

Documents and the History of the Early Islamic World

Islamic History and Civilization

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Documents and the History of the Early Islamic World

Edited by

Alexander T. Schubert
Petra M. Sijpesteijn



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Notes on Editions and Dates

Editions

References to edited papyrus and other documentary texts are indicated by a number directly following the customary abbreviation of the edition (e.g. *P.GenizahCambr.* 33; *BKU* 124). References to discussions by the editors are by reference to the line numbers of the edition or a page number in the edition (e.g. Commentary to *P.GenizahCambr.* 33 ll. 2–3; *BKU*, p. 25).

Abbreviations for Greek and Coptic documentary texts edited in monographic volumes are given according to the *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, J.F. Oates and W.H. Willis which may be consulted online at: <http://www.papyri.info/docs/checklist>.

Arabic papyrus editions are given according to the Checklist of Arabic Documents which appeared first as 'Checklist of Editions of Arabic Papyri,' by P.M. Sijpesteijn, J.F. Oates and A. Kaplony, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 42 (2005): 127–166. An updated electronic version can be consulted online at: http://www.naher-osten.uni-muenchen.de/isap/isap_checklist/index.html.

In the edition of texts and quotations from text editions the following bracket system has been employed:

- [] Single square brackets indicate sections where the text is obliterated or missing owing to a lacuna in the papyrus. Where it is possible to calculate the number of letters missing, these are indicated by the appropriate number of dots or written in Arabic numerals within the brackets. Dots outside square brackets indicate that the extant letters cannot be deciphered.
- [[]] Double square brackets enclose erasures.
- () Round brackets indicate the solution of abbreviations. In the translation they indicate additions provided by the editor.
- < > Angular brackets enclose words or phrases which the writer omitted by mistake and are supplied by the editor as a correction.
- { } Curly brackets enclose words or phrases which were written by mistake and should be omitted in reading the passage, e.g. dittographies.

Dates

If not otherwise specified dates given in this volume are C.E. dates. However, if a double date is given, i.e. 99/717, the first is the Muslim Hijri date (A.H.) and the second is C.E.

Introduction

Hugh Kennedy

The generally held and often-repeated generalisation that there are no documentary sources for the history of the first four centuries of Islamic history is slowly being undermined as new discoveries are made and old texts revisited. It is interesting to reflect that a decade ago no one had any knowledge of the existence or possible existence of the Arabic documents from Tukharistan recently published by Geoffrey Khan.¹ From Iran itself we have the Pahlavi economic documents from the late seventh and early eighth centuries, now in the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, whose publication is just beginning.² Greek papyri from Petra in Jordan, containing Arab names and Arabic phrases, are also in the process of being published.³ But despite this, it is Egypt that provides by far the most important body of documentary evidence,⁴ and this volume is essentially concerned with material from Egypt and southern Palestine. The database of Coptic documents from the late antique and early Islamic periods suggests that there are over 7,000 preserved items, while the Arabic papyri are at least as numerous if not more so. The number of Greek documents from the Islamic period continues to increase with the redating of material and a steady broadening of focus among Greek papyrologists to include the Islamic period.⁵ This is a vast amount of material for any early medieval society, even if the fact that they are not sorted or archived makes them difficult, and in some cases frustrating, to use.

¹ Khan, *Arabic documents*.

² These are presently being catalogued by Philippe Gignoux and Rika Gyselen. See also on the Pahlavi collection from Berlin, mostly from Egypt: Weber, *Papyri* and Weber, *Berliner*.

³ Frösén, Arjava, and Lectinen, *The Petra papyri I*.

⁴ Small numbers of documents have been found outside Egypt, most notably in Sāmarrā' in Iraq, in Nessana and Khirbet al-Mird in Palestine (See *P.Ness.* III and *P.Mird*). For an overview of papyri found outside Egypt, see Sijpesteijn, *Arabic papyri* 453.

⁵ Most of the papyri edited at the beginning of the twentieth century by Carl Wesley in *SPF* III were dated to the Islamic period in their reeditions by Claudia Kreuzsaler (*Pap.Vind.* 6), Fritz Mitthof (*Pap.Vind.* 3) and Sven Tost (*Pap.Vind.* 2). See also the two volumes of Greek papyri published by Federico Morelli which contain exclusively texts from the Islamic period (*CPR* XXII and XXX). For the inclusion of the Islamic Egypt in the grander Greek papyrology enterprise, see for example the panel on papyri from Islamic Egypt planned

It would be easy to imagine that the papyrus record is essentially concerned with administrative records, demands and receipts for tax payments, leases on properties, etc., and to be sure all these things can be found in this collection. But the volume also demonstrates the contribution that documentary evidence can make to wider social history, to intellectual history and to our understanding of political events, where the documents can fill in gaps left by the well-known narrative sources.

Many documents show the early Islamic administration of Egypt as ruthlessly efficient and oppressive, but Mostafa El-Abbadi's paper reveals a rather different side. On the one hand, the administration is shown maintaining a strict control over freedom of movement. The Arab administration brought in new restrictions: no one could go anywhere without the vital *sigillion* (Arabic *sijill*) and perhaps the passport is one of the Islamic world's gifts (if that is the right word) to humanity. This system is already well known but here we learn how meticulous this could be, with the example of a permit granted to a man to move to another village for work which was only allowed because it would enable him to pay his taxes. Anna Selander in her paper, looking at the short texts requesting safe-conducts for travelers through particular roadblocks or checkpoints in the Theban region and later reused by the monk Frange for his bookbindings, shows how far down the administrative line this supervision of movement went. Selander also discusses the effects of the system of passports required of the subject population for their travelling compared to the pre-Islamic period.

The Arab administration is, on the other hand, shown to be anxious about discontent among the tax-payers and a desire to be fair and just, if only to avoid violent protests. El-Abbadi also shows how groups of Christian tax-payers could nevertheless co-ordinate their opposition. Rather than a top-down managerial state in which the subjects can only accept their lot and pay up, we see an administrative environment in which there was considerable room for negotiation and in which the state and its employees had to take notice if they were going to achieve anything at all.

If taxes were inevitable so too was the other of Benjamin Franklin's famous dyad of inevitable discomforts, death. In this volume the material dealing with death is not on papyrus but on paper. It dates from the early thirteenth century and comes from the Red Sea port of Quşayr, already well known for

at the next International Papyrological Congress in Warsaw in 2013. See also the chapter on Arabic Papyrology included in *The Oxford Handbook for Papyrology* (Sijpesteijn, Arabic papyri).

the collection of commercial documents found there.⁶ Anne Regourd shows how such death certificates were issued to protect the interests of the heirs and, more importantly perhaps, to secure the interests of the state in any parts of the deceased's property on which it might have a claim. Taxes again. Interestingly, there do not seem to be any early Islamic records of such a procedure, and it is likely that it was introduced in the Fatimid period. It also has implications for Islamic burial practices as the *mawārith* (inheritance) authorities decreed that the burial of the dead could only take place after their officials had been informed. If this was the case, it must often have held up burial beyond the day prescribed by Islamic law. Perhaps the ultimate indignity was the fact that the document was later recycled, like many administrative documents, and reused for writing a letter about something completely different on the other side.

The documents also reveal at least something about travel in Egypt in the Islamic period, the sort of everyday travel of ordinary people which goes unremarked in narrative account. Anna Selander's paper gives a useful introduction to the exhaustive research she carried out for her Master's. Most of the material comes not from official records but from informal letters, including an encouragingly high number of invitations to feasts or other celebrations. But, as can easily be imagined, there were gloomier reasons for undertaking the strains and stresses of the road, confronting opponents in legal dispute, for example, and there are many journeys we only know about when the intending traveler sent apologies to explain how illness had obliged him to stay at home. We also learn something of modes of transport and interestingly that water transport was mostly used for moving goods, while individuals usually went by land, on donkeys and, probably most commonly, on foot.

More light is shed on transport and travel by the early fifteenth-century Arabic paper retrieved by Frédéric Bauden from the Venetian archives. This is in effect a contract for shipping and, as such, is unusual and even unique. In it a soldier from the garrison at Alexandria, accompanied by a substantial collection of textiles, arranges to be taken by boat to the port of Cairo at Būlāq. Bauden compares the document with near-contemporary legal formularies and arrives at some important terminological precisions and with other, mostly Italian, accounts of similar journeys in the late Middle Ages. Students of maritime history will be interested to find mention of what is, in effect, a plimsoll line, showing how far the boat could be safely loaded, a device which did not appear in the West until the nineteenth century.

6 On which see Guo, *Commerce*.

All manner of interactions between tax-payers and the state are illustrated in these documents. In his discussion of some of the material recovered from the site of the monastery of Bawit, Alain Delattre draws attention to the evidence of small amounts of produce paid by the Christians to people with Arab names. Delattre argues that these are too small to represent tax payments but are more likely goods to be handed over for the subsistence of travelling officials. This is typical of the insights that the papyrological and other documentary evidence can give into the day to day running of the administration, but perhaps the most remarkable feature is the way in which these transactions, no matter how small they were, were meticulously recorded and the receipts kept for posterity.

Alia Hanafi presents editions of two new texts. The first is a paper document from the first half of the fourth/tenth century detailing the *kharāj* due from the estate (*day'a*) of Drinja near Ihnās, reminding us yet again of the extraordinary details that can be found in such documents. Not just the amount of tax to be paid but the various different crops which were produced on one estate are mentioned in the text. The second is a papyrus from the second/eighth century, recording traditions about behaviour at funerals.

Shaun O'Sullivan's paper is the most ambitious attempt to use papyrological data to examine the wider economic and social history of Palestine under the Umayyad period. His important conclusion is that taxation in Nessana under Umayyad rule was significantly higher than it had been under late Roman government and that a heavy burden of taxation was a major factor in the effective abandonment of the settlement in the early eighth century. O'Sullivan's methodology may be refined in future scholarship, and some of his conclusions disputed, but the paper shows how the documentary evidence can be used to shed light on macro-economic questions.

This brings us on to the question of language itself. There are, of course, three different languages in use in these documents, Coptic, Greek and Arabic. How then are we to understand their different roles? How far does the use of language reflect ethnic or cultural difference within the wider population. Or are they, by contrast, more a reflection of the different sorts of subject matter in the texts themselves? In Rachel Stroumsa's paper, she suggests some approaches to these problems. Her material is taken from the Nessana papyri from southern Palestine, so there is no Coptic but Nabataean, Syriac and even a little Latin are added to the linguistic cocktail. In his edition of the Nessana papyri, on which we all continue to depend, Casper J. Kraemer Jr. saw much of the Greek used in the documents as "barbarous" and the product of a declining education system in seventh-century Palestine. Stroumsa, by refreshing contrast, sees this as a natural evolution of the language, much as Latin evolved in seventh-century Gaul. Instead of following a paradigm of declining Hellenism among a

Semitic speaking people, she argues for a bilingual population using Greek for official business, and to convey power, status and culture but naturally slipping into Arabic for such agricultural matters as the names of fields. It was not until late Umayyad and early Abbasid times that Arabic had acquired the prestige to replace Greek as the language of authority. Multilingualism is also touched upon by El-Abbadi who wonders how the three languages (Coptic, Greek and Arabic) functioned in a mid-eighth-century trilingual document recording a settlement between the Egyptian population and some Arab administrators.

The relationship between the evidence of the papyri and material culture is the subject of Tasha Vorderstrasse. She is interested in trying to link the names of pottery vessels found in documents with the different types of plates and containers which have been recovered from archaeological contexts. The relationship between textual and material evidence, whether in architecture, ceramics or any other field, is often very problematic, and there is always the temptation to make connections that have no basis in reality. Vorderstrasse is very careful not to make rash or unfounded claims while at the same time inviting us to consider exactly what the various containers mentioned might have looked like. The terms *jarra*, *qist* and *qulla* are all considered as well as less common terms like *iqniz*. This paper shows just how difficult it is to make firm connections. Some words, like *qist*, can mean units of measurement as well as containers; others have clearly changed their meaning through the centuries. In the end, as Vorderstrasse remarks, we need more Arabic references to containers and only further publication will supply these.

Papyri seldom shed much light on the history of political events but on some occasions the material they contain may help to clear up long-standing puzzles. Such a case is presented in Jairus Banaji's paper on the identity of Shahrālān-yōzān. This figure was a Persian official, active in the Persian administration of Egypt in the 620s and attested in a number of papyri. Banaji uses a wide variety of evidence to identify this figure with Shahrvaraz, the well-known general of Khusrō II (r. 590–628) and eventual short-lived usurper of the Sasanian throne. The paper also gives us an interesting insight to the little known Persian occupation of Egypt, showing an important member of the Persian elite establishing himself as a major landowner in the Fayyūm as the Apions had in the previous century. He definitely expected that he and his family were there to stay. Banaji finishes by reflecting that this new identification does, in a minor but significant detail, support the testimony of the early Arabic historian, Sayf ibn ʿUmar (d. ca. 180/796), often suspected of fabricating his narratives.

One of the most important features of the papyrological evidence is the light it can shed on the textual history of the Quran. Matt Malczyk presents a Quranic fragment with some orthographic and verbal differences from the

canonical version ascribed to the caliph ʿUmar (r. 634–644) including the omission of two verses. He dates it to the late third/ninth century on the basis of the letter forms. The question then arises as to whether this fragment represents a genuinely alternative version of the text or simply a number of scribal mistakes. Malczycki, almost certainly, takes a cautious point of view, suggesting that this is a poor or careless copy, not “something more exciting.” He shows convincingly that the four suras copied were chosen because they were traditionally recited at the burial of the dead and can be seen forming a sort of prayer book for such occasions.

Intellectual history is also expanded and developed by the use of papyrological and other documentary sources, as can be seen from Sebastian Richter’s paper. This addresses the important question as to whether there was a native Coptic alchemical tradition, which might plausibly be a continuation of ancient Egyptian practice that fed into and influenced the emerging Arabic one. After a detailed description of a small but important collection of alchemical manuscripts, including some important textual clarifications and emendations, Richter goes on to describe the place of these manuscripts in the alchemical tradition. He shows that they are not derived from the Greek tradition but, on the contrary, show many more similarities with the earliest surviving Arabic alchemical writing which date from the early tenth century. These Coptic writings are older than the earliest Arabic ones but, through careful linguistic analysis, Richter demonstrates clearly that they are, in fact, translations or paraphrases of Arabic originals, that is to say that the Coptic alchemical tradition is ultimately derived from the Arabic, not the other way round. The chapter by Nicole Hansen similarly shows how ancient Egyptian alchemical and medicinal practices continued in later periods in Egypt in the realm of food culture. Her study on two wine recipes shows the cultural and linguistic interaction in medieval Egypt. The inclusion, incidentally, of these recipes in al-Warrāq’s cookbook also show how far Egyptian practices spread throughout the caliphate.

R.G. Khoury, the doyen of Arabic papyrologists, discusses aspects of the collection at Heidelberg where he has spent so much of his long and productive scholarly life. He discusses the history of the Schott-Reinhardt collection, revealing that Reinhardt was an Orientalist who had worked as a dragoman in the German consulate in Cairo while Schott was an industrialist who used some of the money he made from his cement business to collect the papyri which were then lodged at the university. Most of the documents are of types well known from other collections but a few are distinctive and important, including some of the letters of the Egyptian governor Qurra ibn Sharīk (in office 709–715) and the famous scroll of Ibn Lahī’a (d. 174/790), already edited and

translated by Khoury (*ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Lahīʿa*). He also draws attention to some 159 pieces recorded by Adolf Grohmann which have mysteriously disappeared from the collection and speculates as to their contents, finding most of them to have been administrative texts of well-known forms.

The essays in this volume show once again the immense variety of information which can be gleaned from the Egyptian and Palestinian documentary material. They also show much interesting new work is appearing, greatly encouraged by the International Society for Arabic Papyrology and its meetings, but also, of course, how much more needs to be done. We can only imagine how much this will affect our understanding of pre-modern Islamic society.

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Administration & Government



A Late Ayyubid Report of Death Found at Quṣayr al-Qadīm¹

Anne Regourd

Reconstruction and Dating

This article presents a ‘report of death’ document unearthed in 2003 in Quṣayr al-Qadīm on the Red Sea coast of Egypt by David Peacock and his team from the University of Southampton.² Roughly 1,040 fragments of paper documents in Arabic were collected from Quṣayr al-Qadīm between 1999 and 2003,³ some with writing on them, others without. The edition of and commentary on this text appears below in appendix 1.

The document consists of two fragments and has been partially reconstructed (inv. n^o PA0386, and PA0381, see text 1, and fig. 2.1 and 2.2). Both were found in 2003 in the same archaeological trench and context (trench 13, context 5500). Both had been rolled up and use the same high-quality paper, thick and smooth.⁴ Laid lines are not obvious, but cannot be entirely counted out either. Both use the same open and regular script which, considering this was an administrative document (see parts II and III) and therefore probably written by an official, can be taken as a sample of the script of a *dīwān*.⁵

1 I would like to thank Frédéric Bauden, University of Liège, for his useful remarks on my reading of the private letter.

2 The reports of the excavations are available online at www.arch.soton.ac.uk/Research/Quseir/. A survey of the excavations has been published by David Peacock and Lucy Blue, see Peacock and Blue, *Myos Hormos*. For the Islamic burial sites of Quṣayr al-Qadīm, see *ibid.*, ‘Trench 1A’ 157–159.

3 For an overview of the Southampton collection of the Quṣayrī fragments, see Regourd, Trade. A book is in preparation, which will contain the edition of ca. 50 items. The study of these fragments has been made possible within the framework of the Reconstructing the Quseiri Arabic Documents (RQAD) project, funded by the UK’s Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

4 I consulted the original documents kept by the Egyptian Antiquities Service at the end of 2004. I wish to thank the Service for giving me the four-week authorisation necessary for this work.

5 A very closed script for the *basmala* is displayed in al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), *Subḥ al-a’shā*,

The same trench and context yielded another fragment bearing a witness formula (inv. PA0388, see text 1, ‘witness clause’ and fig. 2.4). It too had been rolled up, although it has traces of folding along the longer side (ca. 2 cm from the bottom edge). The paper has lost its starch. Its length of 11.1 cm roughly corresponds to the length of the central part of the report of death (11.3 cm, fig. 2.2). The script is different from text 1, suggesting that the three fragments form together an original document, rather than a copy.

Trench 13 is an Islamic rubbish deposit, quite probably from Mamluk times, but consisting mainly of Ayyubid material.⁶ A, B and C were found in the same context as a paper from the “archives” of the Abū Mufarrij company. These archives have been reconstructed by Li Guo in his study on the Arabic documents from Qūṣayr,⁷ and all the dated evidence in his material is from the first four decades of the seventh/thirteenth century, namely, the period of the reigns of the Ayyubid sultans al-Malik al-ʿĀdil (r. 596–615/1200–1218) and his son al-Malik al-Kāmil (r. 615–635/1218–1238). In addition, the formula seems to follow those of the Cairo Geniza papers dating from the seventh/thirteenth century (see appendix 2), which would also place it in this time frame.

Six reports of death of Jewish women from the Geniza collection, published by Geoffrey Khan, were also all written according to the same formula.⁸ “Their dates fall within the last three quarters of the seventh/thirteenth century, spanning the Ayyubid and early Mamluk periods (from 621–629/1224–1231 to 697/1298).”⁹ The reports of death from other collections that I have been able to locate were found at Qaṣr Ibrīm, but are late and have a different purpose.¹⁰

The missing part of the document is reconstructed according to the model of the documents found in the Geniza. An idea about the width of the Qūṣayr al-Qadīm document is given by the piece bearing the *basmala* (22.5 cm), so that we can probably reconstruct the missing part between A and B on side 1 as having contained the name of the dead person and the date of his death.

3:132, *al-ṣūra al-ūlā*, assuming the printed text is correct compared to the manuscripts. The section is devoted to the script of the *basmala* in the *dōwān al-inshāʿ*.

6 For trench 13, see Peacock and Blue, *Myos Hormos* 172–173.

7 Guo, *Commerce*.

8 *P.GenizahCambr.* 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130. No. 129 is mentioned by Rabie, *The financial system* 130 and n. 4. No. 130 is mentioned in Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 2:321, 473–480.

9 *P.GenizahCambr.*, p. 473.

10 Hinds and Ménage, *Qaṣr Ibrīm* 68, 32–33, dated 1082/1672; *ibid.*, 75, 48–49, dated 1100/1689. Werner Diem presented a Report of Death in his contribution to the Fourth International Society for Arabic Papyrology Conference, in Vienna, March 26–29, 2009, called, “Some remarkable Arabic documents from the Heidelberg collection.”

If my reasoning is correct, the deceased is a Muslim. Every published report from the Geniza specifies the day on which the death occurred. But the date as well as the reasons of the death do not appear in our document. Here the place where the dead person died is mentioned as being *sāḥil al-Quṣayr*, i.e. ‘the coast of Quṣayr,’ referring to ‘the anchorage of Quṣayr.’¹¹ It can simply mean that the man died in the anchorage of Quṣayr al-Qadīm or close to it, or the death could have happened on a ship. Besides Quṣayr, *sāḥil al-Quṣayr* appears frequently in the addresses of the Quṣayr letters.¹² It also sometimes appears in the text of the documents.¹³

The Quṣayrī Report of Death Bearing Mention of Heirs and the *Dīwān al-mawārith al-ḥashriyya*

Khan suggests that these reports of death were “presumably addressed to the *dīwān al-mawārith al-ḥashriyya*,”¹⁴ the office of intestate successions, which kept a register of deaths.¹⁵ Ibn Mammātī (d. 606/1209) gives a precise statement about the conditions under which this office was entitled to (a part of) the inheritance: “If there were no heirs, or the heir or heirs were not entitled to the whole of the inheritance, the whole estate in the first case, or its residue in the second, would go to the *bayt al-māl*. As the sole Fatimid concession to remain in force, the share of the absent heir would be kept in trust in the treasury until his return.”¹⁶

11 Cf. the discussion in Regourd, Arabic. Access to the coast around Quṣayr al-Qadīm is difficult because of a barrier of coral, which is, however, discontinuous at the level of Quṣayr al-Qadīm (Peacock and Blue *Myos Hormos* 8, fig. 2.2). The recent excavations have revealed evidence of industrial activity in particular what has been interpreted as the repair and/or construction of boats in the channel from the sea to the south (ibid., 111–115). The ‘natural’ elements that made it a place for the ships to stop are evident.

12 Guo, *Commerce* 10, 157; 13, 165; 16, 173; 18, 176; 25, 197; 26, 199; 55, 251; For the documents found in Qusayr between 1999 and 2003, see Regourd, Trade on the Red Sea.

13 Guo, *Commerce* 52, 246, recto l. 3, and 54, 249, recto l. 1; and also in 70, 287, recto l. 3, “*sāḥil*” being translated as “the aforesaid port.”

14 *P.GenizahCambr.*, 125, 473.

15 al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ* 4:33.

16 Rabie, *The financial system* 127–128, who summarises Ibn Mammātī’s *Kitāb Qawānīn al-dawāwīn*, 319–325. However, an early document, dating to the 1st–2nd/7th–8th centuries, which was produced in a time close to when Shafi’ite law was being shaped, refers to the case of a woman who died without heirs and the legal arrangements that followed from it,

From the time of the Ayyubids, the definition of those having a right to the inheritance was, following Shafī'ite and Malikite doctrine, restricted. The office charged with investigating and determining the succession of those without heirs on behalf of the treasury was precisely the office of intestate successions.¹⁷ This system continued under the Mamluks with the *dīwān* being clearly linked to the *dīwān al-amwāl* within the structure of the *dīwāns*.¹⁸ Outside Cairo and Fustāṭ further *dīwāns* were located in the major cities of Egypt.¹⁹ Ayyubid reports of death bear the same formula whatever the religious identity of the deceased, as we saw above. And the inheritances for Jews were directly supervised by the same authorities as inheritances for Muslims during our period.²⁰ In conclusion, the *dīwān* was supposed to register only the deaths of those with taxable legacies.²¹ But in each published report of death in the Geniza, the deceased does have some heirs to his estate, as does the deceased of the Quṣayrī document. The next question then is how the *dīwān* functioned in practice?

Rabie observes that “Baybars [Mamluk Sultan, r. 1260–1277] used to levy a tax on a deceased person’s estate even if there were heirs,” and reaches the conclusion that “it is very probable that the officials of the *mawārīth* had to report each deceased case immediately and separately.” Rabie then refers to one of the Geniza’s report of death documents, dated 682/1284, i.e. during the reign of Sultan Qalāwūn (r. 1279–1290), which was later published by Khan who, in his edition, referred to Rabie’s analysis.²² Generally speaking, for the published Geniza reports of death, which usually concern Jewish women, Khan refers to al-Nuwayrī’s (d. 732/1332) *Nihāyat al-arab*, where it is written that “the heads of the *dhimmīs* had to notify the government of every death in their communities.”²³ This is confirmed by the works of Ibn Taghrī Birdī (d. 874/1470)

namely that in cases without legal heirs, the inheritance (here estate) goes to the highest religious authority (Liebrenz, *Eine frühe arabische*, commentary to ll. 5–6).

17 Cf. al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, 4:33; Tyan, *Histoire de l'organisation* 549, in comparison with Fyzee, *The Fatimid law* 61–69, for the Fatimid law of inheritance.

18 Cf. Gottschalk, *Dīwān* (II.- Egypte) 330.

19 Dols, *The Black Death* 171, 181.

20 Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 3, 277–278; Dols, *The Black Death* 180, 175.

21 Dols, *The Black Death* 175.

22 Rabie, *The financial system* 130; *P.GenizahCambr.* 129, 478.

23 al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab* 242–243. Dols, who used the records of the *mawārīth* to assess urban depopulation after epidemics in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, on the other hand, argued that: “the *dīwāns* [referring to the *Dīwān al-mawārīth al-ḥashriyya*] of the major cities registered only the deaths of those who died with taxable legacies. Cairo

and al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), who describe the general functioning of the *dīwān* during the Mamluk period.²⁴

As far as the understanding of the Quṣayrī document is concerned, which dates to the first four decades of the seventh/thirteenth century, Rabie does not discuss evolutions in the functioning of the *mawārīth* under the Ayyubid rulers in as much detail as he does those changes under the Mamluks. He has, however, carefully studied taxes and other sources of revenue going to the treasury and discusses the functioning of the *Māl al-mawārīth al-ḥashriyya*.²⁵

Ibn Mammātī's description of the general functioning of the *dīwān* suggests that during the Ayyubid period the *mawārīth* authorities decreed that the burial of the dead could take place only after their officials have been informed, suggesting that at that time each death was registered.²⁶ It seems also that a kind of co-ordination existed between the police and the judiciary, with the police registering the death and then reporting to the *qāḍī* in the quarter where the deceased lived.²⁷ Ibn Mammātī describes the customary procedure following a person's death: the undertaker informed the *mawārīth* official who in turn determined the identity of the heirs.²⁸ The Quṣayrī document, if we assume that the witness clause is part of it, looks more like a legal document produced by the office of a *qāḍī*.

Also relevant is an *iqrār* document from the al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf collection dating to the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century, i.e. under Mamluk rule.²⁹ In this document a "Turkish woman [called] Yulqāṭlū declares in writing

and Fustāt had separate *dīwāns* and included the deaths of Christians and Jews as well as Muslims for both these cities" (Dols, *The general mortality* 397). Dols also takes into account changes of the rules concerning *dhimmīs* who had converted to Islam in order to divert money from the legal heirs to the treasury (Dols, *The Black Death*, 175 ff.; Dols, *The Black Death* 397 ff.).

24 As discussed by Lutfī, who criticised Dols's argument especially because he did not define what he meant by "taxable legacies" and did not substantiate other aspects of his argument (Lutfī, *Al-Quds* 16–17).

25 Rabie, *The financial system* 127 ff.

26 Ibn Mammātī, *Qawānīn al-dawāwīn* 324–325, mentioned by Lutfī (*Al-Quds* 14) who analyses the reasons.

27 Lutfī, *Al-Quds*; Scanlon, *Housing* 185.

28 Ibn Mammātī, *Qawānīn al-dawāwīn* 325, mentioned by Lutfī (*Al-Quds* 14–15).

29 Published in Lutfī, *Al-Quds*. For the general functioning of the *dīwān al-mawārīth al-ḥashriyya* in Jerusalem during the Mamluk period through the documents of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf, i.e. the administration of the estate from the inventory of the inheritance and its selling, until the administration of the following income for the *dīwān*, see Müller, *Qāḍi-Gericht und Rechtsadministration* 391 ff. Some comparisons are made with the situation

that her husband is her sole legal heir.”³⁰ While the Ḥaram collection includes both private and public documents, the *iqrārs* belong to the private legal document type. That is to say, they were issued on behalf of private individuals and the judiciary.³¹ This particular document had been drafted before the death of the Turkish woman. Lutfi underlines the fact that it represents a different use of the *iqrār*, compared to the five other pieces that she published together with it, namely its use as a legal document. It has been written up according to the Sharia, and its formalistic structure is similar to the others. But what makes it a ‘legal document,’ she explains, is its judicial registration: “Because the *iqrār* of Yulqaṭlū involved a unique case of inheritance, the legal document had to be certified by the *qāḍī* so that the husband’s legal right would not be contested in the future. Thus unlike the other *iqrārs* dealt with in this paper, the present one is a judicial *iqrār*, witnessed and certified in court.”³² Lutfi then discusses the judicial registration marks on its recto and the *ishhād* on its verso, both witnesses to its being part of the judicial proceedings.³³ This document belonged to the strategies used by individuals to avoid attempts of all sorts to divert money when it was possible according to the Sharia.³⁴

Meanwhile our document may be considered in another way, that is to say in connection with the abusive practices by or through the office of intestate successions. The *mawārīth* authorities were open to corruption as early as Saladin’s reign (r. 1174–1193), says Rabie, who adds: “There exists a *manshūr* written by [*qāḍī*] al-Fāḍil which reprimands a *mushārīf* for his greed, and warns him that the sultan knows of and is worried about the defects of the administration of the *mawārīth*.”³⁵ According to Rabie again, during the Mam-

in Cairo and, especially, the relation between this institution and *Bayt al-māl*. Cf. Lutfi, *Al-Quds* 18–19.

30 Lutfi, A study of six; Lutfi, A documentary source 315, 278–287, and plate VII, recto and verso, the quotation itself is taken from page 286.

31 Lutfi, A documentary source 149.

32 Lutfi, A documentary source 286.

33 Lutfi, A documentary source 281 ff.

34 Müller deals in his Chapter v with estates under judicial and public control (Müller, *Qāḍī-Gericht und Rechtsadministration* 357 ff.). He then studies the *iqrārs* of estate inventories legalised through *ishhād* (witness citation) by a *qāḍī* and in what cases these were valid and useful in front of the administration (ibid., 363–366). Twenty *iqrārs* with *ishhāds* are mentioned, containing dispositions of goods belonging to couples (ibid., 363 no. 1501). The procedure authenticating an inheritance by *iqrār* was especially prevalent in the case of a single heir (ibid., 365).

35 Rabie, *The financial system* 128, and note 2, quoting *Rasā’il al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil*, Ms. Add. 25757, fol. 10r–v; also Lutfi, *Al-Quds* 14–15.

luk period abusive practices also prevailed, but at another level. The *mawārīth* became a way for the rulers to collect extra money, which was then conveyed to them through *Bayt al-māl*. Rabie mentions in particular that the Mamluk sultan Quṭuz (r. 1259–1260), while preparing troops to fight the Mongols, collected money from the estates of the deceased inhabitants for the treasury, without considering the number of heirs or the size of the estate. The absence of the heirs at time of death of a relative was also a pretext for abusive seizures.³⁶ On the other hand, persons without legal heirs, but having daughters for instance, found strategies to avoid the seizure of their property by the *dīwān al-mawārīth* after their death, in particular through the *waqf* institution, as early as the Ayyubid period.³⁷ This shows that people could find different ways to get around the obstructive measures of the *dīwān al-mawārīth*. The Quṣayrī report of death could then have been produced because of a dispute, between the administration and individuals, as a witness to the existence of heirs.

A Reused Report of Death

After our document was used as an administrative document, it was re-employed to write a letter (see text 2, and fig. 2.3). Here, the report of death, as well as the witness clause, was written on one side, keeping the other side blank (both *A* and *C* are indeed blank on the other side). The paper was rolled up with the written part of the letter on the inside, which confirms that the report of death was the first text to be written. *A* was also rolled up, surely from left to right and with the text inside, but the way *A* was rolled up is different from *B*. The report of death document was probably cut up before it was reused, that is to say cut *before* the letter was written on the back of *B*. The upper edge of *B* does not fit with the edge of *A* on the lower side. We know from the report of death that part of the document is missing. But it can clearly be observed that fragment *A* was cut with a sharp tool. In addition, the edges of *B* are neither clean-cut nor straight and we observe that the letter itself had been cut off at a later stage (see the text missing on the left side). We can then postulate one more step between the original shape of the letter and how it appears now. Moreover, *B* is not as long as *A*. The beginning of the letter (*B* / 2) corresponds roughly to the middle of the formula of the report of death, which is on the

36 Rabie, *The financial system* 131 and n. 3, and also Tyan, *Histoire de l'organisation*.

37 Rabie, *The financial system* 128–129, n. 1.

other side. And as is usual, the name of the sender appears on the upper left side, close to the left edge.

That administrative reports of death were subsequently used to write something else on the other side has been previously observed. The bulk of reports of death published by Khan for example follow this model. No. 128 has been reused to write Hebrew liturgical poetry on the other side. The back of no. 129 has a business account, mainly in Judaeo-Arabic with “Coptic” numerals (some are written as well at the top and right of the report of death). The other side of no. 130 contains Arabic pen trials. Finally, no. 131, a formulary for reports of death, contains a letter in Arabic on the verso.³⁸ We might remark from an anthropological point of view that writing a letter on a report of death does not seem to bring bad luck! Generally speaking the formulary, even with its witness clauses, covers only one page, leaving the other side blank.³⁹

The practice of recycling the archives of the administration has been studied by Petra Sijpesteijn for Abbasid Egypt,⁴⁰ by Frédéric Bauden for Mamluk chancery documents⁴¹ and by Jonathan Bloom for Yemen in the time of Imam Yaḥyā in the early twentieth-century.⁴² If our hypothesis is correct and the fragment bearing the witness clause is part of the report of death (text 1, ‘witness clause’ and fig. 2.4), it should be an original since the administration only kept summaries of documents if at all. Dominique Valérian describes the importance of individuals involved in a case retaining documents, given the authorities’ practice of not keeping copies: “Dans sa plainte, déposée à Gênes, la victime déclare que les deux malfaiteurs ont brûlé ces documents pour effacer les traces de leur dette et il ajoute qu’ils l’ont fait en sachant que les notaires musulmans ne conservent pas les documents qu’ils ont.”⁴³

There is one final remark to be made concerning the document. At least the complete document, i.e. the report of death re-used for writing a private letter, both mentioning Quṣayr and found in Quṣayr shows that the one who died in Quṣayr was connected with a family settled in Quṣayr.

38 *P.GenizahCambr.* 128, 129, 130, 131.

39 Cf. the three other reports of death published by Khan in *P.GenizahCambr.* 125–127.

40 Sijpesteijn, Coptic and Arabic.

41 Bauden, The recovery.

42 Bloom, *Paper before print* 79–80, after Abbott, *The rise* 13–14.

43 Valérian, *Bougie, port maghrébin* 311–312.

Appendix 1

Text 1. Quṣayr—Report of Death—Beginning of the 7th/13th Century

Arabic Text

[A] (Fig. 2.1)

1 بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه و[سلم ...
 2 [المؤمنين شهدوا
 3 [وفاة فلان بن فلان في يوم كذا في شهر كذا في سنة كذا ...]

[B / 1] (Fig. 2.2)

4 ... [يشهدون انه توفي بساحل القصير ال...]
 5 ... وترك من الورثة ال[مستحقين لميراثه المستوجبين له زوجته سه[ح]ا (? سهمين ؟) ...
 6 [...]

Translation

- 1 [A] In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate—God bless our
 Lord Muhammad, his family and his companions, and save him!—[...
 2 ...] the trustworthy have witnessed
 3 [the death of so-and-so, the son of so-and-so, on such-and-such a day of
 such-and-such a month, in such-and-such a year.]
 4 [B / 1] They witness that he died on the coast of Quṣayr [...
 5 ... He left by way of] heirs having right to his inheritance who deserve it,
 his wife a lo[t (? or two?), ...
 6 ...]

Commentary

4. There are only two dots under the first letter; what seems to be a third dot is in fact a hole in the paper. The three dots on the top are on the original. The *nūn* at the end of the first word, *yashhadūna*, has a dot, as does the *nūn* of the following word, *annahu*.

5. *Sahman*: a reading, which does not explain the ligature between the *hā'* and the *sīn* (compare with *المستحقين* and *المستوجبين*). Another possibility, following the Geniza model, is that the name (*ism*) of the wife follows her mentioning as an heir; but in this case the *alif* of *ism* would have been omitted.

Witness Clause [c]
Arabic Text (Fig. 2.4)

- المأمون يعلم صحة ذلك] 1
 وكتب عنه امره وحضره ابن عبد الغفار [بن عبد الله (?)] 2
 في تاريخه . 3

Translation

- 1 [The trustworthy recognises the validity of this.]
 2 Written for him, Ibn ‘Abd al-Ghaffār [ibn ‘Abd Allāh (?)] ordered it and
 witnessed it
 3 on its date.

Commentary

1. The same expression is found in Khan repeatedly; however, a slight change has been made here, in order to be consistent with the beginning of the report of death, which refers to *al-ma‘mūn*, instead of *al-mamlūk* (compare with *P.GenizahCambr.* 131).
 2. Witness names are usually given with at least one generation of *kunya* (*P.GenizahCambr.* 131).

Text 2. Quṣayr—A Letter—Beginning of the 7th/13th Century—[B / 2]
Arabic Text (Fig. 2.3)

- والده [ب] حتى الله الاثنين 1
 حسين بن رضوان 2
 بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وصلى الله على س[بيدنا محمد] 3
 ومن كنت اشتاقه في الدنو فكيف اني اما [ان الوالد] 4
 يعلم الولد العزيز محبي ال[بدين] 5

Right Margin

- بيد (?) [] 1
 باخباركم عسى ان يلد [] 2
 قبل هبوطي (?) من القصير 3

Translation

- 1–2 (From) his father Ḥusayn ibn Riḍwān—God maintain both in life!—
 3 In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. God bless [our
 Lord, the Prophet Muḥammad!]
 4 and the one, I was missing being close to, but what [to do]? I ...[(Your)
 father]
 5 is writing to inform (his) dear son Muḥyi al-[Dīn]

Right Margin

- 1 to the care of (?) [so-and-so ...]
 2 to hear from you all. Let us hope that he gives birth []
 3 before I set down (?) coming from Quṣayr.

Commentary

1. The paper has some internal dark spots which appear to be dots, but are not. This is a speculative reading.
3. The two dots at the last end of the line appear on the original as part of the writing. The *taṣṭiya* has been shortened as is usual in the Quṣayrī documents; the sender is mentioned at the top of the letter, close to the left edge.
4. The dot under *kayfa* appears on the original.

Right Margin

The stroke which appears under the three lines of text does not correspond to any writing and seems to be connected with the text on the other side, quoted here as text 1. The reading of lines 1 and 3 is a best guess.

Appendix 2. The Geniza Model—7th/13th Century

T-s Ar. 39.277 (After P.Genizah Cambr. 131)

Text

- | | |
|--|---|
| الماليك ينهوا وفاة فلان بن فلان اليهودي في يوم الفلان في شهر | 1 |
| الفلان في السنة الفلانة وترك من الورثة ولده المسما فلان | 2 |
| وابنته المسماة فلانة وزوجته المسماة فلانة بنت فلان وابن عمه | 3 |
| المسما فلان بن فلان فلما تحققوا ذلك كتبوا خطوطهم به | 4 |
| في التاريخ المذكور والحمد لله الواحد الحى الدائم البقا | 5 |

Witness Clauses

- | | |
|--|---|
| المملوك يعلم صحة ذلك | 1 |
| وكتب فلان بن فلان المملوك | 2 |
| المملوك يعلم صحة ذلك | 3 |
| وكتب فلان بن فلان | 4 |
| المملوك مقر باثبات خطوطها ولاي الشهود واما بسم | 5 |
| واما بقراءة عارف وكتب فلان بن فلان رايس اليهود يومئذ | 6 |

Figures

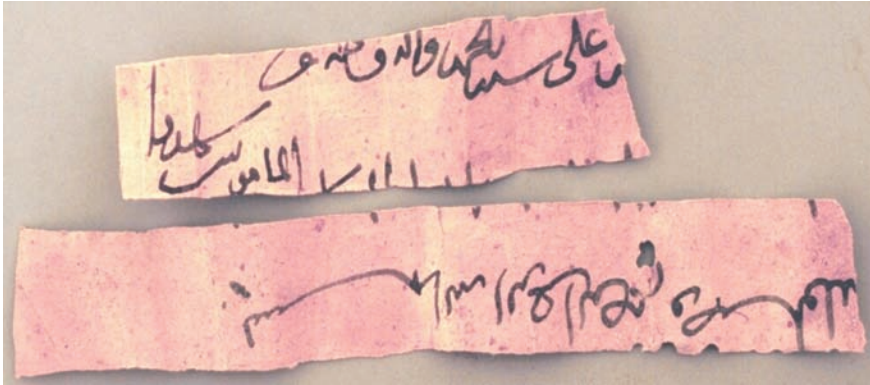


FIGURE 2.1 A INV. PA0386. © University of Southampton, Quṣayr al-Qadīm project

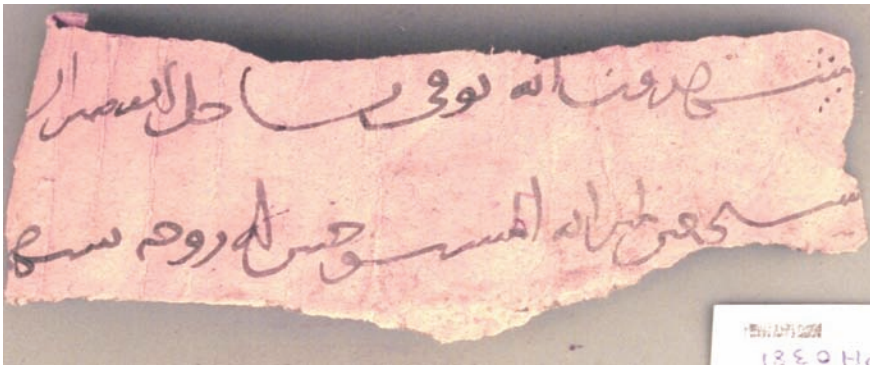


FIGURE 2.2 B/1 INV. PA0381. © University of Southampton, Quṣayr al-Qadīm project

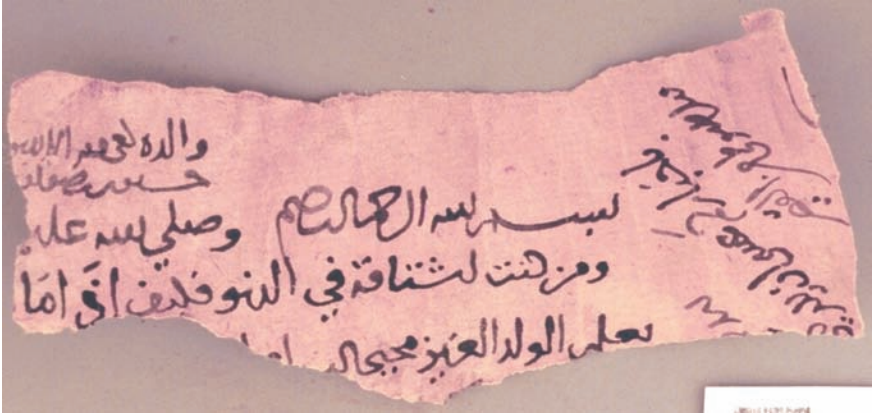


FIGURE 2.3 B/2 INV. PA0381. © University of Southampton, Qusa'yr al-Qadim project

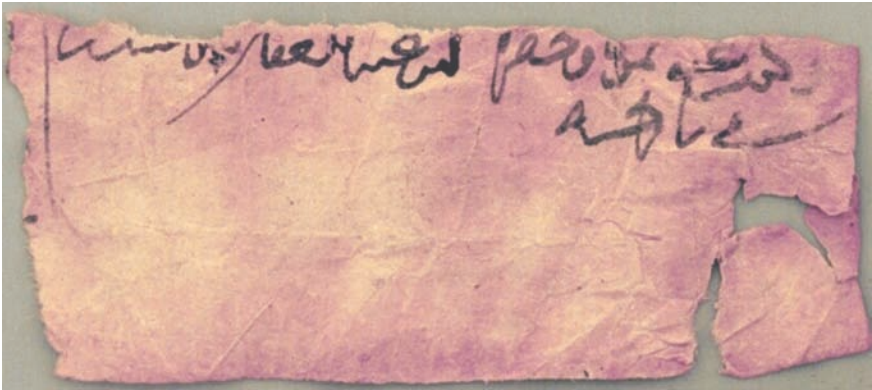


FIGURE 2.4 C INV. PA0388. © University of Southampton, Qusa'yr al-Qadim project

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On the Identity of Shahrālānyōzān in the Greek and Middle Persian Papyri from Egypt

Jairus Banaji

‘Shahrālānyōzān’ appears in several Greek and Middle Persian papyri from Egypt, as well as a couple of ostraca in Greek and at least one parchment in Middle Persian.¹ John Rea has published two of the Greek papyri as *P.Oxy.* 3637 and 3797, and noted that *P.Oxy.* 1843 (from vol. xvi), which does not mention Shahrālānyōzan by name, is in the same hand and deals with the same transaction as *P.Oxy.* 3637.² During the publication of this new material, Poethke confirmed that Shahrālānyōzan also appears in *BGU II* 377, and Worp suggested that he could also be found in *SPP X* 251 (in the Louvre), a suggestion confirmed by Gascou.³ The Oxyrhynchite material contains more or less precise dates and from this it is clear that this official, whoever he was, was active in Egypt in the 620s, a period when the country was under Persian occupation. The Greek material is also better preserved and more substantial in content than any of the published Persian papyri or parchments. Three of the Greek papyri are about the payment of large sums of gold, due for shipment out of Egypt, in a twelfth indiction which is dated 623/4. A fourth one, and possibly a fifth one as well, is part of the internal administration of a large Fayyumic estate that had passed into Shahrālānyōzan’s control. One of the Fayyūm documents, an account involving disbursements of cash, refers to the *oikos* of Shahrālānyōzan

1 *P.Oxy.* LI 3637 (19(?) .x.623); *LV* 3797 (26.iv–25.v.624); *SPP X* 251 (626/7; 7c. in *BL* 9.343), and *BGU II* 377 (7th century) contain references to someone called Σαραλανεοζαν, transliterated ‘Saralaneozan’ in *P.Oxy.*, while the presence of the same individual is implied in *P.Oxy.* xvi 1843 (6.xi.623, *BL* 8.250). The most interesting published Middle Persian documents that mention Shahrālānyōzān are *CII* Nos. 5, 58, and 81 in Weber, *Ostraca* 118, 161, and 185 respectively), P. 136 and P. 172 in Weber, *Berliner Papyri*, and the leather parchment Wien P.Pehl. 373a (Weber, *Eine spätsassanidische* 185 ff.).

2 Rea, *P.Oxy.* 3637.14n (*LI*, p. 103 f.), with Gershevitch’s suggestion that ‘Shahrālānyōzān’ should be seen as a title with the (tentative) meaning ‘most powerful of commanders.’ Here Gershevitch derives *-yozan* from Av. *aojah-*, ‘power,’ e.g. Kellens and Pirart, *Les textes* 2:198, which I find an odd interpretation in view of his commentary on *Yasht* 10, 36, see Gershevitch, *The Avestan hymn* 187. Contrast my explanation below.

3 *Ibid.*, and 3797.9n (*LV*, p. 78).

and refers to the estate as an *ousía*.⁴ It also mentions someone who appears to be his wife or one of his wives, calling her *endoxotatē kyría*.⁵ She was based in Alexandria. In contrast to all of this, the Middle Persian documents, which are also from the Fayyūm, are simply scraps of papyrus or parchment and do not directly concern the affairs of Shahralanyozan.⁶ The picture would probably have been different, perhaps even radically different, if the very substantial collection of Middle Persian papyri acquired by the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna in the late nineteenth century had not disappeared, almost in its entirety, following its loan to Berlin in the 1930s.⁷

To sum up, the Greek material falls into two groups: Oxyrhynchite documents, almost certainly from the former Apion estate,⁸ involving substantial payments of gold, upwards of 150 lbs from just two districts, and the two Fayyūm papyri which are less overtly public in tone. Now the most striking feature of the Greek papyri and the two ostraca from Hermonthis is that Shahralanyozan is described as *paneuphēmos* in almost all of them. I believe this is a fairly strong clue that papyrologists have failed to pick up on. Absolutely no one but the most powerful and wealthy section of the Byzantine aristocracy described themselves in this way.⁹ In other words, if we approach the issue of the identity of this mysterious individual in a purely abstract, logical way, to begin with, he would have had to have been a high-ranking Sasanian official with sufficient stature to justify the extraordinary step of deploying the one epithet that distinguished the *élite* sections of the Byzantine aristocracy. This restricts the choice to a handful of the *highest* ranking officials in charge of the Sasanian occupation of the eastern provinces.¹⁰ Of course, one can always assume that not all

4 SPP X 251a.2, οἶκον Σαραλαν(), b.7, τοῦ κελλαρ(του) τοῦ οἴκου, b.6, ἀρουρ(ῶν) τῆς οὔσι(ας).

5 SPP X 251b.1, δ(ιὰ) ἐπιστά(λματος) τῆς ἐνδοξ(οτάτης) κυράς.

6 Wien P.Pehl. 373a (Weber, Eine spätsassanidische 185 ff.) mentions the “seal of Šahrālānyōzān” in l. 10 (*gilēnaq pad muhr ī Šahr-Ālānyōzān āwišt*).

7 See Weber, Pahlavi Papyri 27–28.

8 I cannot prove this, but the consolidation of the Oxyrhynchite and the Cynopolite for tax purposes otherwise occurs only in Apion documents.

9 E.g. Flavius Strategius son of Flavius Apion I, his son Flavius Apion II, and Flavius Athanasius from the sixth century; Flavius Strategius (the Fayyūm Strategius), Flavius Apion III in the seventh, including some lesser known aristocrats such as Leon in *PLaur.* III 110 (615); an epithet typical of *patricii*.

10 On the military side, the chief rival to Shahrvaraz appears to have been the Sasanian commander called Kardarigas by Theophanes, *Chronicle*, 421 etc. AM 6097. Although titles like this came to be used as personal names, there is no indication in the sources of who this person was. On the name, cf. Theophylact Simocatta, *History*, 32. 1.9.6), “This [the Kardarigan] is a Parthian title; the Persians like to be called by their titles, as if they consider it

of these officials are known to us, and so it is always possible that ‘Shahralanyozan’ conceals a powerful figure of Khusrō II’s administration who has simply escaped the attention of the sources. This is possible but unlikely. What I would like to do in this paper is suggest grounds for identifying Shahralanyozan with Shahrvaraz, the powerful general who led Khusrō’s invasion of Mesopotamia in 608/9 (probably earlier as well), of Syria in 610, and, most notoriously, of Palestine in 613.¹¹ His actual name was Farrukhān, but as Movses Dasxurants’i tells us, Khusrō “called him various fancy names, now Rāzmiozan and now Šahrvaraz, on account of his advances, attacks and victories won by Persian cunning.”¹² Shahrvaraz does not appear to have been from the more traditional layers of the Sasanian aristocracy and, as much later events demonstrated, was in fact hated by them.¹³ From the Syriac sources we can tell, first, that Shahrvaraz supported Khusrō in the conflict with Bahram Chobin late in 590 and much of

unworthy to bear their birth-names,” drawing on the *History* of John of Epiphania, who was acquainted with members of the Sasanian ruling elite, as he tells us, see Olajos, *Les sources* esp. 14 ff. on John’s access to Persian sources and his visit to the country.

- 11 The assault on Mesopotamia was protracted and Shahrvaraz may not have been involved throughout: *Khuzistan Chronicle* 19; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi* 16–17; *Chronicle of AD 1234* (henceforth ‘Dionysius’ = Dionysius of Tel-Mahré) 14, in Palmer, *The seventh century* 122; Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 110 f. (63); Syria: *Chronicle composed AD 640*, AG 921, in Palmer *The seventh century* 17, “On 7 August of the same year [610] Shahrvarāz crossed to Zenobia and took it,” our one precise date; Jerusalem: Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 115 f. (p. 69), precise details with the number of killed put at 17,000 (57,000 in later Armenian sources, a misreading of Sebeos’ figure; 90,000 in Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus).
- 12 Movses Dasxurants’i, *The history* 77, based on a high-quality seventh-century source that terminates its own narrative in the early 680s, cf. Howard-Johnston, *Armenian historians*, esp. 52 ff. (Note Greenwood’s statement that the *History of the Albanians* has been wrongly attributed to Dasxurants’i, Greenwood, *Armenian neighbours* 339, n. 14.) Farrukhān, *Khuzistan chronicle*, 25; Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi* 31; al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* 1:1062, فَرَّخَان, so too Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), *al-Kāmil fī al-ta’rīkh* 1:475; Xořeam etc. in the Armenian sources, cf. Hübschmann, *Armenische grammatik* 42, no. 78.
- 13 Cf. note 40 below. Pourshariati’s suggestion that Shahrvarāz turns up on one of Gyselen’s seals from the Saeedi collection as *Pirag ī šahrwarāz* (described as ‘spāhbed of the Southern Quarter’ and a ‘grandee’, *wuzurg*, hailing from the Mihrān family), Pourshariati, *Recently discovered seals* 175, with Gyselen, *The four generals* 40–41, seal 2d/2, is an improbable one on several counts. (1) There is never any indication in the sources that S. was from the Mihrān clan, which is odd if he *had* been and the fact was well-known. (2) Gyselen is strongly inclined (on internal grounds) to date the *spāhbed* seals that have the expression *hujadag-Khusrō* to the reign of Khusrō I, see Gyselen, *Sasanian seals* 49 ff., Gyselen, *Primary sources* 180 ff., supported by Cereti, *On the Pahlavi cursive* esp. 184, n. 24. (3) Al-Mas’ūdī describes S. as *spāhbed* of the West.

591,¹⁴ and second, that at the time of Maurice's assassination in 602, Shahrvaraz/Farrukhān was already an experienced general.¹⁵

The main arguments for identifying him with Shahralanyozan are: (1) the mainly Syriac (Syrian Jacobite) tradition that attributes the conquest of Alexandria in 619 to Shahrvaraz;¹⁶ (2) Sebeos' crucial testimony that it was Shahrvaraz who controlled Alexandria in 629 when Heraclius opened negotiations with him for the treaty that was eventually concluded at Arabissus in July of that year;¹⁷ (3) the curious if not striking coincidence in the morphology of the names Shahralanyozan and Razmyozan, the latter being Shahrvaraz's most common appellation in the Armenian sources (which generally refer to him as Xorëam, i.e., Farrukhān);¹⁸ (4) a tradition preserved in al-Ṭabarī which asso-

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- 14 'Dionysius' 8, in Palmer, *The seventh century* 117, "When he [Bahram] heard of Chosroës' return, he made ready to do battle with him. When Chosroës reached Persian territory, *the general Rômēzān joined him*, adding his 10,000 Persians to the army of the Romans, and became his ally." Khusrō succeeded Hormazd shortly after 27 June 591 and was restored to the throne in autumn of that year, cf. Tyler-Smith, *Calendars and coronations*.
- 15 'Dionysius' 14, in Palmer, *The seventh century* 121, "... Rômēzān, a powerful, dedicated man with *considerable experience in combat* ..."
- 16 'Dionysius' 24, in Palmer, *The seventh century* 128. "Shahrvarāz invaded Egypt and, with much bloodshed, subjected it with Alexandria to the Persians" (Michael the Syrian, *Chronique de Michel* 2:401; Bar Hebraeus, *The chronography* 1:87).
- 17 Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 129 (p. 88), "Then Khoëam was easily persuaded, and he abandoned Alexandria." Stephanos Asoghig may have read this in Sebeos, if not, he provides interesting corroboration, cf. *Histoire* 148–149: "Héraclius écrivit au général perse Khor'em qui était alors du côté d'Alexandrie pour l'inviter à venir le trouver ..."
- 18 I shall suggest an interpretation of -y(a)ozan later (see below). For the name, cf. Delehayé, *Vie anonyme*, at 9 (p. 23), 'Ρασμιοζαν δὴ τοῦ ἀρχόντος, ἦτοι τοῦ ἀρχιστρατήγου, Χοσρόου κτλ., (Cf. Leontius of Neapolis, *Vie de Syméon le fou et vie de Jean de Chypre*, 325), Lappa-Zizicas, *Un épitomé inédit* at 9 (p. 276) (both based on the lost 'Life' of John by John Moschus and Sophronius, so our two earliest references), Theophanes, (*Chronicle* 421), 'Rousmiazan'; Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 110 (p. 62), "Khoëam called Ēřazman" 115 (p. 68), "their general, called Ēřazmiozan, that is, Khoëam" (p. 69) "Khoëam, that is Ēřazmiozan" etc., Dasxurants'i, *History* (n. 12 above), Thomas Artsruni, *History* 155–156, "Ēřazmayuzan also called Khoëam," and "Khoëam Ēřazmayuzan," Stephanon Asoghig, *Histoire* 146, "le général Khor'em surnommé Razman;" Strategius [Georgian text], *Prise de Jérusalem*, ix.2 (p. 16), "Rasmiozdan," xxiv. 3; 6 (p. 54), "Rasmiozan;" Garitte, *Expugnatio Hierosolymae* 191, رَسْمِيَا (rsmysa); 'Dionysius' 8, in Palmer, *The seventh century* 117, "the general Rômēzān," 14 (p. 122), "Chosroës exclaimed, "Then your name is not Rômēzān but Shahrvarāz, the Wild Boar!"; Mich. Syr., *Chronique de Michel* (n. 16), 2, 377, "Romīzan," Bar Hebraeus, *The chronography* 1, 87, "Rûmīzân, the captain of the host, who was nicknamed 'SHAHRBARAZ';" al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* 1:1002, l. 3, رُمِيوزَان.

ciates the family of Shahrvaraz with Darband (on the Caspian coast) coupled with the fact that Darband stood at the heart of a defensive system designed to consolidate Sasanian control of the Caucasian region (*k'usti kapkoh*) against the incursions of the Alans and other tribal groups. There is some reason to believe that *šahr i Ālān* referred to much of the territory to the north and west of Darband, at least until the Khazars became a major force in the eastern Caucasus.¹⁹ Finally, there is the extraordinary report which we owe entirely to Nikephoros, patriarch of Constantinople, that at least one daughter and one son of Shahrvaraz became Christians (with the names Nike and Niketas). Indeed, the understanding between Heraclius and Shahrvaraz included the betrothal of Shahrvaraz's daughter Nike to Heraclius' son Theodosius.²⁰ This remarkable integration into the Greek-speaking Christian circles of the Byzantine aristocracy accords well with the impression conveyed by *SPP* X 251 of a Sasanian official ('Saralaneozan') settling down to the ways of life of a local aristocrat, with an *oikos*, a substantial estate, in the Fayyūm and, who knows, many other districts.

To rehearse some of these arguments as briefly as I can, the Syriac tradition that it was Shahrvaraz who led the invasion of Egypt is *prima facie* contradicted by a second, divergent source tradition that attributes the conquest of Egypt to the Sasanian commander Shahīn. This tradition is found in Nikephoros and al-Ṭabarī and in a passing reference in al-Dīnawarī.²¹ For the conquest and evacuation of Alexandria we have precise dates in a Mesopotamian chronicle composed c. 640 (known, misleadingly, as the 'Liber calipharum').²² This gives us June 619 as the date of the capture of Alexandria. The later, ninth-century Syriac chronicle of Dionysius of Tel Mahré dated Shahrvaraz's invasion of Egypt to 617/8.²³ There is no conflict here if we assume that operations *began* in 618

19 Both Syriac and Arabic sources suggest that the Khazars were on the scene by the later sixth century (e.g. al-Ya'qūbī [d. after 292/905], *Ta'riḫ* 1:188, l. 2), but if so, it is hard to disentangle them from their Turkish overlords, the Western or Kōk Türks.

20 Nikephoros, *Short history*, at 17 (p. 65): "Now Herakleios conferred the dignity of patrician upon Niketas, son of Sarbaros, and gave the latter's daughter Nike in marriage to his own son Theodosios, born of Martina;" cf. Mango, *Deux études sur Byzance* 105 ff.

21 Nikephoros, *Short History* 6 (p. 45), calling him "Saitos"; al-Dīnawarī (d. 281–289/894–901), *al-Akhbār al-ṭiwāl* 112, ll. 14–15, al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* 1:1002, l. 9 ff., followed by Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil* 1:475 (where al-Ṭabarī's رموزان has become بوران!); in an earlier passage al-Dīnawarī, *Akhbār* 110 f., l. 19 ff. ascribes the capture of Alexandria and the search for the Cross (!) to a second commander (neither Shahīn nor Shahriyar = Shahrvarāz) whose name is clearly corrupt, cf. القائد الآخر بوذ (بووذ in the Cairo ed. of al-Dīnawarī).

22 *Chronicle composed AD 640*, AG 930, in Palmer, *The seventh century* 17–18.

23 'Dionysius,' 24, in Palmer, *The seventh century* 128.

and culminated in the capture of Alexandria in the middle of 619, following what appears to have been a prolonged siege. In 617 Shahrvaraz was in Pisidia.²⁴ Sebeos tells us that Shahīn joined him there, and it is just possible that the invasion of Egypt started as a joint operation in the next campaigning season, which would explain why we have two traditions. In any case, if we *do* have to choose, the Syriac tradition is more credible. The passage in al-Ṭabarī is a highly compressed summary of events ranging from 610 to 626, and it is garbled.²⁵ It posits three Sasanian commanders, but two of them were the same individual. Shahrvaraz appears first as “Rumiyūzān,” i.e., Razmyozan (Khusrō “sent him to Syria which he then subdued and penetrated as far as Palestine”), and then as “Farruhān,” i.e., Farrukhān, “with the rank of Shahrvaraz” (“He led an expedition to attack Constantinople, until he halted on the bank of the strait just near the city ...”).²⁶ al-Ṭabarī or the source he used had lost all narrative sense of these events, but he/his source was correct in describing Shahīn as *pādgōsbān* of the West and dating the start of the invasion to Khusrō’s 28th year.²⁷ Finally, at least one strand of the Arabic historical tradition also attributed the siege or capture of Alexandria to Shahrvaraz, namely, the one found in al-Tha‘ālibī and Abū ‘Alī Miskawayh.²⁸ This was clearly a different source to that used by al-Ṭabarī.

In short, if Shahrvaraz led the invasion of Egypt in 618/9 and was still in control of the country in 629 when, according to Sebeos, he “abandoned Alexandria,”²⁹ he was clearly the highest-ranking Sasanian in charge of Egypt in the 620s, and probably used Egypt as his major base of operations throughout these years. In 622 or 623 the Sasanians launched a naval offensive to seize Rhodes and other Byzantine possessions in the Mediterranean.³⁰ The Syriac sources

24 Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 113 (p. 66), with Howard-Johnston’s notes in pt. 2, 204.

25 al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rikh* 1:1002, ll. 3–15.

26 About Farrukhān: *وَأَمَّا الْقَائِدُ الثَّالِثُ فَكَانَ يُقَالُ لَهُ فَرْهَانَ وَتَدْعَى مَرْتَبَتَهُ شَهْرَبَرَزَ وَأَنَّهُ قَصَدَ قَصْدَ الْقِسْطَنْطِينِيَّةِ حَتَّى* *وَأَمَّا أَحَدُهُمْ فَكَانَ يُقَالُ لَهُ رُؤْمِيوزَانَ وَجَمَّهُ إِلَى بِلَادِ الشَّامِ فَدَوَّخَهَا*; *أَنَاخَ عَلَى ضِفَّةِ الْخَلِيجِ الْقَرِيبِ مِنْهَا حَتَّى انْتَهَى إِلَى أَرْضِ فِلَسْطِينَ*.

27 al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rikh* 1:1002, *فَادُوسِيَانَ الْمَغْرِبِ*, cf. Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 111 (p. 64), “Then came Shahēn Patgosapan ...,” also at 124 (p. 81). Note al-Balādhurī’s description of the governor (*marzbān*) of Iṣfahān at the time of the conquest (al-Balādhurī [d. ca. 892], *Futūḥ al-buldān* 309, *وَكَانَ مَرزْبَانَهَا مَسْنَا يُسَمَّى الْفَادُوسِيَانَ*, Al-Balādhurī, *Origins* 486).

28 al-Tha‘ālibī (fl. 412/1021), *Histoire des rois des Perses*, 701, *فَهَضَ وَحَاصَرَ الْأَسْكَندَرِيَّةَ*, Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), *Tajārib al-umam*, 1:230. The earliest source is al-Zuhri (d. c. 741) cited Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, cf. Kaegi and Cobb 2008, 106, 108. So too in the anonymous author of the *Nihāyat al-arab fi akhbār al-Furs wa’l-‘Arab*, cf. Dāneš-Pažūh 1996, 424, lines 17–18 (‘Shahriyār’), and Eutychius, *Ann.*, 28, ed. Breydy 1985, 121, lines 1–2 (Arabic).

29 Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 129 (p. 88).

30 *Chronicle composed AD 640*, AG 934, in Palmer, *The seventh century* 18, with n. 115,

attribute these operations to Shahrvaraz, and Alexandria would have been a perfect base from which to conduct them. From the summer of 624 to the start of the 626 campaigning season when Persian troops massed for the invasion of Anatolia, Shahrvaraz was back in Persia, pursuing Heraclius who had opened a major counter-offensive in April of 624.³¹ In August 626, following the abortive siege of Constantinople, Shahrvaraz withdrew, probably to Alexandria.³² By this stage there was huge disaffection in the ranks of the Sasanian army and Shahrvaraz's return to Egypt and refusal to come to Khusrō's aid the following year when Heraclius launched his second counter-offensive in September 627, were symptomatic of the crisis that culminated in the removal and execution of Khusrō in February 628.³³ In other words, as the Persian counter-offensive of 626 faltered, tension seems to have developed between Shahrvaraz and Khusrō,³⁴ and it is even possible that there was a mutiny in the armies stationed in Asia Minor. At any rate, a rumour circulated that Shahrvaraz had come to a deal with Heraclius.³⁵

Kavād II, Khusrō's son, who consented to his execution, sued for peace within days of his accession.³⁶ In April, in the presence of the Roman ambassador Eustathius, Kavād dictated a letter to Shahrvaraz, instructing him that "he should collect his troops, come back into Persia, and abandon Greek territory."³⁷ Thus Shahrvaraz was still in former Byzantine territory in April 628

'Dionysius' 30, in Palmer, *The seventh century* 133, Mich. Syr., *Chronique* 2:408, Bar Hebraeus, *The chronography* 1:89.

- 31 See Howard-Johnston, Heraclius' Persian campaigns, esp. 16–26, for a lucid discussion of the chronology of these campaigns.
- 32 Cf. Mango, *Deux études sur Byzance* 109.
- 33 Disaffection: 'Dionysius' 34–35, 37, in Palmer, *The seventh century* 136f., referring to the "general mutiny led by Shahrvarāz," al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* 1:1005, *الكتاب الى الخلاف*, فاخرجهم بهذا الكتاب الى الخلاف, عليه وطلب الحيل لنجاة انفسهم منه. Refusal to aid Khusrō: Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 127 (pp. 84–85), "Heraclius arrived and camped nearby, outside the city of Ctesiphon; he burned all the royal palaces around the city ... However, *Khoream did not come to the aid of king Khosrov*, but remained right where he was in the west."
- 34 For a sample of the legends that evolved around their tense relationship, see ps.-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-tāj* 182ff., ps.-Jāḥiẓ, *Livre* 198ff.
- 35 The Syriac sources, Theophanes, etc. make much of a tradition that Shahrvaraz changed sides or made a secret deal with the Byzantines: 'Dionysius' 35 (p. 137), 38 (p. 138), Theophanes, (*Chronicle* 452–453) *AM* 6118, al-Mas'ūdī (d. 345/956), *Les Prairies d'or* 1:242, Mich. Syr., *Chronique* 2:408–409, Bar Hebraeus, *The chronography* 1:89, *Histoire Nestorienne* ii, 87 (p. 41).
- 36 Negotiations started on 3 April, about five weeks after Kavād's accession, *Chronicon Paschale*, 187, under the year 628; Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 127–128 (p. 85), Thomas Artsruni, *History* 162.
- 37 Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 128 (p. 86).

and reluctant to leave. In fact, no formal evacuation of the occupied territories occurred till June 629, the date given for the evacuation of Egypt and Syria by the chronicle of 640.³⁸ This confirms Sebeos' testimony that Shahrvaraz evacuated Alexandria on the eve of his famous treaty with Heraclius which is dated July 629. The largely Armenian and Greek tradition that Shahrvaraz finally agreed to the withdrawal of troops because Heraclius offered to back a bid for power against the ruling dynasty, now represented by the child Ardashir (Kavād's son), seems credible to me, but it does encounter the obvious difficulty of why Shahrvaraz waited a whole nine months before the putsch of April 630 in which he murdered Ardashir and usurped power.³⁹ He himself was hated by the aristocracy and managed to survive for only forty days.⁴⁰

To return to 'Shahralanyozan,' Dieter Weber's suggestion that we should take this as a name meaning "die Alanen bekämpfend" opens a new line of enquiry.⁴¹ Shahralanyozan-Farrukhan himself was clearly fond of nicknames that drew attention to his reputation as an intrepid warrior. Both 'Shahrvaraz' (literally 'Wild boar of the realm' with the actual meaning 'Hero of the realm')⁴² and 'Razmyozan' ('Stirring up the regiments'? 'Throwing the battle lines into confusion?')⁴³ did precisely this, and so presumably did 'Shahralanyozan.' A form of this name is attested in the Armenian aristocracy of the fourth century,

38 *Chronicle*, AG 930, in Palmer, *The seventh century* 17–18.

39 It is possible that he was busy fighting the Khazars and even used the Khazar threat as the pretext for toppling Ardashir, as Movsēs Dasxurants'i claims, *The history* 104–105 (cf. Flusin, *Saint Anastase* 2:306 ff.). S. was clearly installed in power with Heraclius' backing, cf. Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 129 (p. 88; Heraclius bestows the throne on S. and his offspring), and the discussion in Mango, *Deux études sur Byzance* 110 ff., which concludes, "c'est Héraclius qui décida d'installer Šahrvaraz sur le trône persan ... il lui promit la couronne et, après lui, à son fils." The strongest formulation of this is in Vardan Arewelc'i (Thomson, *The historical compilation* 174), "When Heraclius heard this [news of Kavād's demise], he urged Xorem to seize the crown by murdering the youth [Ardashir]" (!!).

40 Disliked by the aristocracy: al-Tha'ālibī, *Histoire* 734, *فانفتحت كلات الاعبيان والمرازبة على كراهته واجتمع*, cf. al-Dīnawarī, *Kitāb al-akhbār* 116, al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* 1:1063, both attributing s.'s assassination to the nobility—*كثير من العطاء واهل البيوتات*—Shahrvaraz's hostility to the aristocracy: Ferdowsī (d. 410 or 416/1019 or 1025), *Shāh-nāma* 9:2953, *همی دارد او محتران را سبک*, cf. Sebeos, *The Armenian history* 130 (p. 88), "All the principal men at court or in the army in whom he could place no trust he commanded to be put to the sword." This corroborates al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh* 1, 197, *فاخذ عطاء الفرس فقتلهم*, al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh* 1:1062, l. 14 *فاخذ جماعة من الرؤساء فقتلهم*.

41 Weber, Ein bisher unbekanntes.

42 Cf. Monchi-Zadeh, *Die Geschichte* 63, 'Phl. varāz, np. *Gurāz* "Eber" → "Held".

43 Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* 260, s.v. *Ṛazmiozan*, renders the meaning as 'Kampf aufsuchend', and most scholars have repeated this, e.g. Nyberg, *A manual of Pahlavi* 2:40:

where it *clearly implies a reference to the Alans to their north*.⁴⁴ In the sixth century much of the central and eastern Caucasus was dominated by the Alans, Procopius says so in so many words,⁴⁵ and Alan raids across the Caucasus would undoubtedly have been a major reason for Khusrō Anōšīravan's massive projects of construction and fortification in the sub-Caucasian region.⁴⁶ The Sasanian objective of holding the passes through the Caucasus against barbarian pressure from the north fructified in a vast defensive system which is in fact best described in Arabic sources such as al-Balādhurī and Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, and a valuable passage in Ibn Khurradādhbih. Darial in the Central Caucasus and Darband on the western shore of the Caspian were pivotal to this system.⁴⁷ The former, of course, derives its name from 'Dar-i Alān,' Ar. Bāb al-Lān. Alan settlements were widely dispersed in the seventh century.⁴⁸ The Arme-

MPrth *rzmy(y)wz* 'eager for battle'; to me it seems likely that the name contains a stronger Avestan allusion, esp. to *Avesta*, *Yasht* 14, 62 (n. 59 below), where the object of *yaoz-* is *rasmanō* (*rasman-*, 'regiment,' 'Schlachtreihe, Phalanx'; for *y(a)ozan* cf. n. 59). Note the pronunciation implied in the earliest (almost contemporary) transcriptions of the name, viz. 'Ρασμιοζαν in the Lives of John the Almoner and Rasmiozan/Rasmiozdan in Strategius (n. 18 above).

44 Cf. Garsoïan, *The epic histories* 344–345.

45 Procopius, *Bell.* 8.3.4, ταύτην δὲ τὴν χώραν ἢ ἐξ ὄρους τοῦ Καυκάσου ἄχρι ἐς τὰς Κασπίας κατατείνει Πύλας Ἄλανοι ἔχουσιν, αὐτόνομον ἔθνος, οἱ δὴ καὶ Πέρσαις τὰ πολλὰ ξυμμαχοῦσιν.

