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A MONK'S PETITION FROM KARANIS*

1. INTRODUCTION

FOUND IN THE VILLAGE OF KARANIS, this papyrus preserves the beginning of a petition to the *strategos* from a man identified as an 'apotactic monk from the city of the Arsinoites'. Though fragmentary, enough is preserved to see that in the opening of his petition the monk describes his way of life in a community of such apotactics, before turning to the substance of the matter, where we lose the thread. The petition nevertheless offers a rare documentary glimpse of monastic self-fashioning before a state authority¹

* This papyrus was presented together with Ewa Wipszycka-Bravo (whose contribution is published below, pp. 193–229) at the University of Warsaw's Epigraphy and Papyrology Seminar, and I am grateful to my co-presenter for her learned reflections and to the organisers and participants for their feedback. I am thankful in particular to Benedetto Bravo, a generous interlocutor who provided great inspiration for the reconstruction of the text. I have also benefitted from ongoing collaboration with Roger Bagnall, Jennifer Sheridan Moss, and Rodney Ast on the later Roman texts from Karanis, both purchased and excavated, held at the University of Michigan. The papyrus is published with the permission of archivist Brendan Haug, and the edition has been made from autopsy, the digital images available in Michigan APIS (<<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/apis>>), as well as infrared images. My thanks also to Arthur Verhoogt, who kindly reinspected the original for me, and the anonymous reader for helpful comments.

¹ Egyptian monks were not shy about approaching state authorities, a tradition going back to Anthony the Great (E. WIPSZYCKA, *Monks and the Hierarchical Church in Egypt and the Lev-*

and complements the rich fourth-century archives of monks, which highlight their role as mediators between local communities and government officials.²

A discussion of the archaeological context and evidence for Christianity in Karanis follows the edition of the petition. For a detailed study of apotactic monks, the reader is directed to Ewa Wipszycka-Bravo's article below, pp. 193–229.

2. EDITION: PETITION TO THE *STRATEGOS*

P. Mich. inv. 5165a
27-C61A(=C62O)-QII³

13.5 × 10.5 cm

Karanis
mid-4th cent.

The papyrus is broken at the left and bottom. There remain three panels of about 2.5 cm in width, with two small strands of papyrus extending further to the left. The rightmost panel is shorter than the other two, with a relatively clean break under the fifth line. The top margin measures 2 cm. The text is written with the fibres, and the back is blank.

ant during Late Antiquity [= *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 40], Leuven 2021, pp. 63–66), but no other official petitions from monks survive in the papyri until the sixth-century Dioskoros archive (*P. Cair. Masp.* I 67003 and 67021); for a contemporary appeal of a non-official nature, cf. the letter regarding thefts sent to a patron by Timotheos acting on behalf of his fellow monks (*SB VIII* 9683 [unknown provenance, end of 4th cent.]). On monastic interactions with 'the world', see J. WEGNER, *Monastic Communities in Context: Monasteries, Economy, and Society in Late Antique Egypt* [= *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 41], Leuven 2021.

² Including Apa Ioannes (TM Arch 14), addressed as an *apotaktikos* in *P. Herm.* 9 (Lycopolis, end of 4th cent.), ll. 2–3. On these archives, see P. VAN MINNEN, 'The roots of Egyptian Christianity', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 40 (1994), pp. 71–85, E. WIPSZYCKA, *Moines et communautés monastiques en Égypte (IV^e–VIII^e siècles)* [= *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 11], Warsaw 2009, pp. 80–85, and M. CHOAT, 'Monastic letters on papyrus from late antique Egypt', [in:] M. CHOAT & M. C. GIORDA, *Writing and Communication in Early Egyptian Monasticism* [= *Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity* 9], Leiden – Boston 2017, pp. 17–72.

³ The Record of Objects indicates that locus 27-C61A was shown in the next season to belong to house C62 and thus should be relabelled C62O (cf. discussion below).

The restoration of line 3 provides 10 letters missing at the beginning of the line (plus part of the dotted *sigma*), although letter sizes are quite variable in this hand, and the beginning of line 5 seems to require a few more letters (see note *ad loc.*). We therefore estimate that about 10–13 letters are missing at the beginning of each line. Probably only two panels are missing from the left, which would make the original width of the sheet about 12.5 cm, narrow, but not unprecedented among fourth-century petitions in ‘portrait’ format (Isidoros’ petition mentioning a monk and a deacon, *P. Col.* VII 171 [Karanis, 324], is 12 cm in width, for instance).

The date of the petition is lost. The hand is a lively cursive that appears to me most at home in the mid-fourth century. Though smaller in size, it has similarities to *P. Col.* VII 175 (Karanis, 339), and comparable hands are also found in *P. Col.* VII 145 (Karanis, 335), *P. Abinn.* 62 (Philadelphia, 350), and even later in *BGU* XIII 2332 (Ptolemais Euergetis, 374), and *P. Gen.* I² 67–69 (Philadelphia, 383–386).⁴ It is likely that the petition was drafted by a scribe, although since most monks seem to have been literate, the petitioner may have exerted more control than usual over the narrative.⁵

After the opening formalities, the monk’s appeal begins with a *prooimion*, a common feature of petitions from the middle of the second century on, influenced by rhetorical developments of the Second Sophistic.⁶ There are different rhetorical tactics employed in proems, including the use of moralising *sententiae* or direct appeal to the official’s magnificence, but here the petitioner opts for self-characterisation.⁷

⁴ This group of Geneva texts is in the hand of the village secretary Klamasios son of Sarapammon: see W. G. CLAYTOR, ‘Notes on the archive of Hol, son of Koueies’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 218 (2021), pp. 227–232, at 229–230.

⁵ On the high degree of literacy among monks, see WIPSZYCKA, *Moines et communautés monastiques* (n. 2), pp. 361–365.

⁶ J.-L. FOURNET, ‘Anatomie d’un genre en mutation: la pétition de l’Antiquité tardive’, [in:] *Pap. Congr.* XXVIII, pp. 571–590, at 576.

⁷ Such ‘identity strategies’ have a long history in Greek petitions: see G. BAETENS, ‘Persuasive identities. An examination of rhetorical self-presentation strategies in Ptolemaic petitions’, [in:] R. GUICHAROUSSE *et alii* (eds.), *L’identification des personnes dans les mondes grecs* [= *Publications de la Sorbonne. Histoire ancienne et médiévale* 164]. Paris 2019, pp. 257–273.

The proem highlights the petitioner's long association with the community of apotactic monks and his material austerity. In comparison, consider the proem of *P. Cair. Isid.* 75 (Karanis, 316), ll. 3–5: *πλείστην γῆν κекτημένον μου καὶ περὶ τὴν γεοπονίαν [ν ὅ]ντος μου μηδεμίαν τε συμπλοκῇ [ν] ἔχων* (l. ἔχοντος) *πρὸς τινὰς κατὰ τὴν κ[ώμη]ν ἀλλὰ κατ' ἐμαυτὸν ἀναχωροῦντος* κτλ. Here Isidoros touches on the same aspects of his life,⁸ but in precisely opposite terms: he is an owner of much property but minds his own business and does not get involved with anyone in the village. In other petitions, Isidoros presents himself as a large landowner but poor nonetheless (*P. Mert.* II 92 [Karanis, 324], ll. 2–7) or so poor that bare necessities are on his mind (*P. Cair. Isid.* 74, l. 16, copy: *P. Mert.* II 91 [Karanis, 315], l. 17, quoted below in l. 6 n.). All of these passages are directed to the same goal: to use self-characterisation as *captatio benevolentiae* to influence the official's reception of his plea.

