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Joy and sorrow in early Muslim Egypt : Arabic papyrus letters, text and content

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JOY AND SORROW IN EARLY MUSLIM EGYPT

ARABIC PAPYRUS LETTERS

TEXT AND CONTENT

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JOY AND SORROW IN EARLY MUSLIM EGYPT

ARABIC PAPYRUS LETTERS

TEXT AND CONTENT

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For my parents

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Khaled Younes
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Part one

INTRODUCTION

In Dhū al-Ḥijja 18/December 639, a force consisting of about 3,500 Arab troops commanded by the Muslim general ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (d. 43/664) crossed the frontier of Byzantine Egypt. Euphoric and motivated after the sweeping victories they had already achieved over the Persians and Byzantines in Persia and Syria only seven years after the prophet Muḥammad’s death in 11/632, the Muslims were now aiming to incorporate Egypt in the emerging Muslim empire. The caliph ‘Umar I (r. 13-23/634-644) sent a reinforcement of about 12,000 troops led by al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām (d. 36/656) to assist the small and poorly equipped army in its keen mission. After around two years of battles, clashes and sieges, Egypt fell into Muslim hands. Subsequent to the fall of Alexandria and after subduing the rest of the country, Muslims founded the city of Fuṣṭāṭ near the site of the Roman fortress Babylon signaling the beginning of a new era in Egypt’s history.¹

The conquest and the foundation of the new capital were just the beginning of long-running processes of massive changes in the administrative, linguistic, religious and social structures of the country, which eventually resulted in transforming Egypt into an Arabic-speaking and Muslim country. Whereas the administration witnessed swift and dramatic changes in the first two centuries after the conquest, the progress at the linguistic and religious levels was comparatively slow. The Arabic-speaking people long remained a minority consisting mainly of the offspring of the Arab conquerors, a small number of converts who preferred to speak the language of their new religion (Islam) and Egyptian officials who learned Arabic on the job as well as others for whom learning the language provided some advantages or necessity.²

¹ Al-Kindī (d. 350/961), *Kitāb al-wulāt wa-kitāb al-quḍāt*, ed. R. Guest, *The governors and judges of Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1912), 6-10; Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871), *Futūḥ miṣr wa-akhbāruhā*, ed. Ch. Torrey, *The history of the conquests of Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1920), 55-84; al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892), *Futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. M. de Goeje (Leiden: Brill, 1866; repr. 1992), 213-214; A.J. Butler, *The Arab conquest of Egypt and the thirty years of the Roman dominion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 209-210, 341 and note 1; H. Kennedy, *The great Arab conquests* (Philadelphia: Da Capo press, 2007), 139-168; P.M. Sijpesteijn, “The Arab conquest of Egypt and the beginning of the Muslim rule,” in: R.S. Bagnall (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine world, 300-700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 439-444; P.M. Sijpesteijn, “New rule over old structures: Egypt after the Muslim conquest,” in: H. Crawford (ed.), *Regime change in the ancient Near East and Egypt: from Sargon of Agade to the Seljuks. Proceedings of the British academy proceedings of the British academy* 136 (London: The British Academy, 2007), 183; W.E. Kaegi, “Egypt on the eve of the Muslim conquest,” in: C.F. Petry (ed.), *The Cambridge history of Egypt. Islamic Egypt 640-1517* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 34-61.

² For more about the Arabization and Islamization of Egypt, see for example H. Suermann, “Copts and the Islam of the seventh century,” in: E. Grypeou, M. Swanson, D. Thomas (eds.), *The encounter of eastern Christianity with early Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 95-109; G.C. Anawati, “Factors and effects of Arabization and Islamization in medieval Egypt and Syria,” in: I. Vryonis (ed.), *Islam and cultural change in the Middle Ages* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975), 17-41; S. Björneso, “L’arabisation de l’Égypte, le témoignage papyrologique,” in: D. Madiha, C. Miller (eds.), *Les langues en Égypte* (Cairo: Cedej, 1996), 93-107; R.W. Bulliet, “Conversion stories in early Islam,” in: M. Gervers, R.J. Bikhazi (eds.), *Conversion and continuity: indigenous Christian communities in Islamic lands: eighth to eighteenth centuries, Mediaeval studies* 9 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 122-133; Ch. Décobert, “Sur l’arabisation et l’islamisation de l’Égypte médiévale,” in: Ch. Décobert (ed.), *Itinéraires d’Égypte* (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1992), 273-300; D.C. Dennett, *Conversion and poll tax in early Islam* (Delhi: Idarah-I Adabyat-I Delli, 2000); D.P. Little, “Coptic conversion to Islam under the Bahrī Mamlūks 692-755/1293-1354,” *Bulletin of the school of oriental and African studies* 39 (1976), 552-569; B.B. Wilson, “The transition from Coptic to Arabic,” *Muslim world* 53 (1963), 145-150; A.M. ‘Umar, *Tārīkh al-lughā al-*

During the 1st/7th century, the Muslim presence was more or less restricted to the garrison cities of Fuṣṭāṭ and Alexandria as well as other military encampments in the province and the exceptional settlement of the Banū Mudlij in Kharibṭā on the western edge of the Delta.³ There was little or no contact between the Arab conquerors and the native Egyptians except for intercourse at the administrative level and the limited contact with the local farmers during the seasonal grazing of the troops in the countryside (*murtaba' al-jund*).⁴ It is said that the caliph 'Umar I issued a decree, in which he prevented the Arab soldiers from settling in the Egyptian countryside, cultivating lands themselves or even having lands cultivated through partnership (*muzāra'a*) insofar as their military services were still greatly needed to defend the country from the enemy's counterattacks on the one hand and to continue the military campaigns to bring the rest of the world under Muslim rule on the other.⁵ This situation had utterly changed at the turn of the 1st/7th century. The province was much more secure and the conquests had more or less stopped after reaching Spain in the far West and Transoxania in the far East.⁶

The time for consolidation also arrived at a more local level. In 109/727, the Muslim authorities in Egypt, reinforced by the caliph's support in Damascus, had decided to evacuate several hundred families belonging to the Arab tribe of Qays from Syria and settled them in rural areas in the eastern edge of the Delta for political and economic purposes.⁷ From then onwards the Arabs in Egypt individually and collectively began to spread out in the Egyptian countryside. A great stimulus for Arab migration into the Egyptian countryside came when the caliph al-Mu'taṣim (r. 218-227/834-841) ordered to dismiss all Arab forces from the military service (*dīwān al-jund*) and to stop their stipends (*aṭā'*).⁸ In search of alternative sources of income soldiers set off for the countryside to make a living from farming and trading.⁹ Exactly two centuries after the conquest, the Arab conquerors were cut loose from their military obligations leading to more and more traders

'arabiyya fī miṣr (Cairo: Al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-'Amma li-l-Ta'lif wa-l-Nashr, 1970); T.S. Richter, "Greek, Coptic and the 'language of the Hijra': the rise and decline of the Coptic language in the late antique and medieval Egypt," in: H. Cotton, R. Hoyland, J. Price, D. Wasserstein (eds.), *From Hellenism to Islam, cultural and linguistic change in the Roman Near East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 401-446; T.S. Richter, "Language choice in the Qurra dossier," in: A. Papaconstantinou (ed.), *The multilingual experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the Abbasids* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 189-220; Y. Lev, "Coptic rebellions and the Islamization of medieval Egypt (8th-10th century): medieval and modern perceptions," *Jerusalem studies in Arabic and Islam* (forthcoming).

³ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 142.

⁴ According to literary sources, 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ delivered a Friday speech in his mosque in Fuṣṭāṭ in which he exhorted the troops to go every spring to the countryside to graze their horses and to exploit its richness of sheep, milk and other agriculture products. In his speech, 'Amr also urged the troops to maintain good relations with the Christian Egyptians. See Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 139-143; al-Kindī, *Wulāt*, 21. See also S. Bouderbala, "An occasion for exploration and exploitation of a newly conquered countryside: the spring grazing of the *ḡund* in the Delta and Middle Egypt," in: A. Delattre, M.A.L. Legendre, P.M. Sijpesteijn (eds.), *Authority and control in the countryside, continuity and change in the Mediterranean 6th-10th century* (forthcoming).

⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 88-90, 162; al-Balādhurī, *Buldān*, 214. See also P.M. Sijpesteijn, "Landholding patterns in early Islamic Egypt," *Journal of Agrarian change* 9 (2009), 125-126.

⁶ Kennedy (2007), 296.

⁷ Al-Kindī, *Wulāt*, 76.

⁸ Al-Kindī, *Wulāt*, 193.

⁹ The earliest preserved Arabic business letter comes from Bahnasā (Oxyrhynchus) and is datable on palaeographical grounds to the 1st/7th century and the second is datable to 117/735, see P.SijpesteijnTravel, 115; P.RāḡibPlusAncienneLetter, 1-10. The earliest Arabic land leases belonging to Arab landholders date from 159-161/775-776. See CPR XXI, 56-61.

and farmers living at a considerable distance from the Muslim capital and surrounded by Christian Egyptians.¹⁰

Papyrus letters

The papyrus letters published and discussed in this dissertation allow us a unique look into this minority community who communicated amongst each other in Arabic in early Islamic Egypt. These original letters are extraordinarily rich and discuss topics mostly ignored by literary sources. The letters represent an authentic and reliable contemporary source to the crucial formative period of Islamic Egypt. They are without doubt the only dependable source that could deepen our grasp and broaden our knowledge on daily activities, concerns, thoughts, interests and the dogma of authors who are almost entirely invisible in other sources. The letters allow us direct access to people's personal lives in almost every layer in society and open a window to hear their voices without intermediaries. The letters are, however, difficult and challenging to decipher and interpret. Only with a high degree of scholarly competence, energy and patience the letters can be read while a constant vigilance not to make mistakes in reading and interpretation the scholar can be prevented from experiencing oversights which might result in misleading conclusions.

Arabic private and business letters constitute the largest part among all published Arabic papyrus documents. No systematic census of unedited papyri has ever been made, but all the catalogues of the unpublished collections put letters at the top of their lists.¹¹ Around six hundred private and business letters have been published so far with full edition and translation. The Banū 'Abd al-Mu'min archive alone constitutes one third of them.¹² The archive consists of a total 200 pieces; 121 items have already been published by Yūsuf Rāḡib. He has personally located and identified these different pieces from countless collections around the world (e.g. Paris, Berlin and Vienna) which he edited consecutively from 1982 to 1996 in four volumes entitled: *Marchands d'étoffes du Fayyoub*.¹³ Two other volumes are awaiting publication. Another one hundred papyrus letters are partially edited (cf. P.Ryl.Arab. I) and more than four hundred letters are listed in catalogues of papyrus collections with neither edition nor translation (cf. P.Ryl.Arab. II; P.Khalili II). Two hundred letters in these catalogues provide reproductions of the papyri which allow further investigation of the texts (see P.Khalili II). Sixty percent of all published letters are written

¹⁰ See also Sijpesteijn (2009), 126-131.

¹¹ See for example G. Khan, *A catalogue of the Arabic papyri in the Michaelides collection Cambridge university library* (online: <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/deptserv/neareastern/michaelides.html>); Arabic papyrus collection at Beinecke library of Yale University (online: <http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/brblsear/aboutpap.htm>); P.Gen.V.

¹² For more about this archive, see E.M. Grob, *Documentary Arabic private and business letters on papyrus. Form and function, content and context*. Beiheft 29 (Berlin–New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 105-118. See also chapter one.

¹³ P.Marchands I-III; V/I. The first three volumes contain 98 documents including legal documents, i.e. nine debt acknowledgments dated from 250–264/864–878 (P.Marchands I 2-10), one marriage contract dated to 252/866 (P.Marchands I 11) and one contract of partnership dated to 250/864 (P.Marchands I 1) as well as private and business letters belonging to the main figure of this family, Abū Hurayra Ja'far b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Mu'min. The fourth volume consists of 23 letters of another network of the textile trade.

on papyrus and the rest on paper.¹⁴ The majority of the letters is assigned on palaeographical grounds to the 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries, but there is a good number of letters from the earliest two Islamic centuries that were found outside the capital Fustāṭ and are directly connected to the settlement of Arabs in the countryside. Around sixty of these early letters have been edited,¹⁵ but some of them need indeed to be reassigned a different date, earlier or later.¹⁶

Despite the good number of published letters which has resulted in several useful analysis, a comprehensive and systematic study of the *contents* of these letters, using them as the great source for social, cultural and economic history of early Islamic Egypt that they are is still lacking in the papyrological research.¹⁷ Arabic papyri in general are rarely used for historical analysis and the letters even less so.¹⁸ The letters are barely investigated with

¹⁴ For an overview of the number of published letters in all volumes, catalogues and articles, see Grob (2010), 1, 1-21 and note 4; E.M. Grob, "Information packaging in Arabic private and business letters (8th to 13th c. CE): templates, slots and a cascade of reduction and rearrangement," in: T. Gagos, A. Hyatt et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the twenty-fifth international congress of papyrology*. Ann Arbor 2007, American studies in papyrology (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010), 277.

¹⁵ For early published private and business letters from Egypt, see Y. Rāḡib, "Une lettre familiale rédigée en 102/721," *Annales Islamologiques* 45 (2011), 273-284; P.Jahn 1[= G. Levi della Vida, "Remarks on a recent edition of Arabic papyrus letters," *Journal of the American oriental society* 64 (1944), 129; Chrest.Khoury I 96; P.Heid.Arab. II 1]; 2[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 129; P.Heid.Arab. I 7]; 3[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 130]; 4[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 130]; 5[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 130]; 6[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 130; P.World, 184]; 7[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 130; P.World, 185-186]; 8[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 131; Chrest.Khoury I 97]; 9[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 131]; 10[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 132]; 11; 12[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 133; Chrest.Khoury I 98]; 13[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 133; P.World, 183]; 17[= G. Levi della Vida (1944), 135]; P.RāḡibPlusAncienneLettre, 1-9; P.HanafiBusinessLetter, 153-161; CPR XVI 4; 7; 9; 18; 26; 27; 33; P.RāḡibLettres 3; 4; 9; 10; 11; 12; 19; P.David-WeillLouvre 9; 11; 12-13; 25; 26; 30; P.Cair.Arab. V 317; 337; P.Horak 85; P.Berl.Arab. II 49; 50; 51; 52; 53; 72; 73; 74; 75; P.Khalili I 14; 15; 21; 24; P.World, 138; 162-163; 186-187; P.SijpesteijnTravel, 115-152; P.Louvre6842; P.M. Sijpesteijn, "Army economics: an early papyrus letter related to 'aṭā' payments," in: R. Margarati, A. Sabra, P.M. Sijpesteijn (eds.), *Studies in the social and economic history of the medieval Middle East. Essays in honour of Avram L. Udovitch* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2011), 245-267; L. Reinfandt, "Leinenhändler im Herakleopolites in arabischer Zeit. P.Vindob. A.P. 15021 (PERF 576)," *Bulletin of the American society of papyrologists* 44 (2007), 97-123[= P.MugawiriAlqab 3, 117].

¹⁶ See Grob (2010a), 2-7, 11 and note 8. See also chapter one, dating.

¹⁷ See Werner Diem's comments in W. Diem, "Arabic letters in pre-modern times. A survey with commented selected bibliographies," in: A. Kaplony, E.M. Grob (eds.), *Documentary letters from the Middle East: the evidence in Greek, Coptic, South Arabian, Pehlevi and Arabic (1st-15th c CE)*, *Asiatische Studien* 62/3 (Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2008), 845, 862.

¹⁸ For historical studies using papyrus archives, see P.M. Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim state: the world of a mid-eighth-century Egyptian official* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); A.J. Silverstein, "Documentary evidence for the early historical of the *barīd*," in: P.M. Sijpesteijn, L. Sundelin (eds.), *Papyrology and the history of early Islamic Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 153-161; A.J. Silverstein, *Postal systems in the pre-modern Islamic world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Y. Rāḡib, "Marchands d'Égypte du VIIe au IXe siècle d'après leur correspondance et leurs actes," in: *Le marchand au moyen âge. Actes des congrès de la société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public (19e congrès, Reims, 1988)*, 25-33; K.M. Younes, "Textile trade between the Fayyūm and Fustāṭ in the iiird/ixth century according to the Banū 'Abd al-Mu'min archive," in: A. Regourd (ed.), *Documents et histoire. Islam, VIIe-XVIIe s. Actes des journées d'Études musée du Louvre/EPHE, Mai 2008. Ecole pratique des hautes études, Sciences historiques et philologiques II, Hautes Etudes Orientales - Moyen et Proche - Orient* 5/51 (Geneva: Droz, 2013), 313-334. See also S. Hopkins, *Studies in the grammar of early Arabic: based upon papyri datable to before 300 A.H./912 A.D.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). For historical analysis using archives on paper, see L. Guo, *Commerce, culture and community in a Red Sea port in the thirteenth century: the Arabic documents from Quseir* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2004); L. Guo, "Arabic documents from the Red Sea port of Quseir in the seventh/thirteenth century, part I: business letters," *Journal of Near Eastern studies* 58/3 (1999), 161-190; L. Guo, "Arabic documents from the Red Sea port of Quseir in the seventh/thirteenth century, part II: shipping notes and account records," *Journal of Near Eastern studies* 60/2 (2001), 81-117.

the exception of some typological and formalistic studies by Werner Diem and Geoffrey Khan¹⁹ in addition to Grob's recent book *Documentary Arabic private and business letters on papyrus*.²⁰ Grob's book is to be considered "the first monograph devoted to documentary Arabic letters, based on all available editions of Arabic private and business letters on papyrus."²¹ The volume does not produce new editions of Arabic papyrus letters, but greatly facilitates the task of deciphering and interpreting these texts. By grouping and analyzing the epistolary formulae attested in almost all private and business letters published so far and by providing many examples, including entire texts, from the original letters in the main text and the footnotes, Grob provides a useful tool with which to tackle unedited texts. The volume is successful in studying the Arabic private and business letters as one corpus and thereby offering new insights in the process of letter-writing in early Islamic Egypt.²²

Still the special value of these letters lies in their *contents* which have hardly been touched upon.²³ Some Arabic papyrologists have already indicated the great value of the original Arabic private and business letters for the study of early and medieval Islamic Egypt, both orally and in writing.²⁴ Nonetheless, they did not provide us with a concrete methodology with which to approach this far-reaching and intriguing task. The well-established field of Greek papyrology does offer some methods to study and use scattered papyri. So we are not totally lost in the world of papyrology. In his book, *Reading papyri, writing ancient history*,²⁵ Roger Bagnall shows the problems and offers valuable methods to use scattered and badly damaged documents to come from fragments and damaged documents to a lively antique history. The book is really an essential guide for anyone struggling with papyri and documentary sources seeking a general historical approach. Bagnall's and Criboire's book *Women's letters from ancient Egypt*²⁶ is a practical model of the application of Bagnall's approach on epistolary texts. In this book, Bagnall and Criboire used Greek and Coptic letters written to and from women in the timeframe 300 BC-800 AD. The volume studies in some detail how the letters were written, sent and read, and the level of literacy and the privacy of women. The volume also provides a clear image of the socio-economic status of women in the period of discussion. The second section of the volume consists of the translations of letters used in the discussion. In Judaeo-Arabic studies,

¹⁹ See P.Khalili I, 23-27; P.Khalili II, 63-66; G. Khan, "Remarks on the historical background and development of early Arabic documentary formulae," in: A. Kaplony, E.M. Grob (eds.), *Documentary letters from the Middle East: the evidence in Greek, Coptic, South Arabian, Pehlevi and Arabic (1st-15th c)*, *Asiatische Studien* 62/3 (Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2008), 885-906; Diem (2008), 843-883. See also P.Jahn, 153-200.

²⁰ E.M. Grob, *Documentary Arabic private and business letters on papyrus. Form and function, content and context*. Beiheft 29 (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 2010).

²¹ Grob (2010), 207.

²² See K.M. Younes, review of *Documentary Arabic private and business letters on papyrus*. *Bulletin of the American society of papyrologists* (forthcoming).

²³ But see on individual texts: P.SijpesteijnArchivalMind; P.SijpesteijnTravel; P.L.Bat. XXXIII 65; P.Horak 85; Sijpesteijn (2011), 245-267; Reinfandt (2007a), 97-123; Rāgib (2011), 273-284.

²⁴ See Diem (2008), 845, 862. For the great value of Arabic papyri including letters for the history of early and medieval Islamic Egypt, see A. Grohmann, "The value of Arabic papyri for the study of the history of mediaeval Egypt," *Proceedings of the royal society of historical studies* 1 (1952), 41-56.

²⁵ R.S. Bagnall, *Reading papyri, writing ancient history* (London-New York: Routledge, 2005).

²⁶ R.S. Bagnall and R. Criboire, *Women's letters from ancient Egypt, 300 BC-AD 800* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006).

Goitein's prominent work *A Mediterranean society*²⁷ based mainly on the Cairo-Geniza documents stands as a perfect example in describing the world of the letter writers and how to extract the history of their daily life. The work does not contain editions of complete texts, but analysis of the original letters with quotations and translations in the main text and the footnotes. Cairo-Geniza documents have also been used as a primary source for many recent scholarly projects, among which the work of March Cohen on poverty and charity in the Jewish community.²⁸ While the material and timeframe of the foregoing models are different, the methodology can be applied to the Arabic material.

One corpus/One story

This study aims to show what diverse and extensive information is described in the original letters and how, when taken together, they enrich our understanding of the Muslim society in Egypt after the conquest. In this dissertation, I will take an effort to analyze and interpret the letters for as far as we are able to do twelve hundred years after they were written. My main focus is the group of people who used the Arabic language in their correspondences during the first four centuries of Muslim rule in Egypt (1st-4th/7th-10th), but focusing mainly on the earliest two and a half centuries. Their ethnic and religious background can be understood as Arabs and Muslims, although we are not always able to recognize their social or economic position exactly.

In contrast to the original letters that cover daily life activities, Arabic literary texts including scholarly letters described in secretaries' handbooks and copies of letters (*rasā'il*) found in anthologies and literary sources are mainly written with the intention to be preserved and read by a public audience.²⁹ Literary texts in general are written from a male, urban élite perspective interested mainly in political and historical events and represent a late composition of earlier fluid oral traditions.³⁰ Likewise, the scholarly letters do not always represent an actual situation, but are regularly mere models and formulas. My central interest concerns day-to-day life and a population, which often was not part of the urban elite. I have chosen to focus on their concerns more than on the relation between or differences with these urban elites. Thus, all letters and copies of letters given in literary sources are neither studied nor cited in this study.

This thesis edits and studies forty-three private and business letters that have never been published. The letters have been collected from five different papyrus collections worldwide. The main corpus of letters (twenty letters) is kept in the Michaelides collection at Cambridge University library where I consulted the originals and was able to select these letters after making a systematic search through all the boxes with papyri. I would like to thank the imaging service department for providing me with the digital images of the

²⁷ S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean society: the Jewish communities of the Arab world as portrayed in the documents of the Cairo Geniza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967-1993).

²⁸ M. Cohen, *Poverty and charity in the Jewish community on medieval Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

²⁹ Diem (2008), 843-853.

³⁰ S. Humphreys, *Islamic history, a framework for inquiry* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1992), 25-49, 69-91. See also F.M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic origins. The beginnings of Islamic historical writing* (Princeton, New Jersey: The Darwin Press, INC, 1998), 1-31.

letters and the syndicates of the library for their permission to publish them in this dissertation. Fifteen letters are from Beinecke library of Yale University which are freely accessible on their website.³¹ I would like to seize the opportunity to express my deep gratitude to Prof. Andreas Kaplony for entrusting me to work on these items, considering that they were registered in his name for future publication. Thanks are also due to the imaging service department for providing me with the digital images and the permission for publication. Four letters stem from the national library of Egypt (*Dār al-kutub al-miṣriyya*). I am grateful to the department of Arabic papyri in the library for allowing me access to the originals. I would also like to thank Prof. Cornelia Römer and Ahmad Nabil for helping me to obtain the digital photographs of these items. I have also used the published photographs in the catalogue of Arabic papyri from the national library of Egypt.³² Two letters from the private Khalili collection have been edited on the basis of the published photographs in P.Khalili II. One letter belongs to the J. Willard Marriott library at the University of Utah. I owe thanks to Matt Malczyk who drew my attention to this papyrus. I am also grateful to the digital technologies division of the library for providing me with a scan and permission to publish it. Finally, one letter comes from the papyrus collection of the institute of papyrology in Heidelberg. I am greatly indebted to Prof. Andrea Jördens for sending me the digital image and giving me the permission for publication.³³

When selecting the letters, I searched for complete or nearly complete letters which are relevant to the study of emotions as well as fragments which are in some way significant either in their contents, i.e. emotions or in the new epistolary formulae they produce. The corpus is confined to the Arabic papyrus letters that were found in Egypt in the earliest two and a half *hijrī* centuries.³⁴ One letter, no. **18**, possibly dating to the late 3rd/9th century based on the formulae, script, style and format of the letter, is included because of the interesting information it contains and the scarcity of such kinds of letters. The letters deal with family, business and work concerns. Thirty letters are mainly related to family affairs (**1-30**), fourteen of them deal mostly with daily activities in managing household business (**3-16**), two letters touch upon marriage and divorce settlements (**1** and **2**), another two notify the death of close relatives (**17** and **18**), two are letters of condolence (**19** and **20**) and ten letters strengthen the bonds of kinship and friendship between the two correspondents (**21-30**). The rest of the letters is centered on business and work affairs (**31-43**). Fourteen letters of this corpus can be identified as women's letters, as they are mostly sent to, from, and in-between females (**1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 20, 23**). In the discussion and commentaries all relevant references in published private and business letters on papyrus and some of yet unpublished letters are included. Official and semi-official letters sent to, from, and in-between authorities are rarely cited in this thesis.

In spite of the fact that all the letters published in this study are single and somehow unrelated, lacking an archaeological and archival context, they can give reliable answers to a number of the hotly debated issues in modern academic scholarship about the early

³¹ <http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/brblsear/aboutpap.htm>

³² P.DarAlKutub.

³³ I intentionally added words of thanks in this paragraph to highlight these individuals' and institutions' help, without which this work would have been incomplete or even impossible.

³⁴ For more accurate dating, see chapter one, dating.

Muslim society and the following generations of the Arab conquerors in Egypt. The object here is not to answer many questions on the basis of this number of letters or to give exhaustive comments on every aspect given in the letters. All I attempt here is rather to study the letters as one corpus regardless of their archaeological and archival contexts. This thesis will show and argue that to read and study these texts as one corpus is indeed the right approach. Methodologically speaking, the study will follow a two-sided approach, namely the philological and historical approach. For the philological side, the study contributes forty-three complete editions of unpublished letters to the field of Arabic papyrology. As for the historical side, the thesis gives an analytical overview of the letters' contents with main focus on addressing the questions to be raised below.

The thesis is divided into two main parts. The first part comprises two chapters in addition to the introduction and the conclusion. The first chapter concerns the practicalities of letter-writing, using the encouraging results of several recent studies in this field.³⁵ The questions I would like to address in this chapter are: How important was letter-writing for the early Arab settlers in Egypt? What can we learn from the letters' contents about letter-writing, reading, dating, delivery, and the distance between the correspondents? What new palaeographical and linguistic features and epistolary formulae can we see in the letters published in this thesis? In the second chapter, an attempt will be made to explore the social and emotional aspects as they appear in the letters endeavoring to show: How did people in early Islamic Egypt express themselves, their joy and sorrow? How did they respond to misfortunes in their writings? What interested and stirred them? And what did they worry about and believe in? This chapter will also touch upon the organization of the Muslim society aiming to answer the questions: To what extent were the different segments of the Muslim society related to each other? How strong or weak were the social and blood ties? How large or small was their world; did they see themselves as a part of a large Muslim world or were they just limited to their own territory? The second section constitutes the edition of the letters which are classified thematically. Bearing in mind that every categorization is problematic, it is possible that one letter might fall in more than one category.

Editorial remarks

The edition of the texts has been made according to the guidelines established by Adolf Grohmann.³⁶ For each text I provide a physical description of the papyrus, the main characteristics of the handwriting, a short paragraph summarizing the contents of the letter, an edition of the original text in Arabic, diacritical dots in the original, a translation and finally a commentary. All editions will have these seven parts. I also provide whatever

³⁵ See P.World, 82-87; P.Khalili I, 27-46; Grob (2010a), 127-206; P.Qurra, 33-39; P.Khurasan, 66-90; P.Mird, XII-XLVI; P.M. Sijpesteijn, "Palaeography," in: C. Versteegh (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Arabic language and linguistics* 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 513-524; A. Kaplony, "What are those few dots for? Thoughts on the orthography of the Qurra papyri (709-710), the Khurasan parchments (755-777) and the inscription of the Jerusalem dome of the rock (692)," *Arabica* 55/1 (2008), 91-112.

³⁶ P.World, 98-109; A. Grohmann, *Einführung und Chrestomathie zur arabischen Papyruskunde. I: Einführung* (Prag: Státní Pedagogické Nakladatelství, 1954), 130-139.

information is available about the place of writing, receiving and finding. In most cases these issues are unknown to us. Occasionally, the place of finding is itself the place of writing or the place of receiving. The Arabic edition is kept as close as possible to the original. Diacritical dots are supplied throughout the text, but *hamza* and vowels are not added. Due to the fragmentary state of some papyri it was burdensome for me to decipher some words and to offer satisfactory readings to others. These reading problems are somewhat minor and do not influence or change the common sense of the text. The translation has been kept as near to the original as English usage permits. The commentary aims to indicate the orthographical and morphological mistakes, to provide other possible readings and to call the readers' attention to difficulties in the interpretation of the text. Both *hijrī* and Common Era dates are used. As a rule, the *hijrī* date is given first separated from the Common Era equivalent by a slash. Arabic texts are transliterated according to the system used by the *International Journal for Middle East Studies* which can be found online at: <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/ijmes/pages/transliteration.html>. For quoting the Qur'an, the study uses the translation by Marmaduke Pickthall.³⁷

This study follows the abbreviation system of the papyrological editions proposed in the last updated version of the checklist of Arabic documents which can be found online at: http://www.ori.uzh.ch/isap/isapchecklist/ISAP_Checklist_2011.pdf. The study also uses the abbreviations suggested for the articles by the Arabic papyrology database (APD) which is freely accessible on: <http://orientw.uzh.ch:8080/apd/requisites3a.jsp>.

Papyrological references are taken according to the editions of the papyri. For example, P.Khalili I 17.13, 3rd/9th = G. Khan, *Arabic papyri: selected material from the Khalili collection* (London-Oxford: Azimuth Editions, Oxford University Press, 1992), vol. 1, papyrus no. 17. line 13, dated 3rd/9th. The number of the edition is always Bold.

References to primary sources consist of a shortened version of the name of the author and part of the book's title. Secondary sources are referred to by the name of the author and the date of the publication. Full bibliographical information can be found in bibliography.

The edition of the texts is presented according to the usual papyrological practices and the following bracket system has been employed:³⁸

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| [] Single square brackets: | Indicate missing text believed to be written by the scribe. Completed by the editor, if possible. In cases where it is impossible to reconstruct the text the space within the brackets is left blank. |
| ⌈ ⌋ Double square brackets: | Enclose erasures, deleted by the scribe. |
| < > Angular brackets: | Indicate text left out by the scribe. Completed by the editor. |

³⁷ M.M. Pickthall, *The meaning of the glorious Koran: an explanatory translation* (New York: The New American Library, 1953).

³⁸ See P.World, 103-105.

{ } Curly brackets:	Enclose text written by mistake by the scribe.
\ / Diagonal strokes:	Enclose words and phrases written by the scribe in-between lines.
... Dots:	Indicate words or letters cannot be deciphered, usually because the ink has faded. The number of dots corresponds roughly the number of missing letters.
() Round brackets:	Enclose solutions of abbreviations in the Arabic text and words added for the better understanding of the sentence in the translation.
(?) Question mark:	Indicates uncertain reading.

CHAPTER ONE

Written communication in Arabic: public use of letters

Like all inhabitants of the Egyptian countryside, the early Arab settlers were in serious need of writing to cover the short and long distances separating them from their relatives, friends, business partners and agents in the capital and other remote areas in the province or even beyond the borders. The letter was first and foremost the most essential mode of written communication in nearly all societies in Antiquity, and the Arabic letter (*risāla*, *kitāb*, *ruq'a*, *jawāb*) in early Islamic Egypt is no exception.³⁹ It represented the fastest, cheapest and easiest means of contact. One might argue that during the earliest Islamic centuries in Egypt, when the writers of these Arabic letters remained a minority in a prevalently Coptic speaking environment, there might have been even more reasons to communicate in Arabic per post over longer distances. A sense of distance is already conveyed by the language and lay-out of the early letters (1st-mid 3rd/7th-mid 9th). To be more specific, by placing the internal address⁴⁰ immediately after the *basmala*, the sender indicates the physical remoteness between him and the addressee. This address was replaced by extensive blessings and prayers for the addressee in letters from the 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries.⁴¹ It has been suggested that in letters with initial blessings (letters from 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries), the sender presents himself as being in the virtual presence of the addressee rather than being in a remote place and thus pretends to overcome the distance separating between him and the addressee.⁴²

Via an extensive epistolary network, the Arab settlers in the Egypt were able to break their isolation and to speak to one another with some ease, since traveling in person undoubtedly required a lot of effort and money, as is made clear in letter **14** in our corpus. In this letter, the sender writes that he wanted to travel in person to visit the addressee, but when it turned out to be difficult, he apologized, wrote the letter instead, and sent it with a neighbor of his (“[*wa-ukhbiruka annī*] *uḥibbu an law qadartu ātī usallimu ‘alaykum ... fa-‘dhirnī ... anna ṣāḥib kitābī hādḥā ilayka jār yamurru bi-‘Abd al-Jabbār*,” ll.4-6). This also seems to be the case of the sender of letter **9**, who asked the addressee to sail to him along with another woman. In line 15, the sender says that he would not have written the letter, if he had had the ability to do otherwise, i.e. to travel in person (“*mā katabtu bihi ilayka wa-‘lam law annī qadartu [...]*”).

The letter was considered an appropriate substitute for the physical presence of the sender whether he was remote or close in reality. Particularly on sad occasions, the bereaved person would find solace and repose in a letter sent from an absent relative. Ruqayya bt. Yaḥyā, for example, the sender of letter **18**, was so grieved by the death of her

³⁹ See A. Gully, *The culture of letter-writing in pre-modern Islamic society* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 2.

⁴⁰ For this term, see Grob (2010a), 39-42.

⁴¹ See Grob (2010a), 43-48.

