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The Coptic Letters in the Museum Gustavianum

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THREE COPTIC LETTERS
IN THE MUSEUM GUSTAVIANUM*

IN THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE, we present three Coptic ostraca from the Egyptian collection in the Museum Gustavianum, Uppsala, which encompasses the former Victoriamuseet för egyptiska fornsaker (Victoria Museum of Egyptian Antiquities).

The bulk of the collection of Egyptian ostraca was obtained in the 1880s by Karl Piehl (1853–1904), professor of Egyptology at Uppsala University, during his travels to Egypt.[1] Additional pieces were acquired in the following decade, but unfortunately there are no preserved records stating which ostraca belong to which lot.[2] Today, the museum keeps a total of nearly 1,300 ostraca (mainly Demotic, Greek, and Coptic) of which 221 have been identified in a recent inventory as being Coptic. Many of the museum's Demotic pieces have already been edited.[3] In contrast, however,

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[1] M. L. BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, London 2012 (4th ed.), p. 432.

[2] See T. HICKEY, 'Ostraca Upsaliensia (part I)', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 56 (2010), p. 258, n. 1; *O. Taxes* II, pp. 304–6.

[3] E.g. *O. Wångstedt*.

only a limited amount of the Greek documents has been made available[4] and even fewer of the Coptic ones.[5] The two latter groups are currently under study.[6] Similarly to most Demotic and Greek materials,[7] most of the Coptic texts seem to come from the Thebaid, which is supported by internal criteria.

1. Letter from Elias to Samuel

O. Uppsala VM 1085   9 × 10.5 cm   Early 7th cent.
Limestone   Thebaid

This ostracon is one of the few texts in the collection which certainly did not belong to the lot that was donated to the museum by Piehl. On the reverse side of the limestone flake there is a tiny label with a pencil inscription reading: 'A. Akmar'. The handwriting can also be identified as belonging to the Swedish Egyptologist Ernst Andersson Akmar (1877–1957).[8] It may be assumed that he was the previous owner of the ostracon and donated the piece to the museum, possibly during his tenure as its custodian following Piehl's death. Unfortunately, there are no records for how and when he would have obtained the ostracon. In the lower left cor-

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[4] *SB* I 1922–1932, 2133, and 2137; *O. Ups.* I 1–16 (HICKEY, 'Ostraca Upsaliensia [part I]' [cit. n. 2], pp. 258–273).

[5] O. Uppsala VM 683 (R. HOLTHOER, 'The career of Apa Plein, son of Dios', [in:] L. LIMME & J. STRYBOL [eds.], *Aegyptus museis rediviva. Miscellanea in honorem Hermanni de Meulenaere*, Brussels 1993, pp. 103–107); O. Uppsala VM 1087 (A. DELATTRE, 'Un nouveau témoin des listes d'apôtres apocryphes en copte', *Orientalia* 79 [2010], pp. 74–79); *O. Worp* 62; *SB Kopt.* III 1318.

[6] Our project 'Digital archive for Coptic ostraca in Sweden' is financed by Riksbankens jubileumsfond for three years.

[7] Some of the Demotic and Greek ostraca have other provenances, such as Elephantine (e.g. *SB* I 1922–1932) or Gebelein (e.g. *O. Wångstedt* 35–36 and 41–42).

[8] BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who* (cit. n. 1), p. 10.

ner of the reverse, a faint pencil annotation reading '1418' can be observed. The meaning of this number is unknown.
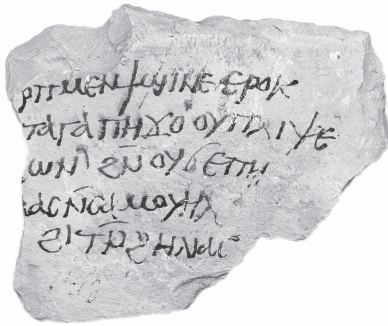
The limestone ostracon is a short note written by a certain Elias to another person called Samuel regarding the delivery of an unspecified amount of some commodity. Its nature is not mentioned, however. The letter presumably relates to a previously agreed matter between the two parties, and therefore there was no need of further detail, which would explain the brevity of the note.

The hand is clear and the text is written in uncial script. The scribe wrote most letters rather tightly together with a few exceptions. The hand leans markedly to the right. With the exception of †, descenders are short. The left corner of the horizontal bar in ⲧ has a characteristic small up- and rightward hook.

Nothing conclusive can be said about the environment in which the text was composed, since the sender and the addressee cannot be identified with certainty, but it is clear that the letter was written in a monastic environment. The writing of this piece shows a similarity to the one found in, for instance, *O. Crum* 100–102, 121, 227, and 343 (cf. *O. Crum*, pp. 59–60), and *SB Kopt.* IV 1701–1704, 1708, 1712 (= *O. Theb. Ifao* 11–14, 18, and 21), and 2111 (= *O. Theb. Ifao* 10). In several of these texts, a certain Elias appears as the sender of the document. It is therefore tempting to identify our Elias with the same individual. The sender in the previously published texts is in all instances provided with the epithet ⲉⲗⲁⲭⲓⲥⲧⲟⲥ (ἐλάχιστος), 'the most humble (priest)', which could indicate that he was a member of a monastic community. It is thus possible that our Elias is none other than Elias, son of Samuel, who succeeded Epiphanius as the abbot of the so-called Monastery of Epiphanius.[9] Note, however, that the letters were not drafted by him personally since he was not able to write.[10]

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[9] Cf. W. Till, *Datierung und Prosopographie der koptischen Urkunden* [= *Sonderschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 240/1], Vienna 1955, pp. 79–80; Florence Calament, 'Varia Coptica Thebaica', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 104 (2004), pp. 39 and 47, n. 18.