The monk's claim of 'possessing nothing' (l. 6), then, must be understood in its rhetorical context and need not be taken any more literally than the same claim made by a pair of business partners and tax collectors in Oxyrhynchus around this time (*P. Oxy.* XLVIII 3393 [365], ll. 13–14; cf. l. 6 n.). *Apotaktikoi* are known to have held property, and the realia of monastic life often involved monks in business transactions and property management.⁹ The petitioner's focus on his poverty, moreover, raises the suspicion that he wishes to protest some imposition related to property, such as taxation or a liturgical obligation, but the fragmentary nature of the complaint itself leaves us in the dark.

[c. 10–13]. νιῶ στρατηγῶ προπολ(ιτευομένῳ) Ἀρσινοίτου
[παρὰ c. 5–8]. ννιανοῦ ἀποτακτικοῦ μο-
[ναχοῦ ἀπὸ τῇ]ς Ἀρσινοιτῶν πόλεως.

⁸ No timeframe is explicitly mentioned, but the implication is that this picture applies to his whole adult life.

⁹ See R. S. BAGNALL, 'Monks and property: Rhetoric, law, and patronage in the *Apothegmata Patrum* and the papyri', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 42 (2001), pp. 7–24, and Wipszycka-Bravo's article below. On monastic economies in general, see WIPSZYCKA, *Moines et communautés monastiques* (n. 2), pp. 471–565.

- 4 [c. 7-10]. [δ]εκαετοῦς τούτου χρόνου
 [ἐν το]ῖ[ς] ἀ[ποτ]ακ[τ]ικοῖς μοναχοῖς τυγχάνων
 [ἄνθρωπος μέτ]ριος μηδὲν κεκτη[μένος]
 [c. 10-13] τὰς διαγωγὰς τῶν [c. 3-5]
 8 []ι περιποιούμενος [c. 2-4]
 []ων ἐπὶ τῆς πόλε[ως]
 []οι Διογένης υἱὸς [c. 3-5]
 []κοιν.....βουλ[c. 3-5]
 12 []μὲ βουλομένοις []
 []..[]..[]
 [].....[]
-

To ...nios, strategos (and) leading councillor of the Arsinoite, [from Aurelius A]nnianus (?), apotactic monk [from the] city of the Arsinoites. [Through-
 out (?)] this [entire (?)] ten(+?)-year period I have been living [among the]
 apotactic monks, [a man] of modest means, possessing nothing, [practising (?)]
 the ways of life of the [apotactics (?)] ... acquiring ... in the city ... Dio-
 genes, son ... to/for those wishing ...

1. The end of the name is enough to show that this official does not appear in the *fasti* of fourth-century Arsinoite *strategoi* (J. G. Whitehorne, *Str.R.Scr.*², pp. 49–51, with the additions of *exactores* in T. Derda, *ΑΡΣΙΝΟΙΤΗΣ ΝΟΜΟΣ. Administration of the Fayum under Roman Rule* [= *Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 7], Warsaw 2006, pp. 108–109). The letter ligaturing into *nu* is most consistent with *alpha* (cf.] ννιανοῦ, next line), even if *omega* (cf. τῶν, l. 7) cannot be excluded.

The title *strategos* is last attested in the Arsinoites in the 320s, although elsewhere it is attested throughout the fourth century, and the position is found under its official title *exactor* in later documents from the Arsinoite nome.¹⁰ The *strategos-exactor* was in this period chosen from among the leading members of the local *boule*: see Derda, *ΑΡΣΙΝΟΙΤΗΣ ΝΟΜΟΣ*, pp. 104–109. His curial membership is occasionally noted in formal addresses, as here (cf., e.g., γυμνα[σι]άρχῳ

¹⁰ On the use of these two terms, *strategos* ‘from below’ and *exactor* higher up the administrative hierarchy, see J. D. THOMAS, ‘*Strategos* and *exactor* in the fourth century: one office or two?’ *Chronique d’Égypte* 70 (1995), pp. 230–239, and DERDA, *ΑΡΣΙΝΟΙΤΗΣ ΝΟΜΟΣ* (cit. l. 1 n.), pp. 105–106.

βουλευτ[ῆ] ἐ[ν] νάρχω στρατηγῶ, in *P. Vind. Sijp.* 3 [Hermopolis, 325], l. 2). The combination of *strategos* with *προπολιτευόμενος* is otherwise unattested,¹¹ though if *SB* XXVIII 17159 (Hermopolis, 325–337), l. 1, is correctly restored, it appears with the official version of the title, *exactor*.

The term *προπολιτευόμενος* denotes a leading member of the local city council, equivalent to *principalis* in the west, as shown by A. K. Bowman, *The Town Councils of Roman Egypt* [= *American Studies in Papyrology* 11], Toronto 1971, pp. 155–158; for more recent literature, see *P. Louvre* II 116 (Hermopolis, 330–340), l. 1 n.; on the inconsequential variance in their title between city and nome, see Bowman, *ibidem*, p. 157). There are a few other secure attestations of the term from the Arsinoites, clustered around the middle of the fourth century: *P. Abinn.* 58 (Ptolemais Euergetis, 345), *SB* XXVIII 17012 (Arsinoites, 353?), *P. Gen.* IV 176 (Arsinoites, 360), and *P. Köln* XV 625 (Arsinoites, 4th cent.). Only the first of these was known to Klaas Worp,¹² who argued for the addition of two examples from the Sakaon archive and proposes a transition from the use of *προπολιτευόμενος* to *πολιτευόμενος* in the 360s, after which there is only one secure attestation of *προπολιτευόμενος* (*P. Lips.* I 37 [Hermopolis, 389]).

2. [παρὰ c. 5–9]. ννιανοῦ. Of the traces of the first letter at the beginning of the line, the clearest is a final stroke ligaturing into *nu* mid-line. There also appears to be a tiny dot at the top of the line, while the traces at the bottom are probably the end of *nu*'s first stroke. The most common name with this ending is Ἀννιανός, and the ligature is consistent with *alpha*, even if lower than that in the following *alpha-nu* sequence: cf. the ligature in *τυγχάνων* (l. 5). The high dot could be a remnant of the loop. The most probable supplement, then, is [παρὰ Αὐρηλίου] Ἀννιανοῦ (for apotactic Aurelii, cf. Αὐρήλιος Ἄγαθος [ἀποτα]κτικός, in *P. Würzb.* 16 [Kerkesecephis, 349], and the Aureliae in *P. Oxy.* XLIV 3203 [400]). Several individuals in the fourth-century Fayum bore this Roman cognomen (TM Nam 8558), a derivative of the *gentilicium* Annii, including a leading member of the village of Philadelphia in the 380s (*P. Gen.* I² 67 and 69; TM Per 249370). Cf. also the priest Anianus connected, it seems, with an ἀποτακτήριον in *P. Oxy.* X 1311 (5th cent.; see Wipszycka-Bravo in this volume, p. 209). More prominent individuals include Petronius Annianus, one of the consuls of 314, and the early fifth-century monk Annianus of Alexandria.

¹¹ It is perhaps implicit in *στρατηγῶ καὶ προπολ[ιτευομ]ένοις Ὁξυρυγίτ[ου]* in *SB* XVIII 13932 = *P. Oxy.* XXII 2343 [287], l. 17), which also happens to be the earliest occurrence of *προπολιτευόμενος*.