46 One can get some sense of the scale of these investments from reports (especially in Yāqūt and al-Ya'qūbī) about the quality of Khusrō's constructions at Darband, Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), *Mu'jam al-buldān* 1:440, al-Ya'qūbī cited Ibn al-Faqih (fl. 289/902), *Kitāb al-buldān* 290 ff., cf. Ya'qūbī, *Les Pays* 232–233, with Barthold, *Derbend* esp. 941, *Kettenhofen*, Darband esp. 15–16, al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ* 1:895, says he built "towns, castles, ramparts and numerous structures" throughout the region, with stone transported from Gurgān, *Al-Tha'libī*, *Histoire* 611 claims he built over 100 fortresses (قلعة) between Iran and the Caucasus.

47 Darial is listed among the provinces (*hshtr*) of the empire in Shapur I's victory inscription at Naqsh-e Rostam, where it is called 'the Alan gate' (Parth. 'l 'nn BB'), see Back, *Die sassanidischen* 286–287 (text), 187–188 (commentary). It was a Sasanian stronghold in 466, cf. Priscus fr. 37 in Müller, *Fragmenta* iv, 107, and Marquart, *Ērānšahr nach der Geographie* 99 ff., but subsequently lost to the Huns. Movses Dasxurants'i, *The history* 66 refers to a *marzbān* of Čolay in the mid-5th century, suggesting that much of the coastal region was under Sasanian control by then, before the emergence of Darband as a substantial fortified site.

48 From their strongholds in the Central Caucasus (Darial, etc.) to the western shores of the Caspian, north of Darband. According to al-Balādhurī, Khusrō I met the Turks at al-Barshaliyya, *Futūḥ al-buldān* 199 (برشلية), not far north of Darband. This was Barsāliā (= Bashli?), the name by which the Alan country was known in this region, cf. Mich. Syr.,

nian *Geography* of Ananias of Širak tells us that the Massagetae (Alans) dwelt “as far as the Caspian Sea to which a branch of the Caucasus extends. Here is the wall of Darband, the town of the Chor pass (*k’atak’ pahakin Čora*), with its great rampart built in the sea.”⁴⁹ Armenian *pahak Čora* has an exact equivalent in the Arabic Bāb Šūl, and al-Ṭabarī’s expression *nāḥiyat Šūl wa-Alān* can be read as implying that Alan territory impinged on Darband.⁵⁰ Both Kavād I and Khusrō I invested massively in the fortification of Daghestan, constructing fortresses throughout the region and assigning these and their garrisons to local rulers.⁵¹ Khusrō was responsible for the creation of a formal system of rulership, with titles such as Sharvān-shāh, Ṭabarsarān-shāh, Alān-shāh, and so on.⁵² According to Ḥamza, these Transcaucasian rulers were assigned hereditary estates.⁵³ Darband itself would undoubtedly have had a Sasanian in control. The *History*

Chronique 2, 364 and Marquart, *Ērānšahr nach der Geographie* 485 ff., concluding, “Damit ergibt sich die Lage des Landes Barsālīā von selbst: es muss sich im Süden bis Darband, im Norden mindestens bis zu den Ebenen am Sulak und Terek erstreckt haben.” Repeated Alan (Ossete, Mazk’ut’k’) raids through Darband and the passes south of Darband (e.g. Moses Khorenatsi, *The history* 9, Thomson, *The historical compilation* 161, etc.) is also proof of a widespread Alan presence in this sector.

49 *The geography* 57; cf. Moses Dasxurançi, *The history* 155, “the gate of Čoḷay which is near Darband.”

50 al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh* 1:895, ناحية صول والان, al-Ṭabarī, *The history*, 152.

51 al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* 198; Ibn Khurradādhbih (d. ca. 300/911), *Kitāb al-Masālik* 123; Ibn al-Faḥīh, *Kitāb al-Buldān* 344; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh* 1:895, l. 7 ff. Kavād’s foundations describe an arc through eastern Albania/Arrān into southern Daghestan, up to the “long wall called Apzutkawat” (*Abzūd kavād*, ‘Kavād extended this’) that connected the mountains to the Caspian north of Shapotran, Ananias of Širak, *The geography* 57 (long rec.); *Ḥudūd al-Ālam* 401. Kavād also seized Darial from the Huns and placed a permanent garrison there, against the Massagetai (= Alans, cf. Dio Cassius, lxxix, 15, Amm. Marc. 23.5.16, 31.2.12), Procop., *Bell.*, 1.10.12 (seizure), 1.16.4 ff. (garrison). Darband was chiefly fortified by Khusrō I, with the famous wall that protruded into the sea and the imposing network of forts in the mountains to the west, al-Iṣṭakhrī (wr. ca. 951), *al-Masālik* 184 ff., n. i; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* 199. In the *Sīrat Ānūshirwān* Khusrō claimed he settled thousands of Turkish auxiliaries in these regions, subordinating them to the *marzbān* of Šūl, cf. Grignaschi, *Quelques spécimens* 19 ff., 24. “Pērōzkhusrō”, *ibid.*, 19, was surely Khusrō’s name for Darband, cf. Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam* (n. 28) 192, l. 8 ff. فلما بلغت باب الصل ومدينه, فيروز خسرو.

52 al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* 199–200, Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (ca. 350/961), *Ta’rīkh sini mulūk* 58, al-Mas’ūdī, *Les Prairies d’or* 1, 160, and the ref. in the *Sīrat Ānūshirwān* to *al-mulūk min qibalanā hunāka* (Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam* 192, Grignaschi, *Quelques spécimens* 19).

53 Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, *Ta’rīkh sini mulūk* 57, واسكن في كل طرف قائدا يقطععه من الجبش واطعمهم من ما يلي ذلك الصقع ضياعا وجعلها من بعدهم وقفا على اولادهم.

also the goddess of war.⁶⁰ The *yašts* which have a more distinctly epic character were favourite songs sung by warriors, and the verb *yaoz-* which appears repeatedly in the *yashts* should be taken in its late Avestan sense of ‘confounding,’ ‘throwing into turmoil’ or ‘stirring up.’⁶¹ Thus I would suggest ‘throwing the land of the Alans into turmoil’ as a likely translation of ‘Shahralanyozan.’

Whatever one thinks of this reconstruction, it is interesting that according to a tradition transmitted by Sayf ibn ‘Umar and reported in al-Ṭabarī, a descendant of Shahrvaraz was ‘ruler of Darband’ (*malik bi al-Bāb*) at the time of the first Arab incursion into Transcaucasia in 643.⁶² What should we make of this? In *Termination of Hostilities* Donald Hill commented, “It is extremely unlikely that any Muslim forces penetrated into the country of the Khazars at such an early date.”⁶³ This seems to imply that Darband was now under Khazar control. To me it seems more likely that the Sasanian contingents called the Siyasikin or Nishastagan retained control of Darband into the early 640s, when the rest of the empire had fallen apart. The backbone of this *isnād*, one repeatedly used by Sayf, may have been a compilation of reports reduced to writing by Ṭalḥah ibn al-A‘lam. In any case, the long-standing prejudice against Sayf’s reliability as a transmitter has now begun to disintegrate. I only mention this report in conclusion because it fits into the general framework of my argument so well.

8 (Panaino, *Tištrya*, I 34): *āpō yaozaieiiti* (in tmesis with *upā* and *aiβi*), and most spectacularly in 14,62 (the hymn to Victory), where the god Vərəθraϥna does various things to the battle lines (*rasmanō*), including “throwing them into confusion”—*yō rasmanō yaōzaieiiti*. Translations of the passage from *Yasht* 14 include Malandra, *An introduction* 87, “We worship Ahura-created Wərəθraϥna, who destroys the battle lines, who cuts the battle lines, who tramples the battle lines, who throws the battle lines into confusion...,” and *Avesta* 267, “der die Schlachtreihen zerstört, der die Schlachtreihen zerschneidet, der die Schlachtreihen ins Gedränge bringt, der die Schlachtreihen in Verwirrung bringt.”

- 60 E.g. Chaumont, *Le culte d’Anāhitā*. The figure of Anahita presided over Khusrō’s expansion into the eastern provinces, see Malek, *The Sasanian king*, discussing Khusrō’s special issues that begin c. 610, with reverse types that replace the fire altar with a facing bust of the goddess. Malek notes that “The cult of Anāhitā was in its ascendancy under Khusrau I” (p. 35).
- 61 See Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* 1231, s.v. *yaoz-*, 2a caus. ‘in Verwirrung bringen’, Boyce, *A word-list* 103, *ywz-* [yōz-] Pth. ‘agitate, set in motion, convulse; be agitated’.
- 62 al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’riḫ* 1:2663, *وما اطل عبد الرحمان بن ربيعة على الملك بالباب والملك بها يومئذ شهريز رجل من اهل فارس وكان على ذلك الفرج وكان اصله من اهل شهريز الملك الذي افسد بنى اسرايل*.
- 63 Hill, *Termination of hostilities* 155.

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Le monastère de Baouît et l'administration arabe

Alain Delattre

Le monastère de Baouît a livré un grand nombre de textes papyrologiques qui proviennent en partie des fouilles, mais surtout des pillages perpétrés sur le site depuis la fin du XIX^e siècle¹. Plusieurs publications ont permis, ces dernières années², de sortir de l'ombre les archives dispersées du monastère; on doit notamment à Sarah Clackson d'avoir mis en évidence des formules documentaires typiques de Baouît³.

La présente contribution est consacrée aux rapports entre le monastère de Baouît et l'administration arabe. Il s'agira à la fois de mentionner les personnages qui portent un nom arabe dans la documentation papyrologique⁴ du monastère, qui date principalement des VII^e et VIII^e siècles, et d'examiner le contexte des relations entre l'administration monastique et l'administration civile, notamment à la lumière d'un texte inédit et d'une lettre copte pour laquelle je propose une nouvelle interprétation.

La plupart des documents du monastère où apparaissent des personnages portant des noms arabes sont de nature économique et en particulier fiscale. Il y a d'abord les *entagia* rédigés par l'administration arabe, souvent par le pagarque lui-même. Quatre de ces *entagia* sont publiés (*P.Mon.Apollo* 1, 28–30, *P.Clackson* 45). On peut aussi mentionner *P.Vat.Aphrod.* 13⁵, un compte grec d'arriérés de réquisitions, où il est question de vêtements et de différents sacs

1 Sur le monastère, cf. *P.Mon.Apollo* 1, pp. 6–8 et *P.Bru.x.Bawit*, pp. 29–109; sur les fouilles récentes, cf. Bénazeth, Recherches.

2 On peut citer *O.Bawit IFAO*, *P.Bawit Clackson*, *P.Bru.x.Bawit* et *P.Mon.Apollo* 1.

3 On pense par exemple aux textes qui commencent par l'expression $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\varsigma \pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\varsigma$, littéralement « c'est notre père qui écrit », formule utilisée par l'archimandrite de Baouît dans les billets qu'il envoie à ses subordonnés. S. Clackson a rassemblé une soixantaine de documents de ce type conservés dans de nombreuses collections de par le monde (cf. Clackson, *It is our father*).

4 Je ne parlerai pas des inscriptions, peu importantes pour le sujet, à une exception près cependant. Un graffiti du monastère a en effet fait couler beaucoup d'encre (*MIFAO* 59, p. 90, n° 222). On a cru longtemps y voir deux musulmans convertis au christianisme; mais le texte a été revu par Jean Luc Fournet, qui en a proposé une nouvelle interprétation (cf. Fournet, *Conversion*).

5 Cf. Gonis, *Two fiscal* (= *SB XXVI* 16664).

en poils, de clous, de bois d'acacia, d'*hepsèma* et de raisins, tous produits destinés à l'administration arabe.

On trouve également plusieurs mentions de personnages qui portent des noms arabes dans des documents de nature économique produits par le monastère lui-même (et qui ne sont pas fiscaux). *P.Mon.Apollo* 1 45, un compte de distributions de vin, présente l. 5 un dénommé ραζιδα (Rāshid ou Rashīd) comme bénéficiaire d'un *knidion* de vin ou sans doute plutôt d'*hepsèma* (le terme, noté l. 4, a pu ne pas être répété). Le même texte mentionne le paiement de trois *kollatha* d'*hepsèma* au *shaliou* de Ptènè (l. 4, 12, 15), que S. Clackson interprète comme des contributions à l'administration arabe (cf. *P.Mon.Apollo* 1, pp. 25–26).

À côté des comptes qui récapitulent l'ensemble des paiements, nous possédons aussi un petit dossier d'une trentaine d'ordres de paiement bilingues du monastère. Ces documents, qui datent du VIII^e siècle, suivent un formulaire fixe : 1. le nom du bénéficiaire en copte, 2. la denrée qui fait l'objet du paiement (le plus souvent du vin), en grec, 3. le nom du responsable de la transaction et 4. la date, en grec également⁶.

Je présente ici un sous-dossier de trois ordres de paiement écrits par le même personnage et dont les bénéficiaires portent des noms arabes ; ce sont *P.Yale* inv. 1866 (1), l'inédit *P.Camb. UL* inv. 1262 (2) et *P.HermitageCopt.* 16 (3). Les trois documents sont datés des mois de Phaôphi et Choiach d'une quinzième année de l'indiction (1 : 26 Phaôphi ; 2 : 28 Phaôphi ; 3 : 6 Choiach) et ont été rédigés sous la responsabilité de l'économe Sérènos (présenté dans 1 comme prêtre, dans 2 comme économe et dans 3 comme prêtre et économe). Les bénéficiaires portent des noms arabes : 'Amr (ou 'Āmir) (1) et Ṣāliḥ (2 et 3). Les textes sont pourvus d'un sceau qui sert à authentifier le document ; le monogramme qui y est estampillé est peu lisible (peut-être un μ traversé d'une croix). La comparaison avec d'autres textes du dossier suggère qu'il s'agit du sceau du supérieur monastique (voir notamment *O.Bru.x.Bawit* 4–27). Les marchandises données aux bénéficiaires comprennent de l'*hepsèma* et parfois du miel (dans le texte 2, le miel a été ajouté après le texte, en copte).

1 Ordre de paiement d'*hepsèma* et de miel (= *P. Bru.x. Bawit* 27)

P.Yale inv. 1866 5,6 × 9,7 cm Monastère de Baouît
Parallèle aux fibres VIII^e siècle

6 Ce nouveau formulaire documentaire de Baouît a été étudié dans Delattre, *Papyrus* ; voir aussi Delattre, *Ordre*.

+ επιλογ(ος) ναμερ έψη(ματος) κ(όλλα)θ(ον) α έν
 (καί) μέλιτ(ος) κάνν(ιον) α έν δ(ιά) Σεργήνου πρε(σβυτέρου)
 μ(ηνί) Φ(α)ώ(φι) κς ί(ν)δ(ικτίωνος) ιε +
 (sceau)

1 επιλο^r pap., λόρος, εψη^η κ^θ pap. 2 σ μελι^τ δ/ σεργηνο^υ πρε^ε pap. 3 μ^ι φ^ω ι^δ/ ιε₊ pap.

† Pour le compte d'Amer. *Kollathon d'hépsèma*: 1, un; et *kannion* de miel: 1, un. Par Sérènos, le prêtre. Au mois de Phaôphi, le 26; 15^e année de l'indiction. †

2 κάνν(ιον) Ce terme est attesté dans *P.Apoll.Anô* 88, 8 et dans *SB* XXII 15300, 8 (cf. aussi Sophocles, 1887, II, 626 et le commentaire dans Diethart, 1995, n° 4, l. 8). Il s'agit d'un récipient cylindrique, étroit et allongé. On trouve le mot également dans le texte 2, où l'on lit après la date, une ligne ajoutée en copte: αγω τι ογκαννιν νεβιω ναγ «et donne-lui un *kannion* de miel».

2 Ordre de paiement d'hépsèma et de miel (fig. 4.1)

P.Camb. UL inv. 1262 (inédit)⁷ 7×8,7 cm Monastère de Baouït
 Perpendiculaire aux fibres VIII^e siècle

+ επιλογ(ος) νααλερ έψη(ματος) κ(όλλα)θ(ον) α έν
 δ(ιά) Σεργήνου οίκο(νόμου) μ(ηνί) Φ(α)ώ(φι) κη ί(ν)δ(ικτίωνος) ιε +
 αγω τι ογκαννιν νεβιω ναγ
 (sceau)

1 επιλο^r pap., λόγος, εψη^η κ^θ pap. 2 δ/ σεργηνο^υ οικ^ο μ^ι φ^ω ι^δ/ ιε₊ pap.

† Pour le compte de Saleh. *Kollathon d'hépsèma*: 1, un. Par Sérènos, l'économe. Au mois de Phaôphi, le 28; 15^e année de l'indiction. † Et donne-lui (aussi) un *kannion* de miel.

3 La ligne a été ajoutée dans un second temps, par une autre main. Sur le terme ογκαννιν, cf. texte 1, n. à la l. 2.

7 Je remercie la Cambridge University Library de m'avoir autorisé à publier ce texte.

3 Ordre de paiement d'*hépsèma*

P.Hermitage Copt. 16⁸ 8×7 cm Monastère de Baouît
Parallèle aux fibres VIII^e siècle

+ επιλογ(ος) νκαλερ έψη(ματος) κ(όλλα)θ(ον) α έν
δ(ιὰ) Σερήνου πρε(σβυτέρου) (και) οίκο(νόμου) μ(ηγι) Χοι(άκ)
ς ι(ν)δ(ικτίωνος) ιε +
(sceau)

1 επιλο^r pap., λόγος, εψη^η κ^θ pap., αε ed. 2 δ/ Σερηνου^{ου} πρε^ε ς οικ^ο μ/ χοι⁻ pap. 3 ι^δ/ pap.

Pour le compte de Saleh. *Kollathon* d'*hépsèma*: 1, un. Par Sérènos, le prêtre et l'économiste. Au mois de Choiach, le 6; 15^e année de l'indiction.

1 νκαλερ L'éditeur avait lu νκαλει. La comparaison avec le texte 2 suggère qu'il s'agit plutôt du nom arabe Saleh.

1 α έν L'éditeur avait lu αε, ce qui représenterait 1.005 *kollatha*. Ce chiffre énorme (plus de 12.500 litres) a été repris par S. Clackson, qui cite le papyrus de l'Ermitage, mais sans l'attribuer aux archives de Baouît (*P.Mon.Apollo* 1, p. 26). N. Gonis a proposé avec plus de vraisemblance de comprendre λε «35» (cf. Gonis, *Two fiscal* 24). Je pense plutôt, par comparaison avec les ordres de paiement du dossier, qu'il faut comprendre α έν «1, un» (le ν est souvent très peu lisible, parfois il se réduit à une simple ondulation de la barre horizontale du ε). L'édition présente une note, en russe, qui signale que l'α n'est pas surmonté d'un trait à gauche (signe caractéristique pour signifier «1.000»).

Les trois textes de ce petit dossier nous laissent entrevoir quelques distributions de produits alimentaires à des personnages portant des noms arabes. Les faibles quantités dont il est question me semblent exclure des paiements de taxes (de même dans *P.Mon.Apollo* 1 45, le versement du *knidion* à Rashid ou des trois *kollatha* au *shaliou*). Il faut sans doute y voir davantage une contribution aux frais d'entretien de fonctionnaires locaux.

8 Le texte de l'édition est reproduit ici avec deux légères modifications (cf. commentaires), suggérées par la comparaison avec le texte 2. En effet, il n'a malheureusement pas été possible d'obtenir une photographie du document. – Je remercie Mme C. Aeby pour sa traduction du commentaire en russe.

Pour compléter le tableau, je voudrais mentionner la lettre *P.Mich.Copt.* 15 publiée en 1942 par W.H. Worrell et E.M. Husselman et dont voici la traduction : « That you⁹ may know that I have appointed Serenus to complete the tax (?). I do not appoint him over you that he may (?) give something in your behalf. But give the allotment, your payment. Collect it. Take it. For if you seek to default (it) respecting anything on it, I shall send one who will bring it out of your bones. »

Le verso de la lettre a été édité comme suit :

v. // CYN Θ EPQΔKΔP × ΘEΩΔΩPΩ ΔΠ[.]ΤΙΤ[.]//

Un examen de la photographie disponible¹⁰ permet de lire plutôt :

v. // Σὺν Θ(εῷ) Ἐβρα(ιμ) υἱὸ(ς) Ἀβδερραμᾶν Θεοδώρω ἀπὸ Τιτκῶ(εως)
« // Avec Dieu, Ebrahim, fils d'Abderahman, à Théodôros, originaire de Titkois. »

Je pense donc que nous avons ici une lettre adressée par un membre de l'administration arabe à un responsable du monastère, comme le suggèrent le toponyme de Titkooh, village en relation étroite avec le monastère, et la présence au sein de la collection d'autres textes, avec des numéros d'inventaire proches, qui proviennent assurément du monastère¹¹. Le ton sec de la lettre (sans la moindre formule de politesse, ni au début, ni à la fin) et la dernière phrase « je le prendrai sur tes os » nous donnent à voir que les relations entre l'administration et le monastère pouvaient parfois être tendues et que le paiement des taxes ne se faisait pas toujours sans difficulté. Ce texte, à côté des *entagia* et autres documents économiques, nous offre donc une image plus contrastée des relations entre le monastère et l'administration arabe. Les nouvelles fouilles sur le site et la poursuite des études sur la documentation du monastère permettront, je l'espère, de compléter le tableau dans les prochaines années.

9 Les éditeurs ont lu ΤΑΡΕΝΕΙΜΕ et ont traduit « we (?) », ce qui ne convient pas pour le sens. En dépit de la remarque que ΤΑΡΕΤΙΝΕΙΜΕ « cannot be read », c'est bien ce qu'il faut lire : le τ est noté en ligature avec le ε qui précède, comme le montre l'image disponible sur internet (<http://images.umdl.umich.edu/cgi/i/image/getimage-idx?cc=apis&entryid=X-2965&viewid=6861r.TIF&quality=large>).

10 <http://images.umdl.umich.edu/cgi/i/image/getimage-idx?cc=apis&entryid=X-2965&viewid=6861v.TIF&quality=large>. (27-5-2011)

11 Notre texte porte le numéro d'inventaire 6861. Les *P.Mich.* inv. 6859 = *P.Mich.Copt.* 14 (cf. Delattre, Une lettre), *P.Mich.* inv. 6860 = *P.Mich.Copt.* 20 = *P.Mon.Apollo* 136 et *P.Mich.* inv. 6863 = *P.Mich.Copt.* 21 proviennent du monastère.

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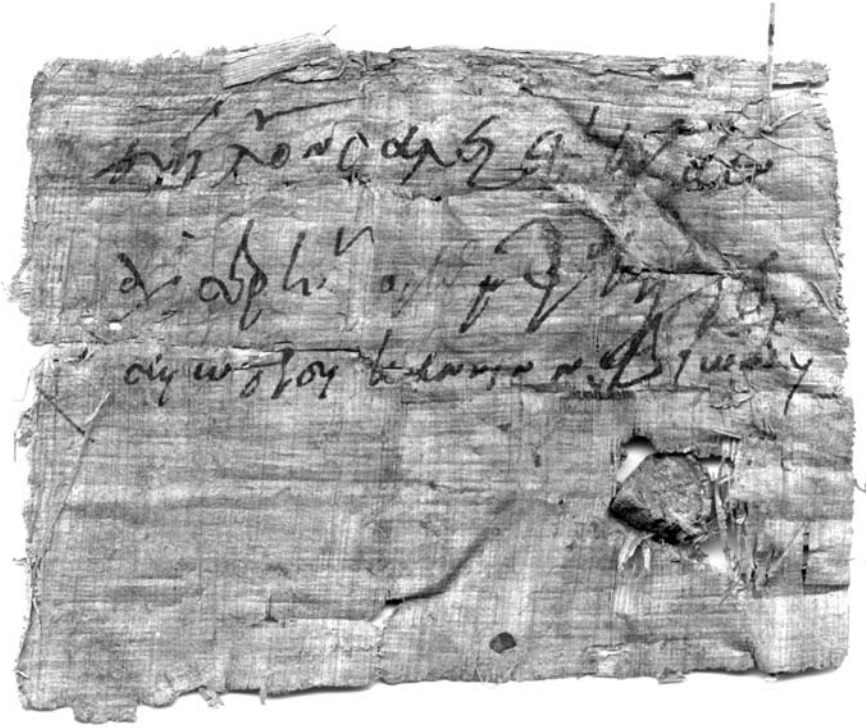


FIGURE 4.1 *P.Camb. UL inv. 1262*. © Cambridge University Library

Fiscal Evidence from the Nessana Papyri

Shaun O'Sullivan

In 1957, C.J. Kraemer published the non-literary papyri found in the 1930s at the site of Nessana, about 70 kilometres south of Gaza.¹ Leaving aside two hundred small fragments almost all datable to the late Roman period (500–630), there are eighty-four larger documents from late Roman and early Islamic periods. Thus, forty-nine of these papyri are datable from 505 to about 630. They include legal contracts, accounts, private letters and one fiscal register. The remaining thirty-five documents are datable from 674 to about 690. They include fourteen non-fiscal documents—namely, two legal papers, ten private accounts and two official accounts listing Arab soldiers, their assignments and annual pay.

The remaining twenty-one papyri from the period 674–690 are fiscal documents. They include nine official demand-notes known as *entagia*, standardised documents requiring payment of money and foodstuffs, written in Arabic with a Greek translation below. Two other special demand notes require the provision of guides and porters. The fiscal documents also include eight official tax receipts and local tax accounts. Two unusual documents, finally, are a register listing all adult male payers of poll-tax in Nessana and a letter sent to Nessana from an unidentified nearby town. This letter informs of a planned protest against high taxes, to be made by representatives from all the local towns before the Arab governor in Gaza.

Almost the whole Nessana collection was found in a small room next to the church and monastery of St Sergius. The clerics of St Sergius were among the leading people in Nessana, and they came from a single family, following one another successively from at least 550 until 690 and probably until Nessana ceased to exist at some point during the early eighth century. The papers had been deposited without arrangement in what was likely a church store-room for miscellaneous documents.

It is known that churchmen did not enjoy fiscal exemptions in the Christian Empire and thus paid the ordinary taxes. But the forty-nine late Roman papyri from Nessana include only one fiscal document, which suggests that the

¹ Kraemer, *Excavations*.

churchmen at Nessana during the Late Roman period were not concerned to preserve fiscal papers. This may be explained by a law of the emperor Marcian (r. 450–457) decreeing that a tax-payer who could produce receipts for three consecutive years would be deemed to have paid all previous taxes.² In contrast, the thirty-five papyri from the period 674–690 include twenty-one various fiscal documents, which suggests that churchmen in this later period were concerned to preserve fiscal papers for a much longer period. A similar contrast exists between papyri of the late Roman and Umayyad periods found at Qāw al-Kabīr/Antaeopolis and Ishqūh/Aphrodito in Egypt.

The question arises why tax-payers in early Umayyad Palestine and Egypt took care to preserve fiscal papers such as demand notes and receipts. Most likely, they were obliged to deal with burdensome tax authorities that continually required proof of payment. The fact that the church of St Sergius kept many fiscal papers during the period 674–690 is circumstantial evidence that an exacting fiscal climate existed at Nessana. This suggests that the Umayyad administration not only produced much administrative documentation but also required tax-payers to present and reproduce documentation proving that they had fulfilled their fiscal dues. Evidence of such close administrative scrutiny of tax-payers and tax-payments also exists for Umayyad Egypt.³

The wider question of Late Roman and Umayyad taxation rates in the Near East will not be settled until new material evidence is published, probably from the numerous papyri stored in European libraries. But evidence already published allows the construction of four models of local economies that may have wider significance. Two of the four models represent the economy of Nessana in the mid-sixth century and the late seventh century, and the other two models represent the district of Antaeopolis in Lower Egypt during the same periods. The models include a set of constant factors, given below, and they rest on three basic assumptions.

The first assumption is that Nessana and Antaeopolis throughout the period 550–700 had agrarian economies based on grain production, in which the grain fed cultivators and their dependents, 80–90% of the total population, and the surplus was converted into all other activity through exchange, rents and taxes. The importance of grain production becomes apparent when the agrarian economy is considered over the long term. Grain sustains the human and animal labour required for all productive activity such as growing olives and

² Jones, *The decline*.

³ Sijpesteijn, *The Arab conquest*.

vines, herding cattle, felling timber, mining metals, manufacturing pottery and textiles, building houses and ships, transporting goods, undertaking administrative and domestic services, and raising children. The economic value of all such non-grain production equals the grain consumption required for its realisation (consumption of water and air is not given economic value). This quantity of grain is the surplus remaining after the needs of the grain-producers have been satisfied. Over the longer term, the economy's grain production becomes equivalent to total production. That is, all capital existing at any moment equals the accumulated value of grain produced over previous decades and centuries. Ultimately, the agrarian economy is the actualisation of grain, a concept grasped by Vico in the eighteenth century. He theorised that grain was the only means of exchange and standard of value in the most primitive societies. Gold was later substituted for grain, not because it was deemed to be intrinsically precious but because it best represented grain by its colour of bright yellow.⁴

The second assumption, well supported by archaeological evidence, is that cultivated land area had reached its Late Roman maximum by the early sixth century in Egypt and Palestine. In consequence, grain production and population were also at their peak during this period. But all these factors diminished owing to the plague that first appeared in 541 and returned several times before the Arab conquest. The plague significantly reduced the population of Egypt and Palestine.⁵ If it were as virulent as the medieval Black Death, which it closely resembled according to contemporary accounts, then the population of Egypt and Palestine may have fallen by one-third between 541 and the Arab conquest. However, cultivated land area and grain production in Egypt and Palestine probably fell by a lower proportion. As the economic models show, the agrarian economy is elastic. The same level of grain production can be maintained by a smaller labour-force if each cultivator works longer. The result is a larger grain surplus that may be converted into higher taxes, higher rents, or higher consumption by the cultivators, depending upon the prevailing relationship between the State, landowners and grain-producers. The Roman State and its dominant landowning class rested upon the taxes and rents provided by the cultivators. When the plague reduced the grain-cultivating population by as much as one-third, the State and the landowners were concerned to maintain cultivated land area and grain production as much as possible.⁶ The heavier

4 Vico, *New science* 539–547.

5 Sarris, The Justinianic plague; Sarris, *Procopius* 217–219; Horden, Mediterranean plague.

6 For the effects of the plague on the economy, see Banaji, *Agrarian change*, Banaji, Aristocra-

work-load necessarily placed upon the surviving grain-producers was probably offset by their keeping a larger share of the surplus. In other words, there was an effort to distribute equitably the economic burden imposed upon society by the plague. Hence peasant unrest is not recorded in Egypt and Syria during the period 541–630, and archaeological work reveals that the best quality of stone housing and church mosaics in villages of Roman Syria is datable to the sixth century.⁷

The third assumption is identical to the Malthusian law. In the agrarian economy, the rural cultivators and dependents (80–90% of total population) live slightly above subsistence level. Under normal circumstances, the cultivating population tends neither to decline nor to remain constant, but to increase. As stated above, the elasticity of the agrarian economy permits a reduced population to maintain grain production if each cultivator works longer. Likewise, if the population grows and the amount of grain produced remains the same, then the work-load of each cultivator will diminish. A larger population thus brings each member the benefit of an easier physical existence. Conversely, there is normally little interest for the cultivators in having few children and in working longer with the aim of maximizing grain-production. The conditions of agrarian life are simple and unchanging. Only so much food can be consumed, and the close-knit society discourages the individual display of wealth. Cultivators have little opportunity to invest a larger grain surplus except through land purchase. Unless extracted through higher taxes and rents, a larger surplus is likely to be amortised in church treasures or coin hoards, of which examples dating to the Late Roman and Umayyad periods have been unearthed in Syria.

The agrarian population tends to reach the highest number that can be supported by net product, defined as total grain production minus 1) the amount that must be stored for the next year's seed, and 2) amounts extracted in outward-going rents (i.e. rents to landlords living outside the agrarian zone, in cities or abroad) and in taxes to the State. Rents paid to landlords living inside the agrarian zone are insignificant in Syria because most landlords live in cities. An insignificant quantity of grain is also subtracted from total grain production through spoilage. Outward-going rents and taxes together supply all the needs of the urban population, which constitutes 10–20% of the total population and includes the State apparatus of army and civil service. Most city-dwellers live on

cies and Sarris, The Justinianic plague, Sarris, Rehabilitating the great estate and Sarris, *Economy and society*. For measures taken by the Roman government to compensate for a loss of fiscal revenue due to the plague, see also Ruffini, *Social networks* 146.

7 Foss, Syria in transition 199–202.

small salaries that purchase little more than their needs in food, fuel and rent. Rents and taxes tend to compete with each other for the grain surplus. When one rises or falls, the other is likely to be affected, but in this period rents paid to landowners were relatively inflexible because they were traditionally a fixed proportion of the crop. In Late Roman Palestine and Egypt, the landowning class was numerous and powerful, but it enjoyed little margin for rent increase in the face of State fiscal requirements on the one side and a free sharecropping peasantry on the other. The margin was further reduced in the later sixth century when plague losses threatened to reduce grain production. With the Arab conquest, the class of city-dwelling large landowners was largely eliminated in Palestine and Egypt. Many took flight to the Empire's remaining territory. Many of those who remained served in the administration of the conquerors, but their former rents were now redirected as tax, for the grain surplus was monopolised by the Islamic State.⁸

If rents were fixed in the decades before the Arab conquest and insignificant afterwards, the important variable in the models for both periods is the tax. It may now be asked what happens to the agrarian economy of these models if the tax rises significantly and permanently. Total grain production (total product) remains the same, but the other factors change. The higher tax reduces net product (total product minus seed, rent and tax). In order to remain collectively above subsistence level, the population must fall correspondingly, which means that over the next generation more aged people and infants will die and fewer children will be raised. Higher tax and lower population result in higher tax per capita. But since total product is unchanged, higher tax per capita is offset by a higher share of total product per capita. In the agrarian economy as seen over several decades, the real burden of higher tax does not lie in the payment of more money per tax-payer (though individual tax-payers would often feel the burden as such) but in the fact that the reduced number of cultivators must work more days in order to achieve the same total product. Like the stretching of an elastic band, the tax may continue to rise and the population may continue to fall without affecting total product, up to the point where the cultivators are working at full capacity. This would be 365 days per year in theory, but in practice it would be considerably less in order to allow for sickness, injury and other incapacitating

8 For the position of Egyptian land-owners in post-conquest Egypt, see Sijpesteijn, Landholding patterns. See also Frantz-Murphy, The economics of state and in *CPR XXI* on the significance of the Umayyad condition of maintaining that all conquered land was collectively owned by the Muslim community.

factors. But once the tax rises above a certain maximum and net product correspondingly falls below a certain minimum, then the cultivators will become too few to achieve the total product even when they are working at full capacity. From that point, total product must fall, and the tax must fall with it. In practice, it seems unlikely that the cultivating population could bear the theoretical maximum fiscal burden for long. Around the point of maximum exploitation, the elastic band would snap. Grain production and tax payments would collapse together as cultivators abandon their lands and take flight.

Constant factors for the models are now introduced (Appendix A). Grain production is measured by the Roman *modius*, which has a capacity of 9 litres and holds 6.55 kilograms of grain.⁹ An average person living at subsistence would consume about 40 such grain-units per year, equivalent to just over 260 kilograms of grain.¹⁰ About two-thirds of the grain-units (26–27 units, 175 kilograms) are directly consumed at the rate of half a kilogram per day as bread and other grain-based food. About 6.5–7 units (45 kilograms) are converted through exchange into other foods (oil, dairy-products, honey, fruit, vegetables and wine) in order to reach a daily intake of at least 2,000 calories. The remaining 6.5–7 units (45 kilograms) are converted into fuel (mainly firewood), clothing and miscellaneous items. Food and drink thus account for over four-fifths of annual consumption and other necessities for less than one-fifth.

The gold solidus or *dīnār* was used for paying taxes and salaries. Although its purchasing power in the market varied greatly depending on local circumstances, the solidus had a nominal fixed value of 33 grain-units in the late Roman period and 30 units in the Umayyad period.¹¹ An annual net income of around five solidi would just support a household of four persons, but city-dwellers needed somewhat more in order to meet the cost of rent and higher prices.¹²

Constant factors are also available for the productivity of grain-land. In the ancient world, ordinary grain-land yielded on average between seven-fold and eight-fold, such that twenty units are usually sown per hectare (10,000 m²) to yield 150 units. However, only half of ordinary land is cultivated each year, the other half lying fallow to recuperate. Irrigated Egyptian land, on the other hand,

9 Jones, *The decline* 376.

10 Hopkins, *Taxes and trade*.

11 Jones, *The decline* 179.

12 Jones, *The decline* 290.

normally yields ten-fold and it does not require a fallow period. However, fewer grain-units, usually only twelve units per hectare, are sown to yield 120 units on Egyptian land. One-eighth of the annual yield on ordinary land must be set aside for next year's seed; and one-tenth of the yield on Egyptian land must be set aside.¹³

Finally, constant factors are given for labour. The first-century author Columella states that one hectare of ordinary grain-land requires about 60 man-days for efficient cultivation.¹⁴ In other words, one labour-unit, equivalent to one adult male aged between fourteen and sixty, can cultivate six hectares per year working at theoretical full capacity of 360 days per year. This factor may be taken as roughly true for irrigated Egyptian land also, although its cultivation probably required more than 60 man-days per hectare because of the need to maintain irrigation works. Finally, the labour-units available for grain cultivation are assumed normally to be adult males. With women and children thus excluded, the labour-units would equal about one-third of the total cultivating population. The proportion would increase to one-half if the labour of women and children were added, a woman being counted as half a labour-unit and a child as one-quarter of a unit.

Model I: Antaeopolis ca. 550 (Appendix B)

For Antaeopolis at this time the papyri give key statistics for the total tax of the district and its cultivated area. Of the total tax, 62% is paid in gold *solidi* and 38% in grain-units. With units converted into gold, the total tax comes to 16,500 *solidi*. The cultivated area is 14,000 hectares (140 km²), about 0.5% of all cultivated land in Egypt.¹⁵ Using the factors for productivity and labour, it can be deduced that this area would yield a total product of 1,700,000 grain-units requiring 840,000 man-days for cultivation. The total product is equivalent to 51,000 *solidi* at the standard rate of 33 units per *solidus*. The tax-rate is therefore 32.5%, and another 10% for seed must be deducted from total product.

However, the evidence for Antaeopolis ca. 550 does not indicate how much is deducted from total product by way of outward rents. Supposing at a guess that deduction for rents amounts to another 7.5% of total product, then net product is 50% of total product, 850,000 grain-units. This amount would support 21,000

13 Jones, *The decline* 300; Kraemer, *Excavations* 237–240.

14 Jones, *Census records* 49–64.

15 Jones, *The decline* 179.

people, of whom one-third, 7,000, are adult males engaged in cultivation. From each of these labour-units, 120 days of work per year would be required to meet the necessary 840,000 man-days. Finally, with the population of 21,000 grouped into just over 5,000 households of four persons each, the annual tax paid by each household reaches 3.1 solidi.

The model can be checked by extension to the whole country since we know that the Antaeopolis district covered about 0.5% of Egyptian cultivated land. The result would be an Egyptian population of 4.2 million people excluding Alexandria, which probably had a population of 300,000 at that time. The total of 4.5 million people lies within the accepted range for Egypt in the Late Roman period, but it might be somewhat high considering that the model reflects the agrarian economy not long after the outbreak of the plague in 541.¹⁶ The deduction of 7.5% for rent is probably too low. If rent deductions are raised to 16%, equal to half of the tax, then net product falls from 50% to 42%, yielding 714,000 grain-units supporting 18,000 people. Labour-units work 140 days per year, and tax per household rises to 3.7 solidi. The population of Egypt would then reach 3.9 million including Alexandria. Lying in the middle of the accepted range, this figure seems quite plausible.

Model 11: Nessana ca. 550 (Appendix c)

The second model represents Nessana in the same period of the mid-sixth century, probably some time after the first outbreak of plague in 541. There are two pieces of papyri evidence for this period.¹⁷ Papyrus no. 82, a list of grain yields, confirms that Nessana's ordinary grain-land yields sevenfold to eightfold, a remarkable achievement for such an arid region. Papyrus no. 39 gives Nessana's tax in gold at that time as just over 1400 solidi. We now make the assumption that Nessana paid taxes in gold and grain in roughly the same proportion as was paid by Antaeopolis during the same period, namely 62:38. In that case, the total tax paid by Nessana is equivalent to 2,250 solidi. There is no certainty here, but we know that Late Roman taxes were levied in gold and in kind, and we can assume that during this period of plentiful gold coinage, the proportion of the tax paid in gold was normally higher than the proportion paid in grain. Therefore, the Antaeopolis ratio of 62:38 seems a reasonable standard to apply elsewhere.

16 Allen, Justinian plague 5–20.

17 Kraemer, *Excavations* 119–125, 237–240.

In the model for Antaeopolis, net product was at first taken to be 50% of total product after deductions of 32.5% in tax, 10% in seed and 7.5% in rent. Alternatively, rent was increased to 16%, which reduced net product to 42%. The second alternative gave a population figure that seemed more likely when extrapolated for all Egypt ca. 550. Let us follow the same procedure for Nessana ca. 550, assuming at first that rent is 7.5% of total product and that net product is 50%. In the case of Nessana's ordinary grain-land, seed deductions are 12.5% instead of 10% as at Antaeopolis, so the tax rate should be reduced from 32.5% to 30% in order to keep net product at 50%. The other factors are calculated as follows. Total product is 248,000 grain-units, equivalent to 7,530 solidi. Total cultivated area is 3,100 hectares, of which only half is cultivated each year. The population is 3,100, with 100 days of labour required from each cultivator, and the tax per head of household is 2.9 solidi. As a check, the estimate of 3,100 people gives a density of 260 persons per hectare in the town's built-up area of 12 hectares. This seems high compared to the widely accepted yardstick of 200 persons per hectare for ancient Near Eastern settlements.¹⁸

Supposing now that rent in this model is 16% of total product, then net product falls to 42%, which would yield 104,000 grain-units supporting 2,600 people. Labour-units would work 115 days per year and tax per household would rise to 3.5 solidi. Population density would fall to 190 persons per hectare, which seems more likely for a straggling, unwalled settlement such as Nessana.

Model III: Antaeopolis ca. 700 (Appendix D)

The third model represents Antaeopolis at the start of the eighth century. There is no fiscal information for this period from Antaeopolis itself, but Umayyad-period fiscal papyri have been found at the site of Aphrodito, a district lying adjacent to Antaeopolis in the same part of Upper Egypt. Analysis of this documentation shows that the Umayyad tax was paid like the Roman tax, in both gold and foodstuffs. But the single Roman tax in gold was now divided into two separate taxes known in the Aphrodito papyri as *diagraphon* and *demōsia*. *Diagraphon* was assessed on land and payable by all landowners, whereas *demōsia* was assessed on all adult males. In most cases, however, landowners were adult males, the main exception being widows who had inherited their deceased husbands' estates. Likewise, each adult male was usually a household head. In

18 Zorn, Estimating the population 31–48.

practice, then, the same people usually paid both *diagraphon* and *demōsia*, and relatively few paid only one of these taxes.

The best piece of fiscal evidence from Aphrodito is *P.Lond.* IV 1420, a document listing tax payments in the village of Pente Padiades (Five Fields) for the year 705. The village contained 95 adult males whose *demōsia* averaged 2.4 solidi each. The total *diagraphon* paid by the village in 705 is also listed, and if we assume that this tax was paid by 95 people, then each paid on average 2.3 solidi. In addition, *P.Lond.* IV 1420 records that the village made regular payments of grain and oil during the same year. The grain is calculated in Roman modii (*mudd*) and the oil in sextarii (*qist*), one sextarius being equal in value to one modius. Converting these foodstuffs into gold-equivalent at the rate of 30 grain-units per Umayyad solidus, and then dividing the result by the known number of adult males in the village, we find that each tax-payer paid on average the equivalent of 2.1 solidi in foodstuffs. The combined total tax per household for the village of Five Fields in the Aphrodito district in the year 705 can thus be estimated at 6.8 Umayyad solidi.¹⁹

It is assumed that this total figure can be applied to Antaeopolis. But we make the prior assumption that rent payments to city-dwelling landlords in Umayyad Egypt ca. 700 are negligible, not more than 0.5% of total product compared to 16% in late Roman Egypt ca. 550, because the Umayyad State is now acquiring the great bulk of the grain surplus. When applied to Antaeopolis, the total tax per household of 6.8 solidi yields the following results: total product for Antaeopolis is the same as it had been ca. 550, but the tax-rate rises from 32.5% to 50%; net product falls from 42% to 39.5%, population falls from 18,000 to 16,800 and each labour-unit now works 150 days per year. The burden on the agrarian economy is heavier than in the model for Antaeopolis ca. 550 but the economy remains viable.

Model IV: Nessana ca. 685–690 (Theoretical Maximum Exploitation, Appendix E)

The last model represents Nessana in the 680s. The Nessana papyri show three main pieces of fiscal evidence for this decade. First, various amounts are recorded as payments for *epikephaliōn* (equivalent to *diagraphon*, the tax paid by adult males) and *demōsia* (the tax paid by landowners). Papyrus 59

19 Simonsen, *Studies in the genesis* 90–92, 116, 124; Dennett, *Conversion* 86; Bell, *Administration* 278–286.

records that for one year a person paid twelve solidi, six as *epikephaliōn* and six as *demōsia*. Papyrus 55 records that a churchman paid another person's annual *demōsia* of 4.33 solidi. Papyrus 58 records that the priest Sergius paid tax (probably *demōsia* for a single year) of 37.5 solidi for land assigned to him by the Arab governor.²⁰

The fragmentary papyrus 77 gives twenty-two other payments from individuals, varying from 0.5 to 23 solidi and averaging 7.5 solidi each. The payments were all classified as *epikephaliōn* and *demōsia*. It is impossible to specify them individually, but the larger payments (23, 21, 20, 20 and 15 solidi) probably represent *epikephaliōn* or *demōsia* payments in arrears for one year. It seems unlikely that arrears for several consecutive years would be recorded as a lump sum. The smaller amounts (0.5, 1, 1.5, 3.75 solidi) might also represent payments in arrears for one year. More likely, though, they represent instalments of arrears payable three or four times a year.²¹

The second piece of evidence is papyrus no. 69, which gives all grain and oil payments paid by Nessana during the period September 680–September 681. These payments are called *rouzikon* (*rizq*), and they total 87 solidi. The last, crucial piece of evidence is papyrus no. 76, dated 689, which gives a list of adult males liable for the *epikephaliōn* tax. The list is alphabetical and records only names, not amounts. The papyrus is incomplete, but its original size can be known and the number of missing names estimated. The list should have held about 180 names in total.²²

Each piece of evidence is significant. First, the *rouzikon* of 87 solidi per year for Nessana as a whole is too small to have been a regular tax. Since the Nessana papyri give no other record of payments in kind, it seems likely that the Umayyad authorities in Palestine during the 680s no longer levied tax in gold and grain on the Roman model. They were now levying the tax in gold, divided about equally between *demōsia* and *epikephaliōn*. The *rouzikon* then was only a small extra payment made to local Arab soldiers who, as shown by papyrus 92, were already receiving annual salaries of about ten solidi each.²³ This conclusion would invalidate the theory, based in part on a misinterpretation of the *rouzikon* demand-notes from Nessana, which argues that the Arab administration in the conquered territories operated at first on a decentralised and ad hoc basis and only became properly organised towards

20 Kraemer, *Excavations* 153–155, 168–171, 172–174.

21 Kraemer, *Excavations* 222–225.

22 Kraemer, *Excavations* 199–201.

23 Kraemer, *Excavations* 290–296.

the end of the seventh century. This view corresponds well, however, with the situation in Egypt.²⁴

Secondly, the amounts paid in *demōsia* and *epikephaliōn* seem much higher on average than the equivalent amounts paid at Aphrodito a little later. This is certainly true for amounts known to have been single annual payments (4.3 solidi, 6 solidi, 37.5 solidi). It is probably also true for the 22 indeterminate payments given in papyrus 77, which average 7.5 solidi each. In contrast, the average *demōsia* payment at Aphrodito in 705 was only 2.3 solidi and the average *diagraphon* payment 2.4 solidi. It is theoretically possible that the recorded payments at Nessana represent payments by richer tax-payers only, but it seems more reasonable to suppose that the taxes paid by household heads were higher than at Aphrodito.

Finally, the population of Nessana in the 680s seems to have been much smaller than it was in the mid-sixth century. Considering that poll-tax was levied on all adult males from 14–65 years, the total of 180 persons liable to poll-tax listed in papyrus 76 would indicate a total population of only about 800 in the 680s compared to about 2,600 in ca. 550 as deduced in Model II.²⁵

The papyri evidence for Nessana in the 680s thus points to a combination of high taxes per head and low overall population. As explained above, this combination is typical of the grain-based economy as it nears the point of maximum exploitation. Therefore, using the baseline figures in Model II, it may be revealing to describe Nessana's economy at its theoretical -point of maximum exploitation and then compare the results with the papyri evidence for the 680s. The same assumption is made here as for Antaeopolis in 705 (Model III), that outgoing rent payments to large private landlords are negligible, not more than 0.5% of total product because the Umayyad State has monopolised the grain surplus.

Under conditions of maximum exploitation at Nessana, total product would remain as before at 248,000 grain-units, equivalent to 8,270 Umayyad solidi, and the required number of man-days remains at 93,000. The tax-rate under these conditions must be 74%, so that after further deductions of 12.5% for seed and 0.5% for rent, net product is only 13%, equivalent to just over 30,000 grain-units. This amount would support a population of 800, and 350 days of

24 Petra Sijpesteijn argued that a similar centrally organised financial administration of the Arab administration was already in place in Egypt directly following the conquest (The Arab conquest). See also Clive Foss's discussion of the Greek papyri from Edfu which show a well-organised Arab administration at the time of Mu'āwiya (Foss, Egypt under Mu'āwiya. Part I and II).

25 Kraemer, *Excavations* 31.

labour, about the maximum possible number, would be required annually per cultivator. The total tax per household is 30.5 Umayyad solidi.

This model of Nessana's economy under theoretical conditions of maximum exploitation corresponds with the available papyri evidence, and the evidence can be interpreted by the model. In particular, there is a strong correspondence between a total population of 800 under theoretical conditions and the total of 180 adult male tax-payers found in papyrus 76. There is also a weaker yet still significant correspondence between the high household tax paid under theoretical conditions and the evidence of taxes actually paid at Nessana during the 680s. The theoretical total tax of 30.5 solidi per household divided equally between *demōsia* and *epikephaliōn* would give 15 solidi for each tax. Only four annual tax payments at Nessana are specified as either *demōsia* or *epikephaliōn*, and they are recorded as 4.3, 6, 6 and 37.5 solidi. The average of these four payments is close to 15 solidi, but the payment of 37.5 solidi was levied on land transferred to the priest Sergius from an Arab clan and could therefore have been an unusually large payment.²⁶ However, the twenty-two payments in papyrus 77 average 7.5 solidi each. If these were mostly instalments on arrears (and the document probably is a register of tax arrears), then the twenty-two payments may offer evidence for annual *demōsia* and *epikephaliōn* taxes of 15 solidi each per household. Indeed, taxes of that size would likely have been paid in instalments rather than all at once. The indeterminate nature of these twenty-two payments makes them inconclusive as evidence. But at any rate, it can be stated firmly that the average of all payments recorded at Nessana in the 680s is 8.4 solidi, which is about two and a half times as high as the average tax paid at Aphrodito in 705. To recall, the recorded average taxes at Aphrodito were 2.3 solidi *demōsia*, 2.4 solidi *diagraphon*, and 2.1 solidi foodstuffs, making a total tax of 6.8 solidi per household. But for purposes of comparison, the 2.1 solidi for foodstuffs paid at Aphrodito should be allocated equally between the two money taxes in order to reflect the absence of important taxes in foodstuffs at Nessana. Thus each annual money tax at Aphrodito came to 3.4 solidi on average, compared with an average recorded payment at Nessana of 8.4 solidi.

The picture outlined by the statistics and models is coloured by two other fiscal items from the Nessana papyri. Papyrus 75, the letter organizing a tax protest, is without counterpart in the body of papyri from the Late Roman and early Islamic periods. It is undated but certainly contemporary with the other fiscal papers from the 680s. The writer is from an unknown town in the district. He

26 Kraemer, *Excavations* 170.

has addressed his letter to someone in another unknown town, who forwarded it finally to Nessana:

We wish to inform your Noble Magnificence, Beloved of God, that we have received a letter from His Magnificence, Lord Samuel. He personally invites both you and us at the same time to appeal to our most esteemed Governor to grant us relief, for they have caused us both serious distress and we cannot bear the burden of such taxation (*panu gar ebaresan hēmas kai humas kai ou dunōmetha bastaze tō toiouto phortion*). Note therefore, that tomorrow, Monday, we shall be in Gaza. There are twenty of us. Will you too please come immediately so that we may all be of one mind and one accord? After you have read the present letter, send it to Nessana. We have written to Sobata. Good luck and good health to you!²⁷

According to the analysis of the editor, C.J. Kraemer, at least four towns are involved in the protest—the writer’s and the recipient’s towns, plus Sobata and Nessana. The twenty people mentioned do not come from any of the last three towns, but probably only from the writer’s town. Samuel himself, the originator of the protest, probably raised more people from elsewhere. Therefore, the protest could have easily have involved up to a hundred people. Kraemer implicitly admits but does not emphasise the “serious distress” revealed by this letter. In fact, he interprets the document

not merely as evidence of burdensome taxation but of the machinery which had been devised to protect the tax-payer [...] This delegation knows the force of concerted protest, and the availability of the *symbolos* (the Arab governor) for an interview has a parallel from Egypt: in a letter written in 710 (*P.Lond.* IV 1356), the governor Qurra ibn Sharīk reprimands his subordinate Basileios for not paying sufficient attention to the complaints of his people.²⁸

Yet Papyrus 75 does not give the impression that the Arab governor is normally available to hear complaints from tax-payers. Nor, supposing that he were available on this occasion, does Papyrus 75 suggest that he is likely to

27 Kraemer, *Excavations* 212–214. See also the discussion of this text and its context of redress of public complaints in El-Abbadi’s paper in this volume.

28 Kraemer, *Excavations* 212–213.

reduce the taxes significantly. The document indicates that the protesters are taking an unusual course of action, one that may have had no precedent and whose outcome could only be guessed. The only clear conclusion to be drawn from Papyrus 75 is that the tax was so high as to prompt a widespread protest by representatives of the conquered Christian population of southern Palestine. This evidence and the statistics in Model IV corroborate each other, reinforcing the impression that the tax levied in Palestine in the 680s was very high. In that case, it would be reasonable to interpret the phrase 'we cannot bear the burden of such taxation' as a plain statement that the local agrarian economy had reached the point of maximum exploitation theorised in Model IV.

The last piece of fiscal evidence from the Nessana papyri is a letter in Arabic on the verso of Papyrus 77, the register of twenty-two indeterminate payments datable 685–690. The letter must therefore have been written in the same period or soon afterwards. Kraemer did not publish this letter along with the other eighty-four documents that he edited. He only refers to it briefly in his commentary to Papyrus 56, dated January 687, a curious Arabic-Greek document worthy of mention in itself.²⁹ The fragmentary Arabic part is witnessed by four Arabs, and the Greek section, full of errors, is written by the archdeacon Father George and witnessed by his superior, the priest Sergius. The document states that an Arab named al-Aswad ibn 'Adī has received fifty *solidi* from Father Cyrin in exchange for releasing Father Cyrin's son, and that from this amount al-Aswad returns twenty *solidi* to Father Cyrin "for the sake of God" (*ṣadaqa 'alayhi bi-'ishrīn dīnār/nomismata eikosi echarisato alasouad to abba kurin*). Al-Aswad also promises that both father and son can go where they want, al-Aswad has no authority over the father, and neither he nor his heirs have any claim over the son. It seems that the father is in effect paying thirty *dīnārs* to redeem his son from a period of forced labour or outright slavery, al-Aswad having returned part of the original redemption as an act of liberality. Yet Kraemer relies on the interpretation of previous scholars, that al-Aswad had originally advanced fifty *dīnārs* to Father Cyrin for the indentured employment of his son. The indenture is now over and al-Aswad receives the money, but he gives back twenty *dīnārs* to Father Cyrin in lieu of salary. But if this is the correct interpretation, the wording of the document is very misleading.

In any case, the first of the four Arab witnesses to this document is Yazīd ibn Fā'id, and here Kraemer notes that this name also appears in the Arabic

29 Kraemer, *Excavations* 15660.

verso of Papyrus 77: “There Yazīd ibn Fā’id receives a letter from a superior official, Nabr ibn Qays, rebuking him in very strong terms for injustice and oppression to the people of Nastān [Nessana], for he [Nabr ibn Qays] remarks, ‘the people of Nastān are under the protection of God.’” Kraemer thinks that Yazīd was probably the *qāḍī* or judge of Nastan because “dealing with contracts was one of the duties of the *qāḍī*.”³⁰ If so, that would indicate that by the 680s Nessana had a significant Arab-Muslim population. But Nabr ibn Qays’ remark that “the people of Nastān are under the protection of God” (*dhimmat allāh*) suggests instead that Nessana remained an entirely Christian town in the late 680s. In that case, al-Aswad and other Arabs mentioned in Papyrus 56 were not inhabitants of Nessana itself but probably belonged to tribal groups now settling in the vicinity, the same who supplied the soldiers listed in Papyrus 92. The *qāḍī*’s authority was restricted to the Muslim community, so if Yazīd ibn Fā’id was oppressing the Christian population of Nessana, it is more likely that his function in relation to them was fiscal. He was probably the fiscal administrator (*āmil*) of the local district (*iqlīm*) of Elusa.

But according to Kraemer’s brief summary, the main point of this unpublished letter was Yazīd’s fiscal oppression of Nessana, which establishes a clear connection with the contemporary Papyrus 75, the tax protest letter. We thus have two pieces of documentary evidence indicating that Nessana’s agrarian economy at that time was heavily strained. Indeed, it seems that the economy was now exploited beyond its limit because the town of Nessana likely ceased to exist soon after 700. Apart from the papyri, other early Islamic evidence from the town is limited to a little pottery and glass classified as Umayyad and ten undated bronze coins.³¹ The pottery and glass probably predate 700, for the glazed ceramic wares classified as Abbasid became widespread in the later Umayyad decades after 700. On the other hand, the coins are of the aniconic type not minted before 696–697. But coins are easily deposited in transit, and without accompanying evidence these examples do not confirm that Nessana was permanently occupied after 700. Much more significant is the abrupt termination of the papyrological evidence. The list of poll-tax payers, written in 689, marks the end of the extant tradition going back to 505.

Papyri 55, 58, 59, 76 and 77 altogether corroborate the maximum-exploitation model theorised in Model IV. And Papyrus 75, the tax protest letter, shows that in the 680s fiscal oppression was common to the whole province (*kūra*) of

30 Kraemer, *Excavations* 159. This text is being prepared for publication by Robert Hoyland.

31 Kraemer, *Excavations* 30.

southern Palestine governed by the Arab *symboulos* at Gaza. On the other hand, the verso of Papyrus 77 shows Nabr ibn Qays, a higher official and probably the *symboulos* himself, reprimanding a subordinate Arab official for oppressing the people of Nessana. The question arises whether the fiscal oppression was mainly caused by the private depredations of local district officials such as Yazīd ibn Fā'id, or whether it derived mainly from the general fiscal policy administered by Gaza and ultimately decided by the central government in Damascus. The latter alternative seems more likely, for the wording of the tax protest letter gives the impression that the central authorities are directly responsible for the heavy taxation. It gives no hint of corrupt local tax-officials. Also, it is notable that Arab-Muslim tax-collectors are attested only in the *entagia* or demand-notes for foodstuffs, which raised small sums by comparison with the two main taxes. A typical example of an *entagion* from Nessana reads:

Al-Ḥārith ibn 'Ad (the local district official or *'āmil* based at Elusa) to the people of Nestana, district (*iqḷm*) of Elusa, province (*kūra*) of Gaza: pay quickly to 'Adī ibn Khālīd of the Banī Sa'd ibn Mālik for the five months Dhū al-Qa'da, Muḥarram, Ṣafar and the two Rabī's, seventy *modii* of wheat and seventy *sextarii* of oil.³²

But the *demōsia* and *epikephaliōn* amounts recorded in Papyri 55 and 59 were paid to John and Victor, tax-collectors who had come to Nessana from Gaza, and the documents were dated by the calendar of Gaza. The evidence indicates that the main taxes were set and raised by the central authorities using their own Christian officials.

It remains to consider what factors lay behind an official policy to impose taxation so high as to threaten the Palestinian agrarian economy. Such a policy was not generalised in the Umayyad State, for the case of Aphrodito in 705 (Model III) indicates a high yet sustainable level of taxation. Generalisation of the policy evidenced at Nessana would have rapidly destroyed the agrarian economy upon which the State rested. Yet this destruction is what seems to have happened in large areas of Palestine and Syria during the late seventh and eighth centuries, according to the evidence of site occupation in four areas covered by archaeological survey:³³

³² Kraemer, *Excavations* 183.

³³ Compiled from reports in MacAdam, *Settlements* 80–82; Dauphin, *Jewish* 132.

Survey area and date	Number of sites	
	Late	Early
	Roman	Islamic
‘Araq al-Amir (near Amman, 1980s)	83	30 (all Umayyad)
Tell Hisbān (near Amman, 1968–1976)	133	33 (29 Umayyad, 4 Abbasid)
Tell al-‘Umayrī (Madaba Plains, 1987)	21	1 (Umayyad)
Golan (1972)	90	13 (undistinguished)

In these four survey areas, the extent of site abandonment in the Umayyad period ranges from 70–95%. Other surveyed areas include the Limestone Plateau, the plateaux east and north-east of Hama, the southern Hawran, the Negev and the ‘Araba and Wādī al-Hasā valleys in southern Jordan. These areas likewise show a large drop in the number of sites occupied during the early Islamic period.³⁴

The difficulty of dating ceramic styles to within a period of less than fifty years means that, relying on material evidence alone, we can be certain only that the agrarian economy in Palestine and Syria was substantially reduced during the period 640–800. Yet it seems likely that this decline was marked by three important stages: the Arab conquest, the late seventh and early eighth centuries, and the collapse of Umayyad rule in 750.

The second stage is of particular interest in the case of Nessana. Several possible factors are connected with the super-taxation of the agrarian economy in Palestine and Syria from the end of Mu‘āwiya’s caliphate in 680 if not earlier. Except during the period of civil war from 684–692, the early Umayyad State was undertaking a relentless attack against the Byzantine Empire. The campaigns included especially the naval and military expeditions against Constantinople in 654, 674–678 and 716–717, but also the annual invasions of Asia

34 Finkelstein and Perevolotsky, *Processes of sedentarization* 80, for the northern Negev (there is separate evidence of new settlements, probably of Arab nomads, in the southern Negev during the Umayyad period: Haiman, *Agriculture and nomad-state* 30–46; Avni, *Early mosques* 91–93.) See Schick, *The settlement* 135 for the surveys in southern Jordan, and Foss, *Syria in transition* 233 for surveys in the regions east and north-east of Hama, where ‘no identified remains or inscriptions of either the Umayyad or Abbasid periods have been reported ...’ For a slightly different view on the pattern of flourishing and decline in this period in this area, see Walmsley, *The village ascendant and Walmsley, Early Islamic Syria*.

Minor, the conquest of Byzantine North Africa during the 690s and the conquest of most of Spain in the years 711–718. All these efforts were undertaken largely by Syrian Arab forces, and their expense was borne disproportionately by the conquered population of Syria and Palestine, the only such group that was directly administered by the Umayyad State. Domestic factors also tended towards heavy taxation during this period in Syria and Palestine. From his accession in 685 to 692, the caliph 'Abd al-Malik (r. 685–705) fought the second Arab civil war against opponents based in Iraq and Arabia. He and his successor al-Walīd (r. 705–715) supervised a building program that included the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, roads and post-houses in Palestine, and a dozen or so palace complexes in Transjordan. Finally, Christians in western Syria were involved in a long revolt against the Umayyad State that began with the destruction of the Arab expedition against Constantinople in 678 and lasted until the mid-690s. Known as the Mardaite revolt from the account given by Theophanes, this uprising permitted the establishment of a short-lived Christian state in the coastal mountain ranges of Amanus and Lebanon. The revolt was supported by the Byzantine Empire, which apparently profited from it by the temporary recapture of Antioch in 686.

The fiscal evidence from Nessana during the 680s thus reflects a time of great disturbance in Palestine and Syria, a time of civil war among the Arab conquerors and revolt among the conquered population. In the midst of this confusion, in 686–687, Theophanes records, 'there was a famine in Syria and many men migrated to the Roman country'.³⁵ All this provides the background for an unusually heavy tax regime that submerged the agrarian economy it exploited. To repeat, this tax regime was not generalised in the early Islamic State, nor could it be if the State were to survive. Nevertheless, periods of fiscal oppression accompanied by revolts and social disturbances recur in different regions during the course of early Islamic history. Well-recorded examples come from Egypt during the last three decades of Umayyad rule and especially from Upper Mesopotamia during the period 750–775, a time of troubles described in eyewitness detail in a long passage of the Zuqnin Chronicle.³⁶ Claude Cahen's standard discussion of this passage in a 1950s article is generally misleading, focusing much more on the element of urban-rural and class conflict than on the more fundamental factor of fiscal oppression.³⁷ It would be a useful task to

35 Theophanes, *The chronicle* 507.

36 Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré.

37 Cahen, *Fiscalité*.

combine the documentary fiscal evidence from Nessana with the literary detail from the Zuqnin Chronicle in order to gain insight into this recurrent aspect of early Islamic history.

Appendices

A *Constant Factors Used for Economic Models*

Unit of grain is the Roman modius (9 litres), holding 6.55 kilograms of grain

Average consumption per person is 40 grain-units per year (260 kilograms grain-equivalent)

33 grain-units equals one Roman solidus at the standard fiscal rate
30 grain-units equals one Umayyad solidus at the standard fiscal rate

On ordinary grain-land, 20 grain-units sown per hectare yield sevenfold or eightfold (150 units) every other year.

On irrigated Egyptian land, 12 units sown per hectare yield tenfold (120 units) every year.

Cultivation of one hectare requires 60 man-days.

One adult male cultivates 6 hectares at full capacity (360 days per year).

Ordinary grain-land and irrigated land are assumed to require a similar amount of labour.

Grain cultivation is normally undertaken by adult males only.

One adult male equals one labour-unit.

One adult female equals one half labour-unit.

One child equals one-quarter labour-unit.

Cultivating labour-units (adult males only) equal one-third of total population.

B *Model 1: Antaeopolis ca. 550*

Papyri Evidence

Cultivated area 14,000 hectares (ha)

Tax 16,500 solidi of which 62% in gold, 38% in grain

Deductions

Total product in grain	1,700,000 units	$(14,000 \times 120)$
Total product in gold	51,000 solidi	$(1,700,000 \div 33)$
Man-days required	840,000	$(14,000 \times 60)$
Tax-rate	32.5 %	$([16,500 \div 51,000] \times 100)$

Assuming 7.5 % total product in rent, then

Net product	50 %	$(100 \% - 32.5 \% - 10 \% - 7.5 \%)$
Net product in grain	850,000 units	$(1,700,000 \times 50 \%)$
Total population	21,000	$([1,700,000 \times 50 \%] \div 40)$
Labour-units	7,000	$(21,000 \times 33 \%)$
Days per labour-unit	120	$(840,000 \div 7,000)$
Tax per household	3.1 solidi	$(16,500 \div [21,000 \div 4])$

Check

Total population of Egypt	4.5 million	$(21,000 \times 0.5 \% + 300,000 \text{ Alexandria})$
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Assuming 16 % total product in rent, then

Net product	42 %	$(100 \% - 32.5 \% - 10 \% - 16 \%)$
Net product in grain	714,000 units	$(1,700,000 \times 42 \%)$
Total population	18,000	$([1,700,000 \times 42 \%] \div 40)$
Labour-units	6,000	$(18,000 \times 33 \%)$
Days per labour-unit	140	$(840,000 \div 6,000)$
Tax per household	3.7 solidi	$(16,500 \div [18,000 \div 4])$

Check

Total population of Egypt	3.9 million	$(18,000 \times 0.5 \% + 300,000 \text{ Alexandria})$
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c *Model 11: Nessana ca. 550*

Papyri Evidence

Tax in gold	1,400 solidi
Grain-yield	Sevenfold to eightfold

Assuming Tax at the proportion 62 % gold, 38 % grain
 Rent at 7.5 % total product
 Net product at 50 % total product, then

Total tax	2,260 solidi	$(1,400 + [(1,400 \div 62] \times 38))$
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Tax-rate	30%	(100-50-12.5 seed-7.5 rent)
Total product in gold	7,530 solidi	(2,260+[[2,260 ÷ 30]×70])
Total product in grain	248,000 units	(7,530×33)
Cultivated area	1,650 ha per year	(248,000 ÷ 150)
	3,310 ha total	(1,650×2)
Man-days required	100,000	(1,650×60)
Net product in grain	124,000 units	(248,000×50%)
Total population	3,100	(124,000 ÷ 40)
Labour-units	1,030	(3,100×33%)
Days per labour-unit	100	(100,000 ÷ 1,030)
Tax per household	2.9 solidi	(2,260 ÷ [3,100 ÷ 4])

Check

Population density	260 persons/ha	(3,100 ÷ 12ha built-up area)
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Assuming 16% total product in rent and 42% net product, then other factors are unchanged except

Net product in units	104,000 units	(248,000×42%)
Total population	2,600	(104,000 ÷ 40)
Labour-units	870	(2,600×33%)
Days per labour unit	115	(100,000 ÷ 870)
Tax per household	3.5 solidi	(2,260 ÷ [2,600 ÷ 4])

Check

Population density	190 persons/ha	(2,260 ÷ 12ha built-up area)
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D Model III: Antaeopolis ca. 700

Papyri Evidence

(Aphrodito *P.Lond.* IV 1420, village of Pente Pediades, 95 adult males in the year 705)

Average <i>diagraphon</i>	2.4 Umayyad solidi
Average <i>demōsia</i>	2.3 Umayyad solidi
Average foodstuffs	2.1 Umayyad solidi
	equivalent
Total	6.8 Umayyad solidi

Assuming	0.5% rent, then
Tax per household	6.8 Umayyad solidi (2.4+2.3+2.1)

Total product in grain	1,700,000 units	(as Model I)
Total product in gold	56,670 Umayyad solidi	$(1,700,000 \div 30)$
Cultivated area	14,000 ha	(as Model I)
Man-days required	840,000	(as Model I)
Deduction for seed	10 %	(as Model I)
Tax-rate	50 %	(trial and error)
Total tax in gold	28,335 Umayyad solidi	$(56,670 \times 50 \%)$
Net product	39.5 %	$(100 - 50 - 10 - 0.5)$
Net product in grain	672,000 units	$(1,700,000 \times 39.5 \%)$
Total population	16,800	$(672,000 \div 40)$
Labour-units	5,600	$(16,800 \times 33 \%)$
Days per labour-units	150	$(840,000 \div 5,600)$

Check

Tax per household	6.75 Umayyad solidi	$(28,335 \div [16,800 \div 4])$
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E *Model IV: Nessana ca. 685–690 (Theoretical Maximum Exploitation)*

Papyri Evidence

Annual payment of <i>epikephaliōn</i>	6 solidi
Annual payments of <i>demōsia</i>	4.3 solidi, 6 solidi, 37.5 solidi
22 indeterminate payments	0.5–23 solidi, averaging 7.5 solidi
List of grain and oil payments for one year	Total 87 solidi
List of poll-tax payers	Total about 180 persons

Assuming	0.5 % rent, then	
Total product in grain	248,000 units	(as Model II)
Total product in gold	8,270 Umayyad solidi	$(248,000 \div 30)$
Cultivated area	3,100 ha	(as Model II)
Man-days required	93,000	(as Model II)
Tax-rate	74 %	(trial and error)
Total tax in grain	183,500 units	$(248,000 \times 74 \%)$
Total tax in gold	6120 Umayyad solidi	$(183,500 \div 30)$
Net product	13 %	$(100 - 74 - 12.5 - 0.5)$
Net product in grain	32,250 units	$(248,000 \times 13 \%)$
Total population	800	$(32,250 \div 40)$
Labour-units	265	$(800 \times 33 \%)$
Days per labour-unit	350	$(93,000 \div 265)$
Tax per household	30.5 Umayyad solidi	$([6,120 \div [800 \div 4])$

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Commerce & Travel



Travel in Coptic Documentary Texts

Anna Selander

Introduction

This article seeks to provide a brief overview of the evidence for travel in Coptic documentary texts in late antique and early Islamic Egypt.¹ To be able to form a representative source base for research on travelling it was necessary to read across all the published material, which amounted to over 7,800 texts.² Of the 486 texts that I was able to collect from the sources that contain information about different aspects of travel, the earliest date is from the fourth century C.E., the latest from the ninth century.³ As is usual with the surviving Coptic material, most documents belong to the seventh and eighth centuries C.E. From the beginning it was clear that letters would be the best source to find out about the journeys people made. In fact, without these letters we would not—to a very significant degree—know that these journeys had been undertaken at all. Various reasons existed why one would mention a journey in a letter, including letting the addressee know that someone was on his or her way, or bidding the addressee pray for the traveler, etc. Often the addressee was asked to come or to send somebody. Problems encountered en route were also reported in letters, and in quite a number of them the writer announces that he has to cancel the planned journey.

In all, 88% of the data was drawn from letters, and the rest from other kinds of documents. The relative lack of documents dealing with journeys is due to the loss of relevant material (shipping contracts, etc.). What does

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- 1 This article is based upon my master's thesis: *Reisetätigkeit nach den koptischen dokumentarischen Texten*, University of Vienna, 2006.
 - 2 Since October 2005 there exists an online database of Coptic documentary texts, from which this estimate has been drawn (currently the number of documents is given to be more than 8,000). See <http://dev.ulb.ac.be/philo/bad/copte/base.php?page=rechercher.php> (25-08-2014).
 - 3 Taken into account were all texts about private journeys written in Coptic. Since the range of dates runs to the ninth century, a few texts are included which are written in Coptic presumably by Muslims and/or people with Arabic names. E.g. *CPR* II 228 (8th century) where a certain Jazīd writes to someone called Abū 'Alī.

survive tends to deal principally—and this is the case with most of them—with some other subject. Sometimes, however, we can learn from the signatures of witnesses why a particular person signed the document including the reasons for making a journey.⁴ In the case of letters, certain information that can tell us about travelling has not been transmitted or has been lost altogether. This includes, in particular, the address. Place names for the addressee are also rarely mentioned in the body of the text since this was information both the addressee and recipient would have known anyway. The duration of a journey is also hardly ever given. Similarly, the mode of transport is seldom thought worthy of mention. Nevertheless, even if some details are missing, these texts offer a broad view across time of the nature of—and changes in—the experience of the Coptic-speaking part of Egypt's population as seen through their access to resources and freedom of movement.

