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COPTIC AND COPTO-GREEK OSTRACA IN WARSAW (O. VARS. COPT.)*

Tomasz Górecki (1951–2017) in memoriam

1. INTRODUCTION

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM IN WARSAW and the University of Warsaw house a small but interesting collection of Coptic ostraca. They came to Warsaw at distinct moments from different sources. Six of them were

*The present article owes much to different persons. First of all, to the late Tomasz Górecki, the employee of the Department of Eastern Christian Art at the National Museum in Warsaw, who brought Grzegorz Ochała's attention to the material stored at the National Museum in Warsaw and arranged a preliminary consent of his superiors for its publication back in 2016. Second, to Aleksandra Sulikowska-Belczowska, the current curator of the said department, for renewing the access to the ostraca and permission for their publication. Third, to Anne Boud'hors for her invaluable comments to the editions and her help with identifying the text of no. 7 as Psalm 1. And, last but not least, to Ahmed Nakshara, who shared with us his editions of Coptic ostraca from Edfu stored at the Louvre (Nakshara forthcoming = *O. Edfu Louvre*). Unless otherwise indicated, all dates are in the common era.

Grzegorz Ochała was responsible for the editions of all the texts, Katarzyna de Lellis-Danys and Aleksandra Pawlikowska-Gwiazda prepared the analysis of the ceramic material as well as the commentaries on metrological issues occurring in the ostraca. Insights into the history of the collection was a joint effort of all the authors.

discovered during the works of Polish archaeologists in the Nile Valley, five at Edfu (nos. 1–5) and one at Faras (no. 7). As for the remaining piece, no. 6, the circumstances of its acquisition are not so clear. While apparently of Middle-Egyptian origin, it must have been acquired somehow by the Polish archaeologists working at Edfu, but the field and museum records are otherwise silent (see the commentary below).

Some of these objects (nos. 1, 2, 4, & 6) were presented in 1960 by Stefan Jakobielski in the fourth volume of the Polish series *Katalog rękopisów orientalnych ze zbiorów polskich* [Catalogue of Oriental manuscripts from Polish collections] devoted to Egyptian, Coptic, and Ethiopic manuscripts (Andrzejewski *et alii* 1960). This publication, however, is hardly accessible to the international community. Also, Jakobielski's presentation of the material is fairly limited, with only some rudimentary information, tentative transcriptions, and no scholarly apparatus or analysis. Thus, even if some ostraca have been reedited on the basis of Jakobielski's catalogue (no. 1) or have otherwise been noticed in scholarship (nos. 2 & 6), it seems worthwhile to publish this small collection in a single place in modern scholarly standards.

2. EDITIONS

2.1. *Edfu*

The ostraca from Edfu published below originate from the Polish-French excavations in this ancient city carried out under the direction of Bernard Bruyère and Kazimierz Michałowski between 1937 and 1939. The work on the site brought to light a good amount of textual evidence from different periods, in different languages, and on different media.¹ The material was divided between the Institut français d'archéologie orientale in Cairo (IFAO) and the University of Warsaw.² The archaeological reports do not

¹ See the archaeological reports in BRUYÈRE *et alii* 1937; MICHAŁOWSKI *et alii* 1938; MICHAŁOWSKI *et alii* 1950.

² Apart from texts, Warsaw received also a number of other archaeological objects, including pottery and stone vessels, elements of architectural decoration, fragments of statuary, dat-

include any information on any principle governing the division of the artefacts between the institutions; they appear to have been assigned randomly. Apart from the five ostraca published here, Warsaw is in possession of other ostraca and papyri dating to the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and early Islamic periods in Demotic, Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Arabic.³

Coptic ostraca from the Polish-French excavations at Edfu arrived in Warsaw between 1937 and 1939 and were housed at the University of Warsaw together with other archaeological finds. They were subsequently transferred to the National Museum in Warsaw and assigned museum inventory numbers, following an agreement between the two institutions intended to enrich the museum's collection. Although the original document recording this arrangement did not survive the Second World War, other preserved documents indirectly attest to it. The Coptic ostraca and other objects were deposited in the museum as the foundation of a new Department of Classical Archaeology and the Ancient East. The museum received more than 3,000 finds, transported in over 70 trunks. Part of the ostraca collection was returned in 2017 to the University of Warsaw, where it is now kept in the Library of Papyrology of the University of Warsaw,⁴ although it is unclear what guided the choice of artefacts to be moved. As a result, from among the texts published here, only two are now housed at the Library of Papyrology of the University of Warsaw; the other four remain at the museum.⁵

Coptic and Copto-Greek texts dated to the late Byzantine and early Islamic periods constitute an important part of textual discoveries of

ing from the pharaonic through early Islamic periods. For an overview of the collection, see <<https://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/en/search-results?phrase=edfu>> (accessed 17 June 2025).

³ To the best of our knowledge, no exhaustive list exists of all Edfu texts brought to Warsaw. See the Appendix below for ostraca dated to the Byzantine and early Islamic periods.

⁴ This piece of information derives from the University of Warsaw deposit files preserved in the Inventory Department of the MNW. One such document, a pre-war letter from the University's rector, Włodzimierz Antoniewicz, dated 17 November 1937 and addressed to the museum's director, Stanisław Lorentz, refers to the division of finds: original works were to remain in the museum, while the museum would also collect auxiliary materials such as plaster casts and photographs. The letter specifies that the University of Warsaw deposit would be stored at the MNW for 50 years.

⁵ One of them, no. 1 here, is even on permanent display at the museum's Faras Gallery.

the French-Polish expedition. According to the archaeological reports, 121 ostraca identified as Coptic were discovered during the three seasons of excavations,⁶ along with an unspecified number of Coptic papyri.⁷ They have not, until quite recently, received a systematic treatment. The original publication of the material included in the archaeological reports of the three campaigns by Jerzy Manteuffel, conventionally referred to as *P. Edfou* I–III and *O. Edfou* I–III (Manteuffel 1937; Manteuffel 1938; Manteuffel 1950), concentrated on earlier periods of Egyptian history, devoting only limited attention to the later ones. Moreover, as the excavation team clearly lacked a specialist in Coptic, late texts that were published in these volumes are almost exclusively Greek, with only a few Coptic exceptions.⁸

It was only at the beginning of the twenty-first century that Seïna Bacot undertook the edition of the part of the collection that was assigned to and still is housed at the IFAO. Her 2009 edition (*O. Edfou IFAO*) includes 145 Coptic, Greek, and Copto-Greek texts written on potsherds, which are an eloquent testimony to the life of the city in the sixth and seventh centuries.⁹ Notably, not all ostraca published by Bacot come from the French-Polish excavations in the 1930s; some of them must have been discovered during earlier works on the site by Henrie Henne (1921–1922). Those that belong to the former lot can be recognised by field numbers starting with C. or Co. (apparently for ‘Coptic’) and normally written on the surface of the objects; the latter, on the other hand, appear to have (field?) inventory numbers starting with ‘E 32’ (Bacot 2009: vi; see the Appendix below).

⁶ 28 in the 1937 season, 47 in 1938, and 46 in 1939 (respectively, MANTEUFFEL 1937: 141; MANTEUFFEL 1938: 138; MANTEUFFEL 1950: 330).

⁷ The reports list four bigger fragments, two from 1937 and one from 1938 and 1939 each, but mention also small fragments which were apparently not even inventoried (MANTEUFFEL 1937: 141; MANTEUFFEL 1938: 137; MANTEUFFEL 1950: 330). The four bigger fragments appear to be now in Warsaw; they will be object of a separate publication.

⁸ Altogether 49 texts labelled as ‘Byzantine’ by the editors were published in these volumes: 4 Greek papyri (*P. Edfou* I 2–4; II 7), 42 Greek ostraca (*O. Edfou* I 210–228; II 309–323; III 476–483), 1 Copto-Greek ostrakon (BRUYÈRE *et alii* 1937: 159 = no. 5), 2 Coptic wooden tablets (*P. Edfou* I T1 & T2).

⁹ The publication is to be read with the article DELATTRE & FOURNET 2011, which contains numerous corrections to Bacot’s original reading as well as re-editions and re-interpretations of many texts.

Interestingly, out of 121 ostraca mentioned as Coptic in the publications of the French-Polish mission, only 76 have been identified as bearing the field inventory numbers, 1–75 and 121 (no. 1).¹⁰ Fourteen of the remaining forty-five pieces can plausibly be identified on the account of the code of their findspot noted down on their surface (KR, KS, KW; see the Appendix below). The rest are probably to be found among all those ostraca published by Bacot that do not include any numbering whatsoever.

As Bacot's edition does not include an inventory list or a concordance of the texts published by her, which makes the orientation in the collection difficult, we have decided to include such a concordance in the Appendix to this article. The readers will hopefully find it useful for the study of this material.

1. Receipt for the delivery of wine

This is definitely the best-preserved ostrakon from Edfu in the Warsaw collection, which earned it a place on display of the permanent exhibition at the Faras Gallery of the National Museum. The text is complete and clearly legible. It is written in black ink on the outer surface of an Aswan amphora sherd, possibly AE 5/6, along the ribbing.

Palaeographically, the ostrakon represents the quadrilinear hand, with numerous ligatures in expected places (e.g. ⲉⲓ, ⲧⲉⲛ, ⲧⲉⲡ, or ⲉⲧ).

According to the code KR written in pencil on the outer surface of the sherd below the text, the object was discovered at the central kom. This is in fact the area which yielded most of the late-Byzantine /early-Islamic textual record during the work of the French-Polish expedition. The provenance of the Coptic ostraca found on the central kom is described

¹⁰ In the introduction to her edition, Bacot noted that six ostraca from the 1937 season of the French-Polish excavation, numbered C. 6, C. 13, C. 14, C. 16, C. 17, and C. 18, were missing from the IFAO's storerooms (BACOT 2009: vi). Of these, four are now identified in the Warsaw collection: C. 6 = no. 3, C. 14 + C. 18 = no. 2, C. 16 = no. 4. Thus, only two objects are effectively missing from the lot, C. 13 and C. 17. Interestingly, another text found in Warsaw, C. 60 = no. 5, and preliminarily transcribed in *O. Edfou* II, has not been listed as missing from the IFAO by Bacot.

as ‘le plateau au nord des caves byzantino-coptes’ (Manteuffel 1937: 142); regrettably, no more precise localisation can be established.

Coincidentally, the object appears to be the last Coptic ostrakon that entered the field register of the excavation, as – relying on the archaeological reports – 121 ostraca were identified and inventoried as ‘Coptic’ (see above).

The text is republished here after Alain Delattre and Jean-Luc Fournet.¹¹

Editions: Jakobielski 1960: 36–37 (no. 10); Delattre & Fournet 2011: 84–85, pl. IV (bottom); *SB Kopt.* V 2312.

MNW 139901 = UW 1309:39

12.5 × 14.4 cm

Edfu

Field no. Co. 121

probably 670s

TM 85345

† ϺΙΤΟΟΤΚ ΝΤΟΚ ΙΩϺΑΝΝΗϺ

ΕΙϺ ΘΡΟΜΝΤ ΕΝΒΑΙΘΟΜΝΤ ΠΗΡΠ

ΝΤΕ ΠΜΕϺCΝΑΥ ΝΕΙΟΟΜ ΝΤΑϺΩΡ ΑΥΕΙ

4 ΕΤΟΟΤ ΝΤΕΙϺΕ ΕΤΚΙΜΑ (τρι)πλ(οὐν) α μεω-

ΤΗΙ (τρι)πλ(οὐν) α χαλαμλη (τρι)πλ(οὐν) α γί(νεται) (τρι)πλ(â)

γ μ(όνα) μ(ηνι) Φαμ(ενω)θ κγ ι(ν)δ(ικτίωνος) β †

Σευῆρος στοιχεῖ

† From you, Iohannes, behold three baishoments of wine from the second wine press of Tabor (that) have reached me in this way: for Tkima 1 triploun, (for) Meshtei 1 triploun, (for) Chalamle 1 triploun, that is 3 triplouns only. In the month of Phamenoth 23, indiction 2. † Seueros agrees.