¹² K. A. Worp, 'Ἀρξάντες and πολιτευόμενοι in papyri from Graeco-Roman Egypt', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 115 (1997), pp. 202–220, at 214–216. On p. 214, Worp dates the earliest use of the term *προπολιτευόμενος* in the Arsinoites to 297, but this comes from *P. Cair. Isid.* 1 (Alexandria), a copy of a prefect's edict, which need not reflect local usage at the time.

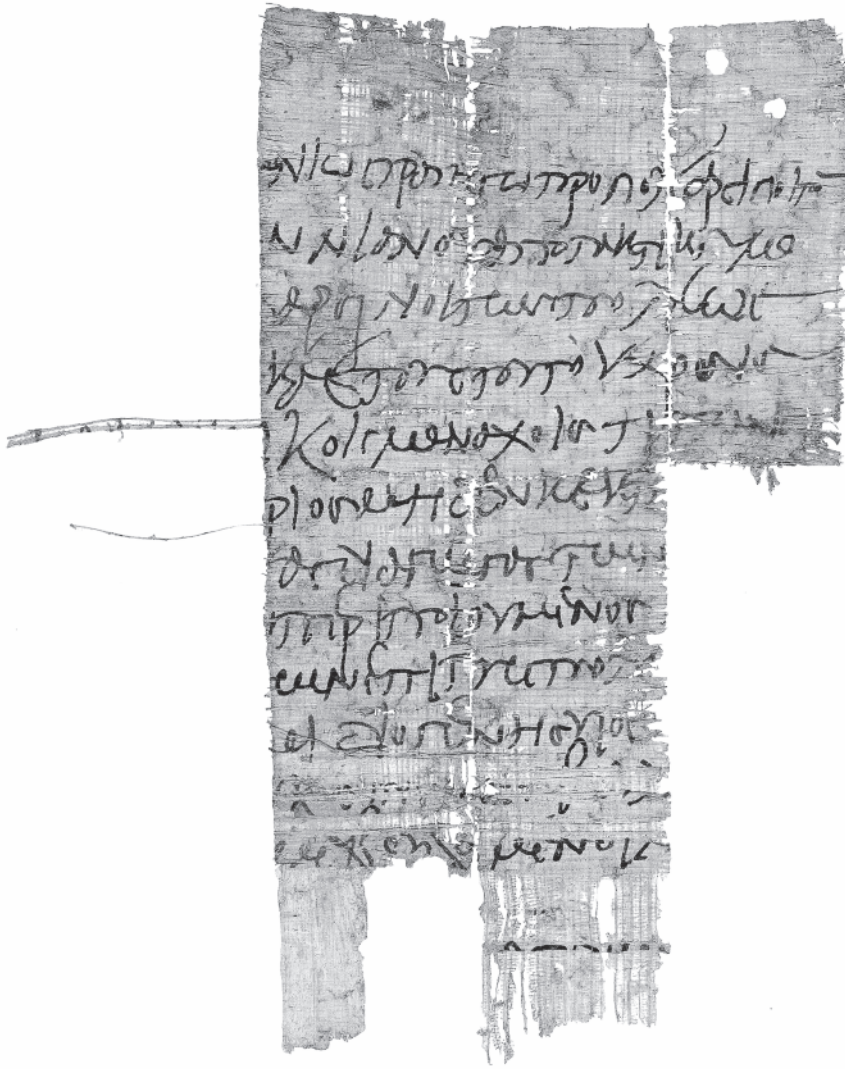


Fig. 1. P. Mich. inv. 5165a: monk's petition to the *strategos*
(image courtesy of University of Michigan Library Digital Collections)

While [παρὰ Αὐρηλίου] Ἀννιανοῦ is probable, there are a few other possibilities that cannot be absolutely excluded, such as a different *gentilicium*, identification by name and patronym without *gentilicium* (as in, e.g., a few Isidoros' petitions:

P. Cair. Isid. 78 [Karanis, 324], *P. Col.* VII 171, *P. Mert.* II 92), or abbreviation of the *gentilicium* together with a less common name, such as Ἐρεννιανός.

2-3. ἀποτακτικοῦ μο[ναχοῦ ἀπὸ τῇ]ς Ἀρσινουιτῶν πόλεως. On *apotaktikoi*, see Wipszycka-Bravo's study below. While the Arsinoite metropolis was the petitioner's legal *idia*, he may have made his monastic home elsewhere (such as in Karanis itself): cf. the case of Paieous, leader of the Melitian monastery of Phathor in the Heracleopolite, who in the official document *P. Lond.* VI 1913 (Hipponon, 334), l. 2, is styled [Ἀὐρήλ]ιος Παγεὺς Ὡρου ἀπὸ κώμης Ἰππώνων τοῦ Ἡρακλεοπολίτου νομοῦ πρεσβύτερος (cf. Choat, 'Monastic letters' [cit. n. 2], pp. 25-26). For other fourth century petitions from individuals bearing a Christian title, cf. *P. Sakaon* 48, copy: *P. Jördens* 29 (Theadelphia, 343), from a deacon, *P. Abinn.* 55 (Berenikis Aigialu, 351), from a deacon, and *P. Oxy.* XXII 2344 (c. 351-352), from a bishop.

4.].[δ]εκαετοῦς τούτου χρόνου. The first sequence could be interpreted as a reference to a 21st year (κα ἔτους), but the lack of a tick or other marker makes it unlikely that κα is a numeral. Instead, we see the end of an adjective denoting a span of ten (or more) years. Before kappa, the rising ligature begins mid-line and is consistent with the expected *epsilon* (cf. the sequence -εκ- in l. 6). The papyrus is broken to the left, but one trace on the strip just below cannot be accounted for in the reconstruction in the next line (see below) and thus probably belongs to a descender from this line, hence the dot before [δ]εκαετοῦς.

The adjective naturally goes with χρόνου, and another fourth-century petition opens in a similar manner (*P. Panop.* 28 [Panopolis, 329], l. 3: πρὸ δωδεκαετοῦς χρόνου; cf. also *SB XVIII* 13260 [Heracleopolites, 328], l. 16). Here, however, we find an intervening τούτου, so the construction is not so simple. Inspired by a suggestion of Benedetto Bravo, I have considered [διὰ παντὸς τοῦ] [δ]εκαετοῦς τούτου χρόνου, for which John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 155 (Migne), provides a close parallel: διὰ παντὸς τοῦ μακροῦ τούτου χρόνου.¹³ For the use of οὔτος with numerals and expressions of time, see LSJ, s.v. B.IV.

Yet, since line 5 appears to contain the participle *τυγχάνων* rather than a finite verb (see note *ad loc.*), we might seek a short finite verb at the beginning of this line, e.g. [διάγω διὰ τοῦ] [δ]εκαετοῦς τούτου χρόνου. However constructed, it seems clear that the petitioner is providing the timespan of his association with the community of apotactic monks.¹⁴

¹³ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ χρόνου is a favoured expression that appears frequently in Chrysostom's writings.

¹⁴ Cf. the petition of a competitive performer, in which he notes with precision the length of his career: εἵκοσι γὰρ καὶ ὀκτὼ ἔτη μέχρι νῦν ἀγωνιστῆς τυγχάνω (*PSI XIV* 1422 [unknown provenance, 301/2], ll. 11-12: on the date see *P. Oxy.* LXXIX 5210, p. 170).