The most common motives for travel in this period were, not surprisingly, trade and the dispatch of goods. However, I have excluded texts that treat mainly these subjects from the text corpus and have concentrated instead on private journeys, since these bring us closer to the personal priorities, motivations and day-to-day experience of Copts at this time. Also, we find a mass of texts among the Coptic documentary material, mainly letters, which deal with the transportation of goods, mostly requests for goods to be sent. But these texts hardly ever tell us anything about travel routes taken or the distances covered, so they have been excluded because of their low informational value. The large quantity of these (mostly short) texts, which number some thousand, was another reason for their exclusion. Of course, there are also texts in which a person travels and takes a small amount of goods with him. In these cases the text was taken into account because it documented the journey of a specific person, and therefore does not have the impersonality that one dealing with an unidentified messenger would have.⁵ For Coptic documentary texts dealing with trade and the dispatch of goods, a separate study is necessary, which would illustrate the economic aspects of trade in Egypt.

Besides the strictly private motivations for travel (journeys made on one's own initiative), I have also taken into account texts that document trips by agents on behalf of officials, clerics, estate owners or other employers.

4 E.g. *P.KRU* 65 (second half of the 7th century), in which Pecosch writes that he had just come to the monastery to visit the father Jacob.

5 Texts that treat the transportation of wheat and corn in general have not been taken into account.

Reasons for Travel

Travel was, in many ways, integral to life in Egypt. One common reason to undertake a journey was to deliver tax payments and such journeys could even stretch from Upper Egypt (e.g. Balā'izah, Ishqūh/Aphroditō) to Babylon.⁶ Other reasons for travelling were the collection of money and also moving to another place,⁷ as is attested in the documents. The clergy were especially mobile since they tended to visit fellow monks and sometimes had to travel to celebrate masses for other villages.⁸ The bishops also regularly sent their staff on tours to inspect church personnel.⁹

A well-documented group concerns trips made to attend a feast. Nineteen texts¹⁰ give us information about the different feasts attended, including feasts of martyrs, divine services, Easter, as well as other feasts whose nature we cannot precisely determine.¹¹ One especially interesting example is an invitation to a feast from the ninth century, written on the verso of an earlier Arabic text.¹²

6 In *P.Bal.* 240 (dating to between 675 and 775, like all other texts from Balā'izah), for example, the trip starts at Ishqūh/Aphrodito and ends in Babylon, a distance of about 410 km. Two other examples of long journeys are *P.Lond.* IV 1628 (beginning of the 8th century), where the same destinations are documented, and *CPR* II 228 (8th century), which attests a journey from Fayyūm/Arsinoe to Babylon (about 135 km).

7 The letters *O.Crum* 385, 386 (both undated), *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 27 (beginning of the 7th century), and most likely *O.Crum* VC 67 (dating to between 619 and 629). Cf. also the letters concerning Frange discussed below. In documents e.g. *P.Lond.Copt.* I 449, 452 (both undated), etc.

8 E.g. *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 22 (beginning of the 7th century), *P.Mon.Epiph.* 154 (7th century), *O.Crum* 53 (dating to about 600), etc. For further texts relating to this topic, see Schmelz, *Kirchliche* 79–83.

9 Krause, *Die ägyptischen Klöster* 225–236.

10 *SB Kopt.* II 897 (= *P.Pisentius* 71, undated); *P.Mon.Apollo* 52 (6th–7th centuries); *P.Ryl.Copt.* 390 (9th century); *O.Vind.Copt.* 214 (7th–8th centuries); *SB Kopt.* II 814 (8th century); *P.Sarga* 94 (7th century?); *O.Vind.Copt.* 266 (7th–8th centuries); *P.Mon.Epiph.* 105; 131; 245 (all three 7th century); *O.Crum* VC 53; *P.Lond.Copt.* I 547; *O.Crum* ST 243 (all three undated); *O.Ashm.Copt.* 17 (7th–8th centuries); *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 22 (beginning of the 7th century); *P.MoscowCopt.* 55; 59; *O.Crum* VC 88; *SB Kopt.* II 893 (all undated).

11 Interestingly, pilgrimage travel is a notable blank spot in the documents (see below). For this, inscriptions, archaeological sources and Greek papyri have instead to be brought into play.

12 *P.Ryl.Copt.* 390. Crum states: "Recto: an Arabic text (earlier), showing the name Naṣr, كتاب نصر" We do not know the further content of the text on the recto or whether the texts on recto and verso are related. Could "Naṣr" be the sender of the invitation, or is the text

Paul E. Kahle discussed elsewhere that the opening phrase (ΤΗΡΗΝΗ ΝΑΚ) indicates that a text is probably written by a Muslim,¹³ as we find in *P.Bal.* 256 (end of 7th/8th century) at the end of the text (line 5): ΑΥΩ ΤΗΡΗΝΗ ΝΑΚ. This is also how the ninth-century invitation starts. Also the lack of the usual cross, instead of which two diagonal lines appear, indicates that the text was possibly not written by a Christian or that the addressee was a Muslim.¹⁴ If we accept that one party was a Muslim, we can determine that the feast was certainly not a Christian religious one. The word ΝΩΑ can stand for various feasts, most of them religious. But it was also used for birthdays,¹⁵ so maybe this text represents an invitation to a birthday party. Since the text itself is an invitation to a feast, which takes place the same day as the addressee receives the letter, the sender and the addressee must have lived relatively near to one other. ΕΙ ΕΞΡΑΙ means “come north” or “come south.” As the practice in Upper Egypt was to use ΕΞΡΑΙ by itself,¹⁶ we cannot be sure whether coming up or down is meant, and hence whether the traveler was going north or south. Walter Crum, the editor, could not interpret the words at the end of the text. Through a comparison of the formula used in other texts, however, a plausible reading can be found. *P.Mon.Apollo* 16 (7th century) contains a parallel formula in line 10: ΜΠΡΩ ΝΑ-ΤΕΙ ΕΡΗΣ, meaning: “Stay not longer without coming south” (better expressed by “do not delay to come south”). This gives us the sentence, “Stay not longer without coming” (i.e. “do not delay to come”). So the writer of the ninth-century invitation again asks the addressee to come in any case!

of the recto earlier, as Crum states, and therefore not relevant? Due to renovation work in the past in John Rylands Library in Manchester, the text was not accessible.

- 13 As Kahle writes in the introduction to the letter *P.Bal.* 256: “the greeting at the end of the letter is ‘peace unto you’ which is the normal phrase found in letters written by Muslims.”
- 14 See for this complicated and not yet completely satisfactorily solved question: Richter, *Spätkoptische* 213–230, especially 223 ff.
- 15 This meaning e.g. in *P.Mon.Epiph.* 253.13 (7th century).
- 16 It is interesting that ΕΙ ΕΠΕΣΗΓ (which actually means to come down) is used only five times in three texts: *P.Lond.Copt.* 1 547, provenance Fayyūm; 1128 and 1124, both originating from Hermopolis, all undated. Whereas *P.Lond.Copt.* 1 1124 remains undated, it can be said that *P.Lond.Copt.* 1 1128 is to be dated sometime after the Arab conquest (here also the two strokes are used, and the name is Arabic. Here we also find the rendering ΤΗΡΗΝΗ ΝΑΚ). Due to the limited sources we cannot determine why ΕΙ ΕΠΕΣΗΓ was used only very seldomly. The reason could be of a geographical nature: it seems that in Lower Egypt to Hermopolis it was used even though not often, whereas up till now from Hermopolis to Aswan explicitly ΕΙ ΕΞΡΑΙ (in connection with travel) was applied.

Another important Coptic stimulus to travel was the settling of arguments.¹⁷ As a first step one party would invite his opponent to come and try to settle the quarrel. In cases where an arrangement could not be reached the matter was then referred, either via a letter or in person, for example to a senior cleric who would be asked to adjudicate.¹⁸ *O.Vind.Copt.* 258 (7th–8th centuries), in which a certain Anup and a woman are engaged in a dispute, is a good example of this procedure. To make his case, Anup travels south to report the details of the disagreement to a person who is addressed as “your fatherhood”—presumably a high-ranking cleric, most likely to be the abbot of a monastery. Reacting to Anup’s testimony and to present her side of the story, the woman then writes a letter to the cleric. As well as cases such as this, we have instances of divorces and the dissolution of marriages precipitating similar journeys.¹⁹

A well-represented group of texts shows that travelling to find work or to get to a place of work was an important inducement to travel in late antique Egypt. The texts show that for this reason larger distances were also covered. *P.Mon.Epiph.* 296 (7th century²⁰) gives, for example, a distance of 40 km that had to be covered first by the messenger and then by the baker, who was asked to come from Koptos to Thebes to make bread and butter for the monastery. Of course, there must also have been a considerable number of official trips, but these are not so well attested in the Coptic documentary texts.

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- 17 *P.Köln.Ägypt.* 17 (provenance unknown); *P.Mon.Epiph.* 96; 189; 262; 267; 300 (Thebes, monastery of Epiphanius); 438 (all 7th century); *O.Vind.Copt.* 212; 218; 258 (all three 7th–8th centuries); *O.CrumST* 181 (provenance unknown, end of 6th–7th centuries); *BKU* III 338 (during Persian occupation); 403 (undated); *O.Crum* 48 (dating to about 600); *O.Crum Ad.* 46 (undated).
- 18 E.g. *P.Mon.Epiph.* 189 (7th century). For the role of monks and clerics in settlement of arguments, see Schmelz, *Kirchliche* 272–288.
- 19 *P.Mon.Epiph.* 161 (7th century). To litigation see further: Allam, *Civil jurisdiction* 4.
- 20 Peel (Dayr Epiphanius 800–802) assumed (according to Crum and Winlock) that all texts from the so-called Monastery of Epiphanius date between 580 and 640. That this is not the case could be shown through the excavation of TT 29 (see page 89), which makes clear that Frange lived there in the eighth century. And since Frange is corresponding with members of the monastery, they are contemporaneous, and therefore the monastery still existed at least in the eighth century. All texts, in which Frange is mentioned, are therefore to be redated to the eighth century. Of course, also other texts from the monastery might be from a later date.

Modes of Transport

The mode of transport, where it is known or can be inferred, also offers important insights, but, surprisingly, only a few texts give us clear information on this. This is because in most texts—as seen in the case of *P.Ryl.Copt.* 390 above—only vague co-ordinates, such as “to go north” and “to go south,” are given, even in the case of journeys between the Nile Valley and the oases, since this was the primary axis of geographical orientation for Egyptians.²¹ In Old Egyptian the usual words for going north and south were determined by the sign of a ship. But the Coptic expression offers no clues as to whether these trips were made by ship, camel or donkey. Indeed none of the texts surveyed using the phrase explains the employed method. Here only the distance or the time span needed for the trip—if known—can help to determine what is more likely. From the reading of the texts in which no remarks about the time required or the distance covered have been made, the cumulative impression is that most of the documented trips were made on foot.

About forty documents in the corpus relate to ships, ferries and sailors, but as the texts show, the use of ships was largely restricted to the transportation of goods, whereas private journeys by boat are not often attested. The most important role for the use of a ship was the transportation of goods, especially corn. That the ship was not the first choice for private individuals is indicated by the much higher price paid for boat travel than transportation by donkey or camel, or on foot. An additional reason for this result is probably the nature of the source material, which, for the most part, deals with journeys that covered a distance of less than one day’s travel. The texts also speak of the Arab naval fleet, for which Egyptians from all parts of Egypt were recruited.²²

Only three texts speak of the use of a ferry, and from them we see that crossing the Nile was relatively cheap.²³ This shows on the other hand what a limited view the extant corpus gives us, since ferries were naturally very important in Egypt. Therefore, it can be inferred that a receipt was not issued for every crossing, and for this reason we mostly get information—as is the case of *P.Bal.* 291 (end of seventh-eighth centuries)—only if a receipt was needed for

21 See Alcock and Funk in *P.Kellis* v, p. 13: “The oasis dwellers regarded themselves as separate from Egypt, which was conceived as a north-south axis stretching from the area where the trade routes reached the valley.”

22 See for these texts, *P.Lond.* iv.

23 *P.Bal.* 291 (end of the 7th century-beginning of the 8th century); *P.Ryl.Copt.* 334 (8th century); *sB Kopt.* 11 889 (9th century).

the account books of a monastery, or as a bill for a business partner or employer. After all, most of the texts in the corpus are letters, in which a mention of having taken a ferry would not be especially important, except perhaps for business reasons.

The best source we have for travelling by boat is *O.Medin.HabuCopt.* 82 (seventh–eighth centuries), which documents the 390 km journey from Thebes to Antinoe. This shipping contract is unique among the Coptic documentary texts for the large amount of information it contains, including the journey's starting point and destination, the names of the people involved, the costs and even the means of travel. Such a quantity of data is a result of its nature as a document, since letters tend only to transmit information that is necessary and not yet known by the addressee.²⁴ Steve Vinson comments as follows: "This text is a short shipping contract, in which a captain agrees to charter his vessel for the hauling of an unspecified cargo. It appears as though the arrangement actually makes the captain and charterer into temporary partners. After the captain has collected his freight fee ($\frac{3}{4}$ solidus), any additional revenues from passengers and any operational expenses incurred en route are to be shared on a 50–50 basis. The upshot is that, at least from the Graeco-Roman period into the early Arab period, vessel income seems often to have been split on a 50–50 basis by the owner and crew."²⁵

Attestations of the use of camels and donkeys are also not often found in the letters.²⁶ But since most of the distances covered are rather small (less than a day's travelling), it is very likely that most of the small-scale travel was done by camel, donkey or on foot. Even larger distances were covered that way. As texts show, monasteries hold a key position in such travel, since they had their own camels and donkeys along with camel drivers. Often monks from other monasteries, and perhaps private people too, borrowed an animal to go on a trip. In this way camels played a critical role in long-distance travel, especially from an oasis to the Nile Valley. For journeys from an oasis to the Nile Valley, the most important sources are the texts from Kellis in the Dakhla Oasis, where a Manichaean community had its base. Although the distance was long—130 km,

24 See below, for the edition and translation.

25 Vinson, *The Nile* 75–76.

26 At least with regard to travel by those whose main priority is not the transportation of goods. Examples of texts in which donkeys and camels appear are *O.CrumVC* 68, *O.Theb.* 27 (both 7th–8th centuries, see for this text also *P.Mon.Epiph.* 1, p. 182), very likely *P.Lond.Copt.* 1 590 (undated, paper), and 529 (Arab period). In Spiegelberg, *Besprechung* 68–69 we find a text in which it is stated that the journey fails because no donkey could be found (the translation was corrected by Crum in Winlock and Crum, *The monastery* 182).

and one would have needed six to ten days with a donkey and less with a camel,²⁷ which was preferred—it seems to be the case that travel, and in turn communication, occurred regularly between the oases and the Nile Valley.

Travel Difficulties

However one travelled, making trips in Egypt was never entirely easy. Generally in the texts it is considered to be difficult, wearying and often demanding significant effort and sacrifice. This attitude tends to be reflected in the often-used phrase, “be so kind and trouble yourself to come,” or its variants, “find a way to come,” “find an opportunity to come,” and so on.²⁸ It was not only the Copts who conceived of trips in this way, as Greek texts in which the sender asks the addressee likewise to “trouble himself to go somewhere” revealed.²⁹ That this phrase was not only used as a courtesy is also shown in some texts in which the writer explicitly says that complications on the journey, especially the roads, prevented him from getting somewhere.³⁰ The text *O.Crum Ad.* 59 (dating from between 578 and 605) even demonstrates that a whole monastery was shifted from a somewhat inaccessible site in the desert behind Jeme for this reason. The order was given by the patriarch Damianos (in office 578–605) himself to improve the accessibility for the messengers who had to deliver the festal epistle throughout the whole country every year.³¹

Illness

Another major thematic group of texts reveals planned trips that had to be cancelled due to illness. In 12 instances the letter-writer says he cannot make a journey because he has become ill.³² Among these illnesses we find problems

27 *P.Kellis* v, 12.

28 E.g. like *P.MoscowCopt.* 55 (undated), v. 20–22 ἀρι ταγαπη | ἄβωακ πεσγυλμος ἴτετεῖ|ει ..., or *P.Pisentius* 48 (end of the 6th century or beginning of the 7th century), 27 ἴβωακ ὅε νβωακ, or a construction with βη τυπος, etc.

29 E.g. *P.Oxy.* I 123, 10 (3rd–4th centuries) σκυλῆναι πρὸς Τιμόθεον “trouble yourself to go to Timotheos.”

30 *P.Mon.Epiph.* 473 (7th century) and *O.Crum* 253 (provenance unknown, undated).

31 Krause, *Die ägyptischen Kloster* 204.

32 *P.Mon.Epiph.* 162; 168; 277 (all three 7th century); *O.CrumVC* 38 (undated), *P.Sarga* 93 (7th century?); *P.Bal.* 245 (end of the 7th century, 8th century); *P.Mich.Copt.* 13 (8th century?); *P.Ryl.Copt.* 273 (4th–5th century); *SB Kopt.* II 893; *O.CrumST* 363; *P.MoscowCopt.* 59; *SB Kopt.* II 854 (all undated).

with the feet³³ and in *SB Kopt.* II 854 (undated) the sender complains that he has been seriously ill for two weeks with fever. Two texts inform us that the parties have become ill during the journey.³⁴ *O.CrumVC* 35 (undated) even tells us about the death of a man's business partner during a trip that had led them north. The text is an oath in which the man had to swear that he did not conceal any of the deceased's belongings from his heirs. Unfortunately, we do not learn what happened to the dead man's body. Many of these texts show that it was important for the one who fell ill to have a cleric pray for him so that God might relieve him of his illness.³⁵

Crime

Brigandage and robbery were also persistent concerns for travelers. *O.CrumST* 390 (undated) seems to indicate an example of mugging. In this short and enigmatic text, a monk recounts to a fellow monk an episode on the road to Alexandria in which he was waylaid by six "devils" and only in the last moment managed to escape. The monk takes no chances: "I ran," he says. That he must have survived the incident is, of course, shown by the fact that he was writing at all. But how the story ends we do not know, since the letter is unfortunately broken and the end is missing.³⁶

Three other letters document the dangers of leaving home.³⁷ In these the writers declare their wish to go on a journey, but claim they cannot do so for fear that their homes and belongings would be robbed in their absence. That only four texts among the Coptic letters deal with criminality of this type does not mean, of course, that crimes did not occur more often. In fact, the opposite seems to be the case: "Zieht man die bereits im 7. Jh. herrschenden Verhältnisse in Betracht, wofür belegt ist, daß viele Menschen durch Überfälle herumstreichender Banden (im 8. Jh. auch durch hohe Steuerlasten) in Not gerieten,"³⁸ we can assume that a lot of incidents of mugging took place.

33 *P.Mon.Epiph.* 277 (7th century); *O.CrumVC* 38 (undated).

34 *P.MoscowCopt.* II (4th–5th century); *P.Mon.Epiph.* 249 (7th century).

35 E.g. *O.CrumVC* 38 (undated), *P.Ryl.Copt.* 273 (4th–5th century), 4–5 (ΤΕΝΟΥ ΟΥΛΗΛ ΕΧΘΕΙ | ΝΤΕΠΝ[ΟΥΤΕ ΤΙ]ΟΝ ΝΑΙ ΤΗΝΟΥ ΟΥΑΡΟΚ: "now pray for me that god gives me strength that I come to you"), and *O.CrumST* 186 (undated). About illness among the Copts, cf. *P.Harrauer* 213–222.

36 See below for the edition and translation.

37 *P.Mon.Epiph.* 222 (7th century), *O.CrumVC* 98, and *O.Crum Ad.* 46 (both undated).

38 *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* II 27.

Travel across Time

Pre-Conquest Egypt

From the fourth and fifth centuries only a few texts have survived, leaving us with a limited picture of travel in this period.³⁹ The most important group comprises the letters and documents from the Manichean community in Kellis in the Dakhla Oasis, which date from the fourth century.⁴⁰ The texts—mostly letters—document the correspondence between family members who had stayed behind in Kellis and the men who were in the Nile Valley. They show us journeys made from Kellis to Antinoe, Hermopolis and Assiut, and the trips made by the men while they were in the Valley, again mostly from Antinoe to Hermopolis and to Assiut.⁴¹ As well as this, the letters inform us about the small-scale journeys between the different villages of the oasis. Especially interesting, because of his frequent travels in the Nile Valley, is the person called “the master” (ⲛⲕⲁⲒ). We hear, for example, of him taking Piene, who joins his entourage, with him to learn Latin,⁴² and in another letter we find out where their journey led, namely Alexandria.⁴³ Yet another letter tells us that Piene and the master left Antinoe, so we know that the trip went from Antinoe to Alexandria.⁴⁴ That Piene and the master arrived in Alexandria, and that Piene continued to live there safely, is reported again in another letter, which reports that fellow brothers come from Alexandria to the south bringing news and a letter from him. We also hear that Piene intends to come south again.⁴⁵

Just as is the case for the fourth and fifth centuries, only a few Coptic papyri have survived from the sixth century. An additional problem is the uncertain dating, which concerns above all the placing of the texts between the fifth and the sixth centuries. Judging from those few and often not exactly dated texts, it seems that travelling was equally possible as before this age and that no significant changes or restrictions took place.

39 E.g. *P.MoscowCopt.* 11 (4th–5th century); *P.Ryl.Copt.* 273 (4th–5th century).

40 From the 45 letters and documents published in *P.Kell.* v, 11 texts deliver information on travelling, which are: 19, 20, 22, 24, 25, 28, 29, 31, 39, 40, 50.

41 The most important group of letters in respect of travelling is those of Makarios (staying in the Nile Valley) who writes to Maria in Kellis.

42 *P.Kellis* v 20.

43 *P.Kellis* v 29.

44 *P.Kellis* v 25.

45 *P.Kellis* v 24.

The next period which is closely defined again and about which several papyri give us valuable information is the Persian occupation.⁴⁶ Under Persian rule the relative good mobility of the people in Egypt seems to have been somewhat curtailed. As some texts make fairly clear, during the occupation finding transport and undertaking journeys could be complicated. Document *SB Kopt.* 136 informs us that a woman with the name Thekla, having sold part of her house in Edfu, made preparations to leave the city. The text reports that she wanted to travel by ship, but could not find one anywhere, and so was forced to go instead by foot. Given that her final destination was a village named Great Beschin (today's al-Fashn) 32km north of Oxyrhynchos, she would have had to have walked an extraordinary 472km, which would have taken her at least 15 and a half days. The letter *P.Mon.Epiph.* 324 raises the question of whether travel restrictions were imposed on the population, since the writer reports to a monk that he has asked someone to write a letter to “the Persian” in Thebes in order to let him go south to fetch some corn. This person indeed wrote the letter to the Persian official. But because the letter is very short—a part of it seems to be missing—we do not know the relationship of the man to the Persian.

O.CrumVC 67 from the Persian period shows clearly—and the background of another text makes it likely—that at this time there were problems with the food supply in Upper Egypt. The man reports in a letter that he travelled north because, with no corn coming south, he could not feed his children. So a trip was made to keep the family alive. Furthermore, we get indications from the sources that there had been riots directed against the Persians. A text confirming this is *BKU* III 338, in which someone, presumably a bishop, tries to find a way to settle a quarrel between the Persians and the leaders of the riots, which had already resulted in the partial destruction of the city of Hermopolis. That the bishop was not totally free in his decisions is shown by the fact that the Persians told him they would take his son as a hostage until the matter was resolved. The texts from the Monastery of Epiphanius show that the invasion was remembered so well by the people that an incident that had happened before the invasion and was reported somewhat later was referred to as “before the Persians came south.”⁴⁷

46 For a compilation of the Greek, Coptic and Persian documents which date from the time of the Persian occupation, see MacCoull, *Coptic Egypt* 307–313. The Coptic sources can be found on page 312. To these have to be added *O.CrumVC* 67 and *SB Kopt.* II 846.

47 *P.Mon.Epiph.* 300.9 (ⲉⲗⲁⲛ Ⲅⲁⲣ ⲛⲓⲡⲁⲧⲉⲓⲡⲉⲣⲥⲟⲥ ⲉⲓ ⲉⲣⲛⲥ). In *P.Mon.Epiph.* 433 the arrival of the Persians in Thebes is imminent.

The impact of the Persian occupation on Egyptians' mobility and prosperity provides a useful model against which to assess the effect of the Muslim conquest. How did the new order under which Egypt's Christians found themselves affect their access to resources and freedom of movement? Did the nature of travel change?

Travel under the Arabs

One of the most significant Muslim innovations affecting the flow of people was the introduction in the eighth century of the so-called *sigillion* (συγίλλιον),⁴⁸ or, in Arabic, *sijill* (سجل)⁴⁹ or *kitāb* (كتاب).⁵⁰ This was a sort of passport or permit that authorised someone to leave his or her tax district.⁵¹ The best evidence we have that the *sigillion* cannot be underestimated as an obstacle to mobility comes from *P.CLT* 3 (728/729 or 743/744), which deals with a group of Theban monks who wanted to go on a business trip to the Fayyūm to sell their ropes and wares, but could not do so without having first been equipped with a passport.⁵² As an Arabic source informs us,⁵³ getting such a document could take up to two months, for the applicant had to meet various requirements beforehand. First, he had to prove (through a tax receipt) that he had no tax liabilities. Then he had to nominate, for the future tax that would accrue during his absence, someone who would be willing to sign a document guaranteeing his tax payments. "Diese Bürgschaftsurkunde mußte dem Pagarchen (Amīr) vorgelegt werden, dann konnte der Reisepaß unter Mitwirkung der Ortsbehörde beantragt werden und durch den Pagarchen (Amīr) ausgestellt werden."⁵⁴ This procedure had to be strictly followed. To date, no evidence has been found that suggests the idea of a passport had existed before the beginning of the eighth century.

48 For all documents with a *sigillion* in the meaning of "passport," see Förster, *Wörterbuch* 726.

49 Term used by Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffā', *History* 69, 70.

50 Schaten, *Reiseformalitäten* 93 n. 11.

51 Rāḡīb, *Sauf-conduits* 145–146 favours the translation 'permit' because "il ne permettait au porteur que de se rendre en un lieu désigné du pays et d'y séjourner pour y travailler pendant une période déterminée, alors que le passport appelé ḡawāz ou barā'a lui conférait le droit de franchir les frontières."

52 The excavation of Deir el-Bachit in Dra' Abu el Naga, ongoing since 2004, of the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich could identify the site as the monastery of Apa Paulos, from where the monks mentioned in this text, came from.

53 Sawīrus ibn al-Muqaffā', *History* 69–70.

54 Schaten, *Reiseformalitäten* 93.

During the excavations of the Mission archéologique dans la nécropole thébaine (MANT)⁵⁵ a number of Coptic papyri were found in Theban tomb TT 29. This old Egyptian tomb of the vizier Amenemope was inhabited in the first half of the eighth century by the semi-anachorite and monk Frange. The texts found in TT 29 shed more light on the circumstances of travel in the Theban region. In a clay-basin, in the hall of this tomb (in layer 159), more than a dozen fragmentary papyri were discovered—some with preserved seal—that Frange had used to stuff book covers. One of the papyri is completely preserved and shows that the documents contained in them were short and businesslike: “N’empêche pas Papas et Theodorake de se rendre à Djémé, car c’est pour leur travail (?) qu’ils y vont. Mois d’Athy, le 3. 3e (année de) l’indiction. A remettre à Halakotsé, de la part de Pha ...”.⁵⁶ While the exact circumstances in which these documents were issued is not known yet, it is likely that they had something to do with taxes comparable with the above mentioned permits. Whereas the Arabic safe-conducts⁵⁷ are very precise concerning the time and place that they covered, these Coptic “permits” in the form of short requests for passage are not. Nevertheless we should probably follow Rāgib in understanding these texts as the Coptic equivalence of the Arabic *jawāz* or *barā’a*, that is to say passports, which allow the population to cross frontiers.⁵⁸ Boud’hors assumes that there must have been a certain road check (or toll station) around Jeme.⁵⁹ Since the documents were written on papyrus and were sealed, their character was certainly official. They were written—in a number of cases the name of the addressee is preserved—to an official named Halakotse, obviously the person in charge of the checkpoint allowing people into Jeme and/or to go on a trip to the south. The writer of the letters must have been an official, too, who forwarded the request ensuring that the person or persons mentioned in these documents could go to the places they wanted, to Halakotse. Some of the letters mention a reason for those travels, like work or the need to pay taxes. In one text (P.TT 29 inv. 295028), it is stated that Halakotse allowed Schenute to go home to the south, since he was living in the nome of Hermonth. Since these letters were of short use (after processing the request, the letter was not important anymore), Halakotse

55 Under the auspices of the universities of Brussels and Liège. See <http://www.ulb.ac.be/rech/inventaire/projets/4/PR3344.html> and <http://www.egyptology.ac.be/necropole.htm>.

56 Boud’hors, *L’apport de papyrus 120* (P.TT 29 inv. 291972).

57 For the safe-conducts written in Arabic, see Rāgib, *Sauf-conduits* 143–168.

58 For the passport, see above note 51.

59 Boud’hors, *L’apport de papyrus 123*.

gave or sold the papyri at some point to Frange, who then applied them in making book covers.⁶⁰

Another late phenomenon is the *logos* (λόγος,⁶¹ “*Schutzbrief*”) in the Coptic documentary texts, which functions as a guarantee of unimpeded passage.⁶² Most of these documents were written to ensure that those whose freedom was in some danger—for example, a debtor or opponent in a quarrel or a leader of a riot—could return safely to their home villages. Sometimes, in the case of debtors, the debts were even forgiven; in other cases, a reduction of the debt or postponement of payment was granted. The purpose of these *logoi* was to prevent members of a community’s tax-paying population being lost, since the tax burden of the person who had fled would then fall on the village. In Greek texts, the *logoi* (λόγοι), which are related to the *logoi asylias* (λόγοι ἀσυλίας), also appear rather late, although earlier than their Coptic equivalent—sometime in the middle of the sixth century.⁶³ The Greek documents, by contrast, were only issued by officials.

Although Coptic *logoi* texts are quite numerous, they only offer limited information about travelling. We can infer that someone fled and possibly returned, but the distances they travelled and the places in which they sought refuge remain unknown. Only one related pair of texts, *P.Schutzbrieife* 53 b and 53 c (= *O.Vind.Copt.* 65 (7th–8th centuries)), supplies the information that the addressee of the *logos* is permitted to come south to the people of the island of Ombos.

Most of the *logoi* tell the addressee to come home without fear. But two texts use an identical and special form of request. *O.Brit.Mus.Copt.* I s. 99, 2 [5894] (7th–8th century), v. 2–3, says: ⲛⲓⲃⲱⲕ ⲁⲛⲉⲛⲧ̅ | ⲛⲓⲃⲱⲕ ⲉⲣⲏⲥ, which means: “you may go north, you may go south.”⁶⁴ Since other texts use this phrase as well in a similar wording, its meaning is fairly clear. The person who requests an official or cleric to write a *logos* promise wants to indicate by this phrasing that the debtor or the like is free to go wherever he wishes.

60 Both texts, and excavated material of the TT 29, prove that Frange not only produced textiles and ropes, but also made bookbindings and bookcovers (*O.Frangé* 19–20).

61 For documents of this kind, see Förster, *Wörterbuch* 478–479.

62 The Coptic *logoi* texts (*Schutzbrieife*) range from the seventh to the ninth centuries. *sB Kopt.* II 914 is dated to the first half of the seventh century. See on the *Schutzbrieife*, Delattre, *Les “lettres de protection”* 173–178 and lately Selander, *Die koptischen*.

63 Palme, *Asyl und Schutzbrief* 229.

64 The other text is also a *Schutzbrief*: *O.Crum* 108 (= *P.Schutzbrieife* 40, undated) lines 3–4 say: ⲛⲓⲃⲱⲕ ⲉⲛⲉⲛⲧ̅ | [ⲛ]ⲓⲃⲱⲕ ⲉⲣⲏⲥ.

Remarks on Time and Place in the Texts

Nomenclature is often not as helpful in fixing places as one might hope. Typically people are identified by their father's name and only occasionally by their place of origin. For determining the route of a journey, this practice has to be treated very cautiously since it means that a person's current whereabouts, and especially the starting point of a trip he is undertaking, cannot be inferred from his name alone. In the case of the man named Frange, who says he is "the man from Medamoud" (ⲡⲣⲓⲛⲉⲧⲉⲙⲟⲩⲧ) but now residing in an old Egyptian tomb on the hill of Jeme,⁶⁵ the place of origin and place of residence are not far away from each other. But from deeds, for which an individual's personal data were more relevant, we know that the place of origin and the current whereabouts could differ enormously.⁶⁶

About some aspects of travel in the Coptic period we are, however, only scarcely enlightened by the Coptic documentary texts, or not at all. For example, this is the case with journeys which led the travelers abroad. Here only a single mention has been found. The above mentioned Frange is known to have travelled to Jerusalem. From the text *O.Frangé* 20 we learn that Frange wanted to go to Jerusalem, which was forbidden by the Elders. We also hear that Frange had planned to travel together with the correspondent of the letter on this far trip. When Frange was stopped from going, he writes the addressee that he too should stay home this year. That Frange was able to travel to Jerusalem at some other point we learn through the text *O.Frangé* 51, where he states that the addressee David should send him two things that Frange had brought earlier from Jerusalem. We do not know exactly why Frange was not allowed to go to Jerusalem in the first context. Boud'hors and Heurtel assume that either an administrative reason (leaving the tax district) might have prevented Frange from leaving or that the religious authorities prohibited it. We can only assume that his trip to the Holy City was a pilgrimage, but as we learn from the latter text Frange also brought home useful devices.

The Coptic term ⲟⲩⲙⲟ, translated with 'abroad' or 'foreign,' does not, however, necessarily mean a place outside Egypt. Rather, it generally denotes a place that is unknown to the traveler but that is located within Egypt. Even a

65 For Frange, see e.g. Heurtel, *Que fait Frange 177–204* and *O.Frangé*. And for his designation of origin and current whereabouts, see Heurtel, *Que fait Frange 187: O. 29840*, and *O.Frangé* 10–12.

66 E.g. *PLond.* IV 1628 (beginning of the 8th century), where two witnesses have Aphrodito as place of origin, but sign the document in Babylon; *SB Kopt.* I 242 (Edfu, 649 C.E.), where the sailor is after all from Edfu and signs a receipt in Esna, etc.

place or region in the vicinity of a well-known city but with which the traveler or city-dweller was unfamiliar could be described as $\alpha\mu\mu\omicron$. 'Abroad' was also used when someone went into the desert to live as a hermit.

About a tenth of the texts surveyed specify the time at which the sender of the letter intends to visit the addressee. Sometimes even the main purpose of the letter was to transmit this information. Mostly we find announcements of what time somebody will come, or requests that the addressee should meet the writer of the letter on a certain day or at a certain time. We also find statements that somebody plans to go to a certain place to inform the other party that he will not be at home for a certain period of time. Not that often we find the statement that somebody should have come at a certain time, but could not come and now writes when he will come instead. At last we find letters where the writer tells the addressee when he went to a certain place.

For these texts, where the writers speak of coming to the addressee on the following day, we can determine that the duration of the journey cannot have been longer than one day and therefore a short distance was covered. In some texts, in which a specific date is mentioned, this is usually because it is a date on which an agreement has been made to start work. Five texts even document that the journey would be undertaken at night if the circumstances made it necessary.⁶⁷

Comparison to Greek Texts

To get additional information about travelling in Roman and late antique Egypt it would also be necessary to undertake a thorough study of the Greek texts related to travel.⁶⁸ This has still to be done. But from Chrisi Kotsifou's work⁶⁹ it can already be seen that certain aspects, which are not to be found in the Coptic text corpus, are present in the Greek texts. In the Greek texts we find information about the travels of athletes and entertainers, travels whose goal was tourism, holidaying, escaping the hot weather (*P.Oxy.* xxxiv 2727, 3rd–4th centuries) or oracle-questioning, and travels abroad. We also find prayers that a trip will take place and will be safe, information about the weather and sailing conditions (favourable winds, Nile level), information that sailing at night was

67 *P.Lond.Copt.* 1 529 (Arab period); *O.Mich.Copt.* 7 (7th century); 9 (6th century?); *P.Pisentius* 5 (end of the 6th century or beginning of the 7th century); *P.Mon.Epiph.* 134 (7th century).

68 For transportation in general, see e.g. Bagnall, *Egypt* 34–40.

69 Kotsifou, Papyrological evidence 57–64.

prohibited and that attacks from pirates were taking place. For the lack of such references in the Coptic documentary texts various reasons can be assumed. For example, change in religious practice accounts for the absence of questions to oracles. The almost complete absence of references to pilgrimages though is harder to explain, since pilgrimage was an important reason for undertaking a journey, and one would expect this to be reflected more strongly in the letters. But we probably have to assume a simple gap in the record, remembering that about six times as many Greek than Coptic documentary texts have been published to date.

Conclusion

Travel has been essential for the economic and social life of Egypt from pharaonic times⁷⁰ up until the present day. We can say that most of the conditions of travel, such as the available means of transport, did not change much (technically) from the pharaonic period up to and including the pre-modern age. Only in the more industrialised conditions of our own age have the speed, ease and cost of travel significantly changed. In the time span covered here it can be said that although travelling was somewhat arduous, since no official transport system existed for the rural and non-élite populations of Egypt, it is noteworthy that people were to a great extent mobile. For the common citizen, who did not have access to the transport system controlled and supported by the state, travelling meant taking responsibility for his or her own arrangements, including finding suitable donkeys or a ship's captain willing to take on passengers (and in this case, concluding the necessary contract).

Another possibility for those not able to afford a ship's passage or not needing one—since only longer distances were covered this way due to the expense—was to hire a transport animal from a monastery. The church and the monasteries had their own stock of animals—including camels and ships⁷¹—which could be rented. These were needed to fulfill their many pastoral duties, including, for example, distributing the annual festal epistle of the archbishop of Alexandria across the breadth of Egypt, a significant operation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the clergy and monks were especially mobile. Only monks had to ask for allowance before they wanted to travel from their superiors in the monastery. For small-scale journeys—and in some cases also for long

70 Köpp-Junk, *Reisen*.

71 For ships in the property of churches and monasteries, see Bagnall, *Egypt* 37 with footnote 157.

distances if no other mode of transport was available or affordable—common Egyptians went by foot. The exact amount of travelling done with each mode of transport remains unfortunately unclear in most of the Coptic documentary texts. Also, the duration of a single trip is hardly ever stated in the texts.

The reason for our poor knowledge of the respective usage of different modes of transport and the duration of journeys lies in the nature of the source material, which consists mostly of letters. In letters, people in antiquity tended to transmit only the most necessary information to the addressee, making it necessary, for example, for the receiving party to know when the traveler would reach his destination but not how long the whole trip would last. Also, the mode of transport would not be of special interest to the reader of a letter. What we are very well informed about, however, was why people undertook their journeys.

Whereas the overall conditions of travelling stayed pretty much constant during the whole of antiquity, it is especially interesting to see what impact the changing governments of Egypt had on the conditions of travel.⁷² As we already have seen, the Persian period is marked by the shortages in the supply of ships. At this time the supply of food also ceases to be regular in southern Egypt, leading people to want to leave Upper Egypt. The situation becomes so critical people are forced to walk if they want to reach their destination. As some texts suggest, there also seems to have been restrictions on travelling.

After the Arab invasion of Egypt there is another period of reduced mobility. The worsening of the economic situation in the seventh and eighth centuries can be seen in the increasing number of fugitives attempting to escape the increasing tax load. The *logoi*, although already starting to be issued in the first half of the seventh century, become more common after the Arab invasion. In order to better control the flow of people—rural exodus has been a long-standing problem in Egypt since Ptolemaic times—the Arab government introduced the permit or passport. Whereas the necessary papers could be put together with the help of local officials and were written in Coptic, the actual passport document could only be issued in the office of the *pagarch* and was therefore only in Arabic. This meant, of course, undertaking a journey required considerable expenditure. Such passports were restricted in time span, most often to three months, and had to be kept during the whole time of the journey, since losing the document could have severe consequences. They include the names of the issuing official of the *amīr* (*pagarch*), the name of the passport-

72 The Coptic material does not give enough information to be able to say if the transport infrastructure (e.g. quality of the roads, frequency of way-stations, control of brigandage, etc.) improved or deteriorated in the Arab period. For this dimension official documents are more likely to be revealing.

holder, a physical description, the reason for travel (usually for the bearer to be able to earn his living and hence pay the next poll-tax), and the areas in which he was permitted to travel. At the end followed a statement that no harm should be done to him during the document's specified span of validity.⁷³ But whereas the time span granted for a journey was restricted, the distances a traveler was allowed to cover were obviously not. As we see in *P.CLT* 3 (728/729 or 743/44), the monks wanting to travel from Thebes to Fayyūm had already been recommended by the local authorities, which suggests that the officials of the *amīr* would most likely have agreed to issue the passport. Although the passport system gave the government absolute control over (legal) travel, its aim was more to ensure the tax-payment of the population of Egypt. Less formal laissez-passers in Coptic, found in an ancient Egyptian tomb, seem to have functioned at a very local level and were used to allow the population from Jeme free passage in the early eighth century.

In the seventh century gangs roaming the countryside became an increasing danger. At times in the Muslim period too there seem to have been shortages in the supply of donkeys or at least an increase in the *amīrs'* request for donkeys to be provided by the people for official use.⁷⁴ Consequently, people were afraid of losing their animals for certain periods, which meant, of course, economic discomfort. Taking all this together, it seems to be clear that travelling in the seventh and eight centuries was even more difficult than in the times before.

The example of the passport also shows the necessity of combining sources of different languages to be able to draw a more complete picture of travel in late antiquity. The Greek material serves above all to illuminate the earlier period, whereas the Coptic material is somewhat scarce, and the inclusion of Arab sources is necessary to gain greater insight into the official issuing of documents and state policy. This is also true for the earlier Greek documents, since they too give us insight into official policy. Coptic texts only start to overtake Greek documents in quantity in the seventh and eighth centuries, when all kinds of documents are issued in Coptic. Through the Coptic material we also gain additional information about church affairs and the organisation and daily management of the monasteries. At this time it can be said that the vast majority of people was speaking Coptic, and Coptic therefore offers the best window onto the daily life and experiences of ordinary Egyptians.

73 See Rāgib, *Sauf-conduits* and also Diem, *Einige frühe* 141 ff., and, especially for the usual formulary for a passport, 144.

74 As a special levy? That the *amīr* is looking for donkeys is stated in *P.Lond.Copt.* 1 529.5–6. The writer George gives careful instructions how to bring the donkey (not to go on the road, to go at night, not to tell anybody in the monastery) to avoid being seen by anyone.

Appendix 1: Three Texts (with some additions and emendations)

1 *P.Ryl.Copt. 390*

- 1 // ΤΗΡΗΝΗ ΝΑΚ ΕΒΟΛ
 2 ΖΙΤΝ ΠΝΟΥΓΤΕ ΤΙΤΑΜΟ
 3 ΜΜΟΚ ΧΕ ΠΩΔ
 4 ΠΟΥ ΛΟΙΠΟΝ
 5 ΑΜΟΥ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΩΔΑΚ
 6 Ω ΖΑΖΤΗ ΜΠΟΥ
 7 [ΔΥΩ?] ΜΠΕΡΩ ΝΑΤΕΙ (ΟΡ ΝΑΤΙ)⁷⁵

(1) “Peace (εἰρήνη) unto thee (2) from God. I (would) inform (3) thee that the festival (4) is today. Then (λοιπόν) (5) come up/down (and) (6) stay today with me. (7) [And?] stay not (longer) without coming (= do not delay to come).”

2 *O.CrumST 390*

- 1 †π[ρ]οσκινε μ̄
 2 ΠΑΜΕΡΙΤ Ν
 3 ΣΟΝ ΧΕ ΑΪΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ
 4 ΖΙΤΟΟΤΚ ΧΕ ΕΙΝΑΒΩΚ
 5 ΕΡΑΚΑΤΕ Δ.//.ΖΙΕ
 6 ΝΖΗΤ ΔΪΖΕ ΕΣΟΟΥ Ν
 7 ΔΙΑΒΟΥΛΟΣ ΖΝ ΤΕΖΙΗ
 8 ΝΤΕΡΙΑΠΑΝΤΑ ΕΡΟΥ
 9 ΑΙΒΩΚ <ε>ΖΕ ΕΒΟΛ
 10 ΑΠΩΤ

ς for Δ. //εie (Crum) ς read αιε ε? ς ζ changed (Crum)
 ς in edition: αιβωκ ζε εβολ

(1) I greet (προσκυνέω) (2) my beloved (3) brother. When I left (4) you to go (5) to Alexandria I went (?) (6) north and met six (7) devils (διάβολος)

75 For a photograph, see *P.Ryl.Copt.* pl. 6. Unfortunately the end of line 7 is not visible on the plate. Therefore it could either read *νατει* or *νατι* (which is only an orthographic variant and does not affect the meaning).

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Le transport de marchandises et de personnes sur le Nil en 823 A.H./1420 È.C.*

Frédéric Bauden

La première ville que nous rencontrâmes s'appelle Fua [Fuwwa]. C'est une très grande ville et riche de toutes les choses que vous pouvez nommer. Elle se situe à l'opposé de l'île de Rosseto [Rashīd] [...]. Dans cette ville de Fua, nous nous arrêtâmes pour la nuit et mangeâmes à bord ; dans la soirée, tous ceux de la ville, hommes et femmes, jeunes et vieux, vinrent pour [nous] voir, car ils sont peu habitués à voir des personnes comme nous [...]. Nous nous arrêtâmes dans cette ville pour la nuit et dormîmes à bord ; puis nous quittâmes la ville en question à neuf heures le vendredi 7 octobre et nous continuâmes de remonter le Nil.¹

Cette brève description d'un voyage sur le Nil donnée par Sigoli, pèlerin florentin qui souhaitait se rendre au Sinaï via Le Caire en 1384, fournit des indications précieuses sur les modalités qui régissaient un tel périple. Il faut bien avouer que de tels témoignages restent trop rares pour la période considérée et que nous sommes quelque peu démunis lorsqu'il s'agit d'étudier comment un voyage sur le Nil était organisé, dans quelles circonstances celui-ci se déroulait et à quel prix. Le document dont je propose la lecture et l'interprétation dans cette étude me permet précisément d'aborder la nébuleuse question du transport fluvial sur le Nil à l'époque mamlouke et d'apporter quelques réponses aux questions restées sans réponse jusqu'à ce jour.

* Je tiens à exprimer ma plus vive reconnaissance à Werner Diem pour sa lecture attentive et ses nombreuses remarques judicieuses. Il va de soi que je reste responsable des choix faits en dernier ressort.

1 Frescobaldi, *Visit* 165. J'ai traduit le texte italien.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 في سنة الف و مائة و ثمان و ثمانين
 في شهر ربيع الثاني
 في يوم الاثنين
 في الساعة السادسة
 في مدينة القاهرة
 في دار السلطنة
 في حجرة الخزانة
 في يد كاتبها
 في سنة الف و مائة و ثمان و ثمانين
 في شهر ربيع الثاني
 في يوم الاثنين
 في الساعة السادسة
 في مدينة القاهرة
 في دار السلطنة
 في حجرة الخزانة
 في يد كاتبها

FIGURE 7.1 *Procuratori di San Marco, Commissarie miste, busta 180, fascicolo IX, no. 8.*
 © Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASVe)

Description²

Le texte est écrit, par une même main, à l'encre noire sur une feuille de papier mesurant 213 sur 155 mm. La marge de droite occupe un espace qui oscille entre 29 mm (partie haute) et 24 mm (partie basse). La marge du haut, dans sa partie la plus large située au-dessus du *bā'* de la *basmala*, mesure 25 mm. Le papier est occidental avec fils de chaînette distants de 39 mm et parallèles au sens d'écriture. Les vergeures sont peu serrées. Le filigrane, coupé, ne permet plus son identification³. Le document porte quatre pliures horizontales séparées les unes des autres par un espace d'environ 52–55 mm. Ces pliures ne résultent

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- 2 Une description sommaire du document avait été fournie dans l'inventaire des documents mamlouks conservés aux Archives de l'État à Venise. Voir Bauden, *The Mamluk 152–153* (n° XI). Bien plus tôt, un résumé en avait été donné par Labib, *Handelsgeschichte* 502 (n° 9). Celui-ci comportait plusieurs erreurs qui sont corrigées dans la lecture qui suit.
 - 3 Outre ce document, la même *busta* en compte deux autres écrits en arabe sur du papier occidental, parfois filigrané (les n°s 2 et 7). Voir Bauden, *The Mamluk 150–151* (n° V) et 152 (n° X).

J'ai déjà souligné l'importance de l'étude du matériau d'écriture pour les documents remontant à cette époque (Bauden, *L'Achat d'esclaves* 272). On connaît en effet encore fort peu dans quelle mesure le papier occidental était utilisé par la chancellerie d'état mamelouke ou pour la rédaction des actes privés, comme c'est le cas ici. Une étude d'ensemble des documents d'époque mamelouke permettrait sans doute de mieux appréhender la question, mais elle n'est pas sans soulever d'insurmontables problèmes techniques et administratifs, la majeure partie d'entre eux étant conservés dans des endroits fort peu accessibles aux chercheurs. Pour contourner ce problème, on peut avoir recours à l'étude des manuscrits datés ou datables à titre de comparaison. Une étude, qui a porté sur un ensemble cohérent (490 manuscrits du monastère de Saint-Macaire au Wādī l-Naṭrūn en Égypte), offre un éclairage qui n'est pas inintéressant (voir Zanetti, *Filigranes*). Au sein de cette collection, il apparaît que 80 manuscrits sont datés ou datables du XIII^e au XV^e siècle. (XIII^e siècle : 7 ; XIII^e–XIV^e siècle : 4 ; XIV^e siècle : 47 ; XIV^e–XV^e siècle : 7 ; XV^e siècle : 15), mais un seul, daté de 1420–1421, a été écrit sur du papier occidental (vénitien, en l'occurrence). À partir du XVI^e siècle, la balance s'inverse en faveur du papier occidental (essentiellement vénitien) avec deux manuscrits uniquement écrits sur du papier oriental (encore sont-ils datés du début du XVI^e siècle!). Voir Zanetti, *Filigranes* 446. On peut difficilement tirer des conclusions en l'absence d'analyses plus vastes. Pour les documents mamlouks conservés à Venise, j'avais déjà indiqué l'étrange absence de papier occidental avant le consulat de Biagio Dolfin (1418–1420), alors qu'il devient largement majoritaire pour les deux années en question. Ici encore, il faut se garder de conclusions hâtives, mais il est indéniable que l'importation de papier occidental est devenue plus importante qu'elle ne l'avait jamais été au tout début du XV^e siècle. Voir Ashtor, *Levant trade* 210 et 597 (*sub* « paper exported to the Levant »). Intéressant à noter à plus d'un titre, le papier produit dans la péninsule ibérique n'apparaît pas dans les échanges

pas de l'écrasement du document après avoir été roulé sur lui-même⁴: il a d'abord été plié en deux, puis en quatre. On constate la présence d'une trace de mouillure dans le coin supérieur gauche qui doit être ancienne puisqu'on la retrouve sur plusieurs des documents arabes d'époque mamelouke conservés dans la *busta* 180⁵. Il est plus que probable que ces documents ont pris l'eau après leur arrivée à Venise où ils sont restés dans les mains de Lorenzo Dolfin avant d'entrer en possession des Procureurs de Saint-Marc⁶. Malgré cette tache, le texte est préservé dans sa totalité et la lecture n'en est pas entravée. Quelques points diacritiques sont indiqués, mais on ne trouve aucune signe orthoépique. Dans l'ensemble, il s'agit d'une écriture cursive aisément déchiffrable qui présente toutefois de nombreuses ligatures et abréviations qui sont détaillées dans le commentaire. Le verso est blanc.

Analyse⁷

Le 17 du mois de rabī 1 en l'an 823 (1^{er} avril 1420), le patron Nāṣir ibn 'Umar ibn Abū (sic) Bakr, connu sous le nom de Ibn al-Kādd [?] et originaire de Būlāq, a conclu un contrat avec un militaire en poste dans le port d'Alexandrie nommé Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Fakhr al-Dīn 'Uthmān. Celui-ci prévoit que ledit militaire sera transporté avec ses bagages et le tissu qui l'accompagne de la rive de Fuwwa à celle de Būlāq sur le bateau, du genre *'aqaba*, appartenant audit patron, pour un montant de 5 ducats vénitiens. La moitié exigible de cette somme avant le départ est fixée à 3 ducats. Le solde sera versé à l'arrivée. Un seul témoin, le notaire, a attesté la validité de la transaction.

commerciaux entre la Catalogne et les territoires mamlouks pour la période qui va de ca. 1330 à ca. 1430. Voir Coulon, *Barcelona* 307–427.

4 Contrairement à d'autres documents conservés dans la même *busta*. Voir Bauden, *L'Achat* 272.

5 Voir Bauden, *L'Achat* 272 et 304.

6 Voir Pedani, *The Mamluk* 141.

7 Cf. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte* 502: «Ein Transportvertrag zwischen einem Soldaten der alexandrinischen Garnison und dem Kapitän eines Nilschiffes, in dem der letztere sich gegen ein Entgelt in Höhe von 5,5 Golddukatun verpflichtet, Güter, Stoffe und Menschen (Einzelheiten werden nicht genannt) von Fuwwa (am Nilzweig Rosetta) nach Būlāq, dem Hafen Kairos, auf seinem Schiff zu transportieren. Bei Vertragsabschluss wurden 2,5 Dukaten bezahlt, die übrigen 3 Dukaten sollte der Kapitän nach der Ankunft in Būlāq erhalten. Der Vertrag wurde laut Gesetz und in Anwesenheit eines Zeugen aufgesetzt und mit dessen Unterschrift versehen. Datum 17. Rabī 1 803/6. November 1400 ».

Texte

- (١) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم يا لطيف
- (٢) عاقد الريس ناصر بن عمر بن ابو بكر عرف بابن الكاد {مع} من اهل بولاق والحاضر بشهو [ده]
- (٣) يوم (سي) بذفوة شه (باب) الدين احمد بن فخر الدين عثمان احد الاجناد بشغر الاسكندرية
- (٤) المحروس على حمله على ظهر مركبه العقبة المحملة العدة والالة والرجال
- (٥) على العادة وامتعته والقماش وللانفار رقية وسق السلامة
- (٦) يحمل ذلك من ساحل مدينة فوة والى ساحل بولاق مع سلا (م)ة الله تعالى
- (٧) باجرة مبلغها عن ذلك من الذهب الدكات البندقي المشخص خمس دكاتات نصف⁸ ذلك
- (٨) دكاتان ونصف الحال من ذلك ثلاث دكاتات مقبوضة بيد الريس المذكور باعترافه بذلك وبقيه
- (٩) الاجرة المذكور (ة) الى ال (ا) بلاغ. تعاقدنا على ذلك معاقدة شرعية (ة) بالايجاب والقبول حسب ما [فيه] به
- (١٠) وشهد عليها بذلك بت (ار) بخ سابع عشر شهر ربيع الاول سنة
- (١١) ثلاث وعشرين⁹ وثمان مائة
- ش (هد)ت عليها بذلك
- كتبه محمد بن عبد (د) الرحمن البهائي

Points diacritiques

- (١) الرحمن ؛ الرحيم ؛ لطيف ؛ عاقد ؛ ابو (٣) نفوة ؛ عمان ؛ الاحناد (٤) مركبه ؛ العقه (٥) وامتعته ؛ والقماش ؛ وللانفار ؛ رقيه ؛ وسق (٦) فوه ؛ بولاق ؛ تعالى (٨) ونصف ؛ مقبوضة ؛ وبقيه (٩) الاجره ؛ الي .

8 S. Labib s'est fourvoyé lorsqu'il parle d'un montant de 5,5 ducats d'or. Son erreur vient de ce qu'il a cru que la moitié payée était de 2,5 ducats et que le solde était de 3 ducats, alors que l'acompte est de 3 ducats et la moitié de la somme totale n'est indiquée que pour éviter toute falsification de cette somme. Le solde de deux ducats était payable à l'arrivée. Voir Labib, *Handelsgeschichte* 502.

9 823 et non 803 comme proposé par Labib, *Handelsgeschichte* 502.

Notes textuelles

1. Il peut arriver qu'une formule laudative adressée à Dieu ou invoquant sa bénédiction sur le prophète soit ajoutée à la *basmala*, bien que cette pratique reste relativement rare. On peut citer à titre indicatif les exemples suivants: *ḥasbunā llāh wa-ni'ma l-wakīl* (*P.Cair.Arab.* v 309, datable du III^e/IX^e siècle); *al-ḥamd li-llāh waḥdahū* (*Chrest.Khoury.* I 78, datable des III^e–IV^e siècles/IX^e–X^e siècles); *tawakkaltu alā llāh* (*P.Cair.Arab.* I 37 = *Chrest.Khoury.* I 21, daté de 393/1003); *al-ḥamd li-llāh wa-ṣallā llāh 'alā nabīyyinā Muḥammad wa-alā ālihi al-ṭayyibīn wa-sallama taslīman* (*Chrest.Khoury.* I 25, daté de 419/1028); *wa-mā tawfīqī illā bi-llāh 'alayhi tawakkaltu wa-huwa rabb al-'arsh* (*Chrest.Khoury.* II 1, daté de 444/1052); *wa-mā tawfīqī illā bi-llāh 'alayhi tawakkaltu wa-ilayhi unību* (*P.Cair.Arab.* I 68, daté de 459/1067); *allāh al-muwaffiq li-l-ṣawāb* (*P.Cair.Arab.* I 72, daté de 460/1068); *wa-l-ḥamd li-llāh ta'ālā* (Bauden, L'Achat daté de 818/1415); *wa-bihi nasta'in* (ASVe, Commissarie miste, busta 180, fascicolo IX, no. 2, daté de 821/1418); *wa-l-ḥamd li-llāh waḥdahū* (Bauden, L'Achat daté de 822/1419); *wa-ṣalātuhu 'alā sayyidinā Muḥammad wa-ālihi* (Bauden, The role daté de 822/1419); *wa-huwa ḥasbī* (*CPR XXVI* 45, daté de 874/1470); *wa-l-ḥamd li-llāh* (*CPR XXVI* 35, daté de 887/1482).

La *basmala* est ici suivie d'une invocation consistant en la particule du vocatif et un des quatre-vingt-dix-neuf noms de Dieu (*latīf*)¹⁰. Cette formule, au moins attestée dans deux documents découverts au Ḥaram de Jérusalem, reste rare¹¹.

2. *Al-Rayyis*. Comme le précise S. Hopkins¹², les mots respectant le schème *fā'il* se transforme, en moyen arabe, en *fay'il* qui donne ensuite *fayyil*. Il ne relevait qu'un *hapax* (*layyim*), mais la forme que nous avons ici pour *ra'īs*) *rayyis* est bien connue puisqu'elle figure même dans les dictionnaires classiques¹³. Le mot est répété avec le même *ductus* à la ligne 8.

Ibn Abū Bakr. Pour le non-respect de la déclinaison du mot *abū* en état d'annexion, voir Hopkins, *Studies* §162.i.

10 Elle n'a pas ici le sens de « Ô mon Dieu! », « Pour l'amour de Dieu! », qui est attesté par ailleurs. Voir Wehr, *A dictionary* 868 (s.v. *لطف*).

11 Jérusalem, al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf, docs. 1 et 308. Voir Little, *A catalogue* 31 et 34. On en trouvera un autre exemple dans un document rédigé par Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī (m. 1434), *Qahwat al-inshā'*, 120 (*latīf* sans la particule du vocatif).

12 Hopkins, *Studies* § 24a.

13 Voir Lane, vol. III, 996. Cette forme était d'ailleurs utilisée en chancellerie. Voir al-Qalqa-shandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*, 6:14.

Ibn al-Kādd [ma'a]. Il s'agit d'une lecture conjecturale. La lettre située après l'*alif* ressemble plus à un *dāl/dhāl* qu'à un *rā'* tandis que la lettre finale présente un tracé souvent rencontré pour le '*ayn/ghayn* dans cette position (voir toutefois la forme que prend précisément cette lettre dans la même position dans les mots *ma'a* (l. 6), *sābi'* et *rabi'* (l. 10)). On peut alors considérer que *ma'a* ne fait pas partie de la *nisba* et que la préposition fut écrite erronément par le notaire qui n'avait plus en tête qu'il avait introduit son texte par le verbe '*āqada* (transitif direct). Il n'aurait toutefois pas raturé le mot fautif au moment de la lecture. Une telle *nisba* n'est attestée ni dans les répertoires onomastiques ni dans les documents publiés jusqu'à présent. S. Labib l'avait interprétée comme étant al-Kārimī, lecture qui s'en rapproche, bien que moins convaincante, et qui fait référence à la catégorie des marchands d'épices, les Kārim¹⁴. La *nisba* est par ailleurs attestée¹⁵ et il n'aurait pas été impossible que le fils de l'un d'entre eux eût dû se reconvertir dans le transport fluvial pour des raisons économiques¹⁶. Il n'en reste pas moins que cette hypothèse perd tout son crédit quand on étudie attentivement le *ductus*.

Bi-shuhū[*dihī*]. Le mot est écrit en bout de ligne, légèrement surélevé, comme cela arrive fréquemment dans les documents de cette époque. Les deux dernières lettres ne sont pas visibles sur le document, mais elles pourraient être contenues dans le trait droit qui part de la base inférieure du *wāw*. Le notaire a manifestement manqué de place et il est probable qu'il a dû ajouter ce mot *a posteriori*.

3. *Yawma*(*ʾi*)*dh*. Le *ductus* ne présente aucune marque visible de la lettre *yā'* utilisée dans ce cas pour comme support de la *hamza*.

14 C'est ce que démontre une note de Fischel 1958, *Über die Gruppe 168* (note 2: « According to another communication from Prof. Cahen, Dr. Labib has found in the Archives of Venice a document of the year 1400 pertaining to an agreement between a Kārimī and a ship-captain for the transportation of commodities to Egypt with many interesting details»). Il s'agit bien du document décrit par S. Labib dans son ouvrage sur le commerce en Égypte (Labib, *Handelsgeschichte*) dont j'ai cité le résumé plus haut (voir note 8). S. Labib avait lu la date comme étant 803/1400, mais il avait passé sous silence cette interprétation de la *nisba*. D'autre part, c'est le patron de l'embarcation qui porte cette *nisba*, contrairement à ce qui est avancé par Fischel sur base d'une communication orale de Cl. Cahen.

15 Voir Wiet, *Les Marchands* 107 et al-Ashqar, *Tujjār* 472 (Maḥmūd ibn al-Kuwayk ibn Karīmī [!]). Voir aussi Sublet, 'Abd al-Laṭīf.

16 Sur les Kārimīs, voir *ibid.*; Fischel, *Über die Gruppe*; Labib, *Handelsgeschichte*; Ashtor, *The Kārimī*; Fischel, *The spice*; Goitein, *New light*; Labib, *Les Marchands*; al-Ashqar, *Tujjār*.

Shihāb al-Dīn. Le *ductus* de ce *laqab* correspond à une abréviation où l'*alif* et le *bā'* ont manifestement disparu, les deux mots étant liés ensemble.

Fakhr al-Dīn 'Uthmān. Le *laqab* aurait aussi pu être lu Muḥyī l-dīn¹⁷, mais ce dernier n'est jamais combiné avec l'*ism* 'Uthmān alors que Fakhr al-Dīn l'est presque systématiquement¹⁸.

Aḥad. L'*alif* est lié au *ḥā'*.

6. *Dhālik*. Le mot fut clairement ajouté après lecture du document. Le notaire n'a cependant pas pris la peine de signaler cet ajout supralinéaire en fin de document comme l'exigent les règles en vigueur en ce domaine¹⁹.

9. *Al-Madhkūr(a)*. La *tā' marbūṭa* a été oubliée par le notaire qui ne semble pas s'en être aperçu au moment de la lecture ou plutôt n'a-t-il pas considéré cette faute d'accord comme rédhibitoire.

Al-[I]blāgh. L'*alif* initial manque indubitablement et doit être restauré, car le mot *balāgh* ne signifie jamais « arrivée, destination. » On trouverait plutôt, pour cette acception, le terme *bulūgh*. *Iblāgh* laisse sous-entendre l'idée de livraison, de mener à destination qu'on ne peut traduire ici que par « arrivée » ou, dans un sens plus libre, « débarquement. »

Sharṭy(a). L'adjectif ne semble pas porter la marque de l'accord féminin avec le nom dont il dépend (*mu'āqada*). Le *yā'* descend manifestement sous la ligne. S'il avait été suivi de la *tā' marbūṭa*, sa forme eût été différente.

Ḥasaba mā [bihi/fihi]. Le mot apparaît à la suite de la formule légale d'offre et d'acceptation et juste avant celle de l'attestation. Il ne fait aucun doute qu'il est lié à celle qui le précède. De plus, le *ductus* n'offre guère de possibilités d'interprétation. Toutefois, la leçon que je propose reste conjecturale, car, à ma connaissance, elle n'est corroborée par aucun autre exemple attesté²⁰.

17 Comme je l'avais pensé dans un premier temps (Bauden, *The Mamluk* 153).

18 Voir Malti-Douglas, *The interrelationship* 41.

19 Voir al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab* 9:8.

20 La leçon *jazm^{an}*, à laquelle j'avais pensé, est improbable. Elle n'aurait été corroborée par aucun autre exemple, à l'exception de son emploi dans le langage juridique : on parle de *ḥukm jazm* quand le jugement est irrévocable. Le terme aurait donc été employé comme adjectif, mais sa forme correspond ici au *maṣdar*. Dans le cas qui nous occupe, ce dernier eût donc apparu dans la fonction d'un *zarf*. On trouve encore l'adjectif *jāzīm* couplé à *amr*, pour désigner une chose décidée, ferme. Voir Amari, *I Diplomi* 209 (l. 5), 217 (l. 6), 229 (l. 2). Il faut corriger, dans ces trois occurrences, la lecture امرًا حازمًا en امرًا جازمًا.

10. *Bi-t(ār)īkh*. Abbréviation que l'on trouve couramment dans les documents d'époque mamelouke²¹. La signature du notaire présente de nombreuses abréviations. La lecture de sa *nisba* est proposée par conjecture.

Traduction

- 1 Au nom de Dieu le Tout-miséricorde, le Miséricordieux. Ô [Toi qui es]
Bon!
- 2 Le patron Nāṣir ibn ʿUmar ibn Abū Bakr, connu sous le nom d'Ibn al-Kādd
{avec}, habitant à Būlāq et en présence de ses témoins
- 3 ce jour à Fuwwa, a conclu un contrat avec Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Fakhr
al-Dīn ʿUthmān, qui est soldat dans la place protégée d'Alexandrie,
- 4 pour le transporter sur le pont de son embarcation [du type] *al-ʿaqaba*,
qui est chargée de l'équipement, des accessoires et de l'équipage
- 5 comme à l'accoutumée, ainsi que ses effets et le textile, les individus ayant
des biens personnels/un capital, [et l'embarcation étant] chargée avec
sûreté.
- 6 Il portera cela de la rive de la ville de Fuwwa jusqu'à la rive de Būlāq à la
grâce de Dieu Très-Haut
- 7 pour un salaire dont le montant pour cela en ducats d'or vénitiens à
figures sera de cinq ducats, la moitié de cela étant
- 8 deux ducats et demi, la moitié de la partie exigible de cela étant de trois
ducats que le patron susdit reconnaît avoir reçus. Le solde
- 9 du salaire susdit sera [payé] à l'arrivée. Ils ont tous deux conclu un accord
légal sur cela par offre et acceptation selon ce qu'il [le document] con-
tient.
- 10 Témoignage a été pris de cela pour eux à la date du dix-sept rabīʿ I de l'an
11 huit cent vingt-trois [/1^{er} avril 1420].
J'ai témoigné de cela pour eux
Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bahāʿī l'a écrit.

Commentaire diplomatique

Dans sa récente étude sur le droit maritime, H. Khalilieh s'interroge, à juste titre, sur l'existence de contrats de transport maritime mis par écrit étant

21 Voir Bauden, *L'Achat* 273.

donné qu'aucun document de ce type n'a été mis au jour. Sur base de cet argument *ex silentio*, il avance l'hypothèse que ces contrats maritimes devaient être majoritairement conclus oralement, en partie aussi à cause de l'illettrisme qui devait frapper les parties contractantes²². Ce dernier argument est battu en brèche par la correspondance, plus qu'abondante, se référant aux activités commerciales des marchands que les documents de la Genizah du Caire, et plus récemment de Quṣayr al-Qadīm, ont permis de mettre en évidence²³. La question de l'absence de contrats de transport trouve, quant à elle, une réponse dans le document qui fait l'objet de cet article. Unique en son genre, celui-ci démontre que de tels contrats écrits existaient bel et bien. Plus intéressant encore, il nous permet d'étudier le formulaire de ce type de contrat de location particulier. Pour le droit musulman, il appartient à la catégorie des documents relatifs à la location (*al-ijāra*), matière à laquelle les juristes ou les notaires consacrent un chapitre dans leurs textes juridiques ou leurs recueils de modèles. Pour la période concernée, c'est l'ouvrage d'un auteur presque contemporain, al-Asyūṭī (*adhuc viv.* 889/1484), qui fournit les données les plus pertinentes²⁴. Étant égyptien, ce dernier était confronté quotidiennement aux problèmes que posait la rédaction de ce genre d'actes, fût-ce pour le transport fluvial ou maritime. Dans le chapitre consacré à la location, il aborde brièvement cette question en fournissant deux modèles de contrats²⁵: un premier consacré à la location d'une embarcation²⁶ et un second, plus restrictif, ne touchant que le transport de marchandises sur une embarcation²⁷. Ce sont ces modèles qui vont nous servir de fil rouge pour l'étude diploma-

22 Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 87: «The level of literacy probably played a key role in the ratification of verbal contracts in courts. Since illiterates made up the great majority of the population, they created difficulties for the legal and administrative systems. As a matter of fact, the overwhelming majority of shipping contracts in the Mediterranean during this period were probably oral and dependent upon consent of the parties. This would explain why very little written evidence has survived. Written contracts were of course drawn up and used as forms of proof in case of legal altercations among the contracting parties. In short, whether the contract was to be oral or in writing was decided by the parties themselves».

23 Pour les documents de la Genizah, on verra Goitein, *A Mediterranean society*. Pour ceux de Quṣayr al-Qadīm, voir Guo, *Commerce*.

24 al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir al-ʿuqūd*.

25 Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:233. Ces deux modèles ont été traduits par Khalilieh, *Islamic* 60–61; Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 89–90.

26 al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir: ṣūrat ijārat markab*. Cf. al-Samarqandī, *Kitāb al-Shurūṭ* 279.

27 al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir: wa-in kāna l-ittifāq ʿalā ḥaml shayʿ muʿayyan min makān muʿayyan ilā makān muʿayyan dafʿa wāhida*.

tique du document conservé à Venise. Ils nous permettront d'établir si celui-ci respecte le formulaire recommandé par al-Asyūṭī et, si oui, dans quelles mesures.

2. *Āqada*. Le terme introductif consiste en un verbe qui exprime la nature de la transaction. Il s'agit d'un contrat synallagmatique comportant des clauses réciproques, dont la plus importante est celle de l'offre et de l'acceptation²⁸. Par conséquent, les deux parties s'accordent pour remplir leurs devoirs et obligations réciproques. La location (*ijāra*) constitue une des catégories qui entrent dans le cadre du contrat (*ʿaqd*)²⁹. Si le contrat concerne la location d'une embarcation, donc d'un objet, celui-ci doit débiter par le terme *istaʿjara*. Lorsqu'il ne porte que sur le transport de marchandises ou de personnes, en conséquence d'un service, c'est le terme *ʿāqada* qui est préconisé³⁰.

Al-Rayyis. Conformément aux règles juridiques portant sur l'identification des parties, le document donne une description assez précise des deux personnes concernées. La première de ces parties correspond à la personne qui est propriétaire du bien, en l'occurrence le patron de l'embarcation désigné au moyen du terme *rayyis*. À côté des termes *muʿallim*, *rubbān* et *nākhūdhā*, plus fréquemment employés dans la littérature touchant à la navigation ou dans les documents, notamment de la Genizah, le mot *rayyis* s'est généralisé pour désigner le chef du navire et, par conséquent, celui qui est responsable de sa conduite, sans qu'entre en question le problème de la propriété³¹. Il est attesté, avec ce sens, déjà dans un document de la Genizah³². La description comporte l'obligation de donner le nom des personnes impliquées ainsi que leur filiation. Dans cette filiation, il est rare de trouver le nom du grand-père³³, ce qui est pourtant le cas ici. À cela s'ajoute la *shuhra*, comme l'indique la formule *urifa bi* (« connu sous le nom de »), qui est aussi recommandée quand elle existe³⁴. Dans notre cas, il est probable que cette appellation courante joue ici un autre rôle. Dans le cas des patrons et des propriétaires de navires,

28 Voir plus bas, commentaire pour la l. 9.

29 Pour la théorie légale du contrat, voir Rayner, *The theory* 87–88, 100–101.

30 al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*.

31 Voir Khalilieh, *Islamic* 42; Diem et Radenberg, *A dictionary s.r. r's*. Le mot *rayyis* s'est imposé au détriment des autres dans le dialecte égyptien. Voir Colin, Notes 75 (qui signale, à côté de la prononciation usuelle, une prononciation emphatique du *ṣīn*).

32 T.S. 12.434 (*rayyis al-markab*). Voir Khalilieh, *Islamic* 43 (note 26).

33 Rāḡib, *Actes de vente* 16 (§ 36).

34 Rāḡib, *Actes de vente* 17 (§ 40).

en effet, les documents de la Genizah prouvent que c'est souvent par leur nom courant que l'on faisait référence à leur embarcation³⁵. Il n'est donc pas impossible que la *shuhra* qui figure dans notre document ait joué ce même rôle.

