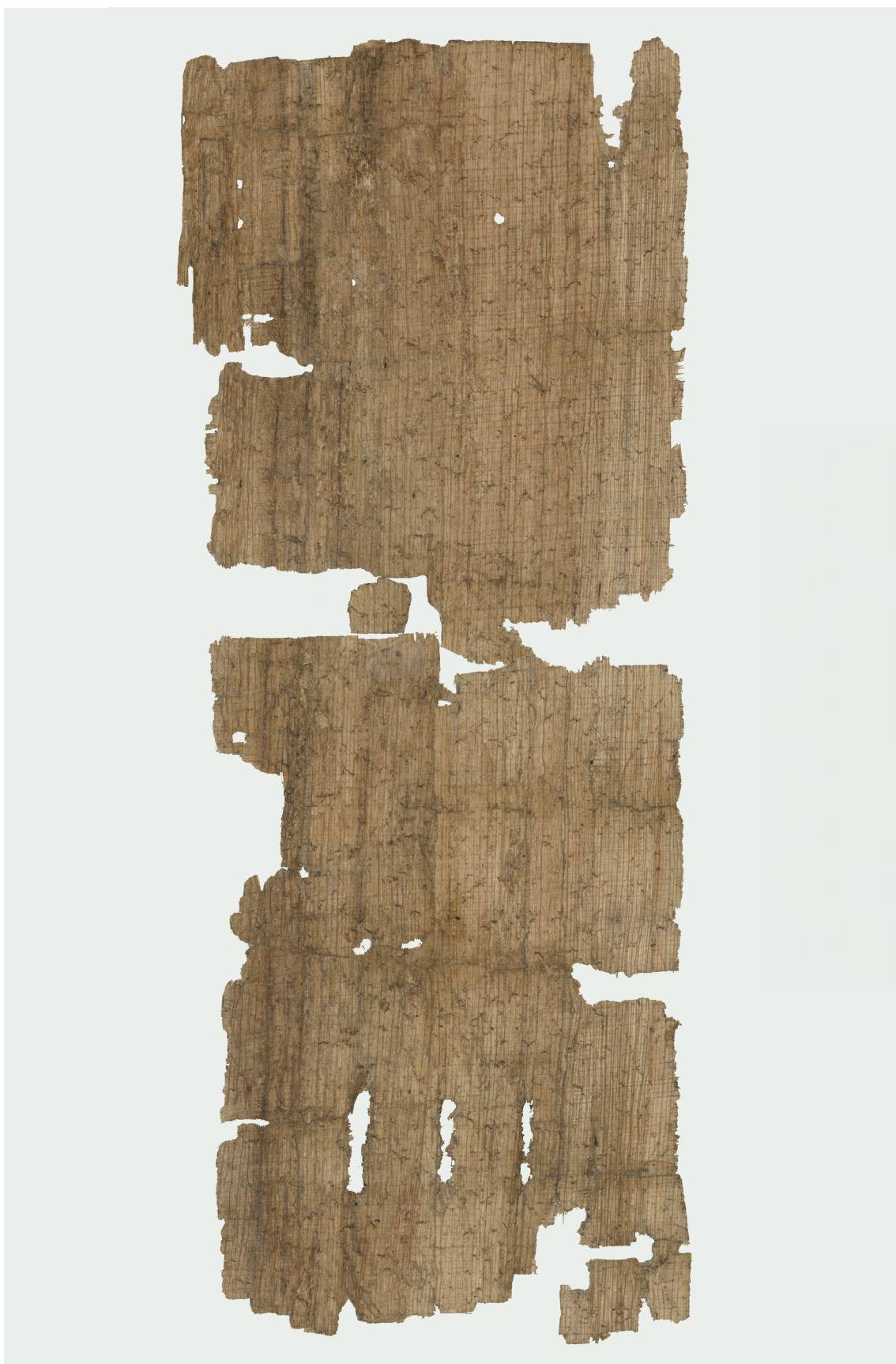


Fig. 2 Provv. 8583 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio (digital reconstruction by Susanne Töpfer).

sender and for a written reply to ease the sender's heart, which had been saddened by the death of his father. It is mentioned that the father himself used to receive letters from Abba Theodoros, in whose prayers he placed his trust. This letter is, therefore, part of a larger correspondence involving at least two members of the sender's family and Abba Theodoros. It also serves as a significant example of intercessory practices in the Theban region.¹

TRANSCRIPTION

Recto:

- ↓ + ἡ̅ω̅ο̅ρ̅η̅ μ̅ε̅ν̅ ν̅2[ω]β̅ ν̅[ι]μ̅ †ω̅[ι]ν̅[ε̅ ε̅]πα̅με̅ρι̅τ̅ [ν̅ε̅ι̅ω̅τ̅] ε̅το̅υ̅α̅α̅β̅ α̅β̅β̅α̅
 θε̅ο̅δ̅ω̅ρ̅ο̅ς̅
 μ̅η̅ν̅ς̅ω̅ς̅ <Δ̅ε̅> †το̅λ̅μ̅[α̅ {μ̅}η̅ν̅ς̅ω̅ς̅ Δ̅ε̅} †[πα̅]ρα̅κα̅λει̅ ν̅τε̅κ̅μ̅η̅ται̅[ω]τ̅
 ε̅το̅υ̅α̅α̅β̅ χ̅ε̅κ̅α̅ς̅
 ε̅νε̅κ̅ω̅λη̅ ε̅το̅υ̅α̅α̅β̅ ν̅α̅τ̅α̅2ο̅[ι̅ ν̅]τε̅π̅νο̅υ̅τε̅ ν̅α̅· ν̅αι̅ ἡ̅β̅ε̅ς̅ο̅π̅
 ἡ̅τε̅ρ̅α̅π̅ε̅ι̅ρα̅ς̅μ̅[ο̅ς̅]
 τη̅ρο̅υ̅ β̅ω̅κ̅ ν̅α̅γ̅ 2ι̅χ̅ω̅ †2ε̅..πι̅ζε̅ γ̅α̅ρ̅ ε̅π̅νο̅υ̅τε̅ χ̅ε̅ 2ι̅τ̅ν̅ νε̅κ̅ω̅λη̅
 5 ε̅το̅υ̅α̅β̅ ν̅αι̅ ς̅ε̅ν̅α̅β̅ω̅κ̅ ε̅β̅ο̅λ̅ 2[ν̅ τ̅α̅]α̅ν̅α̅κ̅η̅ α̅γ̅[ω] †πα̅[ρα̅κα̅λει̅] μ̅μ̅ο̅κ̅
 μ̅π̅νο̅υ̅τε̅
 ε̅τ̅μ̅λο̅ ε̅κ̅ω̅λη̅ 2α̅ρο̅ϊ̅ ω̅αν̅τ̅[ε̅π̅νο̅υ̅]τε̅ ν̅α̅· ν̅αι̅ ἡ̅β̅ε̅ς̅ο̅π̅ τε̅ α̅γ̅ω̅
 ἡ̅β̅ρ̅ τα̅γα̅π̅η̅ ν̅ε̅[ς̅]2α̅ϊ̅ ο̅υ̅κ̅ο̅υ̅ί̅ ἡ̅[ε̅π̅ι̅]ς̅το̅λη̅ ν̅αι̅ ν̅τα̅ρε̅πα̅2η̅τ̅ τ̅ω̅κ̅ ε̅ρ̅ο̅[ι̅]
 ἡ̅τα̅πα̅ει̅ω̅τ̅ γ̅α̅ρ̅ μ̅ο̅υ̅ ε̅42ε̅λ̅π̅ι̅[2]ε̅ ε̅νε̅κ̅ω̅λη̅ {ἡ̅ν̅} ε̅το̅υ̅α̅β̅ μ̅η̅ νε̅τε̅ι̅νε̅
 μ̅[μ̅ο̅ο̅υ̅]
 α̅γ̅ω̅ †τα̅ρ̅κο̅ μ̅μ̅ο̅κ̅ χ̅ε̅κ̅α̅ς̅ ε̅6ε̅[ς̅]η̅ς̅ο̅π̅ π̅νο̅υ̅τε̅ πε̅τε̅ρ̅η̅α̅6ο̅<λ̅>π̅ῃ̅ ν̅α̅κ̅
 ε̅β̅[ο̅]λ̅ [ε̅]6ε̅-
 10 [ς̅]2α̅ϊ̅τ̅ῃ̅ ν̅αι̅ ἡ̅τε̅ρ̅α̅2η̅τ̅ μ̅το̅ν̅ α̅[γ̅ω] ω̅λη̅ ε̅χ̅ω̅ί̅ ν̅τα̅ρ̅ μ̅η̅ω̅α̅ ν̅α̅ς̅πα̅2ε̅ μ̅η̅-
 ω̅ο̅ει̅ω̅ ἡ̅νε̅κο̅υ̅ρ̅η̅τε̅ ἡ̅β̅ε̅ς̅ο̅π̅ ο̅υ̅[χ̅αι̅] 2μ̅ π̅χ̅ο̅ε̅ι̅ς̅ +