[10] Till, *Prosopographie* (cit. n. 9), p. 80.

Obverse (→)

[ⲭ̅ ϣⲟ]ⲣⲡ ⲙⲉⲛ ϯϣⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ
[ⲁⲣⲓ]ⲧⲁⲅⲁⲡⲏ ⲭⲟⲟⲩ ⲡⲗⲓϯⲉ
[ⲉ]ⲭⲱⲛ̀ ϩⲛ̅ ⲟⲩϭⲉⲡⲏ ∴
4   [ⲧ]ⲁⲁⲥ ⲛ̅ⲥⲁⲙⲟⲩⲏⲗ
ϩⲓⲧⲛ̅ ϩⲏⲗⲓⲁⲥ

1. μέν ‖ 2. ἀγάπη

[† *First*] *I greet you.* [*Be so*] *kind (and) send the piece* [*to*] *us quickly. Give it* (sc. the letter) *to Samuel. From Elias.*

1. A staurogram at the beginning of the text is expected in letters circulating in a monastic community, and this also applies to shorter messages (e.g. *O. Medin. Habu Copt.* 26, l. 1; 147, l. 1), as also seen from Elias' other letters (cf. above). See Anneliese Biedenkopf-Ziehner, *Untersuchungen zum koptischen Briefformular* [= *Koptische Studien* 1], Würzburg 1983, pp. 84–91, for the salutation formula.

2. For the reconstruction, see Biedenkopf-Ziehner, *Briefformular* (cit. above), pp. 34 and 216. The formula is common in various requests, including those for deliveries (e.g. *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* II 33 rev., l. 1; 43, ll. 9–10; *O. Crum VC* 94, l. 5; *O. Medin. Habu Copt.* 145, l. 3; 149, l. 11).

It is more common to let the conjunctive follow the imperative than, as here, insert a second imperative (also, e.g., *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* I, pl. 51, no. 2, l. 6; *O. Crum* 102, l. 4; 343, ll. 6–7; *O. Lips. Copt.* 25, l. 4 [= *O. Crum* Add. 22]; *O. Medin. Habu Copt.* 137, l. 6; 149, ll. 10–11; *SB Kopt.* IV 2110, ll. 1–2 [= *O. Theb. Ifao* 9]).

ⲗⲓϯⲉ, 'fragment, small portion' (Crum, *Dict.*, p. 144b). The exact meaning of this masculine noun remains unclear (cf. *O. Mon. Epiph.* 345, l. 6 and comm. *ad loc.*; *O. Medin. Habu Copt.* 143, l. 7 and comm. *ad loc.*), but it has been suggested that it possibly designates a specific measure (*O. Frangé*, vol. 2, p. 59). Nevertheless, as the amount is never stated, the latter suggestion is unlikely; ⲗⲓϯⲉ qualifies a number of commodities of quite diverse nature, such as cakes (*O. Crum VC* 103, l. 9), flax (*O. Medin. Habu Copt.* 143, l. 7), animal hair (*O. Frangé* 60, l. 5), and, perhaps, purple dye (*O. Frangé* 112, l. 7) as well as salt (O. Uppsala VM 1398 [unpublished]).

3. The reconstruction is virtually certain.

4–5. See Biedenkopf-Ziehner, *Briefformular* (cit. above), pp. 205–207, for the address formula.

2. Letter about the appointment of a shepherd

O. Uppsala VM 1487   10 × 12 cm   Early 7th cent.
Limestone   Thebaid

The text on this limestone ostracon is fairly legible apart from a few abraded sequences. The piece is inscribed on both sides. The obverse side is flat except for a concavity in the middle of lines 1–5, which particularly affects the reading of the central part of lines 3–4. The reverse side has a ridge in the middle, but it does not obstruct the visibility of the script.

The text relates to the dossier of the so-called Phoibammon Monastery in western Thebes.[11] The ostracon contains a letter submitted by Apa Viktor (ll. 22–23), who was abbot of the monastery between *ca.* 610/20 and 635/40.[12] As in many other letters sent by him, Viktor is entitled 'the most humble (priest)' (e.g. *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* II 25 obv., l. 9; 27 rev., ll. 16–17).

The scribe of the text can be recognized as 'Hand D' to whom many writings from this monastic community are attributed.[13] He was

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[11] For a general outline and bibliography on the site, see: A. DELATTRE, 'La vie quotidienne dans les monastères égyptiens', [in:] H. FROSCHAUER & Cornelia Eva RÖMER (eds.), *Spätantike Bibliotheken. Leben und Lesen in den frühen Klöstern Ägyptens* [= *Nilus* 14], Vienna 2008, pp. 52–53; W. GODLEWSKI, 'Dayr Apa Phoibammon: Buildings', [in:] A. S. ATIYA (ed.) *Coptic Encyclopedia*, New York 1992, vol. 3, pp. 780–781; T. WILFONG, 'Western Thebes in the seventh and eighth centuries: A bibliographic survey of Jême and its surroundings', *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 26 (1989), pp. 119–122; Ewa WIPSZYCKA, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte (ive–viiie siècles)* [= *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 11], Warsaw 2009, pp. 178–182. See also Anneliese BIEDENKOPF-ZIEHNER, *Koptische Schenkungsurkunden aus der Thebais* [= *Göttinger Orientforschungen* 4/41], Wiesbaden 2001, pp. 129–130.