2–3. *Min ahl Būlāq wa-l-ḥādir bi-shuhūdihi yawma'idh bi-Fuwwa*. La description va plus loin encore en précisant le lieu d'origine du patron et en insistant sur sa présence au moment de la conclusion du contrat. Excès de précaution dans le chef du notaire ? En tout cas, il a clairement senti le besoin de préciser ce point, bien qu'un contrat ne puisse être conclu en l'absence d'une des parties, à moins que l'une d'elles ne soit représentée par un mandataire³⁶.

La deuxième partie contractante, le passager, subit le même traitement. On notera toutefois que seul le nom de son père est fourni, mais qu'au contraire du patron, son surnom (*laqab*) ainsi que celui de son père sont donnés.

3–4. *Aḥad al-ajnād bi-thaghr al-Iskandariya al-mahrūs*. Le passager possède une fonction : c'est un soldat (*jundī*) en fonction dans le port d'Alexandrie.

4. *Alā ḥamlihi 'alā zahr markabihi*. Après la mention de la nature de la transaction (contrat, *mu'āqada*) et les noms des parties, al-Asyūṭī poursuit son modèle par la formule *'alā an yaḥmil lahu 'alā zahr markabihi*. Cette formule est presque identique à celle qui figure dans le document, à la différence que le notaire a préféré utiliser le *maṣdar* et qu'ici il s'agit d'un passager et de ses bagages, et non du transport de marchandises uniquement, comme l'envisageait al-Asyūṭī.

Al-Aqaba. Dans la section sur la vente, al-Asyūṭī traite des embarcations dont il donne, d'ailleurs, une liste particulièrement détaillée pour la période considérée³⁷. Comme tout bien destiné à la vente, une embarcation devait faire l'objet d'une description précise afin d'éviter toute plainte, quelle qu'elle soit, après la conclusion de la transaction. Cette précaution est également valable pour un contrat de transport, car le passager ou celui qui souhaitait faire transporter des marchandises devait être assuré que le voyage se ferait bien sur l'embarcation qu'il avait choisie. Le contrat était alors réputé conclu

35 Voir Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:309 (exemple d'une embarcation nommée Ibn al-Iskandar d'après son patron, 'Alī ibn al-Iskandar), 312 (plusieurs exemples : Ibn al-Basmālī, Mufarrij, Ibn Na'im, Ibn Khallāf) ; Khalilieh, *Islamic* 27–29 ; Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 40–43.

36 Rayner, *The theory* 110–111.

37 al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir* 1:78.

pour une embarcation bien définie (*safīna bi-ʿaynihā*)³⁸. Dans ce cas, le type d'embarcation devait être spécifié, sans entrer dans tous les détails requis pour la vente. Al-Asyūṭī, dans son formulaire de contrat de transport, utilise l'expression «*markabihi al-fulānī*,» renvoyant à la section sur la vente où il a précisément donné les différentes possibilités d'appellations pour les embarcations, qu'elles soient fluviales, maritimes ou habilitées à circuler à la fois sur le fleuve et en mer³⁹. Dans le cas de ce document, l'embarcation correspond au type dit «*al-ʿaqaba*.»⁴⁰ Ce mot désignait un bateau qui ressemblait à une grande barque et que le voyageur Vincent Stochove décrit de la sorte en 1631: «Les riches ont des basteaux exprés qui ne servent que pour ceste réjouissance publique [la crue du Nil], et les appellent Achaba, ils sont plats, la poupe en comprend plus de la moytié, elle est quarrée et entourée de balustres afin que ceux qui les mesnent n'incommodent les personnes qui sont assises dedans, elles sont par le bas couvertes de beaux et riches tapis de Perse, et le haut couvert de toile cirée, le dedans peint et diversifié par différentes sortes de couleurs, de façon que l'on y est comme dans une belle salle.»⁴¹ L'embarcation en question était courte et plate mais large, avec un voile carrée attachée à un mât central. La poupe était occupée par un château ou accastillage où se trouvait une grande salle garnie de tapis et de tissus. Il semble qu'à l'origine, elle était réservée au transport de la paille mais, avec le temps, elle fut aussi utilisée ponctuellement pour les festivités, entre autres celles liées à la crue du Nil⁴².

4–5. *Al-Muḥammala al-ʿudda wa-l-āla wa-l-rijāl ʿalā l-ʿāda*. C'est le mot *al-ʿaqaba* qui précède, d'où l'accord féminin. Toutefois, on peut considérer que l'accord a été fait ici avec le mot *markab* qui, à cette époque, pouvait être des

38 Voir Khalilieh, *Islamic* 61–62; Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 89.

39 al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir* 1:233.

40 Ce type est mentionné par al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir* 1:78.

41 Stochove, *Voyage en Égypte* 34–35.

42 Voir Dozy, *Supplément* 2:146–147; Kindermann, «Schiff» 66–67; Colin, Notes 79; al-Nakhīlī, *Al-Sufun* 101–102. Voici la description précise qu'en donne le voyageur vénitien Alessandro Magno, qui l'emprunta entre Rosette et Būlāq en juin/juillet 1561: «On en trouve de deux sortes [germe]: l'une avec une voile latine se nomme *cacabe*, l'autre avec une voile carrée se nomme *acabe*. Presque toutes ont un mât de misaine. Au dernier niveau supérieur de la poupe, on érige des cloisons: il en est de même au niveau intermédiaire et les passagers construisent leurs propres abris sur cette poupe. Il en existe beaucoup de grande taille qui ont quatre voire six cabines sur cette poupe et parmi elles nombreuses sont celles qui jouent le rôle de navires.» Magno, *Voyages* 264.

deux genres⁴³, même si c'est le genre féminin qui s'est finalement imposé, notamment dans le dialecte égyptien⁴⁴.

Parmi les recommandations d'al-Asyūṭī pour la vente d'une embarcation, il indique qu'il y a lieu de préciser quels sont les équipements (*'udad*) et les accessoires (*ālāt*) faisant partie intégrante de celle-ci et donc de la vente⁴⁵, sans qu'il en dresse la liste. Celle-ci est par contre fournie par un autre formulaire rédigé par al-Jazīrī (m. 585/1189)⁴⁶: on y englobait le gréement, les voiles, le mât, les grapins, les cordes, les rames, etc⁴⁷. Notre document se contente de préciser que l'ensemble de ces équipements et accessoires ainsi que l'équipage sont présents, sans en donner le détail, puisque le notaire s'en dispense en précisant que tous ces éléments sont conformes à l'usage (*'alā l-'āda*).

5. *Wa-amti'atihi wa-l-qumāsh*. Outre le passager, on se doit également de signaler ses effets personnels et ses bagages. En cas de problème dû à une faute, il faut que le propriétaire des biens puisse obtenir réparation⁴⁸. Le passager, dans le cas qui nous occupe, embarquait avec ses effets personnels (*amti'a*) et du tissu⁴⁹. Ces marchandises devaient normalement faire l'objet d'une description plus précise, particulièrement en matière de poids et de mesures, car le bon chargement de l'embarcation en dépendait⁵⁰.

Wa-li-l-anfār raqaba. Cette expression n'est pas signalée dans les modèles de formulaires consultés. Elle se réfère évidemment à une possession des passagers désignés à l'aide du terme «individus.» Le mot *raqaba* couvre plusieurs acceptions. Il désigne, avant tout, le cou et, par synecdoque, une personne,

43 On trouve parfois des traces de cette ambivalence dans les textes où on passe du masculin au féminin dans une même phrase! Voir, par exemple, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Procuratori di San Marco, Commissarie miste, busta 180, fascicolo IX, no. 5 (ll. 5–6: *wašala al-thaḡhr markab lahā 'an al-Bunduqīyya muddat khamsīn yawm*; l. 9: *hādhā l-markab*). Les mss. dits «Galland» des *Mille et une nuits*, datables du xv^e siècle et originaires de Syrie, offrent d'autres exemples tout aussi parlants. Voir Halflants, *Le Conte* 116–117.

44 Colin, Notes 75 (note 3).

45 al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir* 1:78. Cette recommandation est répétée succinctement dans la section sur la location (al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir* 1:233).

46 Dans *al-Maqṣid al-maḥmūd fī talkhīṣ al-'uqūd*. On en trouvera la traduction dans Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 89.

47 Voir aussi Colin, Notes 62–75.

48 Voir Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 99–105.

49 Il ne semble pas que ce soit l'acception plus générale relevée par Amari qui soit d'application ici: marchandises en général ou petites choses. Voir Amari, *IDiplomi* 492 («mercanzie in generale e robe minute»).

50 Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 89.

puis un esclave⁵¹. Par métonymie, on en arrive à l'idée du droit de propriété (*milk raqaba*)⁵². On trouve aussi une autre acception plus technique tirée du sens initial: la peau du cou⁵³ du chameau servait à fabriquer un sac destiné au transport de la poudre d'or⁵⁴. Dozy mentionne encore l'expression *raqabat al-māl* dans le sens de capital ou somme d'argent⁵⁵. De toutes ces significations, seules celles de la propriété en général ou du capital me paraissent les plus plausibles. On voit mal comment expliquer que tous les passagers étaient accompagnés d'un esclave. Par contre, le fait de préciser que chaque passager emportait avec lui des possessions, des biens personnels, ou encore que chacun d'entre eux possédait une somme d'argent, va de pair avec la formule qui suit. Entre ces deux possibilités, j'ai préféré ne pas trancher. En effet, les passagers étaient censés emporter tous les éléments qui devaient leur permettre de passer le voyage dans les meilleures conditions: vêtements, nourriture, toilette et couchage⁵⁶ mais les passagers pouvaient aussi être soucieux de voir mentionner qu'ils voyageaient avec un capital. Dans les deux cas, ils devaient être en mesure d'obtenir réparation en cas de naufrage.

Il reste une autre possibilité de lecture: *wa-l-anfār*. Dans ce cas, il était accompagné de personnes, qui étaient peut-être celles qui gardèrent le contrat à l'arrivée: le consul vénitien et ses hommes qui l'accompagnaient. L'interprétation du mot qui suit reste alors tout aussi problématique.

Wasq al-salāma. Cette formule apparaît dans le premier modèle relatif à la location d'une embarcation que donne al-Asyūṭī dans son traité⁵⁷. Elle vient préciser les mots qui précèdent dans ce formulaire: le locataire pourra jouir du bien loué en le chargeant avec sûreté. Cette clause est fondamentale: ici, elle garantit que le patron de la barque s'engage à ne pas charger son embarcation plus qu'il n'est permis. Pour éviter les surcharges, on marquait une ligne de flottaison sur chaque bateau destiné au transport de marchandises et de personnes. Tant que cette ligne restait visible au-dessus de l'eau, le chargement était considéré comme sûr⁵⁸.

51 Lane, *Madd al-Qāmūs* 3:299 (s.v. رقبة).

52 Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 47.

53 Lane, *Madd al-Qāmūs* 3:300 (s.v. مرقب و رقبة).

54 Dozy, *Supplément* 1:546 (s.v. رقبة).

55 Ibid.

56 Khalilieh, *Islamic* 56–57; Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 75.

57 al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhīr* 1:233.

58 Khalilieh, *Islamic* 31–32; Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 36–37.

6. *Min sāhil .. wa-ilā sāhil*. Après la mention des biens transportés, le formulaire prévoit que le contrat doit indiquer précisément les points de départ et d'arrivée. Celui-ci étant conclu pour un parcours déterminé, le montant réclamé couvre ce transport jusqu'à destination, quelles que soient les circonstances⁵⁹. Al-Asyūṭī l'exprime en ces termes: *min al-balad al-fulānī ilā l-balad al-fulānī*. Notre document met en évidence que le transport se fait d'un port à un autre, exprimé au moyen du terme *sāhil* (rive), plutôt que d'une ville à une autre (*balad*). Dans le cas du point de départ, c'est de la rive de la ville (*madīna*) de Fuwwa qu'il s'agit, alors que pour l'arrivée, on ne parle que de la rive de Būlāq. Cela s'explique par le fait que Būlāq n'est pas une ville à part entière, mais un simple quartier du Caire.

Ma'a salāmat allāh ta'ālā. Ce transport est assuré à la grâce de Dieu. Al-Asyūṭī préconise l'emploi de cette expression sous une forme plus complète: *ma'a salāmat allāh ta'ālā wa-'awnihī* (à la grâce de Dieu Très-Haut et avec Son aide). En d'autres termes, le transport fluvial ou maritime n'est assuré que dans la mesure où c'est Dieu qui est souverain. Le transport sur le Nil, à cette époque, est loin d'être une croisière: les éléments naturels peuvent toujours être la cause de retards ou de dégâts, parfois d'un naufrage. À ceux-ci s'ajoutent les imprévus comme les attaques de pirates qui exerçaient cette activité y compris sur le fleuve⁶⁰.

7. *Bi-ujra mablaghuhā*. Les clauses du contrat déterminées, le notaire passe ensuite à la détermination du salaire ou de la rétribution qui est prévu pour le service rendu ou la location. La formule est conforme aux indications d'al-Asyūṭī et se rencontre, par ailleurs, fréquemment dans les contrats.

Al-Dhahab al-dukāt al-bunduqī al-mushkhaṣ. Conformément aux règles juridiques, le montant est dû dans une devise ou un numéraire qui doivent être spécifiés. Les documents conservés à Venise mettent en évidence, pour l'époque concernée, la prépondérance du numéraire vénitien, en l'occurrence le ducat⁶¹: ASVe, Commissarie miste, busta 180, fasc. IX, no. 2: *dukāt dhahab firanjī*; ASVe, Commissarie miste, busta 180, fasc. IX, no. 7: *al-dhahab al-dukāt al-firanjī al-bunduqī al-wāzin*; ASVe, Commissarie miste, busta 180, fasc. IX, no. 9: *al-dhahab al-dukāt al-firanjī al-bunduqī*⁶². Que le numéraire, quand il

59 Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 132–133.

60 Khalilieh, *Islamic* 142–143.

61 Les propos d'un contemporain, E. Piloti, font écho à cette situation: « Et ne prent-on ducats se non qu'ilz soyent venitiens ». Voir Piloti, *Traité* 108.

62 Sur les cinq contrats conservés, seul un prévoit un paiement dans une devise locale: ASVe, Commissarie miste, busta 180, fasc. IX, no. 12: *dirham fulūs*.

est étranger, soit uniquement vénitien et non florentin, n'a rien de surprenant puisque les transactions concernaient des Vénitiens essentiellement. D'autre part, le ducat vénitien jouissait à cette époque d'une renommée légèrement surfaite dans tout le bassin méditerranéen, et particulièrement en Égypte, au grand dam des sultans mamelouks. Deux ans avant la date de ce document de transport, al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh décidait de faire interdire l'usage du ducat pour les transactions ayant lieu sur ses territoires⁶³. Cette prohibition ne fut pas vraiment suivie d'effets puisque les documents conservés à Venise font état de paiements effectués en ducats vénitiens dans les mois qui suivirent⁶⁴.

Dans notre document, c'est toujours le ducat qui sert de monnaie de paiement, mais les termes utilisés pour le décrire diffèrent quelque peu de ceux rencontrés dans les trois autres témoins conservés aux Archives de l'État à Venise. Dans ces derniers, le ducat est toujours qualifié de vénitien (*bunduqī*) tout en étant décrit, préalablement, comme franc (*firanjī*). L'appellation «vénitien» vient donc préciser le terme de «franc». Cette origine plus générale n'est pas soulignée ici. Par contre, la provenance vénitienne est renforcée par le mot qui lui est adjoint (*al-mushkhas*)⁶⁵. Le *ductus* ne laisse aucun doute quant à sa lecture. Ce terme fait référence aux figures qui ornaient le ducat vénitien sur ses deux côtés : à l'avant, le doge en position assise recevant le gonfalon des mains de saint Marc ; au revers, le Christ. Al-Qalqashandī, dans la description qu'il en donne⁶⁶, confond les deux personnages avec les saints Pierre et Paul. Le terme arabe recouvrait donc une connotation négative et, lorsqu'il fut décidé, en 829/1425, de mettre sur le marché une nouvelle monnaie d'or mamelouke, l'*ashrafi*, pour contrer la popularité du ducat et des autres monnaies d'or étrangères, c'est précisément ce terme qu'utilise Ibn Taghrī Birdī pour parler du monnayage des Francs «qui porte les insignes de leur infidélité.»⁶⁷

Niṣf dhālik. Afin d'éviter la falsification du prix, la mention de la moitié du prix est requise, mais pas toujours respectée⁶⁸. Elle apparaît bien ici.

63 Bacharach, *The dinar* 85–86.

64 Bauden, *L'Achat* 285.

65 Cf. Dozy, *Supplément* 1:735 renseigne aussi une autre vocalisation d'après le *Tāj al-'arūs* d'al-Zabīdī (*mashkhas*). Popper (p. 46) donne *mushakhkhas* sur la base d'Ibn Taghrī Birdī. Au XIX^e siècle, ce terme (*mushakhkhas*) est toujours en usage en Égypte où, en parlant de monnaie, il signifie «comptant». Voir Von Kremer, *Beiträge* 1: 82 (d'après al-Jabartī).

66 al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā* 3:441.

67 Popper, *Egypt and Syria* 1:46–47.

68 Voir Bauden, *L'Achat* 286; Rāḡib, *Actes de vente* 43–44 (§ 113).

8. *Al-Ḥāll min dhālik*. Le premier terme désigne la partie exigible au moment de la conclusion du contrat. Cette partie peut représenter le montant total ou partiel du prix convenu. Dans le cas qui nous occupe, trois ducats ont été réceptionnés par le patron qui reconnaît en avoir pris possession (*maqḅūḍa bi-yad ... bi-tirāfihi bi-dhālik*).

8–9. *Wa-baqīyat al-ujra al-madhkūr[a] ilā l-[i]blāgh*. Le montant payé ne représentant qu'une partie du prix total convenu, le solde sera versé à destination. Dans sa majorité, la littérature juridique prévoyait, pour ce genre de contrat, que le paiement total devait se faire à destination, du moins pour le transport maritime. Ce document établit que ce n'était pas toujours le cas. Bien au contraire, un paiement partiel correspondant au moins à la moitié du montant total était généralement réclamé, comme le prouvent les documents de la Genizah⁶⁹. Al-Asyūṭī se démarquait en cette matière puisqu'il précise que le montant peut être perçu avant le départ soit en entier, soit partiellement, soit encore être payé en plusieurs fois⁷⁰. La pratique contemporaine du document confirme donc le formulaire de ce dernier.

9. *Ta'āqadā ... mu'āqada sharḥya bi-l-ijāb wa-l-qabūl*. Le contrat se termine par cette formule consacrée. En effet, l'offre et l'acceptation scellent la transaction, chacune des parties le faisant en connaissance de cause⁷¹.

11. Pour éviter tout ajout postérieur à la rédaction de l'acte, on constate que les notaires prenaient soin de terminer la ligne soit par une formule religieuse réservée à cet usage dans les documents (*ḥashunā llāh wa-ni'ma l-wakīl*), soit de faire usage de la *kashīda* qui consiste à allonger le trait reliant les deux dernières lettres du mot terminant la phrase⁷². C'est ce dernier procédé qui est visible ici.

Dernier élément qui a son importance, deux témoins de sexe masculin⁷³ au minimum, dont l'un était généralement le scribe et l'autre un témoin profes-

69 En cela, la pratique correspondait à celle en vigueur dans le droit maritime byzantin. Voir Khalilieh, *Islamic* 64–65; Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 125. Goitein avance plutôt l'idée que la majeure partie du paiement du frêt se faisait à l'arrivée, sauf pour le transport maritime où une avance était réclamée. Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:312 et 342.

70 al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir* 1:233.

71 Bauden, *L'Achat* 286.

72 Ces deux systèmes sont indépendamment mis en œuvre dans les deux documents publiés dans Bauden, *L'Achat*.

73 C'est un verset coranique qui en constitue la base juridique indiscutable (II: 282).

sionnel, du moins à l'époque qui nous concerne⁷⁴, devaient attester de leur présence au moment de la conclusion du contrat. Comme on peut le constater, ce document a été rédigé par un unique témoin dont on trouve la signature au bas à droite. En cela, il était dépourvu de valeur probatoire en cas de litige, mais ne pouvait nullement être considéré comme caduc au regard du droit⁷⁵.

Commentaire historique

Ce contrat de transport, conclu dans la ville de Fuwwa par un militaire en garnison dans le port d'Alexandrie en 1420, prévoyait qu'il serait emmené à la grâce de Dieu de cet endroit jusqu'à Būlāq, le principal point d'abordage à cette époque dans la capitale de l'empire mamlouk. Document unique en son genre, il permet de traiter la question du transport fluvial au début du xv^e siècle. Pour ce faire, l'historien dispose de plusieurs sources que l'on peut classer comme suit:

- des documents conservés évoquent le transport sur le Nil de manière fragmentaire : il s'agit de notes de compte, de lettres qui donnent des renseignements assez précis sur l'itinéraire, la durée et les conditions du voyage, mais dont les données restent malheureusement parcellaires quant au coût du transport des personnes et des marchandises, car elles sont généralement globales⁷⁶. De tels documents concernent essentiellement les périodes plus anciennes et figurent dans les riches fonds de la Genizah. Ils ont été particulièrement bien étudiés depuis les travaux de Goitein⁷⁷. Les papyrus peuvent aussi apporter leur lot d'informations, bien que plus rarement⁷⁸.

74 Il est incontestable qu'à l'époque mamelouke cette professionnalisation du témoin était bien établie. Voir Bauden, *L'Achat* 318.

75 Rāġīb, *Actes de vente* 105 (§ 282).

76 Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:339 («The details required for an exhaustive study of the subject – the ports of embarkation and destination, description of the consignment, its weight and value, the freight and the customs paid – are rarely given in full, and very often all the expenses incurred during a journey (namely, the freight, customs and other dues) are lumped together»).

77 Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* vol. I, chapitre IV (Travel and Seafaring); Udovitch, *Time, the sea*.

78 Sijpesteijn, *Travel and trade* (lettre datable de 117/735 donnant un itinéraire et la liste des frais encourus).

- les ouvrages à caractère juridique (théorie légale, pratique du droit, recueils de modèles, collections de *fatwā-s*) fournissent le cadre dans lequel les transactions liées au transport fluvial sont conclues. S'ils sont avares en données factuelles (tous frais liés au transport), ils permettent de mieux comprendre comment le contrat était établi et quels étaient les devoirs et obligations des deux parties⁷⁹.
- les ouvrages à caractère historique et géographique sont aussi particulièrement utiles pour les informations qu'ils donnent, fût-ce de manière anecdotique, sur les ports, les canaux et leur état, les itinéraires et les taxes⁸⁰.
- enfin, les récits de voyage, rédigés soit par des voyageurs occidentaux, marchands ou pèlerins, ou par des musulmans généralement de passage en Égypte au cours du périple qui les conduisait au pèlerinage à La Mecque, restent des sources précieuses. Ces voyageurs étaient en effet souvent attentifs aux frais liés à leur séjour et ils ne manquaient pas une occasion pour se plaindre des exactions dont ils avaient été victimes⁸¹.

Ces sources mettent en évidence que le trajet Alexandrie-Le Caire (port de Fustât, puis, plus tard, Būlāq) pouvait être accompli de différentes manières et selon plusieurs itinéraires, selon les époques considérées :

- soit par voie fluviale d'un point à l'autre, en employant, entre Alexandrie et le Nil (bras de Rosette dit branche bolbitine), un canal ;
- soit un trajet mixte, par voies fluviale et terrestre, à dos d'âne, de mule ou de chameau⁸², ou par voies maritime (Méditerranée) et fluviale⁸³ ;
- soit, enfin, uniquement par voie terrestre, la plus longue, la moins sûre et la plus coûteuse de toutes les possibilités.

79 Ces sources ont été particulièrement exploitées par Khalilieh, *Islamic*; Khalilieh, *Admiralty*.

80 Ces données ont été rassemblées assez exhaustivement par Toussoun, *Mémoire sur les anciennes* et Toussoun, *Mémoire sur l'histoire*. On complétera par al-Makhzūmī, *al-Minhāj*.

81 On verra le panorama très complet qui est donné de ces sources dans Hairy et Sennoune, *Géographie historique* et A. Graboïš, *La Description*.

82 C'était le cas de l'auteur de la lettre datable de 117/735 : il voyagea de Fustât à Rosette par bateau et, ensuite, de Rosette à Alexandrie sur un âne ou une mule. Voir Sijpesteijn, *Travel and trade* 116. Sur la route entre Rosette et Alexandrie, voir Combe 1929.

83 Voir, par exemple, pour cette deuxième possibilité, le témoignage de Bernard de Breydenbach en 1484 *apud* Combe, Alexandrie 121.

L'élément décisif pour déterminer quel itinéraire serait suivi et quels moyens de transport seraient employés était la saison. À l'époque considérée, la branche canopique qui reliait anciennement Alexandrie au fleuve était insuffisamment irriguée et trop ensablée pour permettre sa navigation sur tout son tracé. Outre le souci de permettre le transport des personnes et des marchandises de et vers Alexandrie par voie fluviale, considérée comme la plus rapide, il s'agissait aussi d'alimenter la ville d'Alexandrie en eau douce⁸⁴. La solution apportée à diverses époques de l'ère musulmane consistait à augmenter le débit d'eau en procédant à des captages situés plus en aval⁸⁵. Ces points de captage portaient tous de la branche bolbitine qui se jette à la mer à hauteur de Rosette⁸⁶. Sous le règne du sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, en 1310 précisément, le besoin se fit sentir de procéder à de nouveaux travaux pour combattre l'ensablement de la branche canopique. Un canal fut construit entre la branche bolbitine, à hauteur d'al-'Aṭf, bourgade située sur la rive gauche du Nil vis-à-vis de la ville de Fuwwa, et l'extrême fin du parcours de la branche canopique, plus en aval donc, longeant ainsi le lac d'Edkū⁸⁷. Ce canal, qui prit le nom de ce sultan (al-Nāṣiriya), joua son rôle pendant quelques décennies⁸⁸ mais, en 1368, il fallut déjà procéder à un curage⁸⁹, signe que l'ensablement et la subsidence étaient inexorables. Si navigation il y avait, elle était indubitablement assurée pendant les mois de crue, entre avril et octobre⁹⁰. En 1384, Frescobaldi et ses compagnons florentins quittèrent la ville d'Alexandrie le 5

84 Les nombreuses citernes de la ville étaient remplies durant la crue, à partir du printemps, et c'est sur ces réserves en eau que la ville vivait jusqu'à celle de l'année suivante. Voir Piloti, *Traité* 65–66 (même information fournie par Ghillebert de Lannoy en 1422, Piloti, *Traité* 65–66 note a).

85 Pour la géographie historique du Delta à l'époque musulmane, sur base des sources anciennes, voir Guest, *The delta*. On trouvera un tracé des différents canaux qui ont relié la ville d'Alexandrie au Nil à travers l'histoire dans Kahle, *Zur Geschichte* entre les pages 82–83; Hairy et Sennoune, *Géographie* 276.

86 Voir Hairy et Sennoune, *Géographie* 250.

87 Les travaux ont sans doute remis en fonction un ancien bras puisqu'il existait déjà une jonction entre Fuwwa et Alexandrie au XI^e siècle. C'est ainsi qu'elle est mentionnée dans des documents de la Genizah. Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:295, 297, 299.

88 Sigoli signale la présence d'une écluse sur ledit canal en 1384, signe que l'on pouvait régler le débit. Voir Frescobaldi, *Visit* 164.

89 Hairy et Sennoune, *Géographie* 250.

90 Il semble que ce fût le cas depuis au moins l'époque fatimide. Vers la fin du mois d'octobre 1140, un marchand informait son correspondant au Caire que d'ici peu le canal ne serait plus praticable pendant plusieurs mois. Voir Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:298.

octobre⁹¹. Ils firent l'équivalent d'un mille à dos de mule et arrivèrent au canal où ils embarquèrent dans une germe (en ar. *jarm*, barque) qui les conduisit jusqu'à Fuwwa d'une traite⁹². Ces propos sont confirmés par un autre voyageur, Brancacci, qui voyagea deux ans après notre soldat (1422), en empruntant le même itinéraire que Frescobaldi, toujours au moment de la crue : parti d'Alexandrie à cheval, le 30 août, il rejoignit un port situé, dit-il, à 3 milles de la ville où il embarqua sur une germe qui le conduisit jusqu'à Fuwwa⁹³. L'année suivante (826/1423), le sultan Barsbāy décida d'entreprendre des travaux destinés à rendre ce canal navigable à nouveau toute l'année. L'entreprise dura 90 jours, mais son effet fut de courte durée⁹⁴.

Sur base de ces données, il est donc établi que le canal partait à peu de distance d'Alexandrie et que le voyage se faisait en une traite jusqu'au point de captage situé à al-'Aṭf, sans changer d'embarcation. En chemin, les voyageurs s'étonnent des nombreuses petites villes plus commerçantes qu'agricoles situées en bordure, conséquence de l'incessant va-et-vient de barques transportant tant marchandises que passagers⁹⁵. À ce stade, l'embarcation marquait un arrêt le long de la rive de la ville de Fuwwa, qui est la plus souvent mentionnée dans les récits de voyages⁹⁶. Elle est décrite comme une ville d'importance⁹⁷ avec ses marchés et boutiques, entourée qu'elle est de nom-

91 En 1440, Piloti de Crète fait remarquer que les bateaux arrivent du Nil jusqu'à Alexandrie par ce même canal. Il s'agit à nouveau de la période de crue (septembre). Voir Piloti, *Traité* 183 (« Au mois de septembre attendons en Dieu que aurons la terre d' Alexandrie, qui est au temps que le flume est creu, et sez sarme [= *jarm*], par la voye du Calis [= *khalij*], viennent jusques aux murs de la terre »).

92 Frescobaldi, *Visit* 42. C'était encore le cas un an plus tard. Voir Kahle, *Zur Geschichte* 77–78. On signalera que des bateaux musulmans pouvaient évidemment remonter le Nil depuis la Méditerranée par l'embouchure de Rosette, et ce jusqu'au Caire. Voir Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:296. Ce fut aussi le cas pour des bateaux provenant du *dār al-ḥarb*, sans doute sous bonne escorte, mais cette facilité leur fut déniée à partir des croisades. On en trouve encore des occurrences dans les documents de la Genizah (Udovitch, *Time, the sea* 522).

93 Brancacci, *Diario* 169. S'il faut en croire Gucci, les chevaux étaient normalement réservés aux militaires et aux gens d'un certain rang. Les voyageurs étrangers n'avaient le droit de chevaucher que des ânes ou des mules. Voir Frescobaldi, *Visit* 96.

94 Kahle, *Zur Geschichte* 78–79.

95 Wiet, *Les communications* 244.

96 Graboïs, *La description* 533.

97 Belon du Mans, en 1553, exagère sans doute quand il la dit presque aussi grande que la capitale. *Apud* Maspero et Wiet, *Matériaux* 141.

breux vergers et de cultures en tout genre⁹⁸, notamment de canne à sucre⁹⁹. En 1384, Frescobaldi la définit comme une forteresse sans murailles¹⁰⁰. D'après ses indications, on comprend que les bateaux qui arrivaient à cet endroit marquaient un arrêt pour remplir des obligations liées sans doute au fisc et à la douane. Les passagers passèrent la nuit à bord, y prenant aussi leur repas, pour éviter des frais supplémentaires ainsi que pour des raisons de sécurité¹⁰¹. Il n'y eut pas de transbordement à Fuwwa et on comprend donc que c'est la même embarcation qui les conduisit d'Alexandrie jusqu'au Caire.

Le soldat qui conclut le contrat de transport fluvial était en garnison à Alexandrie. Si l'on considère qu'il a conclu ce contrat à Fuwwa, on peut légitimement se demander s'il a accompli le voyage séparant Alexandrie de la branche bolbitine en bateau. La date du contrat (1 avril 1420) indique que nous étions au tout début de la crue, à un moment où le débit du Nil n'était pas encore suffisant pour alimenter le canal jusqu'à Alexandrie. Il a donc dû prendre un autre moyen de transport, probablement le cheval, jusqu'à l'endroit où la navigation était possible. Le fait qu'il a dû conclure un contrat de Fuwwa au Caire démontre qu'il est soit arrivé directement à cheval à Fuwwa ou, s'il a pris une embarcation, qu'il devait en changer à cette jonction, car un nouveau contrat impliquait des frais supplémentaires et ne faisait qu'augmenter le coût du transport jusqu'à la destination finale. Dans ce cas, cela signifierait aussi que certaines embarcations étaient spécialisées dans la liaison reliant Alexandrie à Fuwwa, ce qui n'est pas impossible. Les témoignages des pèlerins occidentaux

98 Labib, *Handelsgeschichte* 301.

99 Labib, *Handelsgeschichte* 319 et 421.

100 Frescobaldi, *Visit* 43. Pour les monuments historiques qu'on pouvait encore y voir en 1908, voir Massignon, Note 20–22 (la plus ancienne inscription relevée par Massignon fut trouvée sur le minbar de la mosquée al-Sabā'. Elle datait de 817/1414–1415).

101 Frescobaldi, *Visit* 165. Brancacci, en 1422, mentionne lui aussi un arrêt à Fuwwa, pour se rafraîchir et se reposer, jusqu'au départ pour Le Caire au moment des vêpres. Voir Brancacci, *Diario* 169. Les passagers sont censés emporter leurs victuailles pour toute la durée du voyage. Voir Khalilieh, *Islamic* 56; Khalilieh, *Admiralty* 75. Ibn Baṭṭūta apporte des précisions à ce sujet: «Celui qui navigue sur le Nil n'a pas besoin d'emporter des provisions de route, car toutes les fois qu'il veut descendre sur le bord du fleuve, il peut le faire, soit pour vaquer à ses ablutions ou à la prière, soit pour acheter des vivres et autres objets. Des marchés se suivent sans interruption depuis la ville d'Alexandrie jusqu'au Caire, et depuis le Caire jusqu'à la ville d'Assouan». *Apud* Wiet, *Les communications* 246. Dans le cas de voyageurs étrangers au *dār al-islām*, on comprend qu'il était plus intéressant pour eux de partir avec leurs provisions de bouche acquises à Alexandrie, car ils étaient conscients que le prix des marchandises serait inmanquablement plus élevé en chemin eu égard à leur origine.

font état d'un transport fluvial dans une même embarcation d'Alexandrie au Caire pour la simple raison que la saison y était propice.

S'agissant de la durée d'un tel périple, les différentes sources font état d'une moyenne située entre 5 à 6 jours¹⁰², mais il n'était pas rare d'arriver à destination au bout de 8 jours. L'état de navigabilité du canal, la saison, le climat, la direction et d'autres facteurs externes pouvaient raccourcir ou allonger cette durée. En 1384, Frescobaldi et ses compagnons quittèrent Alexandrie le 5 octobre et arrivèrent au Caire dans la nuit (2 h du matin) du 11 du même mois. Toutefois, dès le 6 octobre au soir, donc le lendemain de leur départ, ils arrivaient à Fuwwa, et ce en comptant le trajet effectué à dos de mule pour rejoindre le canal¹⁰³. En 1422, Brancacci ne mit pas plus de temps pour parcourir la même distance. Il arriva au Caire après seulement quatre jours de voyage¹⁰⁴. Par contre, en 1447, un pèlerin musulman, al-Qalašādī, mit 8 jours pour rallier Būlāq au départ d'Alexandrie¹⁰⁵.

Quant au coût d'un tel voyage, les sources donnent aussi de précieuses informations, même si elles doivent être recoupées avec d'autres données. Dans les documents de la Genizah, les frais mentionnés font toujours état d'une somme globale dont il est difficile de retrancher avec précision le coût du transport. Le frêt des marchandises comprenait, en effet, la plupart du temps, le prix du transport de la personne accompagnante¹⁰⁶. Notre document ne s'écarte pas de cette pratique: le soldat paie 5 ducats pour le transport de sa propre personne, ses effets personnels et une quantité de textile. En guise de comparaison, Frescobaldi et ses 11 compagnons de voyage payèrent, en 1384, pour le trajet Alexandrie-Le Caire un total de 8 ducats, soit 3/4 de ducat par personne. Deux ans avant notre soldat, Brancacci donna, pour deux personnes, 1 ducat et 8 *soldi* pour le voyage jusqu'à Fuwwa¹⁰⁷ et 6 ducats, 2 livres et 8 *soldi* pour le trajet Fuwwa-Le Caire¹⁰⁸. En 1481, Meshullam de Volterre, juif italien, paya 30 *mu'ayyadi*-s¹⁰⁹ pour le voyage en bateau de Fuwwa au Caire. Seize ans plus tard, Arnold von Harff acquitta un ducat pour le voyage par bateau de Rosette

102 Wiet, *Les Communications* 244; Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:299.

103 Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:43–45, 96–98.

104 Brancacci, *Diario* 169 (départ d'Alexandrie le 30 juillet, arrivée à Fuwwa le 31).

105 Qalašādī, *Rihla* 125–126 (départ le 8 *jum.* 11 851/21 août 1447, arrivée le 16 *jum.* 11/29 août 1447).

106 Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:341.

107 Brancacci, *Diario* 329.

108 Brancacci, *Diario* 329.

109 En 1479, 25 *mu'ayyadi*-s équivalaient à 1 *dīnār ashrafi*. Ashtor, *The Kārimī* 279.

au Caire¹¹⁰. Ces montants, qui s'étalent sur plus d'un siècle, permettent de constater que le coût moyen du transport de Fuwwa au Caire oscillait entre un à trois ducats, la différence devant s'expliquer par les marchandises qui accompagnaient les voyageurs. On constate donc, pour notre document, que le soldat paya un prix largement supérieur à cette moyenne, ce qui laisse sous-entendre que le textile qu'il transportait devait représenter une part importante dans le calcul du coût du transport. Les données que fournissent les documents de la Genizah nous permettent d'imaginer que la quantité de textile transportée devait être conséquente. Ainsi, pour l'envoi d'une bale d'indigo d'une valeur de 66 *dīnārs* et 1/4 du Caire à Rosette au XI^e siècle, l'expéditeur dû déboursier 3 *dīnārs* ($\pm 5\%$) pour les frais liés à l'expédition et 1 *dīnār* (= 1,5 %) pour le transport¹¹¹. Ces pourcentages ne peuvent évidemment pas être invoqués pour du textile transporté en 1420, mais ils nous autorisent au moins à considérer que le textile emporté par le soldat représentait une somme importante.

Reste à savoir pourquoi un militaire en poste à Alexandrie qui se rendait au Caire transportait une telle quantité de textile et comment ce contrat a pu finir parmi les documents soit du consul de Venise de l'époque, Biagio Dolfin, soit de son neveu, Lorenzo Dolfin, qui faisait office de vice-consul. Les deux questions sont, à mon humble avis, liées. Biagio Dolfin avait été nommé consul de la République de Saint-Marc à Alexandrie en 1418. Son mandat de deux ans, comme à l'accoutumée¹¹², devait donc prendre fin en 1420. En avril de cette même année, nous savons qu'il se trouvait au Caire pour affaire. C'est dans le courant de ce mois qu'il a dû y contracter la peste, maladie à laquelle il ne survécut pas : il trépassa à la fin du mois, son testament étant daté du 27 avril 1420¹¹³. Il n'est pas impossible que son départ survint au tout début d'avril, à la même date que celle de notre document. Il faisait d'ailleurs peut-être partie des passagers qui se trouvaient sur la barque qui devait emmener le soldat de Fuwwa à la capitale¹¹⁴. Si le contrat a fini entre ses papiers ou ceux de son neveu, cela signifie que le soldat rendait un service

110 Ashtor, *The Kārimī* 366.

111 Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:343.

112 Ashtor, *The Kārimī* 413.

113 Le testament fut rédigé le lendemain de sa mort. Pedani, *The Mamluk* 140–141. Voir aussi désormais Christ, *Trading conflict* 101.

114 Dans ce cas, la lecture *wa-l-anfār* proposée pour la l. 5 se justifierait. Le prix de cinq ducats pourrait alors correspondre au tarif exigé pour le transport de toutes ces personnes et de leurs effets. En 1561, Alessandro Magno paya cinq ducats pour louer une germe qui devait le transporter avec ses dix compagnons de Rosette à Būlāq (Magno, *Voyages* 263).

à l'un des deux¹¹⁵. Ce service consistait probablement soit à les escorter, soit à prendre en charge une quantité de textile qui devait être revendue au Caire, soit encore les deux¹¹⁶. Le fait de confier de la marchandise à un passager musulman pourrait sembler étrange et pourtant un document de la Genizah démontre que c'était une pratique sinon courante, du moins attestée. Dans celui-ci, un marchand indien conseille à son frère de confier ses biens à un voyageur musulman afin d'éviter de payer des taxes douanières additionnelles que l'on appliquait aux non-musulmans¹¹⁷. Ce stratagème était de bonne guerre, si l'on ose dire: le non-musulman sortait gagnant de cet échange momentané tout autant que le musulman qui se prêtait au jeu, car on imagine qu'il en tirait un avantage pécunier. De ce genre de contrat, nous ne risquons pas de trouver trace.

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- 115 Lorenzo Dolfín, après la mort de son oncle, poursuit sa carrière de marchand comme l'attestent ses comptes. Voir Ashtor, *The Kārimī* 431.
- 116 Dans la première moitié du xv^e siècle, l'industrie textile d'Alexandrie était déjà sur le déclin. On en trouve la preuve dans l'augmentation des importations de textiles des Flandres, d'Italie, du Languedoc et d'ailleurs dont étaient responsables les Vénitiens. Voir Ashtor, *The Kārimī* 270. Le témoignage d'un contemporain comme l'était Piloti est éclairant à plus d'un titre. Parlant des marchandises importées à Alexandrie, au Caire, à Beyrouth et à Damas, il déclare: «Et premièrement draps de laine de Flandres, de Catalogne, de Barseloigne, et de Venise». Voir Piloti, *Traité* 107. Pour les exportations de tissus de Catalogne, voir Coulon, *Barcelone* 312–338.
- 117 Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 1:344–345. Les *ḥarbī*-s devaient payer un droit de passage à la frontière. Frescobaldi et ses compagnons, en 1384, payèrent chacun un droit de passage de 4 ducats à la sortie d'Alexandrie et un autre d'un ducat par tête à l'approche du Caire. Gucci signale que ces droits de passage rapportaient au sultan quelque cinquante mille florins chaque année. Frescobaldi, *Visit* 42, 98–99, 165. Il est possible que le droit payé à l'approche du Caire ait en fait correspondu à la taxe de circulation sur le Nil (*ḥimāya*) qui était due par chaque passager. Elle fut annulée sous le règne du sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (r. 1309–1341), puis réintroduite à sa mort. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte* 251. Al-Maqrīzī fait aussi état d'une taxe non islamique (*maks*) payable au port de Būlāq et annulée par le même sultan. Voir Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār* 1:88–89. En outre, les marchands non musulmans se voyaient souvent imposer des frais de douane doubles. Goitein (*A Mediterranean society* 1:344–345) estime que cela ne semble pas avoir été d'application sous les Fatimides, mais que ce fut bien le cas pendant une brève période sous le règne de Saladin.

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Language & Culture



P.Cair.Arab III 167: A Discussion of the Akhmīm Declaration*

Mostafa El-Abbadi

Arab Administration: Control and Responsibility

Multilingual documents usually are of special historical interest. Their value for the study of the linguistic situation—multilingualism, linguistic inference and the process of arabicisation—in early Islamic Egypt has recently been considered in a number of studies.¹ *P.Cair.Arab* III 167, a trilingual declaration, written in Coptic, Greek and Arabic, is an exceptionally rich example of such documents. In the present paper, I shall be mainly concerned with its administrative contents and what it reveals about how the new Arab administration reacted to complaints presented against certain irregularities committed in connection with the tax collection in Akhmīm and its surrounding area.

Early Arab rule tended to be practical and keen to avoid any interruption in the smooth running of the administration. It was therefore consistent with the framework of their polity to allow—for at least a century—the perpetuation of two earlier practices: the Byzantine taxation system, and the use of the Greek and Coptic languages in local administration. With regard to taxation, Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam states that “Amr agreed to levy the same amount of taxes as the Rūm (i.e. Byzantines).”² Consequently, the new Arab administration in Egypt had to deal with the same causes of discontent that had troubled the Romans and the Byzantines before them.

Although fiscal pressure had often caused Egypt’s tax-payers to rise in revolt already in the pre-Islamic period, the end of the first/seventh and first half of the second/eighth centuries especially saw tension rising, with more conflicts

* I would like to thank Petra Sijpesteijn for making available her unpublished paper on the relation between Coptic, Greek and Arabic in the early Arabic administration where this document is also extensively discussed.

- 1 See especially Clackson and Sijpesteijn, A mid-eighth-century, Richter, Greek, Coptic, Richter, Language choice, Sijpesteijn, Arabic-Greek archives and Cromwell, Aristophanes.
- 2 For a study of the changes and continuities in the Egyptian Arab administration, see Sijpesteijn, The Arab conquest and *CPR* XXX, introduction.

appearing in the papyri. One of the problems that continued to worry the Arabs was the custom of peasants and small farmers of taking flight and abandoning their land, due to their inability to pay the taxes or for other reasons. Evidence of this phenomenon is reflected in the instructions dispatched by the governor Qurra ibn Sharīk (in office 90–96/709–714) concerning the tracking-down of such run-away villagers and their treatment in their new place of residence.³

A principal cause of this phenomenon of fugitive peasants was the continued use by the Arabs of the former Byzantine practice of imposing a fixed corporate tax (*capitatio*) on each village.⁴ In the words of Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, it was “a collective tax (*jizya*) on each village to be paid by the villagers [together].”⁵ As a consequence, runaways created difficulties for the tax-payers and tax-collectors. On the one hand the authorities wanted to ensure that the same amount of taxes continued to be levied collectively on the villages, while on the other hand less hands were available to produce these taxes. In dealing with such a situation, the Arab administration imposed restrictions on the free movement or travel of villagers out of their villages. In practice, however, a villager in need could apply for a permit to make his living elsewhere in order to pay off his poll-tax (*jizya*) or other dues. In such cases, the villager would be required to provide someone to stand surety for him during his absence.

In a Coptic document, we find such an act of surety in which three men (two of them village scribes) acknowledge in a note addressed to the public treasury (Gr. *demosios logos*) that they stand surety (*enguē*) for a certain Shenūda in case of any enquiry concerning him.⁶ Once provided with such an act of surety, the villager could apply for a travel permit, indicating his destination, reason for travel, and the duration of his stay. The local ‘pagarch’ then issued the requested permit, which would guarantee safe-conduct for its bearer at the hands of the authorities. The translation of one such safe-conduct⁷ reads as follows:

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate. This is a certificate from ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd Allāh, the official in Upper Ashmūn for the governor ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn al-Ḥabḥāb, for Constantine Papostoulos, a

3 *P.Cair.Arab.* III 151–153, dating to 90/709 and 91/710; *P.Lond.* IV 1332.4; 1333.5, provenance of all is Ishqūh/Aphrodito. See also the discussion in Morimoto, *The fiscal Administration*, Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim state* chapter 2 and Swanson, *The popes of Egypt*.

4 Jones, *The later Roman empire* 455.

5 Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr* 154; *P.Cair.Arab* III 160–163, dating to 91–93/709–711; *P.Ness.* 60–67, dating to 54/681.

6 *P.Cair.Arab.* III 164, dating to the end of 1st /7th century. See also Schiller, *Ten Coptic legal texts*.

7 *P.Cair.Arab.* III 175.

youth with a scar on his cheek, two marks on his neck, straight hair, from the village of Baskalon Baha in Upper Ashmūn. I hereby permit him to work in Lower Ashmūn in order to pay off his tax (*jizya*) and earn his living. I therefore grant him two months respite from the 1st of the month of Dhū l-ḥijja to the end of the month of Muḥarram of the year 116. Should whosoever of the governor's men or others encounter him, let them not interfere with him during that period, except for his good. Greetings ... Written by Ṭaliq. 1st of Dhū l-ḥijja end of year 112.⁸ [Appended to the document is 'Abd Allāh's seal and signature.]

It is worth noting that the reason given for issuing the travel permit was to enable its bearer to earn enough to be able to pay his tax and cover his living expenses; the permit—as is stated—was also a warrant to protect him from being bothered by officials and security men. This is why Gladys Frantz-Murphy has made a connection between the disappearance of these kinds of safe-conducts in the course of the second/eighth century and the appearance of similar statements in tax receipts protecting the holder of the document against interference by the authorities.⁹ As regard the payment of the poll-tax, this had to be done in the place of origin and not in the place of temporary residence, as can be concluded from a document dated 113/732.¹⁰ In this document a tax-collector from Ashmūn demands that a certain Girgis son of Longinos, a native of Ashmūn but temporary resident in Fustāt, pay his poll-tax of two *dīnārs* to him.

Taxation was often a cause of discontent among Egypt's population in Roman and Byzantine times, and it continued to be so under the Arabs. Several documents indicate how sensitive the early Arab administration was to complaints about taxes. In a letter that has survived in Greek, the governor Qurra ibn Sharīk admonishes Basileios, his subordinate in Ishqūh, not to torture tax-payers and to instruct the village headmen not to do so either.¹¹ That the governor was seriously concerned with such matters is reflected in another

8 As already noted by Frank Trombley (Sawirus ibn al-Muqaffa' n. 32) one of the dates in the document should probably be corrected because of the unusual four year gap between the date of issuing and the date of effectiveness. One other safe-conduct issued under 'Ubayd Allāh is dated 112/731 (Diem, *Einige frühe* no. 9) and another one 116/734 (Rāgib, *Sauf-conduits* no. 3). Unfortunately the publication does not contain a photograph of the document to check the reading.

9 *CPR XXI*, introduction.

10 *P.Cair.Arab.* III 180.

11 *P.Ross.Georg.* IV 16, dating from 710.

letter, a year earlier, in 91/710, also addressed to the same Basileios and from which we learn that Qurra did not only depend on what reached him of personal or communal complaints, but that he had his own sources of information, namely, *ṣāhib al-barīd*, the postmaster who was also head of the secret police. In that letter, Qurra declares that he learnt from the postmaster that an additional fine had illegally been imposed upon villages that were in arrears in paying their taxes.¹² Qurra peremptorily ordered the fine to be stopped immediately.

A final letter might be added to illustrate the governor's concern that his subordinates treat the tax-paying population fairly. It is a letter in which Qurra warns Basileios to punish those tax-collectors showing fraudulent behaviour at the expense of the Egyptians. Any collector found to have used a wrong measure or to have taken anything more than imposed by Qurra at the collection of the wheat taxes is to be whipped with 100 lashes, to have their beard and hair shaved off and to be fined thirty *dīnārs*.¹³

Of special interest also in this respect is a Greek document from Nessana dating to a little earlier, namely the last quarter of the first/seventh century. It shows how dangerous it was not to address communal discontent in matters related to taxes and public duties. It is a letter sent by a group of individuals to a church official inviting him to join their protest in an attempt to alleviate public duties on the inhabitants. A translation reads as follows:

We wish to inform your Noble Magnificence, beloved of God, that we have received a letter from his Magnificence, Lord Samuel, that he personally invites both you and us at one and the same time to appeal to our most esteemed Governor to grant us (a relief). For they caused us and you serious distress and we are unable to bear the burden of such taxation. Note therefore that tomorrow, Monday, we shall be in Gaza. There are twenty of us. Will you please come (?) immediately so that all of us may be of one mind and of one accord? After you have read the present letter, send it to Nessana. We wrote to Sobata. Good luck and good health to you.¹⁴

We have here a highly organised attempt to round up delegations from various districts in Southern Palestine in order to descend in a body upon Gaza and appeal to the governor. It reveals a long-practiced method of communication

12 Becker, *Arabische Papyri* 13 [= Becker, *Neue arabische* 6; *P.Cair.Arab.* III 153; Abū Safiyya, *Bardiyāt* no. 8].

13 *P.Heid.Arab.* 13, 91/709.

14 *P.Ness.* 75.

among the chiefs of towns or districts as represented by their head churchmen. We can count five of them by reading our letter carefully. First there is the prime motivator, Samuel, who communicated with the second identified participant, the writer of the present letter, who also wrote to Sobata; the final two are the recipient of our letter and the one to whom he forwarded it in Nessana where the papyrus was found.

Possibly, as the editor has suggested, others were also approached by Samuel. The size of each delegation seems to have been quite considerable, if the 20 men mentioned by the writer of our letter were the representatives of his own town or village. Should 20 be the number of the average size of each delegation, it might well be feasible that the total number of the representatives of the five districts could be around a 100 men. This total figure might have been much more, if the total of taxable villages in Palestina Tertia were nine, according to the register preserved in *P.Ness.* 39. These representatives were undoubtedly the landowners upon whom the taxes fell. This type of concerted protest, undoubtedly, had its force as it could have led to communal commotion or even revolt.

Civil Unrest in Upper Egypt

Thus, as we have shown above, the administration was quick to redress any irregularities or acts of embezzlement in the collection of taxes and to avoid any possibly alarming escalations. The Akhmīm trilingual declaration which is the subject of this article is yet another, more detailed document that illustrates a similar situation of communal discontent in Upper Egypt and the measures taken by the Arab authorities in response. It consists of 101 lines: 80 in Coptic, followed by a summary of 12 lines in Greek and at the end, another summary of 9 lines in Arabic. Unfortunately, no surely interpretable date is preserved, but the text should probably be placed between 749 and 756 C.E.¹⁵

15 For the reconstruction of this date and the following discussion, I am grateful to Jelle Bruning who discusses this document in his 2014 Leiden University dissertation *The rise of a capital: Studies into the political, economic, and judicial relation between al-Fuṣṭāṭ and its hinterland*, c. 20/640–200/815. I would also like to thank Lajos Berkes for his comments on the issue of the dating. Palaeographically the text should be dated around 750. The number “3” following the name of the month Choiak both in the Greek and Coptic most probably refers to the indication date. There are also two individuals mentioned in the text who can be used to date it. Yazīd ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥaḍramī became depute *qāḍī* in Fuṣṭāṭ in Jumādā 11 140/October–November 757, a position he would keep until his death in Dhū

The events that led to this document can be summed up as follows: complaints reached the governor in Fustāṭ (l. 5) concerning unspecified irregularities committed by the local tax-collector ‘Amr ibn Attas and his staff. The governor instructed Yazīd ibn ‘Abd Allāh,¹⁶ head of the public treasury (l. 2) *demosios logos* and the governor of Akhmīm and Ṭaḥṭā (ll. 3, 96) to investigate the matter. Yazīd accordingly convened the local headmen (ll. 10, 82, 96) who made their investigations and asked for a formal declaration (l. 9 *homologia*), to the effect that neither ‘Amr ibn Attas nor any of his assistants had oppressed them and that they were liable to a fine (l. 12 *prostimon*) should one of them make a complaint to the contrary (ll. 11–12, 98).

We may never be able to find out whether this declaration of acquittal of the accused officials was justified by evidence or was written under duress. Yet, according to the words of the headmen, it seems that they did not sign the declaration until ‘Amr and his assistants had refunded them their dues (l. 7 *dikaion*). This would imply that ‘Amr had indeed overtaxed them and that he was forced to return the unjustly taken money.

This document is significant in illustrating the situation in the Akhmīm region after the passage of almost a century of Arab rule. Worthy of note are the following points. Firstly, the predominantly Egyptian Christian character of the declaration is indicated by the fact that the Coptic text comes first and occupies 80% of the whole document. The Christian invocation “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost” is used even though the shorter “In the name of God” version inspired by the Islamic *basmala* is widely attested in Greek and Coptic documents at this time, issued by the offices of the governor in Fustāṭ and the dukes.¹⁷ The predominance of Coptic is obviously explained

l-Qa’da 140/March 758. The governor’s name is only partially preserved as ‘Abd which can only refer to ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān whose rule started in Jumādā I 132/January 750. The information from the papyrus, however, does not fit that of the narrative sources. We either have to adjust ‘Abd al-Malik’s governorship to start in Rabī’ I 132/December 749, taking us to the most likely date of Rabī’ I 132/December 749 or to discard the indiction year 3 (reducing it to an indication of the day of the month) and date this document to between 17 Jumādā II/27 November and 17 Rajab/26 December of the year 138/755 or between 28 Jumādā II/27 November and 28 Rajab/26 December of the year 139/756. Adolf Grohmann dated the text to the first half of the eighth century in *P.Cair.Arab.* III, and to 137/754–140/757 at a later occasion (*Beamtenstab* 132).

16 Yazīd ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥaḍramī (d. 140/758). See for him, the previous note 15.

17 The invocation *en onomati tou theou* is attested only in documents issued by the chancery in Fustāṭ or from the offices of the *dukes* (*CPR* XXII, pp. 53–54). Cf. Bagnall and Worp,

by the fact that this would have been the local language of communication amongst the largest number of the people mentioned in the document.

The signatories to the declaration represent a fairly wide cross-section of the population. The Coptic text includes the names of some 54 witnesses of whom two bear Arabic names (l. 37, the two sons of Abdella). Amongst the witnesses whose names appear in the Coptic part, we can identify 22 villagers, ten townsmen of Akhmīm and nine church officials, namely one bishop (ll. 14, 87), one archimandrite (ll. 20 and 88), four deacons (ll. 58, 62, 63 and 84) and three priors (ll. 21, 43 and 88).

We may also notice that of the 50 witnesses in the Greek section, 40 names are repeated from the Coptic, prominent amongst which are that of the bishop, the archimandrite and the other churchmen. The reason for the presence of the Greek part, including the repetition of a large number of the witnesses' names, may be the greater familiarity with Greek than Coptic at the central administration.

The ten witnesses mentioned in the Arabic section all carry Arab names and tribal affiliations, suggesting they were in fact Arabs having arrived with the conquerors or Egyptians having been integrated into the Arab system. Judging by their names, they belong to influential Arab tribes, two of whom (l. 95) were the Umayyads. The Arabs signing this declaration might be personally involved, as we can imagine that they owned land or had land assigned to them in the district of Akhmīm and Ṭaḥṭā. It might explain their anxiety to allay causes of discontent. The Arabic summary was intended presumably for the Arab administration, both for practical and ideological reasons, as well as for the Arab witnesses who were in some way involved in the agreement.

In general the document contains several elements suggesting the importance placed by the authorities on coming to some kind of solution and bringing about some lasting reconciliation. The inclusion of such a large number of witnesses from the different constituencies in Akhmīm and Ṭaḥṭā would have promoted a feeling of communal responsibility among the diverse elements of the population. The largest number of names appears in the Coptic part of the document and this list presumably comes closest to including all those involved in the protest, both the more prominent members of society and those less influential. By having them all sign, they were all personally beholden to keep to the agreements stated in the document. The inclusion of a substantial number of prominent members of this society, such as the Arab tribesmen as

Chronological systems 99; Cromwell, Variation and specificity. I would like to thank Marie Legendre and Jennifer Cromwell for these references.

well as the bishop and archimandrite, was no doubt intended to add weight to the declaration. Legally these large lists of witnesses were not necessary and their function is explainable rather from a social point of view.¹⁸

The predominantly Coptic character of the document in language and persons makes us question the validity of statements about developments in the Arab administration as recorded in the literary sources. Al-Kindī (d. 350/961), for example, states that in 88/707, the Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd (r. 86–96/705–715), implementing the policy started by his father ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān (r. 65–86/685–705), appointed his brother ‘Abd Allāh, the then governor of Egypt (in office 86–90/705–709), over the *dīwāns* ordering “to have them written in Arabic as they had been noted in Coptic before.”¹⁹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, however, stated the change was from *‘ajamī*.²⁰ However, it is remarkable that in our document, almost 50 years after the start of the apparent Arabicisation policy in Egypt, Arabic was far from being the first language in Akhmīm. While Greek continued to be used as an important language in the Arab administration as well, the use of Coptic in this context and in this document confirms the observation that under Arab rule, Coptic advanced at the expense of Greek.²¹

As for the background of the personnel in the administration, al-Kindī reports that the Umayyad Caliph ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (r. 99–101/718–720) decreed that “the Coptic heads (*mawāzīt*, i.e. Gr. *meizoteroi*, village-heads) were to be removed from the pagarchies and to be replaced by Muslims.”²² Daniel Dennett took this statement at its face value and concluded that it led to widespread conversion among Copts who wanted to maintain their position as heads of their villages.²³ But the Akhmīm declaration, written down a full generation later, disapproves such a conclusion, since out of 54 witnesses only two bear Muslim names while the rest are Copts, 22 of whom were village-heads. Indeed, this and other documents from Egypt do not reflect widespread conversion amongst the local population at this time.

Finally, we may observe a point of special interest for the survival of Egyptian place names. The name of Akhmīm is used in the Coptic (l. 3 et saepe) and

18 For a similar use of large lists of witnesses in Coptic Arabic marriage contracts, see Abbott, Arabic marriage.

19 *Kitāb al-Wulāt* 58–59.

20 *Futūḥ* 122.

21 I would like to thank Petra Sijpesteijn for this suggestion as discussed in her unpublished paper (see above, n. 1)

22 *Kitāb al-Wulāt* 69. See for a discussion of the apparent disjuncture between these terms, Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim state* chapter two.

23 *Conversion and the Poll-tax*.

Arabic sections, whereas the Greek uses the corresponding Greek appellation Panopolis (l. 81). Ever since the establishment of Greek administration in Egypt, practically every town and village of any significance was given a Greek name. Examples are numerous and well known to specialists. Similarly, in Syria Greek names were given to ancient sites. For almost a millennium, the new Greek names were universally used in administration and Greek literature. The native population, however, continued to use the Egyptian names. When the Arabs visited these towns in the Byzantine realm, they apparently took over the names for the towns from the indigenous population. This was already the case in the pre-Islamic period as evidenced in pre-Islamic verse. Thus, 'Amr ibn Kulthūm (d. 584) recalls with nostalgia the beakers of wine he drank in Ba'lbak, Dimashq, al-Andarīn and Qaşrīn! The Arabic papyri show that the Arabs in Egypt similarly indeed used the Egyptian names.²⁴

No sooner, therefore, did the Arabs set up their rule in the seventh century than the Greek names disappeared and the native ones came to the fore, as illustrated in the Akhmīm declaration. The interesting aspect of this is that it seems to have been a spontaneous action and not the result of an administrative decision. Perhaps a reasonable explanation of this phenomenon is that it was due to the cultural affinity between the Arabs and the peoples of their neighbouring countries long before the conquest began.

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Greek and Arabic in Nessana

Rachel Stroumsa

Introduction

Greek, Latin, Arabic, Nabataean and Syriac—all of these languages are found among the Nessana documents, and to a greater or lesser extent, all of them have left their mark on the Nessana community. The relative importance of these languages, and the meaning of their presence in different types of documents, has been the source of many casual mentions since their discovery some eighty years ago, though not of any sustained debate. This paper will attempt to examine the role of Greek in the years covered by the papyri—from the early sixth century to the late seventh century—and in particular the interaction of Greek and Arabic in the community.¹

An appropriate place to begin might be one of the least promising papyri in the Nessana collection: a fragmentary papyrus, relegated by the editor of the corpus, Casper Kraemer, to the tail end of the edition and lumped together with other “minor documents.” *P.Ness.* 145 comes from the early seventh-century church archive, and is not only fragmentary, but also incomplete. The writer begins composing an official letter, apparently dealing with household provisions; but after seven lines—five of which are spent on salutations and courtesies—he becomes dissatisfied with his efforts. He then turns the papyrus over and begins writing a letter again, only to grow discouraged at the difficulty of the task, this time after only one line of salutation. Having given up on the actual letter as a task beyond him, the writer then turns the papyrus around by 90 degrees and practices writing only one sentence over and over again, on both sides of the papyrus, that sentence being ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου καὶ δεσπότου Εἰσοῦ

1 Compare the study on the relations between Arabic, Greek and Coptic in a corpus of papyri from early eighth-century Egypt (Richter, *Language choice*). On multilingualism in early Arab Egypt, see also el-Abbadi's article in this volume. For a general discussion of the papyri found in and near two churches in Nessana and a comparison with other multilingual dossiers found in Egypt, see also Sijpesteijn, *Arabic-Greek*. See also in this volume O'Sullivan's use of the same papyri from Nessana to reconstruct changes taking place in the economic administration after the Arab conquest.

Χριστοῦ, “in the name of the lord, the master, Jesus Christ.”² The writer tries out different spellings of δνόματι; he experiments with abbreviating Εἰσοῦ Χριστοῦ; he fiddles with the formula, adding τοῦ θεοῦ in one version. What is so important about this sentence that this man concentrates on it, even when other writing proves to be beyond him? Why would someone expend so much energy on one particular phrase, given that he cannot complete a simple request for more vinegar?

The standard interpretation of this document, exemplified in the first instance by the editor, Kraemer, is that the author is a “Hellenised” inhabitant of Nessana, and that his shaky knowledge of written Greek proves the deterioration of education in the township.³ This interpretation is in line with a more general trend, in which, by mapping out the interplay between various cultures and identities in the Near East, scholars often attempt to describe a socio-cultural reality by using linguistic evidence to yield a quantifiable result. The central, unfounded assumption is that the use of language allows us to determine ethnic, religious and cultural identities. This approach is problematic on two fronts, the abstract and the empirical; and a careful examination of Greek and its usage in the Nessana corpus will allow us to reach a different understanding both of this document and others.

On the theoretical level, reading language as a necessary and sufficient mark of identity is anachronistic at best, relying, explicitly or not, on nineteenth-century notions of personal and group identity.⁴ While scholars often speak of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the region, there is still a tendency to presume homogeneity within an identity, to assume that a person's identity

2 The homogeneity of the writing and ink preclude any change in writers or the identification of the papyrus scrap as used for pen tests.

3 Kraemer, *Excavation* 319.

4 The assumption of a one-to-one correlation between linguistic habits and ethnic groupings stems from modern European notions of the nation-state and a Romantic understanding of identity as a mystical, stable construct, whose existence is untouched by changing historical and social situations. The roots of this identification of language and culture are found in the eighteenth century with Herder's prescription of one language per people, and obviously one language per person. This notion was then picked up by philologists and historians in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who divided the world into distinct races or cultures, assuming that group identity within a ‘society’ or a ‘culture’ was homogenous and stable. Any particular group was understood to be unchanging through time and space, and all individuals within that group were expected to participate equally in all facets of that culture. The continuation of this mindset in modern scholarship has been criticised by, among others, Jones, *The archaeology*; Hall, *Ethnic identity*; and Amory, *People and identity* [2003].

is defined and discrete. Though the region as a whole is often described as a “mosaic” of languages and cultures,⁵ any particular individual is described as either “Greek” or “Semitic,” either “Hellenised” or not. By assuming that identity has a monolithic nature, scholars are also prone to assuming that differing indicia can be used as positive and certain criteria for determining an identity. Thus we find scholars assuming that language is a straightforward indication of identity, ethnicity or religion, rather than seeing language as one element among many, used situationally in the construction of a fluid, shifting identity.

The deep-rooted assumptions underpinning such scholarly analyses have led to a view that cultural identity can be quantified: if every individual has a definite and definable identity, the cultural makeup of the population can be divided and counted. This approach stands at the base of the debate between the Hellenists and the Semiticists, who claim to distinguish the cultural makeup of the area, based in great part on linguistic usage. Both parties start from the same premise—that an answer is attainable, and that it will be one identity or the other. Thus both Fred Donner and Glen Bowersock see late antique Syria and Palestine as bifurcated into two communities, the Greek and the Semitic, and the argument between them focuses on where the boundaries defining these two distinct and discrete communities lie.⁶ Both sides of the modern debate accept as a given the existence of an unbridgeable gap between the Semitic-speaking population and the Greek-speaking population. Both sides take for granted that an individual would have had one genuine identity, and that the job of the scholar is to discern that identity, and then tally up the number of “true Greeks” and “true Arabs.”

My argument here is that this view consists of a fundamental misconception, leading to a false dichotomy between “Greek” and “Arab” and to a misleading debate as to the identity of particular people. As mentioned before, the reliance on language as a marker of ethnic identity has been discredited, and it is particularly inappropriate for the world of late antique Palestine. On the empirical level, an examination of the papyrological testimony of Nessana, as well as other evidence from sixth- and seventh-century Palestine and Syria, will reveal that this approach is simply not borne out by the facts: linguistic, ethnic and religious boundaries do *not* coincide so neatly.⁷

5 See for instance, Cameron, *The Mediterranean* 185.

6 Bowersock, *Hellenism* esp. 72–77; Donner, *The early* 94.

7 Similarly, scholars used to distinguish native Egyptian, Coptic speakers from Greek speaking Hellenes based on the Egyptian papyrological material. For a more nuanced picture, see Papaconstantinou, *Dioscore et la question*; Fournet, *Archive ou archives*; Fournet, *The multicultural environment*; Boud'hors, *Du copte*; and to a certain extent already Wipszycka, *Le*

If, then, language is not operative in distinguishing ethnic identity, we will be left questioning its use, since it is very clear that more than one language was in play in the community and that the choice of language was not random. The question to be examined thus becomes what roles did the different languages play: in what context and for what purposes were they used?

Greek in Nessana

Often the first characteristic to be commented upon, the Greek papyri contain what are frequently described as “barbarisms”: many of the texts deviate substantially from standard Greek spelling, grammar and syntax. Kraemer, who does not shy away from value judgments, reads this as evidence of a significant decline in education: “the priest who wrote the text of 57 as well as the archdeacon author of 56 were both, as far as Greek was concerned, only semiliterate. In fact, the carelessness or ignorance of the scribe George is rather noteworthy.”⁸ Kraemer describes a community where Greek used to be the primary language, whose inhabitants are still “Hellenised,” but no longer have the education to express themselves in “acceptable” standard Greek. This account leaves us without an explanation for the insistence on writing in Greek, given the supposed massive decline in education. It also flies in the face of recent scholarship on the evolution of language, and in particular, the parallel changes in contemporary Latin in the western Empire.⁹ Compared to the Latin of Gregory of Tours, for instance, the Greek found in Nessana shows many of the same characteristics, suggesting that the problem is not an inability to write in “correct” Attic Greek but that we see here an alteration in progress. Kraemer’s account of declining knowledge is also at odds with what we know of Greek learning elsewhere in Palestine: Cyril Mango has demonstrated the vitality of Greek culture in Palestine in the early eighth century, showing that this was “the most active centre of Greek culture” at the time.¹⁰ Altogether, then, on both theoretical and practical grounds, it appears that ignorance and slovenliness will not suffice as explanations for the idiosyncrasies of the papyri.

nationalisme. See also Viero, *Bilingual notaries* for a discussion of the fluidity of bilingual Egyptian-Greek scribes in Egypt from the first century BCE to the first century CE.

8 Kraemer, *Excavation* 157.

9 Banniard, *Viva Voce*.

10 Mango, Greek culture 149.

Greek and Spoken Arabic

If we try to set aside any preconceptions and examine the documents in terms of their functions, the Greek documents fall into two groups. Some documents reflect an idiomatic, easily spoken Greek. Many of these papyri, such as *P.Ness.* 38 and 82, were evidently meant for personal use, and as such are little more than aides-mémoire or notations for personal archives.

Naturally, the fact that Nessanites were comfortable in Greek, both spoken and written, has no influence on whether they were also at ease in Arabic; and indeed, the evidence does point to a widespread use of Arabic as a vernacular.¹¹ The most obvious instance of this infiltration of Arabic into the Greek text comes in the form of place names. Three places mentioned in the papyri include obvious Arabic elements: *Χαφρεα*[...] in *P.Ness.* 54, *Χαφρ* in *P.Ness.* 94, and *Τουρσινα* in *P.Ness.* 73. F.E. Day suggests that the use of *Χαφρεα*[...] in a Greek document implies that the writer “did not realise the native usage, and took *kafr* as a place name, omitting its relative word.”¹² Yet the opposite conclusion may also be drawn, and as we shall see, it is more in keeping with the rest of the evidence—viz., that the writers knew full well that *kafr* was a village, that the place indicated was called *Kafr x*, and that the missing remainder of the name would have supplied the full toponym. This is supported by the later reappearance of a place called *Kafr* in the post-conquest *P.Ness.* 94. Given the date of that manuscript, we can hardly assume the writers to be ignorant of the meaning of the word *kafr* in Arabic, and yet we still find it used as a place name. Clearly, then, it is rash to assume that this usage implies ignorance of Arabic convention. A similar instance appears in an order from the Muslim governor, dated to 683, where Mt. Sinai is called *Τουρσινα* (73.7). Here again we have the identifier of a place (*tūr*) used as a portion of the proper name of a place, and thus according to Day’s rationale, we ought to assume ignorance of Arabic; and yet the date and context of this document assure us of the writer’s knowledge of Arabic. We may then read the use of Arabic place descriptions as evidence for knowledge of Arabic.

Even clearer proof of the widespread use of Arabic as a spoken language is furnished by the Arabic words used to describe plots of land. Altogether, fourteen fields are given proper names, in papyri ranging in dates from 512 (*P.Ness.* 16) to the late seventh century (*P.Ness.* 82). Thirteen of the names are indubitably Semitic in origin, and have a meaning in Arabic. Day suggests that

11 Contra Wasserstein, Why did Arabic succeed 261.

12 Quoted in Kraemer, *Excavation* 152.

alegrad in *P.Ness.* 24.6 is simply *al-ajrād*, plural of *jarad*, field.¹³ Two of the fields mentioned have a similar name—*abiathalbon* in *P.Ness.* 16, and *abiathalba* in *P.Ness.* 21, written 40 years later. These may refer to the same field or to two separate fields; in either case we might suggest that the name is a reflection of *abī-tha'laba*, i.e. the possessor of foxes, or the field (inhabited by) foxes. Two fields are named after their master in *P.Ness.* 82—*μαλαλακωνι*, i.e. *māl al-kāni*, property of the short man, and *μαλζημαρχε*, or *māl dhī māriq*, property of the deserter or the heretic.¹⁴ Another field is called *βεραειν*, i.e. the two wells (*P.Ness.* 82.1).¹⁵ The use of Arabic words, and not just proper names, to identify sections of land, implies that Arabic served in daily life, particularly when discussing elements of agricultural life such as the fields. This use is paralleled in the papyri from Petra where we find over 100 Arabic toponyms and oikonyms embedded in otherwise Greek texts—and there, too, it can be assumed that Arabic was used in daily life especially in an agricultural context.¹⁶ Both in Petra and in Nessana the documents disposing of the fields and naming heirs were written in Greek, but the business of farming appears to have been conducted in Arabic.

Greek and Written Arabic

The difference between the use of Greek and Arabic, then, does not lie in who spoke which language, as we see that use of Greek does not preclude a deep familiarity with Arabic as a vernacular. The difference between the two manifests itself in the second category of Greek documents, those not meant for private but for public consumption. In these cases Greek is used to convey additional connotations of power and authority, serving as more than just a straightforward, limpid tool for conveying the spoken words. This aspect is particularly apparent in the post-conquest papyri, written well into Muslim rule, in contracts like *P.Ness.* 56 and government communications like *P.Ness.* 73.