5. [ἐν το]ῖ[ς] ἀ[ποτ]ακ[τ]ικοῖς μοναχοῖς. There are several traces before -ικοῖς on the thin strand of papyrus, but while the word ἀποτακτικοῖς is certain here, the assignment of these meagre traces to individual letters is less so, and the possibility of descenders from the previous line must be kept in mind. Nevertheless, the second trace, part of a high loop, matches the top of the first *alpha* in ἀποτακτικοῦ of line 2, and the other traces can be interpreted with the aid of a digital reconstruction (Fig. 2).

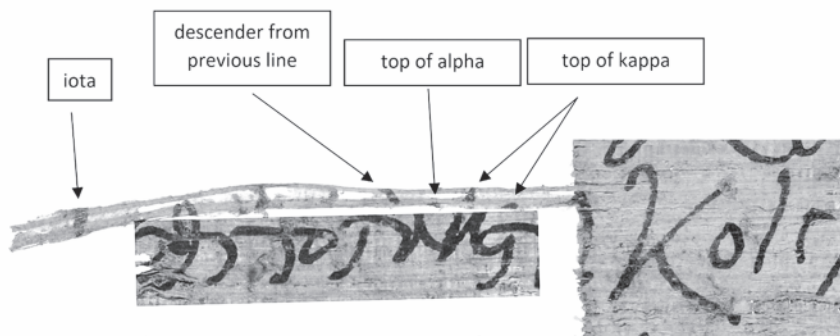


Fig. 2. Snippet of line 5 with digitally-placed supplement

The first trace, a hasta, fits well as the *iota* of το]ῖ[ς], with *sigma* lost below. Then comes the loop of *alpha* and blank papyrus under which the following letters would have been written. The next trace is the bottom of an oblique stroke that must belong to the previous line. There follows an exiguous trace compatible with the top of *alpha*, then the tops of two strokes that fit the beginning of the first and end of the second stroke of *kappa*, slightly wider than the example taken from line 2. The following *tau* would have been below the strand, with the only remains being the end of the crossbar meeting *iota* mid-line.

With ἀποτακτ- written in relatively condensed fashion, there thus seems to be room for supplying [ἐν το]ῖ[ς] at line beginning to account for the dative case.

τυγχάνων. The ink is smudged at line end, but *omega* is not in doubt; it has a straight final stroke, descending slightly as in στρατηγῶ (l. 1). There are faint traces following, which Arthur Verhoogt confirmed on the original to be two verticals compatible with *nu*.

6. [ἄνθρωπος μέτ]ριος μηδὲν κεκτη[μένος]. For the supplement at line beginning, cf. the contemporary petitions *P Oxy.* LXXIX 5210 (298–299), ll. 17–18; *P Cair. Isid.* 74, l. 16, copy: *P Mert.* II 91, l. 17; *P Sakaon* 44, copy: *P Turner* 44 (Theadelphia, 331–332), l. 15; and *SB XVI* 12814 (unknown provenance, 343), ll. 7–8. The term

μέτριος has a strong material sense in the language of the period,¹⁵ as is well illustrated in *P. Cair. Isid.* 74, ll. 16–17, copy: *P. Mert.* II 91, l. 17, where Isidoros calls himself ἄνθρωπος μέτριος κατὰ τὸ π[αντε]λές σχεδὸν τροφῶν] ... ἰων ἀναγκ[α]ίων ἐπενδε-ό[με]νος, ‘a man of most restricted means and almost in need of necessary ... food’ (text cited from *P. Mert.* II 91, translation from the copy *P. Cair. Isid.* 74). Here, our petitioner reinforces μέτριος with the following μηδὲν κεκτη[μένος] (the finite κέκτη[μαι] would also be possible), a phrase paralleled in a petition from the archive of the tax collectors Papnouthis and Dorotheos (*P. Oxy.* XLVIII 3393, ll. 13–14; cf. also *PSI* XII 1243 [Dionysias, 208], ll. 11–13; *SB* XIV 11717 [Hermopolis, mid-4th cent.], i, l. 14; *P. Oxy.* LXIII 4381 [375], l. 6). Claims of poverty are a commonplace in petitions (Papathomas, ‘Zur *captatio benevolentiae*’ [cit. n. 15]), but it takes on special significance in a petition from a monk. Cf. the fragmentary plea of two monks in a trial before the governor of the Thebaid (*ChLA* III 213 r^o [Hermopolis, before 436], with a new text in P. van Minnen, ‘A record of proceedings *de plano*’, [in:] *P. Jördens*, pp. 129–139), which includes the phrase μηδὲν κεκτημέν[.]

7.] τὰς διαγωγὰς τῶν [. Except for a number of examples of its literal meaning ‘transportation’, διαγωγή is rare in documentary papyri and never found in the plural: cf. *P. Petra* IV 39 (574), l. 102: ἔχουν τὴν διαγωγ[γὴν] ἐν Παλαιστίν[η], where it means ‘dwelling’, and the fragmentary letter *P. Genova* I 39 (unknown provenance, late 7th cent.), l. 4: καλὴν διαγωγὴν καὶ σύστασιν πραγμάτων. In our petition, one could understand either ‘way(s) of life, mode(s) of conduct’ (cf. G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1961, s.v. 2, with references to monks) or ‘dwelling(s)’. Either way, τῶν [ἀποτακτικῶν] is an attractive complement to τὰς διαγωγὰς, which would have been introduced either by a transitive verb (e.g. ἀσκῶν, διατηρῶν) or an intransitive verb with a preposition. The sense may be ‘practising the way of life of the apotactics’.

8.] περιποιούμενος [. The middle voice (‘acquire’), less common than the active (‘provide’), is found in several petitions, proceedings, and letters from the third century on: *P. Turner* 41 (Oxyrhynchus, 3rd cent.), l. 17; *SB* XXIV 16214 (Ankyron, late 3rd – early 4th cent.), l. 4; *P. Oxy.* LIV 3758 (325), l. 49; *PSI* IX 1075 (Oxyrhynchus, 458), l. 7; *P. Oxy.* LXIII 4393 (2nd half of 5th cent.), l. 10; and *P. Lond.* V 1708 (Antinoopolis, 567/8), l. 41. As a rule, the verb concerns the procurement of property or goods, sometimes framed positively, sometimes negatively. Here, given the statement in line 6 and the small oblique stroke low in the line before the lacuna, I have considered κα]ι περιποιούμενος μ[ηδέν], an amplification upon the petitioner’s

¹⁵ See H. C. YOUTIE, ‘Notes sur P. Cairo-Boak 57049’, *Chronique d’Égypte* 28 (1953), pp. 147–153, at 150 n. 1, and A. PAPATHOMAS, ‘Zur *captatio benevolentiae* in den griechischen Papyri als Zeugnis für die Mentalitätsgeschichte der Römerzeit’, [in:] E. KARAMELENGOU & E. MAKRYGIANNI (eds.), *Ἀντιφύλησις. Studies on Classical, Byzantine and Modern Greek Literature and Culture in honour of John-Theophanes A. Papademetriou*, Stuttgart 2009, pp. 486–496, at 494

material austerity. Benedetto Bravo has suggested the possibility of περιποιούμενος τ[ὴν σωτηρίαν] on the basis of Pauline language (1 Thess. 5:9: εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; 2 Thess. 2:14: εἰς περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), but I think it more likely in a petition to the *strategos* that the monk here continues in a material, rather than spiritual, vein.

9.].ων. The ligature is a horizontal compatible with *gamma* or *tau*, for example.

10.].οι. The ligature comes in low, linking to a looping *omicron*. *Mu* or *lambda* recommend themselves.