[12] *O. Ashm. Copt.*, pp. 157–159; *O. Stras. Copt.* 24 (introduction). See also T. DERDA & Ewa WIPSZYCKA, 'L'emploi des titres Abba, Apa, et Papas dans l'Égypte byzantine', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 24 (1994), pp. 39–41.

[13] *O. Ashm. Copt.*, pp. 159–161; *O. Stras. Copt.* 24 (introduction); Esther GAREL, 'The ostraca of Viktor the Priest found in hermitage MMA 1152', [in:] *PapCongr.* XXVII, pp. 1041–1054.

initially identified by Walter Crum as the scribe David who was active in the Phoibammon monastery during Viktor's tenure.[14] 'Hand D' has also been attributed to the priest Mark,[15] although more recently, again, the view has been expressed that it may in fact belong to several different individuals.[16]

The text concerns the appointment of a herdsman named Daniel (ll. 3 and 5) to lead the shepherds (ⲣ̅ⲁⲡⲉ ⲛ̅ϣⲟⲟⲥ). It seems that Daniel belongs to the monastery as well; the abbot, Apa Viktor, clearly expresses that Daniel is already working satisfactorily for him (ll. 6–7) and he is therefore reluctant to appoint Daniel (l. 5). The addressee of the letter, a certain Patermoute,[17] who bears the title ⲡⲉⲗⲟⲉⲓϩ, 'overseer of herdsmen/cattle' (l. 22, see comm. *ad loc.*), seems originally to have requested the promotion. Nevertheless, in the present letter Viktor asks him (note, however, the plural in l. 10) to support the appointee with appropriate funds. The text suggests that Daniel was supposed to have been paid a specific sum, but in the time of writing he had not yet been given the money, or at least not all of it; he is said to have been provided with thirty copper coins, a sum which apparently was insufficient (ll. 10–12). Viktor concludes that in the eventuality that Daniel is not paid, God will set the record straight anyway, if Daniel deserves it, so as to leave it to Patermoute to decide whether to pay him or not (ll. 19–21). We are unfortunately left uninformed about the reason why Patermoute failed to provide the whole sum.

Due to the nature of the document, much remains uncertain, but it seems that Patermoute would be a superior of Daniel, who in turn cannot

[14] *O. Crum*, p. xv.

[15] T. S. RICHTER, 'Koptische Ostraka und Papyri', [in:] *O. Lips. Copt.*, pp. 17–18; Chantal HEURTEL, 'Écrits and écritures de Marc', [in:] Anne BOUD'HORS & Cathérine LOUIS (eds), *Études coptes* XI. *Treizième journée d'études* [= *Cahiers de la Bibliothèque copte* 17], Paris 2010, pp. 139–150.

[16] *O. Saint-Marc*, pp. 9–10.

[17] One can only speculate on whether the current addressee is the same individual who received the message from Viktor recorded in *O. Pintaudi* 67 (cf. comm. *ad loc.*), which is written by the same scribe as the present piece (see n. 14 above).

be an ordinary herder. As mentioned above, he was already working for Viktor. Even though it is impossible to delineate exactly the responsibility covered by each title from the present material, our assumption is that Patermoute was an official in charge of all the herding affairs of the brothers, whilst the ⲁⲡⲉ ⲛ̄ϣⲟⲟⲥ was in charge of the shepherds.

It is known that monasteries kept animals for various purposes[18] and it is therefore probable that the interference of Viktor in the herding business was just another of his tasks in supervising the whole monastic estate. His role in the economic life of the monastery is known from a number of other texts. In some of these, it is clear that Viktor engaged labourers who were supposed to work for the monastery (e.g. *O. Crum* 200 and 223) while other texts (e.g. *O. Crum* 219 and 221) show that he was also involved in its herding business; the two texts concern the appointment of camel herders or similar. It is possible that *O. Crum* 220 and 222 are also related to a similar business.[19] The current piece thus indicates that the monastery engaged in shepherding and possibly other kinds of animal husbandry in addition to keeping camels.[20]
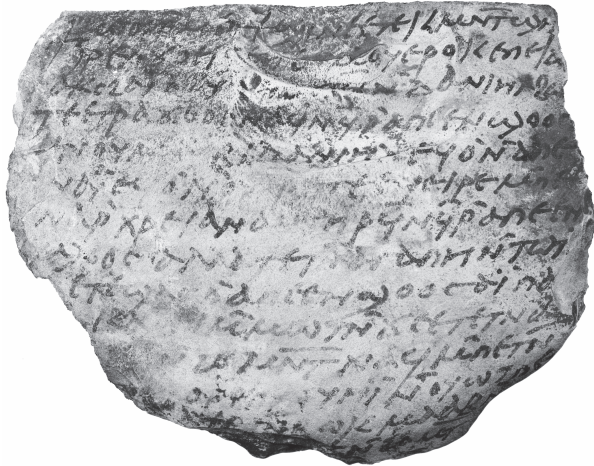
Although the letter is addressed to one individual, the sender makes use of the plural pronouns (ll. 8 [bis], 10 [bis], 12–13, and 15) in the correspondence, which may indicate that the request is directed to more than one individual, perhaps Patermoute and his people, who ought also to have been herders. Nevertheless, perhaps the plural merely indicates courtesy similar to practice in Greek epistolography.[21]

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[18] E.g. A. Delattre, 'Une lettre copte du monastère de Baouît. Réédition de *P. Mich. Copt.* 14', *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 44 (2007), pp. 87–95; Ewa Wipszycka, 'Resources and economic activities of the Egyptian monastic communities (4th–8th centuries)', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 41 (2011), pp. 159–263 especially 163, 212, and 243–244.