The text belongs with a group of six other ostraca forming a dossier of Seueros, an agent of Papas, the pagarch of Edfu: *O. Edfou IFAO* 36–42 (see Bacot 2009: 2), with important corrections in Delattre & Fournet 2011: 84–88.

Wine is a recurring subject of Copto-Greek texts from Edfu, including nos. 1–3 here, especially among the ostraca discovered on the central kom.¹²

¹¹ A photograph is now also available at <<https://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/pl/zbiory/499264>> (accessed 5 June 2025).

¹² Apart from no. 1, the following ostraca dealing with wine are labelled with the code KR: *O. Edfou IFAO* 38, 40, 49; *O. Edfou III* 482.

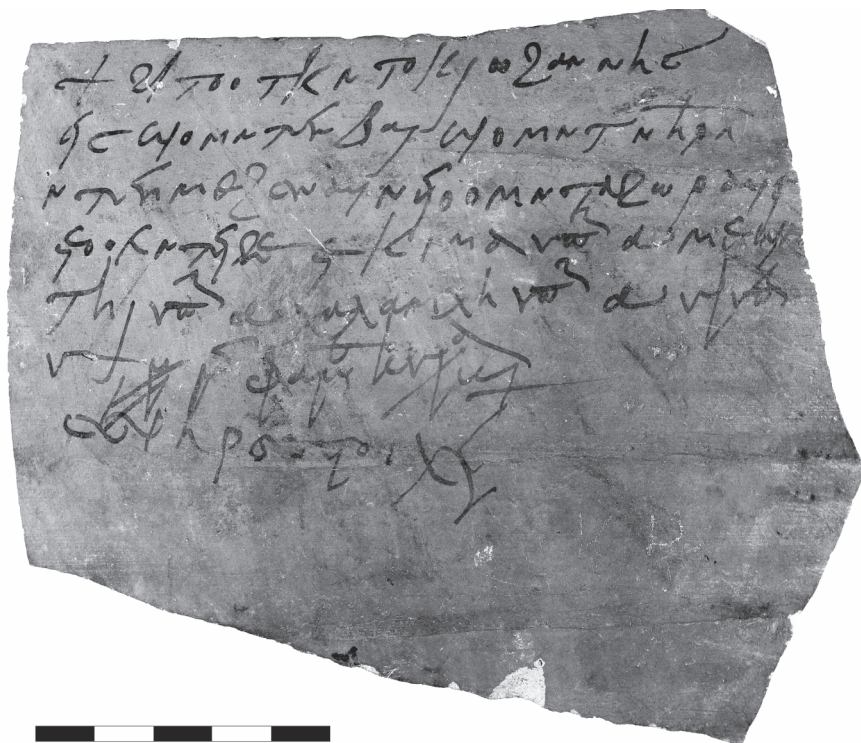


Fig. 1. *O. Vars. Copt. 1* (photo K. Wilczyński, MNW)

It comes hardly as a surprise, as the French-Polish expedition uncovered a wine cellar in the area of the central kom, so-called room CV I (see Bruyère *et alii* 1937, plan IV). Inside the cellar, the archaeologists found four large jars painted with vine scrolls, an amphora with ribbing and resin inside, as well as numerous other amphorae, jugs, and vessels, together with mud-stoppers and amphora stands. The function of the room was further determined by a papyrus dated to 619 mentioning the delivery of a certain amount of *koloba* of wine (*P. Edfou* I 2) and a wooden tablet recording the delivery of wine to different recipients (*P. Edfou* I T1).¹³

¹³ See MICHAŁOWSKI 1937: 62, with n. 4; MANTEUFFEL 1937: 142, 176; KUENTZ 1937: 193; DZIERZBICKA 2018: 251.

2. In documentary sources, the Coptic term *baishoment* corresponds to the Greek *triploun*, literally ‘three measures’. Both denote a volumetric unit of wine equivalent to three *knidia* (Copt. *labe*), with one *knidion* / *labe* amounting to about 4.3 litres = 8 *sextarii* (Bacot 2007: 715). A *baishoment* / *triploun*, therefore, equalled approximately 13 litres of wine. By analogy with *diploun* (‘double jar’), attested in Roman-period texts as a ‘double vessel’ (Casson 1939: 5–6), the *baishoment* / *triploun* could designate either a volumetric unit of measurement or the delivery of wine in three separate containers of *knidion* size. The type of vessel used for this measure remains undetermined, as amphora capacities in late-antique Egypt varied considerably, and papyrological sources do not define them consistently. Some scholars suggest that the *knidion*, for instance, may have referred to a local Egyptian copy of a Knidian amphora or to the late-antique AE 7 form (Mayerson 2000; Dzierzbicka 2018: 304–305). The most typical amphora types of the discussed period had the following average capacities: AE 7, including pseudo-Aswan types, about 6–7 litres; AE 5/6 of alluvial clay, between 7 and 15 litres; larger Mareotide AE 5/6, between 21 and 25 litres; and Aswan amphorae, between 3 and 17 litres (Dixneuf 2011: 142–143, 154; de Lellis-Danys forthcoming [a]). None of these forms precisely corresponds to 13 litres of a *baishoment*. However, the measure could have been realised as either three small Aswan amphorae, each of c. 4–5 litres, or as a single smaller AE 5/6 jar of approximately 13 litres. The former seems to us more likely, as each of the three beneficiaries of the delivery received one *baishoment* / *triploun*. If the *knidion* is understood as an AE 7 amphora with a capacity of 6–7 litres, rather than 4.3 litres, then a *baishoment* / *triploun* would amount to approximately 18–21 litres of wine. These estimations, however, remain highly tentative and should be taken only as providing a general impression of how such deliveries of wine might have been organised. Such calculations are even more problematic because the basic unit of volume here – the *knidion* – in Roman times is itself attested with the capacity ranging from 13 to 39 litres, and later on between 3 to 7 *sextarii* (on this complex issue, see Kruit & Worp 2000: 70, 104–110).

4–5. Owing to the lack of other attestations, Delattre and Fournet (2011: 85) considered *TKIMA*, *MEOTHI*, and *ΧΑΛΑΜΛΗ* to be toponyms designating places of delivery of wine. However, the last one has recently been identified by Ahmed Nakshara in an ostrakon from Edfu in the collection of the Louvre museum (*O. Edfu Louvre* 11). The text, although incompletely preserved, belongs to the same genre as the present ostrakon. Nakshara edits lines 1–3: [† ΖΗΤΟΟΤΚ Ν]ΤΟΚ ΒΙΚΤΩΡ | [ΠΔΙΑΚΟ(ΝΟC) ΕΙC] ὉΒΕΤΗ ΝΖΕ(CΤΗC) ΝΝΕΖ | [ΔΥΕΙ ΕΤΟΟΤ Ν]ΤΑΚΤΑΔΥ ΝΧΑΛΑΜΛΗ, ‘[† From] you, Victor, [the deacon, behold] seventy-five *xestes* of oil [have reached me and] you gave them to Chalamle’. There is, thus, little doubt as to the identity of Chalamle as a person, a beneficiary of deliveries in both cases. Hence, the remaining two names, *Tkima* and *Meshte*, should most likely be interpreted as anthroponyms as well. If so, *Tkima* is likely a female name on account of the element T-.

2. Account in *magarika* and *koloba*

The text is written in black ink on the outer surface of an AE 7 amphora sherd, along the ribbing. The object is incomplete: its right margin is preserved entirely, but the left part, with the beginning of all lines, is broken off. The ostrakon was broken into two pieces in more or less half of its height, apparently quite recently, as an archival photo shows the object intact.¹⁴

The ostrakon was apparently written by two hands. The first one (ll. 2–7) can be classified as bilinear with no ligatures. The writing is very careful; apparently the scribe put a lot of effort into his task. Lines 8–9 seem to have been written by a different person; the letters are much thicker and make impression of being more fluently written than in the text above.

The findspot of the object is not recorded.

Unpublished.

Secondary literature: Jakobielski 1960: 37–38 (no. 12) – partial transcript.

MNW 139869 = UW 1277:39

13 × 10 cm

Edfu

Field no. G. 13 = C. 14

2nd half of 7th cent.

TM 85347¹⁵

- [---] †
 [---] ⲉ ⲙⲓⲡⲛⲉϥ ⲕⲟⲗⲟ(βⲁ) ⲓ
 [---] ⲉⲁϣⲟⲛ ⲙ(ⲁ)γ(ⲁⲣⲓⲕⲟ̀ⲛ) ⲁ
 4 [---] ⲭⲣⲓϥⲧⲟⲫⲟⲣⲟⲥ ⲩⲃⲁⲣ(ⲟⲩⲥ) ⲙ(ⲁ)γ(ⲁⲣⲓⲕⲟ̀ⲛ) ⲁ
 [---] . ⲓⲱⲁⲙⲛⲛⲛⲥ ⲉϥⲃⲛⲕ ⲉϥⲟⲩ
 [---] . ⲛ ⲩⲃⲁⲣ(ⲟⲩⲥ) ⲙ(ⲁ)γ(ⲁⲣⲓⲕⲁ) γ ⲕⲟⲗⲟ(βⲁ) ⲓⲉ
 [---] . ⲙⲡ() ⲡⲣⲟⲩ() ⲕⲟⲗ(ⲟβⲁ) ⲉ
 8 [---] (ⲙⲁ) . ⲙⲉ . ⲛⲉⲙⲉⲁⲗ
 [---] ⲩⲁϥ. ⲕⲟⲗ(ⲟβⲁ) ⲛ

2. ⲙⲓⲡ ⲛⲉϥ ⲕⲟⲗⲟ Jakobielski || 3.] ⲁϣⲟⲛ . ⲙ ⲛ ⲛ Jakobielski || 4. γ ⲁ . ⲡ ⲙ ⲛ ⲛ Jakobielski

2. ⲕⲟⲗⲟ ⲓ || 3. ⲙ ⲛ || 4. γ ⲛ ⲛ: γ ex. corr. || 6. ⲩⲃⲁⲣ ⲙ ⲛ | ⲕⲟⲗⲟ ⲓⲉ || 7. . ⲙⲡ ⲡⲣⲟⲩ: ⲧ corr. ex ⲡ?,
 1. ⲡⲣⲟⲩ() || 9. ⲕⲟⲗ

¹⁴ Photo no. 1434 (bottom right). We thank Naïm Vanthieghem for sharing this photo.

¹⁵ Trismegistos is mistaken in assigning to the object inv. no. 138969, which in fact belongs to another ostrakon from Edfu, no. 3 below.

[---] †
 [---] *of the sailor (?) 10 koloba*
 [---] *servant 1 magarikon*
 [---] *Christophoros 1 magarikon of watery (wine)*
 [---] *Ioannes coming to drink*
 [---] *3 magarika 15 koloba of watery (wine)*
 [---] *mph() prot() 5 koloba*
 [---] (m2) ... *the servants*
 [---] *8 koloba*

The text is an account dealing with measures of wine. The last entry (ll. 8–9) appears to be written in a different hand, but due to its lacunary state of preservation it is impossible to assert how the two parts are connected.

3. In terms of spelling, the correct form is *megarikon*, as it derives from the Greek city of Megara. However, to distinguish it from other measuring terms such as *megala* (abbreviated $\mu\epsilon\gamma$), *magarikon* is consistently written with the *alpha* and usually abbreviated as $\mu\alpha\gamma$ (Kruit & Worp 2000: 133–134). *Magarikon* is thought to designate a type of jar, but so far scholars have been unable to determine its precise capacity. The term is primarily attested in both Greek and Coptic contexts at Edfu and Bawit, suggesting potential connections to the wine trade in the region in late antiquity (Boud'hors 2004: 61–62; Bacot 2006: 39; Bacot 2007: 716).