⁴² See Khan (2008), 895; Grob (2010a), 42.

son. Ruqayya was, however, even more lamenting the fact that she did not receive a letter from her full brother, who was absent during the misfortune (“*wa-lastu asma’u li-akhī khabar wa-lā asma’u minhu kitāb fa-askunu ilā ‘ilm dhālika wa-astarīhu ilayhi*,” l.8). Moreover, Ruqayya asked her aunt Umm al-Qāsim, the addressee, not to withhold writing her (“*wa-anā uhibbu aḥabbaki Allāh an lā taqṭa’ī ‘annī kitābaki*,” l.10). The two letters of condolence, **19** and **20**, are a clear evidence of the letter as being an ideal consolatory substitute for one’s physical presence in times of loss and grief. People would certainly try to attend funerals and to be present to comfort relatives and friends in times of sorrow, but when one could not be present in person, a letter of condolence was the best alternative.⁴³

The letter could also be a nice and effective way to apologize for being late. Take the case of the absent husband ʿĪsā, the author of letter **4**, for example. ʿĪsā wrote a letter to his wife, anonymous to us, apologizing and explaining the reasons for his delay and wishing not to stay longer after writing this letter (“*rajawtu allā uqīmu ba’d kitābī ilaykum shay’ ḥattā aqdim aqrī’ī nafsaki al-salām wa-‘dhirnī*,” ll.9, 18).

Letters were not only used for long distance correspondences, but also for correspondence of less than one day distance. In one published letter from the 3rd/9th century, the sender asks the addressee, both anonymous to us, to visit him on the same day he wrote his letter in order to enjoy chatting to each other (“*uhibbu adāma Allāh ni’mataka an tasurrānī bi-qurbika wa-mu’ānasatika yawmanā hādhā li-tawfīr ḥazzī min mubāsamatika wa-l-tamattu’ min ru’yatika wa-l-sama’ min ṣuwaytika muwaffaqan in shā’a Allāh*,” P.Berl.Arab. II **76.3-4**). A similar request appears in another contemporary letter (“*wa-anā uhibbu fadatka nafsī an tasurrānī bi-muḥādathatika fī yawmika hādhā wa-tasurrānī bi-dhālika in shā’a Allāh*,” P.Berl.Arab. II **80.6-7**, 3rd/9th). In another letter, one Junāda orders a certain Zabān and his mates, the addressees, to bring six hundred rams of the sheep of a certain Ibrāhīm b. Maymūn on the same day he wrote his letter (Friday) so that they could sell them the next day, Saturday, and the day after, Sunday, urging them to hurry up (“*kuntu katabtu ilaykum amartukum an tuqaddimū min ḍa’n Ibrāhīm b. Maymūn sitt-mi’a kabsh fa-l-yakun ḥaqquhu akbaru minnī fihā li-tanfuqa minnā wa-l-yakun qudūmukum bihā al-yawm la-‘allanā nabī’uhā ghadan yawm al-sabt wa-ba’d ghadan yawm al-aḥad in shā’a Allāh fa-‘ajjilū ilayhi wa-lā tu’akhhirūhu sā’a in shā’a Allāh*,” PERF **663**[= P.World, 161-162].3-8, 3rd/9th). Moving with six hundred rams would definitely require from the addressees more than one day notice, if they were not very close to the place of the sender.

With the course of time, especially from late 2nd/8th century onwards, writing, sending and receiving letters became more or less part of the daily activities. The number of the letters increased massively. The letters became almost equal to talking with many of them exhibiting an oral style of writing. The *empty letters*⁴⁴ or letters that contain only information about the health of the sender and his family, inquire about the wellbeing of the addressee and his family, and convey salutations to and from relatives and friends with no further essential contents are a clear evidence of the frequent use of letters in the

⁴³ See also J. Chapa, *Letters of condolence in Greek papyri* (Firenze: Edizioni Gonnelli, 1998), 30-32; K. Worp, “Letters of condolence in the Greek papyri: some observations,” *Analecta papyrologica* 7 (1995), 149-154.

⁴⁴ The term *empty letters* is my suggestion.

private realm (see in this corpus letters **15**, **21** and **22**).⁴⁵ The following example indicates a regular interval of every day correspondence between two individuals. In this letter, the sender greets the addressee and asks about how he passed the previous night, how he is doing today, and how Umm Muḥammad, Muḥammad and the rest of the family are doing (“*a’limnī ḥafīzaka Allāh kayfa kunta fī laylatika al-māḍiya wa-kayfa anta fī yawmika wa-kayfa Umm Muḥammad ‘āfāhu Allāh wa-Muḥammad wa-jamā‘at al-‘iyāl*,” P.Jahn **13**[= P.World, 183].3-6, 3rd/9th).

In short, private letters cover almost all everyday-life practices. There are indeed many letters which are highly rhetorical and full of standard topics and stereotyped expressions, but there are also several practical correspondences, which contain very useful information and serve specific purposes.⁴⁶

In business, letters were much more needed to regulate the trade. Many Arabic individual letters and archives inform us that very complicated and sophisticated methods of delegation and cooperation over great distances were created to move goods and wares from their production centers to the markets of Fuṣṭāṭ, Alexandria and elsewhere in Egypt or even beyond the borders.⁴⁷ These extensive commercial networks included several individuals such as workers, dealers, producers, drivers, agents, middlemen, sellers and buyers. Nearly all these parties were exchanging letters regularly accompanying the delivery and order of goods. For example, the commercial archive of the Banū ‘Abd al-Mu‘min shows a regular interval of every week correspondence between the Banū ‘Abd al-Mu‘min, a family of textile merchants living in the Fayyūm oasis in the 3rd/9th century, and their providers, weavers and smaller textile producers and traders, and their agents in the capital Fuṣṭāṭ, the Banū Thawr.⁴⁸ The commercial letters of this archive give us endlessly detailed and extensive information on the day-to-day mechanics of the textile trade between the important textile producing center in the Fayyūm and the booming market in Fuṣṭāṭ. They also give important insights into the organization of textile production, the arrangement of transport to and from the capital, of goods, money, orders, the financial tools available, the division of responsibilities and the regulation of accountability between traders, agents and workers. In brief, a socio-economic history of medieval Fayyūm can be written on the basis of this archive.⁴⁹

The individual business letters in our corpus also show extensive commercial networks with several intermediaries including women (see letters **31** and **40**) and refer to a regular exchange of letters between remote cities such as Alexandria, Dimyāṭ and Fuṣṭāṭ. A few selected examples will manifest this. Al-Miswar b. Rajā’, the author of letter **32**, wrote to his relative and business partner, al-Khayr b. Muslim, once he reached the city of Dimyāṭ

⁴⁵ See also Rāḡib (2011), 273-284, dated 102/721; P.Loṭh **2**[= P.Berl.Arab. II **75**], 2nd/8th. Compare this with late antique letters, see J.-L. Fournet, “Esquisse d’une anatomie de la lettre antique tardive d’après les papyrus,” in: R. Delmaire, J. Desmulliez, P.-L. Gatier, (eds.), *Correspondances: documents pour l’histoire de l’Antiquité tardive. Actes du colloque (Lille, Novembre 2003)*. Collection de la maison de l’Orient et de la Méditerranée 40. Série littéraire et philosophique 13 (Lyon: Maison de l’Orient et de la Méditerranée, 2009), 23-66.

⁴⁶ For more about topics and topoi in Arabic papyrus letters, see Grob (2010a), 90-93.

⁴⁷ See P.SijpesteijnTravel, 115-152.

⁴⁸ See also S.D. Goitein, “The commercial mail service in medieval Islam,” *Journal of the American oriental society* 84/2 (1964), 122.

⁴⁹ For historical and economic analysis of this archive, see Rāḡib (1988), 25-33; Younes (2013), 313-334.

informing him that he reached the city in good health and bought the linen he was looking for (“*katabtu ilayka hīna qadimtu Dimyāt wa-anā sālim ṣāliḥ wa-llāh maḥmūd ukhbiruka annī qadimtu Dimyāt fa-wajadtu al-bazz fa-sharaytuhu*,” ll.5-6, 8-9). Shurayḥ b. ‘Amr, the author of letter **33**, instructs his business partner/agent, Ibn Abū ‘Ābid, to accomplish some business tasks, amongst which to buy him olives from Dimyāt for one *dirham* (“*wa-tashtarī lī bi-dirham zaytūn min Dimyāt*,” l.12). While writing this letter Shurayḥ was not, of course, in Dimyāt but at some distance outside the town. In letter no. **38**, al-Muṣ‘ab b. Subayḥ writes to the Christian Jurayj reporting on his arrival at Fuṣṭāṭ and the business situation in the city. This letter is one of the earliest correspondences that record business relations between Arab Muslims and Christian Egyptians after the Arab conquest of Egypt.

From the various lines of argument set out above it would seem safe to conclude that letter-writing was a widespread practice within the Arabic speaking milieu in early and medieval Islamic Egypt to such a degree that it was almost a regular routine of daily life.⁵⁰ Native Egyptians were, on the other hand, communicating with each other in Coptic and sometimes in Greek, and continued to do so for the largest part until the 6th/12th century, when the vast majority of Christian Egyptians started to adopt Arabic as their spoken and written language even within their own Christian communities.⁵¹ A handful of Arabic and Coptic-Arabic letters show, nonetheless, that some Christian Egyptians began to communicate in Arabic in the late 3rd-early 4th/late 9th-early 10th centuries.⁵²

Below, I briefly discuss the script, language, dating, layout and format as well as the epistolary formulae of the letters published in this thesis. As I mentioned earlier, some recent works have studied these topics with encouraging results.⁵³ However, our letters offer some unique features which are worth highlighting.

1. Script

The letters published in the thesis show a great variety of handwritings, ranging from very irregular, clumsy and slow to finely executed, proficient and rapid hands. Most hands show no difficulties in writing or handling the pen in general which give the impression that most of the writers must have been trained and received some education to be familiar with writing. Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān, the author of letter **15**, is an exception. His slow and clumsy handwriting exhibits serious difficulties in handling the pen. Moreover, he makes many mistakes in grammar and spelling. Each letter is written in only one single hand⁵⁴ that could

⁵⁰ See also Grob (2010a), 207.

⁵¹ For the complex linguistic situation in Egypt after the Islamic conquest, see L. Berkes, and K.M. Younes “A trilingual scribe from Abbasid Egypt? A note on CPR XXII 17,” *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 58/1 (2012), 97-100; T.S. Richter, “Coptic letters,” in: A. Kaplony, E.M. Grob (eds.), *Documentary letters from the Middle East: the evidence in Greek, Coptic, South Arabian, Pehlevi and Arabic (1st-15th c CE)*, *Asiatische Studien* 62/3 (Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2008), 737-770; Richter (2009), 404; Grob (2010a), 86 and note 5; ‘Umar (1970), 45-55.

⁵² T.S. Richter, A. Delattre, B. Liebrez, and N. Vanthieghem, “Écrire en arabe et en copte: Le cas de deux lettres bilingues,” *Chronique d’Égypte* 87 (2012), 170-188; Richter (2008), 742-743.

⁵³ See P.World, 82-87; P.Khalili I, 27-46; Grob (2010a), 127-206; P.Qurra, 33-39; P.Khurasan, 66-90; P.Mird, XII-XLVI; Sijpesteijn (2007b), 513-524.

⁵⁴ In Greek, Coptic and Judaeo-Arabic letters, the final greetings and a signature were sometimes added by the sender’s own hand in case the letter was penned by a scribe. See Grob (2010a), 87 and note 7; Bagnall and Cribior (2006), 46-48.

either be the hand of the sender himself or someone else, a professional scribe for example. Private letters in general hardly touch upon who actually wrote and read them.⁵⁵ At the best of my knowledge, the sender never mentions whether he wrote the letter in his own hand or that he had it written by someone else. This information emerges from reading between the lines.

In only four cases in our corpus, both direct and indirect references in the texts show different persons being involved in writing the letters instead of the senders. In letter **16**, a certain al-Rabī b. Muslim writes for one Salmān b. Mughīth to two addressees in Fuṣṭāṭ, i.e. ‘Ubayd b. Yasār and someone else whose name is missing. In line 14, al-Rabī cites his name and greets the two addressees (“*kataba al-Rabī b. Muslim wa-huwa yaqra’u ‘alaykumā al-salām*,”). The letter is well written, structured and composed. Moreover, the writer uses the dual consistently and makes almost no grammatical mistakes, indicating his high command of the language. In other words, the well trained hand and the proper language refer to a professional scribe. The fact that the scribe conveys greetings to the addressees does not mean, in any case, that he knows them in person. Conveying greetings from professional scribes to the addressee/s seems to be a general trend rather than a personal concern. Another example supports this interpretation. An anonymous professional female scribe also records her greetings to the addressees after she has completed the letter (“*wa-l-kātiba taqra’u ‘alaykumā al-salām*,” P.Khalili I 17.13, 3rd/9th). While the voice of letter **23** claims direct communication between a woman and her sister, both addressees, i.e. the interior and exterior addressees, carry the name of the servant of a certain ‘Amr (*ghulām ‘Amr*). The writer makes many mistakes in grammar and spelling. Furthermore, he retains the masculine participle in places, indicating his poor command of the language. So when ‘Amr b. Zubayd, the sender of letter **2**, wanted to write to his father-in-law in order to inform him about the divorce, he did not write the letter himself for one reason or another but asked another person, presumably a professional scribe, to pen it for him. This hypothesis is based on a number of grounds. In the first place, the letter is written in a finely executed and proficient hand. Secondly, the letter exhibits an oral style of writing with some minor grammatical and spelling mistakes. Thirdly, the letter is full of repetitions and synonyms which are very common features in dictated letters. Finally and most importantly, the traces of dictation are straightforward in lines 19-20, where the sender is referred to in the third person.⁵⁶ Letter **6**, too, is not penned in the hand of Umm Zur‘a, the female sender, but in the hand of the writer, anonymous, who penned also the letter on the recto, letter no. **3**.

In a similar vein, references to different persons being involved in reading letters for illiterate addressees are infrequently attested in letters. Finding a good reader was definitely a difficult task at that time, since he should have a considerable knowledge of Arabic and the ability to read the partially dotted Arabic script. Even more important, he must be a trustworthy person, as he would be acquainted with the letter’s contents. Misreading and misunderstanding the letter’s contents could have caused a lot of troubles between the two correspondents. To demonstrate this, in one published letter, the sender,

⁵⁵ See also Grob (2010a), 86-89, 100-104.

⁵⁶ For more extensive discussion on dictated letters, see Grob (2010a), 86-89. See also Bagnall and Criboire (2006), 59-65.

unknown to us, informs Abū ‘Abd Allāh, the addressee, that he sent a letter to a certain ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṭalḥī, but this illiterate addressee asked another person to read the letter for him. The reader’s reading capacity was so poor that he totally misread and misunderstood the letter’s contents which made the addressee unsatisfied (“*wa-azunnuhu a’ṭā kitābahu man lā yuḥsinu yaqra’u fa-qara’a lahu bi-mā lam aktub bihi fa-qad fahima shay’ mā huwa min ra’yī walā yurḍī*,” P.Cair.Arab. V 295.6-8, 3rd/9th).

In case the letter is being sent to women, trustworthy carriers and readers are highly recommended. In one published letter, a certain Khunāsa bt. Muslim and another lady write to one Umm al-‘Arab bt. ‘Ammār and other women to inform them about their wellbeing and ask them to write back with their news. Khunāsa knows well that all the female addressees are illiterate. This is why she commended the carrier of the letter, Yazīd b. Sālim, to read and write for them. To assure his trustworthiness, loyalty and dependability, Khunāsa describes Yazīd as a good servant of God (“*fa-idhā katabtum fa-ktubū thumma idfa’ū kitābakum ilā man ya’tikum bi-hādhā al-kitāb fa-innahu ya’rifunā wa-huwa yursiluhu ilaynā ma’a man ya’rifu wa-idhā faragha min ḥājatihi marra ‘alaykum thumma taktubū ma’ahu wa-in aradtum yaktubu lakum aw yaqra’u lakum salūhu fa-innī qad amartuhu wa-huwa ni’ma al-‘abd li-llāh wa-smuhu Yazīd b. Sālim*,” P.Loth 2[= P.Berl.Arab. II 75].10-14, 2nd/8th).⁵⁷

Unfortunately, very little is known about the level of literacy among the Arabs, both men and women, as well as the educational institutions and the training of the scribes in early Islamic Egypt. Both literary and documentary sources are wrapped in silence regarding these issues. However, it is widely accepted among Arabic papyrologists that the vast majority of the Arabic private and business letters was written in the senders’ own hands in a private realm and not in chanceries by professional scribes.⁵⁸ Petra Sijpesteijn has touched upon the issue of literacy on the basis of a semi-official archive from the mid-second/mid-eighth century. In her concluding remarks, Sijpesteijn argues that while the level of illiteracy among the Arabs was high in the first two Islamic centuries and that the majority of population was yet non-native Arabic speakers, this fact did not prevent writing being the prevailing method of communication between individuals and between the state and the subjects. Moreover, she affirms that written documents penetrated every social and geographical layer of the society, even though the ability to read and understand Arabic was more widespread than to write.⁵⁹ Grob, on the other hand, has connected the huge amount of survived documents with the level of literacy, arguing that “the amount and kind of surviving records indicate a society with an advanced literacy level and frequent written contact. The written word was important.”⁶⁰ Indeed, the huge amount of survived texts could be a good indication of a high level of literacy in case we proved that they were truly written in the senders’ own hands.

Let us turn now to the palaeographical features attested in the letters published in this thesis. The letters exhibit many features of the early script, which is generally characterized by elongating lines between characters and wide spaces between words and characters. In many cases, words are broken off at the end of a line and continued on the

⁵⁷ See also Grob (2010a), 100-101.

⁵⁸ See Grob (2010a), 159; Diem (2008), 845.

⁵⁹ See Sijpesteijn (2013), chapter 4.

⁶⁰ Grob (2010a), 207.

next (see 1.12-13, 13-14, 20-21; 2.16-17, 27-28, 28-29; 3.2-3, 14-15; 8.7-8; 16.3-4, 6-7, 11-12; 17.18-19; 20.5-6; 21.5-6). Diacritical dots are widely used, but randomly, without following any systematic practice. *Hamza* and vowel signs are conspicuously absent (cf. *al-‘atā’* 1.7; *al-samā’* 2.14; *al-thanā’* 2.24; *shā’a* 2.30, 15.8, 17.10, 27.13, 31.10).⁶¹ The final and freestanding *alif* usually rise above similar vertical letters in a straight form and extend below the base line. In some places, the freestanding *alif* bends to the right from the bottom. *Dāl* and *dhāl* are very much alike and easily confusing without dots distinguishing them and often have an upturning top to the right (cf. *Dimyāt* 8.6; *alladhī* 21.4, 6). *Sīn* and *shīn* are frequently written with three teeth. On occasions, *sīn* and *shīn* are written as a straight line with three dots written over the line to represent the teeth (cf. *al-salām* 24.18; *bi-sm* 36.1, 37.1; *al-sū’* 36.4; *‘ishrīn* 37.6). The three dots of *shīn* are usually aligned horizontally (cf. *sha’nahā* 3.16; *ashadda* 4.11). *Ṣād* and *dād* are either horizontally elongated or oval in shape (cf. *al-ṣihr* 2.22; *ṣibyānī* 7.7; *Ḥafṣa* 8.2). The horizontal stroke of initial and freestanding *‘ayn* and *ghayn* usually extends to the right (cf. *ghulām* 3.18; *‘inda* 3.10; *‘alaynā* 7.9). In many cases, the head of medial and final *‘ayn/ghayn* consists of two oblique strokes which are not joined at the top by a horizontal stroke forming the shape of the letter *v* (cf. *ya’finā* 3.8; *ba’daka* 3.20; *Rabī’a* 5.2; *al-nīma*, *al-‘āfiya* 5.6; *yaj’ala* 12.7; *taghfalā* 16.11). On occasions, *fā’* appears with a diacritical dot under the letter and *qāf* with one dot over it (cf. *ya’finā* 3.8; *fī-mā* 3.15; *bi-qawl* 3.12; *al-fīṭr* 4.12; *uqīmu* 4.9; *al-khalaf* 4.14; *faḍlihi*, *al-‘āfiya*, *qaḍā’ihi* 5.6). In places, the tail of the final and independent *qāf* extends vertically downwards before bending to the left resembling the old Arabic *qāf* (cf. *al-turuq* 1.8; *al-ḥaqq* 1.22; *Ṭalq* 17.2).⁶² Initial and medial *kāfs* are either horizontally elongated with an extended base, an upper stroke parallel to the base line and a rightward shaft at the top or hairpin-shaped (cf. *kitābuka* 3.5; *kitābī* 4.9; *kullīhi* 4.13; *kataba* 16.14). *Mīm* has a round head and a very short tail (cf. *al-ḥakam*, *lam* 2.10; *al-ḥirm* 2.11; *ghulām* 3.18; *bi-sm* 5.1). Final *yā’* usually bends backwards in a straight line.⁶³

2. Language

The language of the letters edited in the thesis exhibits many orthographical and morphological peculiarities similar to all Arabic papyrus letters and deviating in many aspects from the accepted norms of the standard Arabic. In the following lines, I list some of these peculiarities without going into details, owing to the fact that some studies have widely discussed this topic.⁶⁴ *Scriptio defectiva* and *plena* are frequently attested against classical Arabic rules (cf. *thalāthat* 1.25; *lisānahā* 2.18; *ghulām* 3.9; *dīnār* 3.19; *dhālika* 15.11).⁶⁵ *Tanwīn alif* is lacking in most cases in the direct object and after numerals which would have been obligatory in classical Arabic (cf. *qawl* 2.13; *amr* 2.28; *dīnār* 34.6).⁶⁶ *Tā’ marbūṭa* is sometimes represented in *status constructus* by *tā’ maftūḥa*, especially in the word *rahmat* in

⁶¹ Hopkins § 19 & 20. See also in this corpus letter 6.14 and the commentary.

⁶² See also P.Khalili I, 33-34.

⁶³ For more extensive discussion on the palaeography of the papyri, see P.World, 82-87; P.Khalili I, 27-46; Grob (2010a), 159-172; P.Qurra, 33-39; Sijpesteijn (2007b), 513-524. See also P.Khurasan, 66-81; Kaplony (2008), 91-112.

⁶⁴ See Grob (2010a), 156-158. For more about the language of papyri, see P.World, 94-98; Hopkins, xxvii-xxviii.

⁶⁵ Hopkins § 9.

⁶⁶ Hopkins § 167.

the final *salām* greeting, which is how this final greeting is written in all the letters of our corpus as well as in other published letters.⁶⁷ *Alif* is usually absent after the vocative particle *yā* (cf. 15.7; 20.8).⁶⁸ The long vowel is maintained in the jussive in most of cases (cf. 3.10; 9.7; 13.18; 26.8; 43.7).⁶⁹ The accusative of the plural-*īn* usually replaces the nominative-*ūn* (cf. 5.4; 8.4; 12.5; 17.6; 41.5.).⁷⁰ The feminine plural form is absent (see letters 5 and 12). In few cases, *dād* is converted to *zā* and vice versa (cf. *faḏluhu* instead of *faḏluhu* and *‘aḏīm* instead of *‘aḏīm* 21.7, 22.9).⁷¹ The letters also show a unique orthographical feature, i.e. the long *ā* is sometimes replaced by a little hook (see *rijāl* and *ilāh*, 2.16, 21; *‘āfānā*, 15.3; 28.4; 29.3; 32.4; 35.4; 39.4), which might reflect the traces of vernacular pronunciation of *imāla*.⁷² For more orthographical and morphological peculiarities, see the commentaries.

3. Dating

For a long time, Arabic papyrologists have believed that private and business letters do not carry a full date in their texts.⁷³ The recent publication of a complete private letter sent from a man to four female relatives dated to the 24th (six nights remaining) of Dhū al-Qa‘da of the year 102/721 should change this assumption.⁷⁴ Also the papyrus P.Mird 52 forms the conclusion of a private letter in which the month and the year are given, i.e. Dhū al-Ḥijja 126/October 744. In many cases, the sender tends to specify the place and time of writing by the day of the week or the month without mentioning the respective year as it was obviously known to both parties of the letter.⁷⁵ This information could either be found at the beginning or the end of private and business letters in contrast to official letters, in which a full date is usually given at the end.⁷⁶

With the exception of letter 24 which is partially dated to the 28th of Dhū al-Ḥijja and letter 18 which was written on Monday the 22nd of Ṣafar, none of the letters of this corpus bears a full date. Thus, I had to rely mainly on the script for dating, which is approximate.⁷⁷ In her book, Grob studied the development of the script from a less cursive tendency in the 1st to 2nd/7th to 8th centuries to progressing cursiveness in the 3rd to 4th/9th to 10th centuries. She offers new techniques to measure the cursiveness of the script and thereby reaches a more accurate dating system on the basis of the script.⁷⁸ Although Grob is not the first to

⁶⁷ Hopkins § 47.a. See also in this corpus letter 1.21 and the commentary.

⁶⁸ Hopkins § 49.a.ii.

⁶⁹ Hopkins § 82.d.

⁷⁰ Hopkins § 86.a.

⁷¹ Hopkins § 39.b, 41.

⁷² Hopkins § 7.

⁷³ See Diem (2008), 855; Grob (2010a), 49, 207.

⁷⁴ Rāḡib (2011), 273-284.

⁷⁵ The papyrus letter P.RāḡibLettres 7 dated on palaeographical grounds to the 3rd/9th affirms this fact. In this letter, the sender Muḥammad b. Wahb informs his servant Faṭḥ, the addressee, that he received the latter's dated letter to Rabī I ("wa-huwa 'alā mā waradat bihi risālatuka al-mu'arrakha fī Rabī al-awwal," l.3). The sender wrote his letter one month later, i.e. Thursday, the 3rd of Rabī II ("wa-kutiba yawm al-khamīs li-thalāth layāl khalawn min shahr Rabī al-ākhar," ll.4-5).

⁷⁶ Diem (2008), 855; P.Khalili II, 64. See also in this corpus letter no. 24.19 and the examples provided in the commentary.

⁷⁷ For the problems of dating letters on the basis of the script, see P.Khalili I, 27; Grob (2010a), 2.

⁷⁸ Grob (2010a), 159-206.

deal with this topic, her study is substantially more comprehensive and detailed than any preceding treatments.⁷⁹

In addition to the script, the epistolary formulae and layout of the letters are also considered in dating. To be more precise, the presence of the internal address following immediately the *basmala* has been always proposed as an important device for dating letters. It is argued that no internal address is given in private and business letters after the turn of the 2nd/8th century and that the internal address was either placed above the *basmala* or omitted altogether with the other elements of the prescript, and replaced by long prayers and blessings for the addressee in letters from the 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries.⁸⁰ Grob's discussion of the presence of an internal address or prescript in general is a bit confusing. On p. 39, Grob argues that no internal address is given in private and business letters after the turn of the 2nd/8th century and on p. 41, she affirms that the change of letters with prescripts to letters without prescripts was abrupt. But on p. 42, she says: "The existence or absence of the internal address is an important device for dating letters. But unfortunately, this important change did not take place sharply around the turn of the 2nd/8th to the 3rd/9th century. There are letters without internal address dating probably from before the 3rd/9th c., and some with internal address from the 3rd/9th century." In contrast, on p. 83, Grob states: "Mandatory parts are in letters of the 1st-2nd/7th-8th centuries: *Basmala*, *prescript* and *final blessings*. In the letters of the 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries, the mandatory *prescript* is replaced by a mandatory *initial blessings* section." One would like to have conclusive evidence: Was there a transitional period between letters with and without a prescript or not? Do letters with prescripts exist after the turn of the 2nd/8th century or did they totally disappear at that time? These questions are really difficult to answer, owing to the fact that in comparison to the letters without prescripts, very few letters with prescripts remain, and most of those are difficult to date exactly. However, two unpublished private letters with a prescript (P.Cam.Michaelides A 1368r and P.CtYBR.inv. 2681(B)), relating to al-Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍḍāla (d. 252/866), the grandson of the judge al-Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍḍāla (in office 168-169/784-786 and 174-177/790-793), suggest that the letters with prescripts indeed continued to be written in the 3rd/9th century.⁸¹

Thus, to rest dating our letters on a solid ground I would date all the letters with prescripts to the 1st-mid 3rd/7th-mid 9th centuries. Four letters can be dated, however, more specifically to the late 1st-early 2nd/late 7th-early 8th centuries (see letters **2**, **5**, **12**, **16**) on the basis of the early palaeographical peculiarities. Letter **21** is internally dated on the basis of the name of the governor of Egypt al-Ḥurr b. Yūsuf (in office 105-108/724-727) and the caliph Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 105-125/724-743), who represent the addressees of the letter. Letter no. **18** is reassigned a later date (late 3rd/9th century) on the basis of its formulae, script, layout and format.

4. Layout and format

⁷⁹ See P.World, 82-87; P.Khalili I, 27-46; P.Qurra, 33-39; P.Khurasan, 66-90; P.Mird, XII-XLVI; Sijpesteijn (2007b), 513-524.

⁸⁰ See Diem (2008), 856; Grob (2010a), 39, 41-44, 83; Khan (2008), 890; P.Khalili I, 25, 126-127; P.Khalili II, 63.

⁸¹ For more, see Younes, review.

The letters published in the thesis vary considerably in their layout and format depending mainly on the scribe's proficiency and whim. Some letters are well composed and structured, and laid out into paragraphs with several means to highlight parts of the text and to mark off the onset and the end of the different sections within the letter (see letters 7, 25 and 35). Others are written as one block with almost no attention to the graphic arrangement of the text (cf. 1, 2, 3 and 41). Some letters are highly rhetorical and full of standard topics and common expressions such as the complaint about the lack of replies, the request to write back and the pleasure at receiving a letter from the addressee and knowing about his wellbeing (see letters 26 and 27). Some other letters are direct and straightforward, skipping introductory and concluding expressions (cf. letters 1 and 2). Yet others are very short and condensed with lengthy introductory and concluding expressions and salutations to and from relatives and friends (see letters 15, 21 and 22). Some letters deal with a mixed variety of topics (see as a best example letter 31), while others are only devoted to one specific topic (see letters 1, 2, 3, 24, 17-20). The letters show also considerable variations in dimensions. Some letters are written on long rectangular pieces (e.g. 2, 3-6, 13-23, 17), but others are written on a short square piece (see for example 28).⁸²

All letters are written on papyrus sheets of different quality and thickness, written in different kinds of pens (thin, medium-thick and thick)⁸³ and handwritings. The letters are regularly written in black ink.⁸⁴ Most of the letters are written on the "recto" side at right angles to the fibers leaving the back side blank except for the address. In case of papyri which bear texts on both sides, the recto (Side A) and verso (Side B) have been identified on the basis of the direction of fibers, no matter what the identification of the curator was (see letters 3-6, 13-23).

With the exception of letter no. 1, where traces of one line are still preserved in the right hand margin, none of the letters of our corpus show a use of the margins for writing. The marginal notes have been explained to have been due to a general aversion to continue the letter on the verso.⁸⁵ In my view this is not strictly true. I would argue rather that the writing in the margins was part of the new style of writing letters that became dominant from the late 3rd/9th century onwards resulting in radical changes in formulae and layout, such as replacing the prescript with initial blessings and the tendency toward cursiveness in writing. There are a number of arguments that supports this interpretation. In the first place, letters with marginal notes are too numerous to be considered exceptional. Secondly, these marginal notes are not always notes or afterthoughts, but in most cases simply continue the main text. In other words, the margins were taken into account as writing space from the onset of writing the letter. Thirdly, early letters with prescripts are sometimes continued on the verso, but not in the margins on the recto. It is worth mentioning that letter no. 1 is continued on the back side as well as letter no. 15. Finally, these marginal notes usually follow one typical pattern, i.e. after exhausting the proper space on the recto; the scribe starts writing in the right hand margin from the top

⁸² See also Grob (2010a), 173-175.

⁸³ If the pen's notch is long and thin, the writing gets finer, thinner and more distinct, but if it is short and thick, the writing gets clearer, heavier and thicker. For more, see P.World, 64.

⁸⁴ The black ink was made of soot mixed with water, see P.World, 67-68.

⁸⁵ Grob (2010a), 179.

downwards then in the left hand margin from the bottom upwards. Marginal notes in the top margin are very rare, but normally run parallel to the main text either in the same direction or upside down.⁸⁶ Surely, all of these common features cannot be seen as mere coincidence.⁸⁷

Some other observations on the layout and format of the letters should also be made. None of the letters of our corpus show systematic spacing between words and sections. Traces of folds are still clearly perceptible on the overwhelming majority of letters. Some letters have been folded several times vertically and then rolled up horizontally (see letter no. **2**), but the majority of letters was first folded horizontally parallel to the written lines from the bottom upwards and then folded vertically.⁸⁸ Yet other letters have been folded several times horizontally, but there are no vertical folds perceptible (see letters **24**, **27** and **35**).

In order to write the address on the back side the papyrus sheet is in most cases turned around the vertical axis, namely the way one would turn a sheet of a book. As an exception, the papyrus sheets in letters **1**, **4** and **43** are turned around the horizontal axis, i.e. the way one would turn over a playing card lying on a table.⁸⁹ Also letter **22** shows the address on the bottom margin, in view of the fact that the front side of the sheet is full of Arabic and Coptic scripts. The exterior address typically identifies the addressee in more detail than that of the internal one. For the clearer and the more specified the exterior address is, the more certain the sender could be of the letter's successful delivery. As a standard, the exterior address is added at the top of the back of the letter. In case the back side was later reused, the two texts usually co-exist.⁹⁰

5. Formulary

As a general rule, the *basmala* opens all documentary Arabic papyrus letters on the first line which is usually followed by the prescript section in the letters datable to the first two and a half Islamic centuries. In only one case in our corpus (letter no. **1**), the author starts his letter on the same line as the *basmala* which is uncommon in early letters but occurs frequently in letters from 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries.⁹¹

The prescript section typically includes four basic elements, namely the internal address naming both correspondents, the initial *salām* greeting (“*salām ‘alayka*,” peace upon you), the *ḥamdala* (“*fa-innī aḥmadu ilayka Allāh alladhī lā ilāh illā huwa*,” I praise for your sake God other than Whom there is no god)⁹² and finally the transitional element (“*ammā ba‘du*,” as for what follows).⁹³ The prescript is often highlighted and set off graphically with *alinea*

⁸⁶ Grob (2010a), 179.

⁸⁷ See also Younes, review.

⁸⁸ See Grob (2010a), 181-182.