[19] See Esther Garel, *Les testaments des supérieurs du monastère de Saint-Phoibammôn à Thèbes (VIIᵉ siècle)*, unpublished PhD thesis, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris 2015, p. 90.

[20] See, e.g., *O. Crum* 75, 222, and 259, which mention domestic animals (ⲧⲃⲛⲟⲟⲩⲉ) but in a greeting formula.

[21] H. Zilliacus, 'Anredeformen', [in:] *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum. Suppl.* 3/4, Stuttgart 1985/86, cols. 490–493.
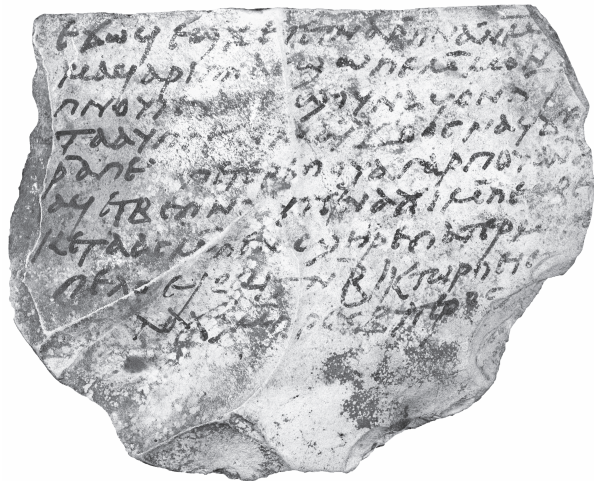
Obverse (→)

ⲭ̄ ϣⲟⲣⲡ̄ ⲙⲛ̄ˋ ⲧϣⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲙⲛ̄ⲧϣⲏ-
ⲣⲉ ⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲉϥⲉⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲇⲏ
ⲁⲕⲥϩⲁⲓ̈ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲛⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄ ⲛ̄ⲇⲁⲛⲓⲏⲗ ϩⲱ[ⲥ]-
4 ⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲣⲁϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁϥ ⲛϥ̄ⲣ̄ⲁⲡⲉ ⲉⲛϣⲟⲟⲥ
ⲧⲛⲟⲩ ⲙ[ⲡⲟ]ⲩϐⲓ ⲇⲁⲛⲓⲏⲗ ⲉϥⲟˋ ⲛ̄ⲁⲡⲉ
[ⲧ]ⲛⲟⲩˋ ⲉϥⲟˋ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩϩⲁⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲉϥⲉⲓⲣⲉ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧ-
ⲛⲁⲣ̄ⲭⲣⲉⲓⲁ ⲛⲁϥ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲛ̄ϥ̄ⲣⲁⲡⲉ ⲉⲛ-
8 ϣⲟⲟⲥ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲧⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲁⲅⲁⲡⲏ ⲛ̄ⲧⲱⲧⲛ̄
ⲉⲧⲉϣⲁⲥⲣⲁⲡⲉ ⲉⲛϣⲟⲟⲥ ⲁⲓ̈ⲡⲁ[ⲣⲁ-]
ⲕⲁ[ⲗ]ⲉⲓ ⲙ̄ⲙⲱⲧⲛ̄ ϫⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲧⲛⲁ[ⲧ]
[± 2] ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ⲛⲁϥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲧⲛ̄-
12 ⲟⲩⲟⲣⲡ ⲛ̣ⲟⲩⲏⲓ̈ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ ⲡⲉ-
ⲛ̣ⲧ̣ⲁⲧⲉⲧⲛ̄ⲃⲱⲕ ⲙⲁⲁⲃ ⲛ̄
[ϣ]ⲉ̣ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲙⲧ̄

Reverse (→)

ⲉϫⲱϥ ⲉϣϫⲉ ⲧⲉⲧⲛⲁⲣ̄ⲡⲛⲁ ⲛ̄ⲙ̄-
16 ⲙⲁϥ ⲁⲣⲓⲡⲛⲁ ⲉϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲙ̄ⲙⲟⲛ
ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲛⲁⲧⲟϣⲟⲩ ⲛⲁϥ ⲟⲛ ⲛ̄ϥ̄-
ⲧⲁⲁⲩ ⲡⲗⲏⲛ ⲇⲉ ⲁⲓ̈ϫⲟⲟⲥ ⲛⲁϥ ϫⲉ
ⲣ̄ⲁⲡⲉ· ⲡⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲁ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲡⲟⲩⲁ ⲛ̄ⲁ̣-
20 ⲁϥ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ˋϥˊⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉϥⲃⲉ-
ⲕⲉ ⲧⲁⲁⲥ ⲙ̄ⲡⲉⲛϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲡⲁⲧⲉⲣⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ
ⲡⲉⲗⲟⲉⲓⲥ ϩⲓⲧⲛ̄ ⲃⲓⲕⲧⲱⲣ ⲡⲉⲓⲉ̣-
vac. ⲗⲁⲭ(ⲓⲥⲧⲟⲥ) ⲙ̄ⲡⲣⲉⲥⲃⲩⲧⲉⲣⲟⲥ [ⲭ̄]