13 Kraemer, *Excavation* 79.

14 This could also be a transliteration of *māl dhī mārikh*, i.e. property of the proud man.

15 In view of these readings, we might propose that the field Kraemer reads as *Αιρεγλα* be emended to *الرجلة*, i.e. *al-rijla*, the water-channel; this would allow us to transform it from a meaningless name (and one, moreover, that does not follow either a Semitic or a Greek form) to a meaningful description, consistent with other field names.

16 Daniel, *P. Petra* inv. 10.

Observations relating to the function of languages in Palestine under late Roman and Byzantine rule and Filasṭīn under Umayyad rule are more often than not detached from each other, partly as a result of the disconnect between scholars of Late Antiquity and scholars of the early Muslim period. Since, then, pre-conquest documents are in Greek, and it is only through a closer analysis that we see the spoken Semitic dialects, Umayyad historians tend to speak of the “arabisation” of the Christian population, implying that until the latter half of the seventh century the population spoke Greek as a matter of course. The texts examined here suggest that this is only a partial truth; Christians in the Shām were indeed familiar with Greek, but even before the conquest it was used in situations where conveying power, status and culture were of importance.

The Nessana papyri show that a people who seem to have spoken a version of Arabic in daily life and nicknamed their fields in that language chose to resort to Greek when drawing up various contracts (*P.Ness.* 16 and 30, for instance), with the presumed intention of increasing the formality of the documents. This division of languages according to their connotations continues in the Nessana papyri after the Muslim conquest, when in fact we can see it even more clearly. *P.Ness.* 92, a record of accounts involving orders from Damascus and Egypt, represents the highest levels of Umayyad authority, including the governors of Egypt and Palestine and the caliph ‘Abd al-Malik himself. Written at the very end of the seventh century—probably around 690—the document is entirely Arabic in content; in fact, it is nothing but a memo internal to the Umayyad administration. All the names and titles mentioned are transliterated from Arabic (note in particular Amīr al-Mu’minīn, commander of the believers, as applied to the caliph); the institutions and administrative habits are all Arabic; the record deals with payment for the Muslim army. And yet, this detailed and formal text is composed entirely in Greek. Unlike the bilingual *entagīa* from the same period, it does not even have a translation into Arabic appended to it.

That the Umayyad regime used Persian, Coptic and Greek for its accounts is well known; usually the phenomenon is explained as a result of the new regime, relatively poor in administrative structure, choosing to take over the intricate bureaucracy of the Byzantine and Persian empires wholesale, and maintaining the scribes who therefore continued to write in Greek.¹⁷ This situation held until the 690s, when Arabic gradually replaced all other languages.

17 See Sijpesteijn, *The Arab conquest*, for an argument in favour of Arab administrative tradition based on the Egyptian papyrological material; and O’Sullivan in this volume for the claim that the Nessana material similarly shows Arabic economic administrative sophistication.

Yet if we examine not just the use of Greek from 636 to the time of the Abbasids, but look at these texts in the context of the preceding centuries, another possibility emerges; namely, that the continuities in the use of Greek reflect something other than a continued use of the same scribes. After the conquest, as before the conquest, the use of Greek among a population fluent in Arabic or Aramaic carries connotations of power and status. Thus although we find inscriptions in Semitic dialects, these tend to be private, not public. In the beginning of this chapter we saw how scholars often conclude from the use of Greek for written documents and inscriptions that the writers' cultural identity must have been Greek. Clearly, this assumption will not hold when we look at the Umayyad documents: their users and patrons could not possibly be said to be "Hellenised."

By this stage—well into Muslim rule in the 680s and 690s—Greek is no longer a *koinē*; it is neither the language of the empire nor the language of daily commerce. A common explanation is that Greek remained the language of the administrators. Bowersock has shown that the limited number of Arabic scribes is not a sufficient explanation.¹⁸ In addition, the *entagia* sent to Nessana from Gaza preserve a different story—one of two parallel systems of scribal notation and administration: the former, Greek-based and Byzantine in origin, supplemented by a new cadre of Arabic scribes. Thus, by the last quarter of the seventh century, there was a functioning Arabic administrative system, which did not supplant but merely enhanced the existing Greek system. This means that though commonsense would dictate that the new administrators were likely to be bilingual—and indeed that has often been the assumption—the administrative system itself did not require bilingualism, and in some sense may be said to have discouraged it; such a skill may have come in useful, but the system functioned without it.

It is worthwhile noting that the tendency to use a language other than Arabic for formal communication is not unprecedented, but in fact continues the practices of pre-Islamic Arabia and the Hauran. Before Islam, Arabic was not used in writing; instead the script of prestige in the locality was chosen.¹⁹ In a multilingual society, where people were often fluent in more than one dialect or language, the distinction between them becomes a matter of tone, conveying a message by the very choice of language. It is this sensibility that we see continued in the Greek papyri at Nessana. The so-called arabisation of Syria and Palestine is only in part then a process by which Arabic became

18 Bowersock, *Hellenism* 77.

19 Hoyland, *Language and identity* 184.

the spoken language: to a certain degree a dialect of Arabic was already the colloquial language. More importantly, the transition from Greek to Arabic reflects the growing prestige of the new Muslim rulers. By the time of the Abbassids, there was no longer a need to use Greek to convey messages of power and status: Arabic represented a powerful enough rule. Only at that point was there no longer a need for public inscriptions in Greek, just as the coins then demonstrate an independent style and Arabic legends.²⁰

Parallels and Comparanda

Further confirmation for this view of language as a tool of status and a symbol of imperial power is found in the few Latin papyri found in Nessana. Though none of the documentary papyri is in Latin, or indeed shows any significant knowledge of the language, the literary papyri include two singular exemplars: a Latin-Greek glossary of the vocabulary in the *Aeneid*, and fragments of books II–VI from a papyrus codex of the *Aeneid*. Both these papyri are notable for the abysmal quality of their Latin; indeed, the illiteracy of the glossary scribe is such that Casson and Hettich speak of “monstrosities,”²¹ and describe the scribe—not unfairly—as merely copying the shapes of the strokes to the best of his ability, with no attempt to make sense of the letters. To give but a few examples from the glossary, *Peget* stands in for *pigebit* (749); *Efello* for *refello* (818); *hortamuis* for *hortamur* (445). This is not a question of making a mistake in the use of the subjunctive, or using the accusative case where we would expect a genitive. This is not a case of typical scribal error, or the mistaking of one word for another. What we see in these papyri is only the outward semblance of a language, comparable to the gibberish babbling of a child imitating adults. We may be tempted to put this down to a novice apprentice or to a phenomenally and singularly inept scribe, were it not for the fact that the papyrus shows signs of extensive revisions by another hand, just as ill-informed. The first scribe then passed on his efforts to be corrected by a superior, whose knowledge of Latin proves to be just as execrable.

The insistence of the sixth-century scribes on going far beyond the limits of their knowledge of Latin, and the continued use of such a poor text (as attested by the careful, if unsuccessful, attempt at emendation) is even more incomprehensible in view of the limited usefulness of Latin. Kraemer, following Casson

20 Shboul and Walmsley, *Identity and self-image* 287.

21 Casson and Hettich, *Excavations* 11.

and Hettich, suggests that the impetus is a Christian one, rooted in the view of Virgil as Christian *avant la lettre*. It is difficult to accept a religious reason for insisting on Virgil given that these texts are nearly unreadable; surely an appreciation of the subtle Christian interpretations of elements in the *Aeneid* would have been difficult, if not impossible, given this mutilated and often incomprehensible copy. A Christian explanation also seems unnecessarily restrictive, given the preponderance of pagan Hellenistic imagery elsewhere in the Christian communities of the region.²²

As for practical reasons for a small school in the Negev to insist on Latin, these are also hard to countenance: Latin had already become a “complete anachronism” by the seventh century.²³ It may be that what we see here is the well-known phenomenon of lag between centre and periphery: although by the time these papyri were written, at the end of the sixth century, Latin was no longer necessary or even important for administrative or cultural prestige in the imperial centres, this change in attitudes to the language had not yet reached Nessana. Thus the glossary and the *Aeneid* codex still reflect the situation in the late fifth and early sixth century, when Latin was the official language of law, the administration and the army, and knowledge of Latin was useful for aspiring bureaucrats and administrators. This remnant of an outdated outlook, which saw in Latin the mark of a man educated beyond the common run, would explain why such care was taken with the glossary in spite of the obvious limitations of both the primary scribe and the secondary scribe attempting to emend the former’s mistakes. Latin still stands here as one of the trappings of imperial culture and power, just as it is still used in legends upon coins and in the legal texts taught at the university of Berytus, even when the language of instruction was firmly established as Greek.²⁴

We see here a clear illustration that the prestige associated with a language is not diminished through spelling, grammatical and syntactical mistakes. On the contrary, the more incomprehensible a text is the more of an aura it gains. As a symbol of status—an attempt to lay claim to a heritage of power and prestige—the external appearance of a language, as expressed by an alphabet, is sufficient. This phenomenon is motivated by the same forces which create instances of pseudo-writing.

22 The popularity of Classical pagan cultural traditions such as Homeric stories and depictions of Pan and satyrs is amply demonstrated in the iconography of the Jerash bowls from the same period: Shboul and Walmsley, *Identity and self-image* 281.

23 Cameron, *The Mediterranean* 310.

24 Geiger, *How much Latin* 41–42.

In a sense, there is nothing new in this observation of a “division of labour” between the languages; as a rule, it is recognised that the Christian communities of Palestine in Late Antiquity spoke a Semitic dialect, and that Greek served as the primary language of worship and theology in the desert monasteries even among non-Greek speakers.²⁵ So far, the scholarly discussion has focused mainly on speakers of what was known to contemporaries as *siriste*, or literally the Syrian language, and is conventionally labelled Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA),²⁶ though the patterns are similar to those we have just seen.

A fine example of this Greek-Aramaic code-switching comes from Madaba. There a sixth-century Greek inscription describes a miraculous rainfall in Greek, but quotes the inhabitants’ reaction to it in Aramaic—“*goubba bagoubba*,” cistern for cistern. The inscription is seen as proving that the mass of the residents spoke Aramaic to the exclusion of Greek, in contrast to the writers and readers of the inscription.²⁷ I would suggest that, seen in the context of other linguistic ‘incongruities,’ instances in which the language used does not seem to correspond to the language spoken, another interpretation suggests itself: that the shift in the text between Aramaic and Greek expresses a shift in the situation and medium, rather than in the identity of the users. When inscribing a formal document, the appropriate language is Greek; but when quoting a spoken exclamation, said in surprise at a miraculous downpour of rain, the appropriate vehicle is Aramaic. This is not bilingualism, but rather code-switching, the use of different languages for different purposes: Greek, Latin and Arabic are used as we would use different registers of the one language. This conclusion gains in plausibility when we look beyond Nessana and sixth-century provinces of Palestine and Arabia to Umayyad al-Shām, where we find several other instances of Greek used as a marker of power.

In Hammat Gader, the hot springs below Gadara (Umm Qays), a monumental and carefully cut Greek inscription informs us over nine lines that the bath was thoroughly restored in the reign of the caliph Mu‘āwiya (r. 661–680). As Fowden has shown, the stone maintains both the conventions and even the letterforms and general aesthetic of pre-Islamic inscriptions.²⁸ The name and title of the caliph and the name of the local governor are carefully transliterated from the Arabic, while the governor’s title is translated. It is perfectly clear that

25 Griffith, *From Aramaic*.

26 Millar, *Ethnic identity* especially p. 162 for a review of the term CPA.

27 Wasserstein, *Why did Arabic succeed* 187.

28 Fowden, *Qūṣayr Amra* 266

no need was felt for a parallel Arabic version of the Greek inscription.²⁹ The use of Greek creates continuity with previous Byzantine and Roman dedications and public inscriptions, and continues the epigraphic tradition, linking the new regime to the old ones and evoking imperial power. In contrast, the Arabic inscriptions found in the vicinity are private inscriptions, prayers for forgiveness or commemoration, rather than statements of authority.³⁰ Similarly, Syriac inscriptions in Palestine, dating to the fourth and fifth century, are found in private houses. This is significant in reinforcing the understanding that the line of demarcation between the languages is not simply about the division between written and spoken languages.

Conclusion

In the 2000 U.S. census, over 6.7 million Americans checked more than one box in describing their race and ethnicity. To them, a constricting, exclusive understanding of ethnicity is nonsensical and out of touch with their lives. If we were to confront the people of Nessana with a similar question—and if they understood what we meant by ethnicity, which is another question entirely—the results of multiple definitions would surely have been even higher than in the U.S. This paper argues that the Nessana papyri suggest that language use was determined by context and situation; and that languages were used to make claims of power, rather than ethnicity. In other words, the same man might well use Greek in one context and Arabic in another, depending on the message he wished to convey to his interlocutors and on the content of the communication. Linguistic usage alone cannot therefore be used to determine the ethnic, religious, or cultural identity of the speaker/writer, but only that facet which is being emphasised in a given situation.

If we return to the example with which we began—our discouraged and frustrated letter writer—we can now see that this neglected papyrus affords us a glimpse into people's motives for insisting on Greek. This is a man who is incapable of composing a simple letter in Greek; and yet there is one line he considers important enough to practice over and over again, and that is the standard formula beginning a formal letter, an appeal to authority or any other kind of legal document. Greek writing is important to master not just so that one may write formal letters (since this individual has shown that he

29 SEG 30 no. 1687; SEG 32 no 1501.

30 Sharon, *Five Arabic inscriptions*.

is incapable of doing so); the ability to string together Greek letters takes on an almost magical meaning, creating the illusion of participation in the life of influence. The standard epistolary formula declaring the writer's literacy, with which the abandoned letter begins—*γραμμάτων παρόντων γράφω*—literally, I write to you since I possess letters—takes on an added poignancy. In this case, the literal interpretation is applicable, but the meaning of the phrase—a declaration of literacy and competence as a scribe—is not.

Both before and after the Muslim conquest, Greek was used for the overtones it carried as much as for its familiarity as a spoken language. Instead of explaining the idiosyncrasies of Greek in late Roman Palestine and in Umayyad Filastīn using two different models, one spectrum emerges. Averil Cameron has already argued that the change from Greek to Arabic was neither as sudden nor as complete as has been thought. The Nessana papyri uphold this insight, and suggest that the nature of this change has been wrongly understood: this is not a story of a shift from one spoken language to another, but of the change in the connotations each language carried. Until Arabic was well established enough to connote power and formality by itself, the Muslim administration continued to use Greek as it had been used before them: not to signify cultural identity, but to signal status and intentions.³¹ In trying to understand the complexities of this society, imposing an anachronistic linguistic dichotomy can only be a hindrance.

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31 See also the Greek inscription, mentioning also Arab-named visitors to the Egyptian monastery of Bawit (Fournet, *Conversion religieuse*). For the continued use of Greek in Arab Egypt, see also Morelli's introductions to *CPR XXII* and *CPR XXX* as well as Sijpesteijn, Arabic-Greek archives.

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The Master Spoke: “Take One of ‘the Sun’ and One Unit of *Almulgam*.” Hitherto Unnoticed Coptic Papyrological Evidence for Early Arabic Alchemy*

Tonio Sebastian Richter

Dedicated to the memory of Holger Preissler (1943–2006), in gratitude, admiration, and affection for an eminent Arabist, a truly humanistic scholar, and a teacher in the best sense!



Prolegomena: A Brief Account of Earlier Approaches to Coptic Alchemical Manuscripts

A legend transmitted in the *Kitāb al-fihrist* of Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad ibn Ishāq al-Nadīm tells the story of the first translation of alchemical writings into Arabic, focusing on the figure of the Umayyad prince Khālid ibn Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiya, “who used to be called the *ḥakīm* of the Marwān family. Being noble-minded and deeply enamoured of the sciences, particularly the alchemical arts, he ordered a number of Greek philosophers living in the town of Miṣr,

* During my work on Coptic alchemical texts, I enjoyed the aid of a number of colleagues. It is a pleasant duty to express my gratitude to Susanne Beck, Charles Burnett, Stephen Emmel, Bink Hallum, Thomas Hofmeier, Wilferd Madelung, James Montgomery, Peter Nagel, Holger Preißler †, Fuat Sezgin, Emilie Savage-Smith, Petra Sijpesteijn, and Manfred Ullmann for their advice. A number of lectures helped me to develop and improve my thoughts on the topic as a whole, and on particular aspects of it. The talk presented at the 3rd conference of the International Society for Arabic Papyrology in Alexandria (March 2006) was the first occasion to receive questions and comments from a larger audience. I am grateful to John Baines who granted me the opportunity to speak to a small but illustrious audience at the Oxford Oriental Institute in September 2006, and to Joachim Quack for inviting me to speak to the Deutsch-Ägyptische Gesellschaft at Heidelberg in December 2006. Finally,

who understood Arabic perfectly, to come to him and translate their books on the art of alchemy from the Greek and Egyptian languages into Arabic. This was the first translation from one language into another under Islam.”¹

Julius Ruska, the famous German historian of sciences, commented on the “Egyptian language” that “Man wird *qibtī* hier im Sinne von altägyptisch, nicht koptisch zu verstehen haben.”² The way of conceptualizing ancient Egyptian wisdom in the early and even earliest alchemical tradition³ seems to make this meaning of *qibtī* most probable indeed. Would Ruska have maintained this view, however, had he known of the existence of Coptic alchemical manuscripts?

As early as 1885, the German Egyptologist Ludwig Stern edited the manuscript known today as British Library Oriental Manuscript 3669(1), a Coptic

I would like to express my esteem for a number of hardy students of Coptic—Susanne Beck, Daniela Colomo, Franziska Dorman, Kathleen Händel, Susann Harder, Maike Ludwig, Franziska Naether, Katrin Scholz, and Susanne Töpfer—who volunteered to read Coptic alchemical texts with me. Last but not least I am indebted to my colleague and friend Eitan Grossman who improved the English of this article.

After this paper was written several relevant publications appeared. The type of alchemy as attested by the Coptic manuscripts is discussed in T.S. Richter, What kind of alchemy is attested by tenth-century Coptic manuscripts?, in *Journal of the society for the history of alchemy and chemistry* 56 (2009), 23–35. The Greek and Egyptian scientific context of alchemical writing is dealt with in T.S. Richter, Naturoffenbarung und Erkenntnisritual. Diskurs und Praxis spätantiker Naturwissenschaft am Beispiel der Alchemie, in H. Knuf, C. Leitz and D. von Recklinghausen (eds.), *Honi soit qui mal y pense. Studien zum pharaonischen, griechisch-römischen und spätantiken Ägypten zu Ehren von Heinz-Josef Thissen*, Leuven, Paris and Walpole, MA, 2010, 585–605. The intellectual background of our manuscripts in terms of scribal habits will be dealt with in T.S. Richter, A scribe, his bag of tricks, what it was for and where he got it. Scribal registers, skills and techniques in the Bodl. mss. Copt. (P) a. 2 & 3, in J. Cromwell and E. Grossman (eds.), *Beyond free variation. Scribal repertoires in Egypt from the old kingdom to the early Islamic period. Conference University College, Oxford September 14th–16th 2009* (forthcoming).

- 1 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist* 242.
- 2 Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten* 9, n. 3; cf. also 3 Ullmann, Khālīd ibn Yazīd. Linden, *The alchemy reader* 71, favours the meaning ‘Coptic’: “Under his (i.e. Khālīd’s), direction, Arabian translations of Greek and Coptic treatises were completed.”
- 3 One need only remember the Greek and Arabic hermetic tradition, cf. Festugière, *La révélation*, Faivre, *The eternal Hermes*, Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, Plessner, Hermes Trismegistos, Ruska, *Tabula Smaragdina*; Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen* 31–44, Vereno, *Studien zum ältesten* 32–35, and the importance of figures such as Petesis, Isis and Kleopatra in pseudepigraphic texts of the *Corpus Chymicum Graecum* and the Arabic alchemical literature, cf. Mertens, Une scène d’initiation and Mertens, Pourquoi Isis, Quack, Die Spur, Richter, *Miscellanea magica*, Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen* 44 and 70; Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 179–183.

alchemical treatise on parchment.⁴ While Stern developed academic interests far removed from Egyptology, and therefore did not deliver a translation, the text remained scarcely noticed by Coptologists or by other scholars for the next 120 years.⁵ To my knowledge, there is just one work directly dealing with the manuscript, MacCoull's 1988 study.⁶ In the field of the history of science, there is an exceptional note in Halleux's *Les textes alchimiques* commenting on the same detail of the Khālid ibn Yazīd legend, the translation from Coptic into Arabic:⁷ "Cette tradition a été mise en doute par Ruska ..., mais la voie égyptienne n'est pas pour autant impossible, car il existe des traités coptes." "Voir, par exemple, le traité publié par L. Stern." As Halleux could not know, this text does not provide evidence for the possibility of translations from Coptic to Arabic—in fact, it does quite the opposite, as we will see.

Since 1890 an assemblage of three alchemical papyri has been kept in the Bodleian Library, known only to a few outstanding British Coptologists, such as Walter Crum,⁸ Paul Kahle Jr., and Sarah Clackson. Again, it was Leslie MacCoull who in 1988 first publicised the existence of these manuscripts and provided some preliminary information about their contents.⁹ As for myself, I came to know of them only after Sarah Clackson's premature death in 2003. Sarah, having been informed about my interest in Arabic words borrowed into Coptic, transferred to me her materials on British Library Or. ms. 13885, an eleventh-century monastery account book full of lexical borrowings from Arabic.¹⁰ Even more surprising, her bequest also contained copies of Walter Crum's and Paul Kahle's transcriptions of Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1, 2 and 3. As I prepared to

4 Fragment eines koptischen 102–119.

5 Stern moved in 1886 from Egyptology to Celtic studies (Dawson, Uphill and Bierbrier, *Who was who* 404). In 1897, Ludwig Stern and Kuno Meyer founded the *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, where he also received an obituary (Meyer, Ludwig Christian Stern). See also Magen, Ludwig Stern.

6 Apart from bibliographical items such as Crum's entries on Or. ms. 3669(1) = n° 374 in *Catalogue of the Coptic manuscripts in the British Museum* 175, and on Cairo catalogue général 8028 in *Coptic monuments* 12, or occasional quotations in commentaries and comprehensive coptological bibliographies.

7 Halleux, *Les textes alchimiques* 65 and n. 40.

8 Crum mentioned the Bodleian mss. in the entry on Or. ms. 3669(1) = no. 374 of his *Catalogue of the Coptic manuscripts in the British Museum*, 175, n. 1, cf. below, and he utilised them for his Coptic dictionary, where they are referred to as Bodl. MSS. (P) a 1, 2, and 3.

9 MacCoull, Coptic alchemy, who had knowledge of at least two of the three Bodleian manuscripts, quoted by her as A(2)P and A(3)P.

10 The edition of this manuscript, based on Sarah Clackson's work, is under preparation by Georg Schmelz and myself.

include this new wealth of Arabic words into my glossary and pondered the meaning of single lexical items, I could not help but think more and more about the texts themselves and their significance. Thus a plain Coptic papyrologist was *volens-volens* won over to alchemy.

My intention here is to give an overview of the small but important Coptic alchemical dossier, its nature, significance, and the related problems it presents that have yet to be resolved. As a first step the Coptic manuscripts themselves will be introduced, then I shall focus on aspects of their setting within the *Geistesgeschichte* and of their transmission within the scientific tradition of early Islamic Egypt.

1 The Coptic Dossier of Texts Relating to Alchemy

The Coptic alchemical dossier, as far as is known to me at present, consists of no more than six textual items altogether,¹¹ being quite different in length and character. Two of them, although somehow related to alchemy, are not alchemical texts in a proper sense: P.Berlin P 8316, because it is not really alchemical; and Cairo Catalogue Général 8028, because it is not really a text (and perhaps not properly alchemical as well).

11 I have not yet identified the whereabouts of the two manuscripts referred to by Chassinat, *Le manuscrit magique*, 15 as “deux autres [sc. papyrus] de même nature [sc., alchimique] en ma possession” and again, “les fragments alchimiques que j’ai acquis, il y a quelques quarante ans, à Louxor.” I also do not yet know the alchemical papyrus brought from el-Meshaikh, the ancient site of Lepidotonpolis, by Urbain Bouriant, according to the account given by Chassinat, Un papyrus 1–2: “Après plusieurs semaines de pourparlers et de marchandages durant lesquels sa patience fut soumise à de dures épreuves, Bouriant entraînait enfin en possession du précieux manuscrit [sc. the Coptic medical papyrus of the Institut français d’archéologie orientale (IFAo)] et des restes d’un feuillet des papyrus portant sur chacune de ses faces des recettes d’alchimie, qui avaient été recueillis avec lui.” I recently suggested that this item could be identical with the medical papyrus Louvre AF 12530: Richter, *Neue koptische medizinische*, 167–168. Also Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic manuscripts in the British Museum* 175, n. 1 ad no. 374, mentioned “other ‘alchemistic’ texts” such as “Zoega no. cclxxviii, Acad. des Inscr., *Comptes rend.* for 1887, 374 (Bouriant), Berlin Aeg. Urk. Kopt. nos. 21, 25; also Bodleian Papyri a1, a2, a3 and several papyri in the IFAo at Cairo”; however, he subsumed clearly medical texts (Zoega, Bouriant, *BKU* I 25) under that category. So too did Tito Orlandi, *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* (<http://cmcl.let.uniroma1.it>), *Clavis Patrum Coptorum* 0014, who claimed six manuscripts apart from BL MS. Or. 3669(1) for *alchimia*, although their character and scope seem to be rather medical and/or magical: 1. Berlin Papyrus Collection P 8117–8117 = *BKU* I 26, from

P.Berlin P 8316,¹² a manuscript belonging to the Berlin assemblage of mainly magical Coptic papyri,¹³ provides a recipe for purple-dye¹⁴ under the seal of strictest secrecy:

Ex. 1 P.Berlin P 8316, verso 16–18: ¹⁶ ... $\overline{\text{NK}}\sigma\lambda\lambda\alpha\ \delta\lambda\gamma\omega\ \omega\upsilon\alpha\kappa$ ¹⁷ $\overline{\text{ZABEC}}\overline{\text{Q}}\ \epsilon\kappa\text{BVI}\ \text{M}\alpha\text{Q}$
 $\epsilon\text{P}\text{M}\alpha\text{Q}$ ¹⁸ $\chi\epsilon\text{NEP}\omega\text{ME}\ \text{NE}\overline{\text{Q}}\ \text{P}\alpha\text{Q}$ ‘... and you shall wrap it and cover it when you take it to the water, so that nobody can see it.’

Its content and aim vividly recall those of Papyrus Leiden I 397 and Papyrus Holmiensis:¹⁵ two Greek papyri written around 300 C.E., which are usually

the Fayyūm, paper, medico-magical recipes, the most alchemy-like one, P.8116a, 15–23, is said to have been communicated by a wise man ($\delta\lambda\gamma\epsilon\phi\omega\varsigma^{\text{sic}}\ \chi\alpha\alpha\varsigma\ \chi\epsilon$) and deals with the way of finding “the diamond-stone ... being applicable to a number of tricks” ($\rho\omega\omega\ \text{N}\alpha\lambda\omega\omega\epsilon\varsigma$ [\langle Arabic *al-mās*] ... $\epsilon\varphi\text{PE}\overline{\text{T}}\ \epsilon\overline{\text{Z}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{Y}}\overline{\text{N}}\ \overline{\text{Z}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{Y}}\overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{Y}}\ \text{N}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{X}}\overline{\text{H}}\overline{\text{N}}\overline{\text{H}}\overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{A}}$); 2. P 5530 (parchment, according to Beltz, Katalog 108, III 11: “Doppelblatt aus einem Codex, nach der Schrift etwa 6. Jahrh. ... Medizinischer Text.”); 3. P 15913 (papyrus, according to Beltz, Katalog 92, I 528: “Blatt aus einem Codex. Sammlung von Rezepten.”); 4. P 15918 (papyrus, according to Beltz, Katalog 92, I 529: “Blatt aus einem Codex. Arzneibuch”; all of Beltz’s attributions having turned out to be wrong, cf. Richter, *Neue koptische medizinische*, 156, n 16); 5. *P.Ryl.Copt.* 412 paper, actually belonging to the Fayyumic parchment quire *P.Lond.Copt.* I 527), providing the same characteristic mélange of magical and medico-magical recipes as P.Berlin P 8116–8117 which it remarkably resembles in other respects as well, cf. Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic manuscripts in the collection* 187, n. 5: “A difference in dialect alone prevents me connecting it also with Berlin, Kopt. Urk., No. 26 (P. 8116, 8119), which is identical in script and measurements”; 6. Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale “Vittorio Emanuele III,” 14.06–07 (not seen). In any case, the aim of all these recipes is to cause an impact on the state and behaviour, not of matter and substances, but on those of people. Although there are affinities between magic and alchemy even (or especially) in the manuscript tradition (see Halleux, *Les alchimistes grecs* 5–6, Richter, *Miscellanea magica*, and below, n. 34), both kinds of practice should be distinguished as techniques in their own right. Cf. Vereno, *Studien zum ältesten* 11–12 against their essential identity as supposed by earlier historians of the sciences such as von Lippmann, *Entstehung* 275–282.

12 Papyrus, H. 42 cm × B. 9 cm; palaeographically datable to the seventh or eighth century; edited by Erman in *BKU* I 21.

13 Cf. Erman, *Ein koptischer*.

14 As to the affinity between dyeing and alchemy, see below; cf. also Pfister, Teinture and MacCoull, Coptic alchemy who certainly over-emphasised the connection of the Bodleian manuscripts to dyeing craft and dye-stuff trade (101): “As will be seen, much of what was disguised with occult-sounding language as ‘alchemy’ was in fact simple craft technology–trade secrets.”

15 Ed. Halleux, *Les alchimistes grecs*; cf. also Berthelot and Ruelle, *Collection*; Caffaro and

regarded as the earliest extant manuscripts dealing with alchemy, although they are concerned, in quite similar ways, with merely technical aspects of the art—the production, imitation and even forgery of costly materials, such as gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, and purple.¹⁶

Cairo Catalogue Général 8028,¹⁷ a single leaf of paper, supposedly from the town of Akhmīm in Upper Egypt, provides a short list of eight Arabic names of ingredients transcribed into Bohairic¹⁸ (i.e. Lower Egyptian) Coptic:

Ex. 2 (Entire text) ⲥⲏⲗⲉⲕⲟϥ ⲏ ⲉⲥⲟϥⲛⲁⲟϥⲣⲉⲩ^{CIX?} ⲉⲥⲡⲏⲛⲓⲧⲉⲗ ⲉⲥⲁⲗⲙⲁⲓⲣⲁ ⲉⲥⲥⲉⲛⲁⲣⲁ ⲉⲥⲉⲣⲛⲏⲃ ⲉⲥⲁⲗⲓⲛⲉⲕ ⲉⲥⲁⲗⲓⲛⲓⲧⲉⲗ ⲛⲓⲡⲁⲥⲥⲏⲛⲁⲣⲁ] ‘syriac red (ⲥⲟⲣⲓⲕⲟⲛ)¹⁹ or cinnabar (*zunjufr*)—white lead (*isbīdāj*)—red chalk (*al-maghra*)—verdigris (*al-zinjār*)—(red or yellow) orpiment (*al-zirnikh*)— lapis lazuli (*al-līnakh/al-līnaj*)—ink (*al-midād*)—verdigris (*deleted: al-zinjār*)’

As was noted by Crum, this compilation of inorganic substances could have served alchemical purposes of some kind.²⁰ Indeed, as each of these substances was common dye stuff and together they cover a good deal of the palette, they may even have nothing but the shopping list of a dyer or painter.²¹

So in a way, P.Berlin P 8316 and Cairo Cat.Gén. 8028 are on the margins of our dossier, while its core consists of the aforementioned alchemical manuscripts

Falanga, *Il papiro di Leida*; Caley, *The Leyden papyrus and Caley, The Stockholm papyrus*; Halleux, *Les textes alchimiques* and Halleux, *Indices chemicorum*; Letrouit, *La chronologie*.

16 The operating instructions of *P.Leid.* I 397 and *P.Holm.* are ennobled, as it were, by the occurrence of parallels in the properly alchemical treatise of Pseudo-Demokritos, *Physika kai mystika* (although overlaid here by an additional symbolic layer); cf. Halleux, *Les alchimistes grecs* 72–75, and Vereno, *Studien zum ältesten* 8. A new edition of Pseudo-Democritus is now available: Martelli, *The Four books*.

17 Leaf of paper, H. 17 cm × B. 12 cm, ed. Crum, *Catalogue général* 12–13, n° 8028.

18 This dialectal tendency, rather amazing with regard to the assumed provenance of the text, is indicated not only by the occurrence of the letter ⲃ, but also by the use of ⲁ for rendering Arabic ‘j’ (ج) where transcriptions of Arabic words based on Sahidic phonology and orthography generally have ⲥ, cf. Richter, *Coptic* 497.

19 The common written form in Greek pigment lists is ⲥⲟⲣⲓⲕⲟⲛ, cf. Mitthof, *Pigmente* 291.

20 Crum, *Catalogue général* 13: “Contents: Apparently Arabic alchemistic terms transcribed.”

21 Strikingly similar lists of dye stuffs in Greek have been edited and discussed by Fritz Mitthof, *Liste von Pigmenten* and Mitthof, *Pigmente* (providing an exhaustive bibliography on 299–304); cf. also Halleux, *Pigments et colorants*.

of London and Oxford, four extensive treatises written in Sahidic (Upper Egyptian) Coptic.

British Library Oriental MS. 3669(1)²² comprises 20 pages, forming a single quire, a *quinternion*, of a palimpsest parchment codex.²³ The beginning and the end of the text are missing, and its first surviving pages are partly damaged, but at least 10 pages are fully preserved. There is no pagination, but the page order was originally fixed by the remains of the codex's original binding.²⁴ Ludwig Stern estimated the age of the manuscript to be five or six centuries,²⁵ which would mean the thirteenth or even fourteenth centuries, but this seems to be considerably too late a dating. The handwriting, even if not very careful and therefore difficult to date (cf. Figure 10.1), does not indicate a time later than the tenth or eleventh century; likewise, the language of the text, a non-archaic late Sahidic, recalls tenth and eleventh-century Coptic texts.²⁶ BL MS. Or. 3669(1) was acquired by the German Egyptologist August Eisenlohr at Sōhāg in Upper Egypt,²⁷ the famous site of Shenoute's monastery near the town of Akhmīm. But

22 H. 16 cm × B. 12 cm; ed. by Ludwig Stern, *Fragment eines koptischen* 102–119; described by W.E. Crum in *P.Lond.Copt.* 1, 374, p. 175, collated by myself in September 2006.

23 Traces of the earlier writing, a bimodular bookhand, are regularly visible on the flesh-sides (cf. Figure 10.1), but nothing distinctive enough for identifying the erased text can be read as yet.

24 Cf. Stern, *Fragment eines koptischen* 103: "... da sie noch in der ursprünglichen Heftung hängen."; W.E. Crum *ad P.Lond.Copt.* 1, 374, p. 175: "threaded together in book form by a small parchment thong." Today the page fragments are fixed in frames of Japanese paper and (together with the parchment fragment Or. MS. 3669[3] obviously not belonging to 3669[1]) have been re-bound in a hardbacked booklet. According to a pencil note at the half-title, this may have happened in October 1907. The correctness of the present page order can still be understood by conclusive codicological features.

25 Stern, *Fragment eines koptischen* 103: "Die Handschrift, welche immerhin 5–6 Jahrhunderte alt sein mag ..."

26 Unexpected confirmation of my own impressions came from a handwritten acquisition catalogue in the British Library Oriental Manuscripts Reading Room, the *List of Oriental manuscripts, 1879–1889, Or. 2091–4046*. The entry on Or. 3669(1) among the 1889 acquisitions runs as follows (232): "Vellum fragment of an alchemical treatise in Coptic (see Stern, *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache* 102–119). A smaller Coptic fragment [i.e., probably, Or. 3669(3)]. 10th cent." The authority the librarian may have been drawing upon is Crum, who classified the handwriting of BL MS. Or. 3669(1) in *P.Lond.Copt.* 1, 374, p. 175 in terms of the palaeographical typology according to the plates in Zoëga, *Catalogus*: "The text ... is written in a small, uneven, sloping hand of Zoëga's 9th class."

27 Cf. Stern, *Fragment eines koptischen* 102; for Eisenlohr, cf. Dawson, Uphill and Bierbrier, *Who was who* 139.

if Sōhāg's being the site of the manuscript's purchase does not automatically make it—or even its environs—the site of its discovery, at least it *could* have been found there.

Bodleian MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1, 2 and 3 were purchased, according to information available in the Bodleian Library Oriental Reading Room card catalogue of “Manuscripts: Donors and Vendors,” in 1890 from “The Rev[erend] G[reville] J[ohn] Chester,” a widely interested traveler, amateur archaeologist and collector of antiquities,²⁸ who provided a number of British collections with objects of amazing diversity. In the case of the Coptic Bodleian manuscripts (P) a. 1–3, Chester's source remains unknown; wherever it was, there is no doubt that all three manuscripts were found and sold together, because they are as similar to each other as they are different from other Coptic texts. We also know that other Coptic papyri likewise kept in the Bodleian Library were bought by Rev. Chester near Sōhāg.²⁹ Based on information given by Chassinat, *Le manuscrit magique*, Leslie MacCoull, Coptic Alchemy quoted the opinion of Crum that the Bodleian manuscripts had been brought from el-Meshaikh, a site near the modern village of Girga. However, this argument is clearly erroneous and must be put aside.³⁰ Even more striking as an argument than such fragmentary bits

28 Cf. Dawson, Uphill and Bierbrier, *Who was who* 96–97.

29 Such as Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 4, edited by Crum, *Coptic manuscripts* appendix, 77–82, which was brought from Sheikh Hammad near Sōhāg, although its dialect is Fayyumic and its content is an account listing persons from villages in the Fayyūm.

30 MacCoull, Coptic alchemy 101, wrote that Crum “apparently ... was of the opinion that they [sc. Bodl. MSS. Copt (P) a. 1–3], like the medical papyrus ... now at the French Institute in Cairo, were found at el-Meshaikh (Lepidotonpolis) near Girga, across the Nile just south of Akhmim,” referring to Chassinat, *Le manuscrit magique* 15. The passage in question runs as follows: “Le papyrus médical de l'Institut français a été découvert près du village d'El-Méshaïkh (Lepidotonpolis), à quelques kilomètres au sud-est de Girga. Les fragments alchimiques que j'ai acquis, il y a quelques quarante ans, à Louxor, m'ont été donnés comme provenant de la même trouvaille. Celle-ci, au dire du marchand, comprenait plusieurs autres pièces encore, de dimensions plus grandes. Je n'ai pu les acheter en raison de leur prix élevé, ni les voir, leur propriétaire refusant de me les montrer si je ne lui versais préalablement la somme qu'il en demandait. Je pense qu'il s'agit des trois papyrus conservés maintenant à Oxford, et dont je dois la connaissance à l'amabilité de M. Crum.” However, Crum certainly knew the true circumstances of the acquaintance of Bodl. MSS. Copt (P) a.1–3 from Rev. Chester in 1890, and the same circumstances disprove Chassinat's assumption that the manuscripts withheld by his purchaser were identical with the Bodleian manuscripts, since these were already resident in Oxford when Chassinat arrived in Egypt for the first time in 1895 (cf. Dawson, Uphill and Bierbrier,

of external evidence is the actual resemblance of Bodleian MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1–3 and the Papyrus Médical Copte of the Institut français d'archéologie orientale (IFAO) in terms of layout and palaeography,³¹ which could indeed point to a shared milieu for all of the manuscripts, if not necessarily to their shared provenance in the same find. However, taking into account all of the evidence for the provenance of Bodleian manuscripts (P) a. 1–3, BL MS. Or. 3669(1) and Catalogue général 8028, I cannot help but at least raise the *possibility* that all of these Coptic texts belong to a single assemblage, originating from the same place of discovery. But even if this is not the case, the accumulation of alchemical writings from a narrowly limited *area* remains remarkable.³² This consideration leads me to a brief remark about the importance of the town of Panopolis/Akhmīm and its surroundings as a likely site of alchemical practice in the late antique and early Islamic period.

An 'Alchemy Valley' around Panopolis/Akhmīm?

The aforementioned fourth-century Papyri Leiden I 397 and Holmiensis originally belonged to the famous d'Anastasi collection purchased in 1828, which means that they originally formed part of the huge papyrus assemblage discovered at Thebes (some 120 km away from Akhmīm) that has yielded the vast majority of all extant Greek, Demotic, and Old-Coptic magical manuscripts.³³ Living at the time these manuscripts were composed, the Egyptian Zosimos, who reached his prime around 300 CE, is considered to be the earliest non-pseudepigraphic author of alchemical writings. Zosimos is usually referred to as ὁ Πανωπολίτης in the alchemical tradition,³⁴ and Mertens has adopted this

Who was who 95–96). A different argument for the shared provenance of Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1–3 and P.Méd.IFAO is made by Richter, *Neue koptische medizinische* 167–168.

- 31 Especially the unusual format of the papyrus scrolls, written *transversa charta*—in the case of the medical papyrus a strip of 248 cm in length and 27 cm in width, in the case of the Bodleian manuscripts a. 2 and 3, strips of ca. 70 and ca. 80 cm in length by ca. 25 cm in width.
- 32 As is also true of the still-missing alchemical manuscripts from el-Meshaikh, cf. above, n. 11.
- 33 Cf. Halleux, *Les alchimistes grecs* 5–6. Preisendanz commented on n° xiii (P.Leiden J 395) (*Papyri* 86): “Gleiche H[an]d in P Leid. J 397, P Holm,” cf. also Halleux, *Les alchimistes grecs* 12: “Il ne nous a pas été possible de vérifier cette hypothèse qui révélerait dans la personne du scribe une curieuse connexion des préoccupations alchimiques avec la magie.” On the circumstances of this find and the history of the d'Anastasi papyri, cf. Tait, *Theban magic and Dieleman, Priests* 11–20.
- 34 Cf. Mertens, *Alchemy* 165 and Mertens, *Zosime de Panopolis* XII–XIX.

as reliable biographical information, against the witness of the *Suda*.³⁵ The continuation, perhaps even concentration, of this hub of alchemical activity in and around the Upper Egyptian urban centre of Akhmīm into early Islamic times is indicated by the number of Arabic alchemists whose lives were somehow related to it in the literary biographical tradition.³⁶ These include Dhū l-Nūn, a mystic and alchemist who spent his entire life in Akhmīm (796–861);³⁷ ‘Uthmān ibn Suwayd Ḥarī al-Ikhmīmī (al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 358; *floruit* around 900);³⁸ a nameless disciple of Jābir ibn Ḥayyān called al-Ikhmīmī (al-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 355.23, probably not identical with the preceding person);³⁹ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Umayl (ca. 900–960);⁴⁰ and Buṭrus al-Ḥakīm al-Ikhmīmī (living in the ninth century or later).⁴¹ Indeed, there might be a relationship between the broad stream of evidence for alchemical thought and practice in Panopolis/Akhmīm on the one hand, and the town’s importance as a centre of textile production and, accordingly, of dyeing, as was emphasised by MacCoull,⁴² on the other. If ‘honest’ alchemy was essentially a way of purifying and improving one’s soul, it was hardly capable of making one a living. Alchemical efforts therefore are usually found in symbiotic connection with professions more appropriate for gaining a livelihood, be it the occupation of a physician as in the—perhaps typical—case of the famous Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyya al-Rāzī (d. 925 CE), or in a trade such as dyeing, in some respects a close neighbour of the alchemical arts.

35 Mertens, *Zosime de Panopolis* 166.

36 Cf. Abt, Madelung and Hofmeier, *Muḥammad Ibn-Umail* xiii–xiv; Plessner, *Vorsokratische* 130–131.

37 Abt, Madelung and Hofmeier, *Muḥammad Ibn-Umail* xiv.

38 Abt, Madelung and Hofmeier, *Muḥammad Ibn-Umail* xiv.

39 Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 217.

40 Abt, Madelung and Hofmeier, *Muḥammad Ibn-Umail* xiv.

41 Sezgin, *Geschichte* 274, and Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 235.

42 MacCoull, *Coptic Alchemy* 101: “From burials at Akhmim ... have come a great many of what art historians generically term Coptic textiles. Both Greek and Arabic papyri attest to the presence of weaving and dyeing facilities in the city and its surrounding area ... Panopolis had gained the reputation of a continuing center of ‘arcane philosophy,’ i.e., craft technology, which combined with surviving Christianity and a memory of Hellenistic philosophy.” The importance of that branch of trade is already mentioned by Strabo XVII 1.41, and was still valid in Abbasid, Tulunid and Fatimid times, cf. Frantz-Murphy 1981, *A new interpretation. From the wealth of papyrological evidence, I only cite the bilingual archive of the purple-dye trader Aurelius Pachymios (Wessely, Neue griechische* 122–139).

TABLE 1 *Synopsis: Correspondences between Bodl. Mss. Copt. (P) a. 1 and 3*

MS. a. 1	MS. a. 3
pag. 1 (Crum <i>g</i>)	(<i>verso</i> , 1–14)
pag. 2 (Crum <i>a</i>)	<i>recto</i> , 1–12
pag. 3 (Crum <i>f</i>)	<i>recto</i> , 13–24
pag. 4 (Crum <i>b</i>)	<i>recto</i> , 24–35
pag. 5 (Crum <i>e</i>)	<i>recto</i> , 35–49
pag. 6 (Crum <i>c</i>)	<i>recto</i> , 50–64
pag. 7 (Crum <i>d</i>)	<i>recto</i> , 64–78
pag. 8 (<i>vacat</i>)	<i>verso</i> , 1–14

Unlike BL MS. Or. 3669(1), the Bodleian MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1, 2 and 3⁴³ are written on papyrus. Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 1 currently consists of four papyrus leaves of $9\frac{1}{4}$ by $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches, placed under glass in one large frame according to the direction of the fibres (see figure 10.2). Two of them, pages *e*(*r*^o)/*c*(*v*^o) and *d*(*r*^o)/*vacat*(*v*^o), are still joined together:

Frame, obverse:

page *a* (—) page *b* (—) page *c* (—) = *conjunction* = page *d* (—)

Frame, reverse:

vacat (|) = *conjunction* = page *e* (|) page *f* (|) page *g* (|)

Figure 10.2. *Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 1 as arranged in the frame*

The original page order, albeit disarranged in the frame, can easily be reconstructed by comparison with the parallel text as attested in Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 3 (see Table 1).

The original ‘quire’ was made up, somewhat strangely from a codicological point of view, of two single leaves (pages 1/2 and 3/4) and one folded double leaf (pages 5/6+7/8) laid next to each other piece by piece.

43 Using the transcriptions of this unpublished mss. in Crum’s notebook 83 (Bodl. MSS. Copt.

Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 1 is written in a sloping hand likewise far from usual book writing as from business hands (cf. Figure 10.2). It can hardly be dated earlier than the ninth century but surely not later than the tenth century, because papyrus in Egypt fell rapidly into disuse after the mid-tenth century.

Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 2 and 3 strikingly resemble each other not only in measurements⁴⁴ and layout, but in their handwriting—to an extent that it is not unlikely to assume that the same scribe was responsible for both. Both manuscripts are written in a sort of semi-uncial, clearly dependent on the contemporary bimodular Coptic book hand (the type otherwise called Alexandrian majuscule, narrow style, or *unciale copte*), which permits us to date these manuscripts with some confidence to the ninth or tenth century (cf. Figure 10.2). Both of them are written *transversa charta* in lines running parallel to the *kollaseis* (bonds) of the papyrus leaves, a manner otherwise attested, apart from documentary texts, in Papyrus Médical Copte IFAO (cf. above, n. 31). Finally, both pieces had been re-used and their recto sides are covered in Arabic letters from an earlier text.⁴⁵

After providing some information on the appearance and physical coherence of the Coptic alchemical dossier, a few words about its contents can now be added. To start with, perhaps the most striking fact: we have four manuscripts, but only three texts. As has already been mentioned briefly, Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1 and 3 are witnesses of the same text (see table 1). While all four Coptic alchemical treatises are plain compilations of alchemical recipes, more or less free of theoretical reflections and philosophical considerations, the literary form of Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1 and 3 is shaped by an overriding narrative idea. The text is presented as a record drawn up by a disciple who had observed his teacher at work and written down what “the master” (ⲡⲥⲁⲗ)—as he always

(P) a.1, 2, and 3) and Kahle's notebook 33 (Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a.1 and 3), I had the opportunity to collate the texts in September 2004 and September 2006.

44 Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 2 measures 81 cm in length by 25 cm in width, Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 3 measures 82 cm in length by 25.5 cm in width.

45 Petra Sijpesteijn was kind enough to have a look at these texts and was able to identify them as *P.Bodl.Arab.* 1 (= verso of Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 3) and 2 (= verso of Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 2), edited by Margoliouth in 1893, who only made a laconic note on the Coptic texts (7): “The Coptic documents written on the back of both Papyri and partly within the lines of Papyrus 1 have, I understand, no connexion with these letters.” Apparently *P.Bodl.Arab.* 1 is cut off at the lower part and *P.Bodl.Arab.* 2 at the upper part. In the case of Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 3, the last 14 lines of the Coptic alchemical text were placed on the | -side, using the interlinear space between the first lines of *P.Bodl.Arab.* 1.

calls him—did and said. The paragraphs of the text of Bodl. Mss. Copt. (P) a. 1 and 3 are marked by opening phrases referring to this narrative framework, such as “I saw the master,” “I heard the master,” “this is what the master let me know” and, most frequently, “the master spoke” (πεξε πσαρ). Thus, the voice we hear telling us recipes is that of the master, but always quoted by a distinct ‘homodiëgetic’⁴⁶ narrator, his pupil. See for instance ex. 3:

Ex. 3 Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 1, pag. a, 1–7 || Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 3, r^o, 1–6: ¹ σν^ο πεξε πσαρ ξε χι α ριπρη μι οϋϋι ² ναλμογλγαν θνοϋ καλωσ καλωσ καλωσ ³ τααϋ εϋτοεισ εκκαρεϋ μαρϯ εϋκαπ ⁴ καασ εκαϋε ερραι ρηογκα-ραειε ⁵ εϋρϯβϯ εκβοθ εϋλαληϋ ηκαρ νκοφοσ ⁶ εϋρνηογκωρϯ εϋκερα νκοτ εκπιε ⁷ μμοϋ νζ νρϯοϋ νατοϋωη ριπεϋωπ ⁸ ωαντεϋρωϋωνε νοϋωτ ‘The master spoke: Take 1 of “the Sun” [i.e., gold] and one unit (*lit.* measure) of ointment (*al-mulgham*), grind it very, very well, fill it into a stretchy bag, tie it to a string, let it hang down in a covered, drilled retort(?), smeared with “clay of the sages” [i.e., laboratory cement], leaving it in a gentle fire of dung, while you cook it 7 days (without nights) upon its broth, until it becomes one single stone.’

While it is amazing enough to have two copies of this text, it is even more significant to see that both copies differ from each other at several textual levels. While morphology and orthography of Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 1 come near to the standard of common literary (i.e., biblical) Sahidic, some spellings of Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 3 bear dialectal features pointing to its Upper Egyptian origin. Both texts have entire phrases as well as single expressions of their own. And even the general textual arrangement differs slightly but significantly (see table 1): the *initial* paragraph of Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 1, “I saw the master as he sublimated, etc.” (see ex. 4) forms just the *epilogue* of the text transmitted in Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 3:

Ex. 4 Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 1, pag. g, 1–6 || Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 3 v^o, 1–5: ¹ αιναϋ επσαρ νταϋσαειλ νπασσαιπακ νζ νκοπ ² > μνηνσωσ πασσαρ-νηϋ [ν]αλλασβαρ εϋττω ³ νμοϋ ννεϋ ναλλω[η]σ αϋαϋμι νμοϋ νλ νκοπ ⁴ > μνηνσωσ αϋσαειλ νμοϋ ριπανναοερ νλ νκοπ ⁵ > μνηνσωσ παλχιπριϋ [να]λλασβαρ αϋτααϋ εϋσοϋ ⁶ μαρεσ αϋοϋαϋϯ ριαϋϋριϋα αϋααϋ νοϋωνε “I saw the master as he sublimated (*ṣa^cada*) the quicksilver (*al-zaybaq*) 7 times,—thereafter the yellow (*al-asfar*) arsenic (*al-zirnīkh*) [i.e., orpi-

46 In terms of Gérard Genette, *Narrative discourse*.

ment], soaking it in oil of aloe, he heated (*aḥmama*) it four times—thereafter he sublimated (*ša‘ada*) it on the refined gold (*al-naḍīr*) four times—thereafter the yellow (*al-asfar*) sulfur (*al-kibrīt*), he put it in a ladle (σωμάριστρον), he melted it on *al-sharīk* (? ‘the partner’), he made it a stone.”

So what we actually have are not just two copies of one text but copies of two *recensions* of one text.

Further more, the text of Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1 and 3 makes use of so-called *Decknamen*, substitute names, which are likewise attested in Arabic alchemical texts,⁴⁷ such as:

- Ex. 5 Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 1 a. 12: ΜΟΥΓ ΝΑΣΕΣΕΣ ‘glass (*al-zujāj*) water’: cf. Siggel, *Decknamen* 51: *mā’ al-zujāj* ‘glass water’ as substitute name of *Hg*.
- Ex. 6 Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 1 g. 9: ΠΑΛΞΔΑΜΗΡ ‘☽ (silver-) [*symbol*: crescent] yeast (*al-khamīr*): cf. Siggel, *Decknamen* 39: *khamīr al-dhahab* ‘gold yeast’ and *khamīra* ‘yeast’ as substitute names of *Hg*.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the final paragraph of Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 1 (= the penultimate of Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 3) seems to point to another text. This paragraph deals with the ΜΕΧΑΝΗ ΜΗΣΟΦΟΣ, the “machine of the sages,” a means or contrivance serving to decompose every substance (or at least, every metal).⁴⁸ This “machine,” however, needs what in Coptic is called a ΠΑΞΡΕ, a “recipe” or “ingredient,” in order to work, and it is this recipe that the master gives to his disciple in the text. The ending of the paragraph sounds like a to-be-continued, when the disciple says, “If God puts it into the heart of the master, then he will let me know—the machine”. Is this an intertextual reference to another alchemical text providing the continuation of the procedure? I shall return to the issue later in the article.

Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 2, comprising 72 lines altogether, is the shortest and in some ways, the plainest (which does not mean easiest to understand) of the Coptic alchemical treatises, a mere sequence of recipes structured by simple

47 Cf. Siggel, *Decknamen*; Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 266–270.

48 The very result which was expected of a piece of equipment called *menstruum universale* in early modern western alchemy.

initial phrases such as χ_1 $\eta\alpha\kappa$, “take” or $\alpha\lambda\lambda\omicron\varsigma$, “another one” (*sc.* recipe of the same purpose), cf. ex. 7:

Ex. 7 Bodl. ms. Copt. (P) a.2, lines 1–6: $^1 \chi_1 \eta\alpha\kappa \square \eta\beta\alpha\rho\omega\theta \epsilon\lambda\eta\eta\upsilon \mu\mu\omicron\gamma \eta\eta\mu\omicron\gamma$
 $\zeta\iota\alpha\omega\alpha\zeta\eta\eta\epsilon \epsilon\iota\phi\omega\gamma\epsilon\iota \mu\mu\omicron\gamma \eta\eta\mu\omicron\gamma [\omicron\gamma\omega\eta]$ $^2 \epsilon\eta\tau\gamma \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \chi\epsilon\zeta\chi\omega\zeta\gamma \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \cdot \chi_1 \mu\iota^\lambda \alpha$
 $\varsigma \eta\eta\tau\gamma \mu\eta \mu\iota^\lambda \alpha \eta\zeta\alpha\tau \omicron\gamma\omega\theta\omicron\gamma \mu\eta\eta\epsilon\gamma$ $^3 \epsilon\rho\eta\gamma \dots \eta\eta\tau\gamma \eta\eta\mu\omicron\gamma \eta\eta\mu\omicron\gamma \eta\eta\tau\gamma$
 $\alpha\gamma\omega [\omicron\gamma]\omega\iota \not\delta \omicron\gamma\alpha\theta \alpha\pi\iota \square \tau\alpha\gamma \epsilon\zeta\omicron\gamma\eta$ $^4 \epsilon\pi\epsilon\zeta\omicron\mu\omicron\gamma \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha \varsigma\omicron\pi \bar{\eta}\omega\alpha\kappa\alpha\zeta\eta\mu\iota \eta\eta\mu\omicron\gamma$
 $\tau\alpha\gamma \epsilon\zeta\omicron\gamma\eta \epsilon\pi\epsilon\zeta\omicron\mu\omicron\gamma \omega\alpha\eta\eta\tau\epsilon\kappa\alpha\gamma$ $^5 \eta\rho \epsilon\gamma \cdot \alpha\kappa \omicron\gamma\omega\theta \alpha\alpha\gamma \eta \alpha \eta\alpha\eta\omicron\gamma \cdot \kappa\alpha \dots \alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha$
 $\epsilon\kappa\omega\alpha\eta\alpha\gamma \dots \eta \dots$ $^6 \omega\alpha\gamma\kappa\mu\omicron\mu \eta\eta\gamma\kappa\omicron\gamma\iota$ “Take a (plate) [*symbol*: $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\alpha\lambda\omicron\nu$] of copper, cover (*lahafa*) it with salt and *al-shahīra* (i.e., a vitriol), roast (*shawā*) it one night, take it away, beat it. Take $1\frac{1}{2}$ mil(iarēsion) of it and 1 mil(iarēsion) silver, melt them with each other, ... in it, a half-measure of it and [one] measure of (gold) [*symbol*: gold]. Melt(?) the (plate) [*symbol*: $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\alpha\lambda\omicron\nu$], put it into the salt, (namely) from time to time when you heat (*ahmama*) it, put it into the salt until you make it a (plate) [*symbol*: $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\alpha\lambda\omicron\nu$] which Melt it, make it one. It is very(?) beautiful(?). But if you make it a ..., it will become black shortly.”

As a recurrent finishing clause it has the formula $\omicron\gamma\alpha\omega\kappa\iota\mu\omicron\mu \eta\epsilon$. This could be understood either in a special, technical sense, “this is a proof,” or, more likely, as a general recommendation “it is proved,” as is an often-attested conclusion in recipes in magic, medicine and cookery.

BL MS. Or. 3669(1) provides the most extensive and elaborate Coptic alchemical text. Its style is rich in imagery; alchemical metaphors and *Decknamen* are excessively used making it even more difficult to understand what’s going on, such as:

- Ex. 8 BL MS. Or. 3669(1), fol. IVB 8: $\mu\eta\mu\mu\omicron\gamma \epsilon\varsigma\iota\eta\epsilon[\lambda\omega]$ ‘bat urine’: cf. Siggel, *Decknamen* 43, *shīdarj* ‘bat excrements’ as substitute name of *Hg*; cf. *ibid.*, 36 with *bawl* “urine.”
- Ex. 9 BL MS. Or. 3669(1), fol. VA 18: $\tau\varsigma\iota\eta\eta\eta\eta\epsilon \mu\eta\zeta\alpha\lambda\eta\tau$ “the way of cooking the bird”: cf. Siggel, *Decknamen* 44 f.: with *tayr*, “bird.”
- Ex. 10 BL MS. Or. 3669(1), fol. VIII A, 19: $\alpha\lambda\lambda\omega\lambda\epsilon$ ‘pearl (*al-lu’lu*)’: cf. Siggel, *Decknamen* 49: *lu’lu raṭīb* ‘liquid pearl’ as substitute name of *Hg*; cf. *ibid.*, 51: *marjān* ‘pearl’ as substitute name of *Sf*.
- Ex. 11 BL MS. Or. 3669(1), fol. VIII B, 12: $\alpha\lambda\kappa\iota\eta$ ‘slave’: cf. Siggel, *Decknamen* 45: several substitute names with ‘*abd*, ‘slave’, ‘servant’, *ibid.*, 37: *jāriya* ‘female slave’ (= *Fe*), and *ibid.*, 38: *khādim* ‘servant’ (= *Fe*).

The recurrent concluding formula of its recipes is $\alpha\chi\chi\omega\kappa \epsilon\upsilon\omicron\lambda$, “it is finished.” Compare ex. 12:

Ex. 12 BL MS. Or. 3669(1), fol. VIa, 9–21: ⁹ $\chi\iota \ \eta\alpha\kappa \ \eta\bar{\iota} \ \eta\omega\iota \ \eta\gamma\alpha\lambda\eta\tau$: ¹⁰ $\omega \ \bar{\iota} \ \bar{\eta}\omega\iota \ \eta\alpha\sigma\sigma\epsilon\bar{\rho}\eta\eta\gamma \ \eta\bar{\kappa}\omicron\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ ¹¹ $\gamma\alpha\tau\omicron\gamma \ \epsilon\bar{\rho}\omega\gamma$: $\omega\alpha\tau\epsilon\gamma\mu\omicron\gamma \ \kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron\varsigma$: ¹² $\tau\alpha\gamma\omicron\gamma \ \gamma\iota\eta\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\bar{\rho}\eta\gamma$: $\sigma[\omicron\pi] \ \varsigma \ [\bar{\eta}]\omega\iota$ ¹³ $\bar{\eta}\kappa\alpha\iota\bar{\rho}\epsilon$: $\sigma\alpha\kappa\tau\omicron\gamma \ \tau\alpha\alpha\gamma$ [$\epsilon\gamma\alpha\lambda\kappa\alpha$] ¹⁴ $\tau\alpha\gamma \ \epsilon\bar{\sigma}\omicron\gamma\alpha\eta$: $\gamma\omicron\upsilon\bar{\sigma} \ \kappa\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\alpha$ [$\epsilon\chi\omicron\gamma$]: ¹⁵ $\chi\alpha\gamma\gamma \ \epsilon\eta\omicron\mu\epsilon \ \bar{\eta}\sigma\omicron\phi\omicron\varsigma$: $\varsigma[\alpha\gamma\tau\epsilon \ \gamma\alpha\bar{\rho}\omicron\omicron\gamma?]$ ¹⁶ $\omega\alpha\eta\tau\omicron\gamma\upsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \ \epsilon\gamma\bar{\rho}\alpha\iota$: $\sigma\omicron\pi \ \omicron\gamma[\omega\iota]$ ¹⁷ $\gamma\iota\omicron\omicron\gamma$: $\sigma\alpha\tau\gamma \ \gamma\iota\chi\omicron \ \bar{\rho} \ \eta\omega\iota \ \bar{\eta}\kappa\alpha\varsigma\iota$ ¹⁸ $\tau\eta\bar{\rho}\epsilon\eta$: $\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha \ \sigma\alpha\upsilon\upsilon\iota \ \bar{\eta}\pi\kappa\alpha\varsigma\iota$ ¹⁹ $\tau\eta\bar{\rho}\epsilon$: $\bar{\eta}\omega\bar{\rho}\bar{\omega}\bar{\rho} \ \gamma\iota \ \pi\epsilon\bar{\rho}\omicron\tau\epsilon$: $\mu\pi\epsilon\varsigma$ ²⁰ $\tau\alpha\phi\omicron\eta\omicron\epsilon$: $\pi\bar{\kappa}\bar{\gamma}\omega\gamma \ \eta\alpha\chi\omicron\kappa$ ²¹ $\epsilon\bar{\nu}\omicron\lambda \ \kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron\omicron\varsigma \ \alpha\chi\chi[\omicron\kappa] \ \epsilon\upsilon\omicron\lambda$. “Take 10 units of the ‘bird’ and (*wa-*) 10 units of red arsenic (*al-zirniḫh*) [i.e., realgar], ‘torture’ them until they ‘die’ well; mingle them with each other, take six units of ‘throat,’ grind them, put them into an open glass, put another one on it, smear it with ‘clay of the sages’ [i.e., laboratory cement], heat beneath it until they ‘fly up.’ Take one [unit] of it, spread it over 100 units of tin—but clean (*ṣaffā*) the tin with laurel(?)—milk!—your work will succeed well. It is finished.”

As might be expected, the aim of all recipes in these treatises is the extraction of gold, silver, a kind of gold even better than common gold, and certain artificial substances wanted for laboratory work, such as $\omicron\mu\epsilon \ \eta\sigma\omicron\phi\omicron\varsigma$, “clay of the sages,” which is an artificial cement used for insulating laboratory vessels, and the elixir, the ultimate catalyst, which is referred to as $\alpha\lambda\chi\iota\mu\iota\epsilon$ ‘alchemy’ in BL MS. Or. 3669(1),⁴⁹ when it says:

Ex. 13 BL MS. Or. 3669(1), fol. I1b, 16–22: ¹⁶ [...] $\omega\alpha\eta\tau\omicron\gamma\upsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \ \epsilon\upsilon\omicron\lambda$ ¹⁷ $\gamma\iota\chi\eta\eta \ \pi\kappa\omicron\gamma\bar{\tau}$: $\kappa\alpha\alpha\gamma \ \omega\alpha\eta\tau\omicron\gamma\kappa\beta\omega$ ¹⁸ $\omega\gamma\tau\omicron\gamma \ \epsilon\iota\mu\epsilon \ \chi\epsilon \ \omicron\gamma\eta\bar{\rho} \ \gamma\iota\omicron\omicron\gamma\epsilon \ \tau\eta\bar{\rho}\omicron\gamma$: ¹⁹ $\tau\alpha\lambda\omicron\omicron\gamma \ \epsilon\pi\kappa\omicron\gamma\bar{\tau} \ \bar{\eta}\kappa\epsilon\sigma\omicron\pi$: ²⁰ $\dagger \ \epsilon\gamma\bar{\rho}\alpha\iota$ [ϵ] χ [\omicron] $\omicron\gamma \ \eta\omicron\gamma\omega\iota \ \alpha\lambda\mu\alpha\tau\kappa\alpha\lambda$: ²¹ $\epsilon\bar{\eta}\alpha\lambda\chi\iota\mu\iota\epsilon$: $\epsilon\kappa\omega\alpha\eta\alpha\alpha\gamma \ \bar{\eta}$ ²² $\pi\epsilon\kappa\bar{\mu}\tau\omicron \ \epsilon\bar{\mu}\beta\omicron\lambda \ \bar{\eta}\bar{\rho}\iota\mu\epsilon \ \chi\epsilon \ \alpha\gamma\epsilon\bar{\rho}\sigma\alpha\eta$: “[...] until they dissolve on the fire; let them, until they cool down, measure them to know how much is in them altogether. Put them on the fire a second time, add one *mithqāl* [-measure] of *al-kīmiyā*? [i.e., the elixir] to them. If you do it in front of yourself, then you will know: it has become beautiful.”

49 For this meaning, cf. Dozy, *Supplément* 514b: “*kīmiyā*’ désignait dans l’origine la substance qui transmue les métaux, la pierre philosophale ...; c’est le synonyme de *iksīr* La science (l’alchimie) s’appelait *ṣana’at al-kīmiyā* (= *ṣan’at al-iksīr*), ‘ilm *ṣan’at kīmiyā*, ‘ilm *al-kīmiyā*, et enfin *al-kīmiyā* tout court.” Stern, *Fragment eines koptischen 102 was wrong when he thought the $\omicron\mu\epsilon \ \eta\sigma\omicron\phi\omicron\varsigma$ “clay of the sages” to be the elixir.*

2 The Setting of the Coptic Alchemical Dossier: Greek and Arabic Alchemy in Late Antiquity and Early Islamic Times

In late antiquity two hitherto independent traditions were merged into a new alloy, to invoke an apt metaphor. Bits of technological knowledge from the realms of specialised crafts, such as goldsmithing,⁵⁰ metal-working,⁵¹ glass-making⁵² and dyeing⁵³—so-called *sub-scientific traditions* according to Høyrup⁵⁴—joined with the scientific knowledge of Greek philosophical thought in the tradition of Empedocles, Plato and Aristotle. This novel and promising alliance of practice and theory, epitomised by the alchemical laboratory equipped with an increasing inventory of tools, vessels and furnaces,⁵⁵ had even a third dimension: a gnostic hope of salvation through self-improvement.⁵⁶ Processes such as distillation and sublimation were equated with purification and the ascent of the soul, while the earthly body, due to its heavy, solid state of matter, had to be left behind and overcome. Accordingly, in the alchemical terminology metals are called τὰ σώματα, *al-ajsād*, “bodies,” while substances such as quicksilver, sulphur, and Sal ammoniac are designated τὰ πνεύματα, *al-arwāḥ*, “spirits.”⁵⁷

Apart from the aforementioned (semi-)alchemical papyri at Leiden and Stockholm, the Greek alchemical tradition partly survived in a Byzantine compilation, the so-called *Corpus Alchymicum Graecum*, attested in a considerable number of manuscripts.⁵⁸ The oldest parts of that corpus, pseudepigraphic treatises and dialogues, are assumed to have been composed in the first cen-

50 Depauw, New light.

51 Cf. Reiter, *Die Metalle*; Tylecote, *A history*.

52 Cf. Nicholson, *Egyptian*; Stern and Schlick-Nolte, *Early glass*.

53 Cf. Pfister, *Teinture et alchimie* and Germer, *Die Textilfärberei*.

54 Høyrup, *Integration/non-integration*.

55 Cf. Mertens, *Alchemy CXIII–CLXIX* on the *appareillage de Zosime*; cf. also Ganzenmüller, *Liber Florum Geberti*; Humphrey, Oleson and Sherwood, *Greek and Roman*; for pictures and reconstructions, cf. Sezgin, *Wissenschaft* 109–153. For the excavation of an alchemical laboratory in 1882 at Dronkah south of Assiut see Maspero, *Études de mythologie* 1, 206–209, and Stern, *Fragment eines koptischen* 102. Regrettably, I could not find any information on the whereabouts of this unique archaeological evidence.

56 Cf. Eliade, *Die hellenistische*, Hofmeier, *Alchemie*; Merkur, *A study*; Stolzenberg, *Unprofitous tinctures*; Wilson, *Pythagorean theory and Wilson*, *Distilling*.

57 Cf. Macuch, *Greek technical terms*; Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 148f.

58 Cf. Berthelot and Ruelle, *Collection*; Halleux, *Les textes alchimiques*; Rehm, *Zur Überlieferung*.

TABLE 2 *Greek and Coptic Alchemical Manuscripts*

Greek Papyri (Halleux 1981)		Coptic Papyrus and Parchment MSS.			Corpus Alchymicum Graecum (Berthelot 1888)		
P.Leid. x (inv. I 397)	P.Holm.	P.Berlin P.8316	P.Bodl. MSS. a. 1, 2 & 3	BL MS. Or. 3669(1)	Cod.Marc. 299	Cod.Par. 2325	Cod.Par. 2327
iii ^d / ivth c. C.E.		viith/ viiith c.	ixth / xth c.	xth/xith c.	xith c.	xiiiith c.	xvth c.

turies CE;⁵⁹ however, the manuscripts themselves are considerably later (see table 2). By far the earliest is a codex from the eleventh century kept in San Marco in Venice, followed by two manuscripts in Paris from the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁶⁰

However, when it comes to identifying a *Vorlage* of the Coptic texts, Greek compositions can generally be left out of consideration, since all the four Coptic alchemical treatises are so obviously influenced by Arabic models.⁶¹ A good deal of alchemical ingredients (cf. e.g. ex. 14–34) and laboratory tools (cf. e.g. ex. 35–39) have Arabic names:

Ex. 14 αλκαλακανθ < *al-qalqand* < χάλκωνθος Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 86a: “(green) vitriol, Cu-vitriol.”

Ex. 15 αλκελι < *al-qilī* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 86a: “potash, saltpetre.”

Ex. 16 αλμαγνησια < *al-maghniṣiyā* < μαγνήσια Sezgin 2003, 189; Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 88a; LSJ 1071b: “manganise minerals.”

59 The model developed by Halleux, *Les textes alchimiques* 61–64 and Letrouit, La chronologie and adopted by Mertens, *Alchemy* distinguishes three chronological layers within the corpus: *1st stratum* (1st–3rd centuries CE)—pseudepigraphic writings (Moses, Isis, Cleopatra, Agathodaimōn, Thot, Hermes, Joseph, Maria the Jewess, Democritus, Zarathustra, Ostanēs, Chymes etc.), partly quoted and presupposed by Zosimos, perhaps the earliest among them *Physika kai mystika* of Pseudo-Democritus; *2nd stratum* (ca. 300 CE)—the writings of Zosimos of Panopolis; *3rd stratum* (ca. 4th–7th centuries CE)—commenting writings (e.g. Synesios, Olympiodor, Stephanos).

60 Cf. Halleux, *Les textes alchimiques* 60–61.

61 Already Chassinat, *Un papyrus médical VIII* noticed à propos the influences of Arabic science on the Papyrus Médical Copte IFAO: “Elle se retrouve encore, et cela sans exception, dans les quelques écrits alchimiques que nous connaissons.”