⁸⁹ See Grob (2010a), 177-178.

⁹⁰ For more about the exterior address, see Grob (2010a), 77-81.

⁹¹ See the commentary of 1.1.

⁹² For references of the *ḥamdala* in published letters, see P.Khalili I, 126-127. The latest datable document having this formula is PERF **624**[= P. World, 132-134].8-9, which is a decree issued in the name of the governor ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Musayyab (in office 176-177/792-793).

⁹³ See Diem (2008), 856; Grob (2010a), 39-42, 83; Khan (2008), 890; P.Khalili I, 25; P.Khalili II, 63.

after the *ḥamdala* and the transitional element *ammā ba'du* is usually placed at the beginning of the next line (see letters 5-8, 24, 32, 33, 35). In few cases, the *ḥamdala* is squeezed and the transitional element *ammā ba'du* is followed immediately with no space in-between (see letters 15, 21, 22).⁹⁴ In only one case in this corpus, the transitional element *ammā ba'du* is skipped after the *ḥamdala* (see letter 30), while in letters 4 and 19, the *taṣliya* is shoved in-between the *ḥamdala* and *ammā ba'du*. In letter 18, the *basmala* is followed directly by the initial blessings replacing the prescript as letters from the 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries usually do.⁹⁵

Besides the familiar *salām* greeting *salām 'alayka* the archaic formula *silm anta/sālim anta/salām anta* (you are at peace) appears in letter 38.2. It has been suggested that this formula predates Islam and that it was replaced by the familiar greeting *salām 'alayka* with the advent of Islam, owing to the fact that the latter is a typical Qur'anic expression.⁹⁶

Our letters also offer a new transitional element in addition to the well-known *amma ba'du* which is usually used to bridge the prescript to the further sections of the letter. The expression *ammā 'alā ithr dhālika* appears in letters 5.7 and 17.7 as an equivalent to *amma ba'du*.⁹⁷

Extra blessings and prayers for both the sender and the addressee usually appear after the transitional element and before getting into the main point of the letter. These extra blessings usually beginning with *'āfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka* (may God save us and you), which could be further extended as *'āfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka min al-sū' kullihi wa-'afā 'annā wa-'anka bi-rahmatihi* (may God save us and you from all evils and may He forgive us and you through His mercy) or any other common prayers and blessings (see letters 7.5-6, 9.3-4, 11.4, 13.4-6, 19.4-5, 23.5, 24.5-6, 25.1-2, 28.4, 29.3-5, 32.4-5, 33.4, 35.4-5, 36.4-5, 37.4-5, 41.4-5, 42.6-8).⁹⁸

The letters produce also an abundance of religious formulae of glorification and prayer types throughout the text such as the *taṣliya*,⁹⁹ *ḥawqala* ("*lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwa illā bi-llāh*," there is no strength nor power except in God), cf. 1.9 and 30.8, slide-in-blessings,¹⁰⁰ oaths such as *fa-wa-llāh* (by God) 24.12; *fa-wa-llāh alladhī lā ilāh illā huwa* (by God other than Whom there is no god) 2.20-21, *wa-innī uqsimu laka bi-llāh* (I swear to you by God) 2.31-32, *wa-l-'amrī* (by my life) 43.10.¹⁰¹ Expressions showing the happiness of the sender are frequently followed by religious formulae of the glorification type, while the expressions of grief and anxiety are typically accompanied by religious formulae of the prayer type.¹⁰²

The complaint about lack of prompt replies to one's written messages appears often in our letters as well as in many published letters. For example, in letter 25, the sender informs the addressee, both anonymous to us, that he wrote to him before his current letter several subsequent letters, but he did not receive for any of them an answer ("*wa-qad kuntū katabtu*

⁹⁴ See also Grob (2010a), 192-193.

⁹⁵ Grob (2010a), 39-48.

⁹⁶ Diem (2008), 860-861.

⁹⁷ See also Rāḡib (2011), 273-284; Hopkins § 106.

⁹⁸ See also Grob (2010a), 41.

⁹⁹ For the different forms of the *taṣliya*, see letter 4.3 and the commentary. See also P.Cair.Arab. I, 215-216; P.Khalili I, 148; Grob (2010a), 27, note 11.

¹⁰⁰ This term is proposed by Grob for the blessings that follow mentioning of the addressee or third parties. See Grob (2010a), 33 and note 20, 237.

¹⁰¹ See Grob (2010a), 25-29.

¹⁰² For more, see Grob (2010a), 91-93.

ilayka qabl kitābī hādhā bi-kutub kathīra mutawātira fa-lam yablughnī li-shay' minhā jawāban," ll.9-10). Also in letter **26**, one Rābiḥ the servant of a certain Sa'īd angrily writes to one Abū Yazīd about the lack of replies and asks him to always keep in touch. He tells that he wrote to him seven letters including the current one, but he never received an answer ("wa-ukhbiruka annī wājīd 'alayka wa-qad katabtu ilayka bi-hādhīhi sab'at kutub fa-lam arā min[ka li-shay' minhā jawāban]," ll.7-8). Likewise, the sender of letter **27**, whose *kunya* is partially preserved, writes to a certain Abū Muḥammad blaming him for not answering his previous letter and urging him to answer this one ("wa-qad katabtu ilayka bi-kitāb qabla hādhā fa-lam tujibnī fīhi bi-shay' wa-b'ath bi-jawābika in shā'a Allāh," ll.7-10).¹⁰³

This complaint has always been explained as a stereotyped expression.¹⁰⁴ In fact, the chance of loss of written messages along the way of delivery was very real. Private letters were usually delivered informally through friends, neighbors, family members and acquaintances. Take the following examples. The sender of letter **14** in our corpus informs the addressee that he sent the letter with his neighbor, who will first pass by a certain 'Abd al-Jabbār ("anna ṣāḥib kitābī hādhā ilayka jār yamurru bi-'Abd al-Jabbār," ll.4-6). In another published letter, the sender informs the addressee that the letter's carrier, Abū al-Ḥadīd, is a friend and neighbor of his ("wa-waṣala kitābī hādhā ma'a jāri wa-ṣadīqī Abū al-Ḥadīd al-'aṣṣār," CPR XVI **22.8**, 3rd/9th). In one other letter, the sender informs the addressee that he sent his letter with his neighbor, Bulbul, who usually travels to the addressee's place ("wa-hādhā jārūnā yajrū 'indakum yusammā Bulbul arsaltu ma'ahu kitābī," P.Marchands II **28.6**, 3rd/9th).

Sometimes the impetus for writing a letter was just the occasion of having a traveler heading for the addressee's domicile. To demonstrate this, in one published letter, the sender informs the addressee that he did not write to him before, because the person (*insān*), who was supposed to carry the letter was in a hurry ("wa-innamā katabtu ilā al-akh kitāb ma'a insān 'ajila 'alayya wa-lam yumkinnī li-sur'at khurūjihi kitāb ilayka ma'ahu fa-katabtu ilayhi bi-ḥaml kitābī ilayka," CPR XVI **32.2-3**, 3rd/9th).¹⁰⁵

The expressions *balligh raḥimaka Allāh* (deliver, may God have mercy upon you); *balligh hudīta* (deliver, may you be guided the right path); *raḥima Allāh man ballaghahā* (may God have mercy upon who delivers it); *balligh yarḥamuka Allāh* (deliver, may God have mercy upon you); *balligh sallamaka Allāh* (deliver, may God save you); *balligh hadāka Allāh* (deliver, may God guide you); *balligh ṣāḥibaka Allāh* (deliver, may God accompany you); *balligh arshadaka Allāh* (deliver, may God guide you) that usually appear next to the exterior address on the back of the letter indicate that the letter is delivered as a personal favor and that no payment is to be made to the carrier (see letters **7**, **15** and **18**).¹⁰⁶

In many cases, the letters do not specify the place of delivery nor do they provide concise addresses. The senders themselves must have been aware that the addresses were incomplete and unclear. Two possible explanations can be made out for the case of letters with incomplete addresses. First, the carrier might know the destination and could have been either a family member or a servant, who used to deliver letters on a regular basis.

¹⁰³ For other attestations of the complaint about lack of replies, see in this corpus letter **25.9-10** and the commentary.

¹⁰⁴ Grob (2010a), 93-100. See also Bagnall and Cribiore (2006), 37-40.

¹⁰⁵ See also Grob (2010a), 107.

¹⁰⁶ Grob (2010a), 95. See also Goitein (1964), 120.

Second, the carrier may have received oral instructions about the destination from the sender. In any case, the letter was at “the mercy” of its carrier.¹⁰⁷ One published letter stresses the fact that the delivery of the letter depends mainly on the safety of the carrier (“*wa-idhā sallama Allāh ḥāmīl kitābī ḥādhā ilayka [...]*,” P.Heid.Arab. II 35.4-5, 3rd/9th).

There is no doubt that the carrier who agreed to carry the letter as a favor, would do his best to deliver it to make the favor complete. In long-distance correspondence, however, people often sent several letters together with the same carrier.¹⁰⁸ Some of these letters were supposed to be distributed at their final destinations. Others were intended to pass through intermediaries. Yet others were enclosed with other letters or goods lacking any information about the place of delivery.¹⁰⁹ During this long and complicated delivery process, the possibility of losing letters is absolutely high. This argument can be strengthened by the observation that the senders, i.e. the complainers, sometimes mention the number of the unanswered letters (see letters 26.7; 27.7).¹¹⁰

It is reasonable to end the discussion with some remarks on the closing section of the letters. Most of the letters of this corpus close as usual with the request to keep in touch which is typically followed by salutations to and from relatives and friends.¹¹¹ In letters 14.1-3; 15.8-9; 31.20-23, the senders incorporate salutations into the body of the letter which is uncommon. The final greeting *wa-l-salām ‘alayka wa-rahmat Allāh* (peace be upon you and God’s mercy) represents the typical closing of the letters of this corpus.¹¹² The addition *wa-barakātuḥu* (and blessings) appears in few letters and it is often written with *scriptio defectiva* of the long *ā* (see letters 1.37, 5.12; 8.8; 11.16; 22.12). As an exception, letter 38 closes with the expression *wa-kutiba* (it has been written).¹¹³ In many cases, some afterthoughts were added after the letter was completed. These afterthoughts are mainly further instructions, inquiries, requests, greetings or just marginal notes (see letters 1.21-25, 3.25-26, 6.11-15, 8.7-8, 9.17-19, 16.13-16, 22.11-14, 24.18-19, 34.9-10, 41.13.15).¹¹⁴

Let us now leave the *text* and move to the *content*.

¹⁰⁷ Grob (2010a), 95. See also Bagnall and Cribiore (2006), 38.

¹⁰⁸ See in this corpus letter 27.9-10 and the commentary.

¹⁰⁹ See for instance *wa-qad wajahtu ilayka bi-kitābihim fī darj kitābī ilayka*, P.Marchands II 2.8, 3rd/9th. See also Grob (2010a), 96-98.

¹¹⁰ See also P.Cair.Arab. V 339.5-6, 3rd/9th; P.Berl.Arab. II 77.2-3, 3rd/9th.

¹¹¹ See Grob (2010a), 69-74.

¹¹² See Grob (2010a), 74-77.

¹¹³ For this expression and other expressions to be used to signal the closure of letters, see P.Khalili I, 194.

¹¹⁴ For more about afterthoughts, see Grob (2010a), 64-69. For a general overview of the typical sections of private or business letters on papyrus and their conventional sequence and internal structure, see Grob (2010a), 82-83.

CHAPTER TWO

Joy and sorrow in early Muslim Egypt

“katabtu ilayki kitābī hādhā wa-anā ‘alā alladhī yasurruki wa-rabbunā maḥmūd ma‘a al-shidda wa-l-ḥāja allatī naḥnu fihā.”

(I am writing you this letter of mine, whereas I am as you wish and our Lord be praised, in spite of the distress and the neediness that we are in.)

Letter 23.6-8

People in early Muslim Egypt, like people everywhere at this time, had good and bad experiences, went through sad and happy occasions, suffered from sickness and depression and faced the inevitable fate, death, when their time came. In their writings, they expressed to each other their emotions, their grief and hope, and how they experienced these turns of the fate. One may wonder, how would a sick person get cured with the primitive medical tools and experience then available? It must have been extremely painful for Hishām the surveyor, the author of letter 42, to have a boil between his backside and penis while measuring the city of Dalāṣ in Upper Egypt with its nasty landscape and under its hot sun. On top of all, as he writes, he and his team of surveyors were staying outdoors. Who cured him and how? And how did his painful days pass? We are not told.

To bring other sorrowful and pleasurable experiences of individuals in the life of early Islamic Egypt closer, Naṣṣār b. Abū Zayd, for instance, the author of letter no. 1, lived happy days while preparing for his marriage. He was in direct contact with his fiancée, Mahdiyya, even before concluding the contract of marriage. After sending the dowry (*mahr*), Naṣṣār was on tenterhooks waiting for Mahdiyya’s consent to marry him. He made a supplication to God asking Him to make her satisfied, to let her come to him in good health, to bring them together in health and happiness and to make their religion thrive. On the contrary, ‘Amr b. Zubayd, the sender of letter 2, had a bad experience with his rude and disobedient (*nāshiz*) wife, who used to insult and curse him. Moreover, she complained to the arbitrator (*al-ḥakam*) that he oppressed and beat her. Consequently, the marriage was dissolved. The addressee of letter 3, lived a mixture of joy and sorrow. He had a similar bad experience with his wife like ‘Amr b. Zubayd. His free wife (*al-ḥurra*) complained about him to the *amīr* for reasons unknown to us, but he at the same time received news that two of his female slaves gave birth to a boy and a girl.

Death in the family brought sadness for family members especially for females. Ruqayya bt. Yaḥyā, the sender of letter 18, wrote that she has had hard times after the death of her son and that she felt lonely, weak, poor and confused after this loss. She was also missing her full brother, who was absent during this calamity. Ruqayya was so depressed that she expressed the wish that she had died before facing these hard times. The case of Umm ‘Uthmān, the addressee of letter 20, was not much better. Umm ‘Uthmān lost, presumably,

her husband Nawfal. The letter of condolence she received from an anonymous male relative advising her to have patience and to seek refuge in God, and showing his deep sorrow and sympathy with Umm 'Uthmān's misfortune, must have relieved her a bit, but the misfortune was too much to be forgotten with a few words. Also the absent Zaynab bt. Abū Ziyād, the addressee of letter 17, was informed by a certain Wusāma b. Ṭalq al-Tujībī about her father's death, Abū Ziyād, after suffering from long-term illness. Abū Ziyād's slave, Muqsim, took good care of his master during the latter's last painful days. In return, Muqsim got the best reward for someone in his situation: his freedom. Likewise, Abū al-Azhar and Abū 'Uthmān were grieved by the loss of a certain Abū 'Abd al-'Azīz. In his letter of condolence, letter 19, another Abū al-Azhar tried to soothe the mourners' pains by expressing his profound sadness and sympathy, and reminding them by the deceased's good deeds and the reward that must be awaiting him in the life to come, i.e. the paradise.

Other calamities kept family members temporarily apart. 'Īsā, for instance, the author of letter 4, witnessed a big fight between two men or two groups of people belonging to two different Arab tribes, Banū Mudlij being one of them. In this fight a killing took place and 'Īsā who was temporary staying there could not leave. He had to write a letter to his wife to explain the reasons for his delay. Later on, the two fighting groups asked for an amicable settlement (*ṣulḥ*) and thus 'Īsā had to wait a few days more for the agreement to have effect. 'Īsā's tragedy was not only the fight itself, but an even greater loss was financial, namely of two *dīnārs*. He bought eggs for two *dīnārs* before breaking the fast of Ramaḍān (*al-fiṭr*) to bring to his family, but all the eggs got spoiled due to the long delay and therefore he had to throw them away. In letter 3, the sender complained to the addressee, both anonymous to us, that the latter's servant, Maymūn, did not come to him nor help him with little or much. The sender made a supplication to God to protect him from what grieved him in this world and the hereafter. The sender did not explicitly tell what his problem was, but he was indeed in need of help.

The economy is an important source for both joy and distress. For instance, the female sender of letter 23, expresses to her sister her distress and neediness, presumably due to a lack of money, but she apologizes for not writing to her about it before. Also the sad (*shaqiya*) female sender of letter 13 asked the male addressee to take care of a certain al-Zubayr, who is poor and needy (*miskīn*), and to buy him a garment as compensation (*jabr*). 'Abd al-Malik b. Ṣalatān, the author of letter 28, too, writes to a certain Musāfir b. Kathīr asking him to pay more attention to him and to fulfill his needs as he is the only one who could do so. In contrast, al-Khayr b. Muslim, the author of letter 32, joyously writes to his business partner and relative, al-Miswar b. Rajā', that he reached the city of Dimyāṭ in good health and bought the linen he was looking for. During his long journey, al-Khayr was accompanied by a good group of people which made him feel safe and happy.

Religious ceremonies and social gatherings are also major sources for both comfort and stress. Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. Mufaḍḍal, for example, the author of letter 37, writes to a certain Abū Sa'īd informing him that he has already intended to perform pilgrimage (*ḥajj*). Therefore, Abū Muḥammad sent to Abū Sa'īd twenty *dīnārs* so that the latter would rent something that remains unknown to us, presumably a camel, and to buy enough food supplies for the long and exhaustive journey.

At first glance, we can discern how rich and fruitful the letters are for the study and reconstruction of emotions in early Muslim Egypt. Such a study would not have been possible without having the letters published and studied together as one corpus. The letters, as shown above, give unprecedented direct insights into people's personal feelings than the literary corpus can do. They provide a fuller textual picture that can be used to voice people's personal feelings. On the other hand, one may wonder whether the written representation of emotions as they appear in the letters are really *sincere*. To what extent should we believe the tears of Ruqayya, the sorrow of 'Amr, the worry of 'Īsā, the pains of Hishām and the joy of al-Khayr? When Naṣṣār declares to his fiancée, Maḥdiyya, that he is rejoiced because they are getting married. Was he truly happy?¹¹⁵ And when al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥārith b. al-Ḥumayd writes to his absent brother to inform him that their mother got very sick since the latter's departure and that she yearns to see his face before death;¹¹⁶ was this real sickness? Did he really mean by death, *true* death? The question to be asked here, do we take these expressions for granted and be content with the accessible written representation of personal feelings as they are or should they be subjected to historical interrogation? To answer this question we need first to review the history of emotions.

Less than a century ago, emotions had become the subject of many interdisciplinary studies, i.e. sociology, anthropology, philosophy, psychology and history.¹¹⁷ As far as we are concerned with history, the history of emotion or "emotionology", as proposed by the husband-and-wife team of Peter and Carol Stearns, has become one of the hot new topics in social history.¹¹⁸ In their ground-breaking article published in 1985, the Stearnses created the term *emotionology* to describe "the attitudes or standards that a society, or a definable group within a society, maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression; ways that institutions reflect and encourage these attitudes in human conduct."¹¹⁹ The emphasis of the term is not, then, on how people experienced, represented and treated

¹¹⁵ See D.M. McMahon, *Happiness: a history* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006). In this book, McMahon studies the concept of happiness from ancient Greece to the present, relying largely on elite conceptions of felicity.

¹¹⁶ See below the discussion on sickness.

¹¹⁷ See M. Gendron, and L.F. Barrett, "Reconstructing the past: a century of ideas about emotion in psychology," *Emotion review* 1/4 (2009), 316-339; J.H. Turner, "The sociology of emotions: basic theoretical arguments," *Emotion review* 1/4 (2009), 340-354; P.A. Thoits, "The sociology of emotions," *Annual review of sociology* 15 (1989), 317-342; W.M. Reddy, "Against constructionism: the historical ethnography of emotions," *Current anthropology* 38/3 (1997), 327-351; M.B. Arnold, *Emotion and personality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960); R.R. Cornelius, *The science of emotion: research and tradition in the psychology of emotion* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1996); T. Dixon, *From passions to emotions: the creation of a secular psychological category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); D. Evans, *Emotion: the science of sentiment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); W.M. Reddy, "Emotional liberty: politics and history in the anthropology of emotions," *Cultural anthropology* 14 (1999), 256-288; R. MacMullen, *Feelings in history, ancient and modern* (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 2003); W.M. Reddy, "Historical research on the self and emotions," *Emotion review* 1/4 (2009), 302-315.

¹¹⁸ See P.N. Stearns, and C.Z. Stearns "Emotionology: clarifying the history of emotions and emotional standards," *The American historical review* 90/4 (1985), 813-836; B.H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about emotions in history," *The American historical review* 107/3 (2002), 824; J. Plamper, "The history of emotions: an interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns," *History and theory* 49/2 (2010), 262. See also S.J. Matt, "Current emotion research in history: or, doing history from the inside out," *Emotion review* 3/1 (2011), 118-119; C. Cubitt, "The history of the emotions: a debate," *Early Medieval Europe* 10/2 (2001), 225-227; S. Airlie, "The history of emotions and emotional history," *Early Medieval Europe* 10/2 (2001), 235-241; A. Wierzbicka, "The "history of emotions" and the future of emotion research," *Emotion review* 2 (2010), 269-273.

¹¹⁹ Stearns and Stearns (1985), 318.

their feelings, but on what people thought about these feelings. The term thus draws a clear line between the collective emotional standards of a society, i.e. emotionology and the emotional experiences of individuals and groups (emotions).¹²⁰

Long time before the Stearnes (in 1938), the historian Lucien Febvre was the first to call for collaboration between historians and psychologists to study and reconstruct the emotions of the past.¹²¹ Since then many historians and psychologists have become actively engaged with the study of emotions and the questions of continuity and change in human emotions. They began to examine change in personal feelings and how they are socially represented and treated.

In the past few decades, the field has expanded massively. Barbara Rosenwein, one of the leading historians of emotions, encouraged the scholars to take up the task of studying and reconstructing the emotions of past generations as serious as they take “other ‘invisible’ topics, such as ecology and gender.”¹²² In her works, Rosenwein shows the problems and offers valuable methods to study and reconstruct emotions of the past. Rosenwein has proposed what she calls “emotional communities”,¹²³ i.e. “social groups whose members adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value or devalue the same or related emotions,” in order to study “collective emotions” of a certain community.¹²⁴ To explain, Rosenwein says: “An emotional community is a group in which people have a common stake, interests, values and goals. Thus it is often a social community. But it is also possibly a “textual community,” created and reinforced by ideologies, teachings, and common presuppositions.”¹²⁵ The starting point in Rosenwein’s method is to gather a dossier of sources for one community, no matter how large the dossier is. Then, to collect the words and phrases of emotions as they appear in the texts, weigh them to establish their relative importance, see in which context they are used, and how often and how they are expressed, e.g. forcefully or gently.¹²⁶ Rosenwein argues that “if this method is employed for each frequently mentioned emotion (noting also emotions that seem to be missing), eventually patterns should emerge – the outlines of an emotional community.”¹²⁷ Defending the authenticity of the “second hand” representation of emotions, Rosenwein states that “we should not worry about whether an emotion is authentic unless the particular emotional community that we are studying is itself concerned about authenticity.”¹²⁸ She continues: “If an emotion is the standard response of a particular group in certain instances, the question should not be whether it betrays real

¹²⁰ Stearns and Stearns (1985), 318; Rosenwein (2002), 224; Matt (2011), 118.

¹²¹ L. Febvre, “History and psychology,” in: P. Burke (ed.) and K. Folca (trans.), *A new kind of history: from the writings of Febvre* (New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row Publishers, 1938), 5.

¹²² Rosenwein (2006), 1-2. See also B.H. Rosenwein, “Writing without fear about early medieval emotions,” *Early Medieval Europe* 10/2 (2001), 229-234.

¹²³ “The definition suggests that any social group with common interests and goals should qualify as an emotional community. One would logically pick a group and read everything that its members wrote, carefully noting the emotions.” See Plamper (2010), 253.

¹²⁴ B.H. Rosenwein, *Emotional communities in the early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2; B.H. Rosenwein, “Problems and methods in the history of emotions,” in: A. Acorn (ed.), *Passions in context: international journal for the history and theory of emotions* 1 (2010), 1, 10-13.

¹²⁵ Rosenwein (2006), 24-25.

¹²⁶ Rosenwein (2010), 12-24.

¹²⁷ Plamper (2010), 254; Rosenwein (2010), 10-17.

¹²⁸ Rosenwein (2010), 21.

feeling but rather why one norm obtains over another.”¹²⁹ Commenting on the difference and significance of sources and materials having emotions, Rosenwein writes: “It is true that genres tend to have different uses for emotions. Presumably letters best reveal how a person “really” feels.”¹³⁰

William Reddy, a historian and anthropologist, one of the most important recent historians of emotions, suggests another theoretical approach to the study of emotions. To investigate the strong relationship between the emotions, culture and language, Reddy proposes the term “emotives” to describe “the speech act” of expressing feelings.¹³¹ He argues that emotional expressions are neither “constative” nor “performative”. They are a third kind of utterance, says Reddy. He argues that “*emotives* are at once managerial and exploratory. An emotional expression is an attempt to call up the emotion that is expressed; it is an attempt to feel what one says one feels. These attempts usually work, but they can and do fail. When they fail, the emotive expression is “exploratory” in the sense that one discovers something unexpected about one’s own feelings.”¹³² “Emotives,” Reddy says, “are themselves instruments for directly changing, building, hiding, intensifying emotions, instruments that may be more or less successful.”¹³³ In addition to *emotives*, Reddy offers the terms “emotional regimes” which he defines as “the set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcate them; a necessary underpinning of any stable political regime.”¹³⁴ and “emotional refuges” which refers to “a relationship, ritual, or organization (whether informal or formal) that provides safe release from prevailing emotional norms and allows relation of emotional effort, with or without an ideological justification, which may shore up or threaten the existing emotional regime.”¹³⁵

In spite of the different approaches adopted to study emotions, historians of the emotions since the beginning shared the conviction that emotions or the ways in which they are experienced, expressed, treated and interpreted are “social products” shaped and reshaped by the society and the culture in which they are surrounded.¹³⁶

Depending on the point of view from which one studies emotions, whether emotionology, emotional communities, emotives, or all three, scholars build up their works on the Stearnses’, Rosenwein’s and Reddy’s methods and methodologies.¹³⁷ Since this chapter is mainly interested in showing who feels what, how, when and why, Rosenwein’s

¹²⁹ Rosenwein (2010), 21.

¹³⁰ “Letters reveal-in however commonplace a fashion- the feelings (or simulated feelings) of those who composed them.” Rosenwein (2006), 28, 193.

¹³¹ W.M. Reddy, *The navigation of feeling: a framework for the history of emotions* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 105, 128; Matt (2011), 119.

¹³² Plamper (2010), 240.

¹³³ Reddy (2001), 105.

¹³⁴ Reddy (2001), 129.

¹³⁵ Reddy (2001), 129.

¹³⁶ Rosenwein (2006), 15, 27; Rosenwein (2010), 8-9; Matt (2011), 118; A. Wierzbicka, “Human emotions: universal or culture-specific?,” *American anthropologist* 88/3 (1986), 584-594. On the other hand, Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen argue that there are six universal emotions, i.e. happiness, sadness, fear, disgust, anger and surprise. See P. Ekman, and W. Friesen, “Constants across cultures in the face and emotion,” *Journal of personality and social psychology* 17 (1971), 124-129; P. Ekman, “All emotions are basic,” in: P. Ekman, R.J. Davidson, *The nature of emotion: fundamental questions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 56-58.

¹³⁷ See Matt (2011), 119.

methods work very well as a strong theoretical and methodological ground for this study. I also follow the guidelines established by Mary Garrison for the interpretation of medieval peoples' emotions in written texts.¹³⁸ According to Garrison, we should read our texts with care avoiding projecting our own ideas of what people thought or felt into their words. The goal must be to recover the shared understanding of the two correspondents rather than anything else, says Garrison.¹³⁹

Before we start our investigation, it is perhaps worth grouping together some difficulties and challenges to the study of emotions through written texts. As we do not have direct access to the inner world of our individuals, some caution is therefore required when dealing with words and phrases of emotions; taking into consideration that some of these texts are stereotyped and formulaic expressions.¹⁴⁰ It is also worth keeping in mind the fact that emotions differ from one place to another, one culture to another and from an era to another. Even within the same society, individuals may differ in their reactions and in their ability and wish to express their feelings.¹⁴¹ Moreover, there is always a social desirability in the way feelings and thoughts are to be described in writings.

Having all these caveats in mind, I will take an effort to collect, study and analyze people's personal representation and treatment of emotions as they appear in the letters, aiming to show to what extent this could help us to achieve a better understanding of the early Muslim society in Egypt. Besides emotions, this chapter will deal with other legal and social topics, attempting to answer the questions posed in the introduction.

The discussion is based mainly on the topics raised in the letters edited in this thesis, but also includes almost all relevant references in published and also some of yet unpublished letters. The study shall let the letters speak for themselves and give them the central place in the discussion. Some letters are cited and studied in several places in the discussion because they fit more than one account.

It would have been tempting to extend this study to include inscriptions and other documentary and archeological materials and then compare these with literature, but this would have entirely altered the frame of the present work. The study just aims to show as a case study what information can be gotten out of the Arabic documentary letters alone. A central objective of this study is to contribute a coherent and comprehensive story of people's personal feelings or at least the ways in which they are presented in the letters to anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists and scholars working on literature to allow further research on this field. It goes without saying that Greek and Coptic letters are beyond the scope of this study as we only focus on the Arab-Muslim community who communicated amongst each other in Arabic.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ M. Garrison, "The study of emotions in early medieval history: some starting points," *Early Medieval Europe* 10/2 (2001), 243-250.

¹³⁹ Garrison (2001), 244.

¹⁴⁰ Historians of emotions, on the other hand, argue that the existence of *topoi* and formulaic expressions should not deter us from studying and establishing points of continuity and change. See Cubitt (2001), 226; Rosenwein (2001), 232; Garrison (2001), 247. See also below the discussion on the value of *heath*.

¹⁴¹ "In anthropological literature, there is always one culture and one emotional style for every society studied, even though individuals are recognized to adapt to it in different ways." See Rosenwein (2006), 23.

¹⁴² A big project studying the history of emotions in the Greek world entitled: The social and cultural construction of emotions: the Greek paradigm is currently taking place at Oxford University. The project is

1. Emotions and the family

1.1. Spouses

“*lā khayr fī rajul bi-ghayr imra’a wa-lā imra’a bi-ghayr rajul.*”

(There is no goodness in a man without a woman nor (in) a woman without a man.)

Letter 1.23-24

Marriage and the relationship between husbands and wives is obviously a constant source of joy and sorrow depending on the personalities of the individuals involved, the circumstances, the stage the marriage is in and the conditions under which it was concluded.¹⁴³ On the one end of the spectrum we find the spectacular joy between two

based mainly on analysis of documentary sources (inscriptions and papyri). For more information about this ERC project check their website at: <http://emotions.classics.ox.ac.uk/>.

¹⁴³ The Qur’an presents marriage as the major source of comfort and joy for the husband and the wife (Q 2:187; 30:21). Through marriage both spouses would control their lust and satisfy their sexual needs in a licit manner, since all forms of sexual relationships outside marriage are strictly forbidden. Those who commit adultery (*zinā*) are to be severely punished with death penalty by stoning if they are married (*muḥṣan*). As for those who are not married but commit this heinous sin (*fāḥisha*), they are to be punished with one hundred lashes. Both punishments are to be carried out in public in order to serve as a strong deterrent to others. The institution of marriage occupies a central and pivotal place in Islamic law. It is recognized as a highly religious sacred covenant (*mithāqan ghalīzan*, Q 4:20-21) upon which the entire society is built. Due to the great significance of marriage in Islam, the topic received the lion’s share of the interest of almost all Muslim jurists. They devoted considerable portions of their works to studying and discussing all issues pertaining to marriage. The basic rules of marriage are given in the Qur’an, while the *Sunna* provides only some necessary guidelines. Both sources exhort and encourage every Muslim individual to establish family/families. The Qur’an states that it is permissible for men, who are physically and financially able to lead a safe conjugal life to marry up to four women at the same time in case they treat them well, equally and with justice. However, if men cannot abide by these instructions, they are instructed to marry only one woman (Q 4:3). It is also permitted for Muslim men to marry Jewish and Christian women (*kitābiyyāt*) (Q 5:5). Besides marriage, men can take an unlimited number of slave concubines as far as they needed to fulfill their needs (Q 4:3; 23:5-6; 70:29-30). Muslim men are prohibited from marrying women who are too closely related to them by blood relationship or consanguinity, foster relationship and marriage, i.e. mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, nieces, foster-mothers, foster-sisters, step-mothers, step-daughters, mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law (Q 4:22-23). Moreover, a Muslim man is forbidden to take two sisters together as wives (Q 4:23) or to marry a married woman, unless she is a slave captive and to inherit the widow of a deceased relative (Q 4:19; 4:24). On the other hand, a Muslim woman is only permitted to marry one man at a time. The reason behind this is to be sure about the paternity of her children. In case a woman married a second husband, this marriage is considered completely invalid (*bāṭil*) and her children from the second husband would not be recognized as legal children and therefore would be excluded from inheritance. A Muslim woman is also prohibited to wed a non-Muslim, even if he is from the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*). The explanation given for this prohibition is because the non-Muslim husband would not treat his Muslim wife according to the principles of Islam, but according to his own religion. Moreover, the children would innately follow their father’s religion. See J. Boyd “Nikāḥ,” E.I.2, vol. 8, 26-35; P. Peters, “Zinā,” E.I.2, vol. 11, 509-510; S. Spectorsky, *Women in classical Islamic law, a survey of the sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 25-30 and note 4; J. Esposito, *Women in Muslim family law* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982), 15-21; J. Tucker, *Women, family and gender in Islamic law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 38-41; M. Kazi, *Family and social obligations in Islam* (Karachi: Ferozsons, 1996), 34-44; G. Stern, *Marriage in early Islam* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1939), 95-103; A.A. Khan, T.M. Khan et al., *Encyclopedia of Islamic law, family law in Islam* (New Delhi: Pentagon press, 2006), vol. 5.

fiancées expressed in a letter containing references to legal and organizational matters concerning the upcoming marriage ceremonies but also very personal expressions of longing.

We begin the discussion on spouses with a brief review of the contents of the two letters dealing with the relationship between husbands and wives (letters 1 and 2). We then try to show what we can actually learn from reading these letters about emotional ties between partners in early Islamic Egypt. The focus then shifts from individual experiences and expressions of personal feelings to legal discussion on marriage and divorce using some published legal acts and other papyrological references related to the first stages in the process of marriage, aiming to show how Islamic marriage and divorce were socially and legally perceived and conducted in the early Muslim society in Egypt.