1. μέν ‖ 2. ἐπειδή ‖ 3–4. ὥστε ‖ 7. χρεία ‖ 8. ἀλλά |
ἀγάπη ‖ 9–10. παρακαλεῖν ‖ 14. *l.* ϩⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ ‖ 18. πλήν |
δέ ‖ 19. γάρ ‖ 22–23. ἐλάχιστος, ⲉⲗⲁⲭⲥ ost. ‖ 23. πρεσ-
βύτερος

† *First I greet your sonship. May the Lord bless you! Since you have written to me concerning Daniel, so that I may tell him to lead the shepherds. Now, Daniel has not been appointed because he is (already) a leader. [Now,] he is a …, doing everything that I will need, and he will lead the herdsmen, but it is your kindness, which usually leads the shepherds. I have asked you so that you would [give] him … copper [coins], (but) you have not sent a single piece. That which you have sent to him is thirty copper coins. If you will be merciful to him, be merciful. If not, (then) God will still assign them to him and he will give them. Nevertheless, I told him to lead. That which each one will do for the sake of God, he will receive his reward (accordingly). Give it* (sc. the letter) *to our son Patermoute, the chief herdsman. From Viktor this (most) humble priest.* [†]

1. The same shape of the staurogram is used elsewhere by the scribe of 'Hand D' as well as Mark (cf., e.g., *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* II 5 and *O. Stras. Copt.* 24; cf. also Heurtel, 'Écrits and écritures' [cit. n. 15], p. 140) but occurs also in a number of other ostraca (cf., e.g., *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* II 10 and 29).

The greeting ϣⲟⲣⲡ ⲙⲉⲛ ⳿ⲧⲱⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲕⲙⲛⲧϣⲏⲣⲉ ⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ ⲉϥⲉⲥⲙⲟⲩ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ is typical for the scribe of 'Hand D' (see, e.g., *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* II 4–5; *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* II, p. 10; *O. Strasb. Copt.* 24, ll. 1–3; *O. Saint-Marc*, p. 10). ⲙⲛ̄ is an unusual graphic variant of ⲙⲉⲛ (μέν), cf. Förster, *WB*, p. 52.

3. ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄. Only the initial ⲛ̄ and ϥ̄ are clearly visible. Here ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄ appears to be used similarly to ⲉⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄, 'for', 'on behalf of' (Crum, *Dict.*, p. 382a). The replacement of ⲛ with ⲉ occurs, although infrequently, in the Theban documents (Crum, *Dict.*, p. 427b; *P. Bal.*, p. 73; *O. Ashm. Copt.*, p. 188).

3–4. ϩⲱ[ⲥ]ⲧⲉ. ⲥ has been has been restored at the end of line 3, although it is unclear how large a piece has been chipped off. It is true that the form ϩⲱⲧⲉ is attested (Förster, *WB*, pp. 899–900), but only once (*P. KRU* 45, l. 40) and is possibly a scribal error.

5. ⲙ̄[ⲡⲟ]ⲩ. The first letter after ⳿ⲧⲛⲟⲩ before the lacuna is undoubtedly ⲙ̄. The abraded sequence corresponds to roughly two letters, which fits the supplemented text. The faded remains before ⲃⲓ (see below) suit ⲩ; the lacuna is therefore restored as the third person plural pronoun ⲟⲩ, here in non-referential use with passive meaning.

ⲃⲓ, 'bear, carry, take' (Crum, *Dict.*, p. 620a), is probably to be understood in a transferred sense, that is 'to appoint', cf. καθίστημι.

6. In this and the following line, the sender of the letter makes clear that Daniel is a reliable person, someone who carries out every request made of him, and therefore he should also become the leader of the shepherds.

ογαρнτε. Abrasions hinder a definite interpretation of the passage, but the faint traces agree with the proposed reading. This immediately brings ογεрнтε, ογрнтε, 'foot, leg' (Crum, *Dict.*, p. 491a), to mind. Unless it is a hitherto unattested idiomatic expression for a trustworthy person or someone engaged in shepherding or similar, which seems questionable, another meaning for the word has to be sought.

A provisional suggestion would be to connect the term with the Demotic title *wrṭ* (cf. Erichsen, *Glossar*, p. 96), which is written with a wool determinative. The exact translation of this word is not known, but tentative suggestions include 'wool shearer' or 'guardian'. It has also been suggested to be a priestly title (C. J. Martin, 'A Demotic land lease from Philadelphia: P. BM 10560', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 72 [1986], p. 167, n. 3; *ST* I 134, 5n.). The known instances connect the title with the god Amun, sheep, shepherding, and wool production. Although the Demotic title is not attested at Thebes, it is possible that it existed there and had survived in the area due to its previous strong connection with the cult of Amun but now only designating someone working with sheep or wool production. While the connection between the two words is speculative, it appears unlikely that Daniel would become a leader of the shepherds if he had no previous experience from that profession. For phonetic reasons the term is probably different from the similar-sounding ʒογριτ, 'guardian' (Crum, *Dict.*, p. 738a), cf. W. Vycichl, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue copte*, Leuven 1983, p. 311.