4 & 6. The abbreviation $\gamma\Delta\alpha\rho()$ likely stands for $\acute{\upsilon}\delta\alpha\rho\eta\varsigma$ or $\acute{\upsilon}\delta\alpha\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$, ‘watery, mixed with too much water’ (LSJ, *s.v.*), mostly used in reference to wine. However, the word has not been attested in papyrological documentation so far as a designation of a type of wine. Its two only occurrences in papyri.info come from medical treatises of much earlier dates: *P. Yale* II 123 (unknown provenance, 3rd cent. BCE), l. 2: [$\epsilon\gamma$?] $\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\delta \acute{\upsilon}\delta\alpha\rho\acute{\omega}\nu$; and *SB XVI* 12529 (unknown provenance, 2nd–3rd cent.), fr. P. Mich. inv. 1469, l. 3–5: $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\pi\iota\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu \omicron[\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\rho\iota]\omicron\nu \kappa\epsilon\kappa\rho\alpha\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\nu \nu[\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\nu \xi\mu\beta\rho\alpha]\chi\upsilon \acute{\upsilon}\delta\alpha\rho\acute{\epsilon}\varsigma$, ‘to drink in addition a little new wine, diluted until somewhat watery’ (transl. APIS). Perhaps the same word, though in a different spelling, can be found in *O. Edfou* II 319, ll. 3–4, in the phrase $\omicron\upsilon\acute{\iota}\nu(\omicron)\upsilon \acute{\upsilon}\delta\rho\omicron\iota() \kappa\acute{o}\lambda\omicron\beta\omicron\nu \acute{\epsilon}\nu$.

6 & 9. The measure *kolobon* has so far been attested only once in Coptic ostraca from Edfu, in *O. Edfu Louvre* 52. Ahmed Nakshara edits lines 1–4: † $\alpha\iota\chi\iota \rho\iota\tau\eta \mu\epsilon<\rho>[\kappa\omicron\gamma\iota\omicron\varsigma \kappa\epsilon\kappa\alpha\gamma \mid \eta\kappa\omicron[\lambda\omicron]\beta\omicron\nu \eta\epsilon\rho\iota \mid \eta[\lambda]\zeta \eta\tau\rho\omicron\mu\eta$, ‘† I have received from Merkourios two *koloba* of old wine’. This measure is well known, however, from

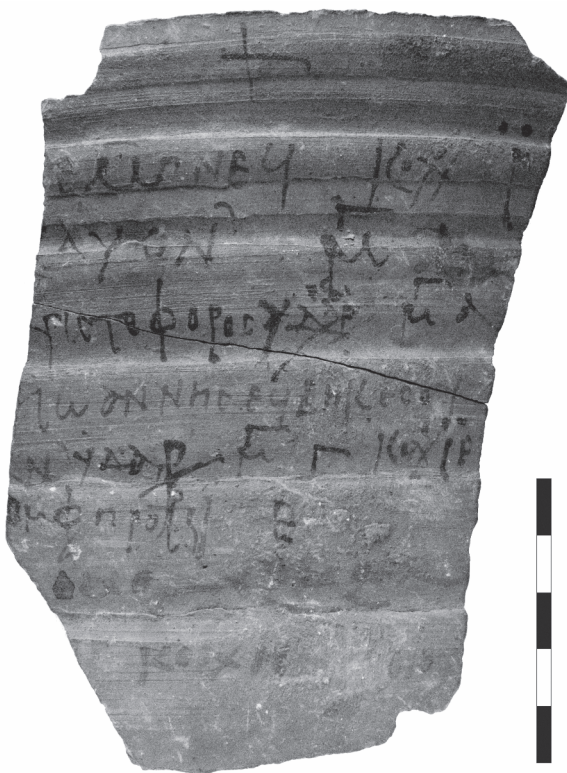


Fig. 2. *O. Vars. Copt. 2* (photo A. Pawlikowska-Gwiazda)

Greek papyri and ostraca from the same site:¹⁶ *O. Edfu* I 141 (1st/2nd cent.), II 319 (4th–7th cent.), III 482 (600–625), III 483 (600–625); *P. Edfu* I 3 (618), *P. CtYBR* inv. 72 (619–629), and from the Coptic wooden tablet *O. Edfou* I T1 (B & C). Estimating the capacity of a *kolobon* is, again, quite challenging, but it is generally assumed that a *kolobon* (often referred to as *κόλλαθον*, see Kruit & Worp 2002) corresponds to around four *knidia* (c. 17 litres) (Kruit & Worp 2000: 106). Contrary to *baishoment*/*tripoun*, *kolobon*/*kollathon* is not primarily a volumetric measure, but rather a specific type of container, which, as we learn from *P. CtYBR* inv. 72, could occur in small (*μικρά*) and large (*μεγάλα*) sizes (see Kruit & Worp 2002: 52–53). It is therefore tempting to suggest that the term *kolobon* may refer to an Aswan amphora of two different capacities (see the commentary to no. 1).

¹⁶ For a list of attestations of the term in Greek epigraphical sources from late-antique Egypt, see Kruit & Worp 2000: 138–140. The term appears to have been particularly popular in the Thebaid, as it occurs in the small collection of papyri of such provenance dated to 601–625 (*P. Horak* 31, 33–37, 42, 44, 49, 54, 60).

7. The reading of this line is not entirely certain. What we print in the edition above was suggested to us by the anonymous reviewer of the article. $\mu\varphi()$ could be the end of an abbreviated personal name and $\pi\rho\sigma\tau()$ a title, resolved as $\pi\rho\sigma\tau(os)$ (for $\pi\rho\omega\tau os$), a monastic title, or $\pi\rho\sigma\tau(οκωμήτης)$ (for $\pi\rho\omega\tau οκωμήτης$), the head of a village. Another way to interpret the line is as follows: $\text{.}\mu(\eta\nu\iota)\ \Phi(\alpha\omega\varphi\iota)\ \pi\rho\acute{o}\tau(\eta)$ (l. $\pi\rho\acute{o}\tau\eta$) $\iota\delta(\iota\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\omega\nu os)$ ε, '[---] in the month of Phaophi the first, in the 5th indiction'. The name of the month Phaophi is not normally abbreviated with only a *phi*, as in no. 4 below, but see *O. Barwit IFAO* 32 (8th cent.), l. 2: $\mu(\eta\mu\iota)\ \Phi(\alpha\omega\varphi\iota)\ \iota(\nu)\Delta(\iota\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\omega\nu os)$ ιγ, 'in the month of Phaophi, in the 13th indiction'.

3. List of deliveries of wine for offering

The text is written in black ink on the outer surface of an AE 7 amphora sherd, along the ribbing. The red coating visible outside is typical of amphorae produced in Edfu (see below, section 3).

The object is incomplete. Its upper margin seems to be preserved almost entirely, and both side margins to a large extent, but the lower part, with an unknown amount of text (see the commentary below), is broken off. The right-hand part of the ostrakon is blackened and hard to decipher.

Palaeographically, the text belongs to the bilinear type of hand, without any ligatures.

The findspot of the object is nowhere recorded.

Unpublished.

MNW 138969 = UW 428:37
Field no. C. 6 = G. 477

11 × 11 cm

Edfu
2nd half of 7th cent.

	† $\eta\eta\rho\bar{\eta}\ \bar{\eta}\tau\alpha\chi\eta\tau\omicron[\gamma\ \xi\alpha?]$	
	$\pi\rho\sigma\phi\omicron\rho\alpha$?	
	$\mu(\alpha)\Gamma(\alpha\rho\iota\kappa\omicron\Nu)$ $\bar{\eta}\eta\ \mu\bar{\eta}\ \lambda\alpha\kappa\epsilon\omicron\Nu$ $\bar{\eta}\epsilon$	
4	$\pi\epsilon\zeta\epsilon\Nu\sigma$	$\mu(\alpha)\Gamma(\alpha\rho\iota\kappa\omicron\Nu)$.
	$\eta\rho\bar{\eta}\omicron\omega\delta\epsilon$	$\mu(\alpha)\Gamma(\alpha\rho\iota\kappa\omicron\Nu)$.
	$\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\mu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$.	$\mu(\alpha)\Gamma(\alpha\rho\iota\kappa\omicron\Nu)$ α
	$\mu\eta\eta\alpha\ \sigma\tau\epsilon\phi\alpha\Nu\omicron\gamma$	$\mu(\alpha)\Gamma(\alpha\rho\iota\kappa\omicron\Nu)$.
8	$\kappa\gamma\rho\sigma\ \Gamma\alpha$. $\tau\iota$	$\mu(\alpha)\Gamma(\alpha\rho\iota\kappa\omicron\Nu)$ α

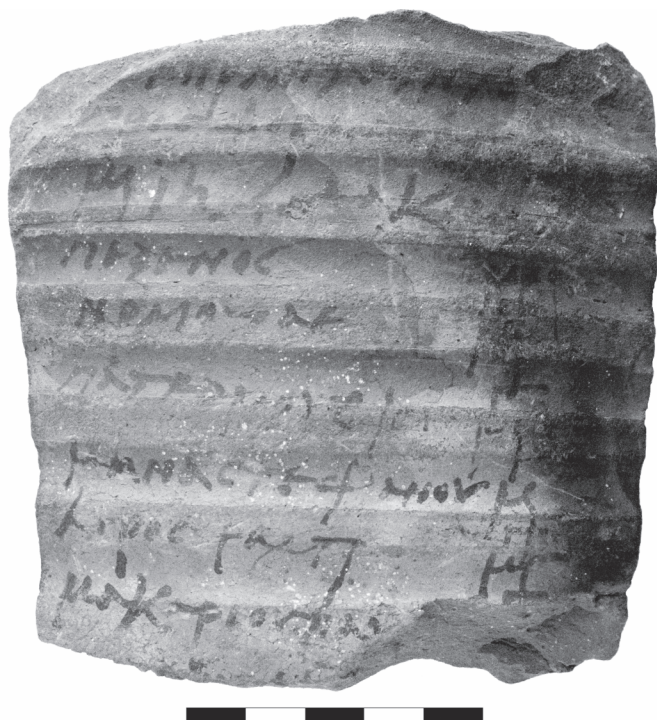


Fig. 3. *O. Vars. Copt.* 3 (photo A. Pawlikowska-Gwiazda)

μακαριος παυ[λοϋ [μ(α)]γ(α)ρικον] [.]
[]..[]..[

3. μ`τ`// 4. μ`τ`// 5. μ`τ`// 6. μ`τ`// 7. μ`τ`// 8. μ`τ`// 9. /[μ]`τ`[/]

† *The wine that they gave [as]*

offering ...

18 magarika and 15 laka

The stranger

. *magarikon/-a*

The men of Oshae (?)

. *magarikon/-a*

Patermouthis

1 magarikon

Mena son of Stephanos

. *magarikon/-a*

Lord Ga.ti

1 magarikon

Makarios son of Paulos

. *magarikon/-a*

The ostracon contains a list or account enumerating persons who delivered some quantity of wine for a *prosphora*, ‘offering’. Unfortunately, we cannot decide what ‘offering’ is meant in this case, as its possible description is illegible in the obliterated part of line 2 (see commentary *ad loc.*). In general, the word designates the Eucharist, but may also refer to other kinds of offerings, for instance for the deceased (Lampe, *s.v.* προσφορά, *sub* 3.f.i–ii, 3.g; LSJ, *s.v.* προσφορά, *sub* II). The latter meaning is found in *P. Ryl. Copt.* 295 (unknown provenance, 6th/7th cent.), l. 9: [---]ΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑ ΝΤΕΚΜΑΚΑΡΙΑ ΝΜΑΔΥ, ‘[---] *prosphora* for your blessed mother’ (our translation); or *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67312 (Antinoopolis, 567), ll. 76–77: ὑπὲρ ἁγίας προσφορᾶς τῆς αὐτῆς μακαρ[ίας] μο(υ) γυναικός, ‘for the holy *prosphora* for my wife of blessed memory’ (transl. *Law in Social Networks Project* at papyri.info).