Verso:

- [τα̅α̅ς̅ μ̅πα̅ει̅ω̅τ̅ ε̅το̅υ̅α̅]α̅β̅ [α̅β̅β̅α̅ θε̅ο̅δ̅ω̅ρ̅ο̅ς̅] 2ι̅τ̅ν̅ ε̅ι̅ω̅(2α̅ν̅ν̅η̅ς̅?)

¹ On which see Piwowarczyk, *Monastic Microtheologies*, 2022, pp. 129–49. We are very grateful to all our supervisors who provided support during the Summer School. In particular, we would like to thank Gesa Schenke, Esther Garel, and Frederic Krueger for their precious advice even after the Summer School.

1 μέν; ἀββα || 2 τολμάω; δέ; παρακαλέω || 3 ἰ. ἐρενεκαωλη; πειρασμός || 4 ἐλπίζω; γάρ || 5 ἀνάγκη; παρακαλέω || 7 ἀγάπη; ἐπιστολή || 8 γάρ; ἐλπίζω || 9 σοφῃ παρ. || 10 ἀσπάζομαι || 12 ἀββα

TRANSLATION

Recto: |¹ + Before everything, I greet my beloved holy [father] Abba Theodoros. |² Thereafter, I am bold and I beseech your holy paternity |³ that your holy prayers may reach [me], so that God will have mercy on me again and all my afflictions |⁴ will disappear from me. For I trust in God that through your holy prayers |⁵ these will disappear from my distress. I [beseech] you by God |⁶ not to cease praying on my behalf until God has mercy on me again ..., and |⁷ that you might be so kind as to write a small letter to me, so that my heart will be strengthened, |⁸ because my father has died believing in your holy prayers and those like [them]. |⁹ And I adjure you that you might pray to God and that whatever he will reveal to you, you shall |¹⁰ write to me, and my heart will be at ease. [Also] pray for me that I might become worthy to kiss the dust |¹¹ from under your feet again. Be [well] in the Lord. +

Verso: |¹² [Hand it to my holy father Abba Theodoros] from John[?].

COMMENTARY

1. 2 ΜΝΝΩC <ΔΕ> †ΤΟΛΜ[Δ {Μ}ΜΝΝΩC ΔΕ} †[ΠΑ]ΡΑΚΑΛΕΙ: In the introductory formulae of Coptic letters, ΤΟΛΜΑ regularly functions as an auxiliary verb (“dare/be so bold *to do s.th.”) which never appears independently (cf. O.Crum 397,3: ΕΥΤΟΛΜΑ ΕΥC2ΔΙ; O.Crum 397,9: [ΔΙ]ΤΟΛΜΑ ΔΙC2ΔΙ; P.MoscowCopt. 61,1–2: †ΤΩΛΜΕ ΟΝ †C2ΔΙ). It also appears in this function as part of an administrative epistolary formula typical of Middle Egypt (ΠΕΤΝΑΔΑΥΟΝ ΝΝ ΠΕΥΤΟΛΜΑ ΕΥC2ΔΙ ΜΠΕΥΧΟΕΙC [and variations]; cf. Delattre, *APF* 51/1 [2005]). In light of this conventional usage of ΤΟΛΜΑ, the repetition of ΜΝΝΩC ΔΕ should be interpreted as a scribal error.

1. 3 ἄλλωC: κ was regularly replaced by σ when the suffix pronoun of the second person singular was attached to a verbal prefix and in κε (“another”). This

feature is very common in texts from the Theban region (cf. Kahle, *Bala'izah*, 1954, p. 97). ΝΑΠΕΙΡΑϢΜ[ΟC] : The sender's statement that he is suffering from the death of his father (ll. 7–8) indicates that ΠΕΙΡΑϢΜΟC does not refer to any physical ailments, but to emotional affliction. Such a usage of ΠΕΙΡΑϢΜΟC is well documented. For instance, Piwowarczyk observed regarding the letters from the Topos of Epiphanius containing requests for prayers: “Trials (ΠΕΙΡΑϢΜΟC) and afflictions (ΘΑΙΨΙC) recurrent in the correspondence from the Topos of Epiphanius should be understood not as physical threats or illness, but rather as demonic temptations. The latter might be corroborated by the saying in which affliction is said to be of demonic origin” (Piwowarczyk, *Monastic Microtheologies*, 2022, p. 136).

1.4 †ZE..NIZE : Undoubtedly, this passage must be interpreted as an orthographic variant of †ZEΛNIZE . However, it appears that following the Epsilon, there are traces of two letters, the faint remnants of which cannot be clearly identified or assigned to specific characters. Possible readings considered include †ZEΛΛNIZE , †ZEΛENIZE , or †ZEEEΛNIZE . If the third character were a Lambda, it would have been written in an inverted way, with the long diagonal stroke ascending from left to right, rather than from right to left.

