

Lajos Berkes
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JESUS'S REPLY TO ABGAR AND A TAX RECEIPT: TWO COPTIC OSTRACA IN THE DNIPRO MUSEUM*

1. EGYPTIAN ARTEFACTS IN THE DNIPRO MUSEUM

THE DMYTRO YAVORNYTSKY NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM of Dnipro is one of Ukraine's oldest museums. It traces its lineage to a public museum in Katerynoslav (after 1926 Dnipropetrovsk, since 2016 Dnipro), founded under the patronage of Governor Andrey Fabr (Fabre) and originally housed in the Potyomkin Palace, then the seat of the assembly of the local nobility. In 1902, Dmytro Yavornytsky (Evarnitskij), a prominent Ukrainian historian and archaeologist (Shubravska 1972), was appointed director of the museum. In 1905, a separate building was

* Anton Kistol has written part 1 and Lajos Berkes part 2. The images are published as a courtesy of the Dnipro Museum. We extend our gratitude to W. Graham Claytor for establishing the contact between us. In November 2024, Kistol posted images of the ostraca on a Reddit subforum, seeking expert assistance with their attribution and possible translation. On 30 November, Claytor contacted Kistol via direct message, inquiring about the origin of the ostraca. The conversation ultimately led to a cooperation between the Dnipro Museum and the University of Warsaw and the present article. Berkes thanks Roxanne Bélanger Sarrazin, Ella Karev, and Korshi Dosoo for helpful comments on the edition of A-827. Special thanks are due to Bélanger Sarrazin for sharing the manuscript of Bélanger Sarrazin (forthcoming).

constructed to accommodate the museum's expanding collection. The museum was later renamed (Beketova 2009: 116) in honour of Alexander Pol, a local nobleman, geologist, politician, and entrepreneur, who is widely credited with fostering the growth of the mining industry in southern Ukraine and transforming Katerynoslav from an insignificant provincial town into a thriving industrial centre – often referred to as 'Manchester of the South' of the Russian Empire (Portnov 2022: 11). Around 2,500 items from Pol's private collection of antiquities and rarities, donated to the museum in 1912, constituted the biggest part of its holdings.

The ostraca A-827 and A-1918 are part of the museum's archaeological collection and are stored together in a single box. The handwritten inscription on the box, in Russian, reads: 'From Thebes (Egypt? Greece?). Fragments of the walls of a ceramic vessel with an inscription in Greek minuscule (?). Brown clay. Antique culture [Hellenism; Greece? Egypt?]'.

It remains unclear when and how the ostraca entered the museum's collection, as well as who first attributed them and when. The prefix of their inventory numbers suggests they were catalogued before the 1917 revolution, as the inventory system was later changed. After the revolution, item prefixes were modified to КП (Russian: *Kniga postupleniy*, 'Acquisition register') and ДИМ (Russian: *Dnepropetrovskiy Istoricheskiy Muзей*, 'Dnipropetrovsk Historical Museum'). There are three museum catalogues published in 1893,¹ 1905,² and 1910,³ but the two ostraca are not mentioned in them. The search is further complicated by the fact that most of the museum's documentation, including inventory books, was destroyed in 1941 by its staff in anticipation of the approaching German troops (Serdiuk 2024: 224).

There are four possible explanations for the provenance of the two ostraca:

¹ К. Мельник, *Каталог коллекции древностей А. Н. Поля, в Екатеринославе Вып 1*, Киев 1893.

² *Каталог Екатеринославского областного музея им. А. Н. Поля: Археология и этнография*, Екатеринослав 1905.

³ *Каталог Екатеринославского областного музея имени А. Н. Поля: Археология и этнография*, Екатеринослав 1910.

1. They could have been donated to the museum by Governor Fabr as a part of 106 ancient Egyptian items from his collection in the 1850s–1860s. Although there is no evidence that Fabr ever visited Egypt, he was known to possess a private collection of Egyptian and Classical antiquities. In 1844, he gifted an ancient Egyptian statuette of an ibis to the Odessa Historical Museum. Fabr is also believed to have donated an Egyptian mummy with a doll of a child to the Katerynoslav Museum, where it remains today (Beketova 2009: 119).