7. ναϥ. The final letter is uncertain; the very vague traces do not disclose the lower part of the suggested sign, but it is possible that it is lost due to abrasion.

10–11. There are various possibilities for reconstructing the chipped end of line 10 and the effaced beginning of line 11. There does not seem to be enough space for more than one letter at the end of line 10. Our preferred reconstruction of line 11, † ϣε, 'to give (copper) money', depends on the text in line 14 below; on close inspection, no traces of the verb can be seen. Otherwise, there could be enough space to insert a short numeral such as 40 (ϩμε), 60 (cε), or 100 (ϣε) instead of ϣε, 'money', in the beginning of line 11.

12. ογнï ñογωτ, 'a single piece'. Ostensibly the expression is an idiomatic expression referring to the absent means; no other interpretation seems palatable. Though нï is translated as 'pair, couple' in Crum, *Dict.*, p. 66b, its etymon ʿ.*wj* can be used for describing a single item (J. Osing, *Die Nominalbildung des Ägyptischen*, Mainz am Rhein 1976, p. 316; cf. also F. Hoffmann, *Ägypter und Amazonen. Neubearbeitung zweier demotischer Papyri: P. Vindob. D 6165 und P. Vindob. D 6165 A* [= *Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek in Wien* NS 24], Vienna 1995, p. 58 [3.31]).

Although the writer of the letter states that the addressee has not yet sent over anything to him as a payment for Daniel, lines 14–15 inform that he, in spite of this claim, has received a modest sum. It is possible that the expression serves merely as a rhetorical device.

14. ϣⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ (ϩⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ). The lower part of the ostracon's rim is broken off. The size of the missing piece hardly allows another reconstruction, such as ⲥⲁⲧⲉ(ⲉ)ⲣⲉ (στατήρ) ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ (*vel sim.*). The frequent usage of the expression ϣⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲟⲙⲛ̄ⲧ (*vel sim.*) supports the suggested reconstruction, see, e.g., *O. Frangé* 110, ll. 26–27; 642, l. 8; 650, l. 18; 653, l. 5; *O. Medin. Habu Copt.*, 56, l. 2; 75, l. 5; 134, ll. 7, 16; *SB Kopt.* I 244, ll. 8–9; IV 1708, l. 3; Crum, *Dict.*, p. 547a.

18. ⲡⲗⲏⲛ ⲇⲉ̣. For adversative πλήν, see Mayser, *Gram.*, II, p. 534. Here, it serves as a progressive particle used 'when the author shortly recapitulates the contents of the previous section before proceeding to a new topic, or when, after an excursus, he returns to his main theme' (J. Blomqvist, *Greek Particles in Hellenistic Prose*, Lund 1969, p. 88). With regard to Coptic, ⲡⲗⲏⲛ has been described as a 'paragraph opener, subtextual initial-boundary marker' (A. Shisha-Halevy, *Coptic Grammatical Categories. Structural Studies in the Syntax of Shenoutean Sahidic* [= *Analecta Orientalia* 53], Rome 1986, p. 60 [§ 1.3.11.6]). The reading of ⲇⲉ seems certain; the upper part of the *delta* is visible, as the lower horizontal line is lost in an abrasion. Likewise, only the upper part of the *epsilon* appears to be preserved. Although ⲇⲉ (δέ) may still have an adversative meaning in Coptic, it seems here to be pleonastic (cf. J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*, Oxford 1954 [2nd ed.], pp. 171–172). The particle δέ may, however, also be used to connect, rather than to contrast, two sentences, similarly to common Greek Byzantine usage (see A. N. Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, London 1897, p. 402 [§ 1709]). Cf. for this particular combination clause-initially in Greek: *P. Haun.* III 52, l. 11; *P. Lond.* III 1075, l. 20 [*BL* I, p. 300]; *SB* XVI 12591, l. 4, and in Coptic: H. Munier, *Manuscrits coptes*, Cairo 1916, p. 112; W. Till, *Koptische Heiligen- und Martyrerlegenden* II, Rome 1936, p. 90, l. 22.

19–20. The passage stating that each one will receive a reward while acting for God echoes a verse in Ephesians 6:8: ⲡⲁⲅⲁⲑⲟⲛ ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲟⲩⲁ ⲡⲟⲩⲁ ⲛⲁⲁⲁϥ ϥⲛⲁϫⲓⲧϥ̄ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ϩⲓⲧⲙ̄ ⲡϫⲟⲉⲓⲥ, 'The good which each one will do, he will receive it from the Lord'. Viktor's rephrasing is not entirely fortunate as substituting the pronominal direct object ϥ found in the model verse through a full noun (ⲡⲃⲉⲕⲉ) makes the sentence ungrammatical.

20. `ϥ´ⲛⲁϫⲓ. The scribe forgot to insert the third person pronoun ϥ and had to squeeze it in above the line after he had written out the verb.

21. See Biedenkopf-Ziehner, *Briefformular* (cit. above, comm. to 1, l. 1), pp. 205–207, for this address formula in Coptic letters.