1.8 Ν'ΕΤΟΥΑΒ : The scribe's correction is grammatically difficult to explain. If he intended to create a genitive construction, he would have had to use ΝΤΕ before the newly formed substantivized relative clause. One would need to emend the text to $\text{ΝΕΚΩΛΗΛ <ΝΤΕ> Ν'ΕΤΟΥΑΒ ΜΝ ΝΕΤΕΙΝΕ Μ[ΜΟΟΥ]}$ and interpret the emendation as an objective genitive: “your prayers to the saints and those like them”. But who could possibly be meant by “those like them”? Saints are, by definition, a group set apart by their very distinction from others. Moreover, the genitive construction ΩΛΗΛ ΝΝΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ appears regularly in letters as a possessive construction (“prayers of the saints”) rather than as an objective genitive – as in the blessing formula used by Frangé: $\text{ΠΑΧΟΕΙC IC ΠΕΧC ΜΝ ΝΕΩΛΗΛ ΝΝΕΤΟΥΑΑΒ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΕΥΝΑCΜΟΥ ΕΡΟ=}$ (cf. O.Frange 66, 4–7; 83, 8–10; 127, 6–9). The possessive article ΝΕΚ- before ΩΛΗΛ rules out such a construction in the present case. One must also ask: why assume that the ancient correction itself requires further correction through the insertion of yet another preposition, rather than simply acknowledging it as a scribal error (as we do)? It is conceivable that the scribe was misled into inserting the Ν before ΕΤΟΥΑΒ after having written the substantivized relative clause ΝΕΤΕΙΝΕ shortly thereafter on the same line. “Those like” the holy prayers could refer to other sacred rituals the sender imagined Theodoros

to practice, but which he could not – or did not wish to – specify. Ultimately, the sender of this letter is asking for the holy prayers of Theodoros himself (cf. l. 3 and ll. 4–5), not for Theodoros to pray to the saints.

l. 9 ΠΕΤΕΥΝΑΒΟ<λ>ΠΗ ΝΑΚ ΕΒΟΛ: ὥπε “seize, take” is not attested with ΕΒΟΛ. ΠΕΤΕΥ/ΠΕΤΕΡΕΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΝΑΒΟΛΠΗ ΝΑΚ ΕΒΟΛ is a well attested phrase expressing the supplicant’s hope that God will grant him a relief-providing revelation through the intercession (cf. P.Mon.Epiph 162, 17–19). Hence the emendation.

ll. 10–11 Ἀσπάζε μῆψοειῶ νεκοῦρητε: This greeting formula is well known from Coptic letters. The described act of worshipping the dust under the recipient’s feet can also be expressed with other verbs such as προσκύνει (cf. Biedenkopf-Ziehner, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Briefformular*, 1983, pp. 94, 100). Many of the known instances of this formula come from the Theban region (cf. O.Frange 252, 7–8: ὡπῶτασε νῶσοειῶ ννεκοῦρητ ετοῦγλαβ; O.Crum 93v, 11–12: προσκύνει) μῆψαδειῶ ννεοῦρετε ετοῦγλαβ; P.Mon.Epiph. 244, 5–6: προσκύνει μῆψοειῶ ννεκοῦρητε). In consideration of the linguistic features (σ for κ), it can therefore be assumed for the time being that the present text originates from the Theban region. The formula was well enough known to appear even in literary texts: it can be found in a letter to the monks of Scetis attributed to the emperor Zeno in the *Life of Hilaria*: †ἀσπάζε μῆψοειῶ ννοῦρητε ντετνμντηετοῦγλαβ (Amélineau, *PSBA* 10 [1888]), p. 196, ll. 15–16). Everything that was touched by holy men was considered worthy of reverence, as it was believed that the healing powers of the holy person’s blessing were conferred on what they touched (cf. Piwowarczyk, *Monastic Microtheologies*, 2022, pp. 184–85). This also included the sand on which the holy men walked: for instance, in the Bohairic version of the *Encomium on Pesynthios of Koptos* the dust on which he walks is considered a relic possessing healing abilities (ⲁⲓⲱⲗⲓ ⲙⲡⲓⲱⲱ ⲉⲧⲏⲁ ⲧⲉⲩⲫⲁⲧ ⲛⲟῦⲛⲁⲙ ⲁⲓⲧⲁⲗⲟⲩ ⲉⲭⲉⲛ ⲧⲁⲗⲫⲉ ⲟὔⲟⲛ ⲛⲉⲙⲟⲧ ⲙⲫⲧ̅ ⲱⲛⲡ ⲁⲓⲁⲥⲓⲁⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲏⲉⲛ ⲡⲁⲱⲱⲛⲓ “I gathered the sand that has been under his right foot, placed it on my head, and, thanks to the grace of God, I was relieved from my disease” [our translation; text from Amélineau, *MIE/2* [1889], p. 348, ll. 1–3]). According to this story, a woman with dropsy and a boy that could neither walk nor speak were also healed by the same sand (cf. Amélineau, *MIE/2* [1889], pp. 346–49).

l. 12 ἑοδωρος: The reconstruction of the name is based on its spelling in l. 1; ⲛⲓⲧⲛ ...] ⲉⲓⲱ. ⲉⲓⲱ. is perhaps an abbreviated form of the name ⲉⲓⲱⲁⲛⲛⲏⲥ.

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LETTER MENTIONING AN *AMĪR* (P. TURIN T.GR. 40 RECTO)

Leia Jiménez Torres, Thomas Laver*

Inv. No.: T.Gr. 40 recto

TPOP Obj ID: 483844

Dimensions: H 17.4 cm x W 32.9 cm

Date: seventh/eighth century

The recto of this document appears to be a letter involving an *amīr* and a monastery, possibly in connection to a tax matter [Fig. 1]. From what can be made out, it appears that this letter relates to some dispute regarding *dēmosion*, which involves an *amīr*, an Arab official or title whose role was not clearly defined in the Umayyad period, but likely sat at the level of the Christian *dux*, immediately underneath the governor.¹ Mention is also made of the pagarchy and a monastery (twice), both of which are probably also involved in this matter. Given that the letter states “the monastery is yours” (l. 13), it seems likely that the letter is addressed to a monastic superior, or to some other administrator with financial or fiscal responsibility for that institution.² Of linguistic interest are the uses of some uncommon Greek words, particularly *τουτέστιν*,³ *βακλίζω* (“to hit with a stick”), and *περισσός*, which may imply a degree of bilingualism. The addressee is likely legally trained, given the epithet “your wisdom” used for him: this may therefore be a *scholastikos* or other official involved in the collection or assessment of tax. The scribe makes frequent use of the plural of politeness throughout, suggesting a formal setting for this letter.

On the verso of this document is written a Greek tax-account. The verso of this document is published in this same volume (→ Torres and Laver).

* Our sincere thanks to both Lajos Berkes and Anne Boud'hors for their help deciphering this difficult text.

¹ See particularly Morelli, in Casanova et al. (eds.), *E sì d'amici pieno*, 2016.

² For a detailed study of the involvement of monasteries in the fiscal administration in the early Islamic period, see Palombo, “Christian Clergy’s Islamic Local Government”, 2020.

³ Very rare in Coptic papyri, but P.Bal. 160 provides one example.