2. They could originate from the holdings of the Archaeological Museum in Kerch, which were evacuated to Katerynoslav during the Crimean War (1855–1856). However, this version is the least likely, since most of the items that arrived from Kerch were antique artifacts dating to the period of Greek colonisation of the Black Sea region – including finds from Chersonesus and Olbia – which remain in the museum's collection to this day (Beketova 2009: 118).

3. They could be a part of Pol's private collection. Pol was known for his passion for archaeology and as a collector of rarities. He frequently travelled abroad, mainly to auctions in Western Europe, to acquire new artifacts for his collection. Among such acquisitions was a statue of Ramesses VI, dated to the thirteenth century BCE, purchased from an Italian antiquities dealer. However, the ostraca are not mentioned in the 1893 catalogue, which lists approximately 4,500 items from Pol's collection (Nikolaieva 2011: 187).

4. They were brought by Yavornytsky from his trip to Egypt in 1910.

We find the last version to be the most plausible, as Yavornytsky was the only known person associated with the museum to have visited Egypt. In early 1910, he journeyed to the Middle East, visiting Jerusalem, Cairo, Giza, and Helwan. Unfortunately, little is known about the details of Yavornytsky's itinerary in Egypt. However, it is documented that on 2 February, he visited Lesya Ukrainka, the renowned Ukrainian poet, at sanatorium 'Villa Continental' in Helwan (*Epistolarna spadshyna*: 609; Shubravska 1972: 121). They also visited the Egyptian Museum in Cairo together. In her letter of 3 February 1910 to Mykhailo Kryviniuk, she wrote about Yavornytsky: 'He journeyed to Upper Egypt to explore its ancient ruins ... He'll be staying with us at the villa for a week after his

return, to rest. He is such a spirited grandpa – he’s climbed on the pyramids and inside them, he’s been all over the place!’

Although there is no evidence that Yavornytsky visited archaeological excavations in Thebes, it is highly likely that he did, given his professional interest as an archaeologist. Alternatively, he may have acquired the artifacts elsewhere in Egypt as souvenirs.

2. EDITION OF THE DNIPRO MUSEUM’S COPTIC OSTRACA

1. Fragment of Jesus’s Letter to Abgar

Ostrakon fragment, complete on the left side, containing a copy of Jesus’ apocryphal reply to the letter of the Edessan king Abgar, who asked him to come to heal his illness. This tradition, already recognised as apocryphal in antiquity and first recorded by Eusebius of Caesarea, enjoyed great popularity. Translated into many languages, one or both of the letters were often used as protective amulets, a use to which the Coptic version explicitly alludes. In addition to our fragment, twenty-five Coptic copies of the Abgar correspondence are known so far (Karev 2024: 210–212). From the published ostraca, *O. Crum ST 36* and *P. Mon. Epiph. 50* could be the upper part of our fragment. However, images of these ostraca that would allow a comparison of their handwritings are not available, and their editions do not mention a framing with two dots (see below) which makes the assumption that one of them belongs to this fragment doubtful. For recent overviews of the Coptic version and manuscripts of the Jesus–Abgar correspondence and its use in amulets with further bibliography, see Karev 2024, and K. Dosoo, E. Love, & M. Preininger in Dosoo & Preininger 2024: 151; see also Bélanger Sarrazin (forthcoming).