- Ex. 17 αλλακνήτης < *al-miqnātīs* < μαγνήτις (λίθος), LSJ 1071b; Sezgin, *Wissenschaft* 181: “magnetite.”
- Ex. 18 αλμαρακ < *al-martak* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 88: “litharge.”
- Ex. 19 αλμαρακωθιε < *al-marqashīthā* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 88a; Sezgin, *Wissenschaft* 179; Goltz, *Studien* 267 f.: “metallic sulphides.”
- Ex. 20 αλλουλγαμ < *al-mulgham* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 88b; Ullmann, *Katalog* 264 s.v. *talghīm, ilghām*: “ointment, alloys of Hg.”
- Ex. 21 αλπαγραφ < *bawraq, bawrūq* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 78a; Sezgin, *Wissenschaft* 197: “borax.”
- Ex. 22 αλκιμιε < *al-kīmīya* Ullmann, *Katalog* 93 f., the “elixir,” cf. here above, p. 49.
- Ex. 23 αλχιπριτ, αλχιπριθ < *al-kibrūt* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 86a; Sezgin, *Wissenschaft* 200: “sulphur.”
- Ex. 24 αλρατιτ < *al-ḥadīd* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 79b: “iron.”
- Ex. 25 αννουφα(α)τερ < *al-nūshādir* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 89: “salmoniac.”
- Ex. 26 ασεε (*al-zāj*) Wahrmund, *Handwörterbuch I* 818; Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 81a: “vitriol, sulphate of iron or copper.”
- Ex. 27 ασσαβηε < *al-ṣaḥīḥa* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 98; Ullmann, *Katalog* 60: “metal plates.”
- Ex. 28 ασσερνηε < *al-zīrnīkh* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 81; Sezgin, *Wissenschaft* 202: “arsenic.”
- Ex. 29 ασσινσαρ < *al-zinjār* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 81; Goltz, *Studien* 256 f.: “verdigris.”
- Ex. 30 ασσινσουβρ < *al-zunjufr, al-zinjafr*, Dozy, *Supplément I* 606a; Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 81b; Sezgin, *Wissenschaft* 195: “cinnabar.”
- Ex. 31 ασσπακ < *al-zībaq* Dozy, *Supplément I* 616b; Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 81b; Sezgin, *Wissenschaft* 195: “quicksilver.”
- Ex. 32 ατταλ(ε)κ < *al-ṭalq* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 84a; Sezgin, *Wissenschaft* 197: “glimmer.”
- Ex. 33 αττανακαρ < *al-tinkār* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 78b: “borax.”
- Ex. 34 ρασαρ < *ḥajar* Dozy, *Supplément I* 250–252; Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 79a: “stone.”
- Ex. 35 αλκαταε, αλκιταε < *al-qadaḥ* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 99a: “cup, glass.”
- Ex. 36 αλμῆραλ < *al-munkhal* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 100: “sieve.”
- Ex. 37 αλλουταακε < *al-būtaqa* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 96: “crucible, melting pot.”
- Ex. 38 αλκενουν < *al-kānūn* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 99: “small oven, stove.”
- Ex. 39 αλχοε < *al-kūz* Siggel, *Arabisch-Deutsches* 99: “jug.”

And even more revealing, a number of verbal lexemes borrowed from Arabic does occur (ex. 40–44 and fig. 5):⁶²

Ex. 40 αῤῃῢ < *aḥmama*: “to heat s.th.”

Ex. 41 εἰσπεῖ < *ajrā*: “to cause to run s.th.”

Ex. 42 εἰσπεῖ < *lahafa* Wahrmund, *Handwörterbuch II* 626; Dozy, *Supplément I* 527a: “to wrap, to cover s.th.”

Ex. 43 εσῤακ < *zahaqa* Wahrmund, *Handwörterbuch I* 852: “to grind s.th.”

Ex. 44 ετταμ < *addama* Wahrmund, *Handwörterbuch I* 39b: “to join, to add s.th. to s.th. other.”

In the language of alchemy—the art of producing, processing, managing *par excellence*—verbal expressions could receive highly terminological semantic values. Therefore, it is not surprising to find among the Arabic words borrowed into the Coptic texts a number of terms which belong to a set of crucial concepts of alchemy called *tadbīrāt* or *tadābīr*, “managements, proceedings, methods,” such as *dabara* (in Coptic transcription taperi), “to prepare,” the verbal item underlying the term *tadbīr* itself, and the other examples displayed in table 3.

TABLE 3 Arabic alchemical terminology: terms of *tadābīr* ‘procedures’ borrowed into Coptic

Procedure	Arabic term	Word class	Coptic term	Meaning
<i>tadbīr</i> procedure ⁶³	<i>dabbara</i>	verb	ταπερι	to prepare, to manage
καθαρισ <i>al-tasfiya</i> purification ⁶⁴	<i>al-tasfiya</i>	nomen actionis	αθεσογε	purification, filtering
	<i>ṣaffā</i>	verb	σαφβι, σαββι	to purify, to filter
	<i>al-muṣaffi</i>	adjective	αλλμογσαββι	purified, filtered
πηξίς	<i>aʿqada</i>	verb	ακητ, ακτ̄	to fix, to thicken

62 16 out of a total of 21 Arabic verbs borrowed into Coptic so far identified are attested in the corpus of our dossier. As for the strategy of inserting Arabic verbal lexemes into Coptic syntactic structures, cf. Richter, *Coptic* 498–499.

63 Ullmann, *Katalog der arabischen II* 33.

64 Ullmann, *Katalog der arabischen II* 263 s.v. *tasfiya*; Ullmann, *Katalog der arabischen II* 52.

TABLE 3 *Arabic alchemical terminology: terms of tadābīr 'procedures' borrowed into Coptic (cont.)*

Procedure	Arabic term	Word class	Coptic term	Meaning
<i>ta'qīd</i> <i>fixation</i> ⁶⁵	<i>al-'aqd</i>	<i>nomen</i>	ⲗⲗ(ⲗ)ⲕⲧ	<i>fixed, thickened</i>
<i>taṣīd</i> , <i>sublimation,</i> <i>destillation</i> ⁶⁶	<i>ṣa'ada</i> <i>al-muṣa'ad</i>	<i>verb</i> <i>adjective</i>	Ϣⲁⲁⲧ, ϢⲁⲎⲘ ⲗⲙⲟϢϢⲁⲁⲧ, ⲗⲙⲟϢϢⲁⲎⲘ	<i>to distill, to condense, to sublime, to evaporate distilled, sublimated</i>
ὄπτησις <i>tashwīya</i> <i>calcination</i> ⁶⁷	<i>ashwā</i>	<i>verb</i>	ϛ(ⲓ)ⲱⲟϢⲎ	<i>to calcine, to roast</i>
λύσις <i>tahlīl</i> <i>dissolution</i> ⁶⁸	<i>inhalla</i> <i>mahlūl</i>	<i>verb</i> <i>adjective</i>	Ⲛⲉⲗ ⲙⲁⲉⲗⲟϢⲗ	<i>to dissolve</i> <i>dissolved</i>
<i>mauh</i> <i>to dilute</i> ⁶⁹	<i>al-māwī</i>	<i>adjective</i>	ⲗⲙⲟϢⲟϢⲎ	<i>watered down, diluted</i>

However, there are not only lots of lexical borrowings from Arabic, but also some remarkable higher-level linguistic interference phenomena, such as the occurrence of a linkage marker ⲱ, probably to be identified with the Arabic *wa-* (see e.g. ex. 12). Arabic verbs are usually borrowed in their imperative form,⁷⁰ the grammatical equivalent of the predominant mode of recipes as a

65 Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimpwissenschaften* 263 s.v. *ta'qīd*.

66 Ullmann, *Katalog der arabischen II* 263 s.v. *taṣīd*.

67 Ullmann, *Katalog der arabischen II* 57 and Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimpwissenschaften* 263 s.v. *tashwīya*.

68 Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimpwissenschaften* 262, s.v. *tahlīl*, *hall* (λύσις); Ullmann, *Katalog der arabischen II* 27.

69 Wahrmond, *Handwörterbuch I* 2 956b; Dozy, *Supplément II* 634a.

70 Cf. Richter, *Coptic* 498. Meanwhile, I am reasonably confident that examples (1) *akēt* and (2) *elhēf* should also be interpreted as Arabic imperative (*a'qīd*, *alhif*), rather than infinitive (*i'qād*, *ilhāf*), forms. This was also suggested to me by my esteemed teacher of

textual genre, however, this might be a linguistic rather than textual feature. Both the quantity and quality of borrowings from Arabic attested in the Coptic alchemical treatises leave no doubt that we have to look for Arabic *Vorlagen*. I believe the most reasonable conclusion to be drawn from this kind of evidence is that all the Coptic alchemical treatises came into being as translations of Arabic texts.⁷¹

This conclusion seems even more convincing given the fact that not only linguistic features point to Arabic patterns, but also the contents of the texts. The entire Greek tradition, as far as it is known to us, is in quite a different intellectual vein, as it were, being much more mysterious both in content and style.⁷² The rather technical, scientific, matter-of-fact nature of our texts, by contrast, seems to have its intellectual native soil, in Arabic alchemy. In the course of the development of Arabic alchemy this quality evolved after the translation movement from Greek into Arabic of the early Abbasid period and is connected with the names of Jābir ibn Ḥayyān and Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyya al-Rāzī.⁷³ The latter died in 925 CE,⁷⁴ while Jābir is now suspected of having been a pseudepigraphic *prosopon* representing the intellectual and religious efforts of an extreme Shi'ite school. The large volume of alchemical literature claiming Jābir's authorship is now assumed to have been composed between the early ninth and the mid-tenth centuries CE.⁷⁵ However, the issue is still being debated, and I have to restrict myself to reporting the opinion dominant at present.⁷⁶

Arabic, Prof. Holger Preissler †.

- 71 This was already Stern's opinion of BL MS. Or. 3669(1); cf. Stern, Fragment eines koptischen 102: "ein recht ansehnliches Fragment ... welches, wie ich darthun werde, aus dem Arabischen übertragen ist, aber die koptische Literatur gleichwohl in bedeutender Weise bereichert."
- 72 Cf. Eliade, *Die hellenistische*; Gundel, *Alchemie*; Merkur, *A study*; Plessner, *Vorsokratische*; Riess, *Alchemie*; Reitzenstein, *Zur Geschichte*; Vereno, *Studien* 16–21; Viano, *Gli alchimisti and Viano, Alchimie*.
- 73 Garbers and Weyer, *Quellengeschichtliches* 64–71; Hamarneh, *Arabic-Islamic*; Kraus, *Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān* 11 30–42; Landfester, Berger and Priesner, *Chemie/alchemie*; Rex, *Zur Theorie*; Sezgin, *Geschichte* 10–11; Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 148–152; Ullmann, *al-Kimiya*; Vereno, *Studien* 21–31; Weyer, *Alchemie*.
- 74 Partington, *The chemistry*; Sezgin, *Geschichte* 275–282; Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 210–213.
- 75 Kraus, *Der Zusammenbruch*; Kraus, *Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān* 1 xxxvi–xliv; Kraus, *Alchemie* 27–46 and 47–70; cf. Capezzone, *Jabir ibn Ḥayyān*; Plessner, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān*; Ruska, *Arabische* 428–430; Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 198–208.
- 76 Against Kraus' hypothesis, cf. e.g. Haschmi, *The beginning*; Holmyard, *Alchemisten*; Sezgin, *Das Problem*, Sezgin, *Geschichte* 132–269, and Sezgin, *Wissenschaft* 99–108.

Be this as it may, our Coptic manuscripts, roughly datable to the tenth century and thereby surpassing in age the oldest extant Greek, as well as Arabic, alchemical manuscripts, seem to be renderings of almost contemporary Arabic texts. Certainly it would be desirable to identify these Arabic *Vorlagen*. Due to the striking feature of its unusual narrative frame, the most promising candidate for identification seems to be the text of Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1 and 3. Unlike the great bulk of Greek as well as Arabic alchemical texts, which are usually presented as a teacher's exchanges with his pupil/son (and reader), this text is structured quite differently. Phrases such as "I saw the master, as he did ..." or "the master said ..." might enable someone familiar with the Arabic tradition to identify the text, if it is known at all. Since the experts I asked were unable to do so,⁷⁷ I am strongly inclined to believe that such an Arabic text, if extant at all, has not yet been published which is hardly surprising. Despite the tremendous progress since the days of Marcellin Berthelot's pioneering work *La Chimie au Moyen Age* in 1893, many texts even by such famous authorities as al-Rāzī and Jābir ibn Ḥayyān remain unedited and untranslated.⁷⁸

An important issue related to the narrative framework of the text of Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1 and 3 is its character in terms of reality vs. fictitiousness. Initially, I had no doubts that the construct of the recording pupil was a literary conceit, and for two reasons I felt inclined to assume the text belonged to the huge corpus of writings composed in the name (or, as in our case, in the attitude) of Jābir ibn Ḥayyān.

First, according to his legendary biography, Jābir was initiated into alchemy by Ja'far al-Šādiq, the sixth Shi'ite imām, and indeed several writings by Jābir do contain references to his master Ja'far.⁷⁹ On the other hand, the often-attested

77 So Charles Burnett and Wilferd Madelung in personal communications, Fuat Sezgin in a letter from 28 April 2005, and Manfred Ullmann in a letter from 21 May 2005.

78 Cf. the verdict of Vereno, *Studien* 22: "Das auf Arabisch vorliegende Handschriftenmaterial ist gewaltig. Die beiden Handbücher Fuat Sezgin's (GAS IV; 1971) und Manfred Ullmann's (NGI; 1972) bezeugen dies eindrucksvoll. Doch dieses Handschriftenmaterial ist, von wenigen Ausnahmen abgesehen, weder durch Editionen zuverlässig erschlossen noch lexikalisch bearbeitet. Ein guter Teil ist womöglich noch nicht einmal katalogisiert. Sich einen halbwegs vollständigen Überblick zu verschaffen, ist daher zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt nicht möglich. Trotz einiger hervorragender Arbeiten ist die arabische Alchemie als Ganzes noch als weitgehend unerforscht zu betrachten." Cf. Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 150–151.

79 Kraus, *Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān* I xxv–xxvii.

phrasing of these references, *wa-haqqā sayyidī*, “and my Lord confirmed,”⁸⁰ refers back to a distant past when Jābir was the disciple of Ja‘far from a present in which Jābir himself is teaching. This model is quite different from the narrative frame of Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1 and 3, where the entire text is presented as notes kept by the disciple. Second, the authors of the corpus of Jābir’s writings recommended and applied a strategy they called *tabdīd al-‘ilm*, “dispersion of knowledge,” in order to prevent unworthy and unprepared minds from acquiring the entire store of alchemical truth all at once:

Um die Profanierung ihrer geheimen Künste zu verhindern, enthüllen die Autoren des *Corpus Gabirianum* die ganze, ungeteilte Wahrheit nie an einer Stelle. Sie begnügen sich vielmehr mit Andeutungen und verweisen immer wieder auf andere Schriften des Corpus, in denen die übrigen Teile der Wahrheit niedergelegt seien und die man also ergänzend studieren müsse. Nur wer das ganze Corpus kenne, sei im Vollbesitz der Wahrheit. Es ist das Prinzip der “Verstreuung des Wissens” [*tabdīd al-‘ilm*].⁸¹

I wonder if we do not have here a nice example of “dispersion of the knowledge” in the aforementioned paragraph about the “machine of the sages” with its conspicuous reference to a future time when the master might let his pupil know the machine itself, in contrast to the present when he is feeding him mere snippets of information (cf. ex. 45).⁸²

80 Cf. Kraus, *Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān* I 91, n° (378); 106, n° (553); 113, n. 3 ad n° (947); 121, n° (972); 122, n° (974); 125–126, n° (988); 133, n° (1056); 143, n° (1800); 156, n° (2145); 171, n° (2958). Among the writings of Jābir ibn Ḥayyān quoted in the *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, one title of the collection “The 112 books” is called *Kitāb al-Ṣādiq*. Paul Kraus, *Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān* 37 ad n° 101, raised the question: “Le titre se rapporte-t-il à Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq?” However the text itself is not preserved, or at least, is not available or not yet identified among the extant Arabic manuscripts. A related phenomenon is mentioned by Kraus, *Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān* 65 à propos the *Kitāb Muṣaḥḥaḥāt iflāṭūn* (*Le livre des Rectifications de Platon*): “Contrairement à la plupart des écrits jābiriens, le k. muṣaḥḥaḥāt iflāṭūn est conservé dans une rédaction postérieure. Presque dans chaque chapitre l’auteur est introduit à la troisième personne: “Jābir dit”; “Jābir ibn Ḥayyān dit”; “le maître (*ustādh*) Jābir ibn Ḥayyān dit”; une fois même on lit “al-imām Jābir”, expression que ne se trouve que dans des textes tardifs.” But even the “le maître dit” is still different from phrases such as “I saw the master,” even leaving aside other difficulties.

81 Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften* 4; cf. also Kraus, *Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān* I xxvii–xxx, xxxi–xxxiii.

82 Another interpretation of this striking passage was proposed by James Montgomery and should not be left out here: he posited an “opt-out clause” anticipating the unavoidable

Ex. 45 Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a.1 d, line 11–12 || Bodl. MS. Copt. (P) a. 3, r^o line 76–77: ΕΡΕΠΝΟΥΓΤΕ ΤΑΔΑΣ ΕΠΕΡΗΤ ΝΠΣΑΖ ΝΥΤΑΜΟΙ ΕΤΜΕΧΑΝΗ “God will put it into the heart of the master, and he will let me know the machine (too)!”

On the other hand, the separation of related material in order to limit the circle of initiates seems not such an extraordinary strategy, especially in a secret lore such as alchemy. So the mere fact that this literary technique was also practiced in the *Corpus Jabirianum* would hardly provide sufficient grounds for an attribution.⁸³

As to the crucial question of whether or not the ‘recording pupil’ is a literary fiction, I was recently led to quite a different way of explaining the literary form of Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1 and 3. Through discussions with experts in Arabic science⁸⁴ I learned that similarly organised treatises are attested elsewhere in the fields of early Arabic educational writing, such as in medical and toxicological literature, and more generally, that the transformation of educational matters from oral to written and their migration from the classroom to the institutions of literary transmission are well-evidenced stages in the formation of Arabic scientific literature.⁸⁵ So the alternative, non-fictional possibility that our pupil’s records of alchemical experiments executed by his nameless “master” may be traceable back to actual lessons in alchemy in a real laboratory should be born in mind. If so, the original (Arabic) text of Bodl. MSS. Copt. (P) a. 1 and 3 might have left the ‘classroom’ and become literature some time ago, as is indicated by its existence in Coptic translation and even in two Coptic recensions (cf. above).

failure of many of the experiments: “It may be worth remembering that as these experiments were never successful, the treatises are bound to conclude some epistemological mechanism which acts like an opt-out clause. ‘God will give it into the heart of the master, that he will let me know the machine (too)’ is one such opt-out clause, it seems to me” (letter from 29.09.2006).

- 83 Cf. Kraus, *Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān* I xxxi–xxxiii on the method of “dispersion of knowledge” elsewhere in antique and mediaeval secret traditions.
- 84 I am grateful to Emilie Savage-Smith and James Montgomery for sharing their erudition with me.
- 85 Cf. the studies by Gregor Schoeler on the “lecture note” phenomenon in the early Islamic sciences, now available in Schoeler, *The oral*, the knowledge of which I owe to James Montgomery.

3 Conclusion

Although comprising only a small number of manuscripts, the Coptic dossier of alchemical texts is of some importance for the history of science. Apart from semi-alchemical texts such as the Greek papyri of Leiden and Stockholm and the Coptic P.Berlin P. 8316, the Coptic alchemical treatises of London and Oxford, datable to the ninth and/or tenth centuries, are by far the earliest alchemical manuscripts known to us, significantly older than all of the extant manuscripts of the Greek corpus of late antique alchemical writing, the *Corpus Chymicum Graecum*, and older than any Arabic manuscript on alchemy known thus far.⁸⁶

The probable provenance of (at least some of) the Coptic manuscripts in the environs of Akhmīm sheds further light on the importance of that upper Egyptian town as a centre of alchemy in late antique and early Islamic period.

Despite its age, and contrary to what the Khālid ibn Yazīd legend of the *Kitāb al-Fihrist* would indicate, the Coptic alchemical dossier cannot be considered a link between Greek and Arabic alchemical traditions and does not contribute to the issue of possible ancient Egyptian roots of alchemy.⁸⁷ The language, contents and literary genre of the Coptic texts prove them to be descendants of the Arabic stock of alchemy, and in particular its more empirical branch. More specifically, there is good reason to believe that they are renderings of almost contemporary, still-unknown Arabic texts.

Seen from the perspective of Coptic literature, the Coptic alchemical dossier belongs to a distinctive group of late Sahidic manuscripts dealing with matters such as medicine,⁸⁸ mathematics,⁸⁹ astrology,⁹⁰ or just alchemy, while referring to taxonomies and technical terminologies of contemporary Arabic science. All these texts bear witness to the intellectual efforts of educated members of the Christian Egyptian society, who were willing and still able to think and write in their native language, to grapple with the new culture. It was only now, on

86 As far as I know, the earliest known Arabic manuscripts on alchemy come from the eleventh century, cf. Sezgin, *Wissenschaft* 109 (a manuscript of al-Kindī's *Kitāb Kimiyyā' al-'itr* dated to 405/1014, ed. Garbers 1948) and von Lippmann, *Entstehung*; the great bulk of manuscripts is, however, much younger.

87 As for this, cf. Bain, *Μελάντις γή*; Daumas, *L'Alchimie*; Derchain, *L'Atelier*; Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* and Lindsay, *The origins*.

88 Chassinat, *Un papyrus médical*; cf. Till, *Die Arzneikunde*.

89 Drescher, *A Coptic*.

90 Bouriānt, *Fragment*.

the eve of the linguistic Arabisation of Egypt, that Coptic became a language of sciences—albeit of Arabic sciences! Such efforts might have been stimulated by the same feelings of fascination and the same high esteem underlying the much more famous, and much better investigated, medieval translations of Arabic scientific texts into Latin.⁹¹

Postscript (fall 2012)

After having finished the print version of this paper, my ongoing work on the Coptic alchemical texts tremendously profited from two sources. First, grants from the Alexander von Humboldt foundation and the Sarah J. Clackson fund permitted me to stay at Oxford and London for five weeks in fall 2007 and to thoroughly study the manuscripts. The results of this work, some of them most amazing, shall be dealt with elsewhere; they do not contradict, but partly enlarge, enrich and improve the observations communicated above. Second, thanks to discussions with Bink Hallum, in writing and orally during the workshop on medieval alchemy held at the Warburg Institute in London in October 2007, I have become a little bit more cautious against a too straightforward argument for a mere translation of the Coptic treatises from Arabic *Vorlagen*. I have also become more sensitive to the possible complexity of the reception and transmission processes underlying, and eventually resulting in our manuscripts. Taking the aforementioned linguistic observations into account, I still find Ludwig Stern's assumption that texts such as BL. Or 366g(1) might have been somehow translated from Arabic compositions, a very likely and convincing suggestion. But strong as it seems at first glance, this hypothesis has some weak points too. For instance, a concept like the machine of the sages, *mechanē nnsophos* as the text puts it, is linguistically composed of two Greek terms, which needs to be explained if one assumes an Arabic composition simply having been rendered into Coptic. Also certain palaeographic features of the Coptic manuscripts, such as their use of cryptography and of symbols of the *σημεία τῆς ἐπιστήμης* type, rather recall the habits of Greek alchemical manuscripts. So I would no longer exclude the possibility that our texts have been composed in Coptic, by Coptic *authors*, rather than translators, who were familiar with contemporary Arabic and Greek alchemical traditions. But we must not forget a remarkable gap in our knowledge: We do know fairly well,

91 Cf. Agius, *The Arab*; Al-Hassan, *The Arabic*, Burnett, *The astrologer's*, Halleux, *Les textes alchimiques*; Newman, *The summa*; Ryding, *The heritage*.

how translating from *Greek* into Coptic worked—the kind of rendering attested by the great bulk of Coptic literary texts, but we have simply no idea of what a translation from *Arabic* into Coptic would look like.

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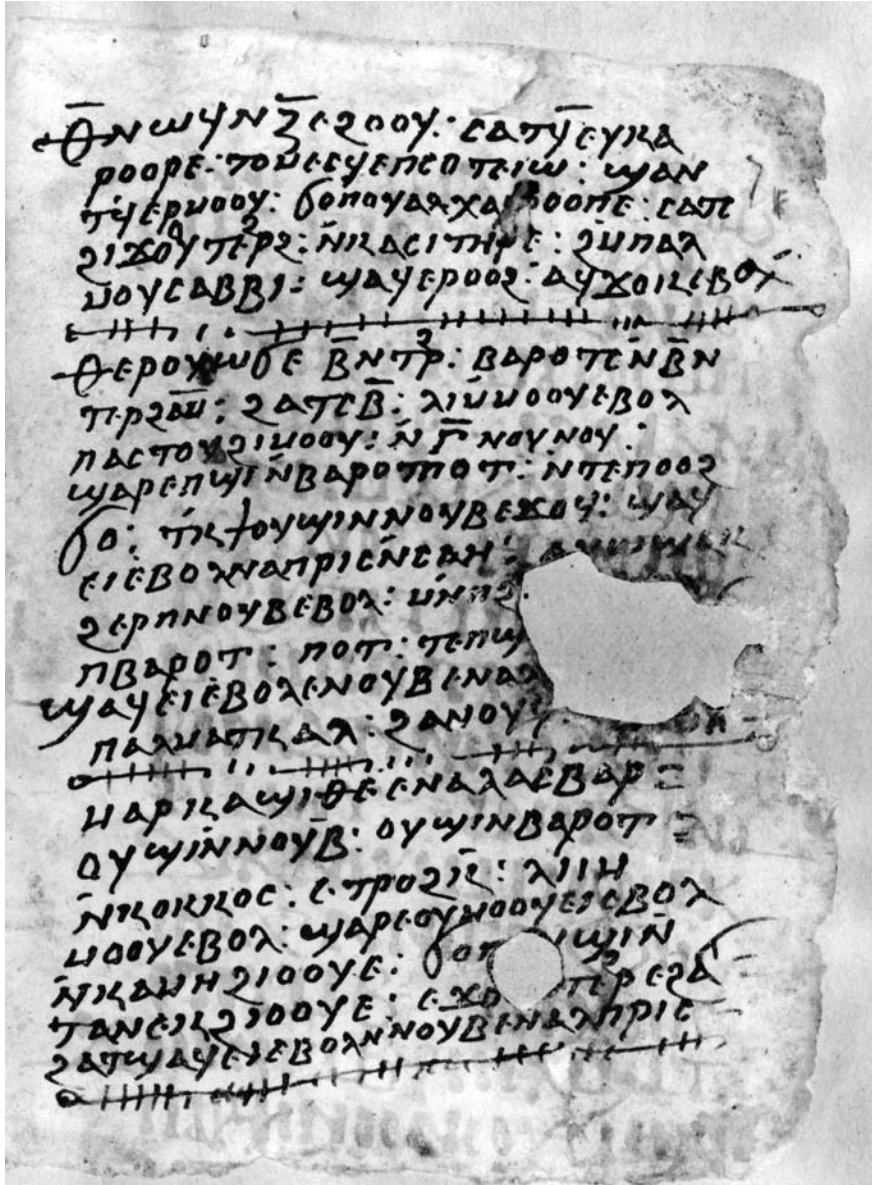


FIGURE 10.1 British Library Oriental Ms. 3669(1)

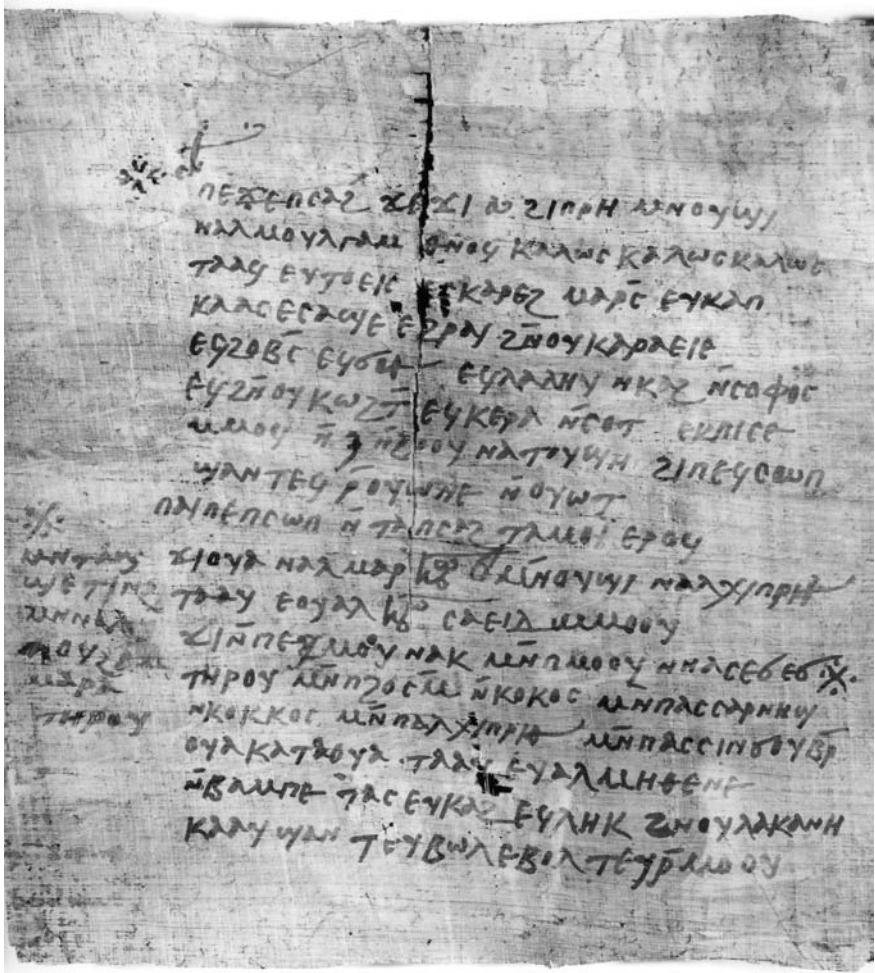


FIGURE 10.2 P.Bodl. MS Copt. (P) a.1, © University of Oxford, Bodleian Library

Terms for Vessels in Arabic and Coptic Documentary Texts and Their Archaeological and Ethnographic Correlates

Tasha Vorderstrasse

Introduction

Both papyri and material remains provide insights into the consumption and construction of pottery in early Islamic Egypt by various members and groups of the population. This paper will focus on terms for jars in Arabic and Coptic documentary papyri in the early Islamic period (7th–10th centuries) and their possible archaeological correlates in pottery, metal, glass, and parchment. There have been previous attempts to link jar terms, particularly in Greek papyri (and occasionally in Coptic) with actual objects, but the Arabic evidence has remained largely unstudied in this regard. Archaeologists, however, have tried to link pottery from all periods found in their Egyptian excavations with ethnographic examples and to provide the pottery with Arabic names that come from nineteenth- and twentieth-century pottery.

This paper will try to remedy this by offering a comparison of actual objects with contemporary Arabic and Coptic names for vessels in order to better understand consumption patterns in the early Islamic period in Egypt. First, the archaeological evidence for different types of jars and containers from early Islamic Egypt will be examined. Then the papyrological evidence will be compared with the ethnographic attestations of jars. Early Islamic period Arabic papyrological terms for jars will subsequently be discussed in detail, including, where it is possible to determine, the types of material from which these jars were manufactured and what types of objects they contained. Finally, the Arabic, Coptic-Arabic, and Coptic papyrological and ethnographic evidence will be combined in order to provide possible names for the archaeological objects.

Archaeological Evidence for Vessels

When one begins to examine vessels from early Islamic Egypt, one is presented with a bewildering array of different forms, types, and materials, scattered

through a variety of publications in different languages. The types of jars that will be examined here are storage jars, as the references in papyri are generally to these kind of containers which are either being sent by the writers of the documents or being received by them. This limits the research to vessels that were sealed in some way and excludes therefore wide mouthed jars. The vessels could be made from different types of materials including pottery, glass, metal, and parchment. The vessels contained different types of goods (both edible and non-edible) and were shipped in boats¹ and by pack animals² to their destination. Sturdier vessels were tied with rope to attach them to saddles of pack animals, while more fragile items were carefully packed in cloth sacks or baskets.³ References in the Coptic ostraca to “camels of wine,” “camels of dates” and “camels of wheat” suggest that items were transported in sacks that weighed very little.⁴

The most common type of jar used in the early Islamic period was made of the clay amphora. The ubiquity of amphorae in the early Islamic period is not surprising, since they had been the primary transport jars used throughout the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods. Their use simply continued in the early Islamic period. Amphorae could contain a wide variety of liquid, semi-liquid, and solid objects, including grain, olive oil, wine, *garum*, cheese, and honey, which were transported on a wide scale throughout the Mediterranean. The majority of the goods shipped in the amphorae have not survived in the archaeological record, although there is some evidence of oil residue, grape seeds, and pitched interiors. Determining the contents of these vessels remains a challenge for archaeologists. Trace analysis has been applied to some vessels, particularly to amphorae. It has usually been assumed that if an interior of a pottery vessel is pitched, it would have contained wine or wine vinegar, while non-pitched vessels would contain other liquids such as olive oil or dry

1 For depictions of boats carrying amphorae from early Byzantine Syria and Palestine, see Decker, *Food* 77, fig. 4.5; Kingsley, *The economic impact* 52, 61, no. 48.

2 Cohen, *Kissufim* 255.

3 For an example of this type of packing, see Petrie Museum UC65051, two glass bottles wrapped in textile. For the difficulties in shipping these types of objects see, for example, *O.Mon.Claud.* 128–129 (early 2nd century C.E.) In the first ostrakon the writer asks for baskets to protect water skins. Apparently he did not get them as he explains in the next letter that the skins have become useless. In *P.Oxy.* 1294 (late 2nd/early 3rd century CE) the writer asks for a bread basket with a lock that contained four flasks. Shipping objects was not without a certain amount of risk, however. Individuals could and did injure themselves when loading full wine amphorae (Mango, *Beyond* 96).

4 Heurtel, *Écrits* 143–144.

goods, such as cereals.⁵ As the tests from Fustāt have indicated, however, it is dangerous to assume that pitched amphorae always contained wine. It is clear that pitched amphorae could in fact also contain other liquids such as oil, sauces, honey, fish, or cheese.⁶ In general, the papyrological evidence from the Hellenistic-Islamic periods suggests a large variety of commodities that were transported in amphorae in Egypt.⁷

It is clear from the texts that orders for jars were either in bulk or small quantities. The choice between these two options clearly depended on what the individual was planning to use the jar(s) for. Individuals who were involved in the production of liquid or solid goods that would be transported in vessels would often order these containers in bulk. In *O.EdfouFAO 107*, which dates to the seventh century, for example, a potter promises to deliver 2070 jars (κοῦφοι from Greek κοῦφα) without default. The word used for jar in this instance means empty and this is a term that is used by transporters to refer to the delivery of jars that were not filled with any goods. Often the delivery of jars was by the thousands or at least hundreds although sometimes the numbers were smaller.⁸ In the first part of the eighth century the correspondence of the west-Theban anchorite Frange provides interesting details about the ordering of containers that may have been fairly typical of individuals purchasing jars for their own use. In this case Frange is ordering a jar that is essentially made to order for him. In text no. 53, he asks an intermediary to order him a jar (κωτων, see discussion below) and demands that it should be of good quality, that it should have a thick base (at the end of the text he reiterates that he wants a large base) and that the two handles should be fitted securely.⁹

5 Peacock and Williams, *Amphorae* 2, 31; Greene, *The archaeology* 162; Curtis, *Garum and Salsamenta* 35, 39; Bailey, *Gaza jars* 295–296; Whitbread, *Greek transport* 19; van Alfen, *New light* 203, 208; Formenti and Duthel, *The analysis* 84; Blakely, *Ceramics* 38; Alcock, *Food* 14, 83, 86–87; Decker, *Food* 76, 80; Ballet, *Un atelier d'amphore* 363–364; Kingsley, *The economic impact* 51; Mayerson, *Pitch*.

6 Vogt et al, *Notes* 76.

7 Curtis, *Garum and Salsamenta* 134–136; Chouliara-Raños, *L'abeille* 74; Kruit and Worp, *Geographical* 98, 107–108; Mayerson, *Radish oil* 109, 113, 117.

8 Diethart, *Neue papyri* 80; Mayerson, *A note*; Mayerson, *The knidion* 166, no. 1; Mayerson, *Enigmatic*; Bacot, *Le vin* 719; Bacot, *Ostraca* 10, 144 (Diethart is incorrectly cited here as Palme, whose article on corrections to Edfu ostraca appears in the same volume and is also used by this author). For attestations in Coptic, see Förster, *Wörterbuch* 440–441.

9 *O.Frangé* 10. For the dating of the texts, see Boud'hors and Heurtel, *Les ostraca coptes* 70–71. In another text Frange orders a small limestone ⲥⲁⲦ made for him to place a jar on (*O.Frangé* 113, notes on no. 120.22–32). For a discussion of Islamic stone jar stands, see Knauer *Marble*. The jar stands discussed in this article are elaborately decorated and made of marble, with a

In the early Byzantine period, the ubiquitous LRA1 amphorae were produced in Syria, Cyprus, Cilicia and elsewhere along the Turkish coast.¹⁰ They have been found in large numbers throughout Egypt and the rest of the Mediterranean,¹¹ while imitation LRA1 amphorae were also produced in Egypt.¹² This amphora had a cylindrical form with a capacity of between 16.54 and 26.44 liters.¹³ The current archaeological evidence indicates that LRA1 amphorae disappeared in Egypt during the course of the seventh century, particularly during the second part of the seventh century after the Islamic conquest.¹⁴ The use of these amphorae seems to have continued, however, at least in a limited way, into the eighth century in Syria-Palestine.¹⁵ Imitation LRA1 amphorae continued to be produced in Egypt, presumably to fill the gap left by the decrease in import, into the eighth century. Again, however, the production centers were limited. Such imitation amphorae have been found in late seventh/eighth-century contexts at Kellia, Saqqara (where the excavator dates it no later than the seventh century), Tod (dated to mid-8th/9th centuries), and Deir el-Naqlun as well as the Sinai.¹⁶ Another popular type of amphorae in the early Byzantine

basin that allowed the water filtering through the jars to be collected and used later. Knauer also discusses some other jar stands, including some that are simpler than the Islamic ones, which she describes as being Coptic (Knauer, *Marble* 91–93).

- 10 Empereur and Picon, *Les régions* 224–225, 231–232, 236–243; van Alfen, *New light* 210; Decker, *Food* 76–78; Manning et al, *Late Roman* 233–258; Opat, *On the origin*.
- 11 There are numerous sites where LRA1 amphorae are found and a few examples are given here: Egloff, *Kellia* 111; Ballet and Picon, *Recherches* 23; Gempeler, *Elephantine x* 52; Engemann, *À propos* 154; Ghaly, *Pottery* 168, 170; Majcherek, *Roman amphorae* 217; Bailey, *Marsa Matruh* 80; Hayes, *The pottery* 121; Heidorn, *Pottery* 39; Tomber, *Pottery* 244; Gascoigne, *Amphorae* 164; Lecuyot, *Amphores* 377, 380–381. For discussion of the distribution of LRA1 in general, see Decker, *Food*, 76–77.
- 12 Ghaly, *Pottery* 168, 170; Bailey, *Excavations* 122; Dixneuf, *Amphores* 136, 174–175.
- 13 Decker, *Food* 76.
- 14 Egloff, *Kellia* 110, 114–115; Górecki, *Deir el-Naqlun* 58–59; Gempeler, *Elephantine x* no. 198; Sidebotham, Bernard, and Pyke, *Late Roman* 215; Vogt, *Les céramiques* 257; Guidotti and Pesi, *La ceramica* 33 (dates the LRA1 amphorae to the 6th/7th century but is not more specific); Marchand and Dixneuf, *Amphores* 319; Dixneuf, *Amphores* 174–175. The picture may, however, be more complex. See Majcherek, *Alexandria's* 235 who states that the LRA1 amphora imports continued into the early Islamic period at Alexandria and were stable from the end of the Byzantine period (although he does not give an exact date) and Rousset and Marchand, *Secteur nord* 409 and Marchand and Dixneuf, *Amphores* 319 who state that the number of amphorae drops considerably between the first and the second half of the seventh century at Tebtunis and Bawit.
- 15 Orssaud, *De passage* 197.
- 16 Ghaly, *Pottery* 168, 171; Bonnet 1994, 363; Godlewski, *Derda*, and Górecki, *Deir el Naqlun*

period was the LRA4, the so-called Gaza/Ashkelon amphora (see below), which is common at sites in Egypt. This type of amphora is cylindrical in shape and had a liquid capacity of between 16 and 26.5 liters. According to Kingsley, it is only produced in southern Palestine but it enjoyed a large circulation throughout the Mediterranean.¹⁷ The date when this form of amphorae stopped being produced is still unclear but its production seems to extend into the eighth century.¹⁸ Therefore, while the chronology of these amphorae remains to be studied in more detail, the use of the vessels does seem to extend into the early Islamic period but to disappear from Egyptian sites in the course of the seventh century, much as LRA1 amphorae.¹⁹

One of the most common amphorae found in the early Islamic period are of the LRA7 type. These amphorae were made in different parts of Egypt from the seventh to the eleventh centuries and are found throughout Egypt at sites such as Tebtunis, Dayr al-Baḥrī, Fuṣṭāṭ, Tod, Bawit, and Alexandria. This type of amphora has a spindly form that is only 10 cm in width and 60–70 cm in length. It is 7 to 8 liters in volume, considerably smaller than the other amphorae, and is often pitched on the inside. Archaeologists have suggested, based upon their shape, that the amphorae were probably meant to transport a fluid such as wine, oil, or *garum*. When such amphorae from Fuṣṭāṭ were tested to determine their contents, however, they turned out to have contained fat, although a vine branch was found embedded in the resin. At Kellia, an LRA7 amphora was found containing fish bones. These might of course have been wine amphorae that were re-used,²⁰ but this is not clear.

Another type of amphora found commonly in Egypt is LRA5/6. These are the so-called baggy amphorae which date from between the seventh and twelfth centuries (continuing from earlier types). The amphorae are found primarily in

232, 256 (Figs. 21.2–3); Ballet, *La céramique* 164; Ballet, 'Uyūn Mūsā 622–624; Marchand and Dixneuf, *Amphores* 316; Dixneuf, *Amphores* 178–179.

17 Kingsley, *The economic* 49, 53.

18 Egloff, *Kellia* 117; Bailey, *Excavations* 123–124.

19 Majcherek, *Alexandria's* 235; Marchand and Dixneuf, *Amphores* 310.

20 Górecki, *Deir el-Naqlun* 56, 61, 64; Vogt, *Les céramiques* 258–259; Rousset and Marchand with Laisney and Robert, *Tebtunis* 185–262, 206; Rousset and Marchand, *Secteur nord* 409; Rousset and Marchand, *Secteur nord* 2000 424, fig. 14.s-t, 435, 445, 458, fig. 40c and 460, fig. 420; Vogt et al, *Notes* 241, 65–80. 66–67, 76; Ballet and Dixneuf, *Ateliers d'amphores* 72; Lecuyot and Pierrat-Bonnefois, *Corpus* 166, no. 87–88; Bavay, *Les amphores* 391–393; Gascoigne, *Amphorae* 166; Marangou and Marchand, *Conteneurs* 269–270; Marchand, *Les amphores* 176, 179; Marchand and Dixneuf, *Amphores* 312–314; Wilson and Grigoropoulos, *The west* 283; Simony, *Étude* 178; Dixneuf, *Amphores* 154–173 (with a list of find spots in Egypt).

Lower Egypt and the Fayyūm (Abu Mina, Tebtunis, Tod, Kellia, Fustāt, Alexandria, and Pelusium), although they are also found in Upper Egypt, at Elephantine and Ashmūnayn for example and in Middle Egypt at Amarna. In addition, they are found in Palestine including in Jerusalem, Khirbet al-Mafjar, Nessana, and Usais. The amphorae can be divided into two types: those made in Palestine and those made in Egypt.²¹ Indeed, archaeologists working in Palestine have argued that the Egyptians imitated these amphorae because they hoped to profit from the reputation of the Palestinian goods, particularly wine,²² often transported in the amphorae. On the other hand, because they do not have resin coating on the inside it has been argued that they probably were not used to transport wine.²³ The popularity of imitated LRA 5/6 and LRA1 in this period may explain why fewer imported LRA1 and LRA4 were found in Egypt after the Islamic conquest.²⁴ Also in a later period amphorae produced in Egypt imitating the LRA2 type that date from the ninth to the twelfth centuries were far more popular than the imported LRA2 types.²⁵

In addition to the more common amphorae that would have been used to transport goods over large distances and which were not all made in Egypt, there are also other amphorae (some of which were quite small), flasks, and jars.²⁶ These types seem to have had a far more local distribution and were, in fact, probably all produced in Egypt. At virtually every site such storage jars have been found that would have been produced and traded throughout the local area or even within Egypt at large. These include the ovoid amphorae (6th–8th centuries) and small amphorae (mid 7th–mid 8th centuries) found at Tod.²⁷ Other amphorae are only found at Kellia (mid 7th–mid 8th centu-

21 Ballet, *Un atelier* 355, 357, 361; Rousset and Marchand with Laisney and Robert, Tebtynis 397; Gempeler, *Elephantine* x κ766 200; Egloff, *Kellia* 117–118; Orssaud, *De passage* 198; Bonnet, *Le matériel* 365–372; Vogt, *Les céramiques* 257–258; Bailey, *Excavations* 123, 136–137; Kingsley, *The economic impact* 50; Majcherek, *Alexandria's* 61, 63; Ballet, *La céramique* 142, 206; Lecuyot and Pierrat-Bonnefois, *Corpus* 176, no. 131; Majcherek, *Alexandria's* 235; Faiers, *A corpus* 174, no. 438; Mouny, *Note* 632–633, pl. 1(4); Ballet, *Un atelier*; Gascoigne, *Amphorae* 166; Marangou and Marchand, *Conteneurs* 269; Marchand, *Les amphores* 176, 179; Marchand and Dixneuf, *Amphores* 316–317; Wilson and Grigoropoulos, *The eest* 283; Dixneuf, *Amphores* 142–153 (with a list of find spots in Egypt).

22 Kingsley, *The economic impact* 57.

23 Ballet, *Un atelier* 363–364.

24 Ballet, *De l'Égypte* 35–37.

25 Górecki, *Deir el-Naqlun* 61, 64; Bailey, *Excavations* 122; Ballet, *De l'Égypte* 37; Majcherek, *Alexandria's* 61, 63.

26 Egloff, *Kellia* 119, 128–129.

27 Lecuyot and Pierrat-Bonnefois, *Corpus* 175, no. 122–123.

ries),²⁸ and jars are found at Tebtunis.²⁹ Some of these smaller jars have a local distribution such as the spheroid amphorae which have been found at Kellia and Abu Mina and which date to the end of the seventh/beginning of the eighth century.³⁰ This is also true of other flasks and jars, which would also have been used to store and send objects probably at a local level. Nevertheless, it is clear that the producers of these small jars, flasks, and amphorae were the same potters as those who made the LRA5/6 amphorae.³¹ There were also Aswan amphorae that were found primarily in the Syene region and further south dating to between the middle of the sixth and the middle of the eighth centuries. They are also common in Nubia, but rarely found north of Aswan, except at a few sites in Middle Egypt such as Esna, Tod, and Ashmūnāy. Despite the fact that the amphorae are not common north of Aswan, imitations were nonetheless produced, probably at Edfu which have been found at Thebes. Again the reason for imitating these amphorae seems to have been their association with the wines of Syene, which had a good reputation.³²

In addition, there is one type which is not only extremely long-lived (the earliest examples date to either the late pharaonic or Ptolemaic period) but which is found at a variety of sites. This is the horizontal pilgrim jar which is asymmetric and has a short neck. It was found in Armant and was identified by the archaeologists as being a water vessel adapted to be slung on each side of a donkey.³³ This type of pottery was also found at Dakhla dating to the Islamic period, where it is also identified as a water jar.³⁴ The jars have also been found in Upper Egypt at Tod (dated to the 11th–12th centuries or

28 Egloff, *Kellia* 117.

29 Rousset and Marchand with Laisney and Robert, Tebtynis fig. 42 m–o, 458, fig. 40c and 46o, fig. 42o; Lecuyot and Pierrat-Bonnefois, *Corpus* 175, no. 124.

30 Egloff, *Kellia* 117–118. Interestingly, Egloff reports that a similar amphora was found in Jerusalem.

31 Rousset and Marchand with Laisney and Robert, Tebtynis 409.

32 Jacquet-Gordon, *Ceramique et objets* 6, pl. CXC; Ballet, Mahmoud, Vichy and Picon, *Artisanat de la céramique*, 140–141; Pierrat, *Essai* 187, fig. 59; Gempler, *Elephantine* x 191, Abb. 121, 12–122, 1–5, Taf. 38,6; Bailey, *Excavations* 136, pl. 85; Lecuyot and Pierrat-Bonnefois, *Corpus* 199, no. 227; Aston, *Amphorae* 432; Bavay, *Les Amorphes* 394–395, fig. 59.

33 Mond and Meyers, *The Bucheum* 82, pl. LXIV. 90. See Class 90. See also Aston, *Amphorae* 441; Ballet, *Les amphores* 482; Marchand, *Les conteneurs* 491–492, 495.

34 Hope, *Dakhleh* 235–236. See also Ashton, *Comparative*. The surface survey also revealed Roman examples.

later),³⁵ but also on the Red Sea coast at Quşayr al-Qadīm,³⁶ and in south Arabia.³⁷

Unlike the other pottery jars found, this type of jar is still made today at the Dakhla Oasis.³⁸ The early twentieth-century researchers, Mond and Meyers, found that the potters claimed they made Roman rather than Arab pottery when referring to the asymmetric water jars. The researchers also concluded: “In passing it may be remarked that this tendency has great advantages as the old conservative idea for cleanliness has been preserved there in face of the Arab and Turkish invasions.”³⁹ Later twentieth-century observers suggested that hygiene might not have been the main aim as the jars are primarily used for carrying and short-term storage of water which may also have been the function of the jar in antiquity. In addition, the jars might have been used in order to store or transport wine.⁴⁰ It has also been suggested that they may have contained different types of agricultural products including wine, wheat, barley, dates, olive oil, and castor oil. At the site of ‘Ayn Manawir, located in the Dakhla Oasis, the excavators found castor bean seeds in the excavations and also mentioned in the Demotic ostraca.⁴¹ The modern examples from Dakhla that are preserved in the Petrie Museum include undecorated forms and two smaller painted versions which may have been produced for a specific purpose or specific function.⁴²

In contrast to pottery, glass does not always survive well in the archaeological record, particularly not in large fragments. Glass is commonly found at archaeological sites but usually in small fragments, which makes such a reconstruction difficult. Further complicating the matter is the fact that glass is not always published in detail. This means that it is difficult to assess the types of glass storage jars that would have been used in the early Islamic period. The main publication is Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson’s book on Islamic glass from Fustāt,⁴³ but some glass bottles have also been published from other sites. The finds pub-

35 Pieerat, *Essai* 174; Lecuyot and Pierrat-Bonnefois, *Corpus* 169, no. 97, 176, no. 132.

36 Johnson and Whitcomb, *Pottery pls.* 36h, 47j (suggests this was a water bottle); Whitcomb, *Islamic pl.* 50n–p.

37 Rougelle, *Excavations* 295–297, fig. 9/8–11.

38 Mond and Meyers, *The Bucheum* 82, pl. LXIV. 90; Hope, *Dakhleh* 235–236; Henein, *Poterie* 120–125.

39 Mond and Meyers, *The Bucheum* 82, pl. LXIV. 90.

40 Hope, *Dakhleh* 235–236.

41 Marchand, *Les conteneurs* 491.

42 Ashton, *Comparative*.

43 Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson, *Fustat*.

lished include a wide variety of glass bottles that could easily contain the types of materials noted in the papyri. The surviving glass bottles which have been found at Fustāt are not very large, however.⁴⁴ Similarly, the two glass flasks, now in the Petrie Museum, from Oxyrhynchos that date to the early Islamic period are also rather small. These two flasks were found in a cloth bag presumably to protect the glass from being broken while being transported.⁴⁵ Depictions and other finds of glass in situ show the different methods of protection, such as baskets and cloth bags.⁴⁶ A mosaic and a painting, both from the 2nd century C.E. from Carthage, show glass bottles in baskets⁴⁷ and a 4th-century CE jug preserved in a basket is now in the Corning Museum of Glass.⁴⁸ The design of some miniature amphorae even mimicked the basketry that would have contained actual glass vessels.⁴⁹ Another example of glass stored in a basket as well as goblet shaped baskets (one of which also contained its goblet) come from the grave assemblage of Thaïas from Antinoe and are now in the Louvre.⁵⁰ The

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- 44 Lamm, Taf. 3. 34–35; Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson, *Fustat* Figs. 11–13. Most of the surviving pieces are between 10 and 11 cm high. The exception to this is 13b, which is 18.5 cm high. A similar piece, 18.2 centimeters high, comes from Midum (Kröger, *Islamische* no. 10).
- 45 UC65051. The two dark green vessels were wrapped in textiles (<http://www.petrie.ucl.ac.uk/index2.html>).
- 46 Meredith, *Evaluating* 196, no. 17, who states that glass was typically transported in leather cases or basketry specifically produced for this purpose.
- 47 Foy and Nenna, *Tout feu* 114.
- 48 Corning Museum of Glass no. 77.1.3. See N.A., *Recent Important* no. 10. This glass is 25.2 cm in height.
- 49 Stern, *Roman* 154, no. 4, cat. no. 59 (first half of 1st century).
- 50 Foy and Nenna, *Tout feu* 115, nos. 136–137; Calament, *La révélation* 374; Bénazeth and van Strydonck, *Carbone* 52, 55, 57, fig. 5. The dating of this material is problematic as carbon 14 dates of the individual pieces from the assemblage are not in accordance with one another. Thaïas herself seems to have been buried in 660, while it has been argued that some pieces are too early or too late to be part of the assemblage. The goblet in the small basket dates between the end of the seventh and the ninth century (Bénazeth and van Strydonck, *Carbone* 55, 57). The current state of publication is somewhat confusing on these pieces. In Bénazeth and van Strydonck, *Carbone*, on the one hand, it is claimed that there are four small baskets and only one large goblet, while it is the other way around in Foy and Nenna (*Tout feu* 115, nos. 136–137). Calament, supporting the statement of Foy and Nenna, gives a list of the objects displayed with Thaïas in 1898, which states that there were four goblet cases and two other baskets. Calament identifies the times mentioned in this list with four goblet shaped baskets and a basket containing a goblet in the Egyptian collection at the Louvre and notes a goblet shaped basket conserved at Rennes (Calament, *La révélation* 374). Gayet, on the other hand, describes six baskets and one other basket (which seems

most important piece for reconstructing the transport of items of glass in this period, however, is a 32.2 cm high glass bottle found at Tebtunis which dates to the beginning of the tenth century. This bottle, like the LRA7 amphorae, is very spindly and therefore not very stable. The bottle is likely to have been used to transport liquids similar to those transported in amphorae. It has been suggested that this piece had a funerary aspect⁵¹ but this seems unlikely. It should be kept in mind, however, that not all glasses found in baskets were for transport. A second-century CE glass from the Fayyūm, found in a basket together with its lid, is said to be a funerary urn.⁵²

In the papyri, there are a number of examples where jars are being shipped in baskets, although the jar's material is not clear. In some cases, it is merely stated that a "basket" of wine should be sent, which infers that there is a jar in basket. In other cases, however, the texts explicitly mention that the wine is to be sent in the baskets.⁵³

The other main type of material used for transporting goods was metal. Metal is even more problematic to assess than glass, because it tends not to survive well and is often not published unless it is decorated. Therefore, one is far more dependent on museum collections. Most of the metal objects from Egypt are ewers or buckets and very little is known about metalwork in general dating from the early Islamic period. In addition to these objects, there are metal flasks that date from the seventh to the tenth centuries.⁵⁴ It has been claimed that, after the Islamic conquest, Egyptian metalwork, which had been traded all over the Mediterranean even ending up in the Sutton Hoo treasure in England, declined drastically because the population was heavily taxed and was not in a position to offer fine metalwork.⁵⁵ The metal bottles found in

to be the goblet shaped basket) (Gayet, *Antinoë* 53, engraving of goblet shaped basket 55, engraving of a basket containing goblet 56).

51 Foy, Secteur nord 480–481. no. 151, Musée égyptien du Caire inv. J. 41879. Despite the fact that this piece is published in a study of the glass of the current Tebtunis excavations, it was found between 1909 and 1910.

52 Hassel, *Glasamphore* 908–999, Abb. 94.

53 Crum, *A Coptic* 777a; Crum, *The monestary* 75; Husselman, *Coptic documents* 68–69; Bacot, *Du nouveau* 158. The texts where this is clear are *P.Mon.Epiph.* 90, *O.CrumST* 132, and *O.Crum* 160.

54 Fehérvári, *Islamic* no. 2, 33–34, 41–42, 46, nos. 20–22; Baer, *Metalwork* 84–87, 90; Allen, *Concave* 132; von Gladiss and Kröger, *Islamische* no. 139; Allen, *Metalwork* 16–17; Ward, *Islamic* 42. The recent publication of bronze vessels from the Coptic museum mentions some small bronze bottles whose chronology was difficult to establish (Bénazeth, *La vaisselle* 103).

55 Ward, *Islamic* 42.

the eastern Islamic empire in Sardis and Nishapur, but also in Syria provide an indication of the types of containers that could have been used in this period. The types seem to be long-lived, dating from the seventh to the eleventh centuries. Some of these bottles are described as being “amphoresque.”⁵⁶

In addition to the flasks of other materials, there were parchment flasks, but their survival is very rare. One found at Tell Idfū excavations is a small flask with a straw grill covered with transparent parchment.⁵⁷ This is an exceptional piece that would have probably transported something very light in weight. It may be a type that was far more common but simply has not survived well in the archaeological record.

Papyrology and Ethnography

The archaeological evidence shows that a wide variety of different types of storage jars made of different materials was in use amongst the inhabitants of early Islamic Egypt. It is therefore not surprising that the jars are frequently mentioned in documentary papyri recording Egyptians’ daily life concerns and activities. There are a variety of names attested in Coptic and Arabic papyri and these can be compared to ethnographic works from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Egypt that record Arabic terms for jars. There have been attempts in the past to link the jars mentioned in the papyri with the jar names from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Egypt,⁵⁸ and with archaeological and ethnographic terms,⁵⁹ but there have been no attempts to join these three data sets making connections between the archaeological and Arabic papyrological terms. It has, however, been attempted for Greek papyri, with the study of jar names that are derived from geographical locations. Greek geographical jar names such as Rhodian and Gazan can indeed be linked to specific jar types.⁶⁰

Even when it has been suggested that certain amphorae were identical to jars mentioned in the papyri, making exact correlates can be problematic. There is one instance, however, where it is possible to do so. The term “Aswan plate” appears in Coptic-Arabic and Coptic spells as well as written on a plate

56 Allen, *Nishapur*; Waldbaum 1983; Mango, *Beyond* fig. 5.7; Pitarakis 2005; Mango, *Tracking Byzantine* 230–231, fig. 15.5.

57 Henne, *Rapport* 9, 36

58 Karabacek. *Papyrus Erzherzog*; Lane, *Manners* 152, 155; Grohmann, *From the world* 10, fig. 1; Grohmann, *Einführung* 9, Abb. 2.

59 Bailey, *Excavations* 75.

60 Kruit and Worp, *Geographical* 65, 72–75, 98, 105, 107, 140.

in the British Museum.⁶¹ The piece is described by Hall as being a “part of a moulded red-faced imitation Arrentine ware bowl.”⁶² One of the spells, however, Inv. no. 515, mentions *white* Aswan bowls.⁶³ The word used for the vessel is in this instance different from the word used in the other two texts. This makes it likely that a different type of bowl or plate is being referred to here. The qualification “white” added to “Aswan” might thus have referred to a specific type of vessel.⁶⁴ The same term for plate also appears in Coptic texts elsewhere and it has been suggested that it is not an ordinary plate.⁶⁵ It is clear from this example, however, that even when the identification between vessel and name seems to be straightforward, it is always more complicated. Furthermore, the texts generally do not tell us whether the objects are made from glass, ceramics, or metal, and only by looking at archaeology can it become clear what types of objects might be actually meant in the texts.⁶⁶ All of this must be kept in mind when examining the terms for vessels. Both Arabic and Coptic terms will be considered here. There are far more Coptic terms known than Arabic ones, but this should not be considered surprising: far more Coptic ostraca and papyri have been published than Arabic texts. In addition to papyri, a considerable amount of information about consumption in the early Islamic period comes from the commodities listed on glass vessel stamps. Glass vessel stamps are known in Egypt in the Byzantine period,⁶⁷ but are found in larger numbers in the early Islamic period.⁶⁸ The glass stamps would have been applied to vessels while still hot and they have been found attached to several glass cups, including one from the American excavations at Fustāt.⁶⁹

61 See van der Vliet, *Varia* 224–225. The Arabic-Coptic bilingual spell and one Coptic spell are published in Bilabel and Grohmann, *Griechische* no. 123 (PSR Inv. no. 500/1), line 1 (Arabic), no. 131 (PSR Inv. no. 518) line 19 (the reading is according to Bilabel and Grohmann somewhat uncertain, but they do restore it, although they do not translate it). Another Coptic spell is published in Stegemann, *Neue Zauber* 78, l. 55–56 (PSR Inv. no. 518). The inscribed plate is published (with a drawing but no photo) in Hall 1905, pl. 38.1 (BM 27718). I would like to thank J. van der Vliet for the reference to his article.

62 Hall, *Coptic* pl. 38.1 (BM 27718).

63 White bowls, without the appellation “Aswan,” also appear in a Coptic text now in Leiden.

64 Van der Vliet, *Varia* 224.

65 Bacot and Heurtel, *Ostraca coptes* 24.

66 Mossakowska-Gaubert, *La verrerie 1443–1444*.

67 Lane-Poole, *Catalogue* xviii–xix; Ross, *Byzantine* 83; Sams, *The weighting* 202–230, 210.

68 Bates, *The function* 63–92, 63–64; Bacharach, *Introduction* 5. For glass stamps from outside of Egypt, see Morton, *A catalogue* 39; Heidemann, *Katalog* 195–196.

69 Scanlon and Pinder-Wilson, *Fustat glass* fig. 37. The glass would have been for dried plums.

The glass vessel stamps give different types of information, including contents, measures, and weight and occasionally the name of the person who authorised the issue of these stamps. It used to be assumed that glass vessel stamps indicated commodities that would have been used in pharmaceuticals or even more general weights.⁷⁰ There has been a growing understanding, however, that glass vessel stamps are likely to have indicated items consumed or used on a daily basis. The commodities include oil (olive oil, etc.), fat, dairy products (milk, cheese, clarified butter), lentils (black lentils and skinned lentils), spices (coriander, fenugreek, mustard, cumin), lupines, sesame, peaches or plums, honey, jujubes, palm fruit, cooked noodles, wine, beer, millet beer, henna, garlic, meat.⁷¹ This information can be combined with the information from the amphorae to see the wide variety of different food stuffs attested.

The amount that a vessel might hold is often difficult to determine. Even when there is information about this in texts, it is not always straightforward. The authors of the papyri did not specify weights; it is to the literary texts that one must turn in order to gain information about how much a particular vessel might have carried or how large a particular measure was. The authors of these texts, however, do not always agree, and it is clear that the contents, weight and size of measures differed per region. Even within Egypt, the size of a particular measure was not always the same.⁷² The differences were not only determined by where a particular measure came from but also by the type of liquid or dry goods that it was used for. Wine, oil, and honey all required different measures; an equal volume of honey has a greater weight than a similar amount of wine, while wine and oil are quite compatible.⁷³

70 Lane-Poole, *Catalogue*, vii, xvii, xxii–xxiv; Miles, *Contributions* 384. This affects how Miles translated the names of particular commodities (Miles, Egyptian glass 384–389). Balog, *Umayyad* 10, 12, 29; Eldada, *Glass weights* 113; Hamarneh and Awad, *Glass vessel* 168.

71 Miles, *Contributions*; Miles, Egyptian glass 386–387; Balog, *Umayyad* 30; Bacharach, *Introduction* 117, 147; Eldada, *Glass weights* 113, 117; Hamarneh and Awad, *Glass vessel* 167, 169–171, 174, no. 5.

72 Sauvaire, *On a treatise* 291–292, 297–299; Rogers 1878, 98–112, 110; Sauvaire, *Arabic metrology* 253–284, 253–254, 256.

73 Sauvaire, *Arab metrology* 495–524, 495. Ms. Madrid ms. arabe gg. 57.

Arabic Terms for Vessels

There is a number of terms for vessels that appear in Arabic papyri, some of these words were borrowed from Coptic (possibly to describe vessels that the Arabs were not familiar with).⁷⁴ One of the most common terms was *jarra* (جررة), which is attested in papyri dating to between the eighth and tenth centuries. Those papyri of which the find spots can be determined come from Medīnat al-Fayyūm (one example) and Edfu (two examples). The *jarras* are said to have contained a large variety of commodities such as honey, wine, sugar syrup, grape syrup, and water.⁷⁵ David-Weill published a papyrus from the Louvre mentioning a *jarra* containing oil made, in his translation, from eggplant seeds.⁷⁶ This seems an unlikely translation as not much oil can be extracted from eggplant grains. While the contents of the *jarra* are varied, this also held true for the size of a *jarra*. According to the literary sources, a *jarra* of Antioch held 23 kg, a large *jarra* 11 kg, and a small one 1.9 kg.⁷⁷ The term may also be attested in a Coptic text. Crum reports that in Bibliothèque Nationale ms. 55 there is mention of ⲧⲁ (صاعرة) (1 var. جرة). In Coptic, this appears to be ⲁⲠⲟⲃⲉⲥ, which Crum translates as a small (?) vessel.⁷⁸ Again, there is no material specified, but the size suggests that the *jarra* was made of pottery and it could easily be connected with one of the amphorae found at the archaeological sites. Therefore, at least some *jarra* could be LRA7 or LRA 5/6 which is found so frequently at early Islamic sites and which seem to have been used for the same goods that the papyri mention in relation to the *jarra*. If small *jarras* are being referred to in the papyri, then they might be the small flasks, made from glass or metal, that have been found at archaeological sites. In illuminated manuscripts, vessels identified by *jarra* are drawn as two handled jars apparently made of metal.⁷⁹

When one turns to the ethnographic attestations of the *jarra*, however, the picture is very different. The papyrological evidence suggests that the

74 It should be kept in mind, however, that amphorae have been found in Arabia. See, for example, Sedov, *New archaeological* 113–114.

75 Grohmann, *From the world* commentary on *P.Cair.Arab.* IV 339.9; Grohmann, *Einführung* 1954, 170–171; Marrow, *Two Arabic Inv.* no. 36.2; Rāḡib, *Quatre papyrus III recto* 8; *P.Khalili* I 7.3.6; *P.Vind.Arab.* I 4.7.

76 David-Weill, *Papyrus arabes* no. 12.

77 Grohmann, *Einführung* 170–171.

78 Crum, *A Coptic* 785B.

79 Hill, *The book* 49, 54, 72, 78, 80, 82, 84, 88, 100, 113–114, 130 (Models 4, 7, 19–22, 32, 38–39, 46).

jarra would be a rather large pottery jar used to transport liquids of all types. The ethnographic attestations of *jarra*, however, suggest that a *jarra* or *jar-rat al-mayya* (Eg.) *al-kabīra* is, in fact, the unusually shaped jar mentioned above that is still being produced at Dakhla. In Egyptian and Syrian/Jordanian colloquial a *jarra* is a clay water jar or pitcher.⁸⁰ In Syria and Jordan *jarra* is also used in more general terms for a storage jar.⁸¹ Water jars which are known in some areas as *jarra* are called elsewhere in Egypt *zūr*.⁸² The *jarra* in Egypt can also preserve cheese and the *jar-rat al-laban* holds milk.⁸³ Therefore, there seems to be two types of *jarra* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: unusually shaped flasks that hold water and cheese and milk jars. This suggests that the meaning of *jarra* has changed through time and that it has become a far more specific term than it was in the early Islamic period.

Another common term in the Arabic papyri is *qist* (قسط); the term is derived from the Greek measure ξέστης (coming to the Arabic either from Greek or from Egyptian via Coptic, where the term also occurs as the measure κᾰστῆς, ζ, ζεστ̄, ζεστα, ζεστε, etc.).⁸⁴ In Arabic, however, the term may refer either to a vessel or a measure,⁸⁵ and it is difficult to determine which is meant. The term *qist*, after all, even when used as a measure, implies the use of a vessel to contain the object in question. The papyri mentioning *qist* date from between the eighth and tenth centuries and the find spots of most of the papyri cannot be determined, but where it has been established, they come from Arsinoe/Fayyūm. As for contents a variety of liquid and semi-liquid commodities have been determined: oil (olive, radish, linen, and sesame), honey, wine, vinegar, and butter. Many of the references in the papyri refer to parts of a *qist*, which could suggest that these refer to a measure rather than to a specific vessel.⁸⁶ In glass vessel stamps, the commodities mentioned include liquids such as wine and olive oil.⁸⁷

80 Hinds and Badawi, *A dictionary* 155.

81 Mershen, *Recent hand-made* 76, n. 7; Taniguchi, *Ethnoarchaeological* 144.

82 Henein, *Poterie* 161, 163; Ashton, *Comparative*.

83 Henein, *Poterie* 161, 163; Ashton, *Comparative*

84 Miles, *Egyptian glass* 385; Kruit and Worp, *Metrological notes* 111 (who note there are over 1,000 Greek examples of the word used as a measure); Förster, *Wörterbuch* 555. Grohmann, however, thinks it came from Aramaic into Arabic (Grohmann, *Einführung* 167).

85 Grohmann, *Einführung* 167; Morton, *A catalogue* 31.

86 Grohmann, *Einführung* 167–170.

87 Morton, *A catalogue* 31.

In one instance, the *qist* is a bronze vessel,⁸⁸ while in others it is made from glass.⁸⁹ It is clear that there are a variety of sizes of *qist*. In P.Cair.B.E. inv. no. 326.4 there is a reference to a large *qist* (a term which also occurs in glass weights) and to a *qist al-layī*. In the papyri, *qists* are referred to as whole, half, quarter, and eighth. According to literary evidence a small *qist* was 1.19 kg and a large *qist* 2.4 kg. On the basis of this information Grohmann suggested that one *qist* was equal to 1.4 liters while Miles interpreted it to be a pint in size.⁹⁰ This could suggest that the *qist* was a relatively small-sized vessel, but the evidence makes clear that the *qist* measure was not fixed. Indeed, both small and large *qists* are attested.⁹¹ The side of a glass cup from the Metropolitan Museum of Art has been stamped with the words: *qist waft* (full measure). The glass cup holds 50 cubic centimeters, but this does not compare with the *qists* attested in the literature. It has been suggested that the glass measure must be incorrect and should have read half of a quarter of a *qist* as fractions of a *qist* are common in glass weights,⁹² but it seems more likely that in glass measures, as in the papyri, the size of a *qist* measure differed significantly.

Once again, when one attempts to find archaeological correlates to a *qist*, one is confronted with the possibility that it may refer to different vessels, in particular when it is used as a measure. The *qist* seems to have been much smaller than the *jarra*, referring to smaller pottery, glass, and metal vessels. It is interesting that the *qist* seems to have evolved from a measure to a term that meant both a measure and a vessel. In Coptic, this process also seems to have occurred. While almost all the references to the term in Coptic appear to be measures, there is one exception to this, *O.Medin.Habu Copt* 5.11, where a list of goods is given and the word ⲟϣϣⲉⲥⲧⲏⲥ appears. The editors do not comment on this, they merely translate it as *xestes*. In the context of the list, the meaning of the word appears to be for a vessel rather than a measure.⁹³

In modern Egyptian Arabic a *qist* is used for a metal can (such as milk man's churn)⁹⁴ and an oil pitcher.⁹⁵ Rogers, in his study of weights and measures,

88 Grohmann, *Einführung* 167.

89 Day, *An Umayyad* 259; Miles, *Egyptian glass* 385, 387–388.

90 Grohmann, *Einführung* 167–170; Hinz, *Islamische* 50; See Grohmann's commentary on *P.Cair.Arab.* iv 342; Miles, *Egyptian glass* 385; Balog, *Umayyad* 30.

91 Sauvaire, *A treatise* 113; Morton, *A catalogue* 31.

92 Day, *An Umayyad* 259; Miles, *Egyptian glass* 385, 387–388; Balog, *Umayyad* 31.

93 See, for example, *P.Ryl.Copt.* 238.41 is a list (8th century) that has a half *xestes* of or for oil (ⲟϣⲡⲁⲟϣⲉⲥⲧⲏⲥ) and *P.Ryl.Copt.* 240.4 (ⲟϣϣ[ⲉ]ⲥⲧⲏⲥ ⲛⲥⲱ).

94 Hinds and Badawi, *A dictionary* 699.

95 Spiro, *An Arabic-English* 486.

noted the presence of a *qist* on glass weights and made enquiries in Cairo about the object. He found evidence in 1878 for a vessel called an oil *qist* that was used to dip into oil jars (قسط الزيت), which did not have a specific size. He stated that the word was not used anymore for a fixed measure of capacity.⁹⁶ Unlike other terms that appear in ethnographic studies, the *qist* is not a term that appears in separate pottery studies. This is probably due to the fact that by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the term had come to refer to a metal vessel. The use of the term apparently changed through time, losing its meaning as a measure and becoming used exclusively to refer to a metal vessel.

The third common term in Arabic is the *qulla* (قلاة), which, like *qist*, comes from a Coptic word, but in this instance not originally coming from Greek. The Coptic root is κελωλ, κογλωλ, κολολ, which means pitcher or jar for water,⁹⁷ originally from hieroglyphic and known as *krr* in demotic.⁹⁸ The term was then used in Greek as κρωρι⁹⁹ and became very common in Greek in the fifth century CE and later (κουρι).¹⁰⁰ Kruit and Worp suggest that it is equivalent to Greek/Coptic κόλλαθον,¹⁰¹ but this is not the case. Despite the fact that *qulla* comes from the Coptic word *kelal*, it appears in several manuscripts as the equivalent to the Arabic words *qist* and *kūz*,¹⁰² which suggests that the authors of the papyri were not aware of the equivalence between the two terms.

The term is attested in Arabic texts dating from between the eighth and ninth centuries but no provenance for the papyri can be determined. The types of contents of this jar include liquid and semi-liquid contents: wine (including date wine), butter, cheese, molasses, raw sugar, oil (Palestinian olive oil and radish oil), soap, and black olives (which although being solid would have

96 Rogers, Unpublished glass 112.

97 Crum, *A Coptic* 104a. For some reason Alcock only gives the meaning “pitcher,” although he does note its etymology, which is neglected by Crum (Alcock, *Coptic terms* 2). Another possible spelling in Coptic may be κογλε as it appears in *O. Frangé* 253.9 referring to a jar. Boud’hors and Heurtel, *Les ostraca* suggest that this is perhaps the word κελωλ κογλωλ or κλε κελη (Crum, *A Coptic* 102a) which is a vessel for liquids such as honey and oil.

98 Černý, *Coptic* 56.

99 According to Bilabel, there is a papyrus that comes from the Hibeh cartonnage (Heidelberg 414) which contains a Greek Demotic glossary, with the Demotic written in Greek letters. Therefore: λεκάνιον-κρωρι (Bilabel 1938, 79). Quecke suggests after a recent re-study of the papyrus that κωρι means τ(ά)λαντον, talent (Quecke, *Eine griechische-ägyptische* 72–73).