11.].κων.....βουλλ[. Following *kappa* (whose foot extends down through the *beta* in the next line), there is a space apparently containing no ink, followed by *omicron*, then a vertical that is intersected by the top of *beta* in the next line, then *nu*, whose second stroke does not descend to the bottom of the line as usual, though is not quite as horizontal as that in *Ἀρσινόιτου* in line 1. With what remains of the rest of the line, το]ῦ κοινοῦ ἐπιβουλλ[is a possible reading, conceivably referring to the community of monks (cf. the sixth-century references *P. Lond.* V 1590 [Aphrodite, 527], l. 2, *P. Cair. Masp.* II 16170 & 16171 [Aphrodite, 562–564], and *CJ* 1.3.46), but a *koinon* of tradespeople or other such group cannot be ruled out. The verb ἐπιβουλεύω is found in the Isidoros petition *P. Mert.* II 92, l. 12, and other fourth-century petitions.

12.]μϵ βουλομένοις [. *Mu* beginning with a loop as in *μηδέν* in line 6, then *epsilon*, the top of whose upper stroke is abraded (note the descending foot of *kappa* from the previous line that transects both this letter and the following *beta*).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The papyrus was discovered during the 1927/8 University of Michigan excavation season at Karanis in a context initially labelled C61A (= level C, structure 61, room A), then changed to C62O when the excavators determined that that this area belonged to the house to the south.¹⁶ This structure was located in the eastern part of the raised mound, where the heart of the village lay. The centre of the village had already been cleared by *sebakkhin* before the excavations began, and the Michigan work concentrated on the remaining rim of the mound, turning

¹⁶ Although they also note that this courtyard originally belonged to C59 to the north, in which period it is called C59L; the label C61 was given to another house excavated in the next season (thus carrying the label 28-C61). In the following discussion, the original excavation label is used for the relevant entries in the Record of Objects, but the structure itself is called C62.

to this well-preserved eastern half in the 1927/8 season, after initial clearing of the top layers in earlier seasons.¹⁷

C62 was a well-built tower house in a block of similar houses, bounded on the south by street CS52. To the northeast lay the large granary C65. The 'C' of these designations refers to the excavators' rough system for differentiating the stages of the site's development, from the most-recent A level to the oldest, Ptolemaic period E level. In a report covering the eastern part of the raised mound excavated in the 1927/8 and 1928/9 seasons, the excavators dated the A level to AD 350–450, the B level to AD 250–350, and the C level, to which our papyrus nominally belongs, to AD 125–250, noting also a distinct break between A and B levels, but a less clear division between B and C.¹⁸

These levels, as Thomas Landvatter has detailed, 'are not real stratigraphic layers in the archaeological sense. That is, they do not represent discrete deposits of material that can be organized into a relative chronological sequence, with, for example, objects found in the B phase of a house necessarily postdating the deposition of the material found in the C phase'.¹⁹ Such a 'disjuncture between occupation level and object'²⁰ is well illustrated by the present papyrus, a fourth-century artefact assigned to a much earlier context.

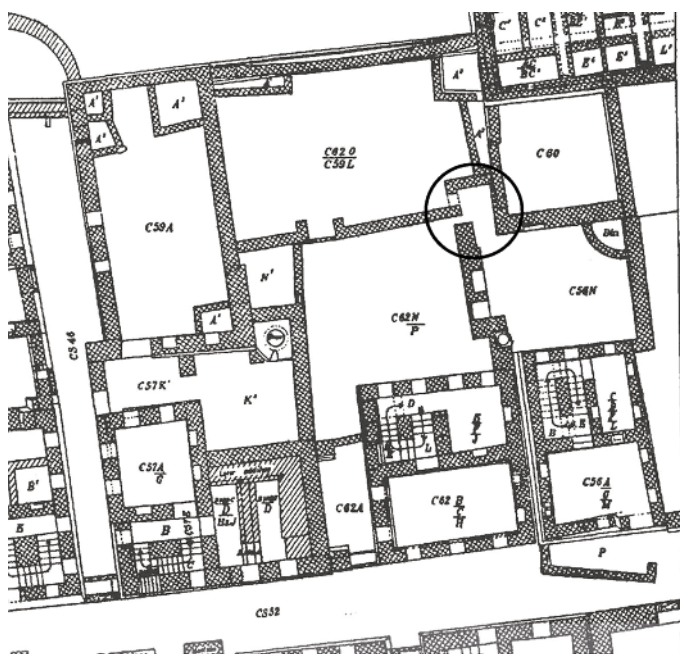
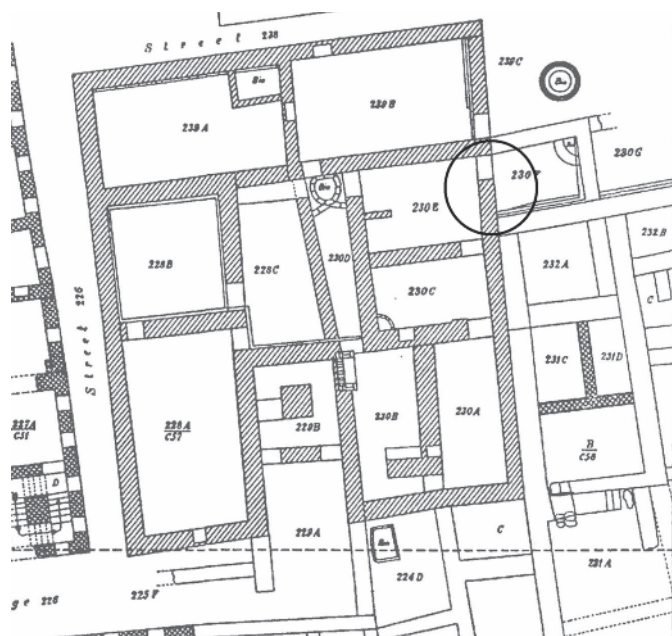
A large number of small finds were registered under the excavation label 27-C61A, with a total of 101 entries in the Record of Objects. Several entries have a more specific notation regarding the findspot, and objects 27-C61A-QII (the entry for the papyri later inventoried under P. Mich. inv. 5165) through HIII were 'found in the room in the NE corner at the end. Perhaps further excavation will reveal it to be part of another house. Found later to be above C56N'. N(orth)E(ast) seems to be a mistake, as the plans show room north of house C56 to the southeast of C62O, whereas the large granary C65 is located to the northeast. In **Figs. 3–4**, I have circled

¹⁷ See *P. Mich.* XXI, pp. 4–8, for an overview of archaeological activity at Karanis.

¹⁸ A. E. R. BOAK & E. E. PETERSON, *Karanis: Topographical and Architectural Report of Excavations during the Seasons 1924–1928*. Ann Arbor 1931, p. 39.

¹⁹ T. LANDVATTER, 'Archaeological and papyrological inquiry at Karanis: problems and potentialities', [in:] *PapCongr.* XXVII, pp. 1493–1518, at 1497.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 1500.



Figs. 2 & 3. Top-right corner of square Fro in the B and C levels (after Boak & Peterson, *Karanis* [cit. n. 18], plan IV, section Fro & plan VI, section Fro)

where the papyrus and related finds seem to have been uncovered in relation to both B and C level structures.

In any case, the entries suggest that these objects were found in a debris layer interpreted to be under the upper B level structures, but before the alignment of C level walls was revealed to the excavators (hence ‘found later to be above C56N’).²¹ Since the Michigan team’s methodology was not properly stratigraphic, they could not systematically identify depositional units without reference to architecture, and thus the finds in such layers were assigned somewhat arbitrarily to ‘rooms’. Consequently, the 101 small finds assigned to ‘room’ C61A = C62O must be understood as deriving from a variety of depositional contexts in the same general area, with only the occasional hint to their relative stratigraphy.