The handwriting is a ‘regularly right-sloping majuscule’ typical of the seventh and eighth centuries, especially the Theban region (Boud’hors 2020: 629). The palaeography thus further confirms the probable Theban provenance of the document, already suggested by the archival note ‘Thebes’ on the box containing the ostraca (see above) and the certain

Theban provenance of the other ostrakon (see below). The scribe consistently writes tremas over *iotas*, liberally employs supralinear strokes, uses a double dot as a sense unit marker in line 3, corrects a copying error in line 6 (see the commentary *ad loc.*), and abbreviates the name of Jesus Christ as a *nomen sacrum* in line 11. A particularly interesting feature of the document is that it is surrounded by a frame consisting of pairs of dots placed side by side, approximately one line break apart. This frame was probably drawn around the entire text. A parallel to this practice can be found in the ostrakon *O. Crum ST 18*, containing a prayer of protection for a monastery, its people, and its cattle, written by the well-known anchorite Frange in the first half of the eighth century.⁴ At the bottom of the text, the name of Jesus, ι(ησοϋ)ς π(α)ρ(ι)ς(το)ς, is written and framed by single dots, except where the strokes used for the *nomen sacrum* are placed. Below this, the Christian symbol χρ is also framed in wavy lines. As Frange was also active in the Theban region, frames made of dots for religious expressions or protective artefacts may have been a local scribal practice. Furthermore, the bottom line of our ostrakon may have contained a 'seal' containing Jesus's name (see 12 n.). Overall, especially considering the parallel of *O. Crum ST 18*, it appears that our ostrakon was most likely an amulet intended to protect a place. Given the Theban context of the ostrakon, the use of a *nomen sacrum*, and its formal affinities with Frange's prayer, our ostrakon almost certainly originated in a monastic context.

The text preserved here diverges in some places from the other known versions, but the variants seem to be minor and may in part even be due to copying errors. In general, the preserved lines give the impression of a careless copy; see the commentary below for details. As the text, especially its spelling, is highly variable, only the most certain and necessary textual supplements are provided below. After the linear commentary, an *exempli gratia* reconstruction of the original will be presented below.

⁴ For a contextualisation of this ostrakon, see PIWOWARCZYK 2022: 170–171.

Inv. A-827

13.6 × 6.9 cm

Theban region
7th–8th cent.

 [c. 6–7]. [
 [ΤΑΓΑΠ]Ἡ ΝΑΡΕΘ[ΥΟΕΙΝ
 [Δ]ΝΟΚ ΕΤΩΑΧΕ : Ε[ΒΟΛ ΜΠΕΚ-]
 4 ΡΑΝ ΕΥΡ ΠΜΕΕΥΕ [
 ΜΝΝΣΩΚ ΑΥΩ [
 ΩΔ ΑΡΧ ΜΠΚ[ΔΕ
 ΖΝ ΤΑΣΙΧ Μ[ΜΙΝΕ
 8 ΝΖΗΤΥ ΝΔ[ΙΣΙΧ
 ΝΤΗ ΠΑΔΙ[ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΣ
 ΝΔΚΑΘ[ΔΡΤΟΝ
 ΧΙΝ Τ[ΕΝΟΥ ΩΑ ΕΝΕΖ
 12 Ι(ΗCOY)C [Χ(ΡΙCΤO)C

5. ἀγάπη || 6. ΜΠΚ: κ согг. ex 2 || 9. ἀντικείμενος || 10. ἀκάθαρτος || 12. ἴϛ

5. ΜΝΝΣΩΚ ΑΥΩ [: The word ΜΝΝΣΩΚ is followed by ΖΝ ΤΕΚΠΑΤΡΙΑ ΤΗΡC ΑΥΩ ΝΣΕCOTM in most versions. The most probable explanation for the divergent text here is that ΖΝ ΤΕΚΠΑΤΡΙΑ ΤΗΡC was dropped in this copy. This may have been an error already present in the *Vorlage* of the scribe or the scribe's own copying mistake (see below, l. 6 n.). However, it is also possible that we are dealing with a shorter version of the text, as it would make sense also with this omission.

6. ΑΡΧ: The scribe probably omitted letters from the expected form ΑΡΗΧΩ, as he commits a mistake also in the next word (see the next note).

ΜΠΚ[ΔΕ: *Kappa* was corrected from *hori* probably because the scribe's eye first accidentally jumped over κα to the following *hori*.