In letter no. 1, Naṣṣār b. Abū Zayd writes to his fiancée, Mahdiyya, informing her that he sent to her two bracelets as a dowry (*mahr*) in addition to two extra bells¹⁴⁴ and two necklaces as a gift (“*fa-qad ba’athtu ilayki siwārayn li-tanzūrī mahraki wa-l-juljulayn wa-l-‘iqdayn ‘alayhi*,” ll.2-3). Naṣṣār tells Mahdiyya that she is free to keep the two bracelets with her as well as the necklace(s) (“*fa-in raḍīti an taḥbisī al-siwārayn ‘indaki ammā al-‘iqd fa-huwa laki*,” ll.4-5, 7).¹⁴⁵ It is unclear, however, what she shall do with the bells as there is a lacuna obscuring the reading. He informs her further that he has kept with him another item to offer to her during the marriage ceremony in order to make her much more contented (“*wa-qad khaba’tu shay’ li-kayy ahabuhu laki wa-tatasarrī ‘inda al-milāk*,” ll.8-9). He hopes that the *mahr* will appeal to her and that she will accept to marry him soon (“*fa-as’alu Allāh yurḍiyaki wa-iyānā wa-yukhrijaki ilaynā fī ‘āfiya*,” l.4). In the same letter, Naṣṣār discusses with his future wife the preparation for the marriage ceremony (*milāk*). He asks her to write back to him about the kind of fruits he should buy for the guests, namely fresh fruits or dried ones, suggesting to buy fresh fruits, because they are preferred by people “these days” (“*wa-akhbirīnī mā arfiqū li-l-milāk al-fākiha al-yābisa am al-fākiha al-raṭiba li-anna al-fākiha al-raṭiba aḥabbu ilā al-nās al-yawm min al-fākiha al-yābisa*,” ll.10-14). Naṣṣār also asks Mahdiyya to inform a certain Abū al-Ḥakam, presumably Mahdiyya’s guardian (*walī*), that he received the trousseau (*al-matā’*), i.e. the household chattels and that he is pleased with it (“*wa-akhbirīhi annā qad ra’aynā al-ḥulīy wa-‘arafnā al-matā’ wa-kull shay’ wa-raḍīnā bihi*,” ll.19-20). To conclude his letter, Naṣṣār makes a supplication to God asking Him to bring them together in health and happiness and to make their religion thrive (“*jama’a Allāh baynī wa-baynaki fī ‘āfiya wa-surūr wa-yaj’aluhu ṣalāḥ li-dīninā*,” ll.21-22). He further cites a prophetic tradition that emphasizes the aversion to being single, stating that there is no goodness in a man without a woman nor in a woman without a man (“*fa-inna rasūl Allāh qāla fī-mā balaghanā lā khayr fī rajul bi-ghayr imra’a wa-lā imra’a bi-ghayr rajul*,” ll.22-24).¹⁴⁶ Finally, Naṣṣār asks Mahdiyya not to delay her departure more than three days, because she pleases him (“*wa-anā as’aluki bi-mā as’alu maratī bihi allā tuttrakī ‘annī ba’d thalāthat ayyām shay’ fa-innaki ‘indī riḍā*,” ll.24-25).

¹⁴⁴ See the commentary.

¹⁴⁵ See also the commentary to line 4.

¹⁴⁶ See the commentary.

The next step after Mahdiyya's acceptance of the dowry and the marriage (*qabūl*) would be concluding the marriage contract in a social gathering (the *milāk* ceremony), as Naṣṣār writes, where family members of both sides, relatives and friends are to be invited and then a new Muslim family in early Islamic Egypt would be established.¹⁴⁷

On the contrary, 'Amr b. Zubayd, the sender of letter 2, describes a bad conjugal experience with his disobedient wife which ended with divorce. In this letter, 'Amr writes to his father-in-law, possibly named 'Abd Al[lāh?], about his wife, who complained to the arbitrator (*al-ḥakam*), stating that 'Amr oppressed and beat her, because he prevented her from going out ("wa-dhālika kulluhu min ḥaṣrī lahā min al-khurūj wa-l-ṭawafān fī al-buyūt wa-l-ṭuruq fa-lammā ra'at annī manā'tuhā dhālika kullahu dhahabat ilā al-ḥakam fa-akhbarathu annahu yufalu bihā mā lam yufal bi-ḥurra min al-ḍarb wa-l-bu's wa-l-ḥirm," ll.7-11). 'Amr informs his father-in-law further that she used to insult and curse him and that he tolerated that for a while ("thumma innahā kānat taqūlu min al-qawl mā law annaka kunta tusāmi'ahu la-'adhartanī 'alayhā tantahiku al-sharaf fīhi wa-l-nafs wa-taqūlu qawl mā sami'tu imra'a taqūlu li-zawjihā mā taqūlu al-'Allāna mā-lā yaṣ'adu fī al-samā' wa-lā yaq'udu fī al-ard," ll.11-14). After his unsuccessful attempts to improve his wife's ill nature, 'Amr sent to her some pious men from his clan, amongst whom a certain Abū al-Gharrā' by reminding her of God and advising her to improve her bad behavior and to restrain her tongue until the addressee would come and investigate everything himself ("fa-lammā ra'aytu minhā annahā irtakabat aswa' amrihā ba'athtu ilayhā rijāl ṣāliḥīn min 'ashīratī wa-arsaltu ilā Abū al-Gharrā' fa-qultu lahum idhhabū fa-dhkirūhā bi-llāh illā itqat Allāh wa-aṣlahat khuluqahā wa-kaffat lisānahā ḥattā taqdim,"

¹⁴⁷ The first step towards establishing a Muslim family starts when a man offers a proposal of marriage (*yāb*), i.e. betrothal (*khiṭba*) to a woman, who is usually represented by her family or more precisely her guardian (*walī*), who could either be the father or the bride's nearest male relative. The betrothal does not involve a contract and therefore does not form any legal obligation on either side. However, it gives the two future spouses the right to see each other. The betrothal also gives the fiancé a right of priority in marriage as another man is banned to ask the hand of a betrothed lady. If the proposal of marriage is accepted, the contract of marriage could be concluded. The marriage contract (*'aqd al-nikāh*), like all legal contracts in Islamic law, is binding and must meet certain conditions concerning content and form. It is usually concluded by a notary between the groom or his agent and the bride's guardian in the presence of at least two sound witnesses (*shuhūd 'udūl*). The payment of the dowry (*mahr*) is an essential element in every valid marriage contract. A valid marriage would also require the consent of the bride (*qabūl*). In addition to the abovementioned conditions, the jurists grant the wife the right to add certain clauses stipulating additional provisions to the marriage contract, even if these conditions are already part of any valid contract, e.g. recording the payment of the bride's dowry. In most cases, these stipulations support and expand the rights of the wife and limit the privileges of the husband particularly on the issue of polygamy, namely prohibiting the husband from taking another wife or even a concubine (*jāriya*). Other possible stipulations prevent the husband from taking the wife out of her hometown; secure the wife's right to visit her family as well as allowing her family to visit her, treat the wife with reverence, supply her with all living expenses and not to subject her to hard work. Sometimes the right of the bride to add such clauses is connected with the amount and division of the dowry. See Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795), *al-Mudawwana al-kubrā, riwāyat Saḥnūn* (Cairo, 1905-1906), vol. 4, 11-15, 48-49; A.M. Delcambre, "Khiṭba," E.I.2, vol. 5, 22-23; A. al-Sarīṭī, *Ahkām al-zawāj wa-l-ṭalāq fī al-sharī'a al-islāmiyya* (Beirut: al-Dār al-Jāmi'iyya, 1995), 16-29; Tucker (2008), 41-42, 46, 49; Spector (2010), 66, 78, 82; Kazi (1996), 39-41, 43; Stern (1939), 23, 32-56; J. Schacht, *An introduction to Islamic law* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1982), 161-168; A. Rahim, *The principles of Muhammadan jurisprudence according to the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali schools* (London: Luzac, 1911), 326-350; M. 'Abidī, *al-Aḥwāl al-shakṣiyya wa-l-mirāth fī al-fiqh al-mālikī* (al-Dār al-Bayḍā: Ifriqiya al-Sharq, 1996), 25-29; K. Ali, "Marriage in classical Islamic jurisprudence: a survey of doctrines," in: A. Quraishi, F. Vogel (eds.), *The Islamic marriage contract, case studies in Islamic family law* (Harvard: Islamic legal studies program, Harvard law school, 2008), 21 and the sources cited there; Y. Rapoport, "Matrimonial gifts in early Islamic Egypt," *Islamic law and society* 7/1 (2000), 12-14.

ll.15-19). But this reconciliatory attempt made by an external party was also deemed to failure. ‘Amr continues to express his dissatisfaction with his wife’s nature assuring his father-in-law that he was serious about the marriage (“*fa-wa-llāh alladhī lā ilāh illā huwa la-qad kuntu kārih li-mā fa’alat al-‘Allāna wa-mā bī illā raghba fī alladhī ja’ala Allāh baynī wa-baynaka min al-ṣihr wa-l-ḥaqq wa-innī murtaghib bi-muṣāharatika wa-mā qaddama Allāh laka min al-sharaf wa-l-ḥaqq wa-l-thanā’ wa-l-ḥamd fī al-dīn fa-mithluka yartaghibu al-rajul fī muṣāharatihi,*” ll.20-25). However, he informs the father-in-law that he has recently divorced his wife or, to be more precise, he has been divorced from her and asks him not to be angry at him, because it was against his will. ‘Amr ends his letter with the wish to remarry his ex-wife awaiting the father-in-law’s arrival and approval (“*fa-lā tajid ‘alayya fī dhālika fa-innamā hiya fa’alat dhālika arjū min Allāh wa-minka an taruddahā ilayya fa-innī lam uṭliq wa-lam akhla’ ‘an hudan minnī fa-innamā iftadaytu minhā bi-dhālika min ḥujajihā wa-min lisānihā ḥattā taqdimā ilaynā,*” ll.25-26, 33-35).

The two letters bring us closer to conjugal life and obligations in early Islamic Egypt and the joyful and sorrowful stories and emotions stemming from them. The letters show how, when and in what context emotional bonds between partners were established and broken up. In letter 1, for example, Naṣṣār tries to make his joy visible to the future wife. In order to create a strong emotional bond, Naṣṣār sent to the future wife many jewelries as a gift besides the legal dowry. Naṣṣār also claims that he kept another item with him in order to offer to the bride as a surprise-gift at the time of signing the contract. The reason, according to Naṣṣār himself, is to make the bride much more happy. Besides discussing wedding ceremony arrangements, the letter contains many words and gestures of emotions, especially longing, joy and satisfaction. It is worth mentioning here that the very intimate personal feeling of longing given at the end of the letter is accompanied by a prophetic tradition emphasizing the aversion to remain single. I was not able to find an equivalent of this *ḥadīth* in canonical *ḥadīth* works, but the authenticity of lost *ḥadīths* and the trustworthiness of Naṣṣār are not issues of discussion here. I have discussed elsewhere the early lost *ḥadīth* codices written on papyrus.¹⁴⁸ Further to the religious significance in expressing personal feelings of longing, a supplication to bring the two fiancées together in health and happiness has been made at the end of the letter. Now then what can we learn of this letter about social mores of the society? Did Naṣṣār act according to or disregard for social mores of his society? In order to answer this question and to fully understand the text, we have to consider the fact that there were several factors that could have either enhanced or hindered expressing intimate feelings of love and passion between two genders. To demonstrate this, in a fragmentary letter introduced by Grohmann, as a romantic love letter, probably transported by a pigeon, the sender shows the sickness of his soul and heart (“*wa-in kānat nafsī marīḍa wa-qalbī []*,” PERF 639[= P.Word, 181].2 3rd/9th). At the end of the fragment, it is said that a copy of this letter was made and that the salve girl may have seen it. The letter is unique. But, unfortunately, the fragmentary condition of the papyrus does not allow further investigation of the text. The fragment does not tell in what context these words are expressed, nor does it say to whom they are addressed. Grohmann

¹⁴⁸ K.M. Younes, and Y. Nour “Fragment of a lost Ḥadīth collection of Sufyān al-Thawrī preserved on papyrus,” (forthcoming).

has also given another example of a love letter on papyrus (PERF 687[= P.Word, 181].2 3rd/9th). Grohmann's understanding of the letter's contents made him come up with this assumption. Let us then read the letter one more time. In the letter, the sender informs the addressee, both anonymous to us, that he has put a letter enclosed in another letter under the cushion and that he forgot to take it with him when leaving. Thus, the sender asks the addressee to immediately send this letter with the guard, namely the carrier of the current letter (*"amtā'anī allāh bika qad kuntu waḍa'tu al-bāriḥa ruq'atan khalfa al-wisāda wa-fihā ruq'atan ukhrā wa-nasītu an ākhudha mā ma'ī al-yawm fa-b'ath bihā ilayya al-sā'a ma'a hādhā al-ḥāris in shā'a Allāh,"* ll.2-10). Now I wonder whether we see here any love or romantic expressions. Perhaps Grohmann indicates the enclosed letter that was kept under the pillow. And maybe this is why the sender was so worried and serious to have it as soon as possible before somebody else could have seen it. How can we know? This is too far-off assumption. It is not entirely clear why Grohmann entitled this letter as a love letter, as he does not provide a commentary on this letter. In her commentary on the first letter, Grob explained the scarcity of such kinds of letters (romantic love letters) due to social conventions and popular use of poetry to express love and affection rather than using written correspondences. Grob says: "A love letter would surely have been kept and disposed of differently from ordinary correspondence."¹⁴⁹ But, one may wonder, if someone expresses his feelings of love and affection in poetry, why would it be a problem of having them written down. The expression of love itself was not an issue, then, but to whom love expressions were addressed. Naṣṣār was not then breaking the social mores of his society by expressing his personal feelings of love and longing towards his future wife, but bringing them to the surface.

As far as the second letter is concerned in this discussion, the main story revolves around an unsuccessful marriage. The letter brings us close to one of the family disputes that resulted in divorce soon after a short-lived marriage and shows a complete mismatch between the husband and the wife from the start.¹⁵⁰ This assumption is based on a number of grounds. First and foremost, the voice of the letter shows the husband's surprise from the wife's bad nature soon after the departure of the father-in-law to the Fayyūm, presumably after bringing her to his place (*dukhūl*).¹⁵¹ The husband says that the wife started to make excuses and insisted to go out, most probably without his permission. He also expresses his shock from the wife's sharp tongue. Certainly, the wife's bad behavior and ill nature would not be an issue of complain after a long-lived marriage.

¹⁴⁹ See Grob (2010a), 93.

¹⁵⁰ When the objectives of marriage remain unfulfilled and the attempts to reconcile and settle the differences between the husband and the wife fail, Islamic law allows the two spouses to dissolve the marriage peacefully (Q 2:231). Islamic law also grants the husband the absolute right to break up the marriage and pronounce a unilateral divorce, if he dislikes his wife. As the Islamic law grants the husband the absolute right to divorce his wife at his will, it also grants the wife the right to demand separation (*khul'*) from her husband, whom she dislikes. The term *khul'* in its literal sense means "to take off or to remove" but as a technical term in Islamic law it signifies an agreement between the husband and the wife to dissolve the marriage through compensation paid by the wife to her husband, namely part or all of the dowry and other gifts she may have received from him (Q 2:229). If the wife makes a demand for *khul'* and the husband refuses, it is her right to go to the judge (*qāḍī*) to seek *khul'* from him. In this case, the *qāḍī* does not have to investigate whether the wife proposes reasonable reasons for seeking separation or not, but only to make sure that she dislikes him. The *qāḍī* would then order the husband to let the wife go. See Mālik, *Mudawwana*, vol. 5, 17-25.

¹⁵¹ For this term, see below.

In this letter as well as in letter 3 of this corpus which also shows a problem between a husband and a wife, we see the wife breaks up her silence about her discontent with the husband and goes to complain about him to religious and administrative authorities, i.e. *al-ḥakam* and *al-amīr*. The husbands, on the other side, seem to do nothing except to express their distress, anger and angst to close family members and to complain about their wives shameful acts. In his letter to the father-in-law, 'Amr b. Zubayd reports on his divorce against his will, complains about his wife's ill nature and sharp tongue and strangely enough asks him to remarry her. Does this refer to or reveal a strong love bond with the ex-wife? We can never be sure. But the letter is very emotional in tone and content with many words of sorrow and regret. It also shows high respect to the father-in-law and points up to what extent 'Amr is concerned to keep the bond of the *ṣihr* relationship (relationship through marriage) with his father-in-law very strong.

The addressee of letter 3, too, wrote a letter to his brother to express his deep sorrow and anxiety of his free wife (*al-ḥurra*), who also complained about him to the *amīr* for reasons unknown to us. The brother responded sympathetically to his brother's sorrowful letter and asked him not worry that much as he, the sender, will take care of this matter.

In all letters discussed above, emotions, whether painful or pleasurable, are predominant, especially in those touching upon marriage and the relationship between husbands and wives. While Naṣṣār, 'Amr and the two brothers, the addressee and sender of letter 3, speak of their own personal experience, they indicate a warm emotional community within the families. A point to which I shall return when discussing children and women of the house.

In addition to bringing the experiences of engaged and married individuals in the life of early Islamic Egypt, letters 1 and 2 are extremely significant as they bring to light an abundance of information about the social and legal practice of marriage and divorce settlements in early Muslim society in Egypt. To be more precise, the first letter sheds light on a number of significant issues, amongst which the direct communication between the bride and the groom before conducting the marriage contract, the payment of the dowry, the delivery of the bride's trousseau and the preparation of the marriage ceremony.

Unexpectedly, the letter records a direct written contact with the fiancée. Moreover, Mahdiyya is represented as a messenger between the future husband and the guardian (*walī*), Abū al-Ḥakam, whose role before concluding the marriage contract seems to be limited to delivering the trousseau to Naṣṣār's place.¹⁵² The marriage negotiations and settlements take place between the two future spouses, as the letter illustrates. The letter also states that the trousseau was provided by Mahdiyya's family from their own money.¹⁵³

¹⁵² For the role and right of the guardian in Islamic law, see Khan, et al. (2006), 223-252.

¹⁵³ The bride's trousseau (*jahāz/shiwār/matā'*) or the "counterpart" dowry is another sort of nuptial gift which was provided by the bride's family either as a gift or a loan (*'aṭiyya/āriyya*) or supplied as part of the groom's dowry. Mālik as well as other jurists hardly touch upon this dowry while discussing the nuptial gifts. However, in two prophetic traditions related to the prophet's marriage to 'Ā'isha (d. 58/678) and the marriage of the prophet's daughter, Fāṭima (d. 11/632), to 'Alī (d. 40/661), the trousseau is referred to as *matā'*, namely the household utensils. It is reported that the prophet asked 'Alī to put one-third of the dowry to Fāṭima into household chattels. In another version, this one-third took the form of clothes. In the prophet's marriage to 'Ā'isha, it is said that Abū Bakr (d. 13/634) provided his daughter with household equipment of a value of fifty *dirhams*. It is not clear, however, whether Abū Bakr provided the trousseau from his own money or from the dowry given by the prophet. See Rapoport (2000), 1-35; Stern (1939), 55 and the sources cited there.

On the other hand, the dowry that Naṣṣār offered to Mahdiyya and the way he divided it seems quite remarkable.¹⁵⁴ He sent three different accessories, two items of each, i.e. two bracelets, two necklaces and two bells. Perhaps all or at least the two bracelets were golden pieces. It is a pity that the word describing the value of the two bracelets is partially illegible at the beginning of line five. The reading [*dha*]habiy (golden) fits nicely but it is not entirely certain.¹⁵⁵ The two bracelets, the two necklaces, the two bells and the surprise-gift, that Naṣṣār claims to keep with him till the time of signing the contract, are not all part of the dowry. Only the two bracelets constitute the dowry and the rest are gifts.¹⁵⁶

In all published marriage contracts, the dowry is paid in money and usually divided into advance (*mu'ajjal*) and deferred (*mu'ajjal/mu'akhkhar*) portions in two or more installments always due at specified dates.¹⁵⁷ On occasions, a separate *barā'a* document recording the receiving of a portion of the dowry or a *dhikr ḥaqq* document recording the acknowledgment of the deferred portions is issued at the request of one of the spouses.¹⁵⁸ Giving gifts, jewelries or any other valuable items as dowry are, to the best of my knowledge, not yet recorded in the papyri. Also the *counterpart* dowry¹⁵⁹ given by the bride's family is conspicuously absent in all published marriage contracts. It is referred to, however, in divorce deeds. The papyrus PERF 569 [= Chrest.Khoury II 19], which dates back to the 2nd/8th century, is a document of a divorce settlement between a husband named Abū Sulaymān and his wife Sukayna. In this document, the two spouses reached an agreement that Sukayna is entitled to what is in her house (*mā fī baytihā*), namely the trousseau, and that Abū Sulaymān is entitled to the (deferred) dowry he still owes her (*mā 'alayhi min al-ṣadāq*). Abū Sulaymān is also required to pay thirty *dīnārs* (*wa-arḍāhā bi-thalāthīn dīnār*) as

¹⁵⁴ The dowry (*ṣadāq/mahr*) constitutes a valuable gift or amount of money which the bride is entitled to receive from the groom at the time of marriage or afterwards and not to be returned in case of divorce, if the marriage was already consummated (Q 4:4, 4:24). In case the wife is divorced before the consummation of the marriage, she has the right to receive only half of the dowry, unless she forgoes it (Q 2:237). The *mahr* could also be paid in kind or anything else that has some value or can be bought, sold or hired for a price. If the groom has no financial sources to pay the dowry at the time of marriage, it is possible for him to marry on the basis of a pledge to pay it in the future. The amount of the *mahr* could vary considerably depending mainly on the groom's financial status. Mālik agreed to fix a lower limit (*ḥadd*) for the dowry to the equivalent of one quarter of a golden *dīnār* or three silver *dirhams*. The dowry could either be paid all at once at the time of the marriage or in two or more installments. Nevertheless, the Mālikī school affirms that the deferred portions of the dowry must be specified to certain dates in the contract of marriage. The social practice of dividing the dowry into two main portions, i.e. immediate (*mu'ajjal*) at the time of the conclusion of the marriage contract and deferred (*mu'ajjal*) most probably payable only at the time of death or divorce provoked a lot of discussions between early Muslim jurists particularly between Mālik in Medina and the famous Egyptian jurist al-Layth b. Sa'd (d. 175/791). Mālik prohibits the postponement of the deferred portions of the dowry (*mu'ajjal*) at the time of death or divorce stating that the non-specification of time would invalidate the dowry and the contract in case the marriage has not yet consummated. Al-Layth, on the reverse, sees no problem in deferring the rest of the dowry at divorce or death. See Mālik, *Mudawwana*, vol. 4, 19, 47, 73-74, 103 and vol. 5, 116-117; al-Asyūṭī (d. 911/1505), *Jawāhir al-'uqūd wa-mu'īn al-quḍāt wa-l-muwaqqi'īn wa-l-shuhūd* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1996), 33-38; Y. Rapoport, *Marriage, money and divorce in medieval Islamic society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 14-18, 53-59; Tucker (2008), 46-47; O. Spies, "Mahr," E.I.2, vol. 6, 78-80; Stern (1939), 25; Rapoport (2000), 5-16, and the sources cited there.

¹⁵⁵ See the commentary to line 5.

¹⁵⁶ For more extensive discussion on matrimonial gifts in early Islamic Egypt, see Rapoport (2000), 1-36.

¹⁵⁷ See Rapoport (2000), 5-16.

¹⁵⁸ P.Cair.Arab. I 49 [= Chrest.Khoury II 13], dated 297/910; P.Cair.Arab. I 48 [= Chrest.Khoury II 14], dated 233/847.

¹⁵⁹ This term is proposed by Rapoport for the bride's trousseau (*jahāz/shiwār*) or any gifts provided by the bride's family to the groom, see Rapoport (2000), 22-28.

compensation for his wife, i.e. the divorce gift (*al-mut'a*).¹⁶⁰ A certain 'Uthmān b. 'Abd Allāh stands guarantor for Abū Sulaymān and two other persons witness the agreement.¹⁶¹ A similar agreement is recorded in another divorce deed from the 3rd/9th century. In this document, the ex-husband, Muḥammad, had to deliver to his ex-wife, 'Ā'isha, what is in her house of trousseau (*shiwār*), which she contributed ("wa-*qad sallama Muḥammad mā fī baytihā min shiwār kāna lahā*," PERF 797 [= Chrest.Khoury II 20].7).¹⁶² In our letter, the trousseau is referred to as *matā'* and it is provided by the bride's guardian. Naṣṣār received the trousseau at his place and was totally pleased with it, and thus another settlement of the process of marriage was agreed upon.

The preparation for the marriage ceremony (*milāk*) is another issue to be highlighted in this discussion. It is remarkable to see Naṣṣār involving his future wife in the small details of the preparation, as he asked her about the quantity and kind of fruits he should buy for the guests. Nevertheless, he put the number twenty-five as the maximum limit. It is not clear from the text whether the mentioned number is referring to the amount of the fruits or the value of them.

Before we move to the second letter, it might be worth studying some other papyrological references related to the first stages in the process of marriage in order to lead forward our understanding of the actual social practice surrounding marriage before and after drawing up the contract. Consulting elderly family members before offering a proposal of marriage (*tazwīj*) to a girl from the same family seems to have been conventional. In one letter originating from the Fayyūm, the sender 'Umar b. Muḥammad informs the addressee Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd al-Salām that he received his two consequent letters. In the first letter, Abū 'Alī expressed his desire to marry his cousin and asked for 'Umar's opinion, while in the second, he gave up the idea stating that he is not interested in this marriage any longer. In his response, the consultant strongly supports the idea of getting married and asks Abū 'Alī to move ahead and not to be reluctant. He, nevertheless, apologizes for being unable to attend any of the negotiations of the marriage settlements ("atānī minka kitāb ba'd kitāb fa-l-awwal minhā dhakarta lī fihī annaka turīdu tazwīj ibnat 'ammika wa-tas'alunī 'an ra'yī fī dhālika wa-kitāb ba'dahu bi-l-farāgh minhu fa-as'alu Allāh yā bunayya an ya'zima laka wa-lanā fī kull amr 'alā arshad al-umūr fī 'āfiya fa-ammā masarratuka iyyāya fī ibnat 'ammika fa-mā aḥsan mā ra'aytu wa-mā aḥaqq ba'dukum min ba'd bi-dhālika wa-lam yā bunayya annī qad kuntu uḥibbu an law ḥaḍartu ba'd amrika fa-dhīrī fa-llāh al-musta'ān wa-as'alu Allāh an yaj'alahā 'alayka mubārakatan naqiyyatan wa-an yuqni'aka bihā wa-yajma'a ulfatakum 'alā al-tahābb wa-l-taqwā wa-an yaj'ala ba'dakum 'alā ba'd barakatan," P.Marchands V/I 11.2-6, 17-20, 3rd/9th).

Another two aspects of the marriage ceremonies that the papyri report on are the *delivery* of the bride to the groom after concluding the contract of marriage and the first

¹⁶⁰ See Mālik, *Mudawwana*, vol. 4, 19.

¹⁶¹ For a wider discussion on the divorce gift (*al-mut'a*) using this document, see Rapoport (2000), 16-21.

¹⁶² In another divorce settlement dated 461/1069, the ex-husband was absolved from paying the outstanding portion of the deferred dowry he owes his wife, which amounts to three *dīnārs* as well as all other expenses, i.e. maintenance, wheat, *dirhams*, clothing, blankets, carpets, house rent, water and oil ("ba'd an waḍa'at 'anhu jamī mu'akhhkar ṣadāqihā wa-mablaghuhu thalāthat danānīr wa-jamī mā yajibu lahā 'alayhi min al-nafaqa al-qamḥ wa-l-darāhim wa-l-kiswa wa-l-ghīṭā' wa-l-waṭ' wa-ujrat al-maskan wa-l-mā' wa-l-zayt," Chrest.Khoury II 18, ll. 8-11). See also Chrest.Khoury II 15, dated 378/989.

sexual cohabitation (*dukhūl*). In two published private letters datable on palaeographical grounds to the 2nd/8th century, the senders inform the addressees about the *dukhūl* of their daughters with their husbands. In the first letter, the sender informs the addressee, both anonymous to us, that his daughter has cohabited with her husband, meaning mainly that the marriage has been consummated (“*wa-inna ibna[t]ī qad dakhlat ‘alā zawjihā,*” P.Ryl.Arab. B II 10r[= P.World, 171-173].13-14).¹⁶³ In the second letter, the same issue is recorded in a similar way. The female sender Umm al-Ḥakam informs her business agent Mīnā Bajūsh that she was in Fuṣṭāṭ when the husband of her daughter came and cohabited with her (“*wa-qad kuntu bi-l-fuṣṭāṭ ḥattā qadima zawj bintī fa-dakhala ‘alayhā,*” P.Jahn 12[= Chrest.Khoury I 98].7-8).¹⁶⁴

Let us now move to divorce. Letter 2 stresses the role of family arbitration before going to court which echoes the Qur’anic command to bring forth two arbiters from the husband’s side and the wife’s side to judge between the two (Q 4:35).¹⁶⁵ The letter shows that after the husband’s unsuccessful attempts to improve the wife’s nature either by advising her and preventing her from going out or by beating and oppressing her, as the wife claimed before the arbitrator, ‘Amr sent to his wife some pious men from his clan. He also asked a certain Abū al-Gharrā’, most probably from the wife’s side, to go along with his people to advise her to improve her bad behavior and to restrain her tongue. But the external reconciliatory attempt failed and the court was the only available solution for the repressed and oppressed wife. The result was to dissolve the marriage according to the wife’s will.

The letter also casts light on the function of the arbitration institution (*taḥkīm*) in the judicial system in early Islamic centuries. In pre-Islamic Arabia, the arbitration was the only judicial system available to the people who were unable to settle their differences by means of a direct friendly agreement. After the advent of Islam, the arbitration became an additional procedure but continued to function as a branch of the organized judicial system (*al-qaḍā’*). The arbitrator’s necessary qualities were as those demanded of the judge and his decision was binding.¹⁶⁶ Our letter confirms this fact.

Letter 3 in our corpus may add a bit to this discussion, since the husband had a similar experience with his free wife, who complained about him to the *amīr*.¹⁶⁷ Unfortunately, this is all we know about the case. Why did the wife complain about her husband? And what was the *amīr*’s decision? It is impossible to know. On the other hand, it is quite a lot to be informed that this wife was also a free wife (*ḥurra*) exactly like the wife of ‘Amr. I discussed elsewhere in this thesis this category of women.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ See also K.M. Younes, “New governors identified in Arabic papyri,” in: A. Delattre, M.A.L. Legendre, P.M. Sijpesteijn (eds.), *Authority and control in the countryside, continuity and change in the Mediterranean 6th-10th century*, document no. 2 (forthcoming).

¹⁶⁴ See also Römer and Demiri (2009), 43-45.

¹⁶⁵ Before going to court to seek *khul’* or divorce, the most abominable thing with God among all the permitted things, the Qur’an recommends reconciliation through family arbitration, namely to bring forth two arbiters from the husband’s side and the wife’s side to judge between the two (“And if ye fear a breach between them twain (the man and wife), appoint an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they desire amendment Allah will make them of one mind. Lo! Allah is ever Knower, Aware.” Q 4:35).

¹⁶⁶ E. Tyan, “Ḥakam,” E.I.2, vol. 3, 72.

¹⁶⁷ For the title *amīr* and who is meant by the *amīr* in the text, see the commentary.

¹⁶⁸ See below the discussion on women of the house.

Back to ‘Amr b. Zubayd and his tragic conjugal life which ended quickly with divorce. After the separation, ‘Amr asks the father-in-law to remarry his ex-wife using the technical term *radda* (to take back). Did ‘Amr succeed in his endeavor to take his wife back? The letter does not tell further. The letter does not tell either whether the ex-wife continued to live in ‘Amr’s house or moved to another place to live independently. She did not, of course, go to her father’s house, as he had to be informed by the letter about the divorce. Finally, it would be fair to conclude the discussion on this letter with the fact that we do not really know whether ‘Amr is telling the truth about his wife or not, as we hear the story from his side only.

The two just discussed letters show that financial and customary matters pertaining to marriage and divorce were mainly settled by mutual consent between the two families, more precisely between the two spouses, as our first letter shows. The marriage proposal offered by the groom (*ijāb*), the bride’s consent (*qabūl*), the amount and division of the dowry (*ṣadāq/mahr*) and the value and delivery of the bride’s trousseau (*matā’*) were all agreed upon in the private sphere before concluding the legal act. The role of the notary “the state” comes into sight at the time of drawing up the marriage contract which should be in a legal valid format. The same holds true for the cases of divorce and *khul’* settlements; we saw in divorce deeds the wives absolving their husbands from paying the outstanding portion of the deferred dowry and the husbands giving them back the trousseau to terminate the marriage through family arbitration. The court appears only when one of the spouses repudiates the friendly agreement, as made clear in the second letter.

One final remark is to be made to end this legal discussion. While all published legal marriage acts follow comparatively the legal formularies proposed in the earliest manual book of *shurūṭ*, i.e. the book *al-Shurūṭ al-ṣaghīr* composed by the prominent Egyptian scholar Abū Ja’far al-Ṭaḥawī (d. 312/933)¹⁶⁹ and specify with precision the due date of the deferred portion of the *ṣadāq* as recommended by the Mālikī legal doctrine (*madhhab*),¹⁷⁰ which was dominant in Egypt during the early centuries of Islam, the actual local practice of the society as noticed in divorce deeds show that the deferred portion of the *ṣadāq* was in reality deferred to the time of death or divorce as was practiced in pre-Islamic Egypt.¹⁷¹ The Egyptian tradition and practice regarding the payment of the *ṣadāq* was already mirrored in the legal discourse by contemporaneous local and non-local jurists.¹⁷² The legal discussion has eventually succeeded in eliminating the practice which shows the interaction between Islamic law and the local Egyptian practices, and how the early Muslim jurists responded to limit or eradicate non-Islamic practices connected with marriage and divorce.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ al-Ṭaḥawī (d. 312/933), *al-Shurūṭ al-ṣaghīr*, ed. R. Awzajān (Baghdad: Ri’āsat Dīwān al-Awqāf, 1974), 671. For the great influence of the *shurūṭ* works over all legal acts from the end of the 3rd/9th century onwards, see J. Wakin, *The function of documents in Islamic law: the chapters on sale from Ṭaḥawī’s kitāb al-shurūṭ al-kabīr* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972); P.Khalili II, 174-75. See also G. Frantz-Murphy, “A comparison of Arabic and earlier Egyptian contract formularies,” I-IV, *Journal of Near Eastern studies* 40 (1981), 203-25; 44 (1985), 99-114; 47 (1988), 105-12, 269-80; W. Hallaq, “Model *shurūṭ* works and the dialectic of doctrine and practice,” *Islamic law and society* 2 (1995), 109-34.