22. ⲉⲗⲟⲉⲓϩ, 'herdsman' (Crum, *Dict.*, p. xvi). J. Černý, *Coptic Etymological Dictionary*, Cambridge 1974, p. 34, suggested the additional meaning 'shepherd', but this rendering seems unwarranted by the etymology of the term. The word derives from *mr-iḥ(.w)*, 'cowherd, overseer of bovines' (*Wb.* I, p. 119, 21; Erichsen, *Glossar*, p. 166; G. Fecht, *Wortakzent und Silbenstruktur. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der ägyptischen Sprache* [= *Ägyptologische Forschungen* 21], Glückstadt 1960, p. 38 [§ 70]).

The title has been regarded as fossilised, perhaps archaic, by Vycichl, *Diction-naire* (cit. above, comm. to **2**, l. 7), p. 42, because the term is hitherto only attested in two magical texts. The oldest attestation is an Old Coptic text while the other one is a Coptic text within a bilingual Coptic-Greek magical handbook. The two texts are P. Schmidt, l. 16 (H. Satzinger, 'The Old Coptic Schmidt papyrus', *Jour-nal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 12 [1975], pp. 37–50, especially 44–45; M. Meyer & R. Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, Prince-ton 1999 [2nd ed.], p. 21 = no. 1) and Ann Arbor, Mich. Copt. Ms. 136, ll. 93, 95, and 98 (W. H. Worrell, 'Coptic magical and medical texts', *Orientalia* 4 [1935], pp. 17–37; Meyer & Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic*, pp. 83–90 = no. 43). The appearance of the title in the present text and the fact that the Ann Arbor text is most likely a translation from a Greek manuscript into Coptic suggests that ⲉⲗⲟⲉⲓϩ was still used in Egyptian until at least the seventh century.

In Ann Arbor, Mich. Copt. Ms. 136, the word is parallel to ⲁⲙⲉ and ϣⲱ(ⲱ)ⲥ. Whilst the first of these two designates a herdsman in general, someone tending both camels, cattle, and sheep, the second one is normally translated as 'shep-herd' (Crum, *CD.*, pp. 7a and 589b). In the present context, a letter regarding herding, it would be appropriate to understand ⲉⲗⲟⲉⲓϩ as a proper title of a chief herdsman, which perhaps had lost its more specific and original meaning of a 'cattle herder', having become a title for a higher-ranking herdsman in general.

We have considered the possibility that ⲡⲉⲗⲟⲉⲓϩ is a personal name preserving the natural outcome of *Pꜣ-mr-iḥ(.w)* [*NB Dem.*, pp. 188–190]). This genuinely Egyptian name is found in Greek transcript as *Πελαιας vel sim.* (*NB*, col. 302), which has been borrowed back into Egyptian Coptic as ⲡⲉⲗⲁⲓ. Nevertheless, the fact that the name is not attested in the current form in other Coptic documents militates against such an interpretation. Note, however, that the absence of any marker for the filiation (e.g., ⲡϣⲉ ⲛ̄ NN or ⲛ̄ NN), is not a decisive argument, since such features are far from regularly provided.

3. Letter about a delivery

| O. Uppsala VM 2397 | 11.5 × 8 cm | 6th–8th cent. |
| Reddish ceramic sherd | | Probably Thebaid |

O. Uppsala VM 2397 is a virtually complete piece with a generally clear script with separate letters, which have a tendency towards a more cur-sive style in Greek words (*μέν* [l. 1] and *γάρ* [l. 3]). The letters are of an even size and lean slightly in the direction of writing (right). The lettering
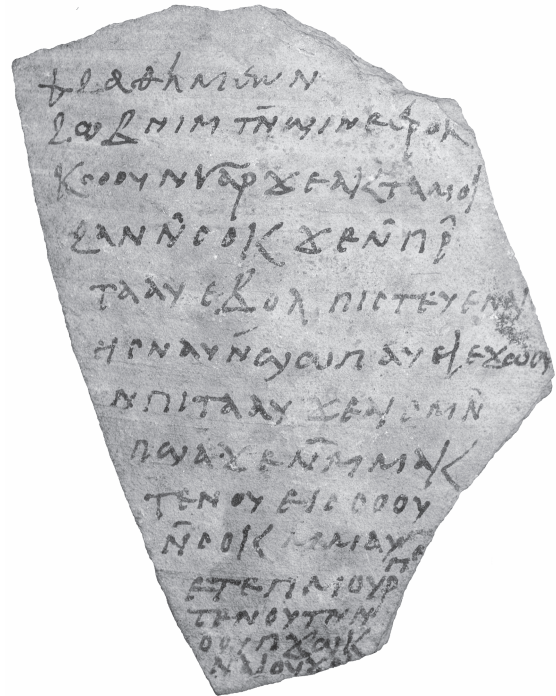
is well arranged and the scribe seems to have avoided, on purpose, dividing words across two lines in the beginning of the text. Towards the end (ll. 11–14), the writing becomes more cramped as a result of lack of space; the piece becomes increasingly narrow after line 6.

The ostracon is a short letter concerning a delivery of six sacks (ⲥⲟⲕ) of an unspecified content. The sender names neither himself nor the recipient. Therefore, both remain anonymous to us. It is nevertheless clear that the addressee has ordered the delivery of the content of the sacks from the sender of the letter. Unnamed persons have come to him with the intention to purchase the sacks. Yet he has not sold them, since he agreed with the addressee that the latter would buy them. By informing the addressee about this, the sender requests to be provided with the sum agreed upon for the sacks. The text does not tell us explicitly that the sacks were filled, although, given the obvious urgency, they are likely to have contained a much-needed commodity, perhaps grain.