8. ΝΖΗΤΥ ΝΔ[ΙΣΙΧ: The last character of the line resembles the *delta* in the following line, which suggests reading ΝΔ[ΙΣΙΧ for ΝΤΕΙΣΙΧ, as the same phonetic interchange occurs in the following line. Most versions have ΝΤΕΙΣΙΧ or ΝΤΑΣΙΧ after ΝΖΗΤΥ, but *O. Crum* 22, l. 22 contains ΝΖΗΤΥ ΝΒΟΛ Ν[. As it is also possible that what appears to be a triangular *delta* is, in fact, a combination of two letters, our text may contain a similar addition to ΝΖΗΤΥ. On the whole, the reading presented in the text above seems more likely.

11. ΧΙΝ Τ[ΕΝΟΥ ΩΑ ΕΝΕΖ, 'from now until forever': Our reconstruction diverges from the known Coptic versions, but is probably only a slightly longer, biblically

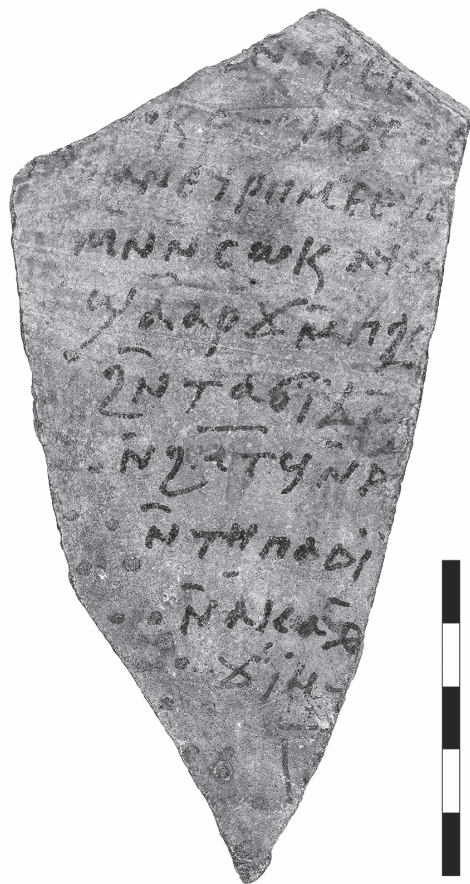


Fig. 1. Fragment of Jesus's letter to Abgar
(Dmytro Yavornytsky National Historical Museum of Dnipro, inv. A-827)

inspired (see Mt. 21:19) version of the expected $\omega\alpha\ \epsilon\eta\epsilon\zeta$. The supplement was kindly suggested by Korshi Dosoo.

12. $\iota(\eta\varsigma\omicron\Upsilon)\varsigma\ [\chi(\rho\iota\varsigma\tau\omicron)]\varsigma$: These words could perhaps belong to the final portion of the text: $\tau\epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\eta\ \mu\pi\epsilon\lambda\chi\omicron\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \iota(\eta\varsigma\omicron\Upsilon)\varsigma\ \chi(\rho\iota\varsigma\tau\omicron)]\varsigma$, 'the letter of our Lord Jesus Christ', although the full closing title is more commonly attested in manuscripts than in isolated copies. Alternatively, the text may have simply concluded with the *nomen sacrum*, or even – as Korshi Dosoo suggests – with a 'seal' of Jesus, similar to those found in one of the Greek and Armenian branches of the Abgar tradition (see, e.g., *P. Nessana* II 7 and Feydit 1986: 153).

A hypothetical reconstruction

A complete reconstruction of text is presented here *exempli gratia*, based on a more or less contemporary copy found in PCM I 11, pp. 24–25. Since the original shape of the ostrakon is unknown and minor variations in the text of Jesus' Letter to Abgar are common, any supplements must remain hypothetical. For reasons of space, lines 4 and 10–11 must have been shorter on the original; however, it is preferable not to speculate on the precise appearance of the text on the ostrakon.