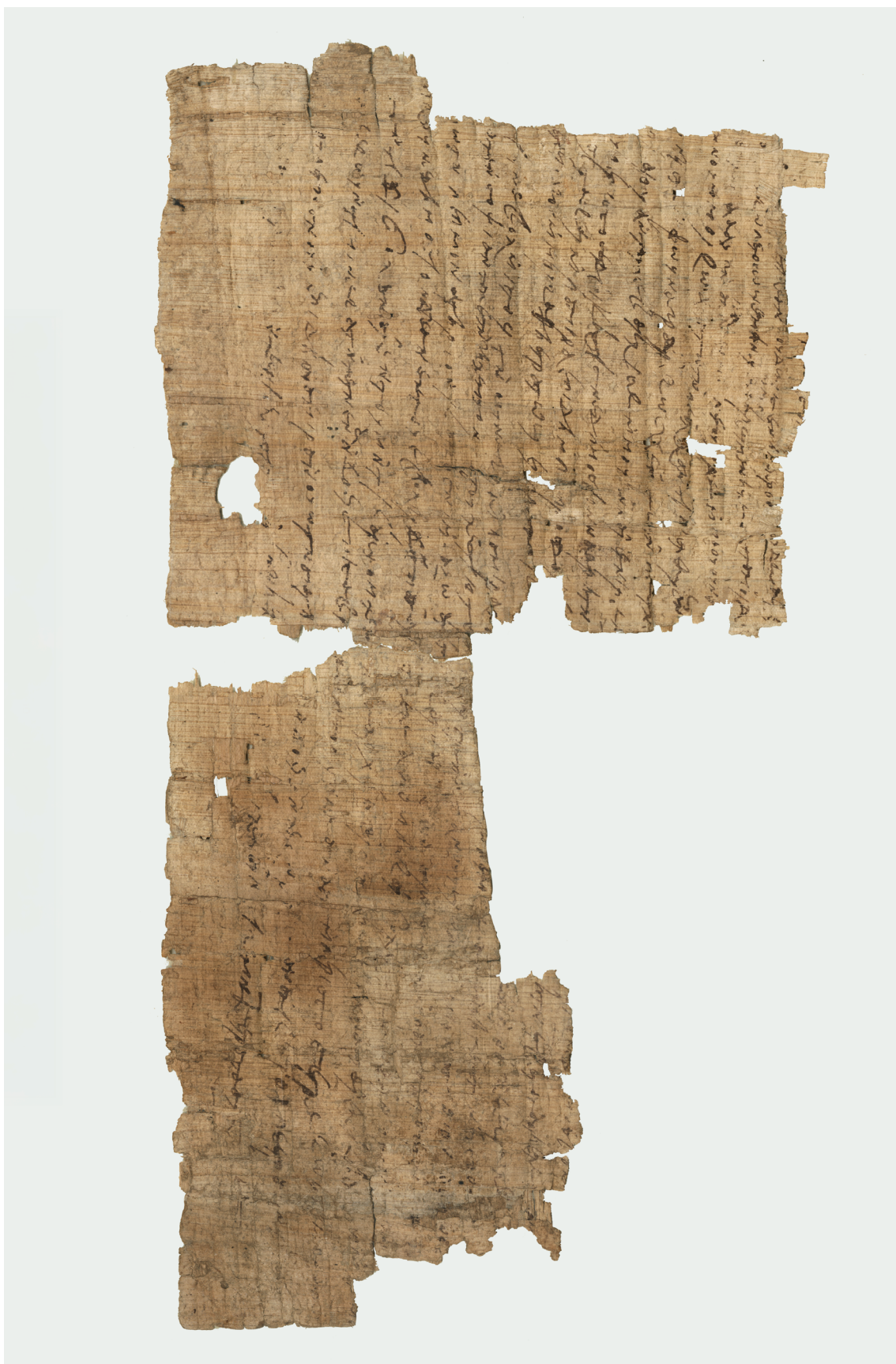


Fig. 1 T.Gr. 40 recto. Scan by Museo Egizio (digital reconstruction by Susanne Töpfer).

1. DESCRIPTION

Two joined fragments of a rectangular, light-brown papyrus sheet written *transversa charta*, preserving the final twelve lines of text, and the first half of an additional six lines. The papyrus is highly abraded and difficult to read at points, with the text on the right-hand side being especially challenging. Most of the left and bottom margins of the document are preserved, measuring 2.9 cm and 2 cm respectively. On the right-hand side, the document seems to have been cut before being reused, as the cut at the end of l. 15 suggests. There are large lacunae between the extant sections of ll. 7–10 across the two fragments, and a medium sized lacuna on l. 11. The text is written in brown ink, suggesting a vegetal pigment.

Palaeography: The scribe writes in a cursive slanted quadrilinear hand, using a number of ligatures (ⲉⲧ: e.g. ⲡⲉⲧⲟϣⲱⲩ, l. 3; ⲉⲓ: e.g. ⲭⲟⲉⲓⲥ, l. 16; and ⲉⲣ: e.g. ⲡⲉⲣⲓϥϥⲟⲥ, l. 8), and at least one abbreviation: ⲉⲛⲗ(ⲟⲩⲟⲧⲏⲥ), l. 16. Supralineal strokes are written with a dot above the letter. Documents that serve as palaeographic parallels for the hand include P.Bru.x.Bawit 39 (seventh/eighth centuries) and SBKopt. V 2319 (eighth century).⁴ The Greek account on the verso has an eighth or late seventh century hand, which provides an approximate *terminus ante quem* for the drafting of the Coptic letter.

Linguistic Features: The use of -ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲉ- to indicate the 2nd person plural (ll. 7 and 13) is a distinctive dialectal feature that is suggestive of a Middle Egyptian (likely Hermopolite) provenance. Otherwise, we also observe a substitution of ϣ in place of ⲃ in the word ⲩⲱⲃ (ll. 6 and 14) and the use of ⲉⲛⲧ as *status pronominalis* of ⲉⲓⲛⲉ (ll. 14 and 15).

⁴ For *ed. princ.* of SBKopt. V 2319 (P.Sorb. Inv. 2606) see Albarrán Martínez, *ZPE* 195 (2015), pp. 202–04, with a discussion and sample of its palaeography in Boud'hors, in Davies and Laboury (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptian Epigraphy and Palaeography*, 2020, p. 629.