It is impossible to say how much text is missing at the bottom. The numerals in the preserved entries of the list are illegible, therefore we cannot know how many *magarika* of the eighteen mentioned in the heading, were delivered by the listed persons. Moreover, the *laka* mentioned in the heading are absent from the preserved part of the account, which points to the fact that the ostracon could have been considerably bigger.

1. ΠΕΞΕΝΟΣ: As the proper name ‘Peksenos’ appears to be unattested in documentation to date, we assume that the word denotes here an anonymous offerer from outside of the community.

2. ΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑ?: One is tempted to read the three first letters as ϣτϣ, which invites the reading προσφορά Στῆφάνου, ‘offering for Stephanos’. Whether this would be the same Stephanos as the father of Mena from line 7, remains naturally unverifiable. However, the traces after the supposed ϣτϣ are too faint to warrant any reading.

3. ΛΑΚΕΩΝ: In Edfu, the measure *lakon* (pl. *laka*) has so far been attested only in Greek documents (*P. Apoll.* 92, 93, 94, 97, and 101). The precise meaning of the term *lakon* (*jagon*) remains uncertain: does it designate a specific ceramic vessel or rather a volumetric measure? Coptic ostraca from Bawit (*O. Bawit IFAO* 46, 47, & 48) show that the term was used in connection not with liquid goods, but with fish (Coptic ϣαλλ, identified as *Synodontis schall*, a Nilotic species; see Clackson 2002). Yet, in the Edfu documents *lakon* clearly refers to wine, which suggests that the term was not restricted to a single commodity (see also *O. Crum VC* 111). As in Egypt fish was typically not transported fresh but preserved as salted products, such as pickled fish (*salsamenta*) or fish sauce (*garum*), it seems plausible that *lakon*

referred to a unit of storage rather than a vessel type. This interpretation is in line with information obtained from textual sources and is further supported by archaeological discoveries at Bawit. In room 42, Jean Maspero found a necked vase ('un vase à goulot') filled with salted fish remains, along with a deep plate containing the same type of goods (Maspero 1931: 42). More recent finds confirmed the presence of *salsamenta* in an amphora of type AE 5/6 of Palestinian origin and dated to the early seventh century (Van Neer *et alii* 2007: 147–150). The Nilotic fish bones identified inside prove that the jar was reused (Van Neer *et alii* 2007: 154). Originally, it served to transport wine, as indicated by resin traces on its interior, and its estimated capacity was about 20–26 litres (Van Neer *et alii* 2007: 151). Taken together, this evidence suggests that *lakon* did not denote a specific amphora type, since pickled foodstuffs were often stored and shipped in reused containers rather than in standardised ones. It is tempting to assume, however, that one *lakon* equalled c. 20–25 litres, based on the capacity of the AE 5/6 amphora. Still, the data remains inconclusive, especially since at Kellia remains of other Nilotic fish (*Alestes* sp.) were also found in AE 7 amphorae (Egloff 1977: 42).

4, 5, 7, ⲉ 9. ⲙ(ⲁ)ⲣ(ⲁ)ⲓⲕⲟⲛ: For *magarikon*, see above, no. 2, l. 2 n.

5. ⲡⲣⲓⲟⲩⲁⲉ: To be best of our knowledge, the toponym Oshae has not been attested so far in our documentation. It would be tempting to identify the name with al-Hosh (TM Geo 4946), a site on the west bank of the Nile some 30 km south of Edfu, near Gebel Silsila, where prehistoric and early pharaonic petroglyphs and graves have been discovered¹⁷ as well as a quarries utilised in the Roman period, to which attest several Greek graffiti of the mid-second century (*I. Portes du desert* 114–121). However, as far as we could check, no late-antique / early-Islamic remains have ever been discovered there.

8. ⲕⲩⲣⲟⲥ ⲉⲁ. ⲧⲓ: The middle letter in the name of the offerer is ambiguous. The form, as far as we can judge, does not resemble any known personal name.

4. Request for the delivery of barley

The text is written in black ink on the outer surface of an Aswan amphora sherd, across the ribbing.

The object is incomplete. It preserves the entire left margin and a large portion of the upper one, but its right part, containing the ending of the lines, is broken off.

¹⁷ See <<https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/nvic/research/archaeology—egyptology/ongoing-projects/the-belgian-archaeological-mission-to-elkab/el-hosh>> (accessed 20 June 2025) for a general overview of the site and basic references.

Palaeographically, the ostrakon represents a quadrilinear hand, with numerous ligatures in expected places (ει, σερ, τεη).

The findspot of the object is nowhere recorded.

Edition: Jakobielski 1960: 37 (no. 11).

Secondary literature: Bruyère *et alii* 1937: pl. XLIV.

MNW 138968 = UW 427:37

12 × 9.5 cm

Edfu

Field no. C. 16

2nd half of 7th cent.

TM 85346

† ταας νβικτορ . [---]
 κολλογθος ερω[αν ---]
 ει φαροκ τι σοογ[---]
 4 ηη φοντε η[---]
 γι(νονται) κριθ(ου) αρτ(αβαι) ς (και) [---]
 Φ(α)ω(φι) κθ ι(ν)δ(ικτιωνος) η [---]
 ου Κοσμη[α ---]

1. ηβικτορ [... Jakobielski || 2. κολλογ... Jakobielski || 3. φαροκ Jakobielski || 4. φοντ^ε [... Jakobielski || 5. γι / κρι^θ αρ... [... Jakobielski || 6. γρα^φ ... ια / η [... Jakobielski || 7. ουκοσμη [... Jakobielski

5. γν κρι^θ αρ^τ | ς || 6. φω^δ

† Give it to Biktōr [--- from?] Kollouthos. If [NN] comes to you, give six [---] and three of [---]. That is 6 artabas of barley and [---] Phaophi 29 (?), in the 8th indiction [---] Kosma [---].

1. It is uncertain how much of the ostrakon is missing to the right; the lacuna could have contained a patronymic or a title of Biktōr, but probably not more (see also l. 2 n.).

2. ερω[: If the identification of ερω[as the beginning of the conditional is correct, we should expect a proper name in the missing part of the line.

7.]ου Κοσμη[α: The reading was suggested to us by the anonymous reviewer of the article. If it is correct, we could expect στοίχει in the lacuna closing the document. We do not know, however, how to interpret the ου at the beginning of the line.



Fig. 4. *O. Vars. Copt.* 4 (photo F. Plewiński, MNW)

5. List of clergymen

The text is written in black ink on the outer surface of an AE 7 amphora sherd, imitating Aswan ware, along the ribbing. The red coating visible outside is typical of amphorae produced in Edfu (see below, section 3).

The object appears to be complete, but its surface is damaged in the upper left-hand part, and the text is obliterated in the central part.

Palaeographically, the text belongs to the bilinear type of hand, without any ligatures.

The findspot of the object is nowhere recorded, but it was most probably in the central kom, from where almost all late texts were recovered (Manteuffel 1938: 156).

While the ostracon was published, after Jaroslav Černý's transcription, already by Jerzy Manteuffel (1938: 159), the reading presented here is slightly improved, especially in line 4. It has been established on the basis of the original object and an archival photo, in which lines 2–5 are much better visible.¹⁸

Edition: Manteuffel 1938: 159.

Secondary literature: Bacot 2009: 3.

MNW 138929 = UW 388:37
Field no. C. 60

12.5 × 9.5 cm

Edfu
2nd half of 7th cent.

[†] ἰακωβ πρες(βγτερος)
[. .]ϣ διακ(ων)
[επ]ιφανις διακ(ων)
4 [μ]ωγχις διακ(ων)
[μ]ηνα διακων
μωγχις κρογστος
μωγχις αναγνωστῆ[ς]
8 πειρωε νρωρ

2. διακ || 3. διακ || 4. διακ

Iakob, priest,
..sh (?), deacon,
[Ep]iphanis, deacon,
Mouses, deacon,
Mena, deacon,
Mouses, ringer,
Mouses, lector,
This pasture of Hor (?).

The text contains a list of clergymen, most probably belonging to one church, perhaps in a monastery (see below, l. 6 n.).

¹⁸ Photo no. 1414 (lower left corner). We thank Nāim Vanthieghem for sharing this photo.

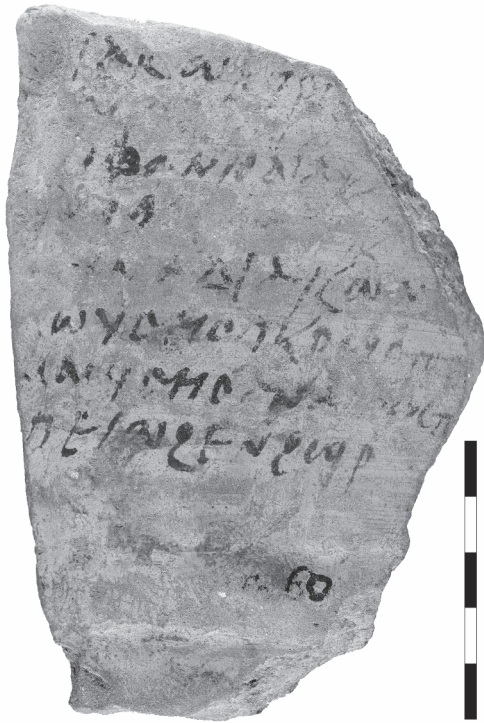


Fig. 5. *O. Vars. Copt. 5* (photo F. Plewiński, MNW)

2. [...]ϣ: One can think of such names as ϣϣ, probably a variant of *Kōs* (TM Nam 3802), found in *BKU* I 149 (Thebes, 6th–8th cent.), v^o, l. 7, or λϣ, attested in *P. KRU* 24 (Djeme, 762), l. 140.

6. πκρογτος: This appears to be the only attestation of this word in either Greek or Coptic sources. It was rightly interpreted by Bacot as ‘sonneur’/‘ringer’ (Bacot 2009: 3),¹⁹ from the Greek verb κρούω, the meanings of which include ‘sound gong as signal for divine office in monasteries’ (Lampe, *s.v.* κρούω, *sub* 3).²⁰ This appears to hint at the monastic interpretation of the find, which would coincide with the interpretation of the late architectonic remains in the south-east part of the central kom, a possible findspot of the ostrakon (Manteuffel 1948: 135–136).

¹⁹ The edition in MANTEUFFEL 1938: 159, is left without any commentary.

²⁰ The word κρουστός is attested in Greek only as an adjective meaning ‘played by striking’ (LSJ, *s.v.* κρουσμός).

8. πειρωε ἡρω: The final line of the text is enigmatic. The name Hor is attested at Edfou in *O. Edfou IFAO* 32, l. x+12. In combination with πειρωε, it could possibly be seen as a toponym, ‘this pasture of Hor’, as ωρε is attested as an element of place-names (Crum, *Dict.*, s.v. ωρε). How should it then be connected with the preceding list of the clergy remains unknown, however. Another, quite tempting interpretation assumes that ωρε means ‘flock’ here, producing the phrase ‘this flock of Hor’. It could figuratively refer to the group of clergymen listed above as the staff of the church. The name Hor would thus designate the name of the church, possibly referring to one of the eight Egyptian holy men by that name (see Crum 1913: 164, n. 1; Muysier 1943: 186–190). However, we are unaware of such a figurative interpretation of ωρε in Coptic sources.