100 Kruit and Worp, *Metrological* 110–111.

101 Kruit and Worp, *Geographical* 138.

102 Crum, *A Coptic* 104a.

probably been stored in oil). Diem also suggested that one of the jars referred to in Grohmann's publication of PERF 769 may have held mixed pickles rather than the water that Grohmann suggested.

There are at least four sizes of *qulla* jars in the papyri: an ordinary *qulla*, which could be either a half or whole *qulla*, a large *qulla*, a small *qulla*, and a hip *qulla*.¹⁰³ Although Grohmann assumed that the *qulla* was a large jar that would have stored 55 kg,¹⁰⁴ the papyri show that there was a variety of different sizes. Further, a *jarra* is apparently smaller than a *qulla* because one *qulla* is said to have contained six *jarra*.¹⁰⁵ In Coptic the term κελλωλ is often found in lists of metal vessels etc., without any sort of object contained within it.¹⁰⁶ The fact that Palestinian olive oil is attested in one of the papyri as being contained in the jar could argue for the idea that the *qulla* is actually the LRA 5/6 which was produced in Palestine and Egypt and would have contained olive oil.¹⁰⁷ If a jar was likely to be imported to Egypt containing olive oil, the chances that it was the LRA 5/6 is quite high. The smaller version of the jar may be made from metal, as suggested by the Coptic variants. If Grohmann's hypothesis is correct the *qulla* might have been a very large storage jar, perhaps far larger than any of the amphorae.

The term *qulla* is known from a variety of ethnographic sources, already noted early on in *Description de l'Égypte*. Indeed, when Karabacek discusses PERF 710, he thinks that the *qulla* in the papyrus is the same as the one illustrated in *Description de l'Égypte*.¹⁰⁸ He did not discuss the correlation in great detail, however. Edward William Lane stated that the *qulla* was used in nineteenth-century Cairo as a water bottle and glass sherbet cup.¹⁰⁹ This suggests that the term could refer to a wide variety of vessels both large and quite small. In Morocco it is thought to be an oil measure which in Casablanca contains 30 kg of oil and in Mazagan 17 kg. This suggests oil would have been stored in a large jar in this period, perhaps not unlike the type seen by Lane in Cairo in the nineteenth century.¹¹⁰ Further, the term appears to have remained popular into the twentieth century, when it continued to mean a jar that contains

103 Grohmann, *From the world* 164; Grohmann, *Einführung* 171; P.Khalili I 3; P.Vind.Arab. I 16.5. Hip: P. Khalili I 7.5.

104 Grohmann, *Einführung* 171.

105 Grohmann, *Einführung* 171.

106 P.Ryl.Copt. 238.3; 242.4.

107 P.Berl.Arab. II 40.6.

108 Karabacek, *Papyrus* PERF 710.

109 Lane, *Manners* 155.

110 Grohman, *Einführung* 171.

liquids, such as water.¹¹¹ In Egyptian Arabic a *qulla* is an earthenware jug¹¹² or a water bottle.¹¹³ Pots found in the Kellia excavations have been associated with the modern *qulla*,¹¹⁴ while other archaeogological material has also been connected to the ethnographic evidence of the *qulla*.¹¹⁵ Once again, there seems to be a change that has occurred between the attestations in the papyri and the ethnographic attestations. There are some *qulla* which seem to be quite large while others are very small.

In addition to these three fairly common terms for vessels in the Arabic papyri, there are two less common ones. One of these is the *iqnīz* (إقنيز). The word *iqnīz* comes from Greek κνίδιον, which also occurs in Coptic texts as κνικιλχι, κνικιλχι, and κογνιλογ and is equivalent to the Coptic word λακοοτε.¹¹⁶ The term is very popular in both Greek and Coptic papyri, although it is rare in the Arabic papyri. Indeed, the term *knidion* is the most widely attested amphora name in the late antique period, although attestations first begin in the Ptolemaic period, then stop and begin again in the second century CE and continue into the ninth century. The Greek attestations of *knidion* jars indicate that it contained large amounts of wine and olive oil, but also other items such as honey, cheese, money, grapes, cheap wine or vinegar, mixed honey and wine, and honey and water drinks, *garum*, sweet olives, olives, pickles, and pickled calf meat.¹¹⁷ It has been argued that in the Byzantine period *knidion* jars ceased to be identified with a specific form or type, but rather referred generally to jar. This seems to be supported by the archaeological evidence as there are no imitation jars from Knidos produced in Egypt in the Byzantine period and in several Coptic texts *knidion* jars are equated with Coptic measures.¹¹⁸ Texts describe *knidion* jars to have been produced in Egypt. This suggests that the term continued to represent both the wine jar and a

111 Blackman, *The fellahin* 140; Mond and Meyers, *The Bucheum* 84; Brissaud, *Les ateliers* 217; Golvin, Thiriot, and Zakariya, *Les potiers* 27, no. 1, 28; Henein, *Poterie* 104, 154; Nicholson, *Deir Mawas* 142.

112 Hinds and Badawi, *A Dictionary* 716.

113 Spiro, *An Arabic-English* 500.

114 Henein, *Poterie* 104, 154. See also Ashton, *Comparative*.

115 Egloff, *Kellia* 128.

116 Bell, *Metrology* 22; Crum, *A Coptic* 11b; Grohmann, *Einführung* 170, no. 5; Černý, *Coptic* 59; Alcock, *Coptic terms* 1–2; Kruit and Worp, *Geographical* 72–75.

117 Clackson, *Coptic* 27, 157; Kruit and Worp, *Geographical* 104–105, 108; Mayerson, *The knidion* 165–166; Mayerson, *Enigmatic knidion* 205–209.

118 For Coptic measures, see Kruit and Worp, *Geographical* 72–75; Černý, *Coptic* 59; Alcock, *Coptic terms* 2.

measure in the late Roman/Byzantine period,¹¹⁹ and presumably this would hold true for the early Islamic period as well. Whether or not the term *knidion* retained its geographical meaning in Coptic, it is clear that the term ceases to refer to an actual jar but rather becomes an extremely common wine measure in the early Islamic period.¹²⁰ It was also used to measure other substances, such as pickles.¹²¹

In Arabic the term seems to refer to actual jars, rather than to a measure. This suggests that the term may be adapted from the Greek rather than the Coptic and hence it retained its original meaning. The Arabic texts date to between the seventh and eighth centuries and, where find spots can be determined, come from the Fayyūm and from Khirbat al-Mird in Palestine (one). The containers primarily contain liquids and semi-liquids such as wine (the most popular), but fat and soap are also attested.¹²² There is some evidence for the type of material that the objects were made of. The vessel from Khirbat al-Mird is made of bronze¹²³ and Grohmann suggests that this is a small vessel,¹²⁴ but there is no evidence for its actual size. The fact that it was in one instance made of metal suggests that metal was used in other instances too, although the carrying of liquid contents may also suggest amphorae.

The term does not survive in modern Egyptian Arabic and therefore is not attested in ethnographic studies or in dictionaries. This may have to do with the fact that it is a measure in Coptic and was rare in Arabic. The only excavators to discuss a possible equivalence for the term *knidion* are those who worked at Ashmūnayn. They suggested that a LRA7 type found there and dating to at least the eighth century can be identified as the *knidion*.¹²⁵ The LRA7 is generally dated to a later period than this, while it was not made in Knidos, even though the geographical association might have been lost by this time. There is another problem, however, namely that the object found at Ashmūnayn does not correlate with the known sizes of *knidion* jars in the texts.¹²⁶

119 Mayerson, *Enigmatic* especially 205, 209.

120 Bell, *Metrology* 22; Clackson, *Coptic* 26–27; Bacot, *Le vin* 714–715. See also Wipszycka, *La Fonctionnement* 170–171.

121 Bell, *Metrology* 23. *O.Sarga* 87.

122 Karabacek, *Bemerkungen*; Grohmann, *Einführung* 170.

123 *P.Mird* 41. For these papyri see Cotton and Millar, *The papyrology* 215, no. 8.

124 Grohmann, *Einführung* 170.

125 Bailey, *Excavations* 129–130; Pyke 2005, 217.

126 Bavay, *Les amphores* 391.

The least common Arabic jar name in the papyri seems to be a *barnīyya* (برنية). This jar appears in A. Ch. 2924.7, which dates to the tenth century. Diem suggests that the jar contained several truffles,¹²⁷ which seems a somewhat unusual content. The jar is not attested anywhere else, which makes it difficult to speculate about what it was. In colloquial Egyptian, however, *barnīyya* means an earthenware pot or dish glazed on the inside.¹²⁸ This could suggest that ethnographically it is a jar that would normally hold liquids or be used in cooking. More attestations of this jar are needed in the papyri, however, before we can make more in depth statements about what it might be. This demonstrates, however, the evolving nature of the evidence in Arabic papyri for jar terms. There are more jar names attested in the ethnographic studies than have been found in the papyri, suggesting that there were more Arabic jar names in the early Islamic period than what we have found so far.¹²⁹

Coptic Terms

The Coptic terms that have correlates in the Arabic papyri have been discussed above, but there are also terms that only appear in the Coptic. As mentioned above, due to a discrepancy in the publication record, there are many more terms known from Coptic papyri than from the Arabic. In spite of the abundance of this evidence, the treatment of Coptic jar terms has been limited to discussing the degree to which they constitute Greek loan words (such as discussed by Förster and Kruit and Worp) or ‘genuinely’ Coptic terms (such as discussed in Alcock, which is essentially a list from Crum’s Coptic dictionary with a few additions¹³⁰). A more complete discussion of all the Coptic terms is a *desideratum* and it is hoped that this article will stimulate further discussion on this topic that will examine all occurrences of the different jar names in detail and publish more texts concerning jars. Such a study may reveal whether or not certain jar names predominate in certain regions, as has been suggested for some measures which seem to predominate in the Edfu, Theban, and Oxyrhynchite areas.¹³¹ Here, the jar names under discussion will be divided into two

127 *P.Vind.Arab.* 1 4.7. Cf. Diem’s discussion of the term in the commentary to this text (p. 26).

128 Hinds and Badawi, *A dictionary* 70.

129 See, for example, Wassef, *Pratiques* 400–402.

130 Alcock, Coptic terms 1.

131 Bacot, *Quelques* 35, 37–38; Bacot, *Le vin* 716. Bacot suggests that the local measures at Edfu are λαρε, βαλϣομητ, ταρϣε, and ρλχ. The term βαλϣομητ also appears at Bawit. Another

categories: those that are attested commonly (both Greek loan words and those that are Coptic) and those which are more rarely attested. Attestations from texts that date generally to the sixth/seventh century will also be included in the discussion here because they may in fact date to after the Islamic conquest.

Several Greek loanwords that are attested in Coptic and Arabic texts, such as *knidion*, have already been discussed, and we will now turn to those other Greek words for jars that are attested as loanwords only in Coptic and that are very common in the papyri and the ostraca. The term ἀγγ, ἀγγειν, or ἀγγεν, comes from the Greek ἀγγεῖον, and means jar.¹³² In Coptic texts from western Thebes the jar contained vinegar or oil (early 8th century),¹³³ while Greek texts mention it containing wine (from 6th/7th-century Hermopolis/Ashmūnayn,¹³⁴ late 7th-century Edfu¹³⁵ and 8th-century Bawit).¹³⁶ The contents are therefore similar to those mentioned in pre-Islamic documents from early seventh-century Apollonopolis Heptakomias, namely wine.¹³⁷ All these texts have thus a middle or upper Egyptian provenance and refer to measures holding liquids.

Another jar term which is common is καιος from Greek σκευος, which occurs frequently in Coptic texts.¹³⁸ The καΔΟΥC from κάδος in some cases contained wine.¹³⁹ The ΔCκαλΩνε, from the Greek ἀσκαλώνιον, might refer to an actual jar or a measure in this period. Most scholars, such as Bell, Hasitzska, and

local term from Edfu is ϩNTACE, ϣNTACE, which occurs as a wine measure, and as a measure for vinegar and herbs in the wider Theban area outside of settlements such as Djeme. It can also be found at Hnes, Ashmūnayn, and Wadi Sarga. It also appears in Greek texts as ψιϑ () from Edfu with salt, boiled wine concentrate, must, and wine (*P.Apoll.* 93.A. 11, 12, 17 and 93.B.2.3.11, 23). See Crum, *A Coptic* 573b; Bacot, *Du nouveau* 153; Worp, *Notes* 571. Another local term is λακοοτε, which especially occurs in Middle Egypt (Bell, *Metrology* 23). The measure λαρη appears in Greek and Coptic, but while the Coptic term appears at a variety of sites such as Edfu and Bawit, in Greek papyri it is almost entirely limited to the Oxyrhynchite nome (Worp, *Notes* 565; Bacot, *Ostraca* 10, 65).

132 Förster, *Wörterbuch* 6–7.

133 Förster, *Wörterbuch* 6–7. For ἀγγεν: See *O.Frangé* 118.7, 120.23, 343.13–14 (mentions an amphora of vinegar), ἀγγι: see *O.Frangé* 82.7: jar(s) of oil.

134 *SB* 18.13585–6, 13589; *P.Lond.* III 1036.

135 *P.Apoll.* 97.

136 *O.Bawit/FAO* 33.2. 36. 2, and possibly 38.4 (the contents are not clear in the last text).

137 *P.Grenf.* 1, 63, *P.Drexel*, and *Par.suppl.gr.* 1291.1. For more on *P.Gren.* 1, 62, its dating, and the provenance of Apollonopolis Heptakomias (Kom Isfāht) rather than Edfu, see Benaissa, *Two bishops* 179–180. For *P.Drexel* and *Par. suppl. gr.* 1291.1, see *Bainassa, Two Bishops* 184–187, 187–191. The monastery of Bawit is located in the vicinity of this city.

138 Bell, *Metrology* 25; *P.Mon.Epiph.* 3; Förster, *Wörterbuch* 735–737.

139 Förster, *Wörterbuch* 357–358.

Förster, believe that it is a measure but Kruit and Worp treat it as a jar. In Coptic, the term is primarily attested at Ashmūnayn, but also appears commonly at Wadi Sarga. It appears in the Coptic texts very frequently as either a measure or container for cheese¹⁴⁰ although wine is also attested.¹⁴¹ Mayerson suggested that ἀσκαλώνε was a form of amphora from Palestine. He noted that this type of jar contained wine, sweetmeats, fish sauce and cheese in the papyri which he felt would fit with an amphora in general. He did not discuss either the jars or the papyri in detail, but identifies ἀσκαλώνιον and γαζίτιον to LRA 4 jars.¹⁴² Once again, the jar name seems to have lost its meaning as a container and to have become a measure.

There are several other words that appear in Coptic whose actual origin is disputed. The word κοεic, which Crum, following Krall in *CPR* II, suggests is also borrowed from Greek κόις, has been thought by Worp to be a word which comes from Coptic as it is only found once in Greek. Again, however, this jar type seems to refer to quite varied types and while it normally contains wine and vinegar, it can also contain solids. At Ashmūnayn a κοεic maker is attested in the seventh century promising to deliver new κοεic jars.¹⁴³ It is attested in the Theban region, Bawit¹⁴⁴ and at Edfu.¹⁴⁵ Bacot suggests that κοεic, κολοβον, and πγpp[oc] are jars attested at Edfu that contain wine although confusingly she also calls them measures.¹⁴⁶ This might be the same as πορο, which is

140 *O.Sarga* 196, 198, 203 from Wadi Sarga; *P.Lond.Copt.* I 1044, 1085, 1126 from Ashmūnayn; *CPR* XII 30.26.

141 *O.Sarga* 237 and 275; Bell, *Metrology* 20; Hasitzska, *CPR* XII 40; Mayerson, *The Gaza Kruit and Worp*, *Geographical* 100 (their list provides only some of the Coptic examples); Förster, *Wörterbuch* 114.

142 Mayerson, *The Gaza* 79–80; Zemer 1977, Peacock and Williams, *Amphorae* 197–199; Kruit and Worp, *Metrological* 97; Kruit and Worp, *Geographical* 100–101; Gorzalczy, *A baptismal* 116–117. There are various varieties of southern Palestinian amphorae (Majcherek, *Gazan amphorae*; Fabian and Goren, *A new type*; Ward, *From provincia arabia* 199–209).

143 *CPR* II 223 = *CPR* IV 35.

144 See Krall commentary on *CPR* II 223; Crum, *A Coptic* 120a; Worp, *Notes* 568. The exact size of this jar is unknown but it is probably smaller than a *knidion* jar (Kruit and Worp, *A seventh-century* 49).

145 *O.EdfouFAO* 29; 70.

146 Bacot, *Quelques* 35; Bacot, *Le vin* 716; Bacot, *Ostraca* 10, 56. Kruit and Worp, *A seventh-century* 49 treat κοεic as a jar. For κολοβον, see Kuentz, *Remarques* 199, who argues that it is a wine measure. Bell, *Metrology* 22 merely states that it has an obscure meaning but includes it in his metrology discussion, suggesting he believes it is a measure as well. Crum, *A Coptic* 28 also discusses it as a measure although he refers in his dictionary to it as a vessel. Kruit and Worp, *A seventh-century* 49 also believe this is a vessel.

attested in *O.CrumST* 117 and is defined by Crum as a jar holding oil.¹⁴⁷ πΥΡΡ[OC] comes from the Greek word πυρρόν, red, and is equivalent to Coptic τΑΡΩΕ, which in turn is derived from the ancient Egyptian *sd dšr*, red vase. The term appears not only at Edfu, but also at Jeme/Medinet Habu and the Monastery of Phoebammon.¹⁴⁸ Kruit and Worp note that Edfu pottery includes both brown and brown with red slip ware.¹⁴⁹ Because red is one of the most common colors in pottery this does not particularly assist in finding any archaeological correlates for this type at Edfu.

In addition to these more common loan words from Greek, there are some less frequently attested ones, such as κεραμι[Δ], from κεράμια¹⁵⁰ and πῖθος from πιθος¹⁵¹. Additionally, there are two words for jars that may in fact not come from Greek at all: βαλιτε, which in the Frange material (spelled καλιτε), refers to a vessel filled with oil or simply as a vessel.¹⁵² It also appears in the Wadi Sarga texts as a vessel also filled with oil.¹⁵³ Another term possibly referring to a storage vessel is ορηον, which holds many different types of foodstuffs.¹⁵⁴ The word κωτων, which may come from the Greek word κώθων has been attested at Edfu, and elsewhere where it contains honey, wine, and pickled food.¹⁵⁵

147 Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* 268a.

148 Kruit and Worp, *A seventh-century* 51. As noted by Heurtel, this word does not appear in the Coptic dictionary. Two attestations of this word which suggest that it is a measure or container (Heurtel, *Reçus* 151). See also Bacot, *Quelques* 35; Bacot, *Le vin* 716; Bacot, *Ostraca* 11, 66.

149 Kruit and Worp, *A seventh-century* 51.

150 Förster, *Wörterbuch* 405.

151 Förster, *Wörterbuch* 643.

152 Oil: no. 88.12. Vessel: nos. 328.10 and 329.6.

153 In the dictionary Crum suggests that it is the form of κόλλαθον in Coptic, but he acknowledges in his commentary on *O.Sarga* 91 no. 4 that it does not look very similar. Bell, however, accepts the idea that the two are the same, but Förster has a question mark (Bell, *Metrology* 22; Crum, *A Coptic* 813a; Förster, *Wörterbuch* 428–429). Occurrences of the Greek measure κόλλαθον in Coptic are very frequent.

154 Bell, *Metrology* 25. Bell argues it was a dry measure, for cheese as well as wine and pickles. He suggests that it comes from the Greek ὄργανον. See, however, Förster, *Wörterbuch* 586, no. 7. The latter argues that this equivalence with the Greek is questionable. It is not always a vessel, however. See Crum's commentary on *P.Mon.Epiph.* 312, no. 1. There he states that it is a mill, wine press, or instrument.

155 Edfu: *P.Mon.Epiph.* 532.15 and 543.7 (in a list). Crum commentary on *P.Mon.Epiph.* 543; Boud'hours and Heurtel, *Les ostraca* 71–72.

There are also Coptic names for jars such as ⲩⲟⲩⲟⲩⲩ, which is found at Wadi Sarga and the Theban region referring to a large jar containing wine.¹⁵⁶ It may be related to the word ⲩⲁⲩⲟ, which Crum defines as a vessel or measure for wine. In three cases, the jar holds the wine of Tiloj. In one case, the papyrus probably comes from the Fayyūm as it was given to the British Museum by Graf,¹⁵⁷ while the other text, an ostrakon cited by Crum, is a Theban account and another is a list of wine jars from Wadi Sarga.¹⁵⁸ This suggests that the wines of Tilodj (Nilopolis/Dallās) were well known outside of their production center, namely the Fayyūm.¹⁵⁹

Other jar names include ⲙⲣⲟⲩⲉ/ⲙⲣⲟⲩⲉ, which Crum defines as a vessel of clay,¹⁶⁰ ⲟⲩⲛⲉ, which is both a measure and a vessel,¹⁶¹ ⲗⲟⲕ or ⲗⲁⲕ, which is a small pot (about 1/2 liter in size) that contains pure honey or oil in the Frange correspondence and is referred to as a jar at Jeme without any contents listed,¹⁶² ⲩⲟⲩⲥ,¹⁶³ and ⲩⲟⲩⲣⲉ which is a jar but also seems to be a measure or jar for bread.¹⁶⁴ Another example is ⲉⲕⲟⲛⲉ, which in the texts of Frange is a vessel filled with oil.¹⁶⁵ It is described elsewhere as a bronze vessel or as a vessel or

156 Crum, *A Coptic* 609a; Bacot, *Du nouveau* 158–159. For some reason Alcock misspells it as ⲩⲟⲩⲟⲩⲛ (Alcock, *Coptic terms* 5).

157 *P.Lond.Copt.* 1 697.

158 *o.Sarga* 135.

159 Crum commentary on *P.Lond.Copt.* 697 (where he is not certain what the word means); commentary by Crum on *O.Sarga* 135 (where he translates the text as wine jars of (?) for Tiloj); Crum, *The monestary* 162, no. 5; Crum, *A Coptic* 604b–605a. For the city of Tilodj, see Timm, *Das christlich-koptische* 498–502.

160 Crum, *A Coptic* 184a; Crum commentary on *P.Mon.Epiph.* 549. See also Schäfer, *Ein Trichter* 152. Crum thinks it may have been a strainer in this context. This is followed by Wilfong, *Women's* 216, who notes the original editors of the *O.Medin.HabuCopt.* 5 translated it as vessel.

161 Crum, *A Coptic* 256a.

162 *O.Medin.HabuCopt.* 5; *O.Frangé* 100.9 (where it refers to a jar of pure honey), 236.3 (jar of oil), 237.11, 633.10 (jar of honey), 770.18. Crum, *A Coptic* 138a–b, defines it as a bowl or cup or a measure for oil.

163 Crum, *A Coptic* 727a. This is a jar or a pot. It is attested in *O.Sarga* 66 as containing cheese, 186 as holding vinegar and pickles, and 344 as containing wine. See commentary of Crum on the Wadi Sarga texts on p. 148, no. 2.

164 *O.Frangé* 93.7, 11, 24 (Frange asks for a ⲩⲟⲩⲣⲉ of bread), 328.9 and 329.4 (where it seems to be a jar). Crum, *A Coptic* 722a, states that it is a vase name. This is not to be confused with ⲩⲛⲗⲉ, which is also a measure or container for bread (Crum, *A Coptic* 667a; Wilfong, *Women's* 217, who suggests that the iron ⲩⲗⲗⲉ and wooden ⲩⲗⲗⲉ mentioned in *O.Medin.HabuCopt.* 85 are not furniture but rather bread containers or measures).

165 Nos. 87.7–8, 327.11.

tank of metal or wood.¹⁶⁶ It is apparently an object used in the kitchen, as it appears in a list of kitchen objects from the Theban area.¹⁶⁷ It also may be related to a word κηνε or κηνε, which is found in a list of vessels.¹⁶⁸

There is evidently borrowing from Coptic into Greek as well. One word is *κελμαι*, which seems to refer to a metal vessel.¹⁶⁹ The word *κογνχογ* refers to metal or clay vessels¹⁷⁰ and is attested in Greek as *κόντσου*.¹⁷¹ There are at least two sizes referred to as a *μεγάλη* and *μικρόν κόντσου*.¹⁷² *σορογτον*, *σιρωτον* is another common word in Coptic which usually refers to a vessel holding wine or vinegar, except in two cases when the contents may be explained as “filtered” wine.¹⁷³ Husselman suggested that it was a jar with a strainer on the top¹⁷⁴ but this would argue against it being a storage jar, as transporting anything in it would be difficult. Worp has tried to connect this word to the Greek *σιρώτ(ησ)/σιρωτόν/ν*. In his discussion of the term he begins by stating that it also looks similar to the Coptic word *cip*, but the relationship between *cip* and *σιρωτ* remains unclear.¹⁷⁵ *cip* has been connected to the Arabic *zīr* which is a common term for jar, basing his findings on a literary text.¹⁷⁶ This has been described as a Coptic loan word in Arabic,¹⁷⁷ although the Coptic use is limited to one attestation.¹⁷⁸ In Greek, the term was used exclusively for containers for wine and vinegar in texts from the sixth to the eighth centuries.¹⁷⁹ It also

166 *O.Medin.HabuCopt.* 5.

167 *SBKopt.* II. 1048.6.

168 *P.Mon.Epiph.* 543; Crum, *A Coptic* 112a; *O.Frangé*, p. 72.

169 Crum, *A Coptic* 81a. See also Worp, Notes 570, who discusses this term in a Greek text of the sixth century.

170 Crum, *A Coptic* 113a; Alcock, Coptic terms 2. See also Stefanski and Lichtheim, commentary on *O.Medin.HabuCopt* 5 no. 7. At Edfu: *O.EdfouIFA0* 127 is list of objects paid as wages including two jars: *κογνχογ* (here *κογχογ*). The word also appears elsewhere in the Theban area (*O.Frangé* 631.8).

171 *SB* 1 1160 of unknown provenance and date (Torallas Tovar, Egyptian 169).

172 Worp, Notes 568–569.

173 Crum, *A Coptic* 148, no. 3. See commentary on *O.Sarga* 186.7.

174 Husselman, Coptic 68.

175 Worp, Notes 569–570.

176 Crum, *A Coptic* 353b; Worp, Notes 569, no. 28.

177 Bishai, Coptic 47.

178 Crum, *A Coptic* 353b.

179 Sixth century: *P.Prag.* 1.92.1, *SB* 1 1960.6 = *O.Petr.* 452. Seventh century: *P.Apoll.* 93.A.5. Early seventh century from Arsinoites: *BGU* II 377.2. Seventh/eighth century: *P.Bad.* IV. 97.10.15.

appears in two Coptic-Greek texts from eighth-century Bawit referring to containers for vinegar.¹⁸⁰

In addition to these fairly common types, there are also a number of words that are found less commonly in Coptic. What follows are some of them. Ⲅⲁⲡⲉ has been suggested to be a small vessel.¹⁸¹ Ⲅⲁ or Ⲅⲁⲓ,¹⁸² Ⲅⲓⲟⲡⲉ,¹⁸³ and Ⲅⲕⲉ refer to a vessel for honey or oil.¹⁸⁴ ⲄⲁⲚ is defined as a measure or a vessel.¹⁸⁵ ⲟⲩⲟⲩⲟ has been identified as a vessel possibly holding corn.¹⁸⁶ ⲄⲁⲗⲗⲁⲒⲱⲙ may be a vessel.¹⁸⁷ Ⲅⲓ seems to be a metal vessel or utensil.¹⁸⁸ ⲙⲟⲤⲛ(ⲉ) might be a vessel or dry measure.¹⁸⁹ Ⲅⲁⲧⲙⲉ,¹⁹⁰ Ⲅⲁⲗ are both described as a vessel or measure.¹⁹¹ Ⲅⲟⲡⲉ seems to be a small vessel.¹⁹² Ⲅⲁⲡ or Ⲅⲁⲡ has been defined as a receptacle or measure for corn and honey.¹⁹³

In other cases, the meaning of the jars is not entirely clear. The word Ⲅⲁⲙⲧⲉ or ⲙⲛⲤⲉ, for example, was defined by Crum as a pail or bucket in the dictionary but he has defined it as a vessel holding oil, dates, or grapes elsewhere.¹⁹⁴ Other containers are attested in the papyri such as a water bottle (ⲙⲁⲗⲕⲟⲩ),¹⁹⁵ bottle or tube (ⲡⲟⲛⲕⲟ),¹⁹⁶ and ampoule (ⲁⲙⲡⲟⲩⲗⲉ). This latter term appears twice in the correspondence of Frange who in one case asks that he be sent a large ampoule

180 *P.Brux.Bawit* 9, 13.

181 Crum, *A Coptic* 825b. This term is found primarily in literary texts, but it also appears in *P.Ryl.Copt.* 397. In note 10 to this text Crum suggests that it is perhaps the Coptic equivalent of the Greek word *αγάπη* but he seems to have abandoned this idea by the time he wrote the dictionary.

182 Crum, *A Coptic* 802a. In *ΒΚΥ* 1 21 it holds boiling water.

183 Crum, *A Coptic* 82a. He suggests it is either a measure or vessel for oil.

184 Crum, *A Coptic* 102a

185 Crum, *A Coptic* 378b.

186 Crum, *A Coptic* 603a.

187 Crum, *A Coptic* 672b.

188 Crum, *A Coptic* 752a. This jar appears in list from Jeme/Medinet Habu where it was translated as a bronze vessel (*O.Medin.HabuCopt.* 27).

189 Crum, *A Coptic* 186b. See also *O.Crum* 216 (Cairo 8215). He translates it as a "small basket of olives" here. The dictionary entry does not explain why he changed his mind.

190 Crum, *A Coptic* 724a.

191 Crum, *A Coptic* 742b–743a.

192 Crum, *A Coptic* 825b.

193 Crum, *A Coptic* 113b; Crum commentary *P.Mon.Epiph.* 536, no. 2.

194 Crum, *A Coptic* 110b; Crum commentary *P.Mon.Epiph.* 551 n.

195 Crum, *A Coptic* 38a.

196 Crum, *A Coptic* 266a.

of fish sauce.¹⁹⁷ There are also words for which the meaning remains unknown such as BHB , which appears in lists of vessels¹⁹⁸ and $\text{K}\text{H}\text{N}\text{E}$.¹⁹⁹

The different products packed in these jars include wine, vinegar, honey, salted fish, *garum*, pickles, meat, salted preserves, herbs, olives, and cheese.²⁰⁰ The types of objects, and the foodstuffs they contain, that appear in the Coptic texts are similar to those attested in the Arabic papyri, but they are encountered more frequently and in more variety in the Coptic texts. It is not always clear from the papyrological evidence what type of material the vessels are made of. Sometimes the material is stated, namely pottery or metal,²⁰¹ but in other cases, this is not clear at all. In the case of the word $\text{G}\text{A}\text{L}\text{A}\text{Z}\text{T}$, for example, which Crum defines as a pot,²⁰² the type of material is not specified. In the Frange letters published by Boud'hors and Heurtel, the word appears three times but only in one instance is it clear that a blacksmith is involved, leading the editors to suggest that it is a pot or cooking pot made from copper rather than a ceramic jar.²⁰³

As has been observed above, there have been few attempts to find archaeological correlates for the Coptic jar names. There is a large variety of different vessels attested in the texts and an equally large variety of objects attested in the archaeological record. The large numbers of terms in Coptic and a certain amount of uncertainty makes it necessary to examine these terms in considerable detail to try to determine whether certain objects are jars or measures, how they might be used and in what context. Moreover, many of the sites where a large number of texts have been recovered and studied have not been published archaeologically.²⁰⁴

The site of TT29, however, provides considerable information about pottery production and consumption, both from an archaeological and textual point of view. At the site, archaeologists have discovered the voluminous correspon-

197 *O.Frangé* 53.15 (commentary Boud'hors and Heurtel, *Les ostraca* 71–72); O.Bale inv. Lg Ae B J F 31c (commentary Boud'hors, *Pièces* 105–106).

198 Crum, *A Coptic* 28b.

199 Crum, *A Coptic* 112a.

200 Kruit and Worp, *Geographical* 138; Worp 2004, 558.

201 See, for example, *O. Medin.HabuCopt.* 27.1 and 7, which notes that the jar $\text{G}\text{O}\text{H}\text{X}\text{O}\text{Y}$ is made of bronze. This term is not attested in Crum (Crum, *A Coptic* 113a, 184a; Alcock, *Coptic terms* 2). See also Stefanski and Lichtheim, commentary on *O.Medin.HabuCopt.* 5 no. 7; Crum commentary on *P.Mon.Epiph.* 549.

202 Crum, *A Coptic* 813b–814a.

203 *O.Frangé* 79.10–11 and commentary.

204 Bavay, *Les amorphes* 391.

dence of the anchorite Frange, as well as large amounts of pottery from the same context.²⁰⁵ This combined evidence provides information about what the anchorite ate and insights about the operations of exchange and transport which were conducted in order to keep him provisioned. The pottery dates to the first part of the eighth century and is very homogeneous which has led to the suggestion that the material might have belonged to the anchorite and those who lived around him. The pottery consists of LRA7 from Ashmūnayn (a type that also occurs frequently at the Monastery of Epiphanius), pottery that has similarities to jars found at Elephantine and Tod, amphorae from Aswan and local imitations of Aswan amphorae made in middle Egypt which are found frequently in the Theban area.²⁰⁶ But it is difficult to know which of the jar names used in Frange's correspondence can be connected to the amphorae found archaeologically. Once the ceramics from the site have been published, it will be interesting to make a detailed analysis of both the texts and the pottery.

Conclusion

A wide variety of different types of jars have been found at sites all over Egypt. Similarly, the Coptic, Greek and Arabic papyrological material contains numerous references to jars and containers. The difficulty is trying to understand how the archaeology and the papyri can be connected. The Arabic evidence remains small and there are not enough names known from the papyri to match the variety of archaeological attested material. Moreover, like the Greek and Coptic textual material the Arabic papyri lack exactitude and details in the descriptions needed for exact matching. This leads to a certain amount of confusion. It also means that it is difficult to make exact correlates. The appearance of new papyrological terms, especially from newly published Arabic material, has made it clear that there are doubtlessly many more attestations of jars in the papyri that are waiting to be published. The ethnographic evidence shows not only that there is a wide variety of different names for jars, but also how the names of jars have evolved through time and changed their meaning. The fact that there are different sizes of jars and that different types of materials are used for jars that carry the same name, suggests that the same term is applied to different types of vessels, something which also exists concerning the ethnographic terms.

205 *O.Frangé* 21.

206 Bavay, *Les amphores* 390–391, 394–397.

The Coptic documentary papyri provide a far more complete picture of the large number of jar names that exists although more work is needed before a clear picture emerges. The information available so far does indicate that many jars seem to have had their own specific names. Finally, the papyrological evidence provides a good corrective to the archaeological record. There is often the tendency in archaeology to assume that storage jars found on sites would have always contained wine. The large variety of commodities attested in the papyri shows that this need not be the case and that the picture is far more complex. Indeed, the attempts to correlate papyri and archaeology in general show that although we are sometimes limited by what has been published, this unique material is still the best way to help us to understand consumption patterns better in early Islamic Egypt.

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A Qurānic Amulet on Papyrus: P.Utah.Ar. 342

W. Matt Malczycki

Introduction

Qurānic texts on papyrus are fairly rare: the late Sergio Noja Nosedā found only seven published fragments of the Qurān on papyrus.¹ He could have added the *P.Bad.* v 143 through *P.Bad.* v 153 and the unpublished P.Duke.inv.274 to this total.² With the possible exceptions of P.Michael. inv. 23 and P.Nosedā.Koranic, all of these texts were amulets. P.Utah.Ar. 342 is similar to these other papyri. It contains all of Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ (Q 112) and Sūrat al-Falaq (Q 113), most of Sūrat al-Nās (Q 114), and the first thirteen verses of Sūrat Yā' Sīn (Q 36). The four *sūras* are parts of prayers and rituals for the sick, dying, and dead. According to *ḥadīth* literature, as the prophet Muḥammad lay dying he uttered Sūrat al-ikhlāṣ and Sūrat al-falaq (also called al-ma'ūdḥātayn).³ Also according to *ḥadīth* literature, *sūra* Yā'-Sīn is one of the *sūras* one should recite over the dying and dead. In addition to the Fātiḥa (Q 1) and Sūrat al-Mulk (Q 67), Sūrat Yā' Sīn, Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ, Sūrat al-Falaq, and Sūrat al-Nās are among the most commonly recited *sūras* in times of sickness, dying, death, and burial.⁴ They are also among those that appear most frequently in Qurānic papyrus amulets.⁵

1 Nosedā, A third 316.

2 A digital image of P.Duke.inv.274 is available at Duke University's website: <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/papyrus/records/274.html>.

3 For the *ḥadīth* that al-Bukhārī relates in reference to the last three *sūras* of the Qurān, see al-'Asqalānī, *Faḥḥ al-bārī* 74–79. In other editions of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, one can find these *ḥadīths* in the chapters about the moral excellence of the Qurān (*faḍā'il al-qurān*).

4 Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah relate *ḥadīths* that say that Sūrat Yā' Sīn was appropriate for prayers for the dying and in funerals. In most editions of *ḥadīth* collections, one can find these *ḥadīths* under the chapters relating to funerals (*al-janā'iz*) (Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* vol. 5 pt. 2, 543; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, 7:212). Al-Tirmidhī describes Sūrat Yā'-Sīn as “the heart of the Qurān” (al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfat* 196–198). This passage is in the chapter entitled “*Faḍā'il al-qurān*” in most editions of al-Tirmidhī's *Jāmi'*. These are only a few of the references to the *sūras* in question that one can find in the *ḥadīth* literature.

5 *P.Bad.* v 147 contains the first lines of Sūrat Yā' Sīn. *P.Bad.* v 145, 151, and 153 contain part or all of Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ. *P. Bad.* v 143 contains each of the last three *sūras*. P.Duke.inv.274 contains Sūrat al-Falaq and Sūrat al-Nās.

P.Utah.Ar. 342 (21.2 × 32.5 cm)

This is a good quality brown papyrus with a small papyrus cord in the upper middle part of the papyrus. The verso has traces of writing, but it seems that these were washed out.⁶ On the verso the four vertical folding marks are also clearly visible. There is one fold in the centre, another fold mark 2.12 cm to the right of centre, another fold mark 2.9 cm to the left of centre, another fold mark 5.9 cm left of centre, and another fold mark 9.8 cm left of centre.

The recto contains separate texts on the right and left sides of the centre fold. The margin between the right and left sides of the text ranges from 2.5 to 3.5 cm. The text runs parallel to the fibres. The ink is black and the strokes are thicker than normal for a papyrus-era text. The right side of the recto contains all of *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* and *Sūrat al-Falaq*. It also contains *Sūrat al-Nās* albeit with some omissions—the scribe omits the second verse (*malik al-nās*), the third verse (*ilāh al-nās*), and the word *al-nās* from the fifth verse. There is an intermittent vertical lacuna on the right side that ranges between 0.3 and 1 cm wide and runs through the text beginning between 4 and 4.5 cm from the right margin.

The left side of the recto contains most of the first thirteen verses of *Sūrat Yā' Sīn*. The left side text contains many more lacunae than the right side, including a large one (6 × 6.5 cm) in the centre that would have contained most of lines 7–11. Lines 11–12 are badly damaged, but enough text remains to offer a reconstruction. Lines 13–16 are all but obliterated, so the edition that follows is based on the amount of text that the scribe could most probably have fit on the remainder of the page. It seems that the scribe made an effort to imitate an angular script in the first few lines, but overall the script is more curved than angular. There are no consonantal diacritical marks, and there are also no symbols to separate the verses.

In the Arabic edition that follows, I have attempted to be as faithful to the original papyrus text as possible. To that end, I have not added consonantal diacritical marks, *tanwīn*, *hamza*, or any other letters or pronunciation signs except when filling in lacunae and adding scribal omissions. I have added the missing verses and words in angular brackets, but I have not corrected the scribe's use of the plural where, according to the canonical edition of the Quran, he should have used the singular. The word Allāh is spelled with *shadda* and *alif qaṣīra*.

6 Lola Atiya's inventory says that the recto is blank and that text is on the verso. She also says that two scribes were at work. A closer analysis reveals that this was not the case (Atiya, *University* 32).

The English translation that follows is an adaptation of the pertinent passages of Arberry's *The Koran Interpreted*.⁷ The chapter and verse numbers from the canonical version of the Quran appear in double parentheses. In cases in which the scribe broke words between two lines, the English equivalents are also broken in the translation. One is forced to admit that the bracketing of the portions of English words is arbitrary, but there seems to be no other way to be true to the text. The rest of the punctuation marks are standard papyrological symbols.

Translation: Right Side

- 1 ((Q 112)) In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate
 2 ((1)) Say: 'He is God, One, ((2)) God the Everlasting Refuge, ((3)) who has
 not
 3 [be]gotten, and has not been begotten ((4)) and equal to him is not
 4 anyone.'
 5 ((Q 113)) In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate
 6 ((1)) S[ay:] 'I take refuge with the Lo[rd] of the [Day]break ((2)) from the
 evil of what He has created,
 7 ((3)) from the evil of darkness when it gathers,
 8 ((4)) and from the evil of women who blow on knots
 9 ((5)) and from] the ev[il] of an envier when he envies.'
 10 ((Q 114)) In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate
 11 ((1)) Say: 'I take refuge with the Lord of men ((2)) the King of men, ((3))
 the God of men,) ((4)) from the evil of the whisperer,
 12 the withdrawer,⁸ ((5)) who whispers in the brea-
 13 sts ⟨of men⟩ of *jinn* and me-
 14 -n
 15 ((Q 36)) In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

7 Arberry, *The Koran* 353–354.

8 Here I have diverged from Arberry and translated al-Khanās as “the withdrawer.” *Al-Khanās* refers, of course, to the Devil, who withdraws at the mention of God.

Translation: Left Side

- 1 ((1)) Yā' Sīn ((2)) By the Wise Quran ((3)) thou art truly among the Envoys
 2 ((4)) on] a straight path ((5)) the sending down of the All-mighty,
 3 the All-]wise ((6)) that thou mayest warn a people whose fathers
 4 [were] never warned, so they are heedless. ((7)) The Word has been
 realised against
 5 [most] of them, yet they do not believe. ((8)) Surely We have put
 6 [on] their necks fetters up to the chin,
 7 [so their] heads are rais[ed; ((9)) and We have put] before them
 8 [a bar]rier and [behind them a barrier;] and We have covered them up,
 9 so they [do not see. ((10)) Alike it is] to them
 10 [whether thou hast warned] them [or thou hast not warned them, they
 do not bel]ieve. ((11)) Thou only
 11 warnest him who [follows the Remembrance and] who fears the A[ll]-
 merciful
 12 [in the Unseen;] so give them⁹ good tidings of forgive[ness and a gener-
 13 ous wage. ((12)) Surely it is We who [bring the dead to life
 14 [and write down what they have forwarded and what they have left
 behind; Every-]
 15 [thing We have numbered in a clear register.]
 16 (((13))) Strike for them a similitude—the inhabitants of the city ...]

The Text: Right Side

اسم الله الرحمن الرحيم	١
فل هو الله احد الله الصمد لم	٢
يولد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا	٣
احد	٤
اسم الله الرحمن الرحيم	٥
ف[ل] اعود ر[ب] ال[ف]ل[و] من سر حلو	٦
و من سر ع[ا]سق ادا وف	٧

9 Arberry's translation reads "him" instead of "them." Arberry, *The Koran* 144. However, as will be explained below, the papyrus uses the plural rather than the singular.

- ٨ و من [س-]ر] العصاب
 ٩ في العصد و من سر حاسد اذا حسد
 ١٠ اسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
 ١١ قل اعود رب الناس (ملك الناس اله الناس) من الوسواس
 ١٢ الخناس الذي يوسوس في صد
 ١٣ ور (الناس) من الخسه و النا
 ١٤ س
 ١٥ اسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

The Text: Left Side

- ١ س و العران الحكيم اك لمن المرسلين
 ٢ [على] صراط مسسقم بربل العرير
 ٣ [الرح-]م لسدر فوما ما اندر) اناهم
 ٤ [ف-]هم عافلون لقد حق القول على
 ٥ اكثر]هم ف-]هم لا [بومون انا جعلنا
 ٦ [في ا]عافهم اعلال فهي الى الادفان
 ٧ [فهم] مغمحمون و جعلنا] من س اند]يهم
 ٨ [س-]دا و [من خلفهم سد] افاع-]شنيهم
 ٩ فهم] لا يبصرون و سواء] علمهم ا
 ١٠ [نذرت-]هم [ام لم تنذرهم لا يؤم-]سون [انما
 ١١ [تنذر] من [اتبع الذكر و] حسي [ا]لرحمن
 ١٢ [بالغيب] فسرهم معمر]ة و اجر كر
 ١٣ سم انا نحن نح-]ي [ال-]موتى]
 ١٤ [و نكتب ما قدموا اوء اثرهم و كل]
 ١٥ [شئ احصينه في امام مبين]
 ١٦ [و اضطرب لهم مثلاً اصحب القرية اذ]

Notes: Right Side

1. The scribe attempted to imitate the Kufic script, and there are some paleographic features of the script that are more typical of early texts than later ones.¹⁰ There are, for example, incomplete final upward strokes of the *nūn* (right side lines 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, and 13; left side lines 1, 4, 5, and 11), horizontally elongated oblique strokes of the *kāf* and *šād* (right side lines 2 and 3), and hooked *dāls* (right side lines 2 and 3).

The horizontal extension of the letter *ḥā'* in *al-rahmān* (the Merciful) is an example of *mashq*, the technique in which scribes lengthen words horizontally to fill lines for aesthetic effect.¹¹

The downward horizontal curved *nūn* that is extended without being completely returned to the horizontal axis of the line is typical of Arabic handwriting from the first through the third Islamic centuries.¹²

2. The horizontal extension of the oblique stroke of the final *dāl* and the small upward right hook of this stroke in the words *aḥad* (one) and *al-šamad* (the everlasting refuge) are typical of second/eighth-century scripts.¹³ The horizontal extension of the letter *šād* in the word *al-šamad* also is common in the Kufic scripts of all eras. The angularity of the script in these first two lines gives the impression that the scribe was trying to execute and perform the Kufic script in the first few lines.

3. The horizontal extension of the oblique stroke of the letter *kāf* and the upward right hook of this stroke in the words *yakun* and *kufiwan* is typical of second/eighth-century penmanship.¹⁴ The scribe uses *alif* to indicate the

10 The script of P.Utah. Ar. 342 resembles what François Déroche describes as “the New Style” in his *The Abbasid Tradition: Qurans of the 8th to 10th Centuries*. Here Déroche argues that the traditional categories of *kūfī* and *naskhī* are not totally accurate, and, accordingly, he introduces a new category, “the New Style.” The New Style is more round than *kūfī* scripts but not as round as *naskhī* scripts. Déroche says that the New Style first appears in non-Quranic texts datable to the third/ninth century and in Quranic manuscripts datable to the fourth/early tenth century (Déroche, *The Abbasid* 132–137).

11 For *mashq*, see Abbott, *The rise* 23–28. Al-Sijistāni relates that as early as four generations before his time, some scholars disliked the use of *mashq* in Quranic texts (al-Sijistāni, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif* 134).

12 Gruendler, *The development* 100–104.

13 P.Khalili 1, 29–32.

14 Gruendler, *The development* 88–92; P.Khalili 1, 34–37.

accusative case of the word, *kufiwan*, although there are no marks to indicate *tanwīn*. The *alif* in this word bends down to the right at the bottom, a tendency typical of early scripts.¹⁵

4. From this line forward, the script becomes more curved as the scribe abandoned his attempt to imitate Kufic. Although some of the *dāls/dhāls* have the upward hook typical of early papyri, all of them after line 4 in the right side lack this feature.¹⁶ All of the scribal tendencies from this point forward suggest a third/ninth-century date of composition.

8. In the word *al-naffāthāt*, the scribe of P.Utah. Ar. 342 writes *mater lectionis alif* after the *fā'* but not after the *thā'*. According to al-Dānī, the word *al-naffāthāt* should be spelled without *alif*, although in modern editions of the Quran, one finds *alif qasīra* in place of *mater lectionis alif*.¹⁷

9. The rightward bend of the *yā'* in *fī* is typical of all papyrus-era texts.¹⁸

11. In the canonical versions of the Quran, there are two more verses than there are here. These verses come between the words *bi-rabb al-nās* and *al-waswās*. These two verses are short (two words each), and both end with the word *al-nās*.¹⁹ Such omissions are common in Quranic papyri.

Notes: Left Side

1. Size is the main difference between the scripts of the right and left sides. In the left side of the text, the scribe writes his letters smaller, avoids *mashq* entirely, and decreases the space between lines. This reduced size of the letters is most apparent in the final forms of *sīn*, *nūn*, and *yā'*. None of the letters with the exception of the *kāf* in line 1 exhibit features common in early papyri.

15 Abbott, *The rise* plate v; *P.Khalili* I, 27–29.

16 *P.Khalili* I, 29–32.

17 al-Dānī, *Kitāb al-Muqni'* 24.

18 Gruendler, *The development* 112–116; *P.Khalili* I, 38–42.

19 Ibn Wathīq al-Andalusī (d. 462/1070) mentions that some people added words to this *sūra* and thereby lengthened it, but he does not say that there are any instances of its having been shortened (1988, 150).

2. The scribe spells *ṣirāṭ mustaqīm* with *mater lectionis alif*. According to al-Dānī (d. 462/1070), the ‘*ulamā*’ of all regions agreed that it should be written without it.²⁰

4. In the last word of the line, ‘*alā*’, one sees the omission of the *alif maqṣūra* that is typical of Arabic papyri.²¹

6. The orthography of the word *aghlāl* here is interesting. Al-Dānī says that scribes spelled *aghlālan* with *alif qaṣīra* (or no *alif* at all) in place of the *mater lectionis alif* between the *lāms*, and with *tanwīn fathā* seated on a prosthetic *alif* marking the accusative case at the end of the word. Here the scribe uses the *mater lectionis alif* between the first and second *lāms* and omits the *alif* of *tanwīn fathā*. Al-Dānī does not record this spelling of *aghlāl*.²²

12. The phrase *fa-bashshirhum* merits comment because it ends with the third person plural enclitic pronoun *-hum* whereas the now-standard version of the Quran contains the singular *-hu*. If line 11 were intact, one could examine it to find out if the scribe treated the verb *ittab‘a* the same way.

This is not a variant known from the different lists of *qirā‘āt*. Rather, scribal error explains the scribe’s use of *-hum* instead of *-hu* as well as the missing *āya*. Verse 11 of Sūrat Yā’ Sīn reads *innamā tundhiru man-ittab‘a al-dhikra wa khashiya al-rahmāna bi-l-ghaybi fa-bashshirhu bi-maghfiratin wa-‘ajrin karīmīn*. The conjunctive particle *man* is singular and indeclinable; however, it can convey a collective meaning (i.e. those, those who).²³ Perhaps the scribe assumed that he was to take *man* to mean “those who” rather than he who and then added *-hum* to *fa-bashshir-* accordingly.²⁴ That a *constructio ad sensum* lies behind this variant is an attractive thought as it appears in many other Quranic

20 al-Dānī, *Kitāb al-Muqni‘* 97.

21 Hopkins, *Studies* 57–60.

22 al-Dānī, *Kitāb al-Muqni‘* 19.

23 For a treatment of *man*, see Wright, *Grammar* 2:273.

24 Another explanation for the use of *-hum* is that the scribe made a careless mistake because of the context in which verse 10 appears. Throughout this part of Sūrat Yā’-Sīn, God is speaking to the Prophet about other groups of people: those who have heard no revelation (verse 6), those who refuse to listen to revelation (verse 7), those whom God has shut off from the light of revelation and punished (verses 8–10), and the dead (verse 13). The first person subject is always plural. The second person subject is always singular. With the exception of verse 10 all third-person subjects and objects are plural. Therefore, the third person singular that one finds in verse 10 is, in a sense, out of place.

papyrus fragments. Regardless of how one explains it, the use of the plural pronoun here does not change the meaning of the verse. It is a minor variation that is most likely due to scribal error.

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New Editions & Collections



Les papyrus arabes de Heidelberg disparus.

Essai de reconstruction et d'analyse

R.G. Khoury

I La collection de papyrus arabes de Heidelberg

La collection de papyrus arabes de Heidelberg est une des plus prestigieuses dans le monde. Non qu'elle soit une des plus importantes concernant le nombre de ses pièces, car elle est nettement inférieure à la plupart de ce que l'on trouve, surtout à Vienne, où les papyrus arabes, et ce que l'on peut rattacher à la papyrologie arabe sont plus de 50.000 pièces complètes ou fragmentaires.

Entre-temps les fonds de cette collection sont bien connus, pour avoir été décrits, en fonction de beaucoup de publications de certains de ses papyrus. Avant mes travaux concernant les manuscrits historiques rares, et les plus vieux de leur genre, que j'ai publiés au cours des années, et dès 1972¹, Richard Seider en avait livré un aperçu général en 1964 dans la collection «Heidelberger Jahrbücher.»² Notons qu'il s'agit à Heidelberg d'une riche collection, dans laquelle les papyri gréco-latins sont de loin les plus nombreux. À côté de papyrus importants en copte, nous avons des papyri arabes qui ont été acquis par l'Université de Heidelberg, pour être conservés dans sa Bibliothèque Universitaire, vers la fin du 19^e et surtout vers le début du 20^e siècle. Elle porte comme sigle les lettres PSR, c'est-à-dire Papyri Schott – Reinhardt; ce dernier était un bava­rois et avait travaillé des années comme drogman au consulat allemand au Caire, avec une formation générale d'orientaliste pour l'époque; F. Schott était un industriel, originaire de la région de Stuttgart (Göppingen) et était devenu le directeur général de la fabrique de ciment (Portland – Zementwerke, Heidelberg et Mannheim, aujourd'hui seulement Zement AG, Heidelberg), qui est devenue une des meilleures à travers le monde. Ce directeur, un riche mécène, fit don de plusieurs centaines (plus de 1000) pièces de papyrus (et de documents sur papier aussi) à l'Université. La collection resta à l'intérieur de la Bibliothèque Universitaire, jusqu'au moment où elle fut levée en 1976 au rang

1 Là-dessus, voyez Khoury, *Wahb ibn Munabbih* et Khoury, *'Abd Allāh*.

2 Seider, *Aus der Arbeit* 142 ff.

d'un Institut de ma Faculté, et cet Institut de Papyrologie a toujours été dirigé par un spécialiste des papyrus grecs, du fait que ceux-ci sont de loin les plus nombreux.

Dans la masse de ces manuscrits il s'agit de documents, de lettres et de contrats de toutes sortes, de mandats d'impôts etc. Loin de vouloir minimiser la valeur de ce genre de pièces, il faut noter que peu d'entre elles sont complètes, ou révolutionnaires dans leur contenu, du fait que nous avons des milliers de documents importants, même très importants, surtout à Vienne, dans la Bibliothèque Nationale Autrichienne (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek), et que d'autres collections à travers le monde occidental, et bien sûr dans la Bibliothèque Nationale (*Dār al-kutub*) du Caire en ont aussi. Parmi toutes ces pièces, les manuscrits sur papyrus l'emportent, numériquement.

II Quelques raretés spécialement précieuses

Quelques papyrus sont cependant d'une importance capitale et ont toujours contribué à donner à toute la collection arabe une renommée spéciale, aussi bien en Europe qu'en Orient :

II/1

Plusieurs lettres de Qurra ibn Sharīk (m. 96 / 714), gouverneur omeyyade d'Égypte, sur des questions administratives, fiscales et économiques, concernant des enquêtes, ou sur des réclamations de rapports sur des faits délictueux à cet égard. Carl Heinrich Becker était le premier à éditer cette collection de lettres, qui est la plus importante numériquement à Heidelberg, en 1906³.

Naturellement Heidelberg n'est pas le seul lieu, dans lequel sont conservées quelques autres lettres, aussi bien en Europe (Paris, Londres, Vienne) qu'en Égypte (le Caire). Notre collègue Jaser Abu Safiyya vient de donner une édition assez complète de toutes ces lettres, avec une étude générale sur le gouverneur et son activité⁴.

II/2

Deux textes historiques admirables sont à nommer, à côté de ces lettres, à l'aide desquelles on peut écrire une véritable grammaire de l'ancien arabe, en

3 *PHeid.Arab.* 1. Voyez aussi Rāgib, *Lettres nouvelles 173–187*; Sijpesteijn, *Une nouvelle*; Dietrich, *Die arabischen et Diem, Philologisches*.

4 Abū Safiyya 1425/2004.

complément des textes coraniques. Ils sont attribués à Wahb ibn Munabbih (34–110 ou 114 / 654-655-728 ou 732):

II/2.1

Ḥadīth Dāwūd – ou Histoire du roi David, la plus ancienne de son genre dans l'histoire islamique, et qui porte la date la plus vieille qu'un manuscrit arabe littéraire (dans le sens qu'il n'appartient pas au genre des documents purs) ait jamais porté dans la culture arabe: Dhū l-qa'da 229 / juillet 844. Dès mon édition de ce papyrus et de celui qui suit j'ai insisté plus d'une fois sur le fait qu'il s'agissait là d'une version, à partir d'un original, qui a été exécutée en Egypte, à Fustāt, dans la maison du juge de ce pays 'Abd Allāh ibn Lahī'a, dont il sera question plus loin, dans la présentation du troisième papyrus historico-littéraire, que j'ai publié avec les autres, dans une série de volumes entre 1972 et 1986.

On y distingue deux parties déterminées:

- a. La première concerne le règne de Saül. Il commence par la désignation de ce dernier par le prophète Samuel, à laquelle suit l'histoire de son choix, comme premier roi des Israélites. Puis viennent l'épisode sur l'arche d'alliance (al-Tābūt), le combat de David contre Goliath (Jālūt) et enfin les péripéties autour de la jalousie de Saül vis-à-vis de David, auquel il a donné sa propre fille en mariage, sans pourtant l'associer à son règne, comme il le lui avait promis. Cette partie se termine par la tentative du roi d'assassiner son rival David, par son repentir et par sa mort.
- b. La deuxième décrit le règne de David. Elle commence par des détails sur sa manière de vivre et de régner; puis viennent les descriptions de sa tentation, suivie du conte des « plaideurs »⁵, en guise d'introduction aux très belles pages sur le repentir de David, pour avoir convoité et épousé la femme de son officier 'Uriyya, après avoir envoyé ce dernier de campagne en campagne contre les ennemis jusqu'à sa mort; puis une description de la révolte de son fils Absalon contre lui et la mort de celui-ci. Le tout prend fin par les très belles pages sur Salomon et ses trois jugements: la femme convoitée par le juge, le chef de police et le responsable du marché; les deux femmes, les deux enfants et le loup, ainsi que le texte relatif à la Sourate 21, 78–79, auxquels succèdent de brefs récits, entre autres sur la construction du temple, commencée par David, ainsi que sur la mort de celui-ci.

5 Coran 38: 21ff.

II/2.2

Maghāzī rasūl allāh (terme valable aussi bien pour la vie (Sīra) que pour les véritables campagnes militaires, auxquelles il fut plus tard réservé)⁶.

A l'encontre du papyrus précédent, celui-ci ne porte ni titre, ni date, mais est de la même écriture et appartient, sans doute à la même époque, de laquelle sont certains transmetteurs de tous ces écrits, qui avaient affaire, en Egypte, avec la maison du juge Ibn Lahī'a, dont il sera tout de suite question. Il comprend les événements suivants de la vie et des campagnes du Prophète Mahomet :

- La rencontre d' *al-Aqaba*.
- Le conseil des qurayshites à *Dār al-nadwa* (Maison du conseil).
- L'émigration de la Mecque à Médine (*Hijra*).
- La campagne de 'Alī contre la tribu Khath'am et la conversion de celle – ci à l' Islam.

Pour toutes les questions concernant ces textes, leur auteur, ou premier transmetteur, ainsi que leur attribution à lui, c'est-à-dire à Wahb Ibn Munabbih, voyez là-dessus mon livre sur lui⁷.

II/3

Un dernier texte littéraire est enfin le fameux rouleau de papyrus (*ṣahīfa*) attribué à 'Abd Allāh Ibn Lahī'a (97–174 / 715–790). Celui-ci était devenu d'abord juge d' Egypte, et puis sa grande autorité, qui avait dans sa maison une bibliothèque, dans laquelle il rassemblait, ou copiait ou laissait copier des originaux ou des copies d' originaux, de sorte que cette bibliothèque fut à l' origine non seulement des manuscrits sur papyrus, décrits ici, mais aussi d' autres qui ont été découverts avec eux et qui formaient des documents de toutes sortes ; sans que l' on puisse dire toujours de quels documents exactement il est question, car ils ne portent pas de signes attestant leur provenance, ou la place de leur conservation. Mais du fait que sa bibliothèque était devenue centrale pour l' Egypte de son temps, et aussi pour tous ceux d' entre les savants qui la visitaient, il est évident qu' elle a dû contenir un nombre importants d' autres manuscrits, parmi ses *uṣūl* et *furu'*, dont il est toujours question. Depuis mon livre sur lui, et l' édition de son rouleau, on ne peut plus en douter, d' autant plus

6 Voyez M. Hinds, 'al-Maghāzī,' *Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, 5:1161.

7 Khoury, *Wahb ibn Munabbih* 9 ff.; 34 ff. (*ḥadīth Dāwūd*) ; 118 ff. (*Maghāzī*), comme auteur de ces papyrus, 183 ff.

que plusieurs de mes travaux qui ont suivi, depuis 1986, ne font que corroborer ces données sur lui⁸.

Ce côté-là est important, pour expliquer la provenance et le lieu de conservation de beaucoup de documents arabes sur papyrus surtout, qui nous sont venus des trois premiers siècles, et qui ont dû avoir comme possesseur, quand on peut les dater, exactement ou approximativement, quand ils ne le sont pas du tout, ou Ibn Lahī'a ou quelqu'un qui a travaillé sous son autorité, copié et transmis des manuscrits, sous sa dictée, enseigné comme maître à son tour et donné le droit de copier, de transmettre et d'enseigner⁹. C'était le plan de Becker lui-même qui prévoyait la publication des papyrus d'Ibn Munabbih et d'Ibn Lahī'a, malheureusement rien n'en a été; et ce que Gertrud Mélamède a essayé de donner s'est limité aux deux premiers feuillets des *Maghāzī* de Wahb, desquels elle a carrément laissé tomber toute la première page (sauf l'*isnād* de deux lignes), de la deuxième page manquent cinq lignes, et de la quatrième manquent quatre lignes vers la fin; de plus elle a laissé beaucoup de lacunes etc¹⁰. Parmi les documents, en dehors de ces textes, dits historiques et littéraires, il y a un certain nombre d'autres pièces, qui ont été publiées par quelques spécialistes, dont je nommerai quelques-uns, à cause de leur importance scientifique (et aussi numérique):

III Les documents médicaux

Plusieurs papyrus ont en effet un contenu médical, et Becker, ayant quitté Heidelberg pour Hambourg, encouragea E. Seidel à se vouer à la publication de

8 Sur lui, v. Khoury, *ʿAbd Allāh* vie et œuvre, 7 ff.; sur sa maison et sa bibliothèque, 27 ff.; édition, 243 ff., 31–32 où ce passage avait été déjà présenté et traduit par moi, pour la première fois; je l'ai repris plusieurs fois plus tard dans une série de différents articles, dont le dernier est le suivant: L'apport spécialement important de la papyrologie dans la transmission et la codification des plus anciennes versions des Mille et Une Nuits et d'autres livres des deux premiers siècles islamiques, in: Sijpesteijn et Sundelin, *Papyrology* 70 ff. (l'article: 63–95). De plus, al-Jābirī, *Takwīn* 61 ff., ce livre ne m'était pas à cette époque disponible; j'en ai pris connaissance à travers la critique adressée à lui par Georges Tarābīshī, *Ishkāliyyāt* 11 ff.

9 Concernant ces «Certificats», délivrés à la fin de véritables séances, et appelés *Ijāzāt samāʿ*, ou «Certificats d'audition et de transmission», qui ont pris place tôt dans la culture de l'Islam classique, voyez Vajda, *Les certificats*; Sellheim, *Gelehrte* 54–79; Mackay, *Certificates* 197; Khoury, *Asad ibn Mūsā* 91–108, il s'agit là de 28 certificats.

10 Là-dessus, Khoury, *Wahb ibn Munabbī* 4–5; Mélamède, *The meetings* 17–58.

ces documents ; celui-ci suivit le conseil et les livra en quatre parties à Becker pour sa revue *Der Islam*, que celui – ci venait de fonder en 1910 :

« Medizinisches aus der Heidelberger Papyri Schott-Reinhardt », I. Teil: *Der Islam*, 1 (1910) : 145–152. II. Teil: *Der Islam*, 1 (1910) : 238–268. III. Teil: *Der Islam*, 2 (1911) : 220–230. IV. Teil: *Der Islam*, 3 (1912) : 273–291.

IV Le reste des documents travaillés

Puis 12 ans passèrent, jusqu'à ce que Grohmann publia 11 textes de protocoles, et 10 ans après suivirent 11 textes de magie, travaillés par Grohmann, Bilabel et Graf¹¹. Voilà quelques spécimens, auxquels il faut ajouter quelques textes, surtout des lettres importantes que K. Jahn édita peu après¹² et un document intéressant, contenant un achat de drogues, qui fut publié par A. Dietrich¹³. Le reste est plus proche de nous, et il s'agit de quelques autres documents ou lettres parus dans différentes publications dans ma *Chrestomathie* ou dans certains travaux de W. Diem, sur lesquels je ne m'attarde pas ici.

V Les papyrus disparus de la collection

Entre-temps plusieurs membres d'universités surtout arabes ont passé par Heidelberg, ont essayé de classer, d'inventorier les documents que la collection possède ; et l'on attend des jeunes qui s'occupent de la publication du reste non sérieusement touché. Dans mes recherches sur tous les documents de toutes sortes que Grohmann avait prévu de publier dans sa *Chrestomathie*, qui a vu le jour, entièrement revue corrigée et élargie par moi-même dans deux volumes¹⁴, je suis tombé sur un certain nombre de papyrus, inventoriés par Grohmann et qu'il voulait publier, mais dont il n'a laissé que quelques notices et dont les originaux ont tout à fait disparu dans la collection de Heidelberg. Toutes mes longues recherches n'ont abouti jusqu'à maintenant à rien. Et pourtant les pièces de toute la collection étaient bien gardées, à l'intérieur de la Bibliothèque Universitaire, où elles sont restées jusqu'à la fondation de l'Institut de Papyrologie et de sa séparation des locaux bibliothécaires en 1976.

11 Khoury, *Wahb ibn Munabbih* 4 et Bibliographie.

12 Jahn, *Vom frühislamischen* 153–200.

13 Dietrich, *Zum Drogenhandel*.

14 *Chrest.Khoury* I et II.

Peut-être que ces textes ont été déplacés, pour tomber dans la main d'un spécialiste, qui les garda à l'intérieur de sa propre bibliothèque, ou pour finir dans des caisses étrangères et ainsi appartenir à une autre institution ou tout simplement trouver leur fin dans un incendie ou une destruction quelconque. On ne peut le dire!

De quoi s'agit-il dans ces pièces qui comptent 159 pièces? Il est bon de donner quelques notions, au moins générales, pour ouvrir les yeux sur des pertes possibles, à l'intérieur de chaque collection à travers le monde, et ainsi avoir des éléments de compléments heureux:

v/1

D'abord nous avons d'eux des numéros d'inventaires. Ces numéros commencent assez bas, par le chiffre 63, pour aller de centaine en centaine et arriver jusqu'à 1451. Ils ne sont pas consécutifs, mais ont dû être pris de leurs anciens numéros, pour être travaillés, sans qu'ils aient appartenu à un même fond suivi, comme c'est le cas, assez souvent, au moins au début du classement de ces documents, après leur acquisition et les premiers essais de les rendre accessibles aux chercheurs.

Grohmann, qui semble avoir voulu les travailler, pour les publier, ne mentionne cependant pas toujours sur quel matériel chaque document a été écrit, et donc trouvé par lui dans la collection. Quelques fois il le mentionne, ce qui fait qu'il a dû disposer de certaines pièces de manière sûre; alors que concernant d'autres, presque la majorité, il n'y a aucune mention à ce sujet; ce qui laisse penser que les documents ont dû lui échapper, avant qu'il n'ait pu terminer son travail de description assez générale, sans avoir pu retenir des indications précises sur la plupart de ces textes. Quant au sigle général de PSR, employé par lui, il ne peut pas jeter de la lumière sur ce côté, car tous les textes de la collection portent cette étiquette, qui concernait et concerne toutes les pièces de toutes sortes, qui forment partie de la collection de Heidelberg dans l'ensemble. Donc là où le matériel porte une marque spéciale de Grohmann, comme « papyrus fin » ou « moyennement fin » etc., on peut conclure avec certitude qu'il s'agissait d'un texte sur papyrus; mais ces notations sont malheureusement très rares.

Les 159 textes n'étaient pas tous complets, mais certains, assez nombreux, étaient endommagés, à très endommagés:

Comme PSR 151v., qui forme une lettre d'affaires, avec la mention « sehr beschädigt » (très endommagé), alors que le recto de cette lettre est formée de 9 lignes, dont les deux premières sont vides, et que de 5 à 9 sont plus remplies. De même 181r, un contrat de bail (Pachtvertrag) de 11 lignes, avec des lacunes, du III^e siècle, portant la date de 269 H. Un autre contrat de bail, PSR 69, de 12

lignes, offre aussi des lacunes, mais est du III^e siècle, de même PSR 259, de 13 lignes, aussi avec des lacunes, de même PSR 259r, de 13 lignes.

D'autres étaient restés en bon état (*gut erhalten*), comme un contrat de mariage (répudiation / *Trennung*), formant 14 lignes. Ce contrat aurait été bien pour mon ancien élève Abdulbary, qui a publié une thèse de doctorat sur des contrats de mariage sur papyrus, avec une grande introduction sur la diplomatie, ou l'étude structurelle et idéale des contrats au cours des premiers siècles en Egypte¹⁵. Un contrat de bail, qui est bien conservé en 16 lignes, est même daté de 209; quel dommage! Un autre PSR 1520 n'a que 8 lignes, sans autre indication.

Dans l'ensemble on a un certain nombre de contrats de bail qui étaient en bon état: ainsi PSR 63, avec un calcul du montant du bail et des dépenses, avec des données concernant les mesures du papyrus (décrit comme fin): 16.5×12.4 ; puis PSR 251, de 14 lignes, PSR 428, de 11 lignes. D'un autre PSR 116, de 9 lignes, il s'agirait vraisemblablement aussi d'un contrat de bail, qui serait, selon les indications des Grohmann, daté de 266 H.

Un grand nombre d'entre ces papyrus perdus (?) sont des listes d'impôts, sur lesquelles Faleh Hussein a aussi travaillé il y a vingt cinq ans, dans son doctorat sous ma direction¹⁶:

Impôt capital (*Kopfsteuer / jizya*): PSR 1225, de 4 lignes. PSR 235v, avec une liste d'impôts de 12 lignes, sur un papyrus brun ouvert et moyennement fin, et aussi ses mesures que Grohmann a pu encore vérifier: 33.5×17 . PSR 431v, avec un calcul des impôts, de 5 lignes. PSR 511r des impôts de 9 lignes, et plus important PSR 531r, de même sur 30 lignes, ainsi que PSR 539 de 18 lignes, et du III^e siècle.

Quelques listes de calculs (d'impôts) vont de même très haut dans le nombre de leurs lignes, ainsi: PSR 546r, de 24 lignes, du III^e siècle aussi, PSR 546v (?) une liste de calculs de céréales, sur 29 lignes. D'autres nombreuses quittances de plusieurs lignes, comme PSR 615r, 16 lignes; PSR 618, 13 lignes, du III^e siècle; PSR 622, 8 lignes, aussi du III^e siècle, ainsi du même siècle, PSR 627, 12 lignes. Des listes de calcul d'impôts (vraisemblablement) sont assez nombreuses, comme PSR 1151, de 14 lignes, PSR 1157r, 10 lignes, PSR 1159 de 11 lignes.

Il est toujours très regrettable d'être confronté à des données pareilles, sans avoir la possibilité de voir un original, ou une copie de lui, pour pouvoir travailler, publier ou au moins dire quelque chose de plus sur le contenu et les modalités de la conclusion du contrat, ou au moins sur quelques détails

15 al-Mudarris 2009.

16 Hussein, *Papyrologische* 19–254 / 639–868.

importants de cette conclusion. On voit dans l'ensemble qu'il s'agit là-dedans des données suivantes, que ces papyrus ont voulu attester par écrit :

- Des contrats de bail, dont plusieurs étaient assez complets, d'autres avec des lacunes, et même parfois avec certaines lignes vides, parce que non employées.
- Des listes d'impôts, très nombreuses, avec des pièces plus complètes, d'autres moins complètes, et d'autres avec de grosses lacunes.
- Des listes de calcul de toutes sortes, et pas seulement concernant des problèmes de taxation.
- Des listes de dépenses.
- Une liste d'ustensiles ménagers.
- Une liste de marchandises avec leurs prix.
- Une liste de biens.
- Des quittances de toutes sortes.
- Des listes de noms (affaires, impôts ?).
- Un papyrus même concerne la vente d'une maison (PSR 1451, de 27 lignes), un autre l'achat d'une maison (PSR 190 plus 191, 33 lignes / 12 plus 21, de 270 H.).
- Et certaines lettres privées, avec règlements de certaines affaires.
- Même un contrat de mariage, bien conservé, PSR 209, 14 lignes, qu'on a vu plus haut.

Dans cette collection il y a une omoplate d'une chèvre, publiée (PSR 1204, 8×17,5, du 1^{er} / 11^e siècle H. Le texte a été publié par Becker)¹⁷. De même une lettre à un gouverneur, PSR 594r, de 9 lignes, avec des lacunes. Deux textes de protocoles, PSR 433r, 11 lignes, et 433v de 10 lignes, déjà publiés par Grohmann, dans ses textes de protocoles¹⁸.