2. EDITION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

2.1 Transcription

- . [±8] ϸ . . [---]
 (traces ±5).τιζε αν.ουδε micε nh . ει εροο[γ] ουδε νακ τ . . [---]
 [±2]α . . . ζω πετογωω εμ[ε]ηνογε \ μμοι / μαρεμενηγε . αυταμοι χε
 [---]
 [±2]οζ . . λααγ ζη απα \ . . α / . ηη . νετογ[ο]γρεζ μηοογ ουν ετ[---]
 5 [±2].νογ μμοι ζω χε ντωτῆ πε αλλα . τι πετεωαν\ει/[---]
 [±2] . ηζι ω . . φωγ ναζραϊ ζωσ χε ντωτῆ πετν . [---]
 [±2] πω.αι ογα ντετῆεβακκισε μμογ ζη παῖ ετνιρε η[±30–35] . . [---]
 [±2]γ. περιςςος ετδιοικησις νεδημοσιον ναζηρητν [±20–25] . . ε η . χ [±
 2] μ . ε . . η . [±3/4] . [±5]
 [±2] . . ταςζαι μπαμια επιδη μη[.]προσδοξε[ι ±20–25 η]ητν ετβε
 ταγα.ῖη ετετνε[---]
 10 [±2] ετ . ει ταζοι μμοι ζαθη ετρατωω ειτη . . οι . [±20–25] . . ωζ . . ει ατ .
 . εω . . . [---]
 [±2] . ι . η εβολ μητοω τῆοογ νεςζαι μπαμια η . [±10–15] ι . ηετμ . εζ .
 α . . λη κεντ . ηετσοογῆ [---]
 [±2] ητετῆσοφια ητεπετῆζητ εμτον vac. τογτεστιη τε . [±2] χ . . ογτια
 ηετῆανογῆ ωωπε [μ (?) π]μοναστηριον . ογ . . ε . [---]
 [±2] ηωτν πε πμοναστηριον καιρος ηιμ . αυω ατετῆ[ε]ςζαι ηαι . η εωαι
 αυω . ω πα τε ετῆ . . . ζ . . [---]
 ηζωγ νεδημοσιον χε ανεντογ εβολ ζιχ\η/ τπαγαρ[χια] τ . εν . αυω
 μηιςζαι εολ επει η ζ [---]
 15 . . . \γ/ ητιχι εολ αν αῖεντογ μη τκαιωομτε η . παγαρχεια . ι ηα .
 αῖ επειδη α . . . ζη . . μο[---]
 . . . εζωγ ητιμινε ζατη τετνενα(οζοτης) ηχοεις η . σαβι[±3 ca.] χε . .
 ητο . [.]η . οη . αηατ . μηριςςος ετρε ζωβ ηιμ
 . . . οτ νετνςνογῆ επιδη ογαμια ηογωτ ηαι ετη[±3 ca.] . ηχοεις ητετν
 αναγκη εροι πε ετρα\γ/ . η . . []
 (Traces ±15) ητε . . κ . . αῖ . [. . .] . . ηζηη . [±3] τενογ ητιζε μη θ\ε/
 ετραςζατη †
 Vac. †

2 οὐδέ || 3 μηνύω || 4 οὔτω, οὖν || 5 ἀλλά || 6 φῶς, ὥς || 7 βακλίζειν, εἶρε || 8 περισσός, διοίκησις, δημόσιον || 9 ἐπειδή, προσδοκεῖν || 12 σοφία, τουτέστιν, μοναστήριον || 13 μοναστήριον, καιρός || 14 ζωῶ, δημόσιον, παγαρχία, ἐπεὶ || 15 παγαρχία, ἐπειδή || 16 ζωῶ, ΝΤΕΙΜΙΝΕ; ἐνδοξότης, περισσός || 17 ἐπειδή, ἀνάγκη

2.2 Translation

¹ [...] ... [² [...] in this way ... neither offspring ... come to them, nor to you (sg.) the [...] |³ [...] ... the one who wishes to inform me, let him inform me. They told me that [...] |⁴ [...] ... anyone in Apa X. Therefore, the ones who they set free today [...] |⁵ [...] ... me myself, that it is yours, but ... give the thing which we usually ... [...] |⁶ [...] ... the matter before me, so that you (pl.) ... [...] |⁷ [...] ... one, and you (pl.) beat him in this matter, which we made [...] ... [...] |⁸ [...] superfluous to the administration (*dioikēsis*) of tax (*dēmosion*) in your presence [...] ... [...] ... [...] ... [...] |⁹ [...] ... and I write to the *amīr*, since [X] did not trust [...] to you, because the ... which you (pl.) [...] |¹⁰ [...] ...it is assigned to me, before I examine... [...] ... [...] |¹¹ [...] ... from the region. Send the writings to the *amīr* [...] those who know [...] |¹² [...] your wisdom, and your heart is at ease. That is to say, the [...] The good thing exists [in (?) the] monastery ... [...] |¹³ the monastery is yours, always. And you wrote to me ... and ... [...] |¹⁴ the matter of tax (*dēmosion*) that we brought from the pagarchy ... and I do not write lies ... since ... [...] |¹⁵ ... I do not lie. I brought it with the other three [...] pagarchy ... since ... in [...] |¹⁶ ... to a matter of this manner, from your most glorious lordship ... [...] that ... through him ... superfluous, causing every matter ... |¹⁷... your matter(s) from last year, since only an *amīr*, this one who ... [...] the lords, you (pl.) ... there is a need for me to cause them to ... [...] |¹⁸ ... [...] ... now, thus, there is no way for me to save us. † |¹⁹ Vac. †

2.3 Commentary

l. 2 ΤΙΖΕ: Perhaps ΝΤΙΖΕ “this way/manner”, as in l. 18.

ΑΝ: Probably either a negation (“not in this way”) or a dialectal form of ὄν “again” (“again in this way”).

ΜΙΣΕ: Usually a verb, “to give birth”, but here likely a noun meaning “offspring”. The lack of definite article is paralleled in such repetitive uses of οὐδέ as seen in SBKopt. II 944 (= CPR IV 26).

l. 3 ΕΜ[Ε]ΗΝΟΥΓΕ \ ΜΜΟΙ / ΜΑΡΕΥΜΕΝΗΥΕ Μ[Ε]ΗΝΟΥΓΕ: The first known use of the

Greek verb μὴνύω “to inform/declare” in Coptic documents, although the verb is known from contemporary Greek papyri (e.g. P.Ant. II 96, l. 14; P.Lond. IV 1343, l. 36; P.Lond. IV 1384, ll. 10 and 42). The scribe appears uncertain about the spelling in the first instance, correcting epsilon to eta, and using omicron rather than epsilon.

1. 4 ⲗⲁⲗⲁϣ ⲛⲛ ⲁⲡⲁ \ . . ⲁ / . ⲛⲛ .: The words following ⲗⲁⲗⲁϣ ⲛⲛ are perhaps to be the name of a monastic community named after an “Apa” monk. Resolution of the letters that follow is difficult, but one possible extrapolation might be ⲁⲡⲁ \ ⲁⲛⲁ/ⲛⲛⲓⲁϥ Apa Anannias (or similar), which seems to be an otherwise unknown monastic community. Should the insertion be intended to come before Apa, we might instead suggest \ⲛⲙⲁ/ <ⲛ> ⲁⲡⲁ ..., with the monastic community then described as a ⲙⲁ (lit. “place”), as we have seen at other monastic institutions such as the Bawit monastery. However, it appears most likely that the insertion is intended to come after “Apa”.

ⲛⲉⲧⲟϣ[ⲟ]ϣⲣⲉⲛ: Likely a variant form of ⲟϣⲱⲣⲉ (“to set free” or “to remit to”), discussing individuals possibly recently released from prison. Given the fiscal content of the letter, these may be tax fugitives, or individuals who have not paid their taxes.

1. 5 ⲛⲉⲧⲉⲱⲁⲛⲉⲓ/[...]: Substantivized relative habitual (e.g. O.Frange 780, ll. 9–10; P.KölnÄgypt. II 45, l. 16; P.KRU 68, l. 43; P.KRU 74, l. 58; P.LouvreBawit 43, l. 2), with the verb possibly ⲉⲓ, ⲉⲓⲣⲉ, ⲉⲓⲛⲉ or even ⲉⲧⲉⲟ/ⲉⲓⲧⲉⲟ (l. αἰτέω). None appear more likely than any other.