2.2. *Middle Egypt*

6. Ostrakon of the type *etmoulon*

The text belongs to a group of roughly 170 so-called *etmoulon* ostraca. Because all examples of this type of text are believed to be of Middle-Egyptian origin (Delattre 2009: 23–24), the Edfu provenance for this text, claimed in Jakobielski’s edition and the museum records, is highly unlikely. While there is nothing in these records that could suggest another place of origin for the ostrakon, one notes that the object bears no excavation number characteristic of all pieces of inscribed pottery coming from the French-Polish excavations. Moreover, it cannot be identified on the archival field photographs of ostraca from Edfu, unlike all the remaining pieces belonging to the Warsaw collection. On the other hand, the university inventory number for this text indicates that it entered the collection in 1939 together with objects from Edfu. In this context, a note by Manteuffel that a local antiquities inspector, a certain Mr. Fahmi, handed him a certain number of texts that did not originate from the work of the expedition but were reportedly found by the *sebakhin*, appears significant (Manteuffel 1938: 138). In its light, it seems entirely plausible that the Warsaw *etmoulon* ostrakon fell into the hands of the excavators in such circumstances and, having arrived in Warsaw with the Edfu findings, was inventoried together with them. The subsequent inventorying of the

objects at the National Museum must have automatically taken its Edfu provenance for granted and hence such provenance noted in the museum log books.

The text is completely preserved. It was written in black ink on the outer surface of an AE 7 amphora sherd, along the ribbing. The fabric of the sherd displays macroscopic features that may be linked to the production centre in Antinoopolis, further hinting at the Middle-Egyptian provenance of the object (see below, section 3).

Palaeographically, the text represents a nice and careful, even if seemingly not quite professional uncial hand (see the commentary below).²¹

Edition: Jakobielski 1960: 36 (no. 9).

MNW 139907 = UW 1315:39
TM 85344

12.1 × 10.1 cm

Middle Egypt
6th–7th cent.

ⲡ ἰνδ(ι)κ(τίωνος) θ Παῦ(νι) : α
 ⲙⲁ ⲛⲣⲁⲧⲣⲉ : ἁμάξ(ας)
 :γ: σάκ(κους) :ιε: σί(του) (ἀρτάβας) με
 4 ⲉⲧⲙⲟϥⲗⲟⲛ

1. ΔΙΗΚ | ΠΑΥ || 2. ΔΗΔΞ || 3. ΣΑΞ

ⲡ *In the 9th indiction, Pauni 1. Manbatre: 3 wagons, 15 sacks, 45 artabas of wheat to the mill.*

The *etmoulon* ostraca record the deliveries of grain, counted in wagons, sacks, and artabas,²² ‘to the mill’ (ⲉⲧⲙⲟϥⲗⲟⲛ) from different localities that most likely belonged to one large estate or monastery in Middle Egypt.

²¹ HENGSTENBERG 1931a: 52 calls it ‘hohe, “liturgische” Unziale’.

²² The deliveries are as a rule calculated in the 1:5:15 proportion, that is each wagon contained five sacks and each sack contained three artabas, which is also the case in our text (HENGSTENBERG 1931a: 62; YOUTIE & WORRELL 1942: 259; DELATTRE 2009: 26–27). There are, however, certain inconsistencies in about a fifth of deliveries. For some explanations see HENGSTENBERG 1931a: 63–64; HENGSTENBERG 1931b: 133–135; DELATTRE 2009: 27–28.

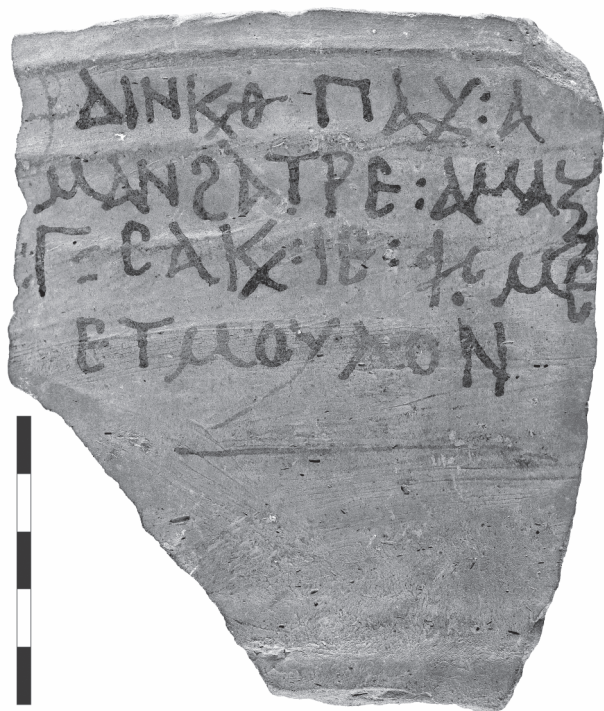


Fig. 6. *O. Vars. Copt.* 6 (photo F. Plewiński, MNW)

They have been extensively discussed in the literature (most notably in Hengstenberg 1931a; Hengstenberg 1931b; Youtie & Worrell 1942; Delattre 2009).²³ The present ostrakon is a typical representative of the genre. Palaeographically, the Warsaw *etmoulon* ostrakon can be classified as Youtie and Worrell's 'Hand 2', with its characteristic misspelling of the abbreviation for indiction (ΔINK), in which the majority of ostraca appear to have been written (Youtie & Worrell 1942: 256–257, 262).

The toponym Manhatre is a well-known locality in the *etmoulon* dossier. With as many as twenty-three attestations, the place is in fact the second

²³ For a concordance of all edited *etmoulon* ostraca, see the table in DELATTRE 2009: 40–48. The present text is no. 108 in the table. Note, however, that the table prints 'Pauni 4' instead of 'Pauni 1'.

largest supplier of wheat, after Manapollo attested in thirty-three texts (Delattre 2009: 25–26). Altogether, Manhatre delivered 2,129 artabas, while from Manapollo came c. 3,000 artabas. Based on these figures, Alain Delattre (2009: 26) suggests an approximate size of both Manhatre and Manapollo as 24 ha. The deliveries from Manhatre took place in the months of Pauni and Epiphi in the apparently subsequent indiction years, sixth through ninth and eleventh.²⁴

2.3. *Faras*

Ostraca are not a frequent sight in medieval Nubia. The Database of Medieval Nubian Texts (DBMNT) counts only ninety-five such objects out of approximately 5,300 recorded written sources from the region (see Ochala 2014: table I, with lower figures, reflecting the state of the database a decade ago). They have been found throughout the entire Middle Nile Valley, from Nag' al-Sheima in the north to Soba in the south, and occur in all three languages of written communication in Nubia, Greek, Coptic, and Old Nubian. As far as their contents is concerned, they can be generally divided into four overarching groups:²⁵ documents of various types,²⁶

²⁴ Chronologically arranged, these are, in the 6th indiction: *SB Kopt.* I 216 (Epiphi 17); in the 7th indiction: *SB Kopt.* I 168 (Pauni 5), 62 (Pauni 7), 175 (Pauni 12), 181 (Pauni 23), 183 (Pauni 27), 184 (Pauni 28), 193 (Epiphi 14); in the 8th indiction: *SB Kopt.* I 197 (Pauni 10); in the 9th indiction: *SB Kopt.* I 79 (Pachon 30), *O. Vars. Copt.* 6 (Pauni 1), *SB Kopt.* I 101 (Pauni 24), 102 (Pauni 26), 84 (Epiphi 1), 105 (Epiphi 5), 111 (Epiphi 11), 116 (Epiphi 21); in the 11th indiction: *SB Kopt.* I 118 (Pauni 5), 119 (Pauni 12), 123 (Pauni 23), 127 (Epiphi 7); in an unknown indiction: *SB Kopt.* I 216 (Epiphi 6), 217 (Epiphi ?).

²⁵ Disregarding twenty-seven ostraca for which the state of preservation precludes any identification of a textual genre.

²⁶ Legal texts: e.g. an acknowledgement of debt, in Coptic (*SB Kopt.* II 925 [Nag' al-Sheima, 8th–10th cent.; DBMNT 1374]). Receipts concerning delivery of goods: e.g. bills for shipment of barley, in Greek (RUFFINI 2010: nos. 1–5 [Abd al-Qadri, 8th–9th cent.; DBMNT 625, 695–698]). Lists and accounts: e.g. list of persons and commodities, in Old Nubian (ŁAJTAR 2014: 953, with pl. 5 [Gebel Adda, 12th–14th cent.; DBMNT 3025]). Letters: e.g. letter concerning a slave, in Coptic (RUFFINI 2010: no. 9 [Abd al-Qadri, 8th–9th cent.; DBMNT 1279]).

subliterary texts of educational or magical character,²⁷ liturgical texts,²⁸ and literary texts (see below, commentary to no. 7).

The present article adds one ostrakon, a literary text, to the small corpus of six such finds originating from Faras. The following objects have been published so far:

1. incipits of hymns based on Psalms, in Greek, found in the south church (Mileham 1910: 36, no. 36; DBMNT 2266);
2. a magical text containing the cryptogram of Archangel Michael and the *nomen sacrum* of Jesus Christ, found in the south church (Mileham 1910: 36, no. 31; DBMNT 2267);
3. a magical text in Greek with the Trinitarian formula and names of Archangels Raphael and Michael, found in the so-called Rivergate Church (Griffith 1926: 86, no. 20; DBMNT 1561);
4. a school exercise with syllables ending in the Coptic letter *shai*, found in a grave in room 7 of the Meroitic 'Western Palace' = Griffith's cemetery 8 (Łajtar 2024: no. IX.15; DBMNT 1624);
5. a school exercise with syllables beginning and ending with *beta*, found near the south gate to the cathedral complex (Łajtar 2024: no. IX.16; no DBMNT no.);
6. two small fragments of an unidentified text in Coptic (Jakobielski 1965: 191; no. 59; DBMNT 1801).

The object edited here for the first time comes from the Polish excavations on the site in the 1960s.

²⁷ Amulets: e.g. prayer for protection of Arinyji, in Greek (ŁAJTAR & VAN DER VLIET 2011 [Dongola, 13th–14th cent.; DBMNT 2216]). Catalogues of holy names: e.g. names of companions of Daniel in the Babylonian court (JAKOBIELSKI 1991: 278, no. 1 [Soba, Christian period; DBMNT 1893]). Exercises in writing: e.g. Coptic alphabet (RUFFINI 2012: no. 3 [Meinarti, 13th–14th cent.; DBMNT 1273]); exercise with the word ἀβρόχει and the name of Archangel Michael, in Greek (ŁAJTAR 2024: no. XIII.3 [Ghazali, 7th–13th cent.; DBMNT 2498]); Syriac alphabet (VAN GINKEL & VAN DER VLIET 2015 [Qasr Ibrim, 6th cent.; DBMNT 3078]).

²⁸ Hymns: e.g. incipits of hymns based on Psalms, in Greek (MILEHAM 1910: 36, no. 36 [Faras, 9th–13th cent.; DBMNT 2266]). Prayers: prayer of praise, in Greek (BOYAVAL 1970: 9–10, no. 4 [Nag' al-Oqba, 6th cent.; DBMNT 2935]).

7. Psalm 1:1–4

The text is written in black ink on the outer surface of an Aswan amphora sherd, along the ribbing. The object is incomplete: parts of lower and right margins are preserved; the text on the left-hand side is heavily obliterated. The ostrakon was glued together from four matching pieces.

The text was written in a nice majuscule hand inclined to the right. No ligatures are visible. One notes a peculiar shape of the *eta* in ⲧⲉϣⲱⲛ (l. 8) and ⲙⲡⲱ]ⲛⲛ (l. 9), almost cursive, but with a short left vertical stroke.

The object was discovered in 1964, during the last season of excavations at Faras, in the east part of the remains of a building located to the south of the cathedral square and interpreted as an episcopal residence (Jakobielski 1972: plan II, *sub* N; Godlewski 2006: 45, 77–79).²⁹ The erection of the building is dated to the episcopate of bishop Paulos at the turn of the eighth century, which coincides with the dating of the ostrakon based on its material characteristics (see below, section 3). Unfortunately, no more precise information on the context of discovery is available.

Unpublished.