Voilà un aperçu général de ces textes sur papyrus de la collection de Heidelberg. Je l'ai donné ici, en vue d'informer un public, intéressé à la papyrologie arabe surtout, et pour attirer l'attention sur d'autres textes possibles, qui pourraient avoir une relation quelconque avec de telles données. Il y a eu quelques papyrus anciens, qui seraient un complément à des pièces plus nombreuses de Heidelberg, qui ont fini par se retrouver en Amérique, dans la collection de

17 Dans *P.Heid.Arab.* I 7. Y. Rāḡib en a publié deux lettres aussi, voyez plus haut, note 3, et W. Diem des remarques sur les publications en général *Philologisches*, 251–275; le même, *Der Gouverneur* 104–111.

18 *CPR* III/1 et aussi dans *Chrest.Khoury* I.

Chicago : ainsi un début de papyrus sur la création du monde, qui rappelle le genre de récits attribués à Wahb Ibn Munabbih, comme le livre de *Bad' al-khalq wa-qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, d'Abū Rifā'a 'Umāra Ibn Wathīma Ibn Mūsā al-Fārisī, que j'ai publiés en 1978¹⁹, et qui remontent à Wahb en premier lieu ; l'un d'eux a été publié par Nabia Abbott dans ses « Studies »²⁰.

Pour le reste je n'ai pas besoin de répéter qu'il faut à tout prix faire connaître tout ce qui n'est pas connu de chaque collection papyrologique, car il y a toujours des textes qui viennent des mêmes fouilles, des mêmes lieux, et qui offrent des ressemblances étonnantes, qu'on peut faire connaître, à la lumière d'autres qui sont connus, publiés et donc devenus accessibles. Ceci pourrait aider à replacer ce qui a été perdu, à sa juste place, et peut-être lui trouver un complément adéquat. De plus travailler des papyrus, n'est pas une affaire simple à accomplir ; et il faut être prudent, honnête, et savoir jusqu'où vont ses propres compétences, afin de savoir rendre le service attendu, et aider par là la science concernant les époques islamiques anciennes à donner un bon rendement, et non une idée faussée de la réalité historique, linguistique et sociale de ce passé, malheureusement toujours difficile à cerner, à analyser de manière entièrement satisfaisante. De bonnes publications papyrologiques seraient le meilleur moyen d'arriver à des résultats plus réels et donc plus positifs.

Il faut insister, pour terminer, sur le fait que les spécialistes doivent s'entraider, s'épauler, pour arriver au meilleur résultat possible, pour le bien de notre recherche scientifique et l'intérêt des pays en question : les documents sur papyrus, en effet, ne mentent pas et ne faussent donc pas la réalité historique, que d'autres textes ne reproduisent pas toujours avec fidélité. Là – dessus le travail de Abdelbary al-Mudarris est particulièrement intéressant, surtout concernant le rôle positif joué par la femme musulmane dans les documents de mariage, sur lequel il faut attirer l'attention, de manière spéciale aujourd'hui²¹. De plus Y. Rāgib a publié une étude générale sur les « Actes de vente d'esclaves et d'animaux d'Egypte médiévale », comme suite à son premier volume sur ce sujet²² : Là – dedans il analyse systématiquement les « caractères externes » et « internes » de ces actes, y compris l'objet, les questions de prix et des autres modalités touchant toute sorte de clauses et de témoignages. Ces données bibliographiques n'ont par ailleurs aucune pré-

19 Khoury, *Les légendes*.

20 Abbott, *Studies*.

21 al-Mudarris, *Papyrologische*.

22 Rāgib, *Actes de vente 1 et 2*.

tention d'être exhaustives. Des renseignements beaucoup plus complets sont amplement amenés dans le Arabic Papyrology Database²³.

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Two New Arabic Editions: A Land Survey from Ihnās and Ḥadīths Concerning Funerary Practice

Alia Hanafi

This article provides editions of two unrelated documents, one paper, the other papyrus, which were never studied previously. The first text is in fact a small codex consisting of two folded sheets of paper resulting in eight pages of text. It records the land holdings in the estate (*day'a*) of Drinja in the pagarchy Ihnās as measured in the survey of the year 383/993–994. A nice example of medieval record keeping, it can be used to examine administrative practice, preservation and archiving. Although publicly taxed *kharāj* land is mentioned in the text, there are also suggestions that it refers to a more privately managed or tax-farming context. Close examination could result in a better understanding of the relation between privately and publically held property, disentangling the often difficult to distinguish categories of farmed out, rented, managed or owned land.

The second text contains *ḥadīths* concerning funerary practice. Funerary practices have been vehemently discussed in Islam from its earliest history up to the modern period.¹ Typically these rituals with their strong (local) traditions and customs are measured against Muslim tradition and practice.² Bearing strong associations and intense emotions for believers they are a powerful tool in Islamic identity formation. Whether this papyrus fragment should be interpreted as taking part in this debate or simply as the part of the chapter on funerary practices in a regular *ḥadīth* collection cannot be determined at this point. It is written on an early papyrus and records some known and unknown traditions with the chains of transmitters going back to the prophet Muḥammad or his companions. Most of the traditions are well-known although the papyrus contains some variants in the text and in the *isnāds*.

1 For the medieval period, see for example Halevi, *Muhammad's*. For current debates, see for example Becker, *Islamic (Africa)*, Federspiel, *Persatuan* (Indonesia) and Abashin, *The logic (Central Asia)*. See also Anne Regourd's article in this volume.

2 Halevi, *Muhammad's*; Smith and Haddad, *The Islamic*.

1 Report of a Surveyor

P. Haun. Inv. Arab. 21; 22 Provenance Ihnās (left outlined) figs. 14.1–14.4
 No. 21 (30.9 × 17.2 cm.) 383 AH (26 Feb. 993–17 Jan. 994 C.E.)
 No. 22 (30.9 × 21.1 cm.)

The two sheets of paper are brown and strong. They are each folded in half and written on both sides, forming eight pages of text. Sheet no. 22 is complete and measures 30.9 cm. (width) by 21.1 cm (length). No. 21 measures 30.9 cm. by 17.2 cm., so a stroke of 3.9 cm is missing at the bottom. There are large and small holes in the middle part of the sheets.

The handwriting in black ink is a clerical and skilled hand. Dacritical points are lacking. Since the ink had not completely dried before the scribe turned the page, a slight copy of the letters appears on the facing pages. Accordingly, it seems that although these sheets were part of a notebook they were not quired.³ We do, however, undoubtedly have successive leaves, with each sheet folded vertically down the middle producing conjoint leaves. The scribe started his writing on the outer page of the left-hand leaf of the first sheet, then continued on the inner page of the same leaf, first filling the right side then the left side of the page, moving to the right side of the outer page of the first leaf (all inv. Arab 21). He then moved to the outer page of the second leaf, where he started on the left side of the page repeating the same pattern as before ending on the right side of the outer page (all inv. Arab 22).

Page 1 is clearly the beginning of the book, as the title of the account appears on it, with pages 4, 5, 6 and 7 containing the bulk of the text. Page 8 seems to be the end of the document.

The document is a report of a surveyor concerning an estate called Drinja (درنجہ) in the pagarchy of Ihnās (Heracleopolite) and deals with the annual assessment of taxes. It is dated 383 AH (26 February 993–17 January 994), during the rule of the Fāṭimid caliph Abū Maṣṣūr Nizār al-ʿAzīz bi-llāh (r. 975–996). Different agricultural products are mentioned such as ordināry flax (*kattān*) (p. 4, ll. 1, 5, and p. 5, ll. 1, 2) and flax of high quality (p. 3, l. 6), grapes, lotus fruit (both p. 7, l. 5), figs (p. 2, l. 6), pulse (*qaṭānī*), barley (*shaʿīr*), trefolium, cartamus (safflower) (all four p. 4, l. 3) folium and calamus aromaticus (both p. 5, l. 1).

Two major features may be noted in the structure of our document providing insights into agricultural record keeping. The real aggregate survey of the land of the whole *ḍayʿa* of Drinja is registered first, followed by the actual measure

3 For the structure of a codex, see Casson and Hettich, *Excavation* 3.

of farmed land. At the end of the document different payments are recorded in the names of different individuals (p. 8). In Egypt, the survey made at the time of the seasonal decrease of the Nile flood recorded not only the actual area of land involved but also the amount of work needed considering the degree of natural irrigation by the flood. On the basis of these two factors the amount of taxation that could be expected to be raised was calculated. At later stages the taxes due were adjusted based on the actual land worked and the measure in which crops grew.⁴ Notary practice can also be observed in the text. In the margin, next to some of the lines the balance of the estimated assessment is written (e.g. p. 3, l. 3 الموقف). The scribe used some abbreviations such as the letter *nūn* for *niṣf* (half) and فدا for فدانا.

*P. Haun. Inv. Arab. 27*⁵

Page 1 (Fig. 14.1, left side)

1 ارتفاع الضيعة المعروفة بدرنجة
2 لسنة ثلث وثمانين وثلثمائة
لله الحمد والمنة

Page 2 (Fig. 14.2, right side)

1 بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2 مـ[بد]غ [مـ]ا ارتفعت عقود الضيعة المعروفة بدرنجة من كورة أهناس
3 لسنة ثلث وثمانين وثلثمائة على ما ارتفعت به [مساح]ة اسحق البـ[باد]سى [.....]
4 عليه الأسعار في المواد وأن [يتد]حمل [..] الى ذلك من مال الإستدوال
5 على ألف الان ويتحمل في ذلك من مال الأوان والصراف على ما يتوفر بفضله
6 فيبقى ما يرجوا من نمو بعض التين وما يتحصل من كتان زرع الأوسية
7 [الى أن يعـ]رف [مبلغ عند حبيقة وهو المائة فيضاف الى
8 [المائة وستين دينار] ؟
9 [ونصف وثلث وسـ]د [سـ]

4 For this system, see the description by al-Makhzūmī (d. 585/1189), *Kitāb Minhāj* 58–63 (cited in *P.Khalīlī* 1, pp. 61 ff.); Frantz-Murphy, *The agrarian* 20–26.

5 In the edition *hamza* is added according to the rules of standard Arabic orthography.

Page 3 (Fig. 14.2, left side)

- 1 [مـ]ـن [ذ]ـلك
- 2 خراج أرض [...] ألف وأربع مائة وتسعة وستين فدا(نا)
وربع وسدس
- 3 المو[ف]ـف ألف تسعة وسبعين فدا(نا)
عن ثمن مائة وثلاث وثلاثين [ثين]
وثلثين وثمان
- 4 القـمـح أربع مائة وستة دینار
عن مائتي واحد وسبعين فدا(نا) ونصف ونصف
و[نصف]ـف [ونصف]ـثن
- 5 منـه أربع مائة وخمس دینار
عن مائتي وسبعين فدا(نا) كنان ونصفا وربع
القدان
- 6 ومنـه دینار واحد
عن فدان ونصف ونصفين كنان عالی
ونصف ونصفين

Page 4 (Fig. 14.1, right side)

- 1 منـه ثلاثية وتسـ[ع]ـة [فدا]ـ(نا)
عن مائة وسبعة عشر فدا(نا) ونصف وثمان
كتان ثلث القدان
- 2 ومنـه خمس عشر فدا(نا)
عن سبعة وعشرين و[ثمان]ـن و[نصف]ـن []
القدان
- 3 القـطـائـي والشعير والقرط والقرطم [ما]ـئـتي وتسعة ونصف فدا(نا)
عن أربع مائة وأربعة وأربعين ونصف وربع
وثلث وربع وسدس
- 4 منـه عن ثلاثية وتسعة وثمانين فدا(نا) وثمان
كتان (و)ـاحـد فدا(ن) ونصف وربع وسدس؟

Translation

Page 1

- 1 The result of the survey of the domain known as *Drinja*.
 2 For the year three hundred and eighty three. (vac.) To Him comes praise
 and He is generous.

Page 2

- 1 In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
 2 Amount of what resulted from the contracts of the domain known as
 Drinja of the district of Ihnās.
 3 For the year three hundred and eighty three on what was aggregated of the
 gross from the survey of (the domain of) Ishāq, originating from Bā[d]is?
 and?
 4 to which [are added] the prices of the materials, and Abū Rā[ḍī?] should
 be charged for that from the circulated money
 5 on one thousand now and he will pay in that (case) from the current
 money and expenses on what is saved from its growth (or increase).
 6 So, the rest is what will be expected from growing some figs (trees) and
 what is collected from the flax (*kattān*) of the cultivation of the es-
 tate.
 7] to collect a sum from Ḥabīqa. It is one hundred, which should be added
 to
 8] one hundred and sixty *dīnārs*
 9] and a half and one third and one sixth
 10] ..

Page 3

- 1 (vac.) There from (vac.)
 2 *kharāj* land [] one thousand four hundred sixty nine *faddāns* and a
 quarter and one sixth.
 3 The situation (is) eight hundred and [thirty] three ... (from) one thousand
 and seventy nine *faddāns* and two thirds and one eighth.
 4 The wheat: from two hundred seventy one *faddāns* and a half and one
 half of an eighth (comes) four hundred and six *dīnārs*, and a half and one
 half of an eighth.
 5 Thereof: two hundred seventy *faddāns* of flax and a half and a quarter
faddān (comes) four hundred and five *dīnārs*.

- 6 And from one *faddān* and a half and one half of an eighth of high quality flax (comes) one *dīnār* and a half and one half of an eighth.

Page 4

- 1 Thereof: from one hundred and seventeen *faddāns* and a half and one eighth, one third of the *faddān* of flax (comes) three hundred and nine? ... and a half and one quarter and one sixth [*faddāns*].
- 2 And thereof: from twenty seven and [one eighth] and [one half of an eighth] *faddāns* is fifteen *faddāns* [] and one sixth.
- 3 The pulse, barley, trefoilium and cartamus (safflower) from four hundred forty four and a half and a quarter (is) two hundred and nine and a half *faddāns* and one third and a quarter and one sixth.
- 4 Thereof: from three hundred and eighty nine *faddāns* and one eighth, flax: one *faddān* and half and one sixth? (is cultivated) two hundred and one *faddāns*.

Page 5

- 1 Folium, flax and calamus aromaticus (from) three *faddāns* (is) [] .. and one sixth and one half of an eighth.
- 2 Bakr, from two *faddāns* and one quarter and one sixth and one sixth of one eighth, flax: a half of a *faddān* (is) nine *dīnārs* and one sixth and one half of one fifth.
- 3 The pure income of the *faddān*: A half and one half of an eighth (is) one *dīnār* and one fifth.
- 4 Thereof is now one thousand and three hundred and nine *faddāns* and a half and one fifth.

Page 6

- 1 The domains (are) one hundred eighty nine *faddāns* and a third and a fifth.
- 2 The [] forty? *faddāns*, the coast (is) forty *faddāns*
- 3 The conversion charge: from one thousand and five hundred and thirty three *faddāns* and a quarter and one sixth (is) one hundred and two *dīnārs* and one third and one half of one sixth. The leguminous plants (are) one hundred and ten *faddāns*.
- 4 The rents (are) one *dīnār* and a half and a quarter. Of what were arrears from one year and a half, thereof (is) one *dīnār*.

Page 7

- 1 It has been approved thereof
 2 Thereof: what has been carried to the town in various payments, and what
 has been carried to Thaḳīf and what has been deposited at 'Alī. Now,
 he has acknowledged its price. All Praise belongs to God [
 3 Thereof: what is guaranteed by Ḥumayd Madhkūr ibn Salmī towards
 Salkh? ...
 4 *Bābah* and *Amshīr*: nine and a half *faddān* .. and a half and one third.
Baramhāt one hundred fifty six *faddāns* and one sixth.
 5 *Baramūdah*: two hundred forty one *faddāns* and a half. For grapes and
nabq (fruit of the lotus): three hundred and nineteen *faddāns* and a half
 and one third and a quarter.
 6 And thereof what I have collected and dispatched, and I wrote for a period
 of sufferance one and [] one hundred and seventy seven *faddāns* and
 one third and a quarter and one sixth of one eighth.
 7 Two thousand and one hundred and thirty one *faddāns* [] and a half and
 a quarter. The good (lands) six hundred and
 8 Thereof []

Page 8

- 1].
 2]. Cash for Nāṣr? one hundred *dīnārs*
 3] Vac.
 4 And thereof what has been approved for the judge Asad al-Allāh ibn Zayd
 and it has been recorded: ninety nine *faddāns* and two thirds.
 5 Thereof what has been carried in kind: seventy *faddāns* and one quarter
 and one sixth.
 6 A payment concerning twenty *faddāns*. Nineteen *faddāns* and one third
 and a quarter. A payment is paid on the account of the agent concerning
 thirty five [*faddāns*] (the payment is for) thirty four *faddāns* and a half
 and one third.
 7 A payment concerning twelve ⟨*faddāns*⟩ (the payment is for) eleven
faddāns. A payment concerning[(the payment is for) twenty? *dīnārs*.
 8 Thereof what has been spent in (some) directions [] twenty one *faddāns*
 [] and a quarter? [
 9 The rest is twenty [*faddāns*?] and one quarter [

Commentary

Page 1

1. The term ارتفاع relates to the result of the survey usually referring to gross receipts (Frantz-Murphy, *The agrarian* 34 n. 4, 101, *P.Khalili* 1, pp. 63ff. and cf. *P.Cair.Arab.* iv 265 and 266). A *ḍayʿa* is a rural property rarely extending beyond the area of a village, usually owned by a civilian and managed by a bailiff (*wakīl*). If the holder of the *ḍayʿa* is a Muslim, he has to pay two kinds of taxes: first, the *zakāt* that should be paid by all Muslims, taking the form of a tithe (*ʿuṣhr*) (usually a fifth of the *kharāj*) (Lambton, *State* 215); secondly, the *kharāj*, which is a tax levied on agricultural lands and should be paid by Muslims and non-Muslims (Abū Yūsuf, *Kharāj*, 41). In the Abbasid East, the *ḍayʿa* was administered by a different government office than that pertaining to *kharāj* lands (*CPR* XXI, p. 186 n. 3). درنجہ can be read as Drinja, Dranja or Drunja. This town, in the *kūra* of Ihnās, could not be identified.

2. Medial long *alif* is written with scriptio defectiva in the date (Hopkins, *Studies* § 10, a).

3. لله الحمد والمنة: The addition of a religious formula between the *basmala* and the main text is often found in literary and documentary texts (see Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 1: xxxi. Cf. الحمد لله والشكر لله, *P.Cair.Arab.* 1 54.2; والحمد لله كاملستحق).

Page 2

3. من seems to be corrected from في which makes better sense grammatically. *Min* refers to the distance from a place (Wright, *A grammar* III: 132d), while the preposition *fi* is used to refer to the place itself. So, one may consider that Ihnās itself was at some distance to the *ḍayʿa*. In Egypt, the term *kūra* was used in the early Arab period to refer to an administrative district that had a town at its centre (cf. al-Yaʿqūbī, *Buldān* 331: وكور مصر منسوبة إلى مدنها لأن بكل كورة مدينة: مخصوصة بأمر من الأمور). The administrative district of *kūrat* Ihnās is not mentioned in lists other than the one cited by al-Maqrīzī (*Khīṭaṭ* 1: 72), where the *kūra* of the town of Ihnās is said to have consisted of ninety-five villages plus some *kufūr*. Ibn Khurradādhbih also mentioned the *kūra* of Ihnās as one of the *kuwar Miṣr* (*Masālik* 81). For the frequent changes in the geographical extent of this administrative district which was combined with the administrative district of the *kūrat* al-Bahnasā at certain periods, see Grohmann, *Probleme* 381–394 and *P.Khalili* 1 66. Two towns are known by the name Ihnās (Yāqūt, *Buldān* 1:409–410), the first is located in Middle Egypt on the westbank of the Nile (now called Ahnās al-madīna), the second was called Ihnās *al-ṣuḡhrā* (small Ihnās), and it was a large village in the *kūra* of al-Bahnasā. The town of Ihnās has been

known by many names. Today it is sometimes called *Ihnasiyya Umm al-Kimām*, meaning “*Ihnās*, mother of the sherds.” In Coptic it was called *Hnēs/Ehnēs*. Important since the early dynasties, its main god was *Hershef* assimilated by the Greeks to *Heracles* after which they called the city *Heracleopolis Magna* (see Maspéro et Wiet 1919, 28). The Arabic papyrus *PERF 612* (dated 102/720) actually refers to it as *هرقلوس*, *Haraq̄lūs* (Maspéro et Wiet, *Matériaux* 28).

3. *Iṣḥāq* is written with scriptio defectiva of the medial long *a* (Hopkins, *Studies* §10, a). The nisba can be restored as *البيد[باد]سى* or *الفر[بار]سى*. In *P.Cair.Arab.* III 270, 4 (3rd/9th century) we encounter also an *Iṣḥāq* from *Bādis*. There are traces of the bottom of about 5 letters at the end of the line. One may read *وزادت* which agrees with the rest of the sentence written on the following line.

4. *وأن [يتد]حمل في ذلك أبو را [ضى]*: The reading is uncertain.
الاستدوال: There is a half curve visible above the letter *lām*.

5. *الصرف*, the expenses, refers to a sum to be expended for the land. Grohmann translated this word as “conversion charge” (*P.Cair.Arab.* III 239.2) and “allowance for security” (*P.Cair.Arab.* III 283.3, 7) without explaining how he came to this meaning. The term *فضل* appears in *P. Khalili* I 2.14. Khan (*P.Khalili* I, p. 64) has noted that some other terms are used to express the survey increase such as *زائد* (*al-Makhzumī, Minhāj* 60, 61, and *al-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat* 8:251), *إضافة* (*al-Nābulusī* cited in Cahen, *Le régime* 16–17), and *تأخير* (*al-Makhzumī, Minhāj* 61; *al-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat* 8: 250 and *al-Qalqashandī, Ṣubḥ* 3:458).

6. *الأوسية* is the Arabic rendering of the Greek *ousia* (Grohmann, *Griechische* 281f.). Such estates had a special place in the social and economic life in Byzantine Egypt before the Arab conquest (Hardy, *The large* 113 ff.).

7. *المئة وستين دينا (ر)* (L. المائة. *et passim*): There is an oblique slight ripple of a stroke written above the letter *ṣīm* of the word *ستين* which has no teeth, and the word *دينا (ر)* is abbreviated.

Page 3

2. Around the end of the third/ninth century a legal discussion arose about the nature of *kharāj*. The final outcome of this discussion was that *kharāj* was considered as a rent on the land (Tabatabāʾī, *Kharāj* 201; Lambton, *State* 258) which had to be paid by whomever cultivated the land. After *خراج أرض* one should expect the kind of plant cultivated on the land, such as *خراج القصب* (see *P.Cair.Arab.* III 234.10).

3. *وثلاثين وثمان*: the reading is uncertain.

4. *Kharāj* was assessed in cash from the end of the third/ninth century onwards, when an attempt was made to establish a unified system of accounting on the basis of the gold standard with a legal tariff for the exchange of the *dirham*. Hence the qualification *dīnār* in this line and in other places in the text.

6. *Kattān ʿālā* is fine flax (Latin *Linum usitatissimum*) contrasting the unqualified flax attested in other places in this text. The tax on flax in this text comes to one *dīnār* per *faddān*. For flax, see further *P.Cair.Arab.* II, p. 46 f.

Page 4

1. The number may be 319 or 329, or 339, etc., because there is a letter *wāw* after the number nine, we expect a multiple of ten. In the lacuna a qualification such as *faddāns* may be restored (cf. p. 4, ll. 2, 3, 4). It is to be noted that the flax here as well as in line 4 is not a fine flax (see note to p. 3, l. 6).

2. *عن سبعة وعشرين و[ثم]ن و[نصفم]ن الفدان* may be read.

3. *القطنى* (pulse) (s. *qaṭnīya*). Pulse is the common name for members of the *fabaceae* (*leguminosae*), a large plant family, also called the pea, or legume. Legumes were equally important as fodder and forage plants. The pulse family also provides dyes, medicines and other commercial items such as flavorings, fibres, etc.

Shaʿīr, barley (Latin *hordeum vulgare*, *hordeum distichon* and *hordeum irregulare*, see Hitchcock, *Manual* sv. “Barley”), is one of the most ancient of cultivated grains. Barley plants are annual grasses either harvested in winter or spring.

Qirt (Latin *trifolium alexandrinum* and *trifolium resupinatum*, see Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft* 213 ff.), trefoil, was the most common fodder for animals in Egypt according to al-Suyūṭī (see *al-muḥāḍara* 2: 231). Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam writes that trefoil was exempted from *kharāj* tax (*Futūḥ* 153), but in Arabic papyri we find assessments for this plant (*P.Cair.Arab.* III 231 n. 4). For *kharāj* on trefoil, see for example *P.Ryl.Arab.* VII 19.4, and *P.Cair.Arab.* IV 231.4 and commentary.

Qurṭum, safflower (Latin *Carthamus tinctorius*), is identified by Ibn Manẓūr *qurṭum* as saffron (*Lisān* sv. قرطم). Safflower is one of humanity’s oldest crops. The Arabic name lays at the origins of the general pharmaceutical name *flores carthami*. The Arabic name is derived from the verb *qarṭama* (to dye) in reference to the use of safflower flowers for textile dyeing. Its modern Arabic

name *usfur* (saffron), from *ašfar*, yellow, has entered many languages through the mediaeval Andalusian pronunciation.

5. (و) احد فدا(ن) ونصف وربع وسد(س): The reading of this line is uncertain.

(ن) احد فدا(و): the Kūfan grammarians allow the placement of the adjective of the cardinal number if the genitive is an object (see Ibn Hishām, *Shudhūr* 1: 216 "وللكوفيين كلهم في إجازة نحو الثلاثة الأثواب ونحوه مما المضاف فيه عدد والمضاف إليه معدود"). For the cardinal number احد, واحد, etc. see Hopkins, *Studies* § 91a.

Page 5

1. ساذج L. ساذج (Latin *folium*). This word is known to have been written with the *alif* as third or second letter. Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) describes the plant and its medicinal use (Ibn Sīnā, *al-Qānūn fī al-ṭīb* s.v. ساذج).

Al-qaṣab al-fārisī (Latin *calamus aromaticus*) is a sort of reed, or sweet-scented cane, without branches, with a crown at the top, and beset with spines, about two feet in height, bearing from the root a knotted reddish stalk, quite round, containing in its cavity a soft white pith. It grows in Egypt, Syria, and India and is said to make the air scent while growing. When cut down, dried and powdered, it forms an ingredient in the richest perfumes and is used in medicine (see *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language* sv. "Calamus"). Frantz-Murphy translates the name of the plant literarily as "Persian reeds" (*The agrarian* 34, 18).

Page 6

1. A careless curved joint line links the *alif* and *lām* so one can read the word as الأضياع.

3. The reading of الخ[ض]ر, vegetables, is uncertain. After the article the letter may be *jīm* or *khā*. Vegetables are frequently mentioned in Arabic papyri (see for example *P.Cair.Arab.* 111 266.7; 268.14). For *kharāj* on leguminous plants, see *PER. Inv. Ar. Pap.* 10151, 13.

Page 7

2. الحاضرة: means the "town." See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, sv. "حضر."

تقيف: the reading is uncertain. Thaḳīf is an Arab tribe living to the south-east of Mecca (Kister, Mecca 134).

قيل [ع]لى الان فقر ثمنيه: the reading is uncertain. It seems that 'Alī belongs to the tribe of Thaḳīf. He acknowledges that he has received some of what has been collected from the *kharāj*.

3. *سلخ*: its diminutive name is *سليخ*, as recorded in al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabah* 271.

5. *Inab* are more frequently attested in the papyri as *kurūm*, vineyards. For viticulture, see *P.Cair.Arab.* I, p. 10. Here there is clearly mention of the production of the vineyards as well as the lotus tree (i.e. Nabq).

Nabaq are the fruits (cones) of the lotus, sidr or cedar tree. The lotus is a large hardwood tree, which can grow more than 5 meters high (Nour and Ahmed, *A chemical* 271–273) and bears a round and yellowish cherry-like fruit (al-Anṭākī, *Ṭadhkirat* 186 f.; Ibn al-Bayṭār, *Jāmiʿ* 3: 4, 32). The fruit is used for food and as a medicine (Kamal, *The ancient* 305 ff.). The tree is mentioned in the Quran as a tree in the afterlife in whose shade the righteous will recline (Q 56:28).

6. For *ba'tha* in the sense of 'dispatch,' see *P.Cair.Arab.* IV 401.1–12.

Page 8

6. The payment should be for 20 *faddāns* but what has been paid was for only 19 *faddāns* and one third and one quarter, which means that $\frac{5}{12}$ *faddān* has not been farmed.

7. *اننى عشر*: the reading is uncertain. <<فدا(نا)>> should be added (cf. l. 6 on the same page).

9. *البواقي عشرون*: may be read.

2 Instructions Concerning Funerals

P. ACPSI 126 (P. Rag.) Provenance unknown (outlined left) figs. 14.5–14.6
15 × 8.5 cm. ca. 2nd / 8th century

The papyrus is broken off at the bottom, the left and right sides. It is damaged at the right and bottom sides, though the original margin has remained at the top. The papyrus, which was folded four times from left to right, is of light brown colour, fairly fine. A small piece measuring 5 × 0.8 cm and bearing about six upper halves of letters is torn off on side A.

The text was written on both sides of the papyrus, in black ink, in a neat, elegant hand pointing to the beginning of the second/eighth century. Diacritical points are rarely used. The side where the writing goes perpendicular to the fibres was written first, after which the scribe continued on the other side. There is a correction above line one which can be read while the superscript

of line three can only be partly read. The end of each *ḥadīth* is indicated with a circular sign.

The text was probably longer than the thirteen lines written on both sides of the papyrus. The writer presents the *aḥādīth* sometimes in his own words (A1), other times by citing them literally (B4). The text contains both prophetic and companions' *aḥādīth*, and all the transmitters are known in these traditions.

The place of discovery is unknown.

Side A (Fig. 14.6)

- 1 حدثنا [رافع أن أبا هريرة أوصا أهله حذرو في ألا يظهرها عليه {طيبا} الطيب ولا يجعلوه في
قطيفة حمراء]
- 2 [قال وقد بلغني عن أبي سعيد الخدري ميله في القطيفة [أ] [ضربه الذي يقول خلف الجنازة
استغفروا له غفر الله لكم]
- 3 [واخبرني عن يحيى بن زيد ----- عن أبي؟ سعيد حفص بن ميسرة عن أبي [عمر الصحابي]]
[وأسامة بن زيد عن عبد الرحمن]
- 4 [بن حرمله الأسلمي عن سعيد بن المسيب أنه قال انظروا لراجركم هذا الذي]
5 [يقول استغفروا له غفر الله لكم ولا ينبغي O هذا وقال خارجة بن زيد]
- 6 [بن ثابت أنه قال إذا سمع من يقول في الجنازة أن استغفروا له غفر الله لكم]
- 7 [محدث ويقا] [وذلك عند الله [] [ما لا را [] [O قال قال ال]
- 8 [دعا [] [O [] [ويقا] [ل?]]

Side B (Fig. 14.5)

- 1 وعمرو بن الحارث عن بكير بن الأشج عن بسر بن سعيد أن النبي قال العين تدمع
- 2 والقلب يحزن إياك الصراخ قال بكاني وبكا النبي على {الا} بنيه وقال البكا
- 3 من الرحمة والصراخ من الشيطان O واخبرني عن ابن جريج أن رسول
- 4 الله قال تدمع العين ويحزن القلب ولا نقول ما يسخط الرب
- 5 (vac.) والسلام على أهل القبور

Translation

Side A

- 1] Rāfi‘ [has reported that] Abū Hurayra commanded his family to be careful not to apply any perfume on him and not to shroud him in red velvet (after death) [
- 2] He said, and it has been reported to me, about Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī that he inclined towards the red velvet. The one who was behind the funeral harms them (the death) by saying: “Ask forgiveness [for him. May God forgive you.”
- 3] And he reported to me on the authority of Ḥaḥṣ ibn Maysara on the authority of Yaḥyā ibn Zayd—on the authority of Abū Sa‘īd [‘Umar al-Ṣaḥābī] and Usāma ibn Zayd on the authority of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān [
- 4 ibn Ḥarmala al-Aslamī on the authority of Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab that he said: “Look at your poet who [
- 5 says: “Ask forgiveness for him, God forgives you.” This is not allowed.” In addition to this, Khārīja ibn Zayd [
- 6 ibn Thābit said that he said: “If it is heard that the man behind the funeral says: “Ask forgiveness for him, God forgives you [
- 7] being said [] he says [] and that is with God alone [] [] O. He said: “The one who [] said [
- 8] pray [] O. And [he] says [

Side B

- 1 And ‘Amr ibn al-Ḥārith on the authority of Bukayr ibn al-Ashajj on the authority of Bisr ibn Sa‘īd, that the Prophet said: “The eyes are shedding tears
- 2 and the heart is grieved. Do not scream.” He (also) said I wept and the Prophet wept for his sons, and he (the Prophet) said: “Weeping is
- 3 from mercy and screaming is from the devil.” O And he reported to me on the authority of Ibn Jurayj that the messenger
- 4 of God said: “The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved and we will not say what enraged God.”
- 5 (vac.) And Peace is upon those who are in the graves.

Commentary

Side A

1. Rāfi‘ ibn Khadij (al-Dhahabī, *Muqṭanā* 1:214 no. 1944) died when he was 86 years old in 73/692 or 74/693 (al-Bustī, *Thiqāt* 3:121 no. 407). He lived and

died in Madīna (al-Dhahabī, *Muqtanā* 1:467 no. 1778). At the battle of Badr this companion from the Khazraj was deemed too young to fight (Juynboll, *Encyclopedia* 10). Abū Hurayra (d. 59/687) is the well-known companion and *ḥadīth* transmitter (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt* 4:325; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Istī‘āb* 4:202; Juynboll, *Encyclopedia* 45–47). He appears very frequently in *isnāds* of *ḥadīths*. This *ḥadīth* is not known to have been transmitted on the authority of Abū Hurayra nor on that of Rāfi‘, although both stipulated conditions in their will about how their body should be dealt with after their death. Abū Hurayra forbade the use of a *majmāra* (censer) (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf* 2:472 no. 11170).

Awṣā (أوصى L. أوصى) is written with *alif mamdūda* (Hopkins, *Studies* §12c). The verb *awṣā* was used in some *aḥādīth* in relation to red velvet and *rajaz* (see commentary to B4) (Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt* 5:142; 8:74).

Ḥadhirū fi allā yuḏhirū ‘alayhi al-ṭīb. Verbs signifying ‘to forbid,’ ‘fear,’ and the like, are followed by *an* with the subjunctive. The negative *lā* is sometimes inserted after *an* without affecting the meaning. Cf. *annī akhāfu allā yatrakanī*, “I am afraid he will not leave me,” or “I am afraid he will leave me” (Wright, *A grammar* 2 §15 a). *Al-ṭīb* refers to well-scenting fragrances. The use of essences in the treatment of the deceased body is described in several *ḥadīths*. In a *ḥadīth* narrated by Umm ‘Aṭīyya, one of the *anṣār*, she said that Muḥammad instructed her when she was giving a bath to his deceased daughter saying: “Wash her three, five or more times with water and *sidr*, lotus, and sprinkle camphor on her at the end. When you finish, notify me.” (al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* no. 1183). Ibn Mas‘ūd in another *ḥadīth* reported that the body of the deceased should be dried after washing with a clean cloth and some camphor should be applied to the *sujūd* parts (those parts of the body that touch the ground during prayer) (al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* no. 6495).

Wa-lā yaj‘alūhu fi qatīfa ḥamrā’. When Rāfi‘ ibn Khadij died, his bed was covered in red velvet to the astonishment of the people (Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* no. 16637). See also the commentary to line 2. After the Prophet’s death, his *mawlā*⁶ Shuqrān threw a red velvet *burda* (cloak) on the dead body because Muḥammad had disliked wearing another one (Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* no. 967, and al-Rāzī, *Jarḥ* 6:164). It is also said that Shuqrān placed the red villous cloth (*qatīfa*) in the Prophet’s grave to prevent others from using it (Juynboll, *Encyclopedia* 523).

Based on the prophet’s burial and expressed preferences, the shroud normally used by Muslims consists of white cloths. Samura ibn Jundab (d. ca. 52–

6 It is said that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf (d. 32/652) either donated or sold Shuqrān, the Ethiopian, to the Prophet who set him free after the battle of Badr (al-‘Asqalānī, *Qawl* 5:80).

53/672–673) reported that Muḥammad said: “Wear white. It is purer and more wholesome, and shroud your dead in it” (al-Bayhaqī, *Madkha*, 3:402). ‘Ā’isha (d. 58/678) reportedly said: “God’s messenger was shrouded in three garments of white Yemeni fabric, amongst which was neither a shirt nor a turban” (Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, *Kitāb al-Janā’iz* 20:3145). Children are shrouded in one to three pieces of cloth. Young females are shrouded in a shirt and two wraps. Males are covered by three pieces of cloth, and adult females in five.

2. Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693) held the full name, Sa’d ibn Mālik ibn Sinān. He was one of the prophet’s companions and transmitted many prophetic *ḥadīths*. (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 5:142). In spite of the statement in this text, it is said that Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī demanded that at his funeral no *rājaz* (see commentary on B4), or censer should be present, and that his body should not be carried on red velvet (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 5:142).

A]ḍarra bihim alladhī yaqūlu khalfā al-janāza ’istaghfarū lahu ghaḥara allāh lakum. For the restoration of this sentence, see the commentary to lines B4–5.

The negative sense of *أضرمهم* is contradicted by *ḥadīths* showing that the Prophet approved of the custom to ask for forgiveness of the deceased while following his funeral procession (*janāza*) (Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* no. 2094).

3. The scribe began to write Abī as part of the name of Abū Sa’īd but then continued to write the name ‘Umar al-Ṣaḥābī. He then crossed out the name ‘Umar al-Ṣaḥābī and returned to write the full name of Abū Sa’īd without deleting Abī that he had already written and adding Sa’īd above the line. Between the name of Yaḥyā ibn Zayd and Abū Sa’īd there are traces of some illegible letters.

‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar al-Ṣaḥābī is ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufal, also known as Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 73/692), belonging to the tribe of al-‘Adawī al-Qurayshī (cf. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia* 10–11). He lived in Madīna and died in Marw. ‘Abd Allāh was renowned for his close observation of the Prophet’s actions as observed by ‘Ā’isha: “There was no one who followed the prophet’s footsteps as did Ibn ‘Umar.” He would only relate a *ḥadīth* if he was completely sure that he remembered every word of it. One of his contemporaries said: “Among the companions of the Prophet, no one was more cautious about adding to or subtracting from the *ḥadīth* of the prophet than ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar (see Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba* no. 4825).” Yaḥyā ibn Zayd (d. 63/682) is Yaḥyā ibn Zayd ibn Thābit ibn al-Ḍahāk (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 5:264). He was killed at the battle of Ḥarra in 63/683 (Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* 5:236). His brother is Khārija ibn Zayd ibn Thābit, for whom see the commentary to B5. Abū Sa’īd is Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī for whom see above in the commentary to A2. Ḥaḥṣ

ibn Maysara al-Kanʿanī al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 181/797) (al-Dhahabī, *Muqtanā* 1:422, no 4522; Juynboll, *Encyclopedia* 403). According to some scholars he came from the town of Ṣanʿāʾ in Syria while others identified it with the town with the same name located in Yemen (al-Bukhārī, *Tārīkh al-Ṣaghīr* 2:369; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* 7:73, no. 1417). He was considered a reliable source for *ḥadīths*. Usāma ibn Zayd (d. ca. 54/674) was the son of Zayd ibn Hārith, a manumitted slave and the Prophet's adopted son who became one of his companions (Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istīʿāb* 1:77; 3:1137–1140, and Fuʿad 2003, 8, 161). Some weeks before his death, Muḥammad appointed Usāma, still quite young and unexperienced at the time, at the head of a large expedition against Syria, which caused some of the leading muslims to complain. Usāma died in al-Jurf and was buried in Madīna (Vacca, *EI s.v.*).

4. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥarmala (d. 145/762) was a well-educated member of the Banū Mālik ibn ʿAqṣa, belonging to Madīna's élite (al-Bustī, *Mashahīr* 1:137 no. 1081). He reported on the authority of Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab (d. 94/712) as we have here and others (al-Maḥdī, *Aḥādīth* 4:233; al-Khurāsānī, *Sunan* 1:309 no. 1107). Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab is Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab ibn Ḥazan ibn Abī Wahhāb ibn ʿAmr also known as Abū Muḥammad, belonging to the tribe of al-Quraysh. He lived and died in Madīna (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf* 7:19, 24; al-Qurtubī, *Jāmiʿ* 8:239; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Istīʿāb* 1:77; 3:1137–1140; al-Ṭabarī, *Bayān* 10:68).

The *rājiz* recites poems in the *rajaz* meter. According to different authorities, performing *rajaz* at funerals is forbidden in Islam. Abū Muṭīʿ narrated that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥarmala was at a funeral when he heard a man saying: “Ask God's forgiveness for her, and Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyib said: What is their poet saying? I commanded my wife not to call their poet (at my funeral)” (Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf* 11:198; Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* 5:141).

5. *Istaghfarū lahu ghafara allāh lakum wa-lā yanbaghī*. Correct would have been *istaghfarū lahu ghafara allāh lahu* as is mentioned in certain *aḥādīth*, such as: The Prophet came to them (his companions) and said: “Ask forgiveness for Māʿīz ibn Mālik.” They said: “May God forgive Māʿīz ibn Mālik” (al-Nasāʾī, *Sunan* 4:276). Cf. Ibn Abī Shayba, *Muṣannaf* 2:474 nos. 11193; 11194 and 11199; al-Bustī, *Thiqāt* 1:405 no. 6975. In general the *ṣaḥāba* are said to have disliked the raising of loud voices at funerals (al-Bayḥaqī, *Madkhal* 4:74 nos. 6974–6975).

ولا يبتغي or ولا يبتغي Although the word is dotted the reading is doubtful.

5–6. Khārija ibn Zayd ibn Thābit (d. 99/717 or 100/718) was a great traditionist who transmitted few *aḥādīth* (Ibn al-Qayṣarānī, *Tadhkirat* 1:91 no. 82; al-ʿIjlī,

Ma'rifat 1:330 no. 385). He was also a great *faqīh* who was being consulted on matters of Islamic law (al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar* 4:439–440). Khārija claimed that at the order of the Prophet he learned Hebrew so that he could “write and read the letters of the Jews,” in half a month (al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar* 17:467). He was one of the *anṣār*.

6. *Idhā sumi'a man yaqūlu fī al-janāza istaghfarū lahu ghafara allāh lakum*. We expect a sentence to follow such as فانهوه, then prevent him, or فامنعوه, then stop him.

Side B

1. 'Amr ibn al-Ḥārith, written with defective long a (see Hopkins, *Studies* §10 a), (d. 148/765 or 149/766) belonged to the tribe of al-Anṣarī (al-Bustī, *Mashāhīr* 1:187 no. 1498; al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat* 2:540 no. 846). He lived in Egypt and he was known as *faqīh al-dayār al-Miṣriyya*. The well-known Egyptian scholar 'Abd Allāh ibn Wahb (d. 197/812) was his most famous transmitter (Juynboll, *Encyclopedia* 11 n. 3). He was considered to be a reliable *muḥaddith*, famous for his knowledge of religious philology, as an eloquent narrator of poems and an orator (al-Ḥākim al-Nisābūrī, *Mustadrak* 1:2093). Bukayr ibn al-Ashajj (d. 115/733?) was also known as Abū 'Abd Allāh, as well as Abū Yūsuf al-Qurayshī al-Madanī al-Miṣrī, because he spent some time in Egypt. He lived in Madīna. Bisr ibn Sa'īd (d. 100/718) was born in Madīna. He was considered a reliable *ḥadīth* transmitter and was also considered to be a *ṣūfī* (al-Iṣfahānī, *Rijāl* 1:96; al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar* 5:113).

2–3. *Wa bakā al-nabī 'alā banīhi wa-qāla al-bukā' min al-rahma wa-l-ṣurākh min al-shayṭān*. *Bakā* is written with an *alif mamdūda* instead of an *alif maqṣūra*. It seems that the writer began to write الأبناء (the sons) but he changed his mind and wrote بنيه (his sons) without effacing the article. The Prophet begot four daughters and three sons, the latter of whom all died as young children. Muḥammad is said to have cried at the death of his children and grandchildren allowing tears and sadness to show but forbidding such pre-Islamic customs as tearing ones' clothes, slapping face and wailing loudly at someone's death.⁷ (al-Bayhaqī, *Madkhal* 4:6941, 6943; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* no. 25267; al-Nawawī, *Saḥīḥ Muslim* 2:110, and 6:224–225). This *ḥadīth* is not known to have been

7 For an example of pre-Islamic funerary customs, note the lines of the poet Tarafa ibn al-'Abd (d. c. E. 569): “When I die, mention my qualities as befits me, and rend your garments for me, o daughter of Ma'bad. Do not make me like a man whose aspirations are not my aspirations, who could not do what I could do, or play the role I play (al-Nawawī, *Riyād* 86).

transmitted on the authority of Bisr ibn Sa'īd but on that of Anas ibn Mālīk (d. 93/712) (al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* no. 1220).

3. Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767), in full, 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Jurayj (al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* 6:325, no. 138; Juynboll, *Encyclopedia* 212–225) is said to have been a *mawlā* of Umayya ibn Khālīd and to have been of Byzantine descent (al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* 6:325–336).

4. *Tadma'u al-'ayn wa yahzanu al-qalb wa-lā naqūlu mā yaskhiṭu al-rabb*. This is a part of the same *ḥadīth* discussed above (see note B2–3). It is set at the dying of Ibrāhīm, the Prophet's son. Muḥammad entered upon his son Ibrāhīm as he was surrendering his soul (i.e., dying). Tears began to well up in the Prophet's eyes. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf said to him: "Even you, o messenger of God?" He said: "O, Ibn 'Awf, this is compassion." Then he wept some more and said: "The eyes shed tears, and the heart feels grief, but we will not say what enraged the Lord. And truly we are deeply grieved by your departure, o Ibrāhīm" (Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* no. 1578).

5. *Salām* is written with *defective* long a (see Hopkins, *Studies* § 9 c). When visiting the tombs Muslims should say "peace be upon you, o people who inhabit the graves (three times), you are the predecessors and we are the successors" (al-Ṭabatānī, *Mu'jam* 8:129 no. 8178).

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FIG. 14.1 *P. Haun. Inv. Arab. 21 recto. Courtesy of the Papyrus Carlsberg Collection. The P.Haun. collection is now housed together with the P. Carlsberg collection in Copenhagen, but the manuscripts retain their original inventory numbers.*

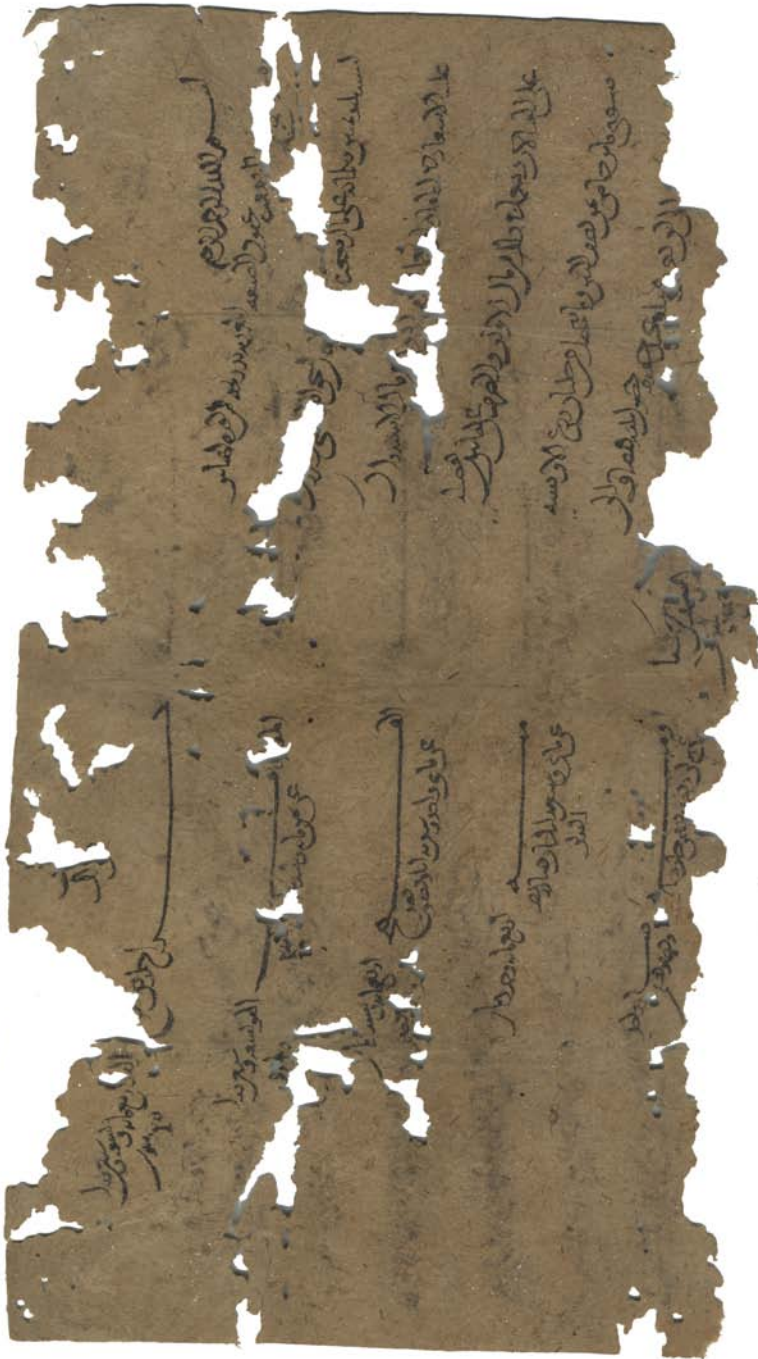


FIG. 14.2 P. Haun. Inv. Arab. 21 verso. Courtesy of the Papyrus Carlsberg Collection.

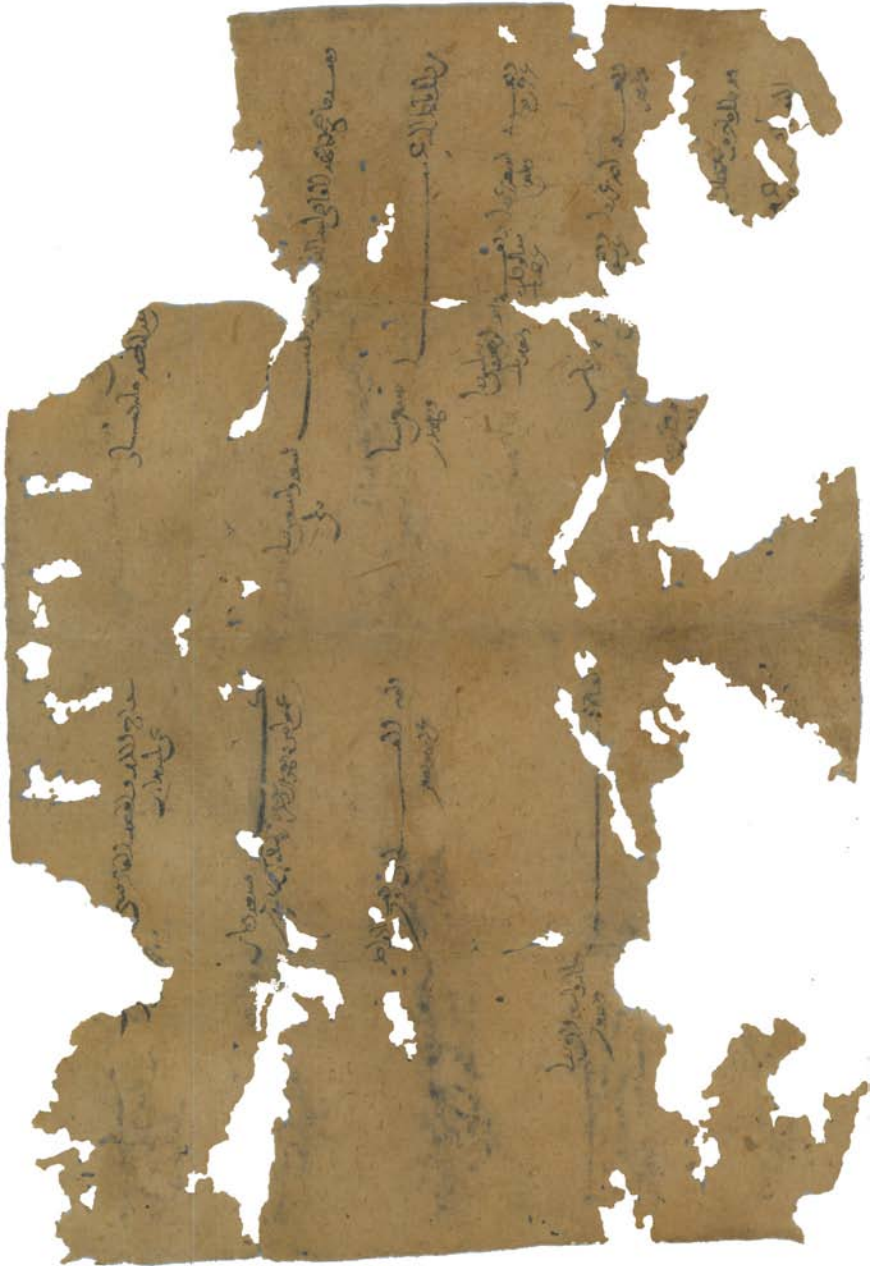


FIG. 14.3 P. Haun. Inv. Arab. 22 recto. Courtesy of the Papyrus Carlsberg Collection.



FIG. 14.5 *P.ACPSI (= P.Rag.) 126 recto.*



FIG. 14.6 P. ACPSI (= P.Rag.) 126 verso.

Sunshine Wine on the Nile

Nicole Hansen

Introduction

In his 1982 work *Weinstudien: Untersuchungen zu Anbau, Produktion und Konsum des Weins im arabisch-islamischen Mittelalter*, Peter Heine devoted a chapter to wine production methods. While he collected valuable evidence, he treated wine production across Arabic-speaking countries as undifferentiated, giving short shrift to regional variations. He also relied solely on lexical texts and poetry to reconstruct the methods of wine production.¹

This approach is not surprising, for the study of the early Islamic period in Egypt has been traditionally based on non-documentary textual evidence. However, such texts alone only give us a small part of a bigger picture. Archaeology is the study of the traces left behind by human activity. While not necessarily as deliberate an act of leaving a record as writing a text, these traces are important for our understanding of history. Equally important for supplementing our knowledge is art, a non-verbal alternative to textual documentation, but similar to textual sources in that it is a product of the human hand and a human desire to record information for future consultation. Finally, ethnographic evidence, or in the case of this article, the observations of early European travelers to Egypt, is invaluable.

Five years after Heine's work appeared, an early Arabic cookbook was published, which forms the focus of this article: the *Kitāb al-Ṭabikh* of Abū Muḥammad al-Muẓaffar ibn Naṣr ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq. It was probably compiled in the second half of the tenth century CE in Baghdad. Several manuscript copies are known.² Most of the recipes in this cookbook are not identified by the region from which they come. But two recipes for wine are identified as Egyptian. In an attempt to better understand these early Islamic period recipes, I will draw upon evidence from earlier and later time periods, and also expand the type of evidence considered. The ancient Egyptians depicted the preparation of food and beverages frequently in their tombs and temples, and archaeologi-

¹ Heine, *Weinstudien* 31.

² al-Warrāq, *Kitāb al-Ṭabikh*.

cal remains help fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge. Non-Arabic texts and early European travelers' accounts round out the sources. Examined together with these other sources, these two recipes are of great importance in tracing and reconstructing winemaking techniques used in Egypt from prehistory to the present day.

The Role of Wine in Early Islamic Egypt

The manufacture of wine faced a challenge at the beginning of the eleventh century CE in Egypt. Al-Ḥākim (Fatimid caliph r. 374–411/985–1021), a ruler known for a number of bizarre and strict rules he imposed on the people, prohibited the import and sale of raisins to Egypt in order to stamp out wine production. Raisins were burned, thrown in the Nile, or thrown in the streets and trodden upon. The vineyards of Giza were cut down and he gave orders for the same to be carried out elsewhere. Five thousand jars of honey were dumped in the Nile.³ What were the drinks made from these raisins, grapes and honey that inspired these acts?

These beverages were actually among the most popular of the time. 'Alī ibn Raḍwān, who lived during the eleventh century CE, described Egypt's vintages thus: "The favoured drink among the people is *al-Shamsī* (sunny) because the honey in it preserves its strength and does not allow it to change quickly. The beverage is made when the weather is hot, so that the heat brings the drink to maturity. The raisins used in it are imported from a country with better air. Concerning Egyptian wine, it is rare that honey is not added when it is pressed. Because wine is pressed from native grapes, it resembles their temperament, and therefore the people prefer *al-Shamsī* to it."⁴

During the early Islamic period and later, wine production was mainly in the hands of Christians and Jews.⁵ Monasteries were large-scale producers of wine during the sixth through eighth centuries CE; in particular, Bawit and Wadi Sarga were important centres for winemaking, and at least at the latter, wine was the biggest source of revenue.⁶ During the twelfth century, the Arabic texts indicate wine was still made widely in monasteries.⁷

3 Heine, *Weinstudien* 50; Lutz, *Viticulture* 5–6.

4 Ridwan, *Medieval* 91 (English), 7 (Arabic).

5 Heine, *Weinstudien* 31.

6 Bacot, *La circulation* 272–273, 284. For wine production in Bawit, see also *P.Bruce.Bawit*, 93–94. For other places in Egypt, see for example Bacot, *Le vin* (Edfou), Konstantinidou, *Aspects* (Wadi Natrun) and more generally Dixneuf, *Amphores*.

7 Monneret de Villard, *Il monastero* 89.

Monneret de Villard argued that wine production remained common in Egypt from the coming of Islam to at least the twelfth century. He found many Coptic documents mentioning wine in the Vienna papyrus collection, and a number of Arabic ones as well, dating from 724–887 CE, mostly from the Fayyūm.⁸ The association of the Fayyūm with wine was long lasting. In the seventeenth century CE, a European visitor to the Fayyūm described the making of wine there.⁹ It remained the sole province producing wine when the French invaded Egypt, and they quickly recognised that the methods used were the same as those depicted on ancient tomb walls.¹⁰

Honey Wine

The first recipe for Egyptian wine in the cookbook is for a so-called “honey wine” or a mead. I will give the Arabic version,¹¹ with my own translation, interspersed with relevant commentary:

عمل النبيذ المصري
يؤخذ جزء عسل بشمعه ورغوته فيجعل في قدر وتصب عليه خمسة اجزا ما ويفلى حتى يذهب منه
الربع

Making Egyptian Wine

Take one part honey with its wax and its froth and put it in a pot and pour five parts water on it and boil it until it is reduced by a quarter.

Arabic texts tell us that grapes were pressed, and presumably picked, in July, August and September.¹² Several Greek texts indicate grapes were picked between the end of July and the middle of August.¹³ While we do not have such detailed records from ancient times, wine was closely tied in ancient Egypt with the star Sirius, which rose in mid-summer.¹⁴ Arabic sources indicate that honey

8 Ibid., 88.

9 Vansleb, *Nouvelle* 255–256.

10 Gerard, *Details* 129–130.

11 As published in al-Warrāq, *Kitāb al-Ṭabikh* 303. Cf. Nasrallah, *Annals* 462.

12 Heine, *Weinstudien* 32; Pellat, *Cinq* 247.

13 Kruit, *The meaning* 273; Rathbone, *Economic* 250.

14 Meeks, *Oléiculture* 20.

was collected mainly in June and the work finished in July, just as the grape harvest and pressing began.¹⁵

Thus it is not surprising to find a close connection between honey and grape-based beverages. We see this close association in the paper by Alain Delattre in this volume. The pre-Islamic predecessor of this so-called “Egyptian wine” made from honey was something known in Greco-Roman times and late antiquity by a variety of Greek names οἶνό-μελι, ὑδρομέλον or μελίκρατον. This mixture of honey and water was used frequently in Greek medicine and appears in even earlier Greek medical papyri. It also could be used in dyeing and alchemy.¹⁶ This beverage may have an even more ancient history. It has been suggested that two ancient scenes, one from a temple and the other from a tomb, represent the making of such a fermented honey drink.¹⁷

The next line of our text reads:

ثم يترك حتى يبرد ويجعل في دنان او كيزان و يجعل على راسه ورق الكرم و يشقب في راسه ثقب
ليخرج الغليا منه

Then leave it until it cools and put it in an earthenware wine jug or large vessel with handles and put grape leaves on top of it and pierce its neck with a hole to allow the fermentation gases to escape from it.

This description is very close to a find dating probably to the seventh century CE from the Monastery of Epiphanius in Luxor of amphorae with wads of vine leaves stuffed into the necks and then covered over with a 10 cm high stopper of mud and chopped straw.¹⁸ Rush bungs were used as stoppers in the wine jars found in King Tutankhamun’s (pharaoh r. ca. 1332–1323 BCE) tomb and at the palace of Malqata belonging to Amenhotep III (pharaoh r. ca. 1386–1349 BCE). Other ancient stoppers found include those made from a circular reed mat, a bung of chopped chaff mixed with adhesive, a bung of chaff with mud, reed wadded up in a ball, or even a pottery stopper (either a disc or a shard of pottery).¹⁹

15 Pellat, *Cinq* 231. However, in modern times honey is not collected during the summer (Kuény, *Scènes* 90).

16 P. Alex inv. 291 (Andorlini, *Greek* 166); Chouliara-Raios, *L’Abeille* 150–151.

17 Kuény, *Scènes* 92.

18 Winlock and Crum, *The monastery* 79.

19 Hope, *Jar sealings* 14; Lesko, *King* 20.

The effect of summer heat under which this fermentation took place is represented in ancient tomb scenes showing wine jars overflowing.²⁰ In one relief, the overflowing jars were being fanned by a man, perhaps in a futile attempt to keep them cool.²¹

Piercing a hole in the neck relieved the pressure of the turbulent fermentation going on inside. Holes for the fermentation to escape in the jars from the Monastery of Epiphanius were either made in the mud stopper or drilled directly into the neck of the jar with a metal awl or something similar after baking.²² Similar artefacts were found at a monastery in Meinarti in Nubia. There, holes had been drilled in the necks of the pitched jars, which were then sealed with mud. This work took place in a chamber adjacent to the monastery's refectory.²³ During his excavations on the shores of Lake Maryut, Empereur found amphorae with holes in their necks.²⁴ In fact, one ancient tomb scene depicts the collection of taxes and among the remittances are jars labelled as honey. The mud covers on these jars are depicted with what may be holes identical to those depicted in paintings of wine jars, although these could simply be seals.²⁵

These methods date back at least to the earliest period of Egyptian history. Wine jars found at the Early Dynastic sites of Saqqara and Abydos had such holes.²⁶ New Kingdom tomb scenes depict wine jars with square-topped seals with such holes clearly illustrated.²⁷

Lerstrup and Mayerson have argued that such holes may not have been used to allow the secondary fermentation to escape, for they do not occur in all wine jars, and the latter has suggested they were instead used to draw the wine out of the jars.²⁸ These arguments are not convincing, for at least two reasons. First, these holes are not always very easy to see and therefore may have been more common than previously noted.²⁹ Secondly, many of the surviving wine jars did not have their original stoppers, as it seems that some wine was rebottled

20 Davies, *The tombs* pl. xxx.

21 Davies and Gardiner, *The tomb* pl. xxvi.

22 Winlock and Crum, *The monastery* 79.

23 Adams, *The vintage* 283.

24 Empereur, *La production* 42.

25 Meeks, *Oléiculture* 23 n. 135.

26 James, *The earliest* 198.

27 Davies, *The tombs* pl. xxx; Säve-Söderbergh, *Four* pl. xv.

28 Lerstrup, *The making* 73; Mayerson, *Jar stoppers* 219–220.

29 James, *The earliest* 198.

after it reached its final destination, thus there would be no secondary fermentation lock.³⁰

One is next instructed thus:

فاذا هدا غليانه طين وترك في الشمس اربعين يوما

When its fermentation subsides, coat it with clay and leave it in the sun for forty days.

This describes a process that is well attested during Greco-Roman times in Egypt. In those days, wine was left to age in sunning areas known as ἡλιαστήριον. The first mention we have of a ἡλιαστήριον was not actually from a Greek papyrus, but from a demotic one that dates to between 107–30 BCE.³¹ We know from texts that the ἡλιαστήριον was well-guarded and had locks and keys.³² Two papyri from Oxyrhynchos described what happened in the ἡλιαστήριον. One, dating to 257 CE said, “And when these [jars] have been filled with wine, we shall place them in the sunning area, seal them, move them, and guard them for as long as they stay there ...”³³ However, the presence of a guard may have not been simply for the purpose of protecting against theft, but also to ensure that the wine was fermenting properly. A papyrus from Oxyrhynchus detailing an inspection of wine amphorae before they were sealed deemed a number of them undrinkable because they had turned to vinegar.³⁴ An intriguing tomb scene from the New Kingdom seems to indicate that the history of the ἡλιαστήριον goes back to ancient Egyptian times. This depicts a guarded walled enclosure filled with wine jars (the guard however seems to have tasted a little too much wine and has fallen asleep on the job). The walls of the enclosure are shown with undulating tops. Säve-Söderberg suggested that these walls might represent the walls of an enclosure, rather than a wine cellar. However,

30 McGovern, *Wine* 91–95. Additional evidence that wine was rebottled after reaching its destination is a limestone stamp found in Tuthmosis IV's (pharaoh r. 14th c. BCE) temple at Thebes used to stamp wine as coming from an area in the Delta (Petrie, *Six* 3). Moreover, among the pierced jar sealings found at Amenhotep III's temple at Malqata, two were for jars containing fat, suggesting that jars originally used to ship wine to Thebes were reused to hold other substances (Hope, *Jar sealings* 7).

31 P. Dem. Gieben 2 (Vandorpe and Clarysse, *A Greek* 131). The word was written in demotic as *h'ly'stryn*.

32 Vandorpe and Clarysse, *A Greek* 129.

33 Mayerson, ἀμπελοουργον 188. See also Rathbone, *Economic* 253.

34 P. Oxy. 1673 (Brun, *Le vin* 71).

he thought this was simply a temporary storage location, rather than an integral part of the winemaking process.³⁵ However, I would argue that it might actually represent a ἡλιαστῆριον.³⁶ Another tomb scene depicts a garden surrounded by an undulating wall.³⁷ Such undulating brick walls have been found by archaeologists and were used as enclosure walls of cult temple complexes.³⁸ Therefore, it seems such walls were used for open areas such as the ἡλιαστῆριον, not for roofed enclosures.

The Geniza documents contain a recipe for “good wine” that involved mixing honey with spices, plastering the jar over, and leaving it in the sun for 7 days. Shamsī is specifically mentioned elsewhere in the Geniza documents.³⁹ Vansleb, a seventeenth-century visitor to Egypt observed that wine was left open in the sun in those days.⁴⁰

Finally we read:

ثم نَحِي من الشمس وجعل على روسها جلود و تترك اربعة اشهر في الظل وتستعمل بعد ذلك ان شا
الله

Then remove it from the sun and put skins on its necks and leave it for four months in the shade and then use it after that, God willing.

The Greek texts indicate there were two stages of fermentation of wine: one of two weeks, another of several months.⁴¹ From one Greek papyrus, it can be deduced that the period of fermentation of grape wine was similar in the Greco-Roman period. In this text, the author wrote that he had not sealed some wine jars because the merchants wished to wait until December 31 to ascertain whether the wine had a good odour before purchasing it.⁴² In Greco-Roman times, wine was drawn from the vats between December and March.⁴³

35 Säve-Söderbergh, *Four* 18.

36 Säve-Söderbergh, *Four* pl. xv.

37 Wilkinson, *The manners* 143.

38 Spencer, *Brick* 114–116.

39 ENA 2808, f. 22 (Goitein, *A Mediterranean society*).

40 Vansleb, *Nouvelle* 255–256.

41 Kruit, *The meaning* 273.

42 *P. Oxy.* 1673 (Brun, *Le vin* 71).

43 Kruit, *The meaning* 273.

Raisin Wine

The second recipe is for a raisin wine:

صفة عمل الزبيب شمسي على رأي اهل مصر:
 يوخذ لكل عشرة ارطال بالمصري سبعة وعشرين رطلا ما حلوا يوخذ من الما المذكور سبعة ارطال
 وينقع الزبيب في العشرين رطل الما في مطر مزفت او غيره يقعد متنوع ستة سبوع ايام ويمرس في كل
 يوم من ثني ثلاثة مرس جيد قوي

Recipe for making 'Sunshine' Raisin (Drink) According to the Custom of the People of Egypt

For every 10 Egyptian *ratls* [of raisins] take 27 *ratls* of sweet water. Take from this water 7 *ratls* and soak the raisins in 20 *ratls* of water in a pitched or unpitched Byzantine amphora and let it sit soaking for 6 or 7 days, squeezing it strongly two or three times every day.

The Eucharistic wine of the Coptic Church is normally made from raisins. The raisins are cleaned with water and then placed in an earthenware pot filled with water to a depth of six centimetres above the raisins. They are soaked for three to five days, after which they are removed and squeezed.⁴⁴ Wine made from raisins was also esteemed in Napoleon's time as a source of vinegar. In those days, the raisins used were often imported from Cyprus or Greece.⁴⁵

The amphorae at the monastery of Epiphanius also were smeared with a resinous pitch for the clay of the jar would have otherwise been too porous to keep the wine from evaporating.⁴⁶

Two hundred years ago, the wine was first put in cylindrical earthenware jars and allowed to ferment for eight to fifteen days.⁴⁷ In Vansleb's day, this initial fermentation period lasted seven days, like in our text.⁴⁸

44 Khs-Burmester, *The Egyptian* 113.

45 Girard, *Details* 235.

46 Winlock and Crum, *The monastery* 79.

47 Gerard, *Details* 130.

48 Vansleb, *Nouvelle* 255–256.

ثم يفرغه في مجور كبير ويدوسه برجليه

Then you pour it into a large trough and crush it with the feet.

Ancient Egyptians treaded grapes with the feet to release their juices. This is frequently depicted in ancient tomb scenes.⁴⁹ It is also mentioned in Greek language texts from Egypt.⁵⁰ The French savants noted that the grapes were first crushed for about an hour in an earthenware jar.⁵¹ A number of large crushing installations have been unearthed, the earliest dating to the New Kingdom at the site of Tell el-Daba, but also a fair number from the Byzantine Period. In fact, one such installation was found at the site of Marea and another very similar one was excavated at Abu Mina both possibly dating to the fifth or sixth century C.E.⁵²

ثم يعصره ويفسل التفل بالسبعة ارطال اما المعزول المتاخرة من تتم الوزن غسيل ملبح الى ان لا يبقى في التفل شيئا

and then you press it and wash the sediment with the seven *ratls* of water left over until no sediment is left.

Napoleon's scholars witnessed the grapes being put in a wool sack and twisted to squeeze out their juice.⁵³ Grapes were pressed in a similar manner in ancient Egypt, but in a linen sack.⁵⁴

ويصفيه ويضاف اليه يفلش شمر غريض وبلاب فلوش مرتين اخضر وبمن دراهم ورق رند واوقية زر ورد ويجلا بثلاثة ارطال فطاره عال

And strain it and add to it 1 *fals* of fresh fennel seeds, 3 *fals* fresh wormwood and rosebay (*murratayn akhḍar*), 8 *dirhams* of bay leaves and an

49 For an overview of treading grapes in ancient Egypt, see Murray, Boulton, and Heron, *Viticulture* 586–588.

50 Rathbone, *Economic* 253–254.

51 Gerard, *Details* 130.

52 al-Fakharani, *Recent* 183–184.

53 Gerard, *Details* 130.

54 Montet, *La fabrication* 120–124.

uqiyya of rose petals and sweeten it with 3 *ratls* of excellent-quality fermented dough (*faṭṭara* 'āl).⁵⁵

Wine made from raisins, known as “straw wine” in Europe, is extremely sweet and needs no extra sweeteners.⁵⁶ In fact, according to Heine, additives like pepper, saffron, rosewater and musk were often used to compensate for the overly sweet taste of some wines.⁵⁷ However, in this case some sort of sweetener was also added. The “good wine” in the Geniza texts that I mentioned earlier was suggested by Goitein to simply be a syrupy additive to flavour grape wine.⁵⁸ In our recipe, it seems that something similar was happening.

ويوعى في الجرار ويحط في الشمس اسبوعين وان اضاف اليه دردى الخميرة كان اصلح

and put it in a bottle and put it in the sun for two weeks and if you add the dregs of yeast it will be better.

The bottle used here, the *jarra*, had a tall neck and two handles and was the kind of vessel in which wine was normally sold.⁵⁹ According to Napoleon's savants, the fermented wine was finally poured off into jars that had been used to import oil into Egypt, buried up to their neck, and then sealed.⁶⁰ The juice of the Eucharistic wine is poured into vessels in which they are allowed to ferment for at least forty days, after which it may be used for the Eucharist.⁶¹ Adding yeast would have helped to speed up the fermentation process and may have been necessary if the wine were made in winter from raisins dried during the previous summer's harvest.

Conclusion

While wine remained a drink of the elite throughout pharaonic times, its production methods are well-attested in visual and archaeological sources. In

55 As Nasrallah (*Annals*, 262 n.13) points out there are a number of Egyptian dialectal forms in this recipe such as reading 'sh' for 's.'

56 Heine, *Weinstudien* 34–35.

57 Ibid., 82.

58 Goitein, *A Mediterranean society* 260.

59 Heine, *Weinstudien* 85.

60 Gerard, *Details* 130.

61 Khs-Burmester, *The Egyptian* 82. According to Butler (*The Ancient* 281), this wine is not fermented, but from his description of its manufacture, this seems unlikely.

Greco-Roman times, wine became a drink of the masses and its production is mentioned frequently in both Greek and Demotic texts. Although the coming of Islam gradually reduced the importance of wine as a beverage, it continued to be manufactured in the monasteries and in the Fayyūm until recent centuries as attested by textual, archaeological and ethnographic sources. By tracing this process through the full range of sources available, it is apparent that winemaking in Egypt is an unbroken tradition of at least 5000 years. The climate and agricultural seasons played a pivotal role in shaping and maintaining the particular process and nature of Egyptian wine that distinguishes it from the wine in other parts of the Middle East, to the extent that Ibn al-Warrāq specifically indicated that two recipes in his compilation were Egyptian ones.

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