1. 7 ⲛⲧⲉⲧⲛⲉⲃⲁⲕⲓϥ: The first epsilon is hard to read, appearing at first as a small ink blob between two taus. βακλίζειν is a rare verb in Greek, and this is its first appearance in Coptic papyri, although examples are known from the Greek papyri of this period: CPR XIV 54 (l. 1); CPR XXX 15 (l. 3); P.Cair.Masp. I 67005 (l. 18); P.Herm. 48 (l. 2 ?); SB VI 9616 r° (l. 5). The aorist form has been adopted into Coptic, as is common: e.g. P.Budge (seventh century), ll. 103 and 220 ⲕⲓⲛⲏϥⲁⲓ (aorist infinitive of κινέω). Note that -ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲉ- is a distinctive Middle Egyptian form of the second person plural see Kahle, *Bala’izah*, pp. 163–66.

1. 8 ⲛⲉⲣⲓϥϥⲟϥ: First known instance of περισσός (“superfluous”, “excess” or “more than sufficient”) in Coptic papyri, although the term is well-used in Greek texts of this period: e.g. P.Lond. IV 1343 (AD 709), l. 6 and 1400 (AD 710), l. 16; SB VI 9280 (sixth cent.?), l. 14; Stud.Pal. XX 145 (sixth century), l. 3.

1. 9 ⲙⲛ[.]ⲛⲣⲟϥⲁⲟϥ[ι]: The pronoun is obscured in a lacuna, but is likely to be ϣ.

ταγα. ιη: ταγαηη would be obvious, but the traces do not seem to permit it, with a clear diaeresis over the Iota, and another letter trace that is not Pi.

l. 10 ταροι νμοι: A peculiar duplication of the same object (first person singular) that seems otherwise unparalleled. Perhaps this is used in the same way as ζω to emphasise “me, myself”. The phrase likely connects to the ε- of the following causative.

l. 11 κεντ :: Obscure string, formed of difficult traces. Possibly part is to be attached to the previous letters as ...ληκε ντε νετσοογν (“... of the ones who know”)?

l. 12 ντετνσοφια: The Phi looks much like a Psi, which might have implied ὁψία “observation”, but this is hard to reconcile with the rest of the sentence. This accords with similar uses of “your wisdom” as an honorific in Greek texts such as P.Bingen 129 (l. 8: τῇ σῇ σοφίᾳ), demonstrating an awareness of trends in Greek epistolography, and so a degree of bilingualism for the scribe. σοφώτατος “most wise” is frequently seen in Greek texts as an epithet given to individuals with legal training, particularly *scholastikoi* (e.g. CPR XXV 12 l. 6; CPR XXX 27, l. 3; P.Ant. II 104, l. 1; PSI VIII 894, l. 6; P.Stras. I 40, l. 5) and *topotērētēs* (CPR XXIV 31, l. 6; CPR XXV 35 l. 17), which may imply that the addressee of this document also has a significant degree of legal training. Our thanks to Lajos Berkes for this last note.

χ . . ογτια: Obscure. ἐξουσία might have been suggested here, but such a reconstruction is not permitted by the traces on the papyrus.

l. 14 ανεντοϣ: εντϣ as *status pronominalis* of εινε.

l. 16 τετνενα(οξοτης) νχοεις: A parallel for “your most glorious lordship” is provided among the papers of Papas, pagarch of Edfu, and fits well the present letter’s frequent use of the second personal plural: see P.IFAO Edfou Jarre inv. 1 *ed. princ.* Boud’hors et. al., “Papyrus coptes et grecs de la jarre d’Edfou”, pp. 102–07, with note in p. 106 for an additional parallel in P.IFAO Edfou Jarre inv. 222 (1). The title is ordinarily reserved for pagarchs and *amīrs*. Unfortunately, the letters that follow are difficult to read and cannot be easily understood: while tempting, it would appear highly unlikely that this is to be read as the name Sabinos.

ντο . [.]ϣ: Likely to be reconstructed as a form of ντοοτϣ, either as ντοο[τ]ϣ or ντοτϣ. The latter is a variant of the grammatically correct form that has a number of parallels in the Frange corpus (O.Frange 65, 173, 263, 327, 594, 639,

701, 715), other Theban documents (P.KRU 69 and 122), as well as the earlier Kellis texts (P.Kell. VII 58 and 66). The form NTOY is possibly to be preferred, given the seeming appearance of a descender underneath the fourth letter, which makes it more likely to be a tau than an omicron, even if the gap between the tau and fi implies either a curiously long connective stroke or a lost letter. It would be peculiar, though, for a tau to have such a long descender. There also exists the possibility that we might give NTOY [.] to resolve the descender under the fourth letter, but the difficulty reconstructing what would follow NTOY inclines us against this.

$\Delta\text{N}\Delta\text{C}\text{T}$: A difficult reading, with no obvious resolution, whether interpreting the final letter as tau or gamma. Neither the name Anastasios nor the Greek noun ἀνάστασις seems likely in context.

l. 17 NETNENON : An unusual construction, seemingly not of NOYB “gold” given the sigma, and so more likely a possessive using ENON “last year”. This is an unusual use of ENON , which usually appears as the adverb NENON , but would seem the most natural reconstruction here to make “your last-year things” or “your matter(s) from last year”.

$\text{NETN} \dots$: We would like NETNCOPIA as the pagarch’s title here (as on l. 12), but the context of the sentence does not seem to permit it, even if the traces might have been compatible with such a reading. A conjunctive second person plural is reconstructed instead.

l. 18 $\text{NTI}\epsilon \text{ MN } \Theta\epsilon / \text{ETPACATN}$: ETPACATN is likely best divided $\epsilon\text{-TPA-CATN}$ “to cause me to save us” (i.e. “in this way, there does not exist a way for me to save us”) as part of a closing warning regarding the consequences (past or future) of failure in the matter in question.

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GREEK TAX ACCOUNT (P. TURIN T.GR. 40 VERSO)

Leia Jiménez Torres, Thomas Laver*

Inv. No.: T.Gr. 40 verso

TPOP Obj ID: 483844

Dimensions: H 17.4 cm x W 32.9 cm

Date: seventh/eighth century

This Greek tax account was written on the verso of a Coptic letter, which has probably been sent to a monastery [Fig. 1]. If so, it is likely that the monks themselves are the ones drawing up this tax-register. It records payments of four different taxes by a series of individuals and their intermediaries: the *chrusika demosia* (a term meaning the regular public taxes paid in gold, likely meaning the land-tax here),¹ the *andrismos* (poll-tax),² the *dianomē*,³ and a fourth due (*kai didomenōn* ...). Given the date attached to the entry on line 2 (2nd of Epiphi, i.e. 26th of June), it seems that this is a register of tax-collection rather than tax-assessment, and that the named taxpayers paid all of these taxes at the same time. The register then seems to account for how the sums paid were initially assessed, before giving a total at the end. It is possible that the register sees both individuals and tax units paying their taxes.

Aside from the first column, the structure of the register is largely obscure. One possibility is that the three fiscal dues mentioned in the title of the account correspond to the three columns of payments, which are then totalled in the

* Our particular thanks to Nikolaos Gonis, who was instrumental in resolving especially difficult abbreviations and traces.

¹ Bell, P.Lond IV, 1910, pp. XXV–XXXII.