The majority of these finds were not retained by the excavators, and those that were are now split between Ann Arbor and Cairo. Few have been published. There are 14 entries for ‘Papyrus’, corresponding to P. Mich. inv. 5156–5169, of which four documents have been edited besides the present text: the letters *P. Mich.* VIII 513 (3rd cent.) and 515 (late 3rd cent.), the donkey sale *P. Mich.* IX 553 (285), and the list of household items *P. Bingen* 117 (late 3rd – early 4th cent.). The only ostrakon found was a dike receipt dated to the third century (*O. Mich.* I 280). There are seven entries for coins, but only those recorded under 27-C61A-JI (dating to 324–330),²² 27-C61A-NI (Constantius II),²³ and 27-C61A-TII (‘pierced coin perhaps used as amulet’) were retained.

In addition to the monk’s petition, the papyrus find labelled 27-C61A-QII also included two other fragments, now inventoried in Ann Arbor as P. Mich. inv. 5165b and c.²⁴ The latter contains on its recto a list of litur-

²¹ Note how Peterson (below, n. 26), p. 173, describes the transition between C and B levels here: ‘The walls of this later house, 230, were built in part upon the broken walls of C62 and upon the debris that completely covered the earlier walls.’

²² Six coins found ‘ca. m. 1.50 below top of N wall’, according to the Record of Objects, published in R. A. HAATVEDT & E. E. PETERSON, with E. M. HUSSELMAN (eds.), *Coins from Karanis. The University of Michigan Excavations. 1924–1935*, Ann Arbor 1964, no. 1519.

²³ 15 coins found ‘high in filling’, published in *ibidem*, no. 1602.

²⁴ Images of these fragments can be consulted in Michigan APIS at <<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/apis>>.

gical nominations for the year 304/5 and on the verso the ends of entries in talents and denarii. Its later use could correspond in date with the petition, but no connection can be drawn from such a fragmentary account. The other fragment, though tiny and in rough condition, is of interest simply because it is written in Coptic, a rare find from the Michigan excavations of Karanis.²⁵ The possibility of a connection to our monk is intriguing, but too little survives to form a judgment of its contents.

Given the lack of stratigraphy and the supposition that the petition was found in a fill context between what the excavators identified as the B and C levels, possible connections might be sought in the B level, despite the object's assignment to the C level. In his unpublished report on the excavations, Enoch Peterson made the following observations about the new constructions in this area (he is speaking of the block outlined by the shaded walls in **Fig. 2** above, houses 228, 230, and 239):

The houses of this entire southwestern corner of this block in the B level were obviously closely interconnected structurally and so interrelated in their use. They perhaps served some function connected with the work carried out in the large granary, House C65. Their inner subdivisions were not typical of living room construction but were rather such as were usually found in courtyards and storage areas.²⁶

No observations of this sort were made in Arthur Boak and Enoch Peterson's earlier publication of this excavation season,²⁷ and it is difficult to know what to make of it. The granary C65, built, according to Elinor Husselman, in the middle of the second century, was still in operation in the excavators' B period, so a functional connection cannot be ruled out.²⁸

²⁵ The only published piece is *Pap. Castr.* VII 2 (TM 107779 / LDAB 107779), on which see below.

²⁶ E. E. PETERSON, *The Architecture and Topography of Karanis, 1928–1935*, Ann Arbor 1973 (unpublished typescript), p. 507.

²⁷ See the discussion at BOAK & PETERSON (cit. n. 18), p. 61.

²⁸ There is more evidence for a connection between granary C65 and the large well-built structure C63: see W. G. CLAYTOR, 'Granary directors (*sitologoi*) of Karanis. II' (TM Arch 671), at <www.trismegistos.org/archive/671> (accessed 12 October 2023).

But the new block of houses (228, 230, and 239) appears to have outlived the granary, so another explanation must be sought for their use in the A period, roughly the fourth century, when our petition was written. The idea of some kind of communal living space for monks can be raised, but it should be noted that even under modern excavation conditions, it is difficult to determine whether fourth-century sites had a monastic character or not.²⁹ Nor does there need to have been any connection between the use of these structures and the author of the petition. Naturally, a more comprehensive study of the architecture and small finds from these structures, together with a better appreciation of the chronology through ceramic analysis, are needed before further interpretation can take place.³⁰

4. CHRISTIANITY IN KARANIS: EVIDENCE AND APPROACHES

Although the petitioner is ‘from the city of the Arsinoites’, the document was found in Karanis, and since the papyrus was not reused the most likely explanation is that the monk lived in or near this village or at least had interests in the area. The village is well known for the earliest secure documentary attestation of the term *μοναχός* in the sense of ‘monk’, found in a petition from the archive of the local landowner Aurelius Isidoros dated to 324 (*P. Col.* VII 171),³¹ in which the protagonist narrates his rescue from an assault near the village by the deacon Antoninus and the monk Isak. The petition demonstrates that monks were nothing extraordinary in the Fayum countryside at the time, although attempts to wring more

²⁹ See N. ARAVECCHIA, *Ain el-Gedida. 2006–2008 Excavations of a Late Antique Site in Egypt's Western Desert (Ambeida IV)* [= *ISAW Monographs* 8], New York 2018, pp. 275–283.

³⁰ Fewer written objects and material finds in general are attributed to houses 228, 230, and 239. We note the published Homer papyrus *P. Mich. inv. 4990* (TM 60691/LDAB 1816, 2nd/3rd cent. AD) in Ann Arbor and the unpublished *P. Mich. inv. 4991-2* and 4997 in Cairo. Surrounding contexts (of all ‘levels’) should all be taken into account as well.

³¹ *P. Neph.* 48 from Phathor in the Heracleopolites may in fact date to 323 (*BL IX* 174).

specific clues to the development of Egyptian monasticism have been doused by Ewa Wipszycka's deconstruction in *P. Thomas*, pp. 45–50.

Stepping back from this chance encounter, the evidence for the spread of Christianity in Karanis is patchy,³² although this is no reason to doubt that the fourth century saw the establishment of characteristic institutions, beliefs, and practices in the village, particularly since papyrological documentation from the village (and the outlying Fayum settlements in general) goes increasingly dark as Christianity takes hold in Egypt at large.³³ When the veil is lifted in 439 thanks to a perfectly preserved Copenhagen papyrus, Karanis is equipped with at least two priests and five deacons, who have a leading role in the village (*P. Haun.* III 58 with John Rea's reedition).³⁴ Further, *P. Mich.* XVIII 768, a fever amulet with possible Gnostic influences,³⁵ and an unpublished petition from a Jewish collective³⁶ remind us that religious developments were not unidirectional.

³² An overview of evidence with a focus on Christian onomastics can be found in G. SCHWENDNER, 'A fragmentary psalter from Karanis and its context', [in:] C. A. EVANS & H. D. ZACHARIAS (eds.), *Jewish and Christian Scripture as Artifact and Canon* [= *Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity* 13], London 2009, pp. 117–136 at 126–134. See also the evidence linked to the Karanis record in P. BUZI, R. WILLIAMS, & V. GHICA, 'Kūm Awšīm', [in:] *4CARE Database – Fourth-Century Christian Archaeological Record of Egypt* at <<https://4care-skos.mf.no/4care-sites/41/>> (accessed 1 October 2023).