¹⁷⁰ The Mālikī school was established by the widely known jurist and transmitter Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795), who was born and died in Medina. For more, see J. Schacht, “Mālik b. Anas,” E.I.2, vol. 6, 262-265.

¹⁷¹ See the discussion in Rapoport (2000), 3, 10-12, 33.

¹⁷² For more extensive discussion on this legal dispute, see Rapoport (2000), 5-16, and the sources cited there.

¹⁷³ For more information, see Rapoport (2000), 9, 31-33.

1.2. Children

“fa-in kānat qad waladat fa-awṣīhim bihā wa-bi-waladihā khayran.”

(If she already gave birth, ask them to take good care of her and her baby.)

Letter 9.18-19

The odds of miscarriage and death by childbirth and during childhood in pre-modern times were extremely high due to the primitive medical tools and experience then available.¹⁷⁴ In our corpus, two references to childbirth occur but none to pregnancy.¹⁷⁵ In addition, two other references to childbirth appear in published texts. The references to childbirth are too short and concise and the topic does not seem to be the main concern of the writer, as we find it always mixed with many other personal and commercial affairs or even given as an afterthought at the very end of the letter. In the four cases attested in the papyri, the sender either inquires or informs about a new childbirth, mentioning usually the gender of the baby neither without giving any further details about the condition of the childbearing woman before and after giving birth nor about the newborn and the birth process at large. The letters are also completely silent regarding the expected celebrations that might have followed a successful childbirth, i.e. naming the newborn, the circumcision (*khitān*) and *‘aqīqa* ceremonies which would have been obligatory or recommended rituals as part of the religion these people adhere to, namely Islam.¹⁷⁶ Likewise, the letters tell us nothing about childrearing in terms of education.¹⁷⁷

With these few and short papyrological references we cannot, of course, catch the emotional reactions of the childbearing women in pregnancy and at birth nor the personal feelings of the fathers and the family at large after a successful childbirth. Nevertheless, it may be fruitful to take a closer look at these references and study them in some detail to see whether we deal here with a different emotional community, i.e. “introvert” expression of emotions.

In letter 3 of our corpus, the sender informs his absent brother that two of his female slaves gave birth to a boy and a girl (*“wa-qad jā’anā khabar anna Sidbata qad waladat ghulām*

¹⁷⁴ See Bagnall and Cribiore (2006), 76; A. Gil’adi, *Children of Islam: concepts of childhood in medieval Muslim society* (Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with St. Antony’s College, Oxford, 1992), 69-93; A. Gil’adi, “Infants, children and death in medieval Muslim society: some preliminary observations,” *Social history of medicine* 3 (1990), 345-368.

¹⁷⁵ For references in Greek and Coptic letters, see Bagnall and Cribiore (2006), 75-77.

¹⁷⁶ According to Muslim faith, on the seventh day after the birth of a child, the parents should give a name to a newborn child, shave off its hair and make a sacrifice, namely two rams or goats for a boy and one for a girl. See Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1349), *Tuhfat al-mawdūd bi-ahkām al-mawlūd* (Cairo: al-Maktab al-Thaqāfi li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī, 1986), especially chapters 6-8; Th.W. Juynbol, and J. Pedersen, “Aḳīqa,” E.I.2, vol. I, 337. For circumcision, mostly in the modern Islamic world, see A.J. Wensinck, “Khitān,” E.I.2, vol. 5, 20-22. See also Gil’adi (1992), 19-34.

¹⁷⁷ For more extensive discussion on childrearing and education in medieval Muslim societies, see Gil’adi (1992), 45-60; A. Gil’adi, “Gender differences in child rearing and education: some preliminary observations with reference to medieval Muslim thought,” *Al-Qantara* 16/2 (1995), 291-308. See also A. Gil’adi, “Concepts of childhood and attitudes towards children in medieval Islam: a preliminary study with special reference to reactions to infant and child mortality,” *Journal of the economic and social history of the orient* 32 (1989), 121-152.

wa-ukhbirnā anna al-ukhrā qad waladat jāriya,” ll.17-19). The letter remains silent about the health status of the mothers and the babies after birth, but the silence seems more likely to be taken as good news. What is more, the expected emotional expressions showing happiness and concern are absent. Is it because they are slaves? The answer could be yes. Immediately after informing the addressee about the birth of the two babies, the sender reports on costs of one hundred and nine *dīnārs* that were spent after the addressee’s departure. One may wonder, do these expenses include birth costs? We are not told. At the very end of letter 9, the sender inquires whether an unidentified woman gave birth or not. The sender asks the addressee to ask others to take good care of this woman and her baby in case she already gave birth (“*hal waladat fa-in kānat qad waladat fa-awṣihim bihā wa-bi-waladihā khayran waladahā,*” ll.18-19). The letter does not say who this woman is, nor does it say how the sender is related to her. While the letter’s tone suggests a degree of physical distance, it shows a strong emotional feeling towards the childbearing lady and her baby. In one published letter, the two senders, Abū Ismā’īl and Umm ‘Umar, ask the addressee, ‘Umar b. Rāshid, to write back to them with a certain Wusāma when a certain Mājida gave birth (“*wa-ktub ilayya ma’a Wusāma in kānat waladat Mājida am lā ḥattā a’lama dhālika,*” P.Jahn 5.8-9, 2nd/8th). The relationship between the senders and the addressee is not clear, but the letter’s tone indicates a very close kinship. Umm ‘Umar is, most probably, the addressee’s mother. In another letter, the sender, Abū Khālīd Yazīd b. Walīd, informs the addressee, Zayd b. Yaḥyā, about several personal and commercial matters. Among the personal affairs, Abū Khālīd reports that a certain Khadīja, most probably his wife, gave birth to a girl (“*wa-ukhbirukum anna Khadīja waladat jāriya,*” P.David-WeillLouvre 11.17-18, 2nd/8th). Again, Abū Khālīd does not tell how the mother and the new baby are doing nor does he mention what name he gave to the girl. Nevertheless, we can assume that Khadīja, the mother, was in a good condition after giving birth, as we hear her voice in the letter. In the greeting section, Khadīja conveys her salutations to the addressees as well as to other male and female relatives.

With the exception of letter no. 9 of our corpus, where feelings of care and concern for the childbearing woman and the newborn are evident, none of the references use words of emotions. Does this mean that people focused more in reporting on the incident itself, i.e. the childbirth rather than expressing their personal feelings or do we see another emotional community whose members are keen and introvert in expressing personal feelings? It may be fruitful to continue our investigation before we give an answer to this question.

In contrast to the brief and rare references to childbirth in letters, references to taking care of children and female members of the family during the absence of the *paterfamilias* appear frequently in published letters as well as in letters edited in this thesis. To start with letters published in this thesis, in letter 41, the absent ‘Ubayd b. Jinān writes to his business partner Abū Sulaymān Ismā’īl b. Ayyūb reporting on many business affairs. At the end of the letter, ‘Ubayd asks Abū Sulaymān to take good care of his family and children (“*fa-stawṣī bi-ahl al-bayt wa-bi-l-‘iyāl khayran fa-innamā hum ahluka ma’a innaka mustawṣī in shā’a Allāh,*” ll.10-12). A similar request appears in letter 27. In this letter, Abū Muḥammad asks the addressee, his business partner, to take good care of his family so that not to blame him concerning

them (“*wa-stawṣī bi-ahlinā khayran wa-lā alumannka fīhim in shā’a Allāh,*” l.13). Also in letter **31**, the absent husband asks his business partner and probably relative to contact his family, most probably his wife, in order to inform them about his arrival on the eleventh of the current month so that they get ready for his arrival (“*wa-qad katabnā ilayka innā qādimūn wa-naḥnu nurīdu dhālika in shā’a Allāh ilā ‘ashr layāl takhlū min al-shahr fa-akthir iṭlā’ ahlinā fa-innamā hum ahluka,*” ll.10-13). In letter **24**, Abū ‘Amr and his wife Umāma write to a certain Abū Nu‘aym and his family to strengthen the bonds of the *ṣihr* relationship (relationship through marriage). At the end of the letter, the senders mention something about their children while playing with someone (“*iyālinā ‘ābathuhu,*” l.16). The content and the context are not clear due to the fragmentary nature of the bottom part of the papyrus. Īsā, the author of letter **4**, ends his letter to his wife by conveying special greetings to her, a certain Idrīs and the sister, most likely his two children, the household (*ahl al-bayt*) and finally his mother and all those who are with her (“*ablighī nafsaki al-salām kathīran wa-Idrīs wa-ukhtahu wa-jamī’ ahl al-bayt wa-aqrī’ī ummī al-salām kathīran wa-jamī’ man ‘indahā,*” ll.14-16). In letter **6**, Umm Zur‘a, the sender, informs her male relative Abū Tamīm that his son Tamīm and all his family are well and in good health as the father wishes (“*wa-ukhbiruka anna ibnaka Tamīm sālim ṣāliḥ kamā yasurruka min faḍl Allāh wa-raḥmatihi wa-ahlahu kamā tuḥibbūna,*” ll.7-9). Also, Shurayḥ b. ‘Amr, the author of letter **33**, informs the absent addressee that the latter’s family is in good health as he wishes (“*ukhbiruka anna ahlaka wa-waladaka ‘alā mā yasurruka,*” l.5). All references given in published letters are very similar, namely greetings to and from children and inquiries about their wellbeing.¹⁷⁸

The terms used to refer to children in the letters are somewhat problematic, and should be highlighted in this discussion. The term *‘iyāl*, for example, literary means children, but it is sometimes used for all family members including females. To demonstrate this, the term *‘aṭā’ al-‘iyāl* (the family allowance) appears quite often in administrative letters related to the *‘aṭā’* payments to the *jund* and their families.¹⁷⁹ In private letters, as they appear in the aforementioned examples, *‘iyāl* is more likely used for little children both males and females. As for the term *ṣibyān*, Petra Sijpesteijn argues that this term “might be a rendering of the Greek *paidia* in the sense of servants, slaves,” which might be true in an administrative context.¹⁸⁰ In private realm, however, the word would simply refer to male children.¹⁸¹ Special for salves, the word *jāriya* is used for a female child and *ghulām* for a male child (see letters **3.9**, 18-19; **13.22**).

Back to our question, while we are little informed about pregnancy and childbearing in early Islamic Egypt and the stories and emotions stemming from them, the letters offer another window on people’s care and concern for the wellbeing of their children. We can clearly discern the feelings of responsibility and accountability on the part of the parents especially the fathers. When they leave their homes, for whatever reason, they ask other family members, friends and business partners to take care of their families and children. Not taking the request seriously might result in harsh blame, as is made clear in letter **27**. In

¹⁷⁸ See P.Heid.Arab. II **50.4** and **56.10**; P.Marchands V/I **10.3**, **11.21**, **12.10** and **17r.4**; P.World, 166[= P.Marchands V/I **8r.8**]; P.Jahn **13**[= P.World, 183].6, all 3rd/9th. See also P.Genv.V **6.13**, 3rd/9th.

¹⁷⁹ See Sijpesteijn (2011), 245-267.

¹⁸⁰ Sijpesteijn (2004), **24.8** and the commentary.

¹⁸¹ See Lane, vol. 4, 1650.

most cases, the caretakers do the work properly and write back to the absent worried fathers with information about the wellbeing of their families stating that they are well and in good health (“*kamā tuḥibbūn*,” (they are as you wish) or “*alā mā yasurruka*,” (as pleases you) cf. 6.9; 33.5). It is misleading to assume here that the caretakers were not somehow related to the families of the absent patrons; they were to some extent kith and kin. This assumption can be supported by the observation that the letters sometimes say in plain words *fa-innamā hum ahluka* (they are your family as well). The case of Abū Hurayra in the Banū ‘Abd al-Mu‘min archive is exceptional. The series of letters sent to him from his sister Anūbīs and brother, asking him for wheat, money and cloths, and complaining that their father is so hard with them leaving them hungry and naked, make us wonder about the reason for this aversion (“*wa-bi-llāh asta‘īnu fī amrī yā akhī abī wa-ghilazuhu ‘alaynā wa-qulta yā akhī mā lanā minhu illā al-ṭā‘ām*,” P.Marchands II 18.4, 5; “*wa-kallim abī abqāhu Allāh ḥattā yarḥamanā*,” P.Marchands II 17.2; “*wa-anā wa-llāh ‘uryāna jā‘a ‘aṭshāna*,” P.Marchands II 23.13-14, all 3rd/9th). The repetitive requests and the distant tone of the letters suggest that they were probably children from an earlier marriage. This possibility is confirmed by another letter from the same archive in which the father Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad asks his son Abū Hurayra to take care of his step-mother and brother during his absence. Instead of being fraternal, Abū Hurayra turned a deaf ear and a blind eye to the cries and misery of his step-mother, half-brother and sister. Having known that, the father, full of anger, wrote back to Abū Hurayra blaming and urging him to be serious about taking care of the family, and reminding him of a Qur’anic verse and a prophetic tradition that are related with the topic of keeping contact with kinship. In this vein, the father continued, with words of pain and sorrow, for some lines (“*yā bunayya bi-jamī ahl baytika min abīka fa-qad kānū ṣāliḥīn ruḥamā’a qāla Allāh yaṣilūna mā amara Allāh an yūšala qāla bal ‘ibādun mukarramūna lā yasbiqūnahu bi-l-qawl wa-hum bi-amrihi ya‘malūna wa-fahimtu mā dhakarta min amr man ‘aṣā Allāh qāla Allāh fa-man ‘afā wa-aṣlahā fa-ajruhu ‘alā Allāh innahu lā yuḥibbu al-zālimīn fa-lā yaḍurruka an taqif wa-tas‘al ‘an akhīka wa-taṣīlahu bi-l-salām wa-tatafaqqadahu fa-la‘alla Allāh sa-yatafaqqaduka wa‘adtahu wa-llāh la-qad jā‘a anna rasūl Allāh qāla inna min barr al-birr ṣīlataka wudd abīka ba‘d abīka fa-kayfa bi-imra‘at abīka wa-akhīka*,” P.Marchands II 9.4-11, 3rd/9th).¹⁸² The delinquent Abū Hurayra seems not to pay any attention. What is more, he does not take care of his sick wife in the Fayyūm, leaving her suffering excruciating stomach pains (see P.Marchands II 28, discussed in sickness).

In addition to bringing paternal and fraternal experiences, the letters collected and studied above show that the Muslim society in Egypt was organized around large and small families, and beyond the families there were small and wide complex networks of tribal relations, friendships and business partnerships which extended sometimes beyond the borders of Egypt and were conditioned by strong emotional ties. The letters have also shown that kinship terms implying relationships by blood (*nasab*) and marriage (*muṣāhara*) were sometimes used in an imprecise way, different from the lexical meaning.¹⁸³ Thus, terms such as brother and sister should be dealt with caution and not always taken literally

¹⁸² For more information about the Banū ‘Abd al-Mu‘min family life, see Younes (2013), 326-327. See also Grob (2010a), 110-112.

¹⁸³ Bagnall and Criboire (2006), 85-87; Worp (1995), 153.

(see letters 3.10, 17; 4.14; 18.7, 8 and the address; 20.3; 23.24).¹⁸⁴ On the other hand, kinship terms such as son, mother, father, aunt and uncle are highly likely used at face value indicating direct blood relationship (see letters 4.15; 6.8; 23.12, 32).¹⁸⁵

In a similar vein, business letters discussed above suggest that some kind of social and emotional ties might have existed between business partners albeit to a certain extent. Take the commercial archive of the Banū ‘Abd al-Mu‘min for example. The business letters of this archive show that two daughters of the *paterfamilias* of the Banū ‘Abd al-Mu‘min, Abū Ja‘far, were married to two merchants from Fuṣṭāṭ. Another business letter published in this thesis (letter 32) shows that business relations were at times built upon tribal affiliation. Besides blood, tribal, social and economic ties that held the Arab-Muslim society together in early Muslim Egypt, the bond of religion (Islam) seems to have been emotionally important and affective. Letter 25 of our corpus brings this fact to the fore. The main concern of the letter is to strengthen the bonds of kin and friendship between the two correspondents. In the letter, the sender stresses the tie of Islam and its holiness (“*fa-innahu laysa min amr yuqaribu ilayyā minhu Allāh illā wa-qad sabbabahu baynanā wa-baynaka ḥaqq al-islām wa-ḥurmatihi wa-ḥaqq al-qarāba wa-ma‘rifatihi*,” ll.2-4). Two other letters stress the bond of brotherhood (*al-ikhā’*) through religion (cf. *wa-dhālika limā qad ajrā Allāh baynanā wa-baynaka min al-ikhā’ wa-l-ṣihr*, 24.11; *wa-nzur bi-ḥaqq mā baynā wa-baynaka min al-ikhā’ illā m[ā] fa‘alta*, 26.11).¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ See also P.Horak 85.8; P.Jahn 12[= Chrest.Khoury I 98],13; P.Berl.Arab. II 55.3.

¹⁸⁵ See also P.Marchands II 24.15; P.Marchands II 36.2, 5, 8; P.RāḡibLettres 15.3, 5, 8 and verso. address, 1, 2; Marchands V/I 11.3; P.Khalili I 29.7.

¹⁸⁶ See also below the discussion on death and consolation.

1.3. Women of the house

“*wa-sami'nā alladhī dhakarta min sha'n imra'atika al-ḥurra annahā qad ablaghat sha'naka al-amīr.*”

(We heard what you mentioned about your wife, the free woman, that she complained about you to the *amīr*.)

Letter 3.5-6

About women and their personal representation of emotions the letters tell us far more than we can learn from any other literary and documentary source. As it is mentioned earlier, fourteen letters of this corpus can be identified as women's letters. The letters are mostly sent to, from and in-between females (see letters **1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 20, 23**). In addition to letters edited in this thesis, some other letters have already been published and studied.¹⁸⁷ Through studying and analyzing these writings we can learn whether there are differences between females' and males' letters and expression of emotion.

Starting with the only statement made on women's letters by Werner Diem in his discussion on Arabic private and business letters, Diem argues that “typical addressees of letters sent by males are other males (without any restriction as to status or relationship), while female addressees are rare (mostly the mothers of the senders). Letters sent to the senders' wives are almost non-existing, and senders mention their wives, if at all, rather *en passant* in letters sent to their relatives..... Typical addressees of letters sent by females are other females (with a restriction to relatives or friends) while male addressees are extremely rare and in most cases sons of the female senders. But not only is the range of possible addressees of female senders more restricted than is the case with the addressees of male senders but also the contents of their letters. While letters of male senders may concern any subject, from business to private affairs, letters of female senders are usually confined to family affairs. Furthermore, the style of letters sent by female senders is often emotional, with many of them apparently serving no other purpose than that of strengthening the bonds of kin and friendship between the female sender and the female addressee. Often greetings are given to numerous persons, and husbands and sons of the female addressees may be mentioned, especially in prayers to the effect that God may preserve them to the addressee.”¹⁸⁸

Women's letters edited in this thesis as well as many other published letters show that this assumption cannot be taken without reservations. In our corpus, for instance, we see a fiancé in contact with her future wife as well as husbands writing to their wives (see letters **1 and 4**).¹⁸⁹ We are also well informed about women sending to and receiving from males,

¹⁸⁷ See P.Loth 2[= P.Berl.Arab. II 75]; P.Jahn 5; P.Jahn 12[= Chrest.Khoury I 98]; P.RāgibLettres 9; P.RāgibLettres 10; P.RāgibLettres 11; P.RāgibLettres 12; Rāgib (2011), 273-284; P.Berl.Arab. II 73; P.Khalili I 17; P.Khalili I 21; CPR XVI 30.

¹⁸⁸ Diem (2008), 845-846.

¹⁸⁹ See above spouses.

both relatives and non-relatives, about business and private matters (see letters **1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 20**). Some women were involved in extensive commercial networks (see letters **17**.side B; **31; 40**). Take the case of Abū Hurayra's mother for example. This woman was active in the same textile trade as her husband and son albeit to a limited extent. There is one letter from her to Abū Hurayra in which she orders several coats and other closing items (P.Marchands II, XIII. 4, 7, 11, 12). These big orders were not, of course, for personal consumption. She also sent goods to Abū Hurayra to sell for her and received three *dirhams* from a previous sale and gave another three to Sayyida. These transactions all confirm that Abū Ja'far's wife (Abū Hurayra's mother) was indeed involved in commercial trading.¹⁹⁰

What is more, some women had their own business and were in direct contact with their Muslim and non-Muslim agents. For instance, Umm al-Ḥakam, a wealthy business Muslim woman residing in the Fayyūm, was in direct contact with her business agent Mīnā Bajūsh (P.Jahn **12**[= Chrest.Khoury I **98**], 2nd/8th).¹⁹¹ In her correspondence to Mīnā, Umm al-Ḥakam writes about many personal and business matters. For another example, the papyrus letter P.Khalili I **17** datable on palaeographical grounds to the 3rd/9th records a contact between a female servant named Rujḥān and her mistress. In this correspondence, the female sender informs her mistress about the delivery and dispatch of huge amounts of various items, i.e. a basket of apples, four baskets of wheat which weigh four *irdabbs* and three *waybāt* according to the large *qafīz* and five baskets of jujube seeds wrapped in five sheets of papyrus. In the letter, Rujḥān says that she met a certain Abū al-Qāsim, presumably an agent, who reported on the good health of the addressee. The letter shows strong emotional bond between the two correspondents. At the end of the letter, a certain Umm ibnihā (literally "the mother of her son") records her painful longing to the absent mistress. She says: "My lady, how great is my longing for you" ("*wa-Umm ibnihā tuqrī'uki al-salām kathīran wa-taqūluki yā sayyittī mā ashadda shawqī ilayki*," P.Khalili I **17**.10, 3rd/9th).

Nevertheless, Abū Hurayra's mother, Umm al-Ḥakam and Rujḥān's mistress seem to be the exception rather than the rule. I have discussed elsewhere in this chapter that the majority of women was to a great extent socially and financially dependent upon males.¹⁹²

Apart from business where very little about emotions is to be told, women's personal feelings in response to being sick or to someone else's sickness, and when the misfortune of death struck one of their close relatives are lavishly expressed. These expressions are widely discussed in sickness and death and consolation.

Women in early Muslim Egypt had their personal female social networks which sometimes extended beyond the borders of Egypt and were conditioned by strong emotional ties, as illustrated in letter **23** of our corpus. This letter has been written between two sisters. The letter's main concern revolves around a certain Ḥammāda bt. Ibrāhīm b. al-Manāzilī, who moved with her husband from Zawīla,¹⁹³ the sender's domicile, to Fuṣṭāṭ (*Miṣr*), where the female addressee lives. The sender asks her sister to look for this woman

¹⁹⁰ For more information, see Younes (2013), 227-228.

¹⁹¹ See also Römer and Demiri (2009), 43-45.

¹⁹² See below the discussion on death and consolation. See also J. Rowlandson, *Women and society in Greek and Roman Egypt: a sourcebook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 218-368; Bagnall and Cribiore (2006), 68-74.

¹⁹³ For more about Zawīla, a city located in the land of Sūdān, see the commentary on **23**.16.

at the address she gives in full in the letter (near Bilāl, the vet, in the house of Ṣard Abū al-Ḥussām). Then, she asks her to become good friend with Ḥammāda, because she is a dear friend to the sender. At the end of the letter, the sender informs her sister that she is really distressed due to Ḥammāda's departure, indicating the strong emotional bond between the two, regardless of the long distance separating them.¹⁹⁴

In a similar vein, women traveled over long and short distances for family visits and other social reasons. In letter 11 in our corpus, a certain al-Nu'mān b. Shu'ayb and someone else, whose name is missing, write to one Umm Nu'aym bt. Nu'aym and three other male and female addressees, i.e. Ḥammād, Umm 'Uthmān and Yazīd b. 'Uthmān. Although the letter states that there are two senders and four addressees, the voice of the letter is first-person singular and the addressee is grammatically singular feminine. In this letter, al-Nu'mān b. Shu'ayb asks Umm Nu'aym bt. Nu'aym to write back to him and to inform him before she travels to him ("*taktubī ilaynā bi-jawāb kitābī ammā al-khurūj ilaynā illā mā narjū nanzur fī wujūhikum fa-in kunti khārīja ilaynā fa-taktubī lanā,*" ll.8-10). The content of the letter is somewhat incomprehensible due to the fragmentary state of the papyrus. The relationship between the senders and the addressees is not clear, but the voice of the letter indicates a very close kinship. At the end of the letter, the cities Kharibtā, Alexandria and Maryūt are mentioned in an unclear context. Probably, the female addressee will travel to or pass by these cities. Also in letter 9, the sender asks the addressee to ask an unidentified woman to sail to the sender's domicile because the air is fresh and healthy there or because the wind is good for sailing ("*wa-ḥaddithhā taqdim ilaynā fa-inna al-rīḥ ṭayyiba,*" l.14).¹⁹⁵

The mention of women in private and business letters is another issue to be raised in this discussion. In general, women are mentioned by their names and other forms of direct and indirect address. Expressions such as *ahl*, *ahl al-bayt* and *man qibalī/qibalika* are often used either to refer to the family at large or to specify the wife/wives in particular (cf. *wa-stawṣī bi-ahlinā khayran wa-lā alumannaka fīhim in shā'a Allāh*, 27.13; *katabtu ilayki wa-anā wa-man qibalī min ahlī wa-ṣibyānī 'alā aḥsan ḥāl al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, 7.6-8; *ablighī nafsaki al-salām kathīran wa-Idrīs wa-ukhtahu wa-jamī' ahl al-bayt wa-aqra'ī ummī al-salām kathīran wa-jamī' man 'indahā*, 4.14-16; *ukhbiruka anna ahlaka wa-waladaka 'alā mā yasurruka*, 33.5).

The term *qibalī/qibalika* is to some extent problematic. In private and business letters, the term is either used to indicate the location or the family members depending mainly on the proposition that precedes whether it is *mā* or *min*.¹⁹⁶ The term has another technical meaning related to legal acknowledgments.¹⁹⁷ As far as we are concerned with letters, Werner Diem argues that expressions such as *man qibalika* were mainly used to avoid direct mention of female members in the family.¹⁹⁸ It is unclear, however, on what basis Diem arrives at this conclusion, since many letters refer in very direct terms to women.¹⁹⁹ Petra Sijpesteijn argues rather that the practice of mentioning women by their names compares well with what is witnessed in pre-Islamic material from Egypt. She concludes: "While other

¹⁹⁴ See also P.Loth 2[= P.Berl.Arab. II 75].10-14, 2nd/8th, discussed in chapter one.

¹⁹⁵ See the commentary to this line.

¹⁹⁶ P.Khalili I, 127.

¹⁹⁷ P.Khalili I 22.2, 3rd/9th and the examples given in the commentary.

¹⁹⁸ Diem (2008), 845.

¹⁹⁹ See letters CPR XVI 30; P.Berl.Arab. II 73; P.Loth 2[= P.Berl.Arab. II 75].

expressions are also used to refer to those of the household of the sender or addressee (*man qibalī/qibalika*), there does not seem to have existed at this time an antipathy to mentioning women by name and other forms of direct address comparable to that of the late 12th/13th century Jewish community from the Geniza.”²⁰⁰

Before we end our discussion on women, women’s letters and emotions, one minor observation about one category of women, i.e. free women (*ḥarā’ir*) is to be made. In letters 2 and 3, a great emphasis has been placed on wives as being free women. The letters show the high social status and the privileges that this category of women enjoyed. Free women, as the two letters show, were able to appear before courts and *amīrs*, most probably by themselves, to complain about their husbands and other family problems. Verdicts were at times drawn in their favors.²⁰¹

In conclusion, the letters that have been collected here brought us closer to women’s life, main concerns and interests, and showed to what extent women were involved in public life. The letters have shown that women in early Muslim Egypt were more or less accessible, free to travel, able to trade and to build up their own trade and social relations. Unexpectedly, women’s letters are neither confined to family affairs nor are they more emotional than males’ letters. On the contrary, women’s letters concern variant topics, from business to private matters. The tension that one might have expected to grasp about women of the house is not really seen in private and business letters.

²⁰⁰ Sijpesteijn (2013), 27.11 and the commentary.

²⁰¹ See above the discussion on spouses.

2. Feasts and festivities

“*wa-qad katabtu ilayka wa-ba‘athtu ilayka ‘ishrīn dīnāran fa-takārā lī li-l-ḥajj in shā’a Allāh fa-qad aradtu dhālika.*”

(I have written to you and sent to you twenty *dīnārs* so that you could rent for me for the pilgrimage, if God wills, because I wanted to do so.)

Letter 37.5-6

Religious rituals are emotionally loaded occasions, so argue historians of emotions.²⁰² During these occasions, celebrants interact with and influence each other. This interaction excites and intensifies lots of emotions.²⁰³ Time and again, Arabic papyri in general and private and business letters in particular inform us abundantly about religious rituals, social gatherings and feasts and festivities which the early Arab settlers in Egypt referred to in their written correspondences.²⁰⁴ Some of these references are given in some detail and speak of sad and happy feelings. Among the religious ceremonies that are recorded in published letters, namely the month of Ramaḍān, the feast celebrating the end of Ramaḍān (*al-fiṭr*), pilgrimage (*al-ḥajj*) and the feast of sacrifice (*al-aḍḥā*), two are attested in our corpus, i.e. *al-fiṭr* and *al-ḥajj*.²⁰⁵ In what follows, I shall discuss all the references recorded in the letters, aiming to highlight the emotions we see and to show how these festivities and feasts are perceived, represented and celebrated by early Arab settlers in Egypt.

2.1. The month of fasting (Ramaḍān)

²⁰² See A. Chaniotis, “Emotional community through ritual. Initiates, citizens, and pilgrims as emotional communities in the Greek world,” in: A. Chaniotis (ed.), *Ritual dynamics in the ancient Mediterranean: agency, emotion, gender, representation* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2011), 265 and the sources cited there.

²⁰³ Chaniotis (2011), 286.

²⁰⁴ For Islamic feasts and festivities in early Islamic times, see M. Ahsan, *Social life under the Abbasids, 170-289 AH/786-902 AD* (London: Longman, 1979), 275-296.

²⁰⁵ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871), the oldest Arab historian to collect and write down the stories of the Arab conquest, records the earliest religious Muslim festivity on the Egyptian lands. The account goes as follows: in its first military penetration in the Egyptian territory, the Muslim army reached the city of al-‘Arīsh on the day of sacrifice (*yawm al-naḥr*), i.e. 10th Dhū al-Ḥijja 18/12th December 639. The soldiers celebrated the day and a ram was sacrificed by the commander of the army ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ on behalf of the soldiers (*fa-ḍaḥā ‘Amr ‘an aṣḥābihi yawma’dhin bi-kabsh*). Al-Kindī (d. 350/961), on the other hand, the most reliable historian dealing with the political history of early Islamic Egypt, reports on a sad celebration of the second minor Muslim feast (*‘īd al-fiṭr*). After around twenty five years of the conquest, the commander, who later became the governor of the province, died on the night of the breaking of the fast of Ramaḍān (*laylat al-fiṭr*), 1st of Shawwāl 43/6th January 664, and instead of him leading the Muslims in the special prayer of the feast (*ṣalāt al-‘īd*) in the early morning, his body was carried to the mosque so that the Muslims could perform the funeral prayer for him. The account continues, when the Muslims both women and men gathered in the mosque and got to know about the death of their commander and governor, they first performed the funeral prayer and then the *‘īd* prayer. The leader in both prayers was ‘Amr’s son ‘Abd Allāh (d. 65/685). See Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 58; al-Kindī, *Wulāt*, 34.

Ramaḍān is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. In this month, Muslims believe that the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed to the prophet Muḥammad through the angel Gabriel in Mecca. A special respect has thus been given to this month through fasting it, namely to abstain from eating, drinking and having sexual intercourse every day throughout the month from the first flush of dawn till sunset.²⁰⁶ According to Muslim faith, once the crescent of the new moon of Ramaḍān is sighted, every single Muslim, both man and woman, who has reached the age of puberty and is sound in health and mind is obliged to fast this month annually. The travelers, sick people, women in menstruation and those who are, for reasonable reasons, unable to undertake fasting during this month are exempt as far as the cause of exemption continues, but should fast a number of days equal to those missed (Q 2:183-185).²⁰⁷ When the new moon of the next month appears, the fast comes to an end and everybody must break the fast and celebrate the breaking of the fast (*al-fiṭr*).²⁰⁸

Papyrological references to the month of Ramaḍān are only a handful but they clearly show the special religious status of the month and how the early Muslims in Egypt received it with joy, seeking its blessings and mercy. In one letter from the Banū 'Abd al-Mu'min archive, the sender Ayyūb b. Sulaymān informs the *paterfamilias* of the Banū 'Abd al-Mu'min, Abū Ja'far, that he wrote the letter after having *suḥūr*, i.e. the night meal taken before the dawn to strengthen the fasting person and help him endure the hardships of the fast during the day ("*katabtu ilayka hādhā al-kitāb ba'd al-suḥūr min kathrat al-shughl*," P.Marchands II 1 left margin.1-2, 3rd/9th). At the end of the letter, Ayyūb swears by the holiness of this month to do something that remains unknown to us ("*fa-bi-ḥaqq hādhā al-shahr al-‘azīm*," l.11). In another published letter, the sender prays to God to accept the fasting of the addressee of this month ("*ḥamala Allāh ‘anka wa-a‘ānaka wa-khallaṣaka wa-qabila minka ṣiyām hādhā al-shahr*," P.Khalili I 32.18, 3rd/9th). In one other letter, the sender informs the addressee that he wrote his letter on Friday in the mid of the month of Ramaḍān. The sender makes a supplication to God to bestow blessings upon them in this blessed month through His mercy ("*kitābī ilayka a‘azzaka Allāh yawm al-jum‘a bi-niṣf min Ramaḍān ja‘alahu Allāh barakatan ‘alayka wa-‘alaynā bi-rahmatihi*," P.Berl.Arab. II 42.3-4, 3rd/9th).

The festive month of Ramaḍān requires some preparation before the beginning of the month, namely to buy enough food and light supplies. In one letter, the sender asks the addressee not to neglect buying the necessities of Ramaḍān ("*wa-lā tada‘ an tashtariya ḥawā'ij Ramaḍān*," P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 15[= P.World, 175].4, 3rd/9th).