-
- [c. 6–7]. [
- [ΤΑΓΑΠ]Η ΝΑΡΕΘ[ΥΟΕΙΝ ΖΗ ΝΕΣΠΛΑΤΙΑ ΑΝΟΚ Ι(ΗΣΟΥ)Σ ΑΝΟΚ ΕΤΖΩΝ]
- [Α]ΝΟΚ ΕΤΩΑΔΕ : Ε[ΒΟΛ ΧΕ ΑΚΜΕ ΕΜΑΤΕ ΤΗΝΑΚΩ ΜΠΕΚ-]
- 4 ΡΑΝ ΕΥΡ ΠΜΕΕΥΕ [ΝΩΑ ΕΝΕΖ ΑΥΩ ΟΥΤΜΗ ΜΗ ΟΥΣΜΟΥ ΖΗ ΝΓΕΝΕΑ ΕΤΝΗΥ]
- ΜΗΝΩΚ ΑΥΩ [ΖΗ ΤΕΚΠΑΤΡΙΑ ΤΗΡΣ (?) ΑΥΩ ΝΕΣΟΤΜΕΥ]
- ΩΔ ΑΡΧ ΜΠΚ[ΑΖ ΑΝΟΚ Ι(ΗΣΟΥ)Σ ΠΕΝΤΑΙΣΖΑΙ ΝΤΕΙΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ]
- ΖΗ ΤΑΘΙΧ Μ[ΜΙΝΕ ΜΜΟΙ ΠΜΑ ΕΤΟΥΝΑΤΩΔΕ ΕΒΟΛ]
- 8 ΝΖΗΤΥ ΝΔ[ΙΩΙΧ ΝΣΖΑΙ ΝΝΕΛΑΔΥ ΝΔΗΝΑΜΙΣ]
- ΝΤΗ ΠΑΔΙ[ΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΣ ΟΥΔΕ ΛΑΔΥ ΜΠΝ(ΕΥΗ)Δ]
- ΝΔΚΑΘ[ΑΡΤΟΝ ΕΩΘΜΘΟΜ ΕΖΩΝΕ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΟΥΔΕ ΕΧΩΖ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΠΤΟΠΟΣ ΕΤΜΜΑΥ]
- ΧΙΝ Τ[ΕΝΟΥ ΩΑ ΕΝΕΖ ΟΥΧΑΙ ΖΗ ΟΥΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΖΑΜΗΝ. ΤΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ ΜΠΕΝΧΘΕΙΣ]
- 12 Ι(ΗΣΟΥ)Σ [Χ(ΡΙΣΤΟ)Σ ΩΑ ΑΥΚΑΡΟΣ ΖΑΜΗΝ (?).]
-

[---] *love will shine [in its streets. I, Jesus, it is I who commands and it is] I who speak. Because [you have loved greatly, I shall preserve your] name as an eternal memory [and an honour and a blessing among the generations who come] after you and [through your entire lineage (?), and they will hear it] to the end of the earth. [It is I, Jesus, who has written this letter] with my very own hand. [The place to which this manuscript will be affixed, no power] of the Adversary [nor] unclean [spirit will be able to approach nor to reach into that place], from now [until forever. Be well in peace, amen! The letter of our Lord (?)] Jesus Christ [to Abgar. Amen. (?)]* (slightly adapted translation from PCM I 11)

2. Poll tax receipt from Djeme

Receipt written on a pottery fragment for the payment of one solidus for a poll tax of the 14th indiction issued to a certain Seueros son of Gamoul. The ostrakon is broken at its bottom, but probably only the scribal signature is missing. The document is a further example of numerous tax receipts from the village Djeme written on ostraca in the early decades of the eighth century. The taxpayer has not been attested so far, but the spelling and handwriting is indicative of the scribe Psate son of Pisrael, the best attested scribe of tax receipts in the region. In addition to the general impression of the handwriting, the spelling εicc with two *sigmas* and the spelling καταβολή for καταβολή, both idiosyncracies of Psate, suggest that he wrote this document. His activity was documented in the 12th, 15th, and 1st–9th indictions that correspond to the years 713/14–726. As most receipts from Psate were issued in the indiction cycle following the one for which the tax was collected (see, e.g., the table in Delattre & Fournet 2014: 240–243), we can assume that this document was issued in the 15th indiction. On Psate son of Pisrael, see Delattre & Fournet 2014: 231–234, who also provide an up-to-date overview of tax receipts from Djeme at pp. 209–239.