² For discussion of the levying of the poll-tax in this period in general, see Schmidt, in Nodar and Torallas Tovar (eds.), *Proceedings of the 28th Congress of Papyrology*, 2019.

³ For discussion of *dianomē*, see Mitthof, *Schuldscheine und Quittungen*, 2007, pp. XXIII–XXIV. For examples of other attestations of the term (seventh–eighth centuries), see e.g. P.Lond. IV 1346, 1369, 1413 and O.Camb. 114 (ed. in Gonis, *AfP* (2016), pp. 407–09).

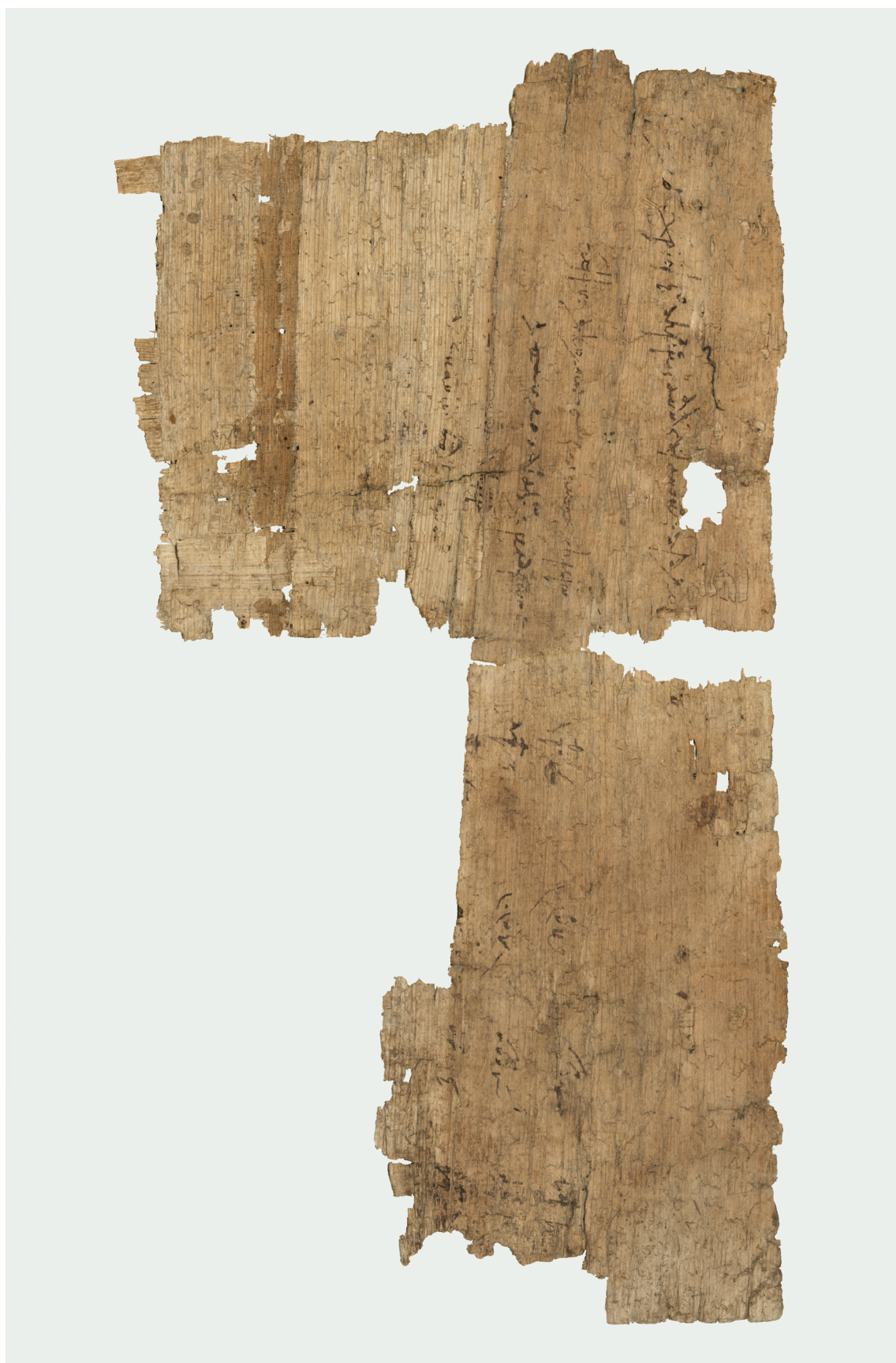


Fig. 1 T.Gr. 40 verso. Scan by Museo Egizio (digital reconstruction by Susanne Töpfer).

final column. However, the calculation for the one line where all numbers are extant (l. 3) adds up to 9.83 solidi rather than the stated total of 10.5.

Given the appearance of the term *onomata* in column 4, we might instead suggest that we are to multiply the amounts in column 3 and column 4, as each tax payment may have been made on the behalf of a number of people (stated in column 4) at a specific but variable tax-rate (specified in column 3). Such an arrangement of individuals paying and being liable for multiple people's worth of tax is known from the Senilais codex, which also shows variable personal tax rates.⁴ We might then interpret l. 3 as showing 3.5 *nomismata* paid per person (column 3), paid by three people (column 4), which does reach the stated total of 10.5 (column 5). However, this does not explain the amounts mentioned in column 2, nor does it account for the appearance of the term *nomismata* between *onomata* and the number in column 4. It also relies upon ignoring the clear fraction mark in column 4 of line 3, which means the calculation would actually be 3.5 by 1/3. As such, this explanation remains difficult.

Explaining the purpose of column 2 is equally difficult. Here, each entry gives amounts *dia arithmion*, which are the “reckoned” solidi, which will then be given their lower “accounting” value in subsequent entries.⁵ Such practices are well-known in Egypt, and are believed to have taken into account any wear or minting variation on the coins themselves, as well as – controversially argued by Jairus Banaji – potentially the differences between local weight standards for gold.⁶ This might suggest that the obscure symbol in column 3 might be interpreted as a symbol for ἔχοντα, a term used to introduce the true “accounting” value of the “reckoned” coins.⁷ However, after this obscure symbol at the start of the third column, the amounts given are then much lower than might be expected for this sort of arrangement: usually such reductions of *arithmia nomismata* to *echonta nomismata* are less than 10%, but the reductions here would be by 60% and 50%

⁴ On the Senilais-Codex, see the discussions of Gasco in Nowak et al. (eds.), *Papyrologische und althistorische Studien*, 2023.

⁵ For such entries, cf. e.g. SB XXVI 16354.3–4 (Herm., ca. 643/644).

⁶ Banaji, *Exploring the Economy*, 2016, pp. 93–104, although with alternate views well-summarised by Bagnall et al., *A Sixth-Century Tax Register from the Hermopolite Nome*, 2011, pp. 30–33. For the Arab period, see Morelli, *CPR* XXII, pp. 147–48 and Morelli, *ZPE* (2014).