MNW 234142
Field no. F 154/63–4

11 × 12 cm

Faras
6th–7th cent.?

- [ⲛⲁⲓⲁⲧϥ]
[ⲙⲡⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲧ]ⲉⲙ-
[ⲡⲉϥⲃⲱⲕ ⲉⲙ] ⲡⲱⲟⲭⲛⲉ
4 [ⲛⲛⲁⲥⲉⲃⲛⲥ] ⲙⲡⲉϥⲁⲉⲣⲁⲧϥ
[ⲉⲓ ⲧⲉⲉⲓⲛ ⲛⲛⲣⲉ]ϥⲣⲛⲟⲃⲉ ⲙⲡⲉϥⲉⲙⲟⲟⲥ
[ⲉⲓ ⲧⲕⲁⲟⲉⲁⲣⲁ ⲛ]ⲛⲗⲟⲓⲙⲟⲥ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲉϥ-
[ⲟϥⲱⲱ ⲱⲟⲟⲡ ⲉⲙ] ⲡⲛⲟⲙ[ⲟⲥ ⲛ]ⲡⲭⲟⲉⲓⲥ ϥⲛⲁⲙⲉ-
8 [ⲗⲉⲧⲁ ⲙⲡⲉϥⲛ]ⲟⲙⲟⲥ ⲙⲡⲉⲉⲣⲟⲟϥ ⲙⲛ̅ ⲧⲉϣⲱⲛ
[ϥⲛⲁⲣⲟⲉ ⲙⲡⲱ]ⲛⲛ ⲉⲧⲣⲛⲧ ⲉⲓⲭⲛ̅ ⲙⲙⲁ-

²⁹ We thank Małgorzata Radomska for kindly checking the findspot information in the filed records of the Faras expedition kept in the archive of the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

- [ΝΕΞΑΤΕ ΜΜΟΟ]Υ ΠΑΙ ΕΤΗΝΑΤ ΜΠΕΚΑΡΠΟΣ
 [ΣΗ ΠΕΦΟΥΘΕΙΩ ΝΝΕΦΩΒ]Ε [ΝΑ]ΣΡΟΥΡΕΦ ΑΝ ΞΩΒ
 12 [ΝΙΜ ΕΤΦΗΑΑΔΥ] ΝΑΨΟΥΥΤΗ ΝΤΑΙ ΑΝ ΤΕ ΘΕ
 [ΝΝΑΨΕΒΗC ΝΤΑΙ] ΑΝ ΤΕ *vac.*

7. ΝΠΞΘΕΙC ΔΥΩ Budge, Nagel

[¹ *Blessed is the man who*] *has not* [walked in] *the counsel* [of the ungodly] *and has not stood* [in the way of] *sinner*s and *has not sat* [in the seat of] *evil men.* ² *But his* [pleasure is in] *the law* [of] *the Lord* and [his] *laws he will meditate day and night.* ³ [And he shall be as a] *tree planted by the brooks* [of] *water, which shall yield its fruit* [in its season and its] *leaf* [shall] *not fall off; and whatever* [he shall do] *shall be prospered.* ⁴ *Not so* [the ungodly], *not so.*

Psalms 1 has so far been unattested among literary sources from Nubia, be they manuscripts, ostraca, or inscriptions in Greek, Coptic, or Old Nubian, self-standing texts or quotations in other textual genres.³⁰ Its identification here thus supplements the corpus of Old Testament Biblical texts from Nubia.

³⁰ The following Psalms (LXX) have been identified to date: 3 (verses 6 & 8, Greek), 16 (verse 1, Greek), 19 (verses 2–4, Greek), 20 (incipit, Coptic), 22 (verse 1, Greek), 26 (verses 8–14, Greek/Old Nubian), 28 (verse 3, Greek), 29 (complete, Greek/Old Nubian), 31 (verses 1–4 & 7–11, Old Nubian), 33 (verses 2–5, Greek), 36 (verses 28–29 & 33–34, Greek), 40 (verses 10–11, Greek), 44 (incipit, Coptic), 46 (verses 2–6, Greek/Old Nubian), 49 (verses 1–3 & 14–15, Greek), 50 (verses 1 & 3, Greek), 61 (verses 10–13, Greek/Old Nubian), 62 (verses 2 & 4–5, Greek), 67 (verses 18, 24–28, & 31–34 Greek), 72 (verses 23–25, Greek), 77 (verses 65–66 & 72, Greek), 83 (verses 2–13, Greek/Old Nubian), 84 (verses 2–14, Greek/Old Nubian), 86 (verses 1–7, Greek/Old Nubian), 88 (verses 16–15, Greek), 90 (verses 1–5, Greek/Old Nubian), 1–11 & 13 Greek), 92 (verse 3, Greek), 95 (verses 6–13, Greek/Old Nubian), 96 (complete, Greek/Old Nubian), 100 (verses 6–8, Greek), 103 (verses 14–17 & 22–24, Greek; 15–31, Greek/Old Nubian), 111 (incipit, Coptic), 112 (verses 1–6, Greek/Old Nubian), 127 (complete, Greek/Old Nubian), 129 (2–8, Old Nubian), 131 (verses 7–12, Greek), 132 (verses 2–3, Greek), 144 (incipit, Coptic; verses 15–16, Greek), 149 (verses 3–9, Greek/Old Nubian), 150 (verses 1–6, Greek/Old Nubian). The list has been compiled on the basis of the list in ŁAJTAR 2015: 127–130 and information provided by Agata Deptuła and Adam Łajtar, who are preparing for publication fragments of Greek manuscript from Qasr Ibrim.



Fig. 7. *O. Vars. Copt.* 7 (photo F. Plewiński, MNW)

As a matter of fact, the ostracon is the first attestation of an almost completely preserved Psalm in Coptic from the Middle Nile Valley. So far, only the incipits of four other Psalms, 20, 44, 111, and 144 (see n. 30), have been identified, but their occurrence in a liturgical context, a fragment of a typicon with the Eucharistic readings for several days of the liturgical year (Hagen & Ochala 2014), implies the existence of continuous text manuscripts in Coptic (Ochala 2015: 19–20).³¹ The potsherd with Psalm 1

³¹ In OCHALA 2015: 19–20, a hypothesis was put forward that the typicon may have served for the needs of an Egyptian community residing at Qasr Ibrim, but Jacques van der Vliet

copied onto it points in the same direction – the presence of a manuscript from which the text was memorised and/or copied.

The copying of Psalms on pottery sherds and limestone flakes was a widespread practice in Egypt, especially in the monastic milieu of the Theban region (see Boud'hors 2019: 42–43), with further literature). The same practice must have existed in Nubia, but to a much lesser extent, as the small number of such finds indicates. The following 'ostraca with Psalm verses' have been attested to date, all in Greek:

1. Psalm 22:1–2 (preceded by the Trinitarian formula): Łajtar 1997 (Dongola, 13th cent.; DBMNT 2003);
3. Psalm 90:1–6: Ruffini 2012: no. 9 (Meinarti, 13th–14th cent.; DBMNT 1266);
4. Psalm 90:7: Ruffini 2012: no. 10 (Meinarti, 13th–14th cent.; DBMNT 1270);
5. Psalm 90:7 + 11: Deptuła 2024: no. 2 (Dongola, 11th–14th cent.; not in DBMNT);
6. Psalm 100:6–8: Ruffini 2012: no. 6 (Meinarti, 13th–14th cent.; DBMNT 1263);
7. Psalm 100:7 (?): Ruffini 2012: no. 11 (Meinarti, 13th–14th cent.; DBMNT 1265);
8. Psalm 102:1 or 103:1: unpublished, personal communication of A. Deptuła (Dongola, 11th–14th cent.; not in DBMNT).

As Anne Boud'hors observes, the Egyptian practice of inscribing Psalms on ostraca involved different purposes:

extracts from Psalms copied for the purpose of memorization and meditation, or as writing practice; compositions of Psalm verses, made up of verses from several Psalms and based on different principles of choice (keywords, themes, etc.) that are not always identified; and, finally, magic texts. (Boud'hors 2019: 42)

It is not easy to differentiate between those uses, especially the first and the last. In the case of the Nubian specimens, on account of both the

(forthcoming) is probably more correct in stating that, simply, 'the Nubian Church had chosen Sahidic Coptic as one of its languages'.

presence of the Trinitarian formula preceding the Psalm quotation and the choice of the quotation ('The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want' [transl. ESV]), no. 1 above had quite likely an amuletic function (Łajtar 1997: 59). The three ostraca with quotations from Psalm 90, nos. 3–5 above, may have had a magical character as well, as this Psalm was particularly favoured in amulets (Ruffini 2012: 293–295; Sanzo 2014: 106–120 and *passim*; Deptuła 2024: 27–29). However, as Giovanni Ruffini (2012: 300) notes for the ones from Meinarti, the sherds were extraordinarily large and hence not necessarily fit as portable charms; they may instead have served as model texts from which smaller specimens were copied. Psalm 100, on the other hand, does not appear to feature in magical contexts,³² and nos. 6 and 7 should perhaps be considered as instances of Boud'hors's first group of 'ostraca with Psalm verses'.

Our text poses an identical interpretative problem. Psalm 1 has been relatively well attested in Egypt,³³ including two instances in a clear magical context (Sanzo 2014: nos. 62–63). Juan Chapa notes that the phrase 'which shall yield its fruit in its season' may be seen as a protective charm for pregnant women (Chapa 2024: 173–174), which may have contributed to the Psalm's popularity. On the other hand, the fact that this is the first song of the Book of Psalms may have triggered its widespread use in education (Chapa 2024: 172–173). Last but not least, the explicit reference of the Psalm to meditating ('and his laws he will meditate day and night') makes it especially relevant to everyday monastic routine of contemplating the word of God (see, e.g., Wipszycka 2018: 150, 222). The monks were supposed to 'read, recite and repeat Psalms, particularly in the evening and at night' (Wipszycka 2018: 149), and Psalms were 'the most important texts used in prayer' (Wipszycka 2018: 229).

The ostrakon from Faras does not have any elements that would support a magical interpretation. If the reconstruction of the first lines is

³² SANZO 2014 does not list any example, and an online search in the LDAB reveals its presence in the Nile Valley only in Psalters.

³³ The examples have been recently collected by CHAPA 2024. To his list three further Coptic limestone ostraca from the hermitage MMA 1152 in the Western Thebes are to be added: BOUD'HORS 2019: nos. 97–99 (7th – mid-8th cent.).

correct, there is no space for any invocation or other formula at the beginning. It does not mean, though, that the object did not possess such quality. It seems to us more likely, however, that our text should rather belong in the educational sphere, the practice of memory or writing, which is well documented by several wall inscriptions from the cathedral and two other ostraca containing exercises in writing and reading.³⁴

11. The lacuna on the left is too narrow to fit the whole phrase [ⲉⲙ ⲡⲉϣⲟϣⲟⲩⲱ ⲛⲛⲉϣⲟⲩⲱⲃ]ⲉ. It is plausible, but by no means certain, that ⲉⲙ ⲡⲉϣⲟϣⲟⲩⲱ was omitted, without which the text still makes sense: ⲡⲁⲓ ⲉⲧⲏⲁⲧⲓ ⲙⲡⲉϣⲕⲁⲣⲓⲟⲥ [ⲛⲛⲉϣⲟⲩⲱⲃ]ⲉ, ‘which shall yield its fruit [and its] leaf [shall] not fall off’.

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE POTTERY

The presented collection of Coptic ostraca is a homogeneous set of amphorae body sherds reused as writing material. They fall into two main categories of vessels made of alluvial or kaolin fabrics. The first group (nos. 2, 3, 5, & 6) comprises Egyptian Amphorae 7 (AE 7), the most common transport container of late-antique Egypt. The presence of resinous impregnate on the interiors suggests wine as their primary content. None of the fragments preserves diagnostic features that would allow more precise typological identification. Therefore, they are tentatively dated to the late-antique and early-Islamic horizons, prior to the ninth century.³⁵

The group exhibits a variety of alluvial fabrics, indicating more than one place of origin. Although precise identification is difficult without an archaeometric analysis,³⁶ we observe that no. 6 shows macroscopic traits

³⁴ They all have recently been collected in ŁAJTAR 2024: 183–199; for the cathedral as provider of ‘educational services’, see OCHAŁA 2022: 62, 64.