Obverse (→)

† ⲅⲁⲑⲏ ⲙⲉⲛ ⲛ-
ⲅⲱⲃ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲧⲛ̄ϣⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ
ⲕⲥⲟⲟⲩⲛ ⲅⲁⲣ ϫⲉ ⲁⲕⲧⲁⲙⲟⲓ
4   ⲅⲁ {ⲛ}ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲕ ϫⲉ ⲛ̄ⲡⲣ̄-
ⲧⲁⲁⲩ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲡⲓⲥⲧⲉⲩⲉ ⲛⲁⲓ
ⲉⲓⲥ ‹ⲥ›ⲛⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϣⲱⲡ ⲁⲩⲉⲓ ⲉϫⲱⲟⲩ
ⲛⲡⲓⲧⲁⲁⲩ ϫⲉ ⲁⲓⲥⲙⲛ̄-
8   ⲡϣⲁϫⲉ ⲛ̄ⲙⲙⲁⲕ
ⲧⲉⲛⲟⲩ ⲉⲓⲥ ⲥⲟⲟⲩ
ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲕ ⲙⲙⲁⲩ
ⲉⲧⲉ ⲡⲙⲟⲩⲣ `ⲡⲉ´
12   ⲧⲉⲛⲟⲩ ⲧⲛⲛ-
ⲟⲟⲩ ⲡϫⲱⲕ
ⲛⲁⲓ ⲟⲩϫⲁⲓ

1. μέν ‖ 3. γάρ ‖ 4–5. l. ⲛ̄ⲡⲣ̄ⲧⲁⲁⲩ ‖ 5. πίστευε ‖
7. l. ⲛ̄ⲡⲓⲧⲁⲁⲩ

† *First of all, we greet you. You know that you informed me about the sacks: 'Do not sell them!' Trust me. See, one has come twice for them, (but) I did not hand them over, because I have made an agreement with you. Now, there are six sacks here, which is the bond (obligation). Now, send the rest to me. Farewell!*

1. There is a loop connecting the lower point of the cross sign with the right cross-arm distorting the initial sign.

ϩⲁⲑⲏ … ⲧⲛϣⲓⲛⲉ ⲉ- is a common greeting phrase in letters (Biedenkopf-Zeiehner, *Briefformular* [cit. above, comm. to **1**, l. 1], pp. 41, 89, and 239–240).

2. The scribe appears to have made a mistake by referring to himself in the first person plural, while in the rest of the text he correctly talks about himself in the first person singular (ll. 3, 7 [bis], 14). Alternatively, there was more than one person who sent the note to the addressee, but the scribe for some reason slipped into the erroneous person, thinking only of himself. Nevertheless, it is less plausible that the scribe repeatedly would commit the same mistake throughout the text and we therefore consider the first suggestion more attractive.

4. ⲛ̄ⲥⲟⲕ, 'the sacks' (Crum, *Dict.*, p. 325a). The term ⲥⲟⲕ is rather vague; Crum provides a number of examples of ⲥⲟⲕ containing everything from money to sand and grain. The first ⲛ has been interpreted as a diplography (cf. *P. Bal.*, p. 120 [b]). An alternative solution is to interpret ⲛⲛ̄ as a possessive pronoun in the first-person plural, thus 'our sacks' (cf. note above).

ⲛⲡⲣ-, negative imperative. See, e.g., *P. Bal.*, pp. 98–101, for ⲛ̄ instead of the expected ⲙ̄ before ⲡ in verbal prefixes.

6. <ⲥ>ⲛⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ϣⲱⲡ. ⲥ is a haplography, shared between ⲉⲓⲥ and ⲥⲛⲁⲩ. The cardinal number ⲥⲛⲁⲩ not infrequently precedes the counted noun in Theban non-literary texts (e.g. W. Till, *Koptische Grammatik*, Leipzig 1955, p. 83 [§ 164]), e.g. *P. Köln Ägypt.* II 42, l. 7 [comm. *ad loc.*]; *P. Moscow Copt.* 12, l. 35; *O. Saint-Marc* 16, l. 3, etc. The noun is probably an instance of ϣⲱⲡ, otherwise found only in the compound ϣ(ⲉ)ⲡⲛϣⲱⲡ, 'suddenly'. For its etymology, see Černý, *Coptic Etymological Dictionary* (cit. above, comm. to **2**, l. 22), pp. 248–9, *s.v.* ϣⲱⲡ.

11. ⲙⲟⲩⲣ. As a noun the word can designate an obligation (Crum, *Dict.*, p. 181b; cf. T. S. Richter, *Rechtssemantik und forensische Rhetorik: Untersuchungen zu Wortschatz, Stil und Grammatik der Sprache koptischer Rechtsurkunden* [= *Philippika* 20], Leipzig 2008, p. 221). Here the term probably designates an agreement (cf., e.g., *CPR* XII 9, ll. 16 and 18) made earlier between the sender of the letter and the addressee concerning the purchase and delivery of the sacks.

13. ϫⲱⲕ. The noun is usually translated 'completion, total, reminder' (*vel sim.*) (Crum, *Dict.*, 761b–762a; Richter, *Rechtssemantik* [cit. above], pp. 360–361), which here would refer to the price for the six sacks. ϫⲱⲕ appears also in other texts in collocation with ⲧⲛⲛⲟⲟⲩ elsewhere (e.g., *O. Crum ST* 227, l. 15; 253, ll. 7, 10).

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