⁷ For such uses of *echonta nomismata*, see P.Lond. IV 1412, 1413, 1414, 1442 c and g, 1470; SB XVIII 13771; SB XXII 15764; SPP VIII 821; SPP X 62. Discussion at Banaji, *Exploring the Economy*, 2016, p. 104.

in ll. 2 and 3 respectively (5 to 2 solidi; 7 to 3.5 solidi).⁸ As such, it is difficult both to comprehend the relation of column 2 to the other columns, and to reconstruct the meaning of the symbol that introduces the entries in column 3.

1. DESCRIPTION

The text is written along the fibres. The sheet was turned upside down and seems to have been cut before writing the account (see also the material description of the recto). The upper, left-hand, and right-hand margins are preserved. The ink used appears black, suggesting an iron-gall pigment, in contrast to the vegetal pigment seemingly used on the recto. The lower half of the document is highly abraded, and so it is unclear how many more entries would have originally been included after line 6, if any.

Palaeography: The handwriting is an upright minuscule, probably dating from the eighth century, or the end of the seventh. Similar hands that can be used as palaeographical parallels are P.Monts.Roca IV 73 (seventh/eighth centuries) and P.PalauRib. inv. 448 (seventh/eighth centuries).⁹ The professional handwriting is fast, and presents multiple abbreviations (e.g. λόγ[ος], χρυσικ[ῶν], and δημο[σίων] in l. 1), and ligatures (e.g. Επιφ and Κολουθος in l. 2).

2. EDITION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

2.1 Transcription

Abbreviations used in the transcription:

ἀρ(ι)θ(.) = ἀρ(ι)θ(μίων)/ ἀρ(ί)θ(μια)

νο(.) = νο(μίσματα)

ὄν. = ὄν(όματα)

γί(.) = γί(νεται)

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ For images and *ed. princ.* of P.PalauRib. inv. 448, see Albarrán Martínez and Jiménez Torres, *AfP* 68 (2022), pp. 389–91.

- + λόγ(ος) χρυσικῶ(ν) δημο(σίων) (καὶ) ἀνδ(ρισμῶν) (καὶ) διανομῶ(ν) (καὶ)
 διδο(μένων) . [---] . β vac.
 Επιφ · β: δ(ιὰ) Κολουθις (ὑπὲρ) Ἀββα Παχημῖω δ(ιὰ) ἀρ(ι)θ(ι) ε . . . νο(ι) β
 ὄν(ι) νο(ι) . γί(ι) ἀρ(ι)θ(ι) η
 δ(ιὰ) Παύλου διακῶ(νου) (ὑπὲρ) Μαδρωνε δ(ιὰ) ἀρ(ι)θ(ι) ζ . . . νο(ι) γζ
 ὄν(ι) νο(ι) γ´ γί(ι) ἀρ(ι)θ(ι) ιζ
 ca. 7 δημο(σι-) δ(ιὰ) ἀρ(ι)θ(ι) . ε . . . νο(ι) .
 ὄν(ι) νο(ι) ις γί(ι) ἀρ(ι)θ(ι) . .
 5 δ(ιὰ) Εἰβανίς ἐποδ(ι) (ὑπὲρ) [. .] α . φο .
traces

1 λοῦγρῖσις ὁδημῶ ἀνδρῶς διανομῶ διδοῖ pap. | l. χρυσικῶν || 2–3, 5 δ pap. | γ pap. ||
 2–4 δαρῶ pap. | ζ ζ ν pap. | ον/ν/ν pap. | γ pap. || 2 l. Επειφ || 3 διακῶ pap. | l. διακόνου ||
 4 δημῶ pap. || 5 εβανίς pap. | ἐποδῶ pap.

2.2 Translation

¹ † Account of the *chrusika demosia* and *andrismos* and *dianome*, and what is being given ... ² Epeiph 2. Through Kolouthos, on the behalf of Abba Pachomius: 5 *arithmia*; 2 ... *nomismata* ; X *onomata nomismata*. Total: 8 *arithmia*. ³ Through Paulos the deacon, on behalf of Matrone: 7 *arithmia*; 3.5 ... *nomismata* ; 3 *onomata nomismata*. Total: 10.5 *arithmia*. ⁴ ... *demosion*...: X5 *arithmia*; ... *nomismata*; 16 *onomata nomismata*. Total: X *artihmia* ⁵ Through Ebanis *hypodektes*, on behalf of ... ⁶ ...

2.3 Commentary

1. 1 διανομ(ῶν): For discussion of the διανομή fiscal due, see F. Mitthof, SPP III², pp. XXIII-XXIV.

(καὶ) διδο(μένων): This represents a fourth fiscal due – e.g. “and amounts given for the account of...”. An alternate resolution as δ ἰ(ν)δ(ικτίωνος) is possible, but this would be difficult to reconcile to the preceding (καί).

1. 2 Κολουθις: A new variant of Κολλούθης (→ TM Nam 403) viz. Κολλοῦθος (→ TM NamVar 10678).

Ἀββα Παχημῖω: The Betas appear somewhat different from their usual formations, hence the uncertainty. Παχημῖω is most likely an unattested variant of

the name Pachomius rather than the similar name Pachemis (Παχημις), given the conjugation. This version of the name Pachomius is previously attested in O.Stras. I 573 (Upper Egypt, first century CE).

. . . : This string of symbols appears to be formed of the symbol for half, followed by a middot, followed by another symbol for half. The meaning is obscure, but they are probably best not interpreted as indicating fractions. Instead, it likely represents some description for the *nomismata* in this column: → Introduction.

ὄν(όματα): Our thanks to Nikolaos Gonis for confirming our suspicion regarding this somewhat malformed abbreviation.

1. 3 Μαδρωνε: Probably a Copticized variant of the rare Greek name Matron (→ TM Nam 10553).

1. 4 δημο(σι-): The traces before may suggest (ὕπερ) (ψ pap.), thus (ὕπερ) δημο(σίων) “for public (land) taxes.” Because of the relatively high sums involved, it is possible that this was the payment of taxes by a larger fiscal unit or group paying as a collective, rather than being the payment of a single wealthy individual. The documentation from eighth-century Aphrodito demonstrates that fiscal units within the village were taxed amounts ranging from 5 solidi (Chorion Taurinou in SB I 5649; Chorion Pharou in SB I 5651) to 498 solidi (Chorion Pakaunis in SB I 5644), and thus a total of 31 solidi is entirely in keeping with payments by a fiscal unit rather than individuals. For a summary of the amounts paid by different sub-units in Aphrodito in the year 709/710, see the table at Marthot-Santaniello in Blanke and Cromwell (eds.), *Monastic Economies in Egypt and Palestine*, 2023, p. 91. This would also explain the higher number of *onomata*, if we have correctly interpreted the symbol, in column 4.

1. 5 Εβαγης: This appears to be the first attestation of this name, if correctly read. The resemblance to the names Ebonh (the second head of the White Monastery federation) and Eboneh (a Theban *oikonomos* known from the Coptic text O.Crum 44) might suggest that this is not only a correct reading, but also the first attestation of the Greek version of a Coptic name. Our thanks to Frederic Krueger for this suggestion.

ἐποδ(): The reading is unclear due to abrasion: there may be another superscript letter before the Delta. We expect a patronymic or a title. One could consider ἐποδ(έκτης) instead of ὑποδέκτης, but this would be an unusual phonetic interchange in a Greek document otherwise mostly written in a standard orthography.

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