³⁵ Examples dating from the ninth century onwards include cylindrical forms with massive shoulders and thick walls, like variant Dixneuf AE 7.2-6, known from the monastery of Naqlun (DE LELLIS-DANYS forthcoming [a]). However, such vessels possibly appeared earlier, even as early as the first half of the seventh century (DIXNEUF 2011: 172–173, fig. 172).

³⁶ No. 4 is made of fabric A5 (DIXNEUF 2011: 32), characterised by golden mica flakes and quartz grains, with occasional small white particles.

comparable to Dixneuf fabric A11,³⁷ tentatively linked to AE 7 production in Antinoopolis (Dixneuf 2011: 34, 162). Sherds nos. 3 and 5 feature a red coating outside, an unusual characteristic for AE 7 amphorae but typical of those produced in Edfu.³⁸ Overall, the presence of Edfu and Antinoopolis amphorae suggests that most of the writing material derived from regionally manufactured vessels that were accessible in substantial amounts.

The second group of ostraca (nos. 1, 4, & 7) is made of pink kaolin clay, a distinctive fabric from Aswan.³⁹ Unlike AE 7, these body sherds preserve traits such as body diameters and wheel-throwing lines, allowing for more precise morphological assessment. No. 1 may derive from a bag-shaped container, a form attested in post-antique deposits from the monastery of Anba Hadra (de Lellis-Danys forthcoming [b]) and the city of Aswan (Williams 2022: pl. 11: g, h). Sherds nos. 4 and 7 by contrast, belong to amphorae with bulbous shoulders comparable to Elephantine type K720 (Gempeler 1992: fig. 123:6–8). The chronology of type K720 spans the sixth to the seventh centuries (Gempeler 1992: 192),⁴⁰ while the bag-shaped form is likely associated with the period following the Arab conquest. Both specimens feature a red slip outside and resinous impregnation inside, suggesting that wine was their primary content.

³⁷ Characterised by a significant amount of small golden mica flakes, occasional white particles and some vegetal negatives; the break colour is reddish brown.

³⁸ For AE 7 production at Edfu, see DIXNEUF 2011: 163. The application of red slip on AE 7 vessels is often interpreted as a practice intended to imitate Aswan amphorae, leading some scholars to describe these as ‘pseudo-Aswan amphorae’. No. 5 is made of fabric A7 (DIXNEUF 2011: 33), with golden and occasional silver mica as well as sparse white particles. No. 3, featuring fabric A5 (DIXNEUF 2011: 32), is identified by abundant golden mica flakes and quartz grains with rare small white inclusions.

³⁹ The Aswan origin of pink kaolin clay has been confirmed through archaeometric analysis. The distinctive pink hue is likely due to local geological conditions, particularly deposits of rose-coloured granite deposits in the region (REMBART & BETINA 2021; PELOSCHKE & KATZJÄGER 2017).

⁴⁰ A specimen of this type has also been recorded among the pottery assemblage from Aswan, associated with the eighth–tenth centuries (WILLIAMS 2022: 72). However, it remains uncertain whether such vessels had a prolonged use-life or whether the find represents a residual example.

Body sherds of AE 7 were commonly chosen as scribal material, likely due to their wide availability as the principal transport containers for commodities in Egypt. Made of alluvial fabrics, these vessels were not highly resistant to breakage, resulting in relatively short life cycles before disposal. Their fabric properties offered, however, a degree of absorbency, which facilitated the preservation and legibility of ink, an advantage that may have been significant for scribes. By contrast, the choice of red-coated Aswan amphorae as writing material appears less common. Unlike AE 7, their surfaces did not provide an absorbent ground for ink, which could smear more easily. The absence of such smearing on the present examples suggests that the individuals inscribing them were well-trained with the skills and practical knowledge necessary to adopt to less suitable writing materials.

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APPENDIX

**Provisional concordance
of late Greek, Coptic, and Copto-Greek ostraca
from the excavations of the French-Polish expedition in Edfu**

Table 1 presents the ostraca dated to the late Byzantine/early Islamic period which were discovered by the French-Polish mission to Edfu and are stored partly in Cairo (IFAO) and partly in Warsaw (University of Warsaw & National Museum). The ostraca can be easily identified by either the field inventory number (starting with G. or C./Co.) or, in the cases where the field number is absent, by a code referring to their findspots. Bruyère *et alii* 1937: 101 and Michałowski *et alii* 1950: viii give the explanation to the following codes occurring on our ostraca:

- KR: north part of the central kom,
- KS: south part of the central kom,
- KN: Roman cellars in the north part of the central kom,
- NOI: pharaonic cemetery.

Unfortunately, the codes KW, KRc, KRf, KRj, KR 1, KR N, KR w/n, K CO are left unexplained, but the additional letters and numbers following KR may refer to rooms excavated in this sector.

Table 2 contains the ostraca that have been identified by Seïna Bacot as most probably coming from the earlier excavations of Henri Henne.

Table 3 includes all remaining ostraca stored at the IFAO and published by Bacot that do not have any identifiers. Some of them may have come from the 1930s works of the French-Polish team.

Table 1. Late Byzantine/early Islamic ostraca
from the 1930s French-Polish excavations at Edfu

<i>Field no.</i>	<i>Findspot</i>	<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
G. 16		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 211	74249
G. 17		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 225	74260
G. 18		MNW	MNW 139691 = UW 1099:37	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 222	74257

<i>Field no.</i>	<i>Findspot</i>	<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
G. 19		MNW	MNW 138956 = UW 415:37	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 215	74250
G. 20		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 218	74253
G. 21		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 223	74258
G. 23		MNW	MNW 138955 = UW 414:37	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 210	74248
G. 24		MNW	MNW 139688 = UW 1096:37	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 221	74256
G. 25		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 212 = <i>SB XVIII</i> 13971	38768
G. 26		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 219	74254
G. 27		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 224	74259
G. 30		MNW	MNW 139722 = UW 1130:37	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 220	74255
G. 32		MNW	MNW 138954 = UW 413:37	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 213 = <i>SB XVIII</i> 13969	38766
G. 102		MNW	MNW 139718 = UW 1126:37	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 226	74261
G. 107		MNW	MNW 138914	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 216	74251
G. 118 ⁴¹		MNW	MNW 139730 = UW 1138:37	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 217 (r ^o) <i>O. Edfou</i> I 227 (v ^o)	74252 74262
G. 124		MNW	MNW 138957 = UW 416:37	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 228	74263
G. 134		MNW	MNW 138958 = UW 417:37	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> I 214 = <i>SB XVIII</i> 13972	38769
G. 239	KR	MNW	MNW 139779 = UW 1187:38	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 316	74326
G. 245		MNW	MNW 139787	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 322 = <i>SB XVIII</i> 13970	38767
G. 246		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 314	74324
G. 240		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 320	74330
G. 248		MNW	MNW 139736 = UW 1144:38	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 319	74329

⁴¹ The number is not visible on the surface of the sherd.

<i>Field no.</i>	<i>Findspot</i>	<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
G. 253		MNW	MNW 139753 = UW 1161:38	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 312	74322
G. 254		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 318	74328
G. 264	KRc	MNW	MNW 139775 = UW 1183:38	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 321	74331
G. 268		MNW	MNW 139750 = UW 1158:38	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 310	64667
G. 272		MNW	MNW 139737 = UW 1145:38	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 311	74321
G. 273		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 317	74327
G. 275	KRf	MNW	MNW 139747 = UW 1155:38	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 309 = Grassien 2005: no. 2	74319
G. 278 ⁴²		UW	MNW 139866 = UW 1274:39	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 323	74332
G. 284	KR	MNW	MNW 138913 = UW 372:37	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 315	74325
G. 285	KRc	MNW	MNW 139784 = UW 1192:38	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> II 313	74323
G. 334	KR	MNW	MNW 139792 = UW 1200:39	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> III 478	74449
G. 352	KR	MNW	MNW 139846 = UW 1254:39	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> III 480	74451
G. 354	KR	UW	MNW 139850 = UW 1258:39	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> III 482	74453
G. 380		MNW	MNW 141916 + 141927 + 141959 + 141962	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> III 479	74450
G. 408		?		Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> III 483	74454
G. 417		MNW	MNW 139805 = UW 1213:39	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> III 477	74448
G. 418		MNW	MNW 139859 = UW 1267:39	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> III 481	74452
G. 420		MNW	MNW 139900 = UW 1308:39	Greek	<i>O. Edfou</i> III 476	74447

⁴² The sherd has G. 278 in pencil, repeated in black ink. *O. Edfou* erroneously prints G. 276, which belongs to a different object, the ostrakon *O. Edfou* 272 dated to 109 CE.

<i>Field no.</i>	<i>Findspot</i>	<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
G. 482	KRc	UW	MNW 139878 = UW 1286:39	Greek	unpublished	
C. 1		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 113	130836
C. 2		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 81	130817
C. 3		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 76	130812
C. 4		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 111	130834
C. 5		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 73	130778
C. 6 = G. 477		UW	MNW 138969 = UW 428:37	Copto-Greek	no. 3	
C. 7		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 72	130777
C. 8		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 77	130813
C. 9		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 135	130859
C. 10		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 58	130763
C. 11		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 118	130842
C. 11 bis		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 62	130767
C. 12		IFAO		Coptic?	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 143	130867
C. 14 = G. 13		UW	MNW 139869 = UW 1277:39	Copto-Greek	Jakobielski 1960: no. 12 = no. 2	85347
C. 15		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 35	130745
C. 16		MNW	MNW 138968 = UW 427:37	Copto-Greek	Jakobielski 1960: no. 11 = no. 4	85346
C. 19		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 104	130827
C. 20		IFAO		Coptic?	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 105	130828
C. 21		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 79	130815
C. 22		IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 75 = Delattre & Fournet 2011: no. 75	130780
C. 23		IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 98	131700
C. 23 bis		IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 94 ⁴³	130826
C. 24		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 138	130862

⁴³ DELATTRE & FOURNET 2011: no. 94 propose a date in the 3rd century for this ostrakon.