Inv. A-1918

6 × 9.6 cm

Djeme
22 April 717

† εicc ογχολοκο(ττινος) ναριϥ-
 mia αφει ετοοτ ριτοοτκ η-
 τρκ σεγνροϥ ραμογλ
 4 ρα πεκδιαγρϥφον ρι τπρωτ(η)
 καταβολη ητρωμπε τεσσερ-
 [ακακαι]αεκατης. γι(νεται) [νο(μισμα)] α. Φαρ(μου)θ(ι) κζ
 [ινδ(ικτίωνος) ιε π]απε †στ(οικει)

1. ὀλοκόττινος, ρολοχ^ο pap. || 1–2. ἀρίθμιος || 4. διάγραφον | πρῶτος, πτρω pap. || 5. κατα-
 βολή || 5–6. τεσσαρεσκαίδεκατός || 6. γμ pap. | φαρ^θ pap. || 7. στοιχεῖν, †στ pap.

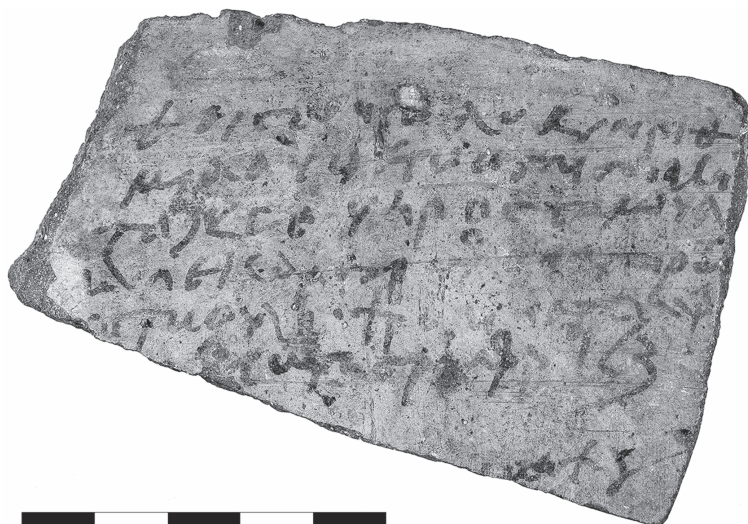


Fig. 2. Poll tax receipt from Djeme
(Dmytro Yavornytsky National Historical Museum of Dnipro, inv. A-1918)

† *Lo, one reckoned solidus has come to me through you, Seueros son of Gamoul, for the poll tax, for the first instalment of this fourteenth year. Total: 1 solidus. Pharmouthi 27, indiction 15. [--- I ---] the headman agree. [---]*

3. $\zeta\alpha\mu\omicron\upsilon\lambda$: As the anonymous reviewer suggests, one could alternatively read $\zeta\alpha\mu\omicron\upsilon<\eta>\lambda$.

6. [$\nu\acute{o}(\mu\iota\sigma\mu\alpha)$]: $\acute{\alpha}\rho(\iota)\theta(\mu\iota\omicron\nu)$ could also be supplemented, as Psate uses both terms in the summaries of his receipts (e.g. *O. Strash. Copt.* 51, l. 6, and 57, l. 8).

7. This line contained the signature of a village headmen, as common in these receipts. On the title $\alpha\pi\epsilon$, see Berkes 2017: 84–87, for Djeme, esp. 173–175, 178–180. For $\alpha\pi\eta\gamma\epsilon$ signing tax receipts of Psate in the 15th indiction, see Till 1962: 186.