The religious celebration of the month of Ramaḍān through gathering and praying in the mosque is attested in a petition sent to the governor of Egypt from an anonymous

²⁰⁶ K. Wagtendonk, *Fasting in the Koran* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 47-122.

²⁰⁷ "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil); (183) (Fast) a certain number of days; and (for) him who is sick among you, or on a journey, (the same) number of other days; and for those who can afford it there is a ransom: the feeding of a man in need - but whoso doeth good of his own accord, it is better for him: and that ye fast is better for you if ye did but know - (184) The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong). And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you; and (He desireth) that ye should complete the period, and that ye should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure ye may be thankful."

²⁰⁸ M. Plessner, "Ramaḍān," E.I.2, vol. 8, 417-418; Ahsan (1979), 275-277; G.E. Grunebaum, *Muhammadan festivals* (London: Curzon Press, 1951), 51-65.

complaining about an unidentified person. In this petition, the complainer writes with words of grief and anxiety that this impious person introduced himself to call and lead the prayers without being approved by the state (the governor). But that is not all. In addition to some other intolerable actions done by this person, the complainer claims that he poured a gar of wine inside the mosque. This shameful action took place in the blessed month of Ramaḍān, in which the people rather seek blessings and mercy of God, says the complainer (“*wa-lā yanẓuru fī amrihi siwāka fī idkhāl mu’adhdhin aw man yuṣallī bi-l-nās fī Ramaḍān wa-ghayrihi kamā yafalu al-amīr abqāhu Allāh bi-ahl al-fuṣṭāṭ fī masjid jāmi’ihim wa-‘indanā rajul ‘allām fī dākhil al-madīna lahu radā’u fī’l adkhala fī al-adhān bi-lā amrika bi-mā yuzādu ba’dū minhu yuṣallī bi-l-nās fī hādihā al-shahr alladhī narjā fīhi al-raḥma min Allāh wa-innamā nataqarrabu ilā Allāh bi-ahl al-taqwā lā naḡhummu awliyā’ Allāh wa-rasūlihi li-rajā’ barakatihim wa-du’ā’ihim wa-hādihā al-rajul lā yaḡhullu li-makhlūq ‘alima ‘ilmahu al-ṣalāt khalfahu wa-lā al-naẓaru ilayhi raḡā’ fī’lihi wa-la-qad balaghanī annahu aṣbaba fī al-masjid qullat nabīdh,” P.RāḡibLettres 5.9-12, 3rd-4th/9th-10th).*

While we are little informed about the ceremonial aspects during this festive month, the feelings of joy, hope and respect are quite evident in the letters. The letters clearly show the role of the collective worship in generating and intensifying emotions as well as in creating emotional community of worshippers. A point to which I shall return when discussing the ritual of ḡajj.

2.2. The feast of the breaking of the fast (*al-fiṭr*)

The end of the long and tough period of fasting is heralded by the appearance of the crescent of the new moon of the month of Shawwāl, which marks the feast of the breaking of the fast (*īd al-fiṭr*).²⁰⁹ According to Muslim faith, the day starts by performing a special prayer of *īd* in the early morning. Both men and women, including those in menstruation, are encouraged and urged to perform or at least witness the prayer.²¹⁰

On the day of *īd*, families and friends are supposed to gather and celebrate. The absent husband *īṣā*, the author of letter 4 of our corpus, could not travel to celebrate this day with the family, namely his wife, his two children and his mother, due to a big fight that broke out between two Arab tribes. *īṣā*, who was temporarily staying where the fight took place, could not leave (“*an nakhruja Banū Mudlij wa-a’mala al-sayf [] yaqṭuru dam,*” ll.5-6). He, thus, had to write a letter to his wife to apologize and explain the reasons for his delay. In the letter, *īṣā* informed his wife that her matter, meaning mainly leaving her celebrating the feast alone, made him feel sad more than the financial loss that had befallen him. He bought eggs for two *dīnārs* before breaking the fast of Ramaḍān (*al-fiṭr*) to bring to his wife, but all the eggs got spoiled due to the long delay and therefore he had to throw them away (“*wa-inna amraki la-yuḡzinunī ashadda mā dakhala ‘alayya min al-khassāra ishtaraytu dīnārayn bayḡ li-aqdimā bihi ilaykum qabl al-fiṭr ḡattā jā’a amr lā ṭāqa lanā bihi fa-nas’alu Allāh al-khalaf,*” ll.10-14). Likewise, the second wife of Abū Ja’far Aḡmad b. ‘Abd al-Mu’min had to spend the day of *īd* lonely and sad in the Fayyūm, while her husband was celebrating the day with his

²⁰⁹ E. Mittwoch, “*īd al-fiṭr*,” E.I.2, vol. 3, 1008.

²¹⁰ Bukhārī, 931; Muslim, 890.

other wife in Fustāṭ. Before traveling, the husband promised the wife in the Fayyūm not to prolong his absence more than one month, and they both reached an agreement regarding celebrating the two Muslim feasts, i.e. *al-fiṭr* and *al-aḍḥā*. The wife in the Fayyūm agreed to let her husband celebrate the feast of the breaking of the fast (*al-fiṭr*) with the wife in Fustāṭ on condition that he would celebrate the feast of sacrifice (*al-aḍḥā*), which comes ten weeks later, with her in the Fayyūm. But eight weeks passed, and the husband did not show up. The wife in the Fayyūm immediately realized that the husband would like to spend the second feast with the wife in Fustāṭ as well. Thus, she angrily wrote to him, blaming and assuring him that she and her children will be extremely sad, if he leaves them celebrating this feast alone as well (“*wa-akhbaratnī Ḥamdūna ‘an Sayyida annahā qālat innaka kharajta ‘annī ‘alā allā taghīb ‘annī illā shahr fa-min shahr hādhā shahrayn fa-law kuntu waḥdī bi-lā walad mā kuntu ubālī bi-mā ghibta wa-law ‘alimtu annaka kunta turīdu an tuḍaḥḥiya khārij ‘annī mā kuntu atrukuka bi-salāmatika taghību ‘annī fī al-fiṭr wa-anā taraktuka tuḥṭiru ‘indahum wa-tuḍaḥī ‘indi taraktanā fī al-fiṭr mithl al-masākīn turīdu tatrūkunā ayḍan fī al-aḍḥā mithl al-masākīn wa-anta ta‘lamu annī mā aṭlubuka li-nafaqa wa-lā li-shay’ min al-dunyā wa-lākinnī u‘ātibu ‘alayka li-unsī bika wa-ammā sha’nuka fī shirā’ fa-wa-llāh mā urīdu bihi wa-lā urīdu an uḍaḥḥiya wa-anta ghā’ib ‘annī,” P.Marchand II 2.10-15, 3rd/9th). In the same archive, a letter was sent to Abū Hurayra, most probably from his mother, informing him that she is willing to stay, where she is, presumably in Fustāṭ, till the feast of the breaking of the fast, most probably to celebrate the feast with the family there (“*innī uqīmu ilā al-fiṭr in shā’a Allāh, P.Marchands II 14.4, 3rd/9th*). In another letter between two blood brothers, the sender informs his brother, ‘Umar b. Muḥammad, that he knew that the latter has planned to visit them, i.e. the sender and the mother, after breaking the fast of Ramaḍān (*al-fiṭr*). The sender expresses his deep feelings of longing and affection towards his brother and shows how much their mother is suffering out of love and passion, because of the absence of her son (“*wa-dhakarta annaka turīdu al-quḍūm ilaynā ba’d al-fiṭr in shā’a Allāh wa-mā dhakarta min shawqika ilaynā fa-wa-llāh innā la-najīdu laka mithl mā dhakarta min al-shawq wa-la-qad aradtu al-khurūj ilā mā qibalaka mithl mā dhakarta min al-shawq nusallimu ‘alayka ḥattā dhakarta al-quḍūm wa-inna al-wālida mushtāqa ilayka shadīdat al-shawq fa-lā akhlā Allāh minka makān wa-lā anzala bika makrūh abadan,” P.Marchands V/I 20.18, 3rd/9th*).*

As it is shown above, sad emotions showing the distress and grief of those left celebrating the festive day of *īd* alone are predominant in the letters which shows how important it was for family members to gather and celebrate this day together.

2.3. The pilgrimage (*al-ḥajj*)

The word *ḥajj* literally means to set out towards a certain place. In Islamic law, it signifies the annual pilgrimage to Mecca to fulfill the last of the five pillars of the Muslim faith. According to Islamic law, pilgrimage is obligatory, at least once in a lifetime, on all Muslims, both men and women, as long as they are physically and financially able to do so and as far

as the roads are safe to undertake the journey (Q 3:97).²¹¹ The pilgrimage season always takes place during the first two weeks of the last month of the Muslim calendar, Dhū al-Ḥijja.²¹² The religious, political and social meanings of the ritual of ḥajj have been widely discussed by both ancient and modern historians and jurists. On the other hand, the emotional dimension of this ritual has been hardly discussed. This study stresses the emotional aspects of the journey and rituals of ḥajj.

For Muslim settlers in far-off territories like Egypt, the holy journey must have been quite long, exhaustive and costly with the means of transportation then available. A letter edited in this thesis datable on palaeographical grounds to the 2nd/8th century telling a story of a Muslim pilgrim arranging for the journey of ḥajj as well as a handful number of references to the ḥajj in published letters can improve our knowledge about this religious journey twelve hundred years ago. Also, a very significant but yet unpublished semi-official letter, most probably dated to late 1st/7th century, shows the state's concern and interest in exhorting people to undertake this journey in the earliest Islamic decades.²¹³ The letters normally speak about four main points of the journey of ḥajj: (1) the organization of ḥajj, (2) costs of ḥajj, (3) trade on ḥajj, and (4) rewards after the return.

2.3.1. The organization of ḥajj

Since the ḥajj can only be fulfilled at Mecca at a certain time of the year, pilgrims from all over the Islamic world need to prepare and organize their journey to arrive at Mecca at that time. Arabic papyrus letters tell us how Muslim settlers in early Muslim Egypt organized their journey.²¹⁴ They, first, inform their relatives and friends about their intention and willingness to go to ḥajj. In this way, they implicitly ask them to take care of their families during their absence.²¹⁵ Then, they rent their beasts, mostly camels. And finally, they buy enough food supplies for the long journey.

In one unpublished letter, the sender informs the addressee, both anonymous to us, that he is keen to go to perform ḥajj (“*hādhā al-waqt aṭāla Allāh baqā’ aka aradtu al-khurūj ilā al-ḥajj wa-ḥaraṣtu,*” P.Cam.Michaelides A 589v.13, 3rd/9th). Unfortunately, this is all we know about this pilgrim due to the fragmentary state of the papyrus. Did he truly go to ḥajj? How did he arrange his journey? We are not informed. Letter 37 of our corpus gives further detail. In this letter, the sender, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Mufaḍḍal writes to a certain Abū Sa’īd

²¹¹ “Wherein are plain memorials (of Allah’s guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whosoever entereth it is safe. And pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who can find a way thither. As for him who disbelieveth, (let him know that) lo! Allah is Independent of (all) creatures.”

²¹² For more information on the ḥajj in early Islamic times, see M.N. Pearson, *Pious passengers, the hajj in earlier times* (London: Hurst, 1994); B. Lewis, “Ḥadjdj,” E.I.2, vol. 3, 31-38; Ahsan (1979), 279-282; Grunebaum (1951), 15-49; F.E. Peters, *The Hajj: the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca and the holy places* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

²¹³ P.M. Sijpesteijn, “An early Umayyad papyrus invitation for the Ḥajj,” *Journal of Near Eastern studies* (forthcoming). I would like to seize the opportunity to thank Prof. Sijpesteijn for allowing me to include this unpublished article in my discussion.

²¹⁴ There are also a number of letters and documents written on paper from 4th-6th/10th-12th centuries conveying greetings from ḥajj or reporting on the completion of the ḥajj. See P.Berlin.Arab. II 66, 4th/10th; P.Berlin.Arab. II 69, 5th/11th; P.Vind.Arab. V 28, 6th/12th.

²¹⁵ See above the discussion on children.

informing him that he has planned to perform the pilgrimage. Therefore, Abū Muḥammad sent to Abū Saʿīd twenty *dīnārs* so that the latter would rent for him and a certain ʿUmar something that remains unknown to us, presumably camels, and to buy them enough food supplies for the journey (“*wa-qad katabtu ilayka wa-[baʿathtu ilayka] ishrīn dīnāran fa-takārā lī li-l-ḥajj in shāʿa [Allāh fa-qad] aradtu dhālika,*” ll.5-7). Abū Muḥammad informs Abū Saʿīd further that he is coming to the latter’s domicile before the appearing of the moon and asks him not to rent until he arrives, otherwise he, Abū Saʿīd, should rent from a trustworthy person (“*wa-anā qādim ʿalayka qabla al-hilāl in shāʿa Allāh takārā lī wa-li-ʿUmar lī wa-lahu wa-sufra rātiba fī al-ṭarīq maʿa fa-in raʿayta an yakūna dhālika maʿaka fī ruqʿatika fa-fal in shāʿa Allāh an akūna maʿaka wa-illā fa-takārā maʿa thiqa,*” ll.7-11).

It is not clear from the text whether Abū Muḥammad is traveling to Mecca over land or sea. But if our assumption that Abū Muḥammad is traveling over land is correct, the journey would take from him roughly forty days to travel from Egypt to Mecca and about the same time or a bit longer to return, as both the Arabic papyri and narrative sources indicate. Abū Muḥammad may have meant by arriving at the addressee’s domicile before the appearing of the moon, i.e. the moon of Dhū al-Qaʿda, counting around forty days for the journey which fits nicely with the period recorded in the sources.²¹⁶

Letter **18** in our corpus shows that the return journey might have taken much longer than the journey going there. In this letter, the female sender, Ruqayya bt. Yaḥyā, who is living in Egypt, informs her aunt, Umm al-Qāsim bt. Zakariyā, based in Mecca, that her son died in the month of Ṣafar after people’s return from the *ḥajj* (“*wa-kāna wafātuhu raḍiya Allāh ʿanhu fī Ṣafar baʿd dukhūl al-nās min al-ḥajj,*” l.6).²¹⁷ The letter states that the pilgrims returned in the month of Ṣafar without specifying an exact date. But if we assume that they returned at the beginning of the month, this means that the journey took at least around forty-five days after the end of the *ḥajj* season in Mecca.

The unpublished semi-official letter (P.O.I.A. 17653), currently preserved in the oriental institute collection of the University of Chicago,²¹⁸ tells us more about the organization of the journey on the official level.²¹⁹ In this letter, Sahl b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 99/717), the son of the governor of Egypt ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Marwān (r. 65-86/685-705) writes to ʿUqba b. Muslim al-Tujībī (d. 118/735 or 120/737), a local Muslim official in the Egyptian countryside, about going to the *ḥajj*. In this letter, Sahl informs ʿUqba that the commander of faithful (*amīr al-muʿminīn*) has announced to the people that it is already time for *ḥajj* and exhorted them to perform this ritual. Thus, Sahl wonders if ʿUqba is willing and being able to join his caravan to undertake the *ḥajj*. Sahl informs ʿUqba further that he is not obliged to pay anything besides the rental costs of his own camel (“*ammā baʿdu fa-innī dhakartu al-ḥajj wa-qad dariyahu amīr al-muʿminīn wa-ḥaḍḍa ʿalayhi fa-in istaṭaʿta an takhruja maʿī fa-mal fa-innaka in tashā tafala dhālika in shāʿa Allāh ukhruj ilayya maʿa rawāḥilī wa-lā tukalafanna shayʿan ghayr karā rāḥila,*” ll.6-12).

The letter is extremely significant as it shows the caliph, the highest religious and administrative authority, concerned about calling and urging individuals in Islamic

²¹⁶ Peters (1994), 86-87; 90-95 and the sources cited there.

²¹⁷ This letter is widely discussed in death.

²¹⁸ To be published by Petra M. Sijpesteijn.

²¹⁹ For more extensive discussion on this letter, see Sijpesteijn, *Ḥajj*.

territories to undertake the annual pilgrimage which echoes the Qur'anic command to exhort people or at least those who can find a way to it to perform this ritual (Q 22:27-29).²²⁰ The letter also shows that organized and collective journeys “caravans” to perform the *ḥajj* were undertaken annually from the early beginning of Islam. This annual journey has a number of connotations, which do not all have a religious character. In the first place, it shows the religious and political power of the Muslim authorities who organized, lead and protected the caravans of pilgrims on their way to the holy city and during performing the rituals. At the same time, pilgrims who join these caravans acknowledge somehow the authorities as their rulers. Secondly and most importantly, bringing together large numbers of Muslims from all over the Islamic world every year in one place and at one time in early Islamic centuries greatly contributes to the solidarity and unity of Islam and the Muslim community, when Muslims were still a minority in a prevalently non-Muslim environments in the conquered territories.²²¹

2.3.2. Costs of *ḥajj*

The costs of *ḥajj* is another aspect that the letters occasionally report on. In one letter from the Banū ‘Abd al-Mu‘min archive, the business agent in Fustāṭ Muḥammad b. ‘Amr b. Thawr writes to inform his main producer Abū Hurayra in the Fayyūm that he received two clothes from the addressee and that he already sold them for fourteen carats and one fourth of a carat. The agent praises the quality of the commodity and states that Abū Hurayra has gotten abundant gain in view of the fact that he, Abū Hurayra, is willing to perform the *ḥajj*. Muḥammad b. ‘Amr b. Thawr prays to God to supply Abū Hurayra with the expenses of the *ḥajj* (“*waṣala ilayya thawbayn laka wa-qad bi‘tuhā bi-arba‘at a‘shar qīrāt wa-rub‘ sab‘a wa-niṣf wa-sab‘a illā rub‘ wa-qad wajjahta bi-matā‘ jayyid kāna al-ḥirzu laka fa-as’alu Allāh an yu‘ajjila ‘alayka nafat al-ḥajj wa-khalaf al-ḥajj sarī,*” P. Marchands III 3.2-5, 3rd/9th). In another letter from the same archive, the textile trader Aḥmad b. Killīs informs Abū Ya‘qūb Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm the broker, both living and trading in the Fayyūm, that he sent to him nine *dīnārs* (actually eight *dīnārs* and eighteen *dirhams* and the rest is from an old account) so that the latter could buy him textiles. The sender urges the addressee to send him this ware immediately in the same week he wrote the letter. He claims that he saved the money for the costs of the *ḥajj* journey to Mecca. He, nonetheless, spent two *dīnārs* of the total amount. Aḥmad b. Killīs thus thought of trading with the rest of the money to recompense the disbursed money (“*qad wajjahtu ilayka ḥafīzaka Allāh bi-tis‘at al-danānīr illā sab‘ al-darāhim minhā thamāniyat al-danānīr ‘ayn wa-thamāniyat a‘shara dirham wa-thamāniyat al-danānīr bi-naqṣ qīrātayn wa-‘indaka qīrātayn lī fa-dhālika tis‘at al-danānīr illā sab‘at al-darāhim fa-nzur ḥafīzaka Allāh an tashtariya lī bihā matā‘ shiqāq wa-riyāt wa-tuwajjihhā ilayya fī hādhihi al-jum‘a fa-innī qad akaltu kull mā fī yadī wa-qad a‘ṭayta hādhihi al-danānīr ‘alā an aḥujja bihā ilā makka wa-qad akaltu minhā dīnārayn fa-*

²²⁰ “And proclaim unto mankind the pilgrimage. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine, (27) That they may witness things that are of benefit to them, and mention the name of Allah on appointed days over the beast of cattle that He hath bestowed upon them. Then eat thereof and feed therewith the poor unfortunate. (28) Then let them make an end of their unkemptness and pay their vows and go around the ancient House.”

²²¹ Sijpesteijn, *Hajj*.

‘*ajjil bihā ‘alayya la‘alla Allāh yarzuqunī fihā shay’*,” P.GrohmannWirtsch. 3[= P.Marchands V/I 5].2-9, 3rd/9th).

The letter shows that the total cost of the *hajj* journey for one person is around ten *dīnārs* including the two disbursed *dīnārs*. To be sure, a double amount of money is given in letter 37 of our corpus for two persons.

2.3.3. Trade on *hajj*

Mecca is not only the holy city where the house of God (*ka‘ba*) exists, but also a booming market in which the merchants from all over the Islamic world brought, sent and received their wares and goods. Doubtlessly, the economic significance of the city made most of pilgrims go to Mecca as much to trade as to perform the *hajj*.²²²

In one published letter from the 1st/7th century, the sender informs the addressee, both anonymous to us, that he received the gold (*dīnārs*) that the addressee sent with a certain Qays b. Ḥajar as the price of three clothes and another cloth which was received during the *hajj* season (“*wa-anna al-dhahab allatī arsalta ma‘a Qays b. Ḥajar min thaman al-thalāthat athwāb allatī ma‘a Qays b. Ḥajar wa-l-thawb alladhī laḥiqa fī al-ḥajj*,” P.HanafiBusinessLetter, 154).²²³ In the commentary, the editor argues that this fourth *thawb* should be understood as “an ordinary garment that the sender wears on his journey from Egypt to Mecca, for the purpose of performing the pilgrimage, rather than the special clothes worn during the *hajj* for which special words were used.”²²⁴ Indeed, the cloth mentioned in the text does not refer to the special clothes of the *hajj*, but it is not also special for the journey of the *hajj*. The cloth was only received during the *hajj* season in a business transaction.

2.3.4. Rewards after the return

The safe return of pilgrims to their homes after the long, exhaustive and probably dangerous journey of the *hajj* brings happiness to family members. Their joy was proved by offering gifts and rewards to relatives, friends and acquaintances. In one published letter, the sender informs the addressee, both anonymous to us, that the latter will be rewarded when the pilgrim arrives safely (“*fa-idhā jā‘a al-ḥajj fa-laka ‘indanā al-mukāfā in shā‘a Allāh*,” P.Khalili II 26r.9-10, 3rd/9th).

One more reference for the *hajj* in a published private letter should not be included here, as the reading is incorrect (P. Jahn 14.9, 3rd/9th).²²⁵

2.4. The feast of sacrifice (*al-aḍḥā*)

²²² See Peters (1994), 180-181. For more extensive discussion on the economic dimensions of the *hajj*, see Pearson (1994), 131-187.

²²³ The editor misread the last sentence as *wa-l-thawb alladhī li-ḥaqqī fī al-ḥajj*.

²²⁴ P.HanafiBusinessLetter, 157.

²²⁵ The editor reads *fa-innī lā aqdiru ḥujju ḥatta afrugha*, (I could not go for pilgrimage until I finish), but I would read it as follows, *fa-innī lā aqdiru ājī ḥatta afrugha*, (I could not come until I finish).

The celebration of fulfilling of the ceremony of the *ḥajj*, the last of the five core tenets of the Muslim faith, is shared throughout the Muslim world as believers in general and pilgrims in particular sacrifice their animals on the tenth day of the month of Dhū al-Ḥijja (Q 22:36).²²⁶ By starting their day with sacrificing their animals celebrants marked the difference of this festive day from a normal day life.

Arabic private and business letters confirm the celebration of this feast by sacrificing. In one letter from the 2nd/8th century, the sender Khālid b. Ḥasan informs the addressee Ibrāhīm that a certain Abū Yazīd, known to the addressee, promised to buy him for a *dīnār* an animal for the feast (*juzur aḍḥānā*). Abū Yazīd told the sender that he would buy the animal and leave it with Ibrāhīm, the addressee, until the time of *ʿīd*. Thus, the sender asks whether Abū Yazīd had already bought it; if not, he asks the addressee to immediately let him know so that he could buy another animal from his place and not to be dependent on Abū Yazīd (“*wa-inna Abū Yazīd kāna qāla lanā innā yashtarī lanā bi-dīnār juzur aḍḥānā fa-lā nadrī ishtarāhu lanā aw lā wa-qāla atrukuhu ʿinda Ibrāhīm ḥattā idhā kāna āwān al-aḍḥā yaʿtikum bihi in shāʿa Allāh fa-in kāna lam yashtarī shayʿ fa-ktub ilaynā yā Ibrāhīm wa-ʿajjil uktub fa-nashtarī najdatan wa-innā nuḥibbu naʿlamu in kāna ishtarā am lā wa-in kāna lam yashtarī fa-ktub ilaynā nashtarī hunā wa-lā natawakkalu ʿalayhi wa-huwa lam yashtarī shāyʿ fa-innī uḥibbu an tuʿlimanī dhāka laʿallahu nasiya an yashtariya,*” P.RāgībLettres 19.2-4, 2nd/8th). While Khālid b. Ḥasan does not mention any word of emotion in the letter, we can clearly discern the feeling of concern towards fulfilling this religious ritual. Another reference to *al-aḍḥā* is attested in an early official correspondence. In one letter from the Qurra archive, the governor Qurra b. Sharīk asks the local official, most probably Basilius to immediately fulfill something, unknown to us, which he ordered him to do before the day of sacrifice. This shows how early Islamic religious terms became part of the daily speech in early Muslim Egypt (“*wa-taʿahhad li-tuwaffiyānī mā amartuka bihi qabla al-aḍḥā,*” P.BeckerPAF 5.15, dated 90/709).²²⁷

To summarize, feasts and festivities constituted an integral part of life in early Islamic Egypt. They were true moments of comfort and happiness in which people gathered to celebrate and entertain, but also moments of grief and distress at times. In the letters and references for the ritual of *ḥajj*, for instance, we hear voices full of hope and desire and we can best observe striving spirits seeking spiritual satisfaction. Individuals were eager to undertake this holy journey, how difficult, long, costly and exhaustive it may be, because they felt strong feelings towards this ritual and the holy places they planned to visit. On the official side, the state organized and lead caravans of pilgrims and encouraged individuals all over the Islamic world to join these caravans. The significance of the emotional dimension of the journey and ritual of *ḥajj* in creating an emotional community of believers can never be underestimated. Emotions were a target and a product of these journeys. The dedication of an entire month of worship, i.e. the festive month of Ramaḍān and the two Islamic feasts *al-fīṭr* and *al-aḍḥā* must have had a similar influence and consequence. To cut a

²²⁶ “And the camels! We have appointed them among the ceremonies of Allah. Therein ye have much good. So mention the name of Allah over them when they are drawn up in lines. Then when their flanks fall (dead), eat thereof and feed the beggar and the suppliant. Thus have We made them subject unto you, that haply ye may give thanks.” For more about *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*, see E. Mittwoch, “*ʿīd al-aḍḥā*,” E.I.2, vol. 3, 1007-1008; Ahsan (1979), 282-283.

²²⁷ See also P.Marchand II 2.13, discussed in *ʿīd al-fīṭr*.

long story short, “cult communities were emotional communities,” as Angelos Chaniotis put it.²²⁸ There is also the following clear cut statement by Rosenwein that emphasizes the role of religion in affecting the way in which feelings and thoughts are expressed, she states: “Belief has much to do with feeling.... People train themselves to have feelings that are based on their beliefs. At the same time, feelings help to create, validate, and maintain belief system.”²²⁹

²²⁸ Chaniotis (2011), 267.

²²⁹ Rosenwein (2006), 196.

3. Sickness

“wa-anā marīḍ mundhu fāraqtukum min dhālika al-dummal alladhī kuntu araytukahu bayna maq’adatī wa-madhākiratī qad ahlakanī lā anāmu wa-lā aq’udu wa-anā ḥīna katabtu ilaykum shadīd al-marāḍ.”

(I am sick since I left you from the boil that I showed you between my backside and my penis. It ruins me (and) I cannot sleep nor can I sit down. While I am writing you, I am very sick.)

Letter **42.15-18**

In the life cycle, people habitually pass through alternating periods of strength and weakness, health and sickness. Sickness does not only generate and intensify sadness and distress to those who go through this painful experience but also to their close family members. A good number of published letters as well as letters published in this thesis enlighten us about physical incapacity and sickness in early Islamic Egypt. In these letters, the problems of ill health are graphically illustrated sometimes by the sick people themselves, who express their individual experiences with sickness like Hishām, the author of the above-mentioned quotation, or by others who describe someone else’s tragedy with sickness such as the case of Abū Ziyād in letter **17** and Duwaylim and al-Admā’ in letter **16**. Through these expressions one can examine the social representation of sickness and picture people’s behavior in response to being sick. As a matter of fact, being healthy or ill depends chiefly on the lifestyle of each person; what he eats and how and where he lives. In other words, the different diseases we encounter in a certain society indicate to a certain extent the way of life of the people, who live in this society. Our letters speak about two different types of illness: (1) physical sickness (2) emotional ailments. The questions I would like to answer through studying the papyrological references of illness are: How did the people in early Islamic Egypt respond to the misfortune of sickness? To what extent were they concerned about health and healthcare? And how would a sick person get cured?

3.1. Physical sickness

To start with personal experiences of physical illness and sorrowful stories and emotions stemming from them, Hishām, the author of letter **42**, tells us how painful it was to have a boil between the backside and penis. It hurt him and made him unable to sleep or sit down, as he describes. Having this painful boil in this sensitive part of the body comprised the core of Hishām’s tragedy, but there were also some extra external circumstances that added to his pains and suffering and made his miserable days pass slowly. Hishām as a land surveyor was on a mission in the hot Upper Egyptian countryside measuring the city of Dalāṣ. The city’s landscape was very inconvenient for Hishām’s health status. “It is the worst city that God created; its soil is the most distasteful and sickening,” says Hishām (*“katabnā ilaykum*

wa-naḥnu fī madīnat Dalāṣ fī asharr madīna khalaqahā Allāh wa-tharāhā athqaluhu wa-akhbathuhu," ll.9-10). What is more, the accommodation was badly arranged, and they had to stay outdoors, as he writes. After measuring the city and calculating tax assessments, the surveyors found much surplus, which they had to send to the *amīr* with the local official and the people of the district ("*wa-qad faraghna min qiyāsat al-madīna 'alā aḥsan ḥāl wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh wajadnā fihā faḍl kathīr qad ba'athnā bihi ilā al-amīr,*" ll.13-15). The team of surveyors including Hishām had to wait some more days for their return, which must have made Hishām's condition even worse ("*wa-naḥnu muqīmīn fī ghayr shay' nantaḥiru qudūmahum 'alaynā,*" l.12). How did Hishām get rid of this painful nightmare? The letter does not tell.

Abū Ziyād's sore experience with his long-term illness was even greater than Hishām's painful boil, owing to the fact that death was the eventual outcome of his disease. Abū Ziyād's deadly illness is not explicitly mentioned in the letter, but the careful description of his condition could tell us something about it. In letter 17, the sender Wusāma b. Ṭalq al-Tujībī informs the female addressee Zaynab bt. Abū Ziyād that her father, Abū Ziyād, had passed away ("*ukhbiruki anna Abū Ziyād tuwuffiya fa-yarḥamuhu Allāh wa-ṣallā 'alayhi wa-adkhalahu al-janna wa-llāh fā'il in shā'a Allāh,*" ll.8-10). Wusāma graphically describes how the deceased's last days passed. He says that Abū Ziyād was unable to move by himself and that his slave, Muqsim, was nursing him all day and night. When Abū Ziyād needed to leave his cottage (*al-khuṣṣ*), Muqsim was always there at his service; he carried him on his hands, took him out and brought him back ("*wa-inna Muqsim wa-llāh [] wa-aḥsana lahu al-ṣaḥāba ḥattā law kunti anti lam taqūmī 'alayhi ka-naḥw mā kāna yaqūmu 'alayhi Muqsim fīmā kāna yuḥsinu ilā Abū Ziyād fī al-qiyām 'alayhi ḥīna lam yas'amhu yawm wa-lā layla law kāna wāliduhu mā ṣabara 'alayhi illā ka-naḥw mā ṣabara 'alā Abū Ziyād fī raf'ihi iyyāhu wa-waḍ'ihi wa-ikhrājīhi min al-khuṣṣ maḥmūl 'alā yadd wa-idkhālihi mithl dhālika,*" ll.13-22). One might wonder, was Abū Ziyād paralyzed or just too weak? It is obvious that Abū Ziyād was an old man. A sick man in his old age would definitely need someone else's help to move, but the description indicates a complete or semi-complete physical incapacity, most probably paralysis (*fālij*). Abū Ziyād's gloomy story with his long-term illness has, nevertheless, a happy ending for the loyal slave. On his deathbed, Abū Ziyād invited some sound witnesses to his house in order to witness him emancipating Muqsim in return of his loyalty and dependability ("*wa-annahu a'taqa Muqsim fī shahīdan ṣāliḥīn min aṣḥābinā qabla an yutawaffā bi-zaman,*" ll.11-13). In the end, Abū Ziyād's long misfortune with sickness resulted in Muqsim's joy of freedom.

Letter 16 in our corpus also informs us about two other sick persons in Fustāṭ. In this letter, a certain Salmān b. Mughīth writes to one 'Ubayd b. Yasār and another person, whose name is missing, about a certain Duwaylim and al-Admā', who are/were sick. The right half of the letter is missing and the preserved vestiges are not enough to extract a continuous sense. All that we know from the letter is that al-Admā' was unable to eat because of her sickness.

Besides the above-mentioned references, some other published and yet unpublished letters having information about ill health and ill people should be included for a wider discussion of how physical sickness was presented, dealt with and treated in early Muslim Egypt. In one published letter, the sender informs the addressee, both anonymous to us, that he feels sick. He further blames the addressee for not visiting and asking about him ("*wa-anā 'alīl lam taji' wa-lam tas'al annī wa-llāh al-musta'an,*" P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 18 [= P.World,

180].5-6, 2nd-3rd/8th-9th). In another letter, the sender, Aḥmad b. al-Aswad, informs the addressee, Abū ‘Uthmān, that he sent to him several letters telling him about the matter of his son Muḥammad and the affliction that has befallen him. He also expresses his deep grief and distress after hearing about the addressee’s illness, asking God to protect him and not to let him see anything unpleasant afflict those whom he loves. Further, Aḥmad asks Abū ‘Uthmān to immediately write back to him so that he knows more about his health condition, assuring him that he will be very pleased at receiving a letter with his news. In plain words, Aḥmad informs Abū ‘Uthmān that he is worried about him “I should like you to know, may God give you strength, that I am worried about you,” (*u’limuka akramaka Allāh annī qad katabtu ilayka min al-kutub mā lā uḥṣīhā adhkuru laka fihā amr Muḥammad waladī wa-mā nazala fī min muṣība wa-lam arā laka kitāb wa-lā khabar wa-la-qad ghammanī amruka wa-ba’du fa-lā adrī yaṣīlu kitābī wa-l-danānīr fa-as’alu Allāh an lā yuriyaka fī man aḥbabta makrūh uḥibbu ta’lamu a’azzaka Allāh annahu ghammanī amr khabarika bihi nafsī wa-qad abṣartu annaka ‘alīl fa-ghammanī dhālika fa-as’alu Allāh an lā yuriya fīka makrūh,” P.Khalili I 36[= P.Khalili II 93].4-9, 3rd/9th).²³⁰ In another letter, the sender, unknown to us, shows his grief and sorrow due to the addressee’s illness. He makes a supplication to God to protect the addressee and to restore his health (*dafa’a Allāh ‘anka wa-arāka al-‘āfiya fa-inna maraḍaka mimmā qad ghammanī,” P.Khalili I 34[= P.Khalili II 40].3, 3rd/9th).²³¹ In one other letter, the sender tells the addressee, both are unknown to us, that he had expected his immediate return. The long delay of the addressee made the sender ask about him, and he got to know about his sickness. The thing that made him very sad. He prayed to God with affection to restore the addressee’s health soon and to let him return in wellbeing, health and happiness. He, finally, asked the addressee to immediately write back to him to let him know about his news, orders and health condition (*lam araka aṭāla Allāh baqā’aka innī kuntu atawaqqa’u sur’at qudūmika aqdamaka Allāh ‘alaynā fī khayr wa-‘āfiya wa-surūr wa-dafa’a ‘anka makārih al-dunyā wa-l-ākḥira bi-raḥmatihī fa-innahu ‘alā dhālika qādir ḥattā ittaṣala binā mā ightamamtu lahu min ‘illatika lā a’allaka Allāh wa-lā arānā fīka sū’ wa-lā makrūh wa-arjū an yakūna Allāh ‘azza wa-jalla qad wahaba laka al-‘āfiya fa-ta’muru aṭāla Allāh baqā’aka bi-l-amr bi-l-kitāb ilayya wa-tu’arrifnī khabaraka fī nafsika wa-bi-amrika wa-nahyika aqifu ‘indahū wa-antahī muwaffaqan,” P.Jahn 6[= P.World, 184-185].11, 2nd-3rd/8th-9th). In another letter, the sender Aḥmad informs the addressee Abū Bakr that he sent his letter with his friend and neighbor Abū al-Ḥadīd. The latter was in a partnership with a certain Jarīr who is gravely sick in Fustāṭ. Therefore, the sender asks the addressee to go with Abū al-Ḥadīd to visit the sick Jarīr and to complete the transaction (*wa-waṣala kitābī hādhā ma’a jāri wa-ṣadīqī Abū al-Ḥadīd al-‘aṣṣār wa-baynahu wa-bayna Abū al-Ḥadīd wa-Jarīr alladhī huwa mu’tall ‘indaka bi-l-fustāṭ sharika fī kattān ḥamalūhu ilā mā qibalaka wa-balaghahu annahu ‘alīl shadīd al-‘illa fa-uḥibbu aḥabbaka Allāh an taḥḍura ma’ahu bayna yaday Jarīr wa-an as’adahu Allāh ḥattā yatawaqqafā ‘an mā baynahum min al-sharika,” CPR XVI 22.8-11, 3rd/9th). In one letter from the Banū ‘Abd al-Mu’mīn archive, the sender, unknown to us, informs Abū Hurayra, the addressee, that a certain Umm Salama is very sick and urges him to come to see her as soon as possible (once he has read the letter), as she yearns to see him (*Umm Salama ‘alīla wa-hiya shadīdat al-‘illa fa-idhā qara’ta kitābī allā taḍa’ahu*****

²³⁰ See also P.DiemKhalili, 57.

²³¹ See also P.DiemKhalili, 57.

min yadika ḥattā taqdima fa-innahā mushtāqa ilā ru'yatika," P.Marchands II 32[= P.Berl.Arab. II 48].3-4, 3rd/9th). In another letter from the same archive, Muḥammad b. 'Amr b. Thawr informs Abū Hurayra that the former's father (*al-shaykh*) is sick and that that is why he is busy ("*al-shaykh 'alīl wa-anā mashghūl,*" P.Marchands III 19.16, 3rd/9th).

The letters cited and studied above show the profound feelings of sadness, anxiety, fear and distress due to the physical incapacity and the tough experience with sickness. Similar feelings of grief and worry are also expressed in the response of relatives and friends after hearing about the others' sickness. The letters have shown that sick persons would find solace and repose in visits from family members and friends, and blame them in case they do not do so. On the other side, the absent relatives and those who could not travel in person ask the sick persons to keep them informed about their news and health status.

3.2. Emotional ailments

Physical illness is not the only source of anxiety and distress recorded in letters. Emotional ailments, such as lovesickness (*shawq*) and homesickness (*ubāba*) also caused lots of worries (*hamm*), grief (*ghamm/ḥuzn*) and fear (*khawf*) to the people in early Islamic Egypt. To demonstrate this, in one unpublished letter, the sender expresses his strong distress and deep sadness due to the addressee's departure. The sender informs the absent addressee further that an unidentified person burst into tears after his departure. He, this person, does not find solace in crying all day and night. Thus, the sender asks the addressee to hasten his return to soothe his suffering ("*min ghamm firāqika wa-innī as'alu Allāh fīhi wa-qad ta'lam anā fī shidda fa-lā tubṭī 'alaynā ḥattā taqdima in shā'a Allāh fa-anā fī ghamm shadīd min firāqika fa-lā tada' al-qudūm ilaynā [] mā ta'azā min al-bukā' al-layl wa-l-nahār,*" P.Gen.V 15.5-10, 3rd/9th). The letter is very emotional in tone and content with many words of sorrow and distress. The relationship between the sender, the distressed person and the addressee is not clear, but the letter's intimate tone indicates a very close relationship. In another letter between two brothers, the sender informs his brother that he got to know about the latter's plan to visit him and the whole family after breaking the fast of Ramaḍān (*al-fiṭr*) because he is yearning to see them. The sender informs his brother that he and the mother find the same feeling of longing towards him. He also lets him know that he, the sender, had planned to go and visit the addressee before receiving the letter and knowing about his arrival ("*wa-dhakarta annaka turīdu al-qudūm ilaynā ba'd al-fiṭr in shā'a Allāh wa-mā dhakarta min shawqika ilaynā fa-wa-llāh innā la-najīdu laka mithl mā dhakarta min al-shawq wa-la-qad aradtu al-khurūj ilā mā qibalaka mithl mā dhakarta min al-shawq nusallimu 'alayka ḥattā dhakarta al-qudūm wa-inna al-wālida mushtāqa ilayka shadīdat al-shawq fa-lā akhlā Allāh minka makān wa-lā anzala bika makrūh abadan,*" P.Marchands V/I 20.18, 3rd/9th). In another letter also between two brothers, the sender informs the addressee that the mother got very sick since the latter's departure. The sender makes a supplication to God to let him see the addressee's face before death ("*wa-u'limuka yā akhī anna ummaka marīḍa shadīdat al-maraḍ mudh kharajta as'alu Allāh an yuriyanī wajhaka qabla al-mawt,*" P.RāḡibLettres 15.5-6, 3rd/9th). Again, in a letter sent from a certain Umm Bakr to two other female addressees, i.e. Umm Muḥammad and Umm 'Abbāsa, Umm Bakr says that she went sick since she left them. She claims that her

sickness lasted for three month (“*mundhu fāraqtukum ajidu annanī ‘alīl al-‘illa mundhu thalāthat ashhur,*” CPR XVI 30.3-4, 3rd/9th). One final reference showing deep sorrow and distress due to a dear female friend’s departure occurs in letter 23 of our corpus. The letter is widely discussed in women of the house.

Even when taking into account that some of these references are conventions and *topoi*, still some personal feelings of sadness and anxiety can be seen. As historians of emotions have argued that the existence of *topoi* and formulaic expressions should not deter us from studying and establishing points of continuity and change.²³² A point to which I shall return at the end of this discussion.

3.3. Medicine and popular methods of curing

The letters do not only inform us about diseases, but also give hints about medicine and other popular and alternative methods of curing accompanied by words and gestures of emotions. Taking into account that medical care in rural areas must have differed greatly from that in urban cities. In lower layers of the society, there was always a room for popular medicine and different explanation of disease.²³³

To begin with medicine, in one published letter, the sender informed the addressee, both anonymous to us, that the former’s children (*al-‘iyāl*)²³⁴ are very sick and that they urgently need to take the medicine “today”. The father was so afraid for his children. He thought they were dying. The father full of fear and awe quickly went to the physician (*al-ṭabīb*) and described to him the symptoms of their disease.²³⁵ The physician prescribed for them lettuce, psyllium and phoinix.²³⁶ The sender, therefore, asks the addressee to send to him this medicine, since the latter used to take the same medicine for his illness as well (“*ḥafīzaka Allāh wa-abqāka wa-amta‘a bika azunnuka tashrabu al-dawā’ fa-nafa‘aka Allāh bihi wa-razaqaka ‘alayhi al-ṣiḥḥa yā akhī qad kuntu a‘lamtuka anna al-‘iyāl yurīdūna shurbat al-dawā’ al-yawm fa-aṣābahum ‘alayhi shay’ ḥattā zanantu annahu al-mawt fa-jītu al-ṭabīb fa-a‘lamtuhu ‘illatahum fa-dhakara al-khass wa-l-asfiyūsh wa-tashrīb bīniksa fa-in ra‘ayta ḥafīzaka Allāh an tab‘atha ilayya bi-shurb asfiyūsh wa-bīniks fa‘alta,*” CPR XVI 24.2-10, 3rd/9th).²³⁷ Strikingly, the physician did not check the sick children himself but prescribed the medicine on the basis of the father’s description. Why? We are not told.

Drugs (*dawā’*) were generally used to cure diseases. In one letter from the Banū ‘Abd al-Mu‘min archive, Abū Hurayra’s step-mother writes to her sick daughter in the Fayyūm inquiring about the latter’s current condition. The mother had sent to the sick daughter a bag of drugs (*qirtās fīhi dawā’*) from Fustāt to cure the daughter’s affected stomach. The mother was so worried and eager to know whether the daughter took the medicine and improved or not (“*wa-ba‘athtu ilayki ma‘ahu qirtās fīhi dawā’ li-jawfiki fa-ktubī ilayya bi-l-wuṣūli*

²³² See Cubitt (2001), 226; Rosenwein (2001), 232. See also below the value of the health.

²³³ For more extensive discussion on popular medicine in medieval Islamic times, see P. Pormann, and E. Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic medicine* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 144-161.

²³⁴ The editor translates it as “meine familie”, see the discussion on this term in children.

²³⁵ For more about physicians in medieval Islamic times, see Pormann, and Savage-Smith (2007), 80-114.

²³⁶ For these drugs, see CPR XVI, 67.

²³⁷ See also the commentary to lines 7-8.

wa-kitābī waṣala ilayki wa-sharibtīhi wa-ntafa'tī bihi fa-ktubī ilayya ḥattā taṭība nafsī fa-innī maghmūma biki ghamm shadīd as'alu Allāh al-faraj min 'indihi," P.Marchands II 28.3-5, 3rd/9th).²³⁸ In another letter, Abū Hurayra's step-mother shows how grief and sorrow have affected her and her husband due to their daughter's sickness. She says that her tears do not stop day and night ("*ahlakanī al-ghamm fa-inna kitābī ilayka wa-dam'atī 'alā khaddī layl wa-nahār mā afirru minhā wa-lā ahda'u ... wa-llāh qad halaktu min al-ghamm wa-abūhā zādahu ghamm bintihi,"* P.Marchands II 27.10-12, 16, 3rd/9th).

Grape syrup (*'aqīd*) and wine (*sharāb*) were widely used as medicine.²³⁹ In one unpublished letter, the sender informs the addressee about a sick woman, most probably his wife. In this letter, the sender asks the addressee to send him grape syrup (*'aqīd*) for this sick woman, if he is able to do so ("*yā akhī anna al-mara ams fa-llāh al-musta'ān wa-iyyāhu as'alu al-ṣabr wa-l-ajr wa-l-..... wa-qad kuriha lahā shurb fa-in khaffa 'alayka an tab'ath ilayya bi-shay' min 'aqīd,"* P.Gen.V 18r.3-7, 3rd/9th). The answer is given on the verso, but the papyrus is badly preserved and the ink is being effaced. The vestiges conserved on the verso contain only prayers and blessings for the addressee and mention the matter of the woman as well as sending something, most probably the syrup ("*waṣala kitābuka wa-fahimtu mā dhakarta min amr al-mara wa-as'al Allāh an wa-yaj'ala thawābaka minhu wa-l-khayr wa-razaqaka arsala shay',"* P.Gen.V 18v.3-5, 3rd/9th). The letter does not tell that the grape syrup was prescribed for the woman's illness. Another published letter from Edfou confirms the fact that grape syrup and wine were popularly used to treat diseases. In this letter, the sender asks the addressee to send to him a jar of grape syrup or wine (*sharāb*). He says that he did not drink it for months and that it was prescribed for him to drink little of it to cure his illness ("*'azzaka Allāh an tanfa'anī wa-tab'atha ilayya shay' yaṣluḥa li-l-marīd min bayna jarrat 'aqīd aw sharāb fa-innī ma sharabtuhu mundhu ashhur wa-lakin wuṣifa lī an atanāwala minhu shay' qalīl la'alla yanfa'unī Allāh bihi,"* P.RāḡibEdfou 3.6-10, 4th/10th).

Dietary therapy, namely eating fresh fruits, and keeping sad news from the ill person seem to have been recommended especially for elderly ill people. In one letter from the Banū 'Abd al-Mu'min archive, the two brothers Mūsā and Hārūn sons of 'Absūn, living in Fuṣṭāṭ, inform their half-brother Abū Hurayra in the Fayyūm about the death of their cousin ("*wa-u'alimuka yā akhī anna [] ibn khālika Abū 'Alī tuwuffiya raḥimahumā Allāh,"* P.Marchands II 24.11, 3rd/9th). The two brothers asked Abū Hurayra not to tell their mother in her current condition of illness, but to wait until she had recovered, so as not to increase her illness and to make her sad ("*wa-lā tu'lim al-wālida wa-hiya fī hādhihi al-'illa ḥattā ta'tiqu in shā'a Allāh fa-taghumuhā,"* ll.15-16). At the end of the letter, the two brothers mention that they are really happy that the bananas and apples they sent for their ill mother had reached her, and she had eaten the ripe ones ("*wa-la-qad sarranī lammā akhbaranī anna dhālika al-mawz wa-l-tuffāḥ waṣala ilayka wa-akalat minhu al-'ajūz surūr Allāh bihi 'alīm fa-lā awḥashanā Allāh minhā wa-lā arānā fīhā makrūh,"* ll.19-20). Strikingly, the Fayyūm is supposed to be so famous for its fruits as both the Arabic papyri and narrative sources indicate. Perhaps there was no fresh fruit available in the season in the oasis, while there were fruits available in the Fuṣṭāṭ markets, imported from elsewhere.

²³⁸ For Abū Hurayra's carelessness towards his family, see the discussion on children.

²³⁹ For the use of grape syrup (*'aqīd*) and wine as medicine, see H. Kamal, *Encyclopedia of Islamic medicine* (Cairo: General Egyptian Book Organization, 1975), 182-183 and the primary sources cited there.

Moving to fresh air areas certainly helps to restore ill health. In letter 9 in our corpus, the sender asks the addressee to sail to him and to ask another woman to sail to the sender's domicile as well, since the air is fresh and healthy there (“*fa-inna al-rīḥ ṭayyiba*,” l.14).²⁴⁰

Besides drugs, herbs, dietary therapy and moving to fresh air areas, amulets, talismans²⁴¹ and other magical and religious medicaments have been widely used for protection and curing.²⁴² Lovesickness (*shawq*) was unquestionably only comforted by reunion (*wiṣāl*).²⁴³

In addition to the references of popular treatments given in private and business letters many scientific medical prescriptions and orders of medicine are recorded in papyri. Some of these prescriptions and orders have already been published but many are still awaiting publication.²⁴⁴ A good and careful examination of these documents would indeed help us to widen our outlook and improve our knowledge about the actual medical care and practice in Egypt after the Arab conquest and show whether or not the Arabs produced new medical practices to what was already known in pre-Islamic Egypt. An attempt has already been done by Ernst Seidel on the basis of some scientific medical Arabic writings found in the Heidelberg papyrus collection.²⁴⁵ Recently, Lucian Reinfandt has elaborated and built upon this study with some encouraging results using mainly published and also some of yet unpublished material.²⁴⁶ Most recently, a PhD thesis on herbs and medical plants cited in the Arabic papyri has been defended in Egypt, but the dissertation has not yet been published and is not easily accessible.²⁴⁷

3.4. The value of health

Further to the question to what extent people in early Islamic Egypt were concerned about health, many references given in private and business letters show the value of health and longevity. Blessings such as *madda Allāh fi ‘umrika wa-aṭāla Allāh baqā’aka* (may God lengthen your life and prolong your existence “on earth”) are well attested in letters.²⁴⁸ Also the words, health (*‘āfiya*), sound condition (*salāma*) and condition (*ḥāl*) seem to be basic elements in every single letter.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, before getting into the main point of the

²⁴⁰ For different interpretations of this sentence, see the commentary.

²⁴¹ A great number of amulets and talismans are preserved on papyrus and paper, many of them are unpublished, see P.M. Sijpesteijn, “A curious Arabic talisman,” in: A. Vrolijk, P. Hogendijk (eds.), *O ye gentlemen: Arabic studies on science and literary culture in honour of Remke Kruk* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 201-210.

²⁴² See I. Perho, *The prophet’s medicine, a creation of the Muslim traditionalist scholars* (Helsinki: Studia Orientalia 74, 1995), 111-118; Pormann, and Savage-Smith (2007), 144-159.

²⁴³ See also the discussion on spouses.

²⁴⁴ See for example A. Dietrich, *Zum Drogenhandel im islamischen Ägypten. Eine Studie über die arabische Handschrift Nr. 912 Heidelberger Papyrussammlung* (Heidelberg, 1954); PERF 649, 760, 804, 834. See also L. Reinfandt, “Medizin und Alltag in den arabischen Papyri,” in: H. Froschauer, C. Römer (eds.), *Zwischen Magie und Wissenschaft. Ärzte und Heilkunst in den Papyri, Nilus. Studien zur Kultur Ägyptens und des Vorderen Orients* 13 (Wien: Phoibos Verlag, 2007), 65-78 and the references provided there.

²⁴⁵ E. Seidel, “Medizinisches aus den Heidelberger Papyri Schott-Reinhardt,” *Der Islam* 1 (1910), 145-152; 238-263; 2 (1911), 220-231; 3 (1912), 273-291.

²⁴⁶ Reinfandt (2007b), 65-78.

²⁴⁷ S.M. Hānī, *al-A’shāb wa-l-nabatāt al-ṭibīyya wa-l-‘iṭriyya min khilāl awrāq al-bardī fi al-‘aṣr al-islāmī* (PhD dissertation, Hilwan University, 2010).

²⁴⁸ See for example CPR XVI 26.2, 10, 2nd/8th; P.Cair.Arab. V 359.2, 3rd/9th; CPR XVI 11 .1, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands II 39.17, 3rd/9th. See also Grob (2010a), 43-48.

²⁴⁹ Grob (2010a), 49.

letter, the sender usually mentions that he and his family are well and in good health, thanks God for this gift and asks Him to grant him and his family always good health. He also inquires about the health of the addressee and his family and wishes them good health as well. Even in regular exchange of letters, the sender usually mentions his wellbeing and expresses his pleasure at receiving a letter from the addressee and hearing about his wellbeing and barely skips this section. Again, at the end of the letter, the sender usually asks the addressee to write back to him with his news and health condition.

On the opening section of the letter, Grob comments: “The content and structure of well-being and confirmation are very conventional and may be described as ‘initial courtesy’.”²⁵⁰ And on the closing part, she says: “The request to write back – rather a courtesy than a major concern – is conventionally introduced by an instruction-trigger.”²⁵¹ Grob’s comments on both sections hold true to some extent. On the other hand, formulaic expressions and conventions can be used to voice *true* feelings and concerns. The conventions did not largely lose their meanings. They rather indicate prevailing emotional norms in the society. As Mary Garrison reminds us, “models and topoi, then, may be able to convey ‘genuine’ statements about the experience of the self and they may also be able to serve as the most effective way to communicate or represent aspects of emotions or the inner world to others. In other words, they are not a barrier to interpreting emotional experience, but a potentially privileged access.”²⁵² This clear cut statement leads us to the conclusion that the repetitive inquiries about health as well as blessings and prayers for longevity show that the members of this society were very much concerned about their wellbeing and health and were always worried about illness, lack of medicine and death.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Grob (2010a), 52.

²⁵¹ Grob (2010a), 69.

²⁵² Garrison (2001), 247. See also Cubitt (2001), 226; Rosenwein (2001), 232.

²⁵³ See also Reinfandt (2007b), 73–75, 78.

4. Death and consolation

“fa-‘alayki yā-mm ‘Uthmān bi-l-ṣabr fa-inna al-ṣabr manjā inna al-mawt sabīl al-awwalīn wa-l-ākhirīn laysa li-aḥad barā’a min al-mawt.”

(Umm ‘Uthmān, you must have patience, for in patience lies salvation. The death is the fate of all people from the first to the last. Nobody is saved from the death.)

Letter 20.9-10

“Death is inevitable and verily everybody whether willingly or unwillingly shall die. Death is the fate of all people from the first to the last. You must have patience, for in patience there is salvation. Indeed, we belong to God and indeed to Him we will return.” With these words, a comforter compiles a letter of condolence to express his personal grief, anxiety and sympathy with the mourners when the misfortune of death strikes one or more of their relatives. Compared to other types of letters, letters of condolence are extremely rare. Not a single letter of condolence has been published so far, and, as a consequence, a comprehensive study on this important subject is still absent from papyrological research. Among our corpus, two unique letters of condolence are edited (19 and 20) as well as two letters notifying the death of close relatives (17 and 18). The letters vary considerably to include a letter written by a bereaved mother who expresses her personal grief and anxiety after the death of her son (18), a letter of condolence sent to a sorrowful widow (20), another one sent to a man on the death of a male relative (19) and finally, a letter sent to a woman by a male relative announcing the death of her ill father (17). In addition to these four letters, one unpublished letter of condolence sent to a woman and her child from two males, which has recently been found in Fustāṭ (9702/f), as well as a papyrus text that contains a model for letters of condolence and two models for replies to such letters shall be included in the discussion.²⁵⁴

In chapter one, I argued that letters of condolence were considered a suitable substitute for one’s physical presence in times of loss and grief.²⁵⁵ Below, I shall focus on the formulaic traditions and the special expressions of grief and distress emerging in these letters, endeavoring to perceive how the people in early Islamic Egypt responded to the misfortune of death.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ These two letters and more will be published in K.M. Younes, “Arabic letters of condolence on papyrus,” (forthcoming).

²⁵⁵ The practice and the objective of this type of letter compare well with that witnessed in pre-Islamic Egypt, particularly in Greek papyri, see Chapa (1998), 30-32.

²⁵⁶ For the study of Arabic funerary inscriptions and other related funerary structures with the Muslim society as compared to non-Muslim areas, see W. Diem, *The living and the dead in Islam, studies in Arabic epitaphs, I epitaphs as texts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004) and W. Schöller, *The living and the dead in Islam, studies in Arabic epitaphs, II epitaphs in context* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004). See also L. Halevi, *Muhammad’s grave. Death rites and the making of Islamic society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

4.1. Letters of condolence

Let us start with a closer look at the letters of condolence of our corpus. In letter **19**, the sender writes to the addressee, both having the same *kunya*, i.e. Abū al-Azhar, trying to soothe the addressee's pains by expressing his sincere condolences, profound sadness and sympathy. The right half of the letter is missing with a considerable loss of text, but it is possible to reconstruct some of the missing parts with the help of other letters of the same genre, Qur'an, traditions (*aḥādīth*) and other literary texts.²⁵⁷ The letter starts after the introductory formulae with the reference to hearing of the death of a certain Abū 'Abd al-'Azīz and then continues with extensive prayers and blessings for the deceased. The sender asks God to have mercy upon the deceased, bless him and grant him a better life in the hereafter. Afterwards, the sender expresses how great the disaster is. He, at the same time, reminds himself and the addressee about the inevitability of death, stating that they have to surrender to God's command being patient and calm in anticipation of God's reward ("balaghanā alladhī kāna min qaḍā' Ab[ū 'Abd al-'Azīz [] Allāh wa-maghfiratan 'alayhi fa-'inda Allāh aḥtasibu muṣībatahu wa-aqūlu innā li-llāhi wa-innā ilayhi rāji'ūna ṣabran wa-ḥtisāban wa-taslīman li-amr Allāh fa-hādhihi muṣība mā a'zamuhā fa-as'alu Allāh an yarḥamahu wa-an yaghfira lahu wa-an yubārīka lahu fīmā ṣāra ilayhi wa-arjū an yakūn [] mā 'alimtuḥu maḥmūd wa-lākinna al-muṣība qad 'azumat [] wa-lākinnaḥu sabīl al-māḍīn wa-l-[lāhiqīn," ll.13-14). Next, he makes a supplication to the addressee, but it is lost ("fa-razaqaka Allāh al-[] ya'mal ṣāliḥan yablughaka wa-iyyanā [] bi-raḥmatihī," ll.15-17). To conclude his letter, Abū al-Azhar sends his greetings and condolences to a certain Abū 'Uthmān, makes further collective supplications and then closes the letter with the final *salām* greeting ("abligh Abū 'Uthmān minnā al-salām wa-abligh ta'ziyatanā iyyāhu bi-Abī 'Abd al-'Azīz [] tawallāka Allāh wa-iyyanā bi-l-'āfiya wa-l-salām 'alayka wa-raḥmat Allāh," ll.17-19).

Letter **20** contains stronger expressions of grief and distress than the other letters do. The letter is fragmentary and forms the middle part of a letter of condolence sent to a woman known as Umm 'Uthmān who had lost a man named Nawfal, who was presumably her husband. The sender, whose name is missing, refers to Nawfal as his brother, but this should not be taken literally.²⁵⁸ The sender assures Umm 'Uthmān that "their" misfortune is a misfortune for him, their sorrow is for him a sorrow and their joy is for him a joy. He then asks, with soothing words, Umm 'Uthmān to be patient, reminding her of God's reward for the patients and stating that death is a universal truth. At the end of the fragment, the sender cites a Qur'anic verse, but it is missing²⁵⁹ ("akhī innā li-llāhi wa-innā ilayhi rāji'ūna fa-yarḥamuhu Allāh wa-ṣallā 'alayhi wa-adkhalahu al-janna 'arrafahā lahu fa-wa-llāh inna muṣībatakum lī la-muṣība wa-inna ḥuznakum lī ḥuzn wa-farahakum lī farah Allāh ya'lām dhālika fa-'alayki yā-mm 'Uthmān bi-l-ṣabr fa-inna al-ṣabr manjā inna al-mawt sabīl al-awwalīn wa-l-ākhirīn laysa li-aḥad barā'a min al-mawt qāla Allāh li-nabiyyihī ..., " ll.3-10). The letter is very emotional in tone and content. The relationship between the mourner, the comforter and the deceased is unclear, but the intimate tone of the letter indicates a very close relationship.

²⁵⁷ See al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā fī ṣinā'at al-inshā* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1922), vol. 9, 80-100. See also the commentary.

²⁵⁸ See the discussion on children.

²⁵⁹ See the commentary to line 10.

The unpublished letter of condolence (9702/f) datable on palaeographical grounds to the 2nd/8th century is fortunately almost complete except for a horizontal strip 2 cm wide and 8.5 cm long which has disappeared of the upper layer of the papyrus at the right half. This results in the loss of two words of each line, but it is not difficult to restore almost all the missing words. The letter is sent from two males, Abū Zufar being one of them, to a woman named Zakhīm and her child (*Zakhīm wa-waladihā*) on the death of the *paterfamilias*, Abū Yazīd. After the common introductory formula, the senders start the letter with the reference to hearing of the death of Abū Yazīd and follow this with extensive prayers for the deceased and the bereaved family (“*balaghanā wafāt Abī Yazīd fa-innā li-llāhi wa-innā ilayhi rāji‘ūna fa-raḥimahu Allāh wa-ghafara lahu wa-jazāhu bi-ṣāliḥ ‘amalihi wa-a‘qabakum ba‘dahu ṣabran wa-imānan,*” ll.3-5). Afterwards, the senders stress the fact that all that dwells upon the earth will perish eventually and that God alone lives eternally (“*fa-huwa al-sabīl ḥattā lā yabqā illā Allāh,*” l.5). The exhortation to have patience because God promises the patient with the best rewards is present in the letter (“*fa-‘alaykum bi-l-ṣabr fa-inna Allāh wa‘ada al-ṣābirīn khayran,*” l.5). The senders then close the letter with the common request to the addressees to write back with their news and condition (“*uktubū ilaynā bi-khabarikum wa-salāmatikum fa-innā nusarru bi-dhālika,*” ll.6-7). After the final *salām* greeting, a certain Tamīma, probably the wife of Abū Zufar, sends her greetings and condolences to the female addressee (“*wa-Tamīma tuqri‘uki al-salām wa-taqūlu a‘zama Allāh ajraki wa-jabara muṣibataki,*” l.7).

4.2. Models for letters of condolence and replies to such letters

P.Cair.Arab. VII 459 is a receipt of payment of land-tax (*barā’a*) from Edfou dated 268/881.²⁶⁰ The back of this receipt contains one model for a letter of condolence and two models for replies to such letters. The model of letter of condolence is written at the top. It starts with the reference to hearing of the death of *so and so* and follows this with prayers for the deceased (“*balaghanī mā kāna min wafāt Abī fulān raḥmat Allāh wa-maghfiratah,*” l.1). The writer declares twice that they belong to God and to Him they will return, stating that the misfortune of death is one of the heavy disasters and offensive misfortunes that happens to the souls that God entrusted us with (“*innā li-llāhi wa-innā ilayhi rāji‘ūna thumma innā li-llāhi wa-innā ilayhi rāji‘ūna fa-la-qad ‘aẓumat muṣibat al-[l-mawt] min ‘aẓimāt al-razāyā wa-mūbiqāt al-balāyā allatī taghdū ‘alā al-anfus al-mustawda‘[a],*” ll.2-3). The writer then states that death is an inevitable fate that comes in an appointed measure and a fixed time. He also confirms that the death of anyone will not be postponed because of his age or status and that God is the only to survive (“*wa-ja‘ala al-maw[t] [...] ḥatman maqḍiyyan al-ḥabīb bi-l-ḥabīb wa-l-ṣaghīr bi-l-ṣaghīr wa-l-kabīr <bi-l-kabīr> lā yu‘akhar ṣaghīr li-ṣigharihi wa-lā kabīr li-kibarihi kull dhālika bi-qadar ma‘lūm wa-kitāb ‘alayhim maḥtūm ḥattā yabqā Allāh al-aḥad al-ṣamad,*” ll.5-6). The writer quotes two Quranic verses that are connected with death. He then states that the greatest disaster of the people of Islam is the disaster of the loss of the Prophet (“*wa-qad qāla Allāh ‘azza wa-jalla fī muḥkam kitābihi kullu nafsin dhā‘iqatu al-mawti wa-kullun ilaynā rāji‘ūna wa-*

²⁶⁰ For the image of this document, see the catalogue of Arabic papyri from the national library of Egypt [= P.DarAlKutub].

qāla kullu man ‘alayhā fānin wa-yabqā wajhu rabbika dhū al-jalāli wa-l-ikrāmi wa-inna a‘zam maṣā’ib ahl al-islām muṣībatahum bi-l-nabiyy ṣallā Allāh ‘alayhi wa-salam,” ll.7-9). Finally, the writer prays to God to comfort the mourner’s grief and asks the mourner to have patience. The writer then emphasizes one last time that death is inevitable (“*fa-a‘zama Allāh ajrak wa-jabara muṣībatak wa-raḥima Allāh Abī fulān wa-ghafara lahu wa-‘alayka bi-l-ṣabr yā akhī fa-innahu sabīl man maḍā wa-sabīl man baqā,”* ll.10-11).

The two models for replies to letters of condolence are actually titled as such (*jawāb ta‘ziya*, m. 1; *jawāb ta‘ziya ayḍan*, m. 2). The formulae used in the two models are very similar. After the *basmla* at the top of the papyrus, the writer starts with the transitional element *amma ba‘du* skipping the first part of the prescript. Model 2 skips also the transitional element. The writer then confirms that he, i.e. the mourner, received the comforter’s letter of condolence on the death of so and so and follows this with extensive prayers and blessings for himself, the comforter as well as for the deceased (“*amma ba‘du waṣala ilayya kitābuka akramaka Allāh bi-ta‘ziyatika iyyāya fī fulān \raḥimahu Allāh/ fa-anā as’alu Allāh lanā wa-laka al-i’tiṣām bi-tā‘atihi wa-l-riḍā bi-qaḍā’ihi fa-innahu waliyy kull khayr wa-mu‘īhi wa-raḥima Allāh fulān (Abā fulān, m. 2) wa-ghafara lahu fa-‘inda Allāh aḥtasibu muṣībatahu (wa-aqūlu innā li-llāhi wa-innā ilayhi rāji‘ūna ṣabran wa-ḥtisāban wa-taslīman li-amr Allāh, m. 2) wa-iiyāhu as’alu al-ajr ‘alayhi wa-yaj’al mā ṣāra ilayhi khayran mimmā kāna fīhi,”* ll.2-5/13-17). Next, the writer stresses the fact that death is inevitable and that all people upon the earth will perish eventually (“*wa-innahu yā akhī amr lā budda minhu wa-lā maḥiṣa ‘anhu wa-‘alā dhālika halaka al-awwalūn wa-ilayhi yaṣīr al-ākhirūn,”* ll.5-6/17-18) and continues this with the prayers to live peacefully in this world and to grant them better life in the hereafter (“*wa-nas’alu ḥayātan ṭayyibatan wa-munqalab karīm,”* ll.6-7/19). Afterwards, the writer expresses his sincere gratitude to the comforter for the consolation and shows that he knew what grief and sorrow have affected him, i.e. the comforter, because of this disaster, stressing the strong bond of friendship and brotherhood between both of them (“*wa-qad ‘araftu al-dākil ‘alayka min dhālika li-makāninā li-khāṣṣatinā bika wa-limā ajrā Allāh baynanā wa-baynaka min al-ḥurmma wa-l-ikhā’,”* ll.7-8/19-20). At the end of the letter, the writer makes another collective supplication, asking God to grant them patience and reward them for it and emphasizing once again that everybody whether willingly or unwillingly shall die (“*fa-lā aḥramanā Allāh wa-iiyāka ajra muṣibatinā wa-baraka lanā wa-laka fī qaḍā’ihi fa-nas’alu Allāh al-ṣabr ‘alā qaḍā’ihi fa-lā budda min qaḍā’ihi in shi’nā wa-in abaynā wa-lā maradda li-qaḍā’ihi wa-lā yanjū minhu aḥad wa-maṣīr al-khalq ilā mā ṣāra ilayhi wa-warada manhalihi,”* ll.8-11/20-23).

The two reply models are very significant as they show us the basic structure, formulae, and main points stressed in every reply to a letter of condolence. These are: (1) the confirmation of the arrival of the letter of condolence; (2) blessings and prayers for all parties, namely the author, the mourner, and the deceased; (3) emphasis on the inevitability of death and exhortations to be patient and accept God’s will; and finally, (4) re-affirmation of the strong personal bonds between the comforter and the mourner.

The original letters of condolence, on the other hand, seem to follow one typical pattern, and it is possible that the authors used models while writing their letters.²⁶¹ The letters have the same basic elements as the model above. After the introductory formulae

²⁶¹ The same holds true for the Greek letters of condolence, see Chapa (1998), 45-47.

and blessings, the letters usually mention that the authors have heard news of a death.²⁶² The bodies of the letters are full of expressions of grief, anxiety, distress, and sympathy. There are no expressions of joy. There is repeated reference to death.²⁶³ Prayers and blessings for the deceased as well as the bereaved family are always there. Similarly, Quranic verses and Prophetic traditions connected with death appear frequently. The exhortation to have patience was a major theme in every letter of condolence.²⁶⁴ In all letters, death is represented as the ultimate fate of all mankind for God alone is immortal. Both mourners and comforters usually pray to God to bestow blessings upon the deceased and to guide him to the paradise. The mourners are always reminded to remember God's command to be patient and calm and to seek God's reward. According to Muslim faith, the reward for those who frequently, thoughtfully and truthfully show patience (*ṣabr/iḥtisāb/istirjā'*) and declare that they belong to God and to Him they will return (*innā li-llāhi wa-innā ilayhi rāji'ūna*),²⁶⁵ when the misfortune of death strikes one or more of their relatives, is the paradise (Q 2:155-156).²⁶⁶ But indeed patience must be displayed at the first stroke of the affliction.²⁶⁷ The feelings of concern and sympathy about what will happen to the deceased in the life to come are also expressed by both, the mourners and the comforters. All in all, these Muslim letters of condolences are Islamic versions of a consolatory letter-writing tradition that existed in Egypt even before the appearance of Islam.²⁶⁸

4.3. Letters announcing death

In our corpus, two letters announcing the death of close relatives are edited (17 and 18). Letter 17 is widely studied in sickness, but it may be worthy to readdress here once again how the sender reports this sad news. In this letter, the sender Wusāma informs the female addressee about the death of her father ("*ukhbiruki anna Abū Ziyād tuwuffiyya fa-yarḥamuhu Allāh wa-ṣallā 'alayhi wa-adkhalahu al-janna wa-llāh fā'il in shā'a Allāh*," ll.8-10). Strikingly, the strong feelings of grief and distress are not visible in the letter. Wusāma neither reports the news as a disaster nor does he express his sincere sympathy and condolences. The cold attitude of Wusāma towards Abū Ziyād's death can be explained in view of the fact that Abū Ziyād has been suffering from his deadly illness for a long time. Abū Ziyād's death was

²⁶² Some Greek letters of condolence begin by stating what grief and sorrow have affected the sender after hearing the death of *so and so*, see Chapa (1998), 26-27.

²⁶³ In contrast, the mention of death in the Greek letters of condolence is euphemistically avoided, see Chapa (1998), 35.

²⁶⁴ For *ṣabr* (patience) as a motif in medieval Islamic consolation treatises, see Gil'adi (1992), 94-100. See also, A. Gil'adi, "Islamic consolation treatises for bereaved parents: some bibliographical notes," *Studia Islamica* 81 (1995), 197-202; A. Gil'adi, "'The child was small... not so the grief for him': sources, structure and content of al-Sakhawi's consolation treatise for bereaved parents," *Poetics today* 14 (1993), 367-386.

²⁶⁵ (Q 2:156).

²⁶⁶ "And surely We shall try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and crops; but give glad tidings to the steadfast, (155) Who say, when a misfortune striketh them: Lo! we are Allah's and lo! unto Him we are returning." See also Nasā'ī, 1870-1876.

²⁶⁷ "*innamā al-ṣabr 'inda al-ṣadma al-āwālā*." See Bukhārī, 1252; Muslim, 926; Nasā'ī, 1868.

²⁶⁸ See Chapa (1998), 23-24. See also J. Smith, and Y. Haddad, *The Islamic understanding of death and resurrection* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); R. ibn Salāma, *al-Mawt wa-ṭuqūṣuh min khilāl ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī wa-Muslim* (Tunisia: Dār al-Ganūb li-l-Nashr, 1997), 23-40.

expected at any time, and that that is why it caused lesser sadness. Wusāma, Muqsim, the servant, and maybe Zaynab, the daughter, were not strongly afflicted out of this loss; they were, I assume, relieved.

On the contrary, in the letter **18**, strong feelings of grief and worry are vividly expressed by a bereaved mother reporting on her son's death. This letter is cited elsewhere in this thesis, but let us study the letter's contents in some detail here. In this letter, the female sender, Ruqayya informs her aunt, Umm al-Qāsim, that she is in good health in spite of the affliction that has befallen her, namely the death of her son who died in the month of Ṣafar after people's return from the ḥajj ("wa-anā bi-ḥāl salāma wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh kathīran 'alā mā dahanī wa-afja'anī min wafāt sayyidī wa-waladī raḍiya Allāh 'anhu wa-llāh as'aluhu an yu'azzima ajraki wa-yuḥsina 'azā'aki wa-yajbura bi-taqwā nafsiki wa-yuḥsina al-khalaf 'alayki fa-huwa al-sabīl ḥattā lā yabqā aḥad wa-kāna wafātuhu raḍiya Allāh 'anhu fī ṣafar ba'd dukhūl al-nās min al-ḥajj," ll.3-7). Ruqayya shows how confused, lonely, poor and weak she feels after this loss, especially after her brother's departure ("fa-qad baqītu ḥayrā waḥīdatan ḍa'īfatan faqīratan dhahaba al-ān al-surūr ma'a al-akh al-shaqīq wa-baqītu waḥīdatan," ll.6-7). In this vein, Ruqayya was so depressed that she expressed the wish that she had died before facing these hard times, namely losing her son and missing her brother ("fa-layta anna al-mawt qadamanī qablahu wa-lastu asma'u li-akhī khabar wa-lā asma'u minhu kitāb fa-askunu ilā 'ilm dhālika wa-astariḥu ilayhi," ll.7-8). Afterwards, Ruqayya informs her aunt that a certain Abū 'Abd Allāh, known to the addressee, looked after her during this misfortune. He also took care of the deceased and the preparation of the funeral. In return, Ruqayya expresses her deep gratitude to Abū 'Abd Allāh and makes supplications for him. She prays to God to please him in this life and in the life to come ("wa-llāh as'aluhu li-sayyidī Abū 'Abd Allāh al-baqā' fa-law ra'at 'aynuki qiyāmahu bihi wa-binā la-sarraki sarrahu Allāh bi-..... wa-a'ānahu 'alā mā wallāhu min umūr dunyāhu wa-ākhiratihi," ll.8-10). Before ending her letter, Ruqayya asks her aunt not to withhold writing her ("wa-anā uḥibbu aḥabbaki Allāh an lā taqṭa'ī 'annī kitābaki," **18.10**). The letter closes with the *taṣliya* and the common closing blessings.

In addition to the aforementioned letters, four other published letters reporting on the death of someone should also be included in this discussion as they lead forward our understanding of how death was announced, perceived and dealt with in early Islamic Egypt. To start with the letter of the Banū 'Abd al-Mu'min archive (P.Marchands II **24**), the two brothers Mūsā and Hārūn sons of 'Absūn inform their half-brother Abū Hurayra about the death of their cousin ("wa-u'alimuka yā akhī anna [] ibn khālika Abū 'Alī tuwuffiya raḥimahumā Allāh," l.11, 3rd/9th). The cousin died in the countryside, but his body was brought to be buried in Fustāṭ, which shows how important it obviously was to be buried in one's home territory. The journey took around three days and two nights from Tuesday to Thursday evening. The body was buried in the fourth day, Friday, most probably to allow relatives, friends and comforters to attend the burial ("wa-u'alimuka annahu māta bi-l-rīf yawm al-thulāthā' wa-ḥumila ilā al-fuṣṭāṭ waṣala yawm al-khamīs fī ākhir al-nahār wa-dufina yawm al-jum'a bi-l-ghadāt," ll.13-14).²⁶⁹ In the letter, the two brothers stress the fact that death is the fate of all mankind. They also pray to God to have mercy upon themselves as well as the deceased ("fa-raḥimanā Allāh wa-iyyāhu wa-huwa al-sabīl ḥattā lā yabqā aḥad," ll.14-15). In

²⁶⁹ This letter is also discussed in sickness.

another letter, the sender informs the addressee, among many other things, that he got to know about the death of a certain Mūsā b. Walīd. The sender shows what strong grief and sorrow have affected him after hearing this sad news, but also shows patience and makes supplications to the deceased. He prays to God to forgive the deceased, have mercy upon him and to be blessed with him (“*wa-qad balaghanī wafāt Mūsā b. Walīd fa-ghammanī dhālika ghamm shadīd fa-‘inda Allāh naḥtasibu muṣībatahu wa-naqūlu innā li-llāhi wa-innā ilayhi rāji‘ūna fa-rahimahu Allāh wa-ghafara lahu wa-raḍiya ‘anhu,*” P.Jahn 14.13-17, 3rd/9th). In another letter, the sender Abū ‘Uthmān writes to Abū Aḥmad, the addressee, inquiring about and reporting on very important political information, amongst which the death of the commander of the faithful. In this interesting letter, Abū ‘Uthmān informs the addressee that he got to know about the death of *amīr al-mu‘minīn* (“*wa-qad balaghanā wafāt amīr al-mu‘minīn,* P.RāḡibLettres 13.7, 3rd/9th). Further, Abū ‘Uthmān asks Abū Aḥmad to always keep him reported about the news of the city of al-‘Askar, the capital of Egypt at that time, as well as the news of *al-Shām* (Syria) and the city of Fustāṭ (“*wa-mā yajī ukum min akhbār min al-‘askar wa-min al-qāyim bi-yamīn al-nās wa-mā yablughukum ‘an al-shām wa-akhbarihā wa-‘an al-fustāṭ wa-akhbarihā,*” ll.10-13).²⁷⁰

This letter is exceptional. The script, formulary, style and format of the letter confirm that it is a private letter. Also, there is no indications in the letter that makes us assume that Abū ‘Uthmān and Abū Aḥmad were local officials or somehow related to the administration. They were, most probably, two of the common folk. If our interpretation of P.RāḡibLettres 13 holds, we have to consider as well that there may have been other examples that show people’s curiosity and interest in the news of the administrative courts. Fortunately, we have one more evidence that supports this interpretation. At a more local level, another interesting letter from the 2nd/8th century shows to what extent individuals in early Islamic Egypt, especially those who were settling in the countryside, were concerned about the political changes in the capital. In this letter, the sender informs the addressee, both anonymous to us, about several public, business and private affairs. Among the public affairs, the sender reports on the appointment of a new governor (*wālī*) over the province. The sender intended to send the letter to the addressee on the same day he wrote it, but he postponed sending it after hearing about the arrival of a new governor. The next day, the sender got further details. He was informed about the appointment of the governor Ḥuwayy b. Ḥuwayy over the prayer (civil and military administration) and the finance of the province (*al-ṣalāt wa-l-kharāj*). The new governor made many administrative changes which were worthy to be reported to the absent addressee. The governor appointed a certain Ibn Falīḥ over the control of the *dīwāns* and the finance (*al-zimām wa-l-kharāj*) and a certain Abū ‘Ubayda b. ‘Uqba b. Nāfi‘ over Upper Egypt and the finance (*al-ṣa‘īd wa-l-kharāj*). The new governor also wrote to the officials and the tribal heads summoning them. He further ordered the *tawābīt* and the *dawāwīn* (archives) to be transferred to somewhere that remains unknown to us. According to the sender, the appointment of this governor was only confirmed on Sunday the third of Ramaḍān. At the end of the letter, the sender wrote that he found it necessary to let the addressee know about all these changes (Younes, “New governors,” no. 2 [= P.Rayl.Arab. I I 5; P.World, 171-173]).

²⁷⁰ See also Grob (2010a), 90.

Here then I leave the references to people's concern with political and administrative news and changes and come back to their concern with death. One final papyrological reference reporting on the death of a close female relative is to be studied. In her letter, Umm al-Ḥakam, the wealthy Muslim lady from the Fayyūm, informs her agent Mīnā Bajūsh about various commercial and personal affairs, amongst which, Umm al-Ḥakam reports on the death of her sister Umm Hāshim. Umm al-Ḥakam then makes a supplication to God to have mercy upon Umm Hāshim (*“wa-ukhbiruka anna ukhtī Umm Hāshim qad tuwuffiyat raḥimahā Allāh,”* P.Jahn 12[= Chrest.Khoury I 98].13-14, 2nd/8th).²⁷¹ Strikingly, the topic is marginally addressed. Moreover, the expected feelings of strong grief and worry are not expressed in spite of the close blood ties between the deceased and the sender. Taking into account that the letter is sent to a male business agent and not to a relative, Umm al-Ḥakam might have found no need to express her personal feelings but just to report on the death.

To sum up, the letters studied above have shown that death in the family brought sadness and distress to family members especially for females. For them, the death of a male member of the family, mainly a husband, father or son certainly added worries and fear to their grief not only because of the blood ties and emotional bonds between the mourners and the deceased but also because of their need and dependency on him. In letter 18, for example, we can clearly see the deep feelings of grief and worry of a bereaved mother next to the feelings of dependency and need towards the dead son. The letters made it clear that women were to a great extent socially and financially dependent upon males and were thus more distressed when these fell away.

²⁷¹ See also Römer and Demiri (2009), 43-45.

CONCLUSION

“When we write histories of the past in which feeling is omitted, we implicitly disregard fundamental aspects of the terms on which people act and interact, and we thus deprive ourselves of important evidence for the framework of understanding in which our subjects conducted the business of their lives.”²⁷²

With this clear cut statement, Catherine Peyroux puts the study of emotions on the right track. Emotions are “social products” as Barbara Rosenwein always likes to call them.²⁷³ They are usually responses to external cultural, social, religious, economic and political structures.²⁷⁴ Thus, the representation of past generations’ emotions in written texts and the information to be gleaned from them should not by any means overlooked or underestimated. Talking about the early Muslim society in Egypt, the major obstacle for the study of emotions there lies obviously in the lack of contemporary narrative sources. Papyri form unique and reliable contemporary source material which makes it possible to tackle this area of research. Against this backdrop, this study opens up new doors for researchers who are keen to know more about the emotions of Arab-Muslims who lived in Egypt after the conquest.

In addition to editing forty-three letters relevant to the study of emotions, this study investigated and analyzed the representation of people’s personal feelings in almost all published Arabic private and business letters on papyrus covering the first four centuries of Muslim rule in Egypt (1st-4th/7th-10th), but focusing mainly on the earliest two and a half centuries. The study also used some of the unpublished letters which are relevant to the main theme of this study.

In order to tackle the main and sub-questions raised in this research, the thesis has been divided into two main parts, besides the introduction and the conclusion. The first part included two chapters devoted to the historical analysis of the letters’ contents. The second part constituted the edition of the letters. Chapter one has investigated the practicalities of letter-writing in early Islamic Egypt. This chapter has showed how important writing was for the early Arab settlers in Egypt to bridge the short and long distances separating them and to regulate their trade properly. In this chapter, it was argued that letter-writing was a widespread practice within the Arabic speaking milieu in early Islamic Egypt; to such a degree that it was a regular routine of daily life, especially from late 2nd/8th century onwards. The chapter has also provided new explanations and insights in the process of letter-writing in early and medieval Islamic Egypt. It has showed, on the basis of a number of arguments, how letters changed from one style of writing to another in the course of time resulting in radical changes in formulae, layout and format. For instance, the presence of the internal address, naming both correspondents, and the prescript section including the initial *salām* greeting, the *ḥamdala* and the transitional element *ammā ba‘du* immediately

²⁷² C. Peyroux, “Gertrude’s *furor*: reading anger in an early Medieval saint’s *life*,” in: B.H. Rosenwein (ed.), *Anger’s past: the social uses of an emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998), 54-55.

²⁷³ Rosenwein (2001), 231; Rosenwein (2006), 15, 27; Rosenwein (2010), 8-9.

²⁷⁴ Rosenwein (2006), 197.

following the *basmala* have been always proposed as an important device for dating Arabic private and business letters on papyrus. It has been argued that no internal address is given in letters after the turn of the 2nd/8th century and that this address was either placed above the *basmala* or omitted altogether with the other elements of the prescript, and replaced by long prayers and blessings for the addressee in letters from the 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries. On the other hand, this chapter held that letters with prescripts continued to be written till the beginning of the 3rd/9th century, but totally disappeared from the late 3rd/9th century onwards. With regard to writing in letters' margins, the chapter challenged the idea that *marginal notes* were written due to a general aversion to continue the letter on the verso. It has been rather argued that writing in the margins was part of the new style of writing letters that became dominant from the late 3rd/9th century onwards resulting in radical changes in formulae and layout such as replacing the prescript with initial blessings and the tendency toward cursiveness in writing. The issue of *topoi* was also dealt with in this chapter. It was argued that explanations of apparently stereotyped expressions can be made. For instance, the complaint about lack of prompt replies to one's written messages has always been explained as a mere *topos*. The chapter has showed that this explanation cannot be taken without reservations. It was argued rather that the chance of losing written messages during long and complicated delivery processes of private letters was undoubtedly high, and thus this complaint can be taken as real. The argument was strengthened by the observation that the senders, i.e. the complainers, sometimes mention how many letters are unanswered, possibly lost.

Chapter two has also shown that formulaic expressions and conventions can properly be used to voice *true* feelings and can be very helpful and useful for the study of emotions.²⁷⁵ In this chapter, an attempt was made to explore social and emotional aspects as they appeared in the letters with the aim to show how people in early Muslim Egypt expressed themselves, their joy and sorrow, how they responded to misfortunes in their writings, what interested and stirred them and what they worried about and believed in. The study has shown that in private and business letters some topics are represented to be constant sources of joy and sorrow; four for them -studied in this chapter- always come to the fore, i.e. familial relationship, feasts and festivities, sickness and death. Throughout this chapter, the letters were frequently allowed to speak for themselves and were given the central place in the discussion. The study has resulted in several useful analysis not only for the history of emotions but also for general history of early Islamic Egypt.

Starting with family construction and familial relationships and emotions and stories stemming from them, the letters brought us close to familial relationships and shed light on very personal emotions between spouses, parents and children, brothers and sisters. In letter 1, for example, we saw the spectacular joy between two fiancées with very personal expressions of longing. Conversely, letter 2 pictured one of the moments in which conjugal life broke up due to mismatch between the two spouses. The letter showed how at times family disputes encroached family arbitration to courts resulting in separation. Besides bringing the experiences of engaged and married individuals in the life of early Islamic Egypt, letters 1 and 2 contain plenty of useful information about the legal practice of

²⁷⁵ See Cubitt (2001), 226; Rosenwein (2001), 232; Garrison (2001), 247.

marriage and divorce settlements in early Muslim society in Egypt and thereby provided a glimpse into the relation between what is recorded in Islamic legal literature on marriage and divorce and local Egyptian practices in the crucial formative period of Islamic Egypt. In addition to these two letters, a good number of marriage legal acts written on papyrus, paper, parchment and silk have been published. These legal documents were mostly drawn up by notaries and thus represented the state and legal practice in the society. The two letters, on the other hand, were written in the private realm and therefore filled the gaps in our knowledge about the actual social practice surrounding marriage and divorce and marriage settlements before drawing up the marriage contract. In other words, the published legal documents and the two private letters of our corpus gave a more comprehensive picture of how Islamic marriage and divorce were socially and legally perceived and conducted in the early Muslim society in Egypt.

The letters have also informed us about the feelings of responsibility and accountability on the part of the *paterfamilias* towards their children, wives and other male and female members of the family. The letters have shown that in case of the *paterfamilias*' absence, they ask relatives, friends and business partners to contact and take care of their families until they come back. In most cases, the caretakers seemed to do the work properly. They wrote back to the absent patrons with information about the wellbeing of their families. About one certain family we knew more, the personal letters of the Banū 'Abd al-Mu'min archive (P. Marchands II) gave us glimpses of the Banū 'Abd al-Mu'min's personal family life and their familial relationships. The vast majority of the letters is full of expressions of painful and pleasurable feelings. Passionate expressions and words of endearment are lavishly expressed. On occasions, the members of this family, both males and females, exult in happiness out of passion and affection and burst into tears out of grief and anxiety. The impassionate and unaffectionate Abū Hurayra is indeed the exception that proves the rule. The series of letters he received from his father, mother, step-mother and half-sister Anūbīs, blaming him for his carelessness, ruggedness and aversion and urging him to be serious about taking care of the family during the father's absence is an indication of an emotional distance between Abū Hurayra and the rest of the family.

Beyond the family, there were small and wide complex networks of tribal relations, friendships and business partnerships which extended sometimes beyond the borders of Egypt and were conditioned by strong emotional ties. Business letters studied in this thesis have suggested that some kind of social and emotional ties might have existed between business partners.²⁷⁶ As it was argued in this chapter, letters sent to close friends and relatives were more or less emotional in tone and content, with some of them apparently serving no other purpose than strengthening the bonds of kin and friendship between the two correspondents. Besides blood, social and financial ties that held the Arab-Muslim society together in early Muslim Egypt, the bond of religion (Islam) seems to have been emotionally important and affective, as letter 25 of our corpus made it clear. Apart from that, the letters have made it clear that kinship terms such as brother and sister were widely used in an imprecise way, different from their lexical meaning.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ See the discussion on children.

²⁷⁷ See the discussion on children.

Now, what did the letters tell us about people's personal representation and treatment of emotions during festivities and feasts, in response to being sick, and when the misfortune of death struck one or more of their relatives. To start with feasts and festivities, the letters have clearly shown the significance of the emotional dimension in worship and in the creation of emotional communities of believers, worshippers and pilgrims. They have given us a shape to the way emotions were expressed, developed and utilized during these occasions. The references of *ḥajj*, for instance, show a community of pilgrims eager to undertake the holy journey regardless of all its difficulties seeking spiritual satisfaction. The papyrological references to sickness, on the other hand, have indicated a community whose members were very much concerned about wellbeing and health and were always worried about illness, lack of medicine and death.

A good and careful examination of letters connected with death has improved our understanding of how death was announced, perceived and dealt with in early Muslim Egypt. Collective responses and views on death, dead ones and the afterlife have indicated a warm emotional community. The letters have shown that death in the family brought deep sadness and distress to those left behind. Particularly for females, the death of a male member of the family added worries and fear to their grief not only because of the blood ties and emotional bonds between the mourners and the deceased but also because of their financial need and dependency on him. One letter published in this thesis (letter no. 18) has showed us, with very warm expressions of grief and distress, the way mothers lamented and mourned their sons.

It is perhaps worth grouping together words and gestures of emotions in order to see which words and gestures occur frequently and which are absent. Emotions as they appeared in the letters can be classified in the following categories: (1) terms refer to joy such as *surūr*, *sa'āda* and *farḥ*, (2) words and gestures signifying sorrow, i.e. sadness (*ghamm/ḥuzn*), weeping (*al-bukā'*) and tears (*dam'*), (3) words of passion, affection and sentiment such as longing (*shawq*), passion (*maḥabba*), affection (*mawadda*), tenderness (*riqqa*), compassion (*shafaqa*), (4) words of fear (*khawf*), (5) anxiety (*hamm*), (6) aversion (*jafā'*), (7) ruggedness (*ghilaz*). The survey has shown that terms such as *surūr* signifying happiness and *ghamm* and *hamm* indicating sadness are lavishly expressed in the letters. On the other side, words signifying feelings such as rapacity, jealousy, envy and malice are absent. As Rosenwein reminds us "if an emotion word does not appear, the silence itself is significant."²⁷⁸ In other words, people in early Islamic Egypt intentionally avoided expressing these negative feelings.

The representations of people's personal feelings as they appeared in the letters have suggested more than one emotional community that did exist contemporaneously within the same society, as Rosenwein proposed in *emotional communities*.²⁷⁹ Some of these communities were more emotional than the others. The emotional norms, standards, codes and modes of expressions indicated a larger society whose members shared in one religious affiliation and common values, interests and concerns.

²⁷⁸ Rosenwein (2006), 195.

²⁷⁹ Rosenwein (2006), 2, 23, 191.

Finally, while this thesis has only touched on the surface of the information locked in the original Arabic private and business letters written on papyrus, it shows how rich and fruitful the letters are for social, cultural and economic history of early Islamic Egypt (1st-4th/7th-10th). Written correspondences, as it was argued in this dissertation, penetrated almost every social and geographical layer of the society and thereby provided a clear and reliable view from below. This thesis is to be considered a novel step forward in the study of the letters' contents which is greatly needed. A logical next step would be a comparative study of the Greek, Coptic and Arabic texts in order to fully understand the striking newness of the early Arab-Muslim society in Egypt after the conquest and the impact it had on the diverse cultures it superseded.

Part two

1. Family affairs

1.1. Marriage and divorce

1.

Sending the dowry and preparing for the marriage ceremony: A letter from a man to his fiancée

P.CtYBR.inv. 2666

17.8 x 13.6

2nd/8th

Provenance: Unknown

Plate 1-2

Medium-brown papyrus written in a flowing hand in black ink with a medium-thick pen parallel to the fibers. The original margins remain on all four sides. A long horizontal fiber of 1 cm wide has disappeared at the middle of the papyrus resulting in the loss of lines 16-17. There are several worm holes and lacunae all over the papyrus that have caused some damage to the text. At the bottom, a broad margin of 5 cm has been left blank. Traces of characters and words of one line can be detected on the right hand margin. Diacritical dots occur frequently but randomly. There are many ink spots that could be mistaken for diacritics. The papyrus sheet has been folded 11 times horizontally and 8 times vertically. The text is continued on side A, where traces of two lines written by the same hand across the fibers are still visible.

The script is characterized by the way in which *fā'* has one dot below it and *qāf* has one dot over it (l. 5 *nafaqati*). Initial and medial *kāfs* are hairpin-shaped (l. 12 *al-fākiha*). Words are split across line endings (ll. 12-13 *al-fākiha*; ll. 13-14 *al-yābisa*; ll. 20-21 *ma'ūna*; ll. 23-24 *imra'a*).

In this correspondence, a certain Naṣṣār b. Abū Zayd writes to inform his fiancée, Mahdiyya, that he sent her two bracelets and two extra bells and necklaces as a dowry (*mahr*). He informs her further that he has kept with him another item to offer to her during the marriage ceremony in order to make her much more contented. In the letter, Naṣṣār discusses with his future wife the preparation for the marriage ceremony (*milāk*). He asks her to write back to him about the kind of fruits he should buy for the guests, namely fresh fruits or dried ones, suggesting to buy fresh fruits, because they are preferred by people “these days”. Naṣṣār also asks Mahdiyya to inform a certain Abū al-Ḥakam, presumably Mahdiyya’s guardian (*walī*), that he received the trousseau (*matā*), i.e. the household chattels and that he is pleased with it. To conclude his letter, Naṣṣār makes a supplication to God asking Him to bring them together in health and happiness and to make their religion thrive. At the end, Naṣṣār cites a prophetic tradition that emphasizes the aversion to being single stating that there is no goodness in a man without a woman nor in a woman without a man. Finally, Naṣṣār asks Mahdiyya not to delay her departure more than three days, because she pleases him.

The letter is composed as one block with almost no means to highlight the text or to mark off the onset and the end of the sections and omitting all stereotyped expressions and greetings. Regardless of the spelling and grammatical mistakes that appear here and there in the text, the author uses a rich vocabulary and complex sentences with many conjunctions and connective particles which give the impression that he received some education.

Text

Side B:

1. بسم الله الر[ح-]من الرحيم من نصا[ر بن] ا[ب-]ى زيد الى مهدية سلم علي[ك]
2. فانى احمد [ال-]يك الله الذى لا [اله ا] لا هو اما بعد فقد بعثت اليك
3. سوارين لتتنزى مه[رك] و[الج-]لجلين والع[ق-]د دين ع[ل-]يه
4. فاسل الله يرضيك وايانا ويخرجك الينا فى عافية فان رض[ي-]ت ان تحبسى
5. [هى السوارين عندك فالعشرة (؟) ما يجمع الله على نفقتى فا
6. [فعلى] بالخيرة واما الجلجلين فكما اخ[بر]تك حسب [ا-] (؟)
7. واما العقد فهو لك فان الله جانا بالعطا فالجلجل[ين]
8. [] [مرىا (؟) وقد خبيت شى لكى اهبه لك اذا.]
9. [ان] شا الله ولا حول ولا قوة الا با[لله] وتتسرى عند الملاك
10. [تج-]على متاعك كما لا [يكلونا] يكلفونا الناس ما ليس عندنا]
11. يكون لى ولك فى عقلك منفعة والخفة الى/ولو كان شرى نفقتى بيدى لم ابطا\ وا [ما] خبرينى ما
12. ارفق للملاك الفاكهة اليابسة ام الفاكهة الرطبة لان الفا
13. كهة الرطبة احب الى الناس اليوم من الفاكهة اليا
14. بسة وانا اسلك بالله ان تجعلى ما تكتبى عشرين فان قد صار
15. التفاح[ح] (؟) خمسة وعشرين وانا ليس اجبى الا خمسة وعشرين
16. []
17. []
18. ابو{الحكم لا يردك على فى اسوال وفل (؟) ابو ا[ل-]حكم
19. كله خمسة وعشرين واخبريه انا قد راينا الحلى وعرفنا
20. المتاع وكل شى ورضينا به وكفى اننا سل[ي-]مين لا يكلفونا مو
21. نة والسلم عليك ورحمت الله جمع الله بينى وبينك
22. فى عافية وسرور ويجعله صلاح لدينا فان رسول
23. الله قال [لا] فيما بلغنا لا خير فى رجل بغير امرة ولا امر
24. ة بغير رجل وانا اس[لك] بما اسال مرتى به الا
25. تتركى عنى بعد ثلاثة ايام شى فانك عندى رضا

Right margin:

26. ولو [كان] عندى انا لى ما يكل-]

Side A:

27. [] كتب لا يريد شيا من و
28. فان ا [] ان يضع هذين سوارين..... ذلك

Diacritical dots

- 1) الرحيم (2) اليك (3) العودين (4) عافيه; رضيب; تحبسى (5) عندك; العسرة; نفقتى (6) بالخيره; الحلجلين; فكما (7) فهو; فان
- 8) مرىا; فد; خبيت; شى; اهبه (9) ويسرى (10) عند (11) الحجه; الي; احبريبي (12) الجاكهه; اليابسه; الرطبه (13) الرطبه;

اليوم; من; الجاكهه; اليا (14) بسه; وانا; بحلي; تكبي; عشرين; وان; فد (15) التفاح; خمسه; عشرين (18) بردك (19) عشرين;
احبريه; راينا; الحلي; عرفنا (20) حوي (21) نه (22) عافيه; لديننا; وان (23) بيما; حير; بعير (24) بعير; رجل; مرتى; به (25)
سركي

Translation

Side B:

1. In the name of God the [Com]panionate, the Merciful. From Naṣṣā[r b.] A[b]ū Zayd to Mahdiyya. Peace be upon yo[u.]
2. I praise for [yo]ur sake God other [than Whom there] is no god. As for what follows, I sent to you
3. two bracelets to see your dow[ry] and the two bells and the two necklaces are extra.
4. I ask God (to) make you and us satisfied and (to make you) come to us in health. If you like to keep
5. []... the two bracelets with you, as the cost of being together (?), God has made it my responsibility, so
6. [please do so] with blessings. As for the two bells, as I told you[] (?).
7. As for the necklace, it is for you. For God has sent us our stipend. The two be[lls]
8. [] (?) I have kept something in order to give to you (as a gift) when [..
9. I[f] God wills, there is neither strength nor power except in G[od,] so that you will be happy during the marriage ceremony.
10. [Arra]nge your belongings, for people [charge] do not charge us, for what we do not owe [
11. (It) will be for you and me, assistance and faster in reaching me, if you believe. \were it a purchase at my cost, I would not be tardy/. [what] Inform me of
12. what to enclose for the Marriage ceremony, fresh fruits or dried fruits, because fre-
13. sh fruits are preferred by people today over dri-
14. ed fruits. I ask you by God to make what you request up to twenty. If it is
15. appl[es] (?), (it should be) twenty five, for I only collect (from it) twenty five
16. []
17. []
18. Abū al-Ḥakam does not answer the question and the ... (?) of Abū al-Ḥakam
19. is in total twenty five and inform him that we have seen the jewelry and recognized the
20. ware and everything and we were pleased with it. It is sufficient that we are in good condition and that they did not cost any susten-
21. ance expenses. Peace be upon you and God's mercy. May God bring me and you together
22. in health and happiness and may He make our religion to thrive. For the messenger of
23. God said [no] , for as much as reached us, there is no goodness in a man without a woman nor in a wom-
24. an without a man. I as[k] you as I ask my wife not to
25. prolong your absence from me over three days, because you please me.

Right margin:

26. If I have had [

Side A:

27. [] he wrote that he does not want anything from and

28. that [] to put these two bracelets this

Commentary**Side B:**

1. The letter begins on the same line as the *basmala* which is very uncommon in early letters but occurs frequently in letters from 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries, see P.Khalili I, 158. The reading Naṣṣār is not certain. For this proper name and other possible readings, see al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), *al-Mushtabih fi al-rijāl* (Leiden: Brill, 1893), 537-538.

3. *Siwār* (pl. *asāwir*) is a type of bracelet, mostly made of gold and worn in pairs. *Juljula* (pl. *jalājil*) is a small bell suspended from the neck as part of an amulