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The Coptic Ostraca on the Theban Hermitage MMA 1152 : 1. Letters («O. Gurna Górecki» 12-68)

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Anne Boud'hors

**THE COPTIC OSTRACA
OF THE THEBAN HERMITAGE MMA 1152
1. LETTERS (O. GURNA GÓRECKI 12–68)**

*To the memory of Tomasz Górecki and Tomasz Markiewicz**

DURING SUCCESSIVE EXCAVATIONS carried on between 2003 and 2013 in the hermitage MMA 1152, near the now-vanished village of Sheikh Abd el-Gurna, on the western bank of the Nile opposite Luxor, Tomasz Górecki has dug out more than 300 ostraca and some fragments of Coptic papyri.¹ Their publication, first entrusted to Tomasz Markiewicz, was proposed to me after the premature death of this young researcher (September 2009). From 28 November to 2 December 2010, welcomed at the Deir el-Bahari Polish excavation house, I was able to examine the ostraca in the storage of the Supreme Council of Antiquities,

* See the obituaries by T. DERDA in this volume and T. DERDA & J. URBANIK, 'In memoriam Tomasz Markiewicz (1974–2009)', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 39 (2009), pp. 17–21.

¹ T. GÓRECKI, 'Sheikh Abd el-Gurna (West Thebes). Coptic hermitage. First interim report', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 15 (2004), pp. 173–179; IDEM, 'Sheikh Abd el-Gurna (hermitage in Tomb 1152): Preliminary report, 2005', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 17 (2007), pp. 263–272; IDEM, 'Sheikh Abd el-Gurna hermitage in Tomb 1152 and chapel in Tomb 1151', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 19 (2010), pp. 297–303.

and to spend time on the site in order to discuss with Tomasz Górecki the issues of the documentation.²

This is a difficult documentation, due to its fragmentary state. Complete pieces are rare and the available information quite heterogeneous. It seems that the texts mainly illustrate two periods: the part of the seventh century prior to the Arab conquest on the one hand, and the first half of the eighth century on the other. In this regard, the situation is similar to that observed for other sites in the region, notably the Monastery of Epiphanius and the Theban Tomb 29. In view of the difficulty of producing a 'catalogue raisonné' within an acceptable time, I preferred, in agreement with Tomasz Górecki and the colleagues at the University of Warsaw, to divide the publication into several articles, of which this one, devoted to letters, is the first, while the three following ones will deal respectively with legal and economic texts, then exercises and various pious texts, to end with a synthesis of the documentation and complete indices.

Tomasz Górecki died suddenly in September 2017, fully active and without having accomplished all what he planned. In tribute to the outstanding archaeologist he was, the acronym for the documentation coming from the hermitage MMA 1152 will be *O. Gurna Górecki*.

Several letters were published in the previous years, because they were recognized as connected to the dossiers of previously known persons, namely Mark, the priest of the *topos* of Saint Mark; Victor, the priest of the monastery of Saint Phoibammon; and Frange, the monk who occupied the Theban Tomb 9. In order to facilitate future references to this hermitage, I have assigned to these published pieces the first numbers in a general numbering sequence, starting with those published by Esther Garel, already numbered from 1 to 8.³ We would thus have:

² These discussions were very helpful. I am deeply grateful to Tomasz Górecki for sharing his experience of the site with me, as well as for arranging the best possible working conditions during my short stay in Luxor. These memories are even more precious, now that he is no more with us.

³ Esther GAREL, 'The ostraca of Victor the priest found in the hermitage MMA 1152', [in:] *PapCongr.* XXVII, pp. 1041-1054.

<i>Siglum</i>	<i>Contents</i>	<i>Inv. no.</i>	<i>Edition</i>
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<i>O. Gurna Górecki</i> 2	Letter from the priest Victor to Iezekiël and (?) Djôr	C.O. 155	Garel, 'The ostraka' (cit. n. 4), no. 2
<i>O. Gurna Górecki</i> 3	Letter to Djôr and Apa Iezekiël about a book of Shenute	C.O. 170	Garel, 'The ostraka' (cit. n. 4), no. 3
<i>O. Gurna Górecki</i> 4	Letter from the priest Victor to Apa Iezekiël and Apa Djôr	C.O. 174	Garel, 'The ostraka' (cit. n. 4), no. 4
<i>O. Gurna Górecki</i> 5	Letter from the priest Victor to Djôr	C.O. 180	Garel, 'The ostraka' (cit. n. 4), no. 5
<i>O. Gurna Górecki</i> 6	Letter to Apa Iezekiël and Djôr from 'Iakôb the humble'	C.O. 090	Garel, 'The ostraka' (cit. n. 4), no. 6.
<i>O. Gurna Górecki</i> 7	Letter to Djôr and Apa Iezekiël	C.O. 136	Garel, 'The ostraka' (cit. n. 4), no. 7
<i>O. Gurna Górecki</i> 8	Letter to Apa Iezekiël and to Djôr	C.O. 171	Garel, 'The ostraka' (cit. n. 4), no. 8
<i>O. Gurna Górecki</i> 9	Letter by the hand of Mark, the priest of the <i>topos</i> of St Mark	C.O. 120	Chantal Heurtel, 'Un nouvel exemple de l'activité de scribe du prêtre Marc à Thèbes', [in:] Anne Boud'hors & Catherine Louis (eds). <i>Études coptes XIII. Quinzième journée d'études (Louisvain-la-neuve, 12-14 mai 2011)</i> [= <i>Cahiers de la bibliothèque copte</i> 20], Paris 2015, pp. 121-126
<i>O. Gurna Górecki</i> 10	Request of money from Iohannes to Ioseph (note that on l. 3, one reads ⲛⲓⲱϥⲥⲏⲓ instead of ⲛⲓⲱⲉⲗⲁⲛⲛⲏⲥ)	C.O. 001	Iwona Antoniak, 'New ostraca from Thebes', [in:] G. Gabra & H. N. Takla (eds.), <i>Christianity and Monasticism in Upper Egypt, II: Nag Hammadi-Esna</i> , Cairo 2010, pp. 1-6, at 4-5 ⁴
<i>O. Gurna Górecki</i> 11	Letter from Frange to Ioseph	C.O. 010	<i>Ed. pr.</i> Antoniak, 'New ostraka', pp. 3-4; reed. Anne Boud'hors, 'Pièces supplémentaires du dossier de Frangé', <i>Journal of Coptic Studies</i> 13 (2011), pp. 99-112, at 109-110 (no. 5)

As for the papyri, the best preserved piece, a letter requiring a payment for scraps of papyrus, has recently been published.⁴

Consequently, the numbering of the ostraca in this article begins with *O. Gurna Górecki* 12. The order of the texts is based on a rather flexible principle: first, the most substantial texts or those where the content is clearly identifiable, then the beginnings and ends of letters, and finally the fragments. Dimensions are in centimetres (height × width). Dates are not proposed systematically, as it is usually impossible to decide in favour of one or the other of the two periods mentioned above. The characterization of the material is due to Tomasz Górecki. The handwritings are almost all bilinear, straight, or more or less sloping.

The photographs of the ostraca were taken by Dariusz Dąbkowski; they are published here courtesy of the PCMA Archive.

12. Dispute about tax payment

Inv. no. C.O. 266

18 × 12.8 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Neither sender nor addressee is named. There are no greetings, neither at the beginning nor at the end. The tone is brief, probably even angry. Apparently, the sender had to give many things to the addressee because of the tax (*demosion*), and he is making a kind of account of all these things, perhaps complaining that he has been treated unfairly. Although the scribe may be identifiable (see below), he is not necessarily the sender.

The content of the text also provides connection to several other sites and characters of the area, and enriches the dossier of a certain Helias, son of Kalapesios, a 'great man', that is to say a worthy man of the region (see the commentary below).

⁴ Anne BOUD'HORS, 'Réclamation pour le paiement de coupons de papyrus: Le témoignage d'une lettre copte', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 45 (2015), pp. 9–24. In 2010, I made transcriptions of some other fragments. However, the photos of these fragments have been missing until now, which does not allow me to provide a satisfactory edition for them.

This hand is very close to the hand of a certain Moses, who used to live in TT 29 at the beginning of the seventh century (see *O. Frangé*, pp. 22–23). Especially typical is the shape of the μ , as well as some diacritical signs (for instance the comma in l. 19) and the superlinear stroke in place of η at the end of line 4, which is an habit of scribes copying literary manuscripts (indeed Moses was a copyist of this type). TT 29 has provided several ostraca written by this hand, with or without the name of Moses (*O. Frangé* 752–759). Most of them are limestone. However, there is one potsherd (*O. Frangé* 757), where the text is not finished and the vocabulary quite similar to C.O. 266. If this identification is right, this is another indication of the connection between TT 29 and MMA 1152.

- ⲡ · ⲉⲡⲉⲓⲃⲏ ⲁⲕⲉⲣⲓⲛⲉ ⲙⲏ-
 ⲙⲁⲓ ⲉⲁ ⲡⲁⲏⲙⲟⲥⲓⲟⲛ ⲁⲓⲃⲱⲕ ⲟϥ-
 ⲥⲱⲃⲉ ⲛⲉⲁⲧ· ⲉⲣⲟϥⲛ ⲛⲁⲕ ⲛ-
 4 ⲥⲟ ⲛⲥⲁⲧⲉⲣⲉ ⲛⲉⲁⲧ ⲙⲏ ϣⲙⲟϥ(ⲛ)
 ⲛⲉⲣⲟⲟⲙⲡⲉ· ⲙⲏⲛⲥⲱⲥ ⲁⲓⲟⲕ ⲉⲣⲏ-
 ⲗⲓⲁⲥ ⲛⲕⲁⲗⲁⲡⲏⲥⲓⲟⲥ · ⲛⲱⲙⲧⲉ ⲛ-
 ⲕⲉⲣⲁⲧⲓⲛ ⲛⲏⲟϥⲃ ⲁⲣⲁⲡⲟⲗⲟⲓⲛⲉ
 8 ⲙⲙⲟⲟϥ ⲛⲁⲕ · ⲁϥⲱ ⲁⲕϫⲟⲟϥ
 ⲁⲃⲁⲛⲏⲗ ⲉⲣⲟϥⲛ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲙⲏ ⲉⲗⲓ-
 ⲥⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲕⲁⲗⲣⲱϥ ⲡⲉ ⲁⲓⲧ
 ⲟϥⲗⲉⲃⲓⲧⲱⲛ ⲛⲁϥ ⲛⲉⲉⲓⲱ
 12 ⲛⲕⲁⲃⲱⲧⲓⲧ ⲙⲏ ⲙⲏⲧⲥⲛⲟⲟϥⲥ
 ⲛⲱⲉ ⲛⲉⲣⲟⲙⲏⲧ·
 ⲙⲏⲛⲥⲱⲥ ⲟⲛ ⲁⲕϥⲓ ⲡⲁⲧⲱⲉ
 ⲟⲛ ⲉⲧⲉⲛ ⲡⲕⲟⲓⲛⲟⲛ ⲙⲏ
 16 ⲛⲱⲣⲏϥ ⲛⲁⲛⲱⲉⲣⲓⲟⲥ
 ⲉⲁϥⲓⲥⲉ ⲉⲣⲟⲓ ⲛⲙⲁⲁⲃ
 · · ⲛⲱⲉ ⲛⲉⲣⲟⲙⲏⲧ ⲉⲁ
 ⲧ· · · ⲁⲉⲓⲉ, ⲉⲁⲕⲟⲗⲓ
 20 ⲁⲕϥⲓⲧⲓⲧ · ⲡ·



1. ἐπειδή | ἐρίζειν || 2. δημόσιον || 7. κέρατιον |
 ἀπολογίζειν || 11. λεβίτων || 15. κοινόν

† Since you had argued with me about the demosion, I added a leaf(?) of silver for you, which has the value of (4) six drachmas of silver, as well as eight doves. Besides I sent you to Helias (son) of Kalapesios for three carats of gold (and) he reimbursed (8) them to you. And you sent me Daniel and Elisaïos, who is 'rolled-mouth', I gave him a tunic (lebitôn) made with (12) double-thread linen, as well as twelve che of bronze. In addition, you also took my chaff, which was in common with (16) the sons of Antherios, since they have troubled me with thirty-?? che of bronze for the ...; you held it, (20) you took it.

1. ἐπιζε. The Greek verb ἐπίζευ is not attested in Förster, WB, and the only attestation in a Greek document is in BGU IV 1043 (letter, 3rd cent. Arsinoites).

2. What is the meaning of σωβε? Is it 'leaf'? Or is it an unidentified object that would be worth or contain a certain amount of money?

4. κατρεπε. Coin or weight?

5. One or several 'golden doves' or 'doves of gold' are mentioned in some texts (for instance *P. CLT* 10: see the reedition of Jennifer Cromwell & E. Grossman, 'Condition(al)s of repayment: *P. CLT* 10 reconsidered', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 96 [2010], pp. 149–160); a discussion on this expression is in Florence Calament, 'Règlements de comptes à Djêmé... d'après les ostraca coptes du Louvre', [in:] C. Cannuyer (ed.), *Études coptes VIII* [= *Cahiers de la bibliothèque copte* 13], Lille – Paris 2003, pp. 37–58): it could mean a measure of gold coins (originally a container with the shape of a dove). Here, there is no precision after 'doves'. Nevertheless, since the context is about money, one could propose that they are 'doves of silver'.

Particular construction of the verb ωλ: 'I sent you to Helias for three carats' (= 'I charged Helias to pay you three carats in my place'). For a similar use, see *O. Saint-Marc* 28: ἀφολῖ ἐρηλιας ἡμῖν τῇ νῶϣε. T. S. Richter, *Rechtssemantik und forensische Rhetorik: Untersuchungen zu Wortschatz, Stil und Grammatik der Sprache koptischer Rechtsurkunden* [= *Philippika* 20], Wiesbaden 2008, p. 300, knows only the intransitive use of the verb (*P. KRU* 44, 33, and 68).

5–6. Helias, son of Kalapesios, is already known from the following texts:

(1) *O. Medin. Habu Copt.* 153: limestone, inscribed on both sides, not translated by the editors, signed or written (?) by a certain David (the plate shows that the hand is probably Crum's 'hand D': see *O. Crum*, p. xv). This is apparently a case of exclusion concerning the monastery of Phoibammon, in which the great man Helias is likely to intervene.

(2) *O. Crum* 116: pottery; arbitration case in which Helias appears to have played the role of investigator.

(3) *O. Saint-Marc* 28 (see above): a character of this name, with the same kind of activity, returns, moreover, several times in *O. Saint-Marc*.

(4) *P. Mon. Epiph.* 88: a kind of *dialysis* (conciliation) in which one of the parties

declares the matter settled thanks to Helias son of Kalapese. Only in this text, is Helias called ‘apa’.

(5) *P. Mon. Epiph.* 271: the document could also be linked to this dossier, as a certain Helias is mentioned there, who is not called ‘great man’, but acts as such.

(6) *O. Brit. Mus. Copt.* I 126, pl. 87.4: a tax receipt paid for by Helias Kalapesios, is written by Psate son of Pisrael; since this scribe was active in the first quarter of the eighth century, it cannot be the same Helias.

Helias is thus a ‘great man’, which means someone playing the role of a go-between or arbitrator in economic and legal matters. On this, as well as on the administrative hierarchy of Djeme, see chapter 5.2 (‘Das *κοινόν* und die Beamten von Djeme’) in L. Berkes, *Dorfverwaltung und Dorfgemeinschaft in Ägypten von Diokletian zu den Abbasiden* [= *Philippika* 104], Wiesbaden 2017, pp. 170–190. Here, it is likely that the sender could not pay himself the three carats of gold, so he asked Helias to pay them for him (for which he probably gave a security, for instance a piece of furniture or personal belongings).

10. *καλρωϋ*, literally ‘rolled-mouth’, is perhaps a nickname (this is the first attestation of this word). It could indicate a physical defect of the man, as is often the case. Is it a harelip?

11–12. The *λεβιτων* (kind of tunic) is made with *καβωγτιτ* linen (the first attestation of this compound word). I have asked a specialist of ancient textiles, but she did not see what was meant with this expression; *καβ* is a from the verb *κωβ*, ‘to double’; *ωγτιτ* is the chain of the loom. The garment in question must have been rather luxurious, probably woven with thick linen.

14–20. The translation is based on the interpretation of *τωϋ* (l. 14) as the agricultural word ‘chaff’, and *Ϸν κοινον* as meaning ‘in common’. It seems that the sender is reproaching the recipient for having taken (*ακϷ*) his chaff, which he had in common with the sons of Antherios, as a kind of security for the money they were reclaiming. He his repeating this reproach at the end. Another possibility, which seems to me less satisfactory, would be to interpret *τωϋ* as ‘disturbance’ thus ‘disagreement’, and *koinon* (l. 15) as a kind of council of Djeme (the word is attested in *P. Mon. Epiph.* 163, a petition sent to Epiphanius by the *koinon* of the *kastron*, where several civil servants are mentioned, notably a *lashane* Shenoute and Abraam son of Antheris). In this case, the meaning would be ‘the disagreement I have in the *koinon* with the sons of Antherios’. However, in this context, *ακϷ* (l. 14) remains difficult to interpret.

16. The name Antherios seems to be rare and one wonders whether its other attestations (including *P. Mon. Epiph.* 163) refer to the same man:

(1) In Chantal Heurtel, *Les inscriptions coptes du temple d'Hathor à Deir al-Médina* [= *Bibliothèque d'études coptes* 16], Cairo 2004, pp. 35–37, no. 37, a very damaged funeral inscription gives the name of Abraham (son) of Antheris, *lashane* of Djeme, as an element of dating. The name Antheris is found again in inscription no. 70.

(2) *O. Medin. Habu Copt.* 50 is an acknowledgment of debt dated to (ΝΑΖΡΝ) 'Abraham, son of Atheris' (the editors specify that he is the *lashane*). However, this document is addressed to Kolodje, grand-daughter of Katharon, which would date it to the end of the seventh century, a date not very compatible with our ostrakon.

(3) In *O. Crum VC* 108, a certain Daniel (son) of Antheros serves as a go-between in a loan against surety.

Could Abraham and Daniel be the sons of Antherios mentioned in our ostrakon? $\varpi\rho\eta\gamma$ is a plural form of $\varpi\rho\eta\rho\epsilon$ (typically Theban, according to Crum, *Dict.*).

19. A possibility for the beginning of line 19 is $\tau\epsilon\gamma\gamma\alpha\epsilon\iota\epsilon$, 'their field', which would fit the interpretation of $\tau\omega\zeta$ as 'chaff'.

13. Request for help from Koïre to apa Paulos

Inv. no. C.O. 300

12.5 × 15.1 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Letter from a woman named Koïre to a certain apa Paulos. This character seems to have the task of arbitrating ($\Delta\iota\kappa\alpha\lambda\epsilon$) a dispute between Koïre and a certain David, her (future?) son-in-law. David is claiming to take the daughter of Koïre 'abroad', which the latter does not want, and she thus asks Paul to arbitrate in her favour. Given the way Koire addresses him ('Your pious Paternity'), Paul is likely to be a member of the clergy. The notion of 'abroad' ($\xi\iota\ \pi\omega\mu\mu\omicron$), which seems to be at the heart of the dispute, is discussed below in the commentary. Even though it remains a little vague, this text is an interesting witness to the feminine condition at this time in this region. This woman is obviously alone with her daughter, perhaps being a widow, and she complains about harassment and blows.⁷

Since apa Paulos is not attested in other texts from MMA 1152, one wonders how this letter happened to reach the hermitage.

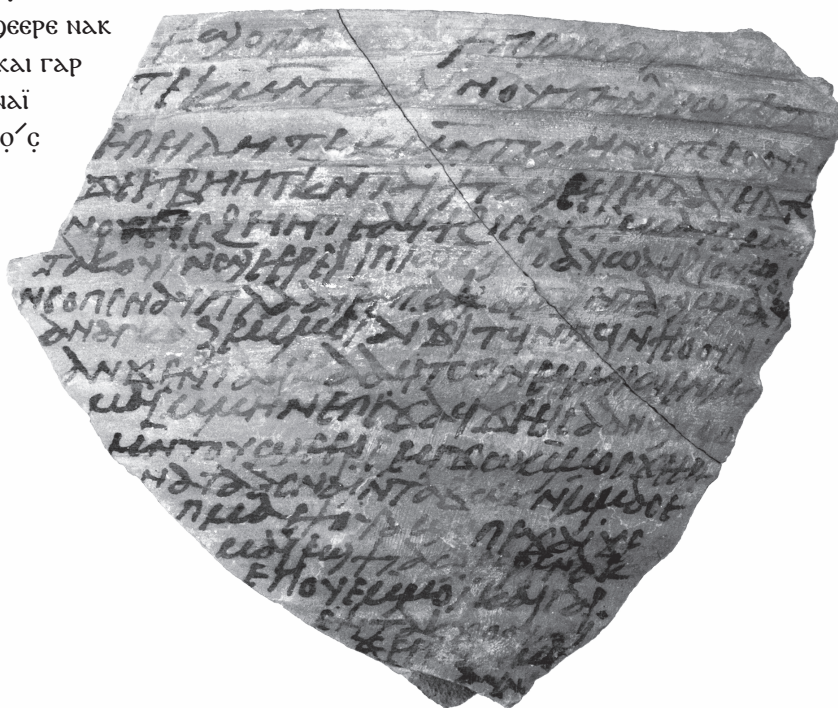
The fragment is inscribed on both sides. The script is a regular sloping majuscule, of a type widespread in the Theban region among educated people in the seventh century. The μ is close to a Greek μ . It is probable that Koïre does not write herself. The hands of women who know how to

⁷ For a more general frame, see Joëlle BEAUCAMP, *Le statut de la femme à Byzance (4^e – 7^e siècle)*, I: *Le droit impérial*; II: *Les pratiques sociales*, Paris 1990 & 1992; T. WILFONG, *Women of Jeme*, Ann Arbor 2002, especially pp. 40–45

write are generally different. The syntax is also of a slightly sophisticated level (note especially the use of so called ‘Second tenses’, with rhetorical value: $\eta\tau\alpha\iota\tau$ [l. 4], $\epsilon\iota\sigma\alpha\nu\omega$ [l. 10], $\epsilon\eta\tau\alpha\kappa\chi\omicron\omicron\gamma$ [l. 16]).

Recto (outer side)

- τ $\omega\rho\pi$ $\mu\epsilon\eta$ τ $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\kappa\chi\eta\epsilon\iota$ η -
 $\tau\epsilon\kappa\mu\eta\tau\mu\alpha\iota\eta\omicron\gamma\tau\epsilon$ $\eta\epsilon\iota\omega\tau$ $\epsilon\tau\tau$ ($\lambda\eta\eta\gamma$).
 $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota\delta\eta$ $\tau\epsilon\kappa\mu\eta\tau\mu\alpha\iota\eta\omicron\gamma\tau\epsilon$ $\varsigma\omicron\omicron\omicron\gamma\eta$
4 $\chi\epsilon$ $\epsilon\tau\beta\eta\eta\tau\epsilon\kappa$ $\eta\tau\alpha\iota\tau$ $\tau\alpha\omega\epsilon\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ $\eta\lambda\alpha\gamma\epsilon\iota\delta$. $\tau\epsilon$ -
 $\eta\omicron\gamma$ $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\gamma\eta\eta\tau\epsilon$ $\alpha\varphi\tau$ $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\epsilon$ $\eta\alpha\iota$ $\epsilon\mu\alpha\tau\epsilon$ $\mu\eta$
 $\tau\alpha\kappa\omicron\gamma\iota$ $\eta\omega\epsilon\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ $\gamma\iota$ $\pi\iota\omega\eta\mu\omicron$ $\alpha\gamma\omega$ $\alpha\varphi\epsilon\iota\omicron\gamma\epsilon$ $\epsilon\rho\omicron\iota$
 $\eta\varsigma\omicron\pi$ $\varsigma\eta\alpha\gamma$. $\pi\lambda\alpha\alpha\gamma\epsilon$ $\eta\tau\alpha\kappa\chi\iota\tau\gamma$ $\eta\tau\alpha\omega\epsilon\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ $\alpha\varphi$ -
8 $\alpha\eta\alpha\gamma\kappa\alpha\zeta\epsilon$ $\mu\mu\omicron\iota$ $\alpha\iota\chi\iota\tau\bar{\gamma}$ $\eta\alpha\varphi$ $\eta\tau$ $\varsigma\omicron\omicron\omicron\gamma\eta$
 $\alpha\eta$ $\chi\epsilon$ $\eta\tau\alpha\varphi\kappa\alpha\alpha\varphi$ $\tau\omega\eta$. $\epsilon\varphi\eta\omega\epsilon$ $\mu\eta$ -
 $\mu\alpha\iota$ $\mu\eta\eta\eta\epsilon$. $\pi\epsilon\chi\alpha\varphi$ $\chi\epsilon$ $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\alpha\alpha\nu\omega$ $\mu\mu\omicron$
 $\mu\eta$ $\tau\omicron\gamma\omega\epsilon\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ $\epsilon\varphi\chi\omega$ $\eta\mu\omicron\varsigma$ $\chi\epsilon$ $\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ -
12 $\eta\alpha\tau\alpha\alpha\varsigma$ $\eta\alpha\iota$ $\eta\tau\alpha\beta\omega\kappa$ $\mu\eta\mu\alpha\varsigma$ ϵ -
 $\pi\eta\alpha$ $\epsilon\tau\omicron\gamma\alpha\omega\gamma$. $\pi\epsilon\chi\alpha\iota$ $\chi\epsilon$
 $\mu\alpha\iota\epsilon\omega$ τ $\tau\alpha\omega\epsilon\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ $\eta\alpha\kappa$
 $\epsilon\pi\omicron\gamma\epsilon$ $\mu\mu\omicron\iota$. $\kappa\alpha\iota$ $\gamma\alpha\rho$
16 $\epsilon\eta\tau\alpha\kappa\chi\omicron\omicron\gamma$ $\eta\alpha\iota$
 $\chi\epsilon$ $\epsilon\eta\eta\alpha\zeta\mu\omicron$ $\omicron\gamma$
 $\alpha\gamma\eta$.



Verso (inner side)

- ... εἰς ζήτητε ἀφ' ἧς ναῖ
 20 ἐμαῖτε ρι παῖμο. τενοῦ οὔν
 ἡρετεκμῆτειωτ ετοῦααβ δι-
 δικαζε ἡπρωβ ετενοφρε δε κσο-
 οὔν δε ετβε τεκμῆτειωτ ἡται-
 24 † ταφερε ναφ : † ταας ἡ-
 παχοεῖς νειωτ ετοῦααβ
 ἀπα παγλος ριτη
 τεκμῆταλ
 28 κοῖρε ρ

1. μέν | προσκυνεῖν || 2. εττς || 3. ἐπειδή || 8. ἀναγκάζειν ||
 15. καὶ γάρ || 20. οὖν || 21-22. δικάζειν



† First of all, I bow before your precious and pious Paternity. Your Piety knows (4) that it was because of you that I gave my daughter to David. Now, here he has done me a great deal of harm, as well as to my young daughter about this 'abroad'. And he hit me twice. The cloth/object that you had taken/received (as a pledge?) for my daughter, he (8) forced me, I had to take/receive it for him, and I do not know where he put it. He quarrels with me every day. He said: 'I have fed you and your daughter', also saying: 'You (12) will give her to me and I will go with her where I want'. I said: 'I will not be able to give you my daughter (to take her) away from me'. Indeed, (16) you have sent me to say 'You shall stay. They have ...'. ... here he has done me a great deal of harm (20) about this 'abroad'. Now, then, may your Holy Paternity judge the matter in the right direction, for you know that it was because of your Paternity that I (24) gave him my daughter. To give to my holy lord and father apa Paulos from your servant (28) Koire †.

6. ⲡⲓ ⲛⲱⲙⲓ. 'Abroad' is not necessarily another country, or even another part of Egypt, but can simply refer to an unfamiliar place, anywhere outside the social unit to which one belongs, either a village, town, or monastery. For the use of this expression in monastic texts, see Anne Boud'hors, 'Aspects du monachisme égyptien: les figures comparées de Chénouté et Frangé', [in:] Florence Jullien & Marie-Joseph Pierre (eds.), *Monachismes d'Orient. Images, échanges, influences: hommage à Antoine Guillaumont* [= *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Sciences religieuses* 148], Turnhout 2012, pp. 217–225, at 223–224. The use of the 'affective article' ⲙ- reinforces the repulsion caused by this perspective.

7–9. Apparently Koire possessed a valuable object (perhaps a piece of textile), which she could use as a pledge if needed, with apa Paulos acting as an intermediary, according to a system well attested in the Coptic texts of this region (see text no. 14). It was settled between them that this pledge was to be used in favour of Koire's daughter. However, David obliged Koire to give him this object or to pledge it for him, and he took it away.

18–19. A possible reading could be ⲁⲅⲏⲁ ⲉⲁⲣⲟ, 'you have been pitied', but this use of the verb ⲏⲁ in documentary texts is not well attested.

28. The name Koire does not appear to be attested in Coptic texts.

14. Request for intercession

Inv. no. C.O. 034

8.4 × 9.2 cm

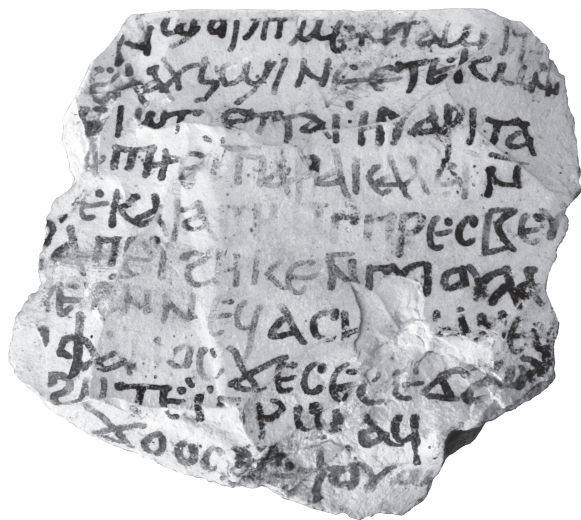
Limestone

No name of sender or recipient is preserved in this letter. The addressee is asked to intercede on behalf of a poor man and his orphans (he thus must be a widower). Actually the intercession consists of accepting a pledge from the poor man and thus lending him something in exchange or acting as an intermediary in a loan. Given the mention of the winter, the loan could be a blanket or a warm cloth or a piece of clothing, as in *O. Crum* 243, where the context is similar. For another text concerning poor people in this collection, see no. 15 below.

The text is written on one side only with traces of its end on the edge of the ostracon.

The hand is clumsy, with large upright letters.

Bibliography: Ewa Wipszycka, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte* (IV^e – VIII^e siècles) [*The Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 11], Warsaw 2009, p. 75, fig. 6 (with an incorrect identification).



ΝΩΟΡΠ ΜΕΝ ΤΑΜΝΤ-
ΕΛΑΧ(ΙΣΤΟΣ) ΩΠΙΝΕ ΕΤΕΚΜΗΝΤ-
ΕΙΩΤ ΕΤΤΑΙΝΥ. ΑΡΙ ΤΑ-
4 [Γ]ΑΠΗ ΕΪΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΙ Ν-
ΤΕΚΑΓΑΠΗ ΝΓΠΡΕΣΒΕΥ-
[Ε] ΖΑ ΠΕΪΡΗΚΕ ΝΓΧΙ ΟΥΛΑ-
[(Δ)]ΥΕ ΖΝ ΝΕΦΑΧΗ[Ρ] ΝΑΝΕΦ-
8 ΟΡΦΑΝΟΣ ΧΕ ΣΕΖΕΧΖΟΧ
ΖΝ ΤΕΪΠΡΩ. ΑΦ-
ΧΟΟΣ ΧΕ ΤΟΥΩ

1. μέν || 2. ελαχς ostr.: ἐλάχιστος ||
3-4. ἀγάπη || 4. παρακαλεῖν ||
5. ἀγάπη | πρεσβεύειν || 8. ὀρφανός

First, my humility greets your valuable Paternity. Be (4) so kind, I pray your goodness, and intercede on behalf of this poor (man) and take (as a pledge) a thing from his belongings for his (8) orphans, for they are in distress during winter. He said: '...'

5–6. $\pi\rho\epsilon\varsigma\beta\epsilon\gamma\epsilon$ is not very frequent in Coptic documentary texts and is generally used to express intercession in front of God in a formula like $\pi\rho\epsilon\varsigma\beta\epsilon\gamma\epsilon$ $\chi\alpha\rho\omicron\upsilon$ $\pi\pi\alpha\chi\rho\mu$ $\pi\pi\omicron\gamma\tau\epsilon$, 'Intercede for us in front of God'. See, however, *P. Mon. Epiph.* 478 (translation only), where $\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma\beta\eta\tau\eta\varsigma$ is interpreted by Crum as $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}\tau\eta\varsigma$, but could well be $\pi\rho\epsilon\varsigma\beta\epsilon\gamma\tau\eta\varsigma$.

7. $\alpha\chi\eta\rho$ (Crum, *Dict.*, p. 18a) seems to be an equivalent for the more usual $\sigma\kappa\epsilon\gamma\epsilon$. The same word is found in *O. Crum* 243 mentioned above. On the process of loan against security in the Coptic texts from this region, see Seřna Bacot, 'Avons-nous retrouvé la grand-mère de $\kappa\omicron\lambda\omega\chi\epsilon$?', [in:] *CoptCongr.* VI/2, pp. 241–248, at 244–245.

11. The interpretation of $\tau\omicron\gamma\omega$ remains uncertain: is it 'I am ceasing or finishing', or is it rather an imperative 'make (my misery) cease'? A third solution could be $\tau\omicron\gamma\omega[\omega]$, 'I wish', with a short complement no longer visible on the edge.

15. Request for clothing for poor people

Inv. no. C.O. 041

16.8 × 13 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

The letter, where no names of sender or recipient are preserved, is about protecting a woman and her young children. She was perhaps in debt and her belongings taken as security. There are several intermediaries in this matter, namely the sender, the recipient, and people in Toout, the latter being apparently responsible for the harm done to the woman. This woman may have been a widow, or her husband was in jail in Toout.

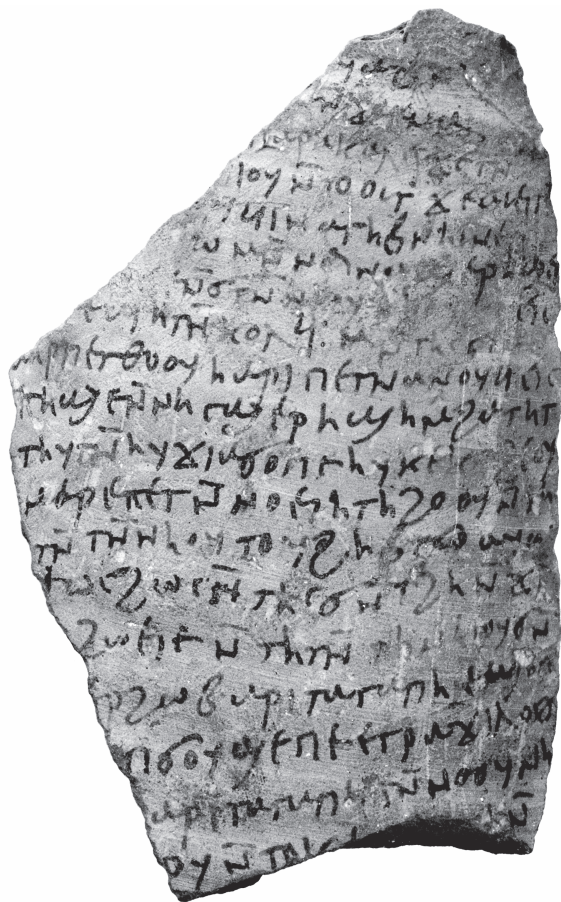
The script is quite exercised, with some ligatures (especially $\epsilon\iota$), and some letters significantly larger (especially ϱ); α is frequently open, η is written as minuscule 'h'.

The text displays some particular orthographic and grammatical features:

(1) η frequently replaces ε (or the superlinear stroke between two consonants), as well as α (πηγε, νηογ) and even ο (τηννηογ); conversely, ε can replace η.

(2) νοειη (l. 12) is a southern form of να: cf. *O. Crum ST* 287 (ναειη); the same kind of variation could be observed for ζωειε (l. 16), provided that its interpretation as a form of ζοι is correct.

(3) The forms of the conjunctive are ν̄ο- (l. 8), ν̄τητ̄ν- (ll. 13–14), ν̄τησ- (l. 15), τ̄ογ- (l. 16).



-
- [---] . [---]
 [---] λιας .
 [---] . η χ?εμα
 4 [---] παρακαλει δε τ̄ν-
 [νηογ η] ηογ ν̄τοογτ δε αχει η-
 [---] αχχι νατηννηγε?
 [? νε] γω μ̄ν να ναθερη ωει
 8 [αρι π] μεγε ν̄οτ̄ννηογ ηογ δε εις
 [ζηη] τε {α} τητ̄νχολη : μητης ο̄ρη
 . . . ρ πετ̄οογ η αρι πετ̄νανογ η εις
 τ̄πηδε ν̄νησθερη ωμη ρατητ
 12 τητ̄ν ηχχι αβοις ηγκεκαρεογ
 μαρεπετ̄ννοειη τηροογ ν̄τη-
 τ̄ντηννογ τογζησβ αγω
 †ωσ ζωσ ν̄τησβ̄ν τ̄νη ν̄χι
 16 ζωειε ν̄τητ̄ν τηνη τ̄ογσ̄ν
 ερ ζωβ αρι ταγαπη εωοπ
 πσογδε πε ετραχι λογ(ος)
 αρι ταγαπη τ̄ννοογ ηη-
 20 ογ ν̄τοκ . [. . .] . ν̄-

4. παρακαλεῖν || 9. χολή || 17. ἀγάπη || 19. ἀγάπη ||
 23. λογς ostr.: λόγος

I give below a kind of standardized version of the text, which does not have any other aim than to show clearly my choices in the interpretation.

-
- [---] . [---]
 [---] λιας .
 [---] . νδεμα
- 4 [---] παρακαλει δε τῆ-
 [νοοῦ ν] αὐ ἡτοοῦτ δε αὐει ἡ-
 [---] αὐει πατβνοοῦε
 [?] νε] γω μῆ να ναωρε ωημ.
- 8 [αρι π] μεγε ἡγτῆνοοῦ ναυ δε εις
 [ζηη] τε {α} τετῆχολη : μντς οῦμ
 . . ρ πετθοοῦ η αρι πετνανοῦγ. εις
 τῆαωε ἡνεωρε ωημ ρατοτ
- 12 τηγτῆ εγχι οβς εκηκηζη.
 μαρεπετῆνα ταροοῦ ἡτε-
 τῆτῆνοοῦ τεγρβω αγω
 ταας ρωως ἡς ἡ τρε ἡχι
- 16 ροι ἡτῆτῆ νς ἡ
 ερ ρωβ. αρι ταγαπη εωωπε
 ποοῦε πε ετραχι λογ(ος)
 αρι ταγαπη τῆνοοῦ ναυ
- 20 ἡτοκ . [. . . .] . ἡ-

[---] *lias* [---] of *Djeme* (4) [---] asked: 'Se[nd (a message)] to them at Toout, for they came [---] they took my cattle [--- as a] security, as well as the belongings of my young (?) children'. (8) Think of sending (a message) to them, for indeed, your anger cannot do any harm, or do good! Look, half of her young children are among (12) you, suffering from cold and being naked! May your pity reach them, send them their clothing. And also allow her to find a way of receiving (16) land from you, so that they can work. Have

charity, if there is ... that I receive a verbal (assurance), have charity and send (a message) to them. (20) You [---].

2. End of the name ρη]λιας?

3. Probably a form of Djeme. A tentative reconstruction of the line is πτοο]γ
ΝΧΕΜΑ.

5. ΤΟΟΥΤ (Tūd) is a town on the eastern bank of the Nile, opposite Hermonthis. It is often mentioned in Coptic texts of the region, as a place where there was a jail and where judicial affairs were dealt with (see, for instance, *P. Mon. Epiph.* 163 or *O. Frangé* 774).

6. ΝΑΤΗΒΝΗΓΝΕ? It is impossible to read the expected form ΝΑΤΗΒΝΗ(Ο)ΥΕ. The question mark indicates that the line could contain two extra letters, very faded, perhaps ΤΗ-, with [ΡΟΥ ΝΕ]ΥΩ in the following line.

12. ΔΟΟΠΣ is an unattested form of ΟΣΒΕΣ (from the verb ΩΣΒ).

14. The scribe must have hesitated between ρΗΒΣΩ and ρΗΒΣΟΥ.

15. The interpretation of †ΩΣ as ΤΑΔΣ is not certain at all.

16. It looks as if ΤΗΝΗ had been erased; did the scribe try to write first a form equivalent to ΝΤΟΤ ΤΗΝΟΥ?

18. ΠΣΟΥΘΕ. The meaning of this word escapes me.

16. Letter about books

Inv. no. C.O. 042

16.2 × 8.3 cm

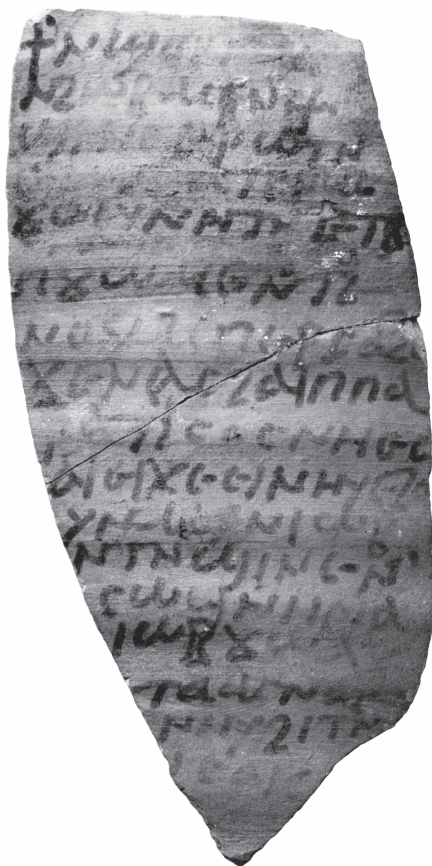
Pottery: Aswan

A woman had requested brothers to copy a book. The sender of the letter, Isak, specifies that he will take charge of the copy himself. He then mentions the dwelling of a certain Iob, which was perhaps the place where he will obtain the model for his copy. Lines 13–14 remain difficult to interpret.

The interest of this text lies in the mention of the ‘Paradise’ (ll. 8–9), an ascetic book cited in other ostraca of the region (see the commentary below).

The script is slightly sloping, quite regular if not skilful. Note a non-syllabic cut at the end of line 10.

- † ΝΩΟΡΠ ΜΕΝ
 ΝΩΩΒ ΜΙΝ †-
 ΩΙΝΕ ΕΡΩΤῆ
 4 ΕΠΕΙΔΗ ΑΤΣ. . .
 ΔΟΟΥ ΝΗΤῆ ΕΤΒ<Ε>
 ΠΧΩΜΕ ΝΤΕ-
 ΝΟΥ ΜΠΕΡΑΖῆ
 8 ΔΕ ΝΑCΖΑΙ ΠΠΑ-
 ΡΑΤΙCOC ΝΗC
 ΔΙΕΙ ΔΕ ΕΙΝΗΥ ΕΞΟ-
 ΥΝ ΜΑ ΝΙΩΒ
 12 ΝΤΝΩΙΝΕ Ν-
 CΩQ ἦ ΝΝΑ
 ΙΩΒ ΔΩΛ
 ΤΑΔC ΝΗC-
 16 ΝΗΥ ΖΙΤῆ
 ΙCΔΚ



1. μέν || 2. Ι. ΝΗΝ (ΜΙΝ CΟΓΓ. ΕΧ ΜΕΝ?) || 4. ἐπειδή ||
 8-9. παράδεισος || 9. Ι. ΝΗC? || 13. ἥ

† *First of all, I greet you. (4) Since Ts... sent you (a message) about the book, now do not copy it, (8) for we will copy the Paradise for her. I have come, because I am going to enter Iob's place (12) and we will claim it or ... To be handed to the (16) brothers on behalf of Isak.*

4. Feminine proper name starting perhaps with Tsi..., possibly Tsina, which is attested in the unpublished Coptic documents from Edfu.

8-9. ΝΑCΖΑΙ is a form of the future first person plural (cf. *O. Frangé* 1, 1. 11).

The 'Paradise' (of the Fathers) is the name of a collection of monastic apophthegms. It is also mentioned in *O. Crum* 250 ('Paradise of Scete' and ΠΠΑΡΑΔΕΙCOC ΜΠΡΟCΗ[...]), *O. Crum* 252, and *O. Crum* Ad. 23.

17. End of a letter mentioning a book

Inv. no. C.O. 009

6 × 9,5 cm

Pottery: pseudo-Aswan

Before the final greetings, the sending of a book is mentioned, a common topic in the letters from the Theban region.

Bilinear sloping script, with a somewhat thick line.



 [---] . . [---]
 [---] ϷΙΤΗ ΝΕΤῆΩΛΗΛ
 [---] ΧΩΩΜΕ Μῆ ΠΕ-
 4 [---] . ΔΑΝΤῆΝΟΟΥϸ Ἰ-
 ΤΕΚΜΗΤΕΙΩΤ †
 ΟΥΧΔῆ ϷΗ ΠΧ-
 ΟΕΙϸ

[---] *by the prayers* [---] *book and/with the* (4)
 [---] *we sent it to your Paternity. Hail in the Lord!*

18. Fragmentary letter about books

Inv. no. C.O. 308

4.4 × 5.7 cm

Pottery: Aswan

Bilinear upright script.



[---] *traces*
 [---] . ΩΗ : ΔΡΙ ΤΑ-
 [ΓΔ]ΠΗ ΝΓϸΕΝΩ
 4 [---] ϷΥΔΓΓΕΛΙ-
 [---] . . . ϷΖΗ .

2-3. ἀγάπη || 4-5. εὐαγγέλιον

3. Only the prenominal form $\kappa\epsilon\omicron\omicron$ - is registered in Crum, *Dict.*, as a form of the factitive $\tau\kappa\alpha\omicron$ (435b), 'to make, to provide'. However, *O. Frangé* contains many attestations of two other forms, namely $\kappa\epsilon\omicron\omega$ and $\kappa\epsilon\omicron\alpha\chi$. For the use of $\kappa\epsilon\omicron\omega$ in the context of book production (rare), see *O. Frangé* 79, where the meaning is probably the same as here: not only the copying is concerned, but the complete making of a book, especially the covering.

4-5. $\epsilon\gamma\alpha\gamma\epsilon\lambda\iota\omicron\upsilon\omicron$ as a book is mentioned in the book lists *O. Vind. Copt.* 148 & 149.

5. Traces of the name of the book of Ezekiel?

19. Letter

Inv. no. C.O. 004

15 × 13.3 cm

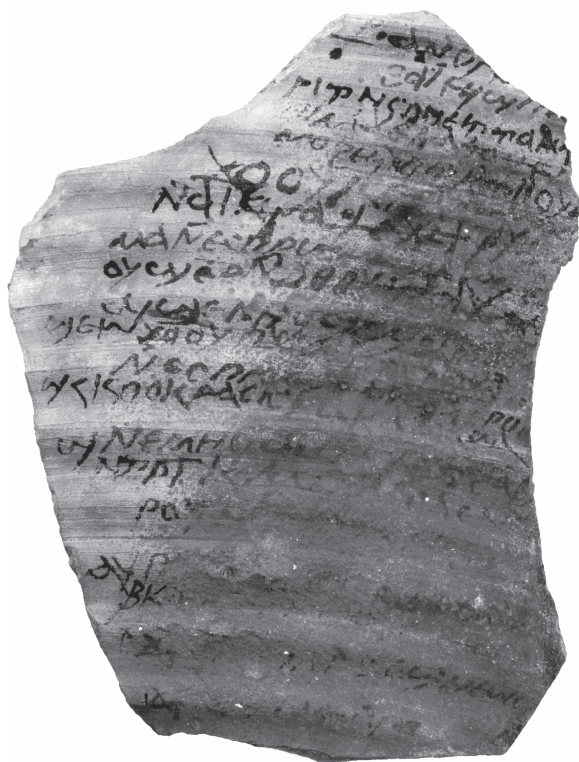
Pottery: LRA 7

Left part of a letter whose contents are almost completely obscured by reading difficulties. Only the initial formula is recognizable, and a shepherd ($\mu\alpha\ \bar{\eta}\epsilon\sigma\omicron\omicron\upsilon$) may be mentioned on line 5.

The right lower part of the ostrakon is erased. The script is very irregular and the scribe seems to have had difficulty dealing with the ribs. τ has remarkable appendices at the extremities of the horizontal stroke.

Most of the readings are dubious.

- $\text{ⲡ } \Delta\text{NOK} [--- \text{C-}]$
vac. $\text{ⲉⲁⲓ } \epsilon\varphi\omega\iota\eta\epsilon [\epsilon\pi\alpha\mu\epsilon-]$
 $\text{ⲣⲓⲧ } \text{NCON } \epsilon\tau\tau\alpha\eta\tau [---]$
 4 $\text{ⲛⲓⲡ } \chi\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\ \theta\epsilon\ \eta [---]$
 $\text{ⲛⲟⲗ\epsilon\tau. } \omicron\Upsilon [---]$
 $\chi\omicron\omicron\Upsilon \eta \text{ traces } [---]$
 $\text{ⲛⲁⲓ } \kappa\eta\alpha\tau\epsilon\ \chi\epsilon\ \tau\text{ⲣ} [---]$
 8 $\mu\alpha\ \bar{\eta}\epsilon\sigma\omicron\omicron\upsilon \text{ traces } [---]$
 $\omicron\Upsilon\omega\epsilon . . . \omicron\Upsilon\tau . \iota\chi . . . [---]$
 $\lambda\iota\omega\epsilon\ \eta\eta\chi . \text{ traces } [---]$
 $\omega\epsilon\mu\chi\omicron\omicron\Upsilon \text{ ⲡⲭ traces } [---]$
 12 $\bar{\eta}\epsilon\sigma\text{ⲡ } \text{traces } \rho\omicron . [---]$
 $\alpha\kappa\kappa\text{ⲡⲟ}\kappa\alpha\alpha\varsigma . \text{ traces } \mu\alpha [---]$
 $\omega\ \bar{\eta}\epsilon\mu\eta\chi \text{ traces } \xi\alpha\varsigma [---]$
 $\eta\tau\text{ⲣ}\tau\kappa \text{ traces } [---]$



- 16 ρΟΥ *traces* [---]
 αΥΠ *traces* [---]
 ΒΚ *traces* [---]
 ΡΧ *traces* ΕΩΝΕΜΗ . [---]
 20 Χ *traces* [---]

1. Ι. ΕΤΤΑΙΝΥ || 4. κατά

I, [---] write and greet my beloved brother, precious in every [---].

(4) According to [---].

3. [ΚΑΤΑ ΣΜΟΤ] in the lacuna?

15. Read ΝΤΟΟΤΚ?

20. Letter to a priest

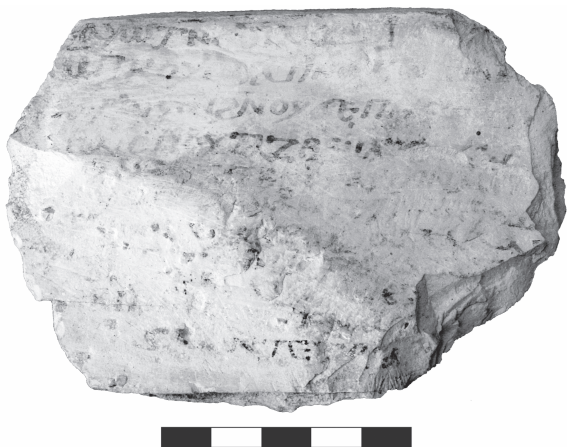
Inv. no. C.O. 002

8 × 11.5 cm

Limestone

Fragmentary letter. No proper name is preserved, and the contents remain obscure, except for some well-known formulas.

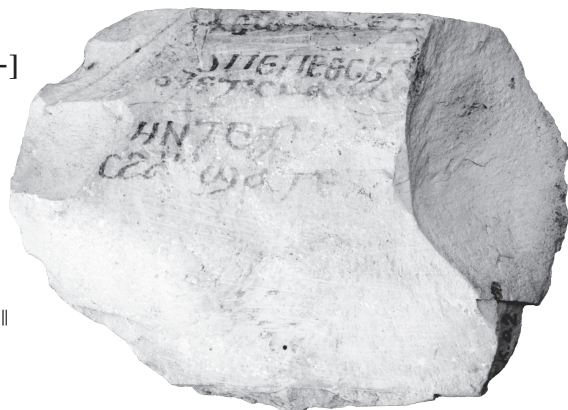
The fragment is inscribed on both sides. Side (b) is recto, while side (a) contains the address. The script is bilinear, only slightly sloping, and tends to be close to the unimodular script used in literary manuscripts (this is particularly striking on the verso). The ink is much faded.



- 1^o [---] αΥΩ Τῆς ΠΑΖΕ *traces* [?]
 [---] ἡ ΠΚΟΓΙ ΩΑ ΠΝΟς *traces* [?]
 [---] . . ΕΡΩΤῆ Ζῆ ΟΥΘΕΠΗ Ε *traces* [?]
 4 [---] . ΧΕ ΑΙΣΠΟΥΤΑΖΕ ΕΜΑΤΕ *traces* [?]
 [---] *traces* ΤΕΝΟΥ ΑΡΙ ΠΝΑ ΝΤΕ[ΤΗ-]
 [---] *traces* ΩΑ ΝΤΕΤῆΜῆΤΗ . [?]
traces Α *traces* ΑΛΛΑ ΑΙ[?]
 8 *traces*
traces ΕΤ[---]
traces ΕΝΑ . [---]
 [ΟΥΧΑΙ] Ζῆ ΤΩΟΥ ΝΤΕΤΡΙΑς

- v^o 12 [ετοῦααβ † τ]αας μπεππετο[γααβ ---]
 [---] . πεπερεσβ(γτερος) [---]
 [---]οῦ ετςμαμαατ [---]
 [αρι ταγαπ]η ητετηκ . . [---]
 16 [---]εχαί αα τετηη[---]

1. ἀσπάζεσθαι || 4. σπουδάζειν || 7. ἀλλά || 11. Τριάς ||
 13. περεσβ ostr.: πρεσβύτερος || 15. ἀγάπη



[--- we ---] and we greet [---] from the youngest to the oldest [---] to you
 hastily (4) [---] I tried hard [---]. Then have the kindness and [---] to (?)
 your [---] but I did [--- (8) ---]. Hail in the power of the [Holy] Trinity!
 (12) To be given to our holy [---] the priest [---] blessed [---].
 [Have the chari]ty and (16) [---] write to your [---].

2. αἰν]μ πκογι?

6. αα is either the preposition or the end of the verb μνωα, 'to be worthy', which, in this kind of letter, frequently expresses the wish of the sender to be worthy of meeting the addressee.

μνημα[ινουτε, 'piety'?

12-14. It is hard to determine where the names of both the sender and the addressee were written.

15. A thin line seems to have been drawn between the address and this last sentence, which is probably a kind of post-scriptum. A possible reconstruction of it is 'Have the chari]ty and [allow me to] write to your [Holiness]'.

21. Letter

Inv. no. C.O. 294

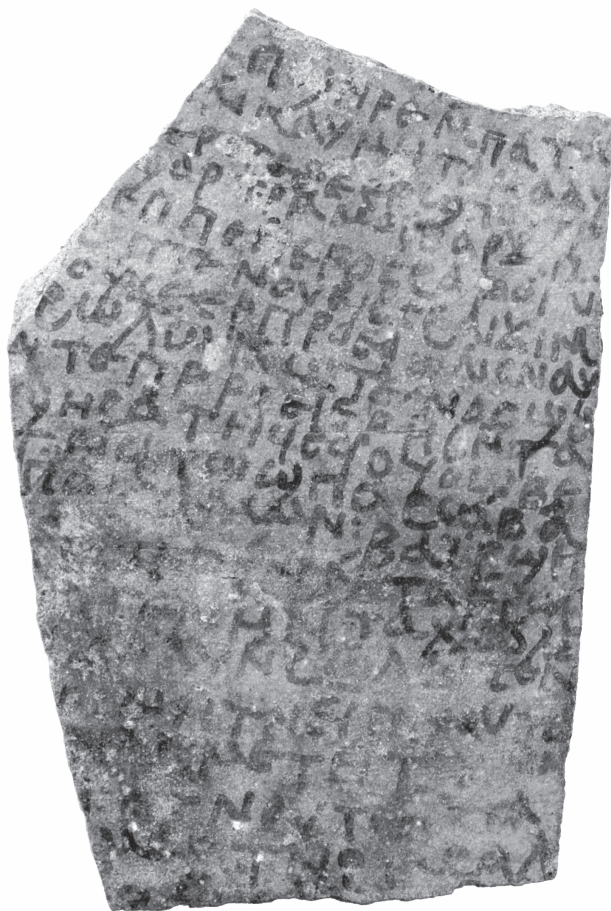
14.5 × 6.7 cm

Pottery: pharaonic sherd

Even though the text is written on both sides and quite extensive, the bad state of preservation of the ink, as well as the obviously defective ortho-

graphy of the scribe prevent me from providing any satisfactory description of the content. Given the introduction and final greetings, it is a letter. The most interesting thing is the mention of πρρο, 'the king', or 'the emperor', and his coming to the south (ll. 8-9). Two *solidi* are mentioned on line 8.

Clumsy upright script. Several non-syllabic cuts at the end of the line (ll. 9, 33, 35, 36, 38).

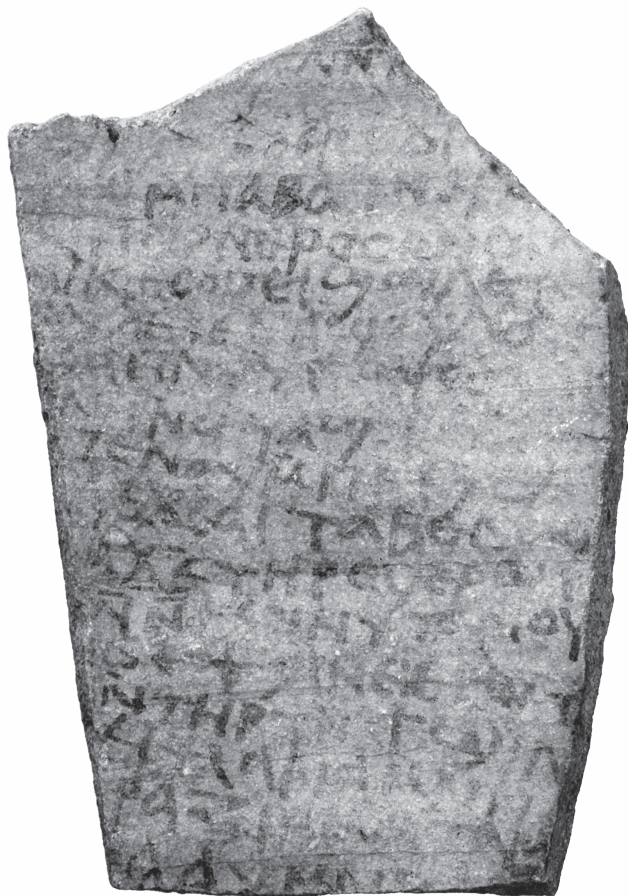


Recto (outer side)

-
- [---] . πωhre ἡπατα-
 [---] . ἡκαγ ἡη ταμααγ
 [---] ἐρετερεεῖρ αὐτορτρ
 4 [---] α<τ>ορτρ ἡμοῖ βαρχι ἡ
 [---] ἐππ . . ερος χαροῖ ἡ
 [2-3] . . ἡ τενογ εἰς ζζ αἰχι μ-
 [±2] ογχε ερ προε . ω ἡснаγ
 8 [η] χαλωκωτεινος αα-
 ντεπρρο εἰ ερhc ἡτα-
 αη χατηη εφογοαβε-
 τ ηητωα παζωβ α`η'
 12 πα φη : βαῖρωη
 ἡταῤ ρωβ
 . . ε . ἡητααω . .
 ἡλααγ ηζωβ ἡσον
 16 ητνει πῆογτε
 ἡα . . μετειτ . . . α
 νογτε πα
 ἡ τηζηαλ
 20 [---]

Verso (inner side)

-
- [---] . [---]
 [---] . NN . [---]
 [---] *traces?* [---]
 24 *traces* . οειω χι[---]
traces μπαβα . ναι . [---]
 ON ερος . νε . [.]
 ΝΚΕΟΠ ΕΙΩΔΙ . ΕΤ .
 28 Ε . Ε ΟΥΔΕ .
 ΝΝ . ΥΕ Ν
 Ν . ΝΥΤΑΩ *traces*
 ΤΕΝΟΥ ΜΠΙ
 32 ΩΔΧΕ ΔΙΤΑΒΕ ΝΑΩΔ-
 ΧΕ ΤΗΡΟΥ ΕΡΩΤ-
 Ν ΝΑΣΝΗΥ ΤΕΝΟΥ
 Σε τωινει ΕΡΩΤ-
 36 Ν ΤΗΡΤΝ τωιν-
 ει ΕΔΔ . . . ΜΝ . .
 ΡΑΖ . . . ΜΝ ΤΑΜ-
 ΑΔΥ ΜΝ . [---]



6. / εις ζηητε? || 8. δλοκόττινος ||
 28. ουδε?

6–11. ‘Now here I received ... two *solidi* until the king comes to the south and I go to him, and he answers me and fixes my case?’

31–36. ‘Now I did not ... talk, I sealed my words about you, my brothers. Now then I greet all of you, I greet ... and ... and my mother and ...’.

22. Letter to an anchorite

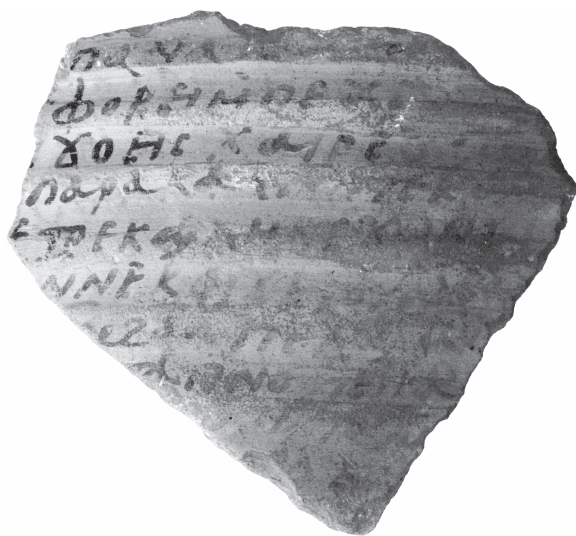
Inv. no. C.O. 028

10.7 × 13 cm

Pottery: pseudo-Aswan

Although the letter is fragmentary, the text of the first two lines points to the identification of the addressee as an anchorite, as the title 'who bears the Christ' is usual for ascetes of high rank, and the request for a prayer by raising the hands (the position of the praying figure) is frequent in monastic texts from this region.⁸

Bilinear sloping script, whose regularity recalls similar hands in the same region around the seventh century.



 [---] παναχ [?]
 [---] ε[?]φορει ἡπεχς . . . [?]
 [?] ζη[?] π[?]χοεις χαιρε [?]
 4 [?] †[?] παρακαλει ντεκμη[?]τ-
 [---] ε[?]τρεκωληλ εχων ζη[?]
 [π[?]ι ε[?]ραι] ηνεκσιχ ετογααβ .
 [---] . ζα . πε
 8 [---] †[?]αππουτε να-
 [---] *traces*
 [---] *traces*

1. ἀναχωρητής || 2. φορεῖν || 3. χαίρειν ||
 4. παρακαλεῖν

[---] *the anchorite* [---] *who bears the Christ* [---] *in the Lord, rejoice!*
 [---] (4) *I request your* [---] *to pray for us by [raising] your holy hands* [---]
 (8) [---] *God* [---].

⁸ See a list of texts for both formulas in *O. Frangé*, vol. 2, pp. 69 and 70, respectively.

2. ⲕⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲉ is expected at the end, to complete the formula.

3. ⲕⲙ ⲡⲭⲟⲓⲥ ⲭⲁⲓⲣⲉ usually ends a prescript of the ancient type (before the 5th century): $\text{Ⲁ ⲡⲉⲧⲥⲁⲓ ⲛ-Ⲗ ⲕⲙ ⲡⲭⲟⲓⲥ ⲭⲁⲓⲣⲉ}$ (M. Choat, 'Epistolary formulae in Early Coptic letters', [in:] *CoptCongr VIII*, pp. 667–678. Nevertheless, in the period of this ostrakon, many formulas are possible for the beginning of a letter.

4–5. Perhaps ⲛⲧⲉⲕⲙⲏⲧⲓⲥⲓⲱⲧ , 'your Paternity'.

23. Request for prayer

Inv. no. C.O. 067

10 × 5.5 cm

Pottery: Aswan

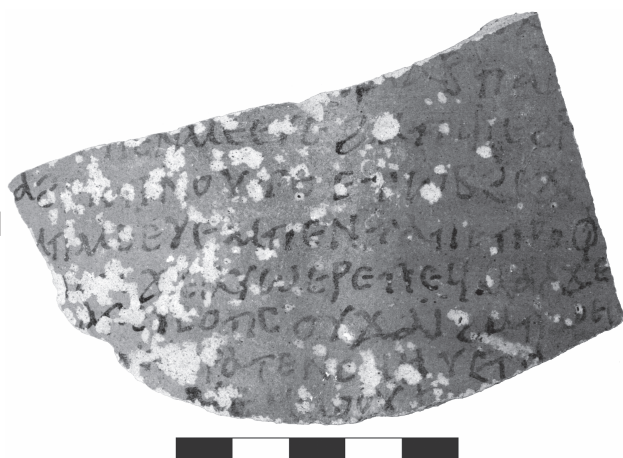
The Biblical quote and the request for prayers suggest a monastic milieu.

The surface of the ostrakon is damaged in many places.

Bilinear upright script.

-
- [---] . ⲭ [---]
 [---] ⲉⲧ ⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ ⲡⲁϥ[---]
 [---] $\text{ⲡⲉⲛⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲕⲙ ⲡⲓⲓ ⲉⲣⲣ}$ ⲁⲓ [---]
 4 [---]ⲁⲣ . . ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲱⲃⲉ ⲉⲭ . [---]
 [---]ⲙⲡⲙⲉⲉⲩⲉ ⲙⲡⲉⲛⲧⲁⲡⲉⲣⲱⲡⲓⲥ [ⲛⲧⲛⲥ ---]
 [---] . . . $\text{ⲭⲉ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉⲩⲙⲁⲁⲭⲉ}$ [---]
 [---]ⲁⲡⲉⲩⲥⲟⲛⲥ ⲟⲩⲭⲁⲓ ⲕⲙ ⲡⲭⲟⲓⲥ [---]
 8 [---]ⲛⲁⲙⲓⲥⲓⲱⲧⲉ ⲛⲥⲛⲛⲩⲩ ⲉⲧⲟⲩⲁⲁⲃ
 [---]ⲙⲉ ⲙⲙⲟⲟⲩ †

5. *προφήτης*



[---] *holy* ... [---], *remember us by raising* [---] (4) *God to pray upon* [---] *remember what the prophet* [---]. 'And His ear [---] their prayer'. *Hail in the Lord* [---] (8) *my dear and holy brothers* [---] ... †.

5–9. The quotation seems to be part of Ps. 33:16: $\text{ⲭⲉ ⲉⲣⲉⲛⲃⲁⲗ ⲙⲡⲭⲟⲓⲥ ⲃⲱⲱⲧ ⲉⲭⲛ ⲛⲁⲓⲕⲁⲓⲟⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲉⲩⲙⲁⲁⲭⲉ ⲉⲩⲣⲟⲕⲉ ⲉⲡⲉⲩⲥⲟⲛⲥ}$. If this is right, here is a possible reconstruction for the last lines:

- [---]ἡμῶν ἐν πένταπυρροφ[ήτης]
 [x]ὁς δε αὐτῷ ἐρεπεμνᾶδε [εφ-]
 [ροκε] ἀπεγχοῖς οὐχ αἶ ζῆμ πλοῖς [τα-]
 8 [ας η]ἡμ[ε]ρατῇ κσνῆς ἐτοῦ
 [ααβ ετ]μῇ μμοῦ †

... remember what the prophet said: 'And His ear is open to their prayer'. Hail in the Lord! [To be given to] my dear and holy brothers that [I love] ... †

24. Request for mercy and prayer

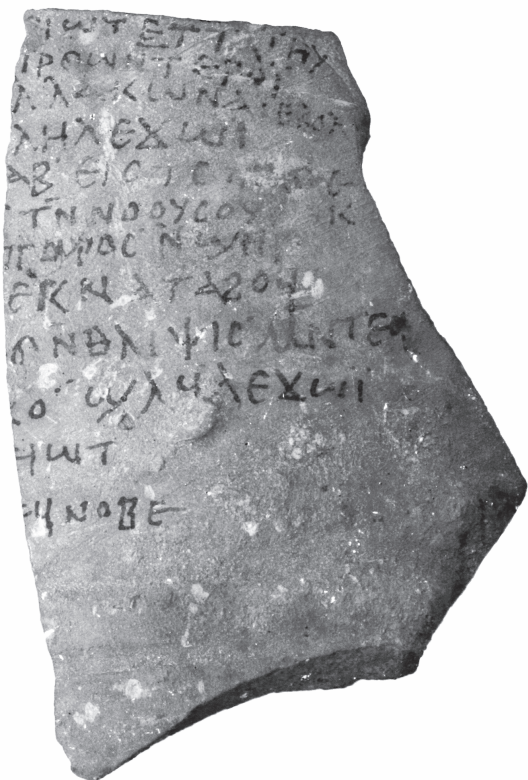
Inv. no. C.O. 123

12 × 8 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Only the right part of the text is preserved, which makes it impossible to know the subject of this letter beyond the usual expressions of politeness and humility. No proper name is mentioned.

Clumsy script, bilinear and upright. More than the half of the ostracon could be lost, at least in the first lines.



- [----- τεκμντ]ειωτ ετταῖν
 [----- η]πρωτ εροῖ
 [----- α]λλα κω ναῖ εβολ
 4 [----- ω]ληλ εχωῖ
 [ζη νεκωληλ ετογα]αβ· εἰς τεπ· σ· ε
 [-----], τῆνοογσοῦ νακ
 [----- ταλα]πωρος ἡωρη
 8 [----- π]εκνα ταρο
 [-----]ον ελιψις μη τεφ-
 [-----]χο· ωληλ εχωῖ
 [-----]ειωτ
 12 [-----]εφνοβε
 [?]

3. ἀλλά || 7. ταλαίπωρος || 9. θλίψις

[--- your] *Precious Paternity* [---]. *Do not be angry with me* [---] *but forgive me* (4) [---] *pray for me* [with your holy prayers!] *Behold, the ...* [---] *sent to you* [---] *miserable son* (8) [---. *May*] *your pity reach him* [---] *find trouble with his* [---] ... *Pray for me* [---] *father* (12) [--- *his*] *sin(s)* [?].

5. The lacuna could even be larger if we suppose [εμ πι εραι ννεκσιχ ετ-ογα]αβ.

8. μαρε]πεκνα or ερε]πεκνα.

10. σα]χο?

25. Letter with a request for prayer

Inv. no. C.O. 064

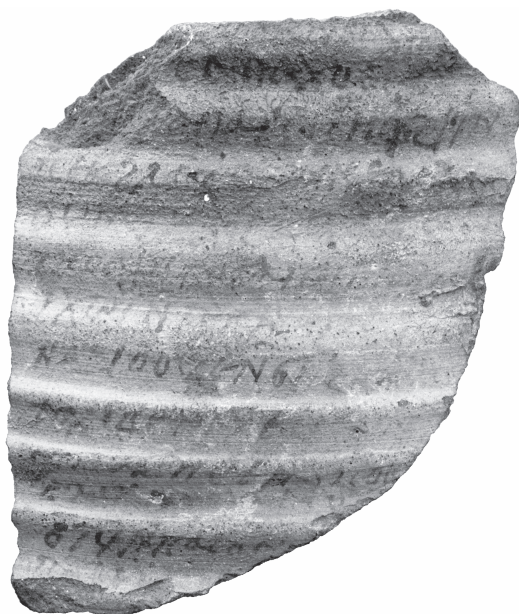
10.8 × 10.2 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

The text seems to be almost complete, but is very difficult to read and its content cannot be assessed. It starts with the address and contains a request for prayer and blessing.

Bilinear sloping script.

[---] *traces?*
[ταα]ς ἡπαχοεῖς
[---] ἀπα ἰωσφ ριτν
4 πεκρῆ *traces* ἡκε ...
traces
... ἀρι ταγαπῆ *traces*
εχωῖ ἡτεπνοῦτε *traces*
8 ναξιουγε ἡσι *traces*
... βετ ... ε *traces*
... πε ε ... κ
ετ ... ετο-
12 οτq ἡπαcon
πεκοῦι



[--- *To be given*] *to my lord* [---] *apa Ioseph from* (4) *your ...* [---]. *Have the goodness* [---] *for me, and may God* [---] (8) *my ways* [---].

4. A possible reading would be πεκρῆζαλ ἡρῆκε, 'your poor servant', but it is very uncertain.

6. (nr)ωληλ is expected at the end of the line.

8. A verb with the meaning of σοῦτην- or εἰρηεῖ is perhaps expected at the end.

10. πεκοῦι could be a proper name.

26. Request for incense and grapes

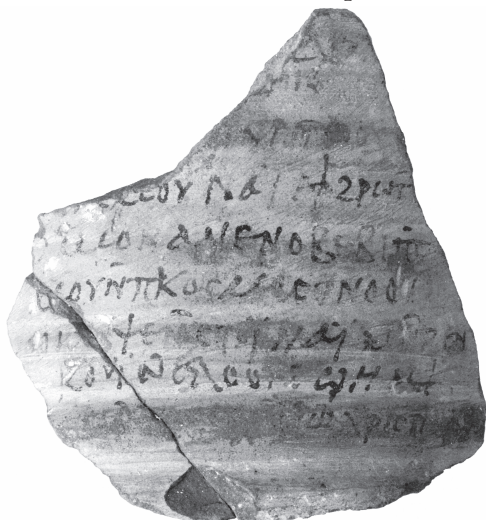
Inv. no. C.O. 107

11.7 × 13.8 cm

Pottery: pseudo-Aswan

The last line seems to have been erased; or is it because the sherd is damaged?

The script is bilinear and upright, quite skilful.



 [---] . . .
 [---] . . traces?
 [---] . οὖν τῆσοῦ
 4 οὔρμου ναὶ ἐτῆρωτ
 [---] . ἡμον ἀνεννοβε βι ἡς-
 μου ἡπκοσμος τῆσοῦ
 οὔλ[ι]τῆ ἡστοῖ ναὶ μῆ γεν-
 8 κοῦι ἡελοολε ωην †
 † τῆας traces ἰωδριςτ traces
 traces?

6. κόσμος

[---] then, send me (4) a gratification/blessing for this wine-press [---].
 For/Indeed our sins have removed the blessing of/from the world. Send me
 a little incense and some (8) small grapes. To be given to ...

5-6. Biblical reminiscence?

7. A request for οὔκοι ἡστοι ἐπτοπος ('for the *topos*) is attested in *O. Crum* 362.

9. According to the traces, a possible reading, although very uncertain, could
 be τῆας ἡεω\τ' ἀριςτωφ . . .

27. Fragment of a letter mentioning corn

Inv. no. C.O. 069

4.5 × 6.8 cm

Pottery: Aswan

The double occurrence of the Greek expression *καὶ γάρ* ('indeed, for') suggests that the text is a letter, since this expression is especially attested in such texts.⁹ The only information is the mention of an ἀρτάβη of corn (l. 3).

Bilinear upright script.

 αν . . . ηεα[---]
 και γαρ ανου . [---]
 [ο]γερτοο ηκο[χο ---]
 4 [?]φν . ησινε[---]
 και γαρ *traces* [---]



2 & 5. καὶ γάρ

2. ανουτι [---] is a possibility, but is very uncertain.

2 & 5. For *καὶ γάρ*, see Anne Boud'hors, 'γάρ et καιγάρ dans les textes documentaires coptes', [in:] S. Aufrère, Nathalie Bosson, & Anne Boud'hors (eds.), *'Labor omnia vicit improbus'. Miscellanea in Honorem Ariel Shisha-Halevy* [= *Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta* 256], Leuven 2017, pp. 93–110

28. Request for a knife

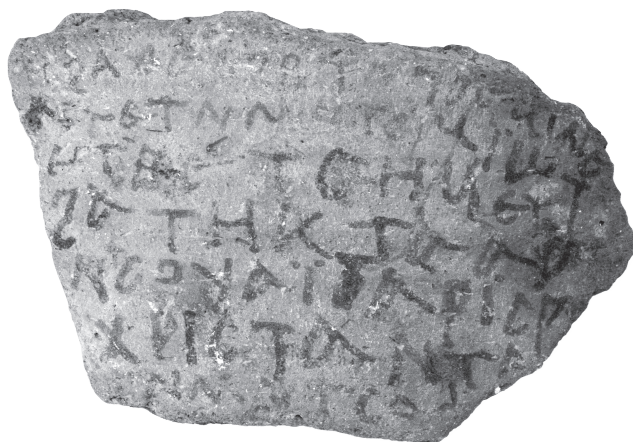
Inv. no. C.O. 147

6.7 × 10.7 cm

Pottery: household pottery
(utility ware), NT

Both the writing and the spelling of the text make it difficult to read its details with certainty. I cannot recognize the introductory formula.

Upright clumsy letters.



†† ζαθε ηζ . . . ντο . . . ε
 ντετημητε{ . }ϊωτ
 ετβε τχηε <ε>τ-
 4 ζαθηκ τααγ
 νσογαϊ ταρϊερ-
 χριστα ντε-
 τμημντσοφ[ος]

4. ζ. ταας? || 5-6. ευχαριστειν? || 7.
σοφος

†† Before ... your Paternity. Concerning the knife that (4) is with you, give it to Souai, so that I give thanks to your Wisdom [?].

3. χηε does not seem to be frequently used in documentary texts, where σοτε is generally attested with the meaning of 'knife'. One could think of χηβε, 'reed', but a reed is perhaps not so valuable as to be the subject of a request.

7. According to Förster, *WB*, σοφος and σοφία are not used for ordinary people, but only for God or Biblical figures.

29. Fragment of a letter about ropes?

Inv. no. C.O. 337

6.6 × 6.7 cm

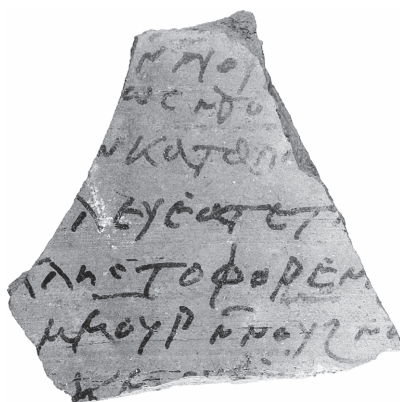
Pottery: LRA X

One or several bundles of ropes are mentioned line 6. On line 5, the personal name Christophoros is perhaps recognizable. The verso contains the address, with the end of the addressee's name (-ias), whereas the sender calls himself 'humblest'.

Bilinear sloping script.

Recto (outer side)

 [---] ἡνοῦγ[---]
 [---] ὡς ἡθο[---]
 [---] ἡ κατὰ πο[---]
 4 [---] κε]λεγεῖ ἀτετῆ[---]
 [?] χληστοφορε ἡ[---]
 ἡμοῦρ ἡνοῦγ ἡ[---]
 κελεγεῖ[---]

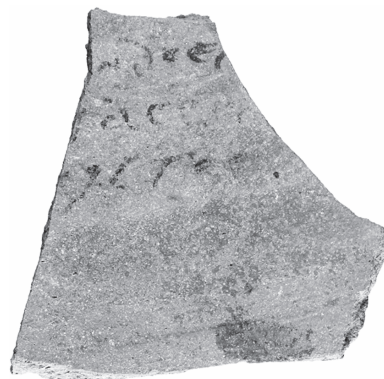


3. κατὰ || 4. κελεύειν || 7. κελεύειν

Verso (inner side)

[---] ἡλχοει[---]
 [---] ἡδς ριτ[---]
 [---] ελα]χιστος

3. ἐλάχιστος



6. Two ἡηρ ἡνοῦγ are mentioned in *O. Frangé* 752, l. 2, and several times in *O. Frangé* 756.

30. Letter requesting people or goods

Inv. no. C.O. 022d

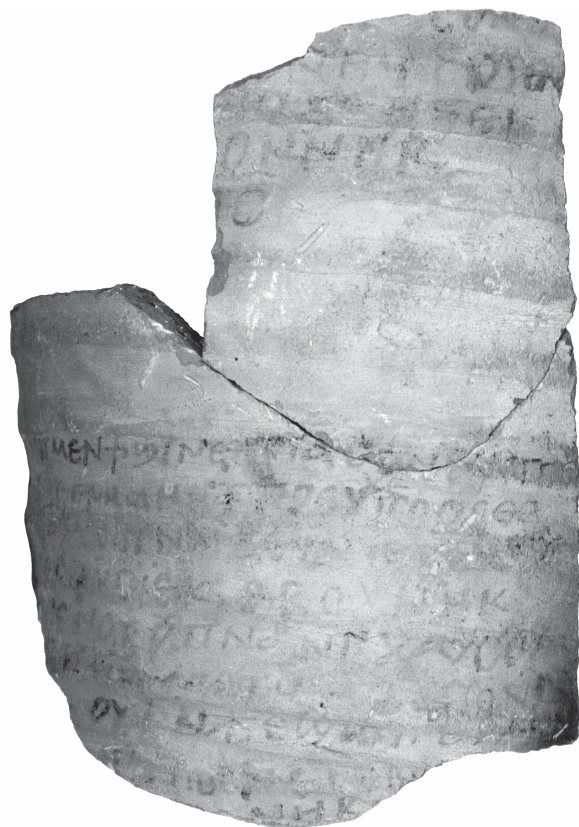
3.6 × 4.9 cm

Pottery: pseudo-Aswan

This letter is one of several texts written on the same amphora (the discussion of this phenomenon will come in another article). Although the details of the contents remain uncertain, the topic sounds familiar: the

sender is asking for somebody or something that had been announced by the addressee and has not yet come.

The script is bilinear and upright. The ink is much faded.



† ΕΥΩΠ ΜΕΝ †ΩΙΝΕ ΕΠΑΘΝ ΕΥΣΤ . . .
†ΩΙΝΕ ΕΝΑΔΝΗΥ ΤΗΡΟΥ \ΧΕ/ ΠΡΟΣ ΘΕ
traces ΟΟΓ ΝΑΙ ΧΕ *traces*

4 . . ΟΥΧ. ΝΕΙΕ. ΕΒΟΛ ΝΗΚ
ΤΕΝΟΥ † ΠΝΑ ΝΓΧΑΥΟΥ
ΝΗΝ ΣΙΤΟΥΤ *traces* ΟΝ . .
ΟΥ . . . ΕΩΩΠΕ . . .

8 Ν Ε
ΝΗΚ

1. μέν || 2. πρός

† *To begin with, I greet my brother Eust... I greet all my brothers. Since you sent me a message, saying (4) '... to you', then have the kindness to send them to us through ...*

1. ΕΥΣΤΑΘΙΟΣ or ΕΥΣΤΑΘΕ are expected, but I cannot read either of them.

3. Probably ΝΤΑΚΤΗΝΟΟΥ or ΝΤΑΚΧΟΟΥ at the beginning.

31. Request for a personal meeting

Inv. no. C.O. 222+252

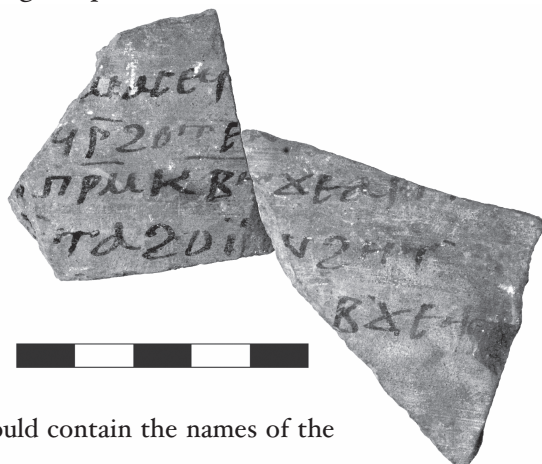
7.8 × 9.2 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

The text mentions a 'man from Koptos', perhaps the addressee (l. 3). If the interpretation is right, the sender asks this man to join him in the north (ll. 3-4).

The two fragments were joined by examining the photos.
Bilinear script, slightly sloping.

[---]μας εϗ[---]
[---]ϗῖ ροτε | [---]
[---] . πρῖ κβτ̄ | ξε αρ̄ι τ̄[α-]
4 [γαπн н]τ̄ταροῖ [ε]нρητ̄
[---]τ̄[ca. 6]β̄ ξε †



1. If this line is the first one of the letter, it could contain the names of the correspondents, possibly $\epsilon\omega\mu\alpha\varsigma$ for the sender?
2. $\pi\rho\epsilon\lvert\kappa\bar{\iota}\rho$ ροτε as an epithet of the recipient ('pious')? See *O. Frangé* 341.

32. Beginning of a letter

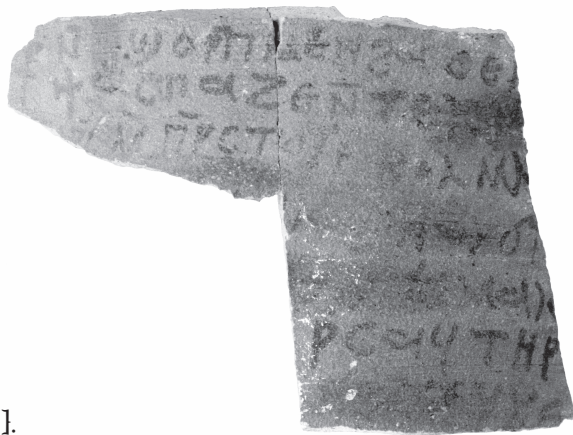
Inv. no. C.O. 119+254

7.3 × 6 cm

Pottery: Aswan

The script is bilinear and upright, not very skilful.

† ἡωροπ̄ι μεν ρα θε η[---]
† ασπαζε ἡτεκμ̄[нт ---]
 . ἡπ̄ρστοῖ εβολ μη[---]
4 [---] . . . ποϗσ̄η[---]
[---] . . . μακ[---]
[---]ρσαϗ τηρ[---]
[---] . . . ευχα[ριστα ---]



1. μέν || 2. ἀσπάζεσθαι || 7. εὐχαριστεῖν

† To begin with, before [---] I kiss your [---].
Do not rebuke me [---] thank [---].



34. Beginning of a letter

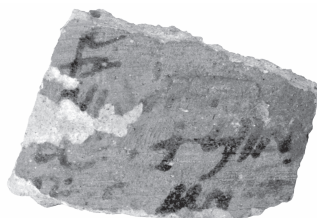
Inv. no. C.O. 062

2.9 × 4.3 cm

Pottery: Aswan

Bilinear sloping script.

† ΝΩΟΡΠ
 ΜΕΝ †ΩΙΝΕ [Ε]
 ΤΕΤΝΜΝΤ[---]



† To begin with, I greet your [---].

35. Beginning of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 071Y

12.1 × 11.2 cm

Pottery: Aswan

After the first five lines, which seem to contain only greetings, the text is completely erased.

Bilinear sloping script.

† ΩΟ-
 ΡΠ ΜΕΝ † . .
 ΝΤΕΤΝ . [?]
 4 traces [?]
 traces ΜΕΡΙΤ Ν . . .

 2. μέν



† To begin with, I [---] your [--- (5) ---]
 beloved [---].

4. It is tempting to read ισακ in the middle of the line, but without any certainty.

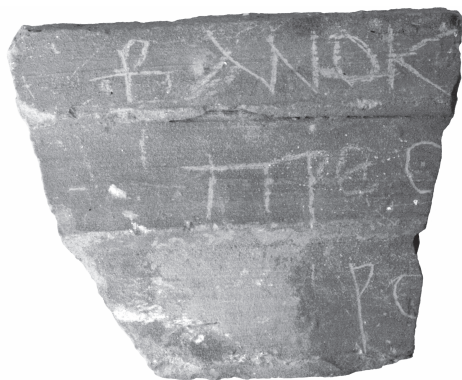
36. Beginning of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 087

6.3 × 7.6 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Bilinear upright script. The text is not written with ink, but engraved.



† ΑΝΟΚ [---]

ΠΡΕΣ[---]

[.] ΡΟ[---]

2. *πρεσβύτερος?*

37. Beginning of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 225

10.8 × 10.2 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Bilinear upright script.



† ΝΑΘΡ[π ---]

. ΗΕΙ †[---]

ΤΗΜΕΝΤΕΙΩΤ ΕΤ[---]

4 *traces* ΕΡΩΤΗ . . . [---]*traces of ca. 10 lines*

† *To begin with / Before* [---] Ι [---]
your Paternity [---].

38. Beginning of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 271

7.4 × 5.6 cm

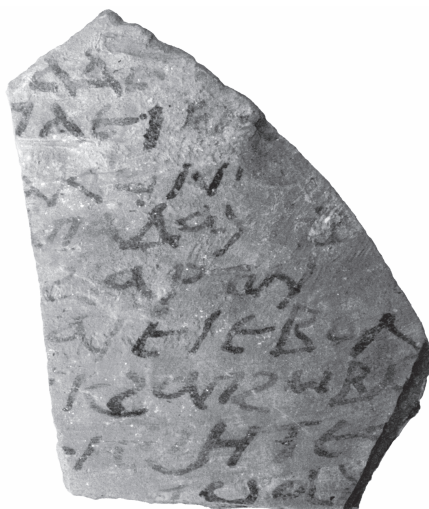
Pottery: LRA 7

The letter begins with the address, as sometimes happens. Then, it follows a common outline, but breaks too soon to provide any substantial information.

Bilinear sloping script.

- [Ϝ τ]ααϙ
 [μ]παειωτ
 [πλι]ακων . .
 4 [---] ἀπα δαυειδ
 [μν νετ]ζαρωγ
 [επλδη] διει εβολ
 [χιτοο]τκ ζα πζωβ μ-
 8 [---] εις ζητε ἀ[ι-2]
 [---] πωδζ[ε ---]

3. διάκων || 5. ι. ζαρωγ? Εξ ζαρωτη σοπ?



[Ϝ] *To be given to my father the deacon* (4) [---]. *Apa Daueid and those who are with them.* [Since] *I left you because of the thing of* (4) [---], *behold,* [---] *the word* [---].

3-4. A possible reconstruction is [πλι]ακων ![ω][[χηφ μν] ἀπα δαυειδ.

39. Beginning of a letter

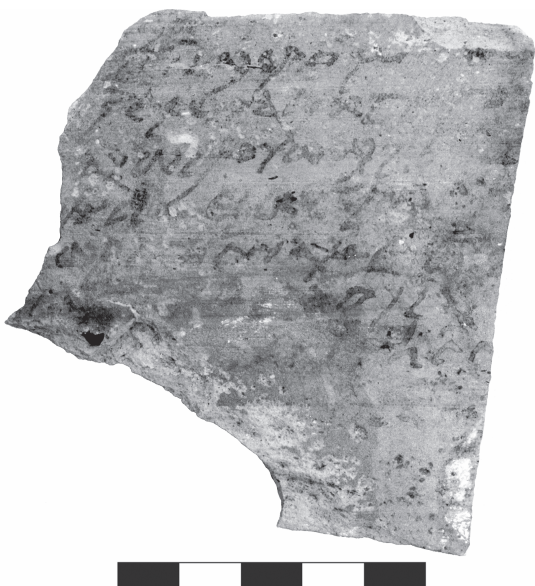
Inv. no. C.O. 279

8.5 × 8.7 cm

Pottery: Aswan

If the text breaks after line 7, it could be an exercise. All that is visible concerns greetings.

Bilinear sloping script.



- † ἡγορη μεν . . . [---]
 τε μπαειωτ . . . [---]
 αγω εἰσωωτ ε . . . [---]
 4 ειωτε ιω . . [---]
 ω . . . ἡναμερατε [---]
 . . . ετογααβ κα[---]
traces ης [---]
 8 *traces*
vac.?

1. μέν

† *Before* [---] *of my father* [---]. *And I am*
bowing before [---] (4) *... fathers* [---] *my*
beloved [---] *holy* [---].

2. τε could be the end of ογερντε, 'feet'; in this case the missing part of the text on the right would be quite long, as a formula such as †/εἰπροσκυnei επεγπο-ποδιον ηνογερντε μπαειωτ ('I worship the footstool of the feet of my father ...') could be expected.

4. Perhaps the beginning of ιωθαννης?

40. End of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 021

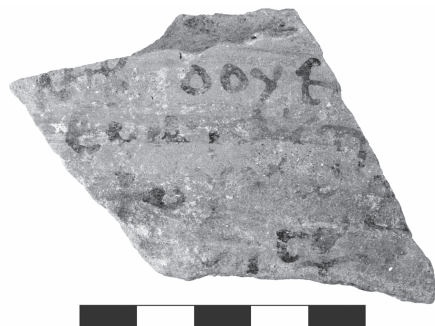
4.3 × 7.7 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Only traces of the final greetings are preserved ('Hail in the Lord!'), as well as the mention of cattle (l. 1)

Bilinear handwriting. The script is not very skillful; the letters are well separated.

 ΝΤΒΝΟΟΥΕ [---]
 ΕΜΑΤΕ . Π[---]
 † ΟΥΧΑΙ † Ζ[Μ ΠΧΟ-]
 4 ΕΙC †



41. End of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 045

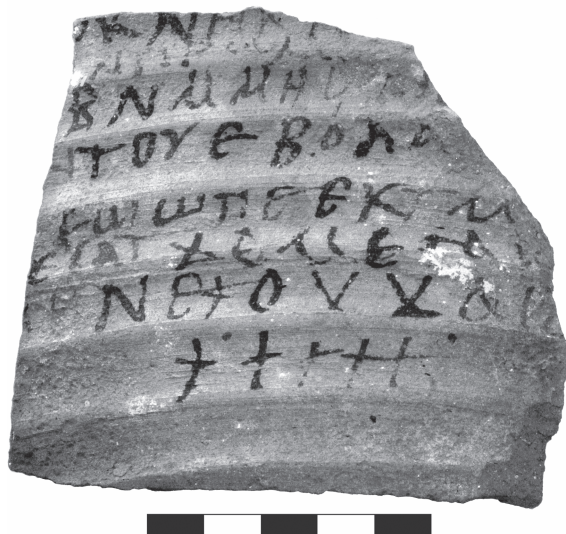
8.4 × 10.3 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Djeme is mentioned in line 6. The letter ends with five crosses, while the usual number of crosses in this case is one or three: the scribe perhaps wanted to fill the space left empty.

Bilinear upright script, somewhat clumsy.

 [-----] . ΚΝ . . . [---]
 [-----] ΝΠΡΩΜΕ [---]
 [--- ΖΩ] Β ΝΜΜΗΓ Ν . [---]
 4 [-----] ΝΤΟΥ ΕΒΟΛ Δ[---]
 [-----] ΕΩΩΠΕ ΕΚΤΜ[---]
 [-----] ΕΙ ΝΧΕΜΕ ΤΑΡ[---]
 [-----] . ΕΝΕ † ΟΥΧΑΙ † Ζ[Μ]
 8 [ΠΧΟΕΙC] † † † † †



[---] *the man* [---] *matter with him* [---]
 (4) ---] *bring them out* [---] *if you do not*
 [---] *come to Djeme, I shall* [---] † *Hail in*
 (8) [*the Lord!*] † † † † †

42. End of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 047

7.4 × 5.5 cm

Pottery: utility ware
(part of *saqqiya*-pot)

This small fragment can be identified as the end of a letter, thanks to the preservation of keywords usual in this kind of text.

Bilinear script.



 [-----] ἀπὶ π[---]
 [-----] φλῆλ] ἐχθῆ [---]
 [-----] , ἐτοῦ[ααβ [---]
 4 [--- οὐχαὶ ἔμ] πλῶεῖς [---]
vac.

[---] *Have the kindness/Remember* [--- *pray*] *for*
me [---] *holy* [--- (4) ---. *Hail in*] *the Lord!*

1. να or μεεγε in the lacuna after ἀπὶ π[.

2-3. One thinks of the formula 'pray for me by raising your holy hands' (cf. 22 and 23), but the traces preceding ἐτοῦααβ do not fit this hypothesis very well.

43. End of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 055

8.9 × 5.7 cm

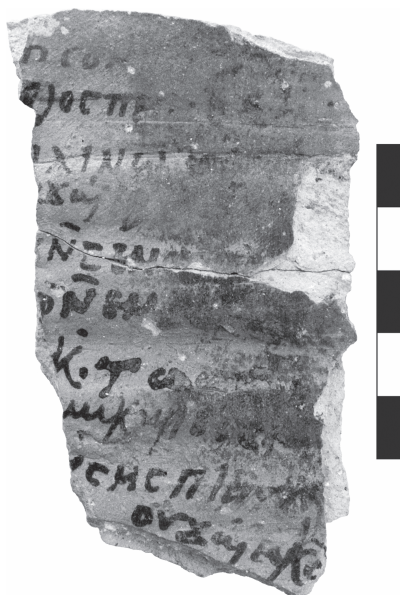
Pottery: Aswan

At the end of the text the names of the sender (the humblest Mouses, probably a cleric or a monk) and recipient (Makarios) are legible. The content of the letter remains in the dark, partly because of the damaged state of the pottery.

Bilinear script, slightly sloping and not very regular.

- [---] *traces*
 [---] πκο *traces*
 [---] ριος πε *traces*
 4 [---] λινω *traces* [---]
 [---] χαϊζε *traces* [---]
 [---] ἡγεν *traces* [---]
 [---] ῥ ἡεμ *traces*
 8 [---] κ· ταας . . . [?]
 [---] μακαριος ριτη [?]
 [μω]υχης πελαχ(ιστος) [?]
 ογχαϊ ε . . . `.[?]

10. ελαχς ostr.: ἐλάχιστος



3. Perhaps μακαριος followed by his title (possibly a priest)?

5. One possible reconstruction could be [--- ω]ρη αϊεζαϊ, which is a typical formula for legal texts (the security clause); however, the address and the final greetings are typical of a letter.

44. End of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 065

6.6 × 8.6 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Only the last sentence, 'Hail in the Lord!', is legible.
 Bilinear upright script

- [---] . [---]
 [---] . τμη[---]
 [---] *traces?* [---]
 4 [---] *traces* τ . [---]
 [---] *traces* α[---]
 [---] η . αρκ *traces* [---]
 ογχαϊ εἰμ πχθεικ



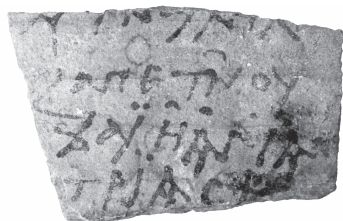
45. End of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 156

3.5 × 5 cm

Pottery: import ware

Bilinear script, slightly sloping. Note the quasi-epigraphic form of the α in ἀγία τριάς.



ΝΤΝΩΛΗΛ

εα πετνωγ-

αδῖ ἡ ἀγία

4 ΤΡΙΑΣ †

3-4. ἡ ἀγία Τριάς

[---] so that we pray for your health/salvation. Holy Trinity!

46. End of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 255

7 × 9.6 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Bilinear upright script.



Μ κα[-----]

. ε ν . . . [-----]

ΤΟΝ ΝΕ ΑΡΙ [-----]

4 ΧΕ ΤΧΡΕΙΑ[ΤΕ ΟΥΧΑΙ ΖΗ ΠΧΟ-]

ΕΙΣ ΤΑ[αc -----]

ΖΙΤῆ [-----]

. . [-----]

4. χρεία

[---] (4) *because there is need. [Hail in the Lo]rd! To be gi[ven ---] from*
[---].

4. $\chi\epsilon \tau\chi\rho\epsilon\iota\alpha$ [τε, 'because there is need', following a request, is a usual expression in Coptic letters of this region.

47. End of a letter?

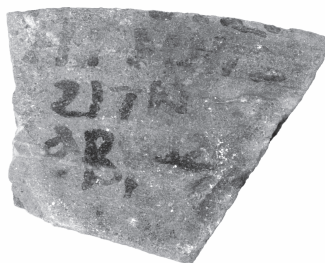
Inv. no. C.O. 259

4 × 5.2 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Bilinear upright script.

traces [---]
ⲧⲏⲙⲛⲧⲁⲟ[ⲉⲓⲥ ---]
ⲉⲓⲧⲏ . . [---]
4 ⲁⲃⲣⲁⲉⲗⲁ[ⲙ ---]
traces? [---]



[---] *your Lordship* [---] *from* [---] (4) *Abraham* [---].

48. End of a letter to Markos

Inv. no. C.O. 262+285

18.2 × 12.5 cm

Pottery: household pot

Very little is legible on this ostrakon. The closing formula 'Hail (in the Lord!)' is recognizable (l. 3), as well as the beginning of the address, the recipient probably being Markos. On line 2, there is an expression commonly found in Theban letters, namely 'so that I meet you'. The sender is probably asking the recipient to come and join him.

Bilinear sloping script, apparently regular. The surface of the ostrakon is erased, and the ink very faded.



traces [---]
traces ἸΤΑΘῆΤΚ ---]
traces ΟΥ[ΧΑΙ ---]
 4 ΤΑΔΕ ΜΠΑΔΟΝ [---]
 ΜΑΡΚ[ΟC ---]
 [---]
 [---]
 8 .. [---]

49. End of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 284

6.3 × 7.8 cm

Pottery: LRA X

Bilinear upright script.



 [---].
 [---], . ΜΗ.
 [---]ΕΡΟΚ : ΟΥΧΑΙ
 4 [ἔμ πχοει]C :
 [---] *Hail in the Lord!*

50. End of a letter?

Inv. no. C.O. 044

10.4 × 5.2 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

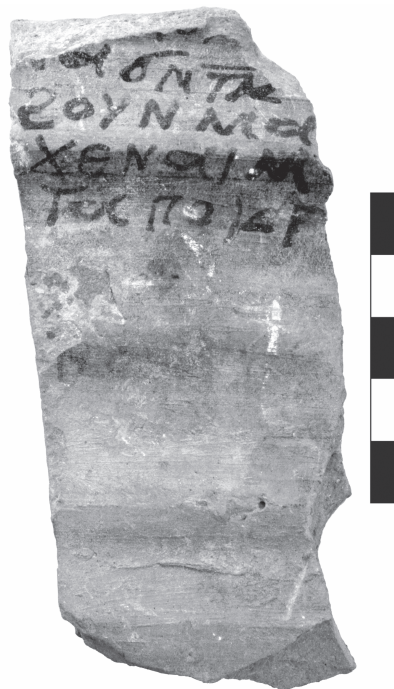
While line 5 does not fit with the usual final greetings, it seems to be the last line of the text, and the few expressions that can be identified are common in letters. Even though the text was an exercise, it was an epistolary one.

Bilinear upright script.

 [---] . . [---]
 [---] ΤΑΘΝΤΚ [---]
 [---] Ε]ΘΥΝ ΜΑ [---]
 4 [---] ΧΕ ΝΑΙ Μ [---]
 [---] ΤΑΠΟΚΡ[ΙCΙC ---]
vac.
traces
vac.

5. ἀπόκρισις

2. '[---] so that I meet you [---]'
3. It is probably about entering someone's place (see 16, ll. 10-11).
5. '[---] the answer [---]' or '[---] the affair [---]'.



51. End of a letter?

Inv. no. C.O. 046

9.6 × 9.8 cm

Pottery: household pot

Again the text breaks in the middle of the ostracon, without final greetings. It was perhaps a draft.

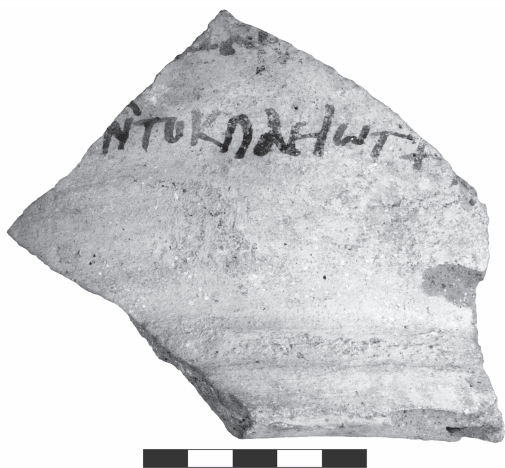
Inscribed on both sides. Bilinear upright hand.



Inner side

-
- [---] *traces* [---]
 [---]†ⲛⲁ *traces* [---]
 [---]ⲧⲁⲉⲓ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲛ ⲡⲧ . [?]
 4 [---] ⲁⲭⲓⲥ ⲛⲁⲓ
vac.

[---] *so that I go out of the* [---] *tell me* [---].



Outer side

-
- [---] . ⲃ[---]
 [---] ⲛⲧⲟⲕ ⲡⲁⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲛⲧ . [---]
vac.

[---] *you, my father.* † [---]

52. End of a letter?

Inv. no. C.O. 195

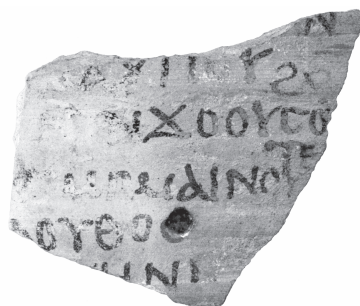
5 × 6.6 cm

Pottery: Aswan

The proper name Kollouthos is probably identifiable in line 5. He could be the recipient, if the address is recognizable from line 4 onwards.

Bilinear upright script.

 [---]N
 [---] . . ΔΙΤΟΥ ΖΗ
 [---] ΗΤΗΧΟΟΥΣΟΥ
 4 [---]ς ΜΠΜΑΙΝΟΥ`ΤΕ'
 [--- ΚΟΛ]ΛΟΥΘΟΣ
 [---] . ΗΝ .



3. '[---] so that we send them'.

4. [--- ΤΑΔ]ς ΜΠΜΑΙΝΟΥ`ΤΕ', '[To be giv]en to the pious [---]'?

53. Fragmentary letter

Inv. no. C.O. 126

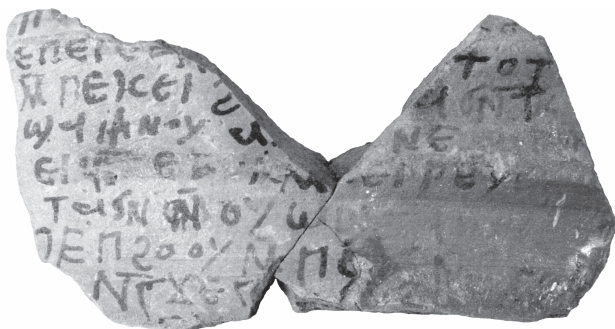
5.5 × 11 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Partly recognizable is the usual complaint of the sender for not being visited by the recipient.

Upright script, clumsy hand.

 η . [---] . . [---]
 επειεα . [---] ΤΟΤ
 ἡπεκει ε[. . (N)Τ]ΔΘΝΤΚ
 4 αα †ΝΟΥ Δ . [. .]ΝΕ
 ειγ . ΕΒΟΛ Μ . ΕΙΡΕ . . .
 ΤΑΘΝ ΝΟΥΩΥΕ *traces*
 . Ε ΠΡΟΟΥ ἡΠ
 8 ΝΓΧΕ . *traces*
 . . [---]



2. A possible reconstruction would be επει εαξ[ει εβολ ει]ΤΟΤ, 'since you left me'.

3-4. 'You did not come ... so that I can meet you until now ...'.

54. Fragment of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 036

3.1 × 4.6 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Bilinear sloping script.



 . [---]
 ΠΕΣΥ . [---]
 ΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ . [---]
 4 ΤΙΝΑΤ [---]

1. It is tempting to reconstruct the name ΠΕΣΥΝ[ΘΙΟΣ] or ΠΕΣΥΝ[ΤΕ].
2. Part of the formula ΖΑΘΗ ΜΕΝ ΝΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ, 'Before everything'.
3. 'We will give [---]'.

55. Fragment of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 040

6.2 × 7.8 cm Pottery: household storage pot, NT

The only elements preserved are the formula of request in l. 2 ('Have charity and ...') and the name of apa Ioseph (l. 3).

Inscribed on the inner side. Bilinear script. Note the minuscule shape of η (like a 'h').



 [---] . Δ[---]
 [---] ΑΡΙ ΤΑΓΑΠΗ • ΝΤ[ΕΤΗ ---]
 [---] ΑΠΑ ΙΩΣΗ[Φ ---]
 4 [---] . ΡΗ Ω[---]
 [---] . ΠΟ[---]

2. ἀγάπη

2. ΝΤ[ΕΤΗ ---] or ΝΤ[---].

56. Fragmentary letter

Inv. no. C.O. 061

12 × 7.5 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Not much can be drawn from this text, except the name Kurik[os] (l. 8).
The script looks bilinear and upright. The potsherd is much damaged.

- Ϝ *vac.* [---]
 ε . . . [---]
 πλεν [---]
 4 ναϊ . . . [---]
 traces [---]
 ωνη εβολ [---]
 τ *traces* [---]
 8 αα κυρικ[ος ---]
 εζ *traces* [---]
 traces [---]

 3. πλήν



57. Fragment of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 071x

4.5 × 3.8 cm

Pottery: Aswan

Perhaps 'I know' (l. 2) and 'we sent it' (l. 4).
Bilinear upright script.

- [---] . [---]
 [---] δε †σοογ[η ---]
 [---] . αι . [---]
 4 [---] ανξσοογς [---]
 [---] δε . . . [---]



58. Fragment of a letter

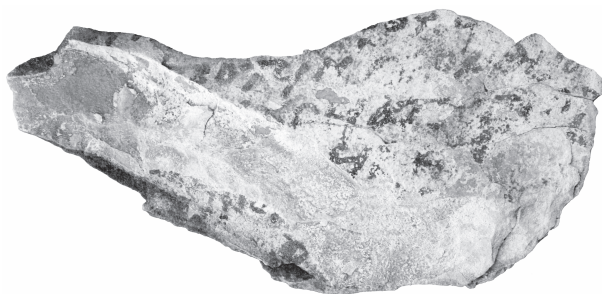
Inv. no. C.O. 089

3.2 × 4 cm

Limestone

In spite of its bad state of preservation, this ostrakon is likely to belong to the same group as the eight pieces published in Garel, 'The ostraka' (cit. n. 4).

Bilinear sloping hand.



 [---] . . [---] . ΟΥϥ[---]
 [---] ϥ]ΤΟΟΤϥ ἡ . . ΟΜΑΝΟ[---]
 [---] ΑΤΧΡ . . [---]
 4 [---]ϥ . . . [---]
 . Ν . [---]
 . [---]

59. Fragmentary letter

Inv. no. C.O. 129

6.2 × 4 cm

Pottery: pharaonic pot

Traces of six lines written on the inner side. The only recognizable words are μεριτ ἡ- (l. 3) and ἀπα ἰακωβ (l. 4).

Bilinear sloping script.



60. Fragment of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 165

3.8 × 3.7 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Flax (μαξε) is perhaps mentioned in line 4.
Bilinear sloping script.

- [---] . [---]
 [---] ΟΥΝΑ . [---]
 [---] . ΝΓΨΙ [---]
 4 [---] . ΜΑΞΕ ΝΓ [---]
 [--- Ν] ΓΨΑΔΥ [---]
 [---] . [---]



61. Fragment of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 173

7.1 × 5.2 cm

Pottery: utility ware, Mt

Bilinear upright letter, clumsy hand.

- [---] . [---]
 [---] ΝΝ [---]
 [---] ΕΥΖΑΤ [---]
 4 [---] traces ο ΔΕ [---]
 [---] Μ traces [---]
 [?] ΕΒΟΛ ΝΤΑΒΙΤ . [---]
 [?] ΤΑΤΑΞΟ ΔΝ . [---]
 8 [?] † ΝΗΥ : ΟΥ [---]
 [?] traces? [---]



4. Possibly νξογο Δε, 'moreover'?

62. Fragment of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 181

4.5 × 4 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Only the proper name Papnoute is perhaps recognizable in line 4.
Bilinear sloping script.



 . . . ΝΔΥ [---]
 ΤΑΔΔΥ ΤΗ [---]
 ΟΥΥ ΝΔ [---]
 4 ΠΑΠΝΟ [---]
 ΤΝΔΒΙ [---]
 [. . .] [---]

4. ΠΑΠΝΟ[ΥΤΕ ---]?

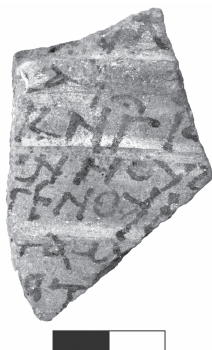
63. Fragment of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 184

5.5 × 3.5 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Bilinear sloping script.



 [---] . . . [---]
 [---] . ΔΥ . [---]
 [---] Κ ΝΓΙ . [---]
 4 ΖΝ ΝΟΥΔ [---]
 [---] ΤΕΝΟΥ . [---]
 [---] ΤΑΔ [---]
 . Τ [---]

64. Fragmentary letter?

Inv. no. C.O. 242

7 × 6.7 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

A certain David is mentioned in line 4; lines 2 and 3 probably contain other proper names.

Bilinear sloping script.

 [---]ΔΝ[---]
 . ΔΚΙΔC Ν[---]
 . ΥΛΟC ΞΜ[---]
 4 ΝΔΔΥΕΙΔ [---]
 [---]Ε . . Ν[---]
 [---] . . ΑΤΑ[---]
 [---] . . . [---]
 [---]ΟΥ[---]



65. Fragmentary letter?

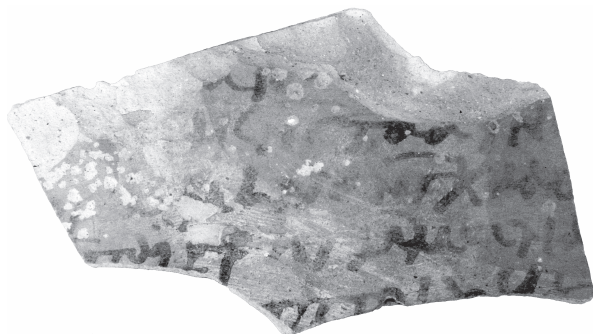
Inv. no. C.O. 280

5.8 × 11.8 cm

Pottery: Aswan

Bilinear script, slightly sloping, with some ligatures.

 [---]Δ . [---]
 [---] . ΔΚ ΝΓΤΑΔΥ Ν . [---]
 [---] . . ΜΗΝΔ ΝΓΚΑΔC [---]
 4 [---] ΝΤΑΙΕΡΗΤ ΜΜΟC ΝΔ[---]
 [---] ς . [---]



3. Is this the proper name Mena?

4. 'that I promised'.

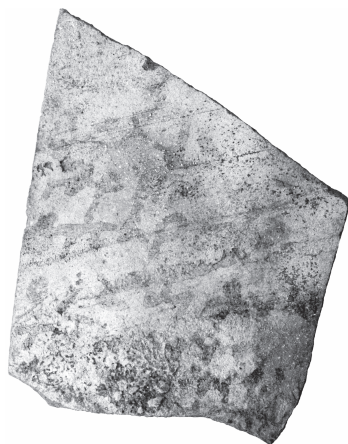
66. Fragmentary letter?

Inv. no. C.O. 281

9.6 × 7.8 cm

Pottery: LRA X

Bilinear sloping script.



 [---] . . [---]
 [---] . . ακ . [---]
 [---] γαρ ηηα . .
 4 [---] επηρεια
 [---] ουχαι αγω
 [---] τῆν οου ου
 [---] traces η . .
 8 [---] . .

3. γάρ? || 4. επήρεια

4. επηρεια is attested in *P. Mon. Epiph.* 186: πλοοις εφεξαρεξ ερωτη αγω ηφνεζη τηγτη επηρηια ηηη ητε παντικιμενος, 'The Lord guard you and keep you from all the insolence of the adversary'.

67. Fragment of a letter?

Inv. no. C.O. 295

3.3 × 4.8 cm

Limestone

Unimodular script of the Biblical majuscule type.



[---] ου αρη ηη[α ---]
 [---] γῶ ηη . [---]
 [---] . κ[---]

1. 'Have kindness [---]'.

68. Fragment of a letter

Inv. no. C.O. 315

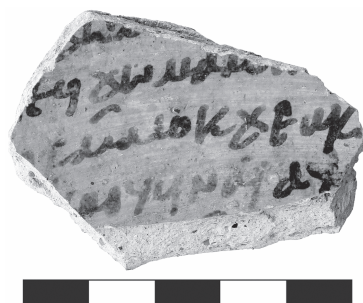
4.1 × 5.4 cm

Pottery: plate, Aswan

The traces of $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota\Delta\eta$ (l. 1), as well as the mention of sending (l. 4) support identifying this text as a letter.

Bilinear script, slightly sloping.

 [--- $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota\Delta\eta$. [---]
 [---] . $\epsilon\varphi\chi\omega$ $\mu\alpha\mu$. [---]
 [---] . ϵ $\mu\mu\omicron\kappa$ $\chi\epsilon$ $\alpha\kappa$ [---]
 4 [---] $\chi\omicron\omicron\gamma\gamma$ $\mu\alpha\iota$ $\alpha\gamma$ [---]
 [---] . [—]



1. $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\iota\delta\eta$

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$\alpha\eta\theta\epsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ – I 2 16

$\beta\iota\kappa\tau\omega\rho$ (πρεσβύτερος) – I 19–20; 2 10; 4 13;
 5 11

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(χωωρ)

[---]iас – 29 v° 1

Toponyms

Djeme – 15 3 (?); 41 6

Ṭūd – 15 5

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