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CONTENTS

<i>From the Editors</i>	XI
-------------------------------	----

Constantinos BALAMOSHEV

P. Mert. II 81: On oracular inquiry and shady business.

<i>A re-edition with a new translation</i>	1
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Abstract: The article presents a new edition and translation of *P. Mert. II 81*, offering textual corrections based on available high-resolution images. The palimpsest document is a letter from Epoeis to Demetrios (whom she calls ‘son’, most likely in an affectionate, non-literal sense) discussing a dispute involving a priest. Epoeis relates she has been engaging in persistent oracular consultations seeking divine guidance for Demetrios, which demonstrates how oracles were used in everyday decision-making in Roman Egypt. The letter provides insights into kinship terminology, social relationships, and ritual practices. The newly restored text clarifies episodes of family negotiation, possibly personal debt, and the handling of sensitive affairs through temple oracles.

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

Lajos BERKES & Anton KISTOL

Jesus’s reply to Abgar and a tax receipt:

<i>Two Coptic ostraca in the Dnipro Museum</i>	17
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Abstract: The article presents the first edition of two Coptic ostraca held in the collection of the Dnipro Museum: one contains a fragmentary copy

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

<i>Seven Arabic slave sale contracts on papyrus</i>	29
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Abstract: Annotated editions and translations of seven Arabic slave sale contracts on papyrus dating from the late ninth and early tenth centuries CE. Six of these documents belong to the Arabic Papyrus, Parchment and Paper Collection of the University of Utah's J. Willard Marriott Library; one document is kept in the Egyptian National Library (its *editio princeps* has been published as *P. Cair. Arab.* II 124).

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

Katarzyna DE LELLIS-DANYS, Grzegorz OCHALA,

✉ Aleksandra PAWLIKOWSKA-GWIAZDA

<i>Coptic and Copto-Greek ostraca in Warsaw (O. Vars. Copt.)</i>	65
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Abstract: First editions and re-editions of six Coptic and Copto-Greek ostraca from the collections of the Warsaw National Museum and the University of Warsaw. Five objects come from the Polish-French excavations at Edfu (Egypt) in 1930s, one from the Polish works at Faras (Nubia), and one is most likely of Middle-Egyptian provenance. The pieces from Edfu represent the well-known types of texts on potsherds known from other publications of the material from this site. They include receipts and accounts connected with deliveries of wine and crops. The text from Middle Egypt is an addition to the collection some 170 ostraca of the so-called *etmoulon* type. The ostrakon from Faras is the only literary text in the lot, preserving the beginning of Psalm 1. The edited ostraca are also studied from the perspective of their materiality, presenting the characteristics of vessel forms and fabrics used for their production.

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

Giulio IOVINE

<i>Fragmentary legal document(s?) from the archive of Ammon scholasticus (P. Duke inv. 190-193 and 195)</i>	111
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Abstract: Edition, translation and commentary to some scattered fragments from the Duke University papyri collection (P. Duke inv. 190-193 and 195), which are part of the so-called archive of Ammon *scholasticus* (1st half of 4th

cent. CE) and may cover a single occurrence, a petition or records of court proceedings, referring an individual pretending to be a priest to escape his liturgies.

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

Conto di vino (SB XII 10892 verso) 155

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

Abstract: The article formulates a hypothesis that the penalties referred to in lines 6–8 of *P. Col. VI 123* (Alexandria, 200 CE) are related to two edicts copied in *P. Oxy. XLVII 3364* (Oxyrhynchus, 209 CE), ll. 1–9, in which Septimius Severus and Caracalla ordered the population to return to their homeland. In these edicts, penalties were imposed both on the fugitives and on their protectors, but additionally, as an incentive to follow the imperial order, a period of amnesty was announced. Similar amnesty is mentioned also in the Columbia papyrus.

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, *hypothèque-praxis*, *dikaia time*, legal practice, *apotage*, *hypothekimaia asphaleia*.

Book review	339
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