<i>Field no.</i>	<i>Findspot</i>	<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
C. 25		IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 95 = Delattre & Fournet 2011: no. 95	131697
C. 26		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 125	130785
C. 27		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 13	130785
C. 28		IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 96 = Delattre & Fournet 2011: no. 96	131698
C. 29		IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 11 = Delattre & Fournet 2011: no. 11 = <i>SB Kopt.</i> V 2357	129850
C. 30		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 107	130830
C. 31	KR	IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 88	131694
C. 32	KN	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 124	130848
C. 33		IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 46	85138
C. 34	KR 1	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 31	130741
C. 35	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 33	130743
C. 36		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 78	130814
C. 37+38	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 93	130825
C. 39	KR N	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 74	130779
C. 40	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 141	130865
C. 41	KR N	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 136	130860
C. 42		IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 119	130843
C. 43	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 32	130742
C. 44	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 131	130855
C. 45		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 120	130844
C. 46	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 82	130818
C. 47		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 126	130850
C. 48	KR w/n	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 17	129847
C. 49		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 140	130864
C. 50		IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 39	85146

<i>Field no.</i>	<i>Findspot</i>	<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
C. 51		IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 41 = Delattre & Fournet 2011: no. 41 = <i>SB Kopt.</i> IV 1810	130757
C. 52	KR	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 47	85139
C. 53	KR	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 56	130761
C. 54	NOI	IFAO		Coptic (r ^o) Greek (v ^o)	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 12 (r ^o) + <i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 103 (v ^o)	130784 + 131705
C. 55	KR j	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 127	130851
C. 56		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 45	85141
C. 57		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 30	130740
C. 58	KR	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 121	130845
C. 59		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 110	130833
C. 60		MNW	MNW 138929 = UW 388:37	Copto-Greek	Manteuffel 1973: 159 = no. 5	130837
C. 61		IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 116	130840
C. 62		IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 100	131702
C. 63	NOI	IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 50	131689
C. 64	NOI	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 61	130766
C. 65	K CO	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 42 = Delattre & Fournet 2011: no. 42 = <i>SB Kopt.</i> IV 1811	130758
C. 66		IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 53	131692
C. 67	KR	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 38	130748
C. 68	K CO	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 48 = Delattre & Fournet 2011: no. 48	131687
C. 69		IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 101	131703
C. 70	KS	IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 59	130764
C. 71	NOI	IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 97 = Delattre & Fournet 2011: no. 97	131699
C. 72	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 65	130770
C. 73	NOI	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 55	130760

<i>Field no.</i>	<i>Findspot</i>	<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
C. 74	NOI	IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 99	131701
C. 75	KS	IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 54	131693
C. 121		MNW	MNW 139901 = UW 1309:39	Copto-Greek	<i>SB Kopt.</i> V 2312 = no. 1	85345
no number	KW	IFAO	121 (blue)	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 20	130730
no number	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 9	130783
no number	KR	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 36	130746
no number	KR	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 37	130747
no number	KR	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 40 = <i>SB Kopt.</i> IV 1809	130749
no number	KR	IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 49 = Delattre & Fournet 2011: no. 49	131688
no number	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 60	130765
no number	KS	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 85	130821
no number	KR	IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 102	131704
no number	KR	IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 106	130829
no number	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 114	130838
no number	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 117	130841
no number ⁴⁴		IFAO		Coptic?	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 123	130847
no number	KR	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 137	130861
no number	KS	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 139	130863

Table 2. Late Byzantine/early Islamic ostraca
from the 1920s French excavations at Edfu

<i>Findspot</i>	<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
E 32 5 VI 52	IFAO	77	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 34	130744
E 32 5 VI 39	IFAO	89	Coptic?	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 130	130854

⁴⁴ The ostrakon bears no field number or findspot code, but the date of its discovery instead, 6/2/37.

<i>Findspot</i>	<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
E 32 5 V 15	IFAO	147	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 71	130776
E 32 VI 4	IFAO	148	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 69	130774
E 32 5 VI 30	IFAO	152	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 63	130768
E 32 t 90	IFAO	159	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 122	130846
E 32 5 VI 24	IFAO	195	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 109	130832
E 32 5 VI 29	IFAO	197	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 83	130819
E 32 5 VI 3	IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 108	130831

Table 3. Late Byzantine /early Islamic ostraca from Edfu
with unknown discovery date

<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 1	128538
IFAO	24	Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 91 = Gascoü 2010: 367–369 = van Minnen & Worp 2011: 228–231	131683
IFAO	57	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 44	85119
IFAO	146	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 21	130731
IFAO	176	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 28	130738
IFAO	188	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 23	130733
IFAO	189	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 6	129846
IFAO	190	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 26	130736
IFAO	192	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 4	129844
IFAO	198	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 112	130835
IFAO	199	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 25	130735
IFAO	200	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 3	129843
IFAO	201	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 15	130787
IFAO	203	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 16 = Delattre & Fournet 2011: no. 16 = <i>SB Kopt.</i> V 2358	129849

<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
IFAO	204	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 27	130737
IFAO	205	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 7	130781
IFAO	206	Greek?	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 92	130824
IFAO	207	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 24	130734
IFAO	208	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 8	130782
IFAO	209	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 2	129842
IFAO	213 + 2	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 64	130769
IFAO	237 + 238	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 29	130739
IFAO	239	Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 22	130732
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 5	129845
IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 10 = Delattre & Fournet 2011: no. 10	129848
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 14	130786
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 18	130728
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 19	130729
IFAO		Copto-Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 43	130759
IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 51	131690
IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 52	131691
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 57	130762
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 66	130771
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 67	130772
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 68	130773
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 70	130775
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 80	130816
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 84	130820
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 86	130822
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 87	130823
IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 89	131695
IFAO		Greek	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 90	131696
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 115	130839

<i>Stored</i>	<i>Coll. no.</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>TM</i>
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 128	130852
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 132	130856
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 133	130857
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 134	130858
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 142	130866
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 144	130868
IFAO		Coptic	<i>O. Edfou IFAO</i> 145	130869

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Η ΕΝΩΘΗ
ΠΑΡΑΔΟ



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FACULTY OF ARCHAEOLOGY
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CHAIR OF ROMAN LAW AND THE LAW OF ANTIQUITY



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Keywords: oracular inquiry, Roman Egypt, private letters, kinship terminology, documentary papyri, palimpsest, family relationships.

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of Jesus' apocryphal letter to Abgar and the other is a tax receipt from Djeme, dated to 717 AD.

Keywords: Dnipro Museum, Coptic ostraca, Egypt, apocrypha, tax receipt.

Jelle BRUNING

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Keywords: slavery, slave trade, sale contracts, Egypt, Arabic papyri.

Katarzyna DE LELLIS-DANYS, Grzegorz OCHALA,

✉ Aleksandra PAWLIKOWSKA-GWIAZDA

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Keywords: Coptic and Copto-Greek ostraca, Edfu, Faras, Middle Egypt, *etmoulon* ostraca, wine, literary ostraca, Psalms, materiality.

Giulio IOVINE

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Keywords: archive of Ammon, late antique Egypt, Egyptian priesthood, petition, court proceedings.

Adam ŁUKASZEWICZ

An inscription from Hermopolis 145

Abstract: Hermopolis was an important cultic and administrative centre of Graeco-Roman Egypt. During three seasons (1987–1990) a Polish-Egyptian archaeological expedition directed by Marek Barański carried out excavations in the city's Great Basilica. The inscription under discussion is one of the results of these excavations.

Keywords: Hermopolis, archaeological works, Greek inscription, Hermes.

Gabriella MESSERI

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Abstract: First edition of a wine account extending over six columns. Columns i–iv (iv is lost) record the sale of vintage wine and columns v–vi payments to the parties involved (intermediaries, administrators, camel drivers, and donkey drivers) made with the profits from the sale of wine. The vineyards are located in the area of Karanis. The account was most likely written in 194 CE using the back of the land administration register SB XII 10892 edited by Anna Świderek in *JJP* 16/17 (1971) and republished by the author *JJP* LIV (2024).

Keywords: wine account, wine production, wine prices, land transport, Karanis (Arsinoites).

Radosław MIŚKIEWICZ

Diocles' Law (Dem. 24.42) and the problem of the validity of laws in Athens in the late fifth century BCE 179

Abstract: The article examines the significance of Diocles' Law (Dem. 24.42) for the growing problem of (in)validity of laws in the Athenian legal order in the late fifth century BCE. Diocles' Law should be understood as part of the broader set of vital principles that constituted an 'evolving law reform' aimed at consolidating laws and strengthening the rule of law and democracy after deep constitutional crises. This study reconstructs the factual and legal background to which specific clauses of Diocles' Law refer (sections 2.1–2.4; ἐν δημοκρατία, κυρίου εἶναι, the archonship of Eucleides, ἀναγεγραμμένοι).

More broadly, it outlines the challenges the Athenians faced at that time, and the measures they took to address them, arising not only from the two oligarchic coups d'état, but also from mounting problems in their legal, constitutional, and judicial order. The article also argues that an analysis of Greek legal language – and its manoeuvrings as seen in Andocides' *On the Mysteries* – confirms that issues of the validity (κυρίως εἶναι) of laws must be distinguished from those concerning their application (χρησθαι). Even though the latter also played a role at the time, especially due to the *caesura* marked by the archonship of Eucleides (403/2), the central argument is that Diocles' Law was enacted to impose order specifically on the validity of laws at a very particular historical moment. This law was relevant retrospectively to 'the scrutiny of the laws', with the vital involvement of ἀναγραφεῖς τῶν νόμων from the beginning of their work in 410, and, more broadly, to future law-making. In addition (section 3), the article eventually identifies the principle of 'legal certainty', which underpinned the introduction of Diocles' Law, and formed a key part of Athenian legal culture at the end of the fifth century BCE.

Keywords: Diocles' Law; validity of law; application of law; classical Athens, law reform, law-making, the scrutiny of the laws, legal certainty, law consolidation.

Anna PLISECKA

The stick and the carrot: Notes on P. Col. VI 123, ll. 6–8 237

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Keywords: ἀπόκριμα, ἰδία, imperial edict, amnesty, petition.

Jakub URBANIK

The purpose of P. Dionysia (P. Oxy. II 237) and its mysterious beginning 251

Abstract: This article presents a new hypothesis regarding the function the so-called *Petition of Dionysia* (*P. Oxy. II 237* = *P. Dionysia*). The study re-examines the papyrus' structure and its procedural context, focusing on its newly deciphered mysterious beginning (col. i) by Constantinos Balamoshev. The findings suggest that *P. Dionysia* be not the original petition but rather a copy, possibly official, produced during its administrative processing. I conjecture that the document represents a late procedural stage, possibly including the governor's final decision and subsequent requests for execution.

Keywords: Dionysia, juristic papyrology, Roman administration of justice, court/judicial procedure, Roman Egypt, local law, Reichsrecht, Volksrecht.

Joanna WEGNER

Clerical authority in late antique Egypt: A papyrological perspective 283

Abstract: Papyrological sources from late antique Egypt attest to a variety of non-religious contexts in which clergy below the episcopal level – mainly presbyters and deacons – exercised authority in rural settlements. These contexts include formal and informal representation of village communities, mediation in conflict, and policing of the morals. While these phenomena have already drawn the attention of scholars, they were often viewed strictly as an outcrop of the religious authority wielded by the clergy. The present contribution is an attempt to nuance this perspective by taking into consideration the diverse socio-economic factors which contributed to the social standing of the clergy. It uses Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, with its subsequent reiterations, as the main theoretical framework and builds on the concepts of capital accumulation and convertibility between social fields in order to arrive at a multifaceted analysis of the clerics' position as fully integrated members of rural societies.

Keywords: late antiquity, Greek and Coptic papyri, clergy, institutional church, authority, field theory, forms of capital.

Marzena WOJTCZAK & Jakub URBANIK

To sell or to have sold? Hypotheke-praxis and dikaia time in P. Budge 311

Abstract: A tiny archive composed of the famous Coptic arbitration protocol *P. Budge* and three associated Greek documents, a settlement of claims, a sale, and a loosely connected marriage document, bring forward a fascinating controversy of the tormented times between the Persian and the Arab conquests of Egypt. Its settlement testifies to the operative force of law, legal awareness of its users, and dispute-resolution strategies in an environment of intrinsic legal plurality. A new text edition, providing an in-depth study of this material, delving into the dispute resolution method, rhetorics, and proper reconstruction of the events, is presently in the works. Before it is published, we would like to present here an aspect of this matter, closely connected to the very origin of the dispute, viz. our hypothesis on the nature of the security provided by the borrower, the widow Thekla, to her creditors, the consorts Philemon and Thekla. This central matter of the *P. Budge* controversy witnesses the profound legal awareness of its parties. Operating within the legal framework provided by Roman law, and without attempts to transgress it, the law-users of seventh-century Edfu managed to bend and form it to serve best their needs, creating a flexible form of security,

fitting the circumstances of Thekla-the-Widow and the creditors couple. It is amazing to see how, even at the dusk of its domination of Egypt, the Roman legal *forma mentis* was so strongly present in this inherently plural society.

Keywords: Edfu, arbitration, late antique Egypt, securities, *hypotheke-praxis*, *dikaia time*, legal practice, *apotage*, *hypothekimaia asphaleia*.

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