³³ For the growing archaeological evidence of Christianity in the northern part of Fayum, see P. BUZI, 'Bakchias in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages', [in:] P. BUZI & E. GIORGI (eds.), *The Urban Landscape of Bakchias. A Town of the Fayyūm from the Ptolemaic–Roman Period to Late Antiquity* [= *Archaeopress Roman Archaeology* 66], Oxford 2020, pp. 81–96, at 82. I thank the anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to this volume. Cf. now BGU XXI 2883 (Philadelphia, 6th/7th cent.).

³⁴ J. REA, 'P. Haun. III 58: Caranis in the fifth century', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 99 (1993), pp. 89–95. The unpublished P. Mich. inv. 5690a (29-B191K-Q) is in the same hand as the Copenhagen document (namely that of Aurelius Serenos, the secretary of the village: cf. *P. Haun.* III 58, ll. 16–17) but does not contain anything relevant to the topic of Christianity as far as I can see.

³⁵ On this text and the possible identification of the woman Allous, see SCHWENDNER, 'A fragmentary Psalter' (cit. n. 32), pp. 134–136.

³⁶ P. Mich. inv. 6036 (30-SG-MV, a surface find west of the South Temple): identified and read by the author from the image in the Michigan collection, this papyrus has now been cited in C. BALAMOSHEV, 'The Jews of Oxyrhynchos address the *strategos* of the nome:

A small fragment of a Psalter suggests a Christian community had already established itself in Karanis in the third century – if the dating of its editor holds.³⁷ The date was established both through palaeography and ‘its immediate archaeological context’ (p. 120), but as Brent Nongbri has pointed out,³⁸ this contextualisation was limited exclusively to textual finds, and we have seen above that a ‘context’ in the Michigan excavations was defined by architecture, not stratigraphy, and thus can cover a wide variety of depositional units, thereby undermining the utility of this approach without further evidence and arguments.

The veneer of contextual objectivity likewise affects the only other published example of Christian literature from Karanis: a codex leaf of Job in Coptic (*Pap. Castr.* VII 2 [TM 107779 / LDAB 107779]), dated to the fourth or early fifth century on palaeographic grounds, was assigned an earlier date due to documents found ‘along with’ it,³⁹ which has turned into its ‘stratigraphic data’ in a more general treatment.⁴⁰ Yet, nothing is known of the leaf’s depositional context, and even the objects from the ‘room’ in which it was found turn out to be sparse and unpublished.⁴¹ Further analysis is needed if the palaeographically-assigned dates of these two papyri are to be challenged or confirmed.

In the fourth century, Christian titles and new onomastics mark the changing religious landscape. Gregg Schwendner’s analysis has demon-

An early fourth-century document’, *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* XLVII (2017), pp. 27–43, at 30, and *P. Oxy.* LXXXIII 5364 (4th cent.), ll. 4–5 n.

³⁷ P. Mich. inv. 5475b (TM 128586/LDAB 128586) published in SCHWENDNER, ‘A fragmentary psalter’ (cit. n. 32).

³⁸ B. NONGBRI, ‘A manuscript of the Psalms in Greek from Karanis’, *Variant Readings* 8 August 2018, at <<https://brentnongbri.com/2018/08/08/a-manuscript-of-the-psalms-in-greek-from-karanis/>> (accessed 22 December 2023).

³⁹ VAN MINNEN, ‘The roots of Egyptian Christianity’ (cit. n. 2), p. 72.

⁴⁰ J-L. FOURNET, *The Rise of Coptic. Egyptian Versus Greek in Late Antiquity*, Princeton 2019, p. 7 n. 8.

⁴¹ The datable objects cited by van Minnen come from room K of B168, while room L produced only a handful of items retained by the excavators besides the codex leaf. See also B. NONGBRI, ‘A manuscript of Job in Coptic from Karanis’, *Variant Readings* 16 August 2018, at <<https://brentnongbri.com/2018/08/16/a-manuscript-of-job-in-coptic-from-karanis/>> (accessed 22 December 2023).

strated a small Christian community in Karanis around the time of Aurelius Isidoros in the first few decades of the century,⁴² which is complemented by the appearance of a handful of Christian titles, most of which, however, like the literary sources just discussed, are hard to contextualise or pin down chronologically. Besides the monk Isak and the author of our petition, we find reference to another monk in a fragmentary context of an unpublished account that also mentions an *eirenarches* and a *komarches* (P. Mich. inv. 5265a r^o, i, l. 2). Several deacons appear in accounts and a receipt in the second half of the fourth century.⁴³ Ioannes *πρ(εσβύτερος)* in the account P. Mich. VI 379 is probably a priest, especially since this text has been assigned to the fifth century (BL VIII 213). So, too, Nilammon *πρ(εσβύτερος)* in the unpublished account P. Mich. inv. 914 (v^o, l. 4), whose recto mentions a 'reader' (*Παηουδς ἀναγνώστου*, r^o, ii, l. 1) and can be dated to the second half of the fourth century based on monetary sums in myriads of talents. The evidence is thinly spread – a handful of monks, deacons, priests, and a reader over the course of the fourth century – but constitutes the essential cast of a Christian community, which we can only witness 'in action' in the Copenhagen papyrus of 439.

Beyond the fourth century, written evidence from Karanis is even more limited. The only coherent group is a set of grain receipts probably dating to the fifth century, a few of which contain the Christian formula *χμγ* and one of which has been prosopographically linked to the Copenhagen papyrus.⁴⁴ Other papyri have been redated to the fifth century by Jean Gascou and Peter van Minnen due to the presence of *χμγ* and palaeographic considerations.⁴⁵ A few were dated to this century already by

⁴² SCHWENDNER, 'A fragmentary psalter' (cit. n. 32), pp. 127–133.

⁴³ Amaeis the deacon in P. Col. VII 167, l. 6 (373) and P. Mich. X 596, ll. 4–5 (now likewise dated to 373); Aion in P. Mich. XII 651, l. 4; the heirs of Heras the deacon in P. Mich. inv. 3676 (351/2?; TM 382617).

⁴⁴ On the grain receipts, see J. Gascou in P. Sorb. II, pp. 45–46, and P. VAN MINNEN, 'Deserted villages: Two late antique town sites in Egypt', *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 32 (1995), pp. 41–56, at 52. On the prosopographic link, see N. LITINAS & R. J. COOK, 'A fifth century receipt for the delivery of wheat from Karanis', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 60 (2014), pp. 388–392.

⁴⁵ E.g. P. NYU 8 and 10, P. Mich. VI 378, and P. Mich. VIII 519 (see previous note).

their editors, including *P. Mich.* VIII 521, a private letter written with ‘vigor and beauty’,⁴⁶ and *P. Col.* VIII 242 (with Rea’s re-edition), an official letter about problems collecting taxes from the village.⁴⁷ The many inscribed tomb markers identified during the necropolis surveys (see below) still await proper publication,⁴⁸ but a limestone epitaph in the form of a *tau*-cross found in the Karanis storeroom is probably from this cemetery and has been dated to the fifth to seventh centuries.⁴⁹ If a correction to the small fragment *SPP* X 67 is correct, Karanis was still an active village in the seventh or eighth century, but I think the late-antique village of Karpe (TM Geo 1012) is more likely recorded here.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, an unpublished fragment from a Coptic parchment codex containing

⁴⁶ Cf. VAN MINNEN, ‘Deserted villages’ (cit. n. 44), who notes that the letter was found in the same house as one of the receipts (*P. Mich.* VI 416).

⁴⁷ J. R. REA, ‘*P. Col.* VIII 242: Caranis in the fifth century’, [in:] *PapCongr.* XX, pp. 266–272.

⁴⁸ A. E. AUSTIN, ‘Preliminary remarks on the Coptic burials at Karanis’, *Coptica* 10 (2011), pp. 45–60, at 50, counts ‘72 legible inscriptions’. Many grave markers contain Christian symbols, such as a cross and *alpha* and *omega*. Both symbols feature on the marker documented in P. BUZI, ‘Ancora sulla necropoli tardo-antica di Karanis: indizi per la determinazione della datazione del definitivo abbandono del sito’, [in:] S. PERNIGOTTI & M. ZECCHI (eds.), *Il coccodrillo e il cobra – Aspetti dell’universo religioso egiziano nel Fayyum e altrove. Atti del colloquio Bologna - 20/21 aprile 2005* [= *Archeologia e storia della civiltà egiziana e del Vicino Oriente antico* 10], Bologna 2006, pp. 111–132, at 122, fig. 3, on the other visible side of which ⲙⲉⲣⲓⲧⲟⲩ can be read, apparently the rare female name Σⲉⲓⲣⲟⲩⲥ (TM Nam 5690), found only in the Fayum.

⁴⁹ *AE* 2017, no. 1630 (TM 832102) = L. H. BLUMELL & C. ALIBERTI, ‘Two Greek inscriptions from Karanis’, *Tyche* 32 (2017), pp. 1–5, at 2–4; on the date, see A. DELATTRE, J. DIJKSTRA, & J. VAN DER VLIET, ‘Christian inscriptions from Egypt and Nubia 6 (2018)’, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 56 (2019), pp. 305–324, at 312, no. 29. Other late inscriptions found in the storeroom at Karanis seem to be from the Fayum but not necessarily from Karanis itself.

⁵⁰ J. G. KEENAN, ‘Deserted villages: From the ancient to the medieval Fayyum’, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 40 (2003), pp. 119–139, at 129 = *BL* XII 271. After *Καρ* is a small roundel, which seems consistent with the beginning of a horizontal stroke in such hands: cf. how *Καρπε* is written in *SB* I 5339 (Arsinoites, 7th cent.; cf. *P. Ross. Georg.* III 51, l. 7 n.), i, l. 16. Keenan cites this text in the same passage, but for *Καπα*() *Μαπ*[in line 25, which has been corrected to *Κύπα*(s) *Μαπ*[ίς] or *Κυραμαπ*[ίς] (*BL* XII 182). The other text mentioned, *BGU* II 608, dated by its editor to the Arab period, is now properly placed in the fourth century (*BL* VIII 30; cf. CLAYTOR, ‘Notes on the archive of Hol’ [cit. n. 4], p. 230 n. 21).

parts of 1 and 2 Thessalonians (P. Mich. inv. 6829b, 35-286B-CI) suggests some type of activity at the site in these later centuries: it is written in an Alexandrian majuscule hand that can perhaps be dated between the seventh and ninth centuries.⁵¹

Aside from written evidence, the broader corpus of material culture from late-antique Karanis is abundant and includes many overtly Christian objects,⁵² even though no structure has been conclusively identified as a church, unlike in neighbouring Bakchias.⁵³ The dating of these later objects from Karanis, however, has long been hindered by the belief that the site was abandoned in the fifth century, a terminus set by the Michigan excavators. This idea was first challenged by Donald M. Bailey, who noted that scholars were down-dating objects to fit this paradigm.⁵⁴ Nigel Pollard later advanced a forceful argument based on ceramic finds for occupation into the sixth century.⁵⁵ In the past few decades, surveys and excavation of the necropolis northwest of the village⁵⁶ and its eastern and

⁵¹ The style first becomes popular for Coptic literary texts in the seventh century (C. ASKELAND, 'Dating early Greek and Coptic literary hands', [in:] H. LUNDHAUG & L. JENOTT [eds.], *The Nag Hammadi Codices and Late Antique Egypt* [= *Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum* 110], Tübingen 2018, pp. 457-490, at 476-478), while examples from the Hamuli library (TM Arch 262) suggest a date as late as the ninth century.

⁵² See those discussed by SCHWENDNER, 'A fragmentary psalter' (cit. n. 32), pp. 126-127, and T. G. WILFONG & A. W. S. FERRARA, 'Karanis revealed: artifacts from the exhibition', [in:] T. G. WILFONG (ed.), *Karanis Revealed. Discovering the Past and Present of a Michigan Excavation in Egypt*, Ann Arbor 2014, pp. 107-111.

⁵³ See, in particular, BUZI, 'Bakchias' (cit. n. 33), pp. 81-96.

⁵⁴ D. M. BAILEY, review of L. A. Shier, *Terracotta Lamps from Karanis*; E. Husselman, *Karanis, Topography and Architecture*; B. Johnson, *Pottery from Karanis*, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 70 (1984), pp. 185-187. Similar remarks are found in C. GRANDE, review of L. A. Shier, *Terracotta Lamps from Karanis*, *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985), p. 284.

⁵⁵ N. POLLARD, 'The chronology and economic condition of late Roman Karanis: An archaeological reassessment', *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 35 (1998), pp. 147-162. Cf. D. WHITEHOUSE, 'The date of the glass from Karanis', *Journal of Glass Studies* 41 (1999), pp. 168-170.

⁵⁶ The fullest overview of the necropolis can be found in N. M. S. SOLIEMAN, 'Investigating Karanis necropolis in a pagan Christian context', *Journal of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University* 7 (2010), pp. 1-51. See further P. BUZI, 'Lo scavo di una necropoli di età

western suburbs⁵⁷ have provided further evidence for this late-antique phase of the village. A synthesis of the village's late-antique material culture is a desideratum.

From this brief survey, one can glean that much remains to be published from late-antique Karanis and most of what has been published needs to be reanalysed with a better appreciation of the limits and opportunities of the legacy data of the Michigan excavations and without the artificial fifth century limit previously imposed, not to mention broader contextualisation in the late-antique Fayum. The monk's complaint is one more piece of this fragmentary mosaic, awaiting reassembly.

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tardo-antica a Karanis (Kom Aushim): alcune annotazioni', *Ricerche di egittologia e di antichità copte* 6 (2004), pp. 97–106, and EADEM, 'Ancora sulla necropoli tardo-antica di Karanis' (cit. n. 48), pp. 111–132. The 2008–2010 survey of the necropolis is discussed in A. E. AUSTIN, 'Preliminary remarks on the Coptic burials at Karanis', *Coptica* 10 (2011), pp. 45–60.

⁵⁷ H. BARNARD *et alii*, 'The fourth-century AD expansion of the Graeco-Roman settlement of Karanis (Kom Aushim) in the Northern Fayum', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 101 (2015), pp. 51–67, provides a convenient overview of the URU Fayum Project's work at the site, but the central claim that Karanis underwent a 'dramatic expansion' (p. 54) in the fourth century must be treated with caution, as the authors do not present much of an argument, nor do they engage with the documentary evidence or studies of the population of Karanis. Consideration needs to be given to the idea of a settlement shift, as in neighbouring Backhias (E. GIORGI, 'The genesis and urban development of Bakchias', [in:] BUZI & GIORGI [eds.], *The Urban Landscape of Bakchias* [cit. n. 33], pp. 34–36). On shifting settlements in the late antique and medieval Fayum, see KEENAN, 'Deserted villages' (cit. n. 50), pp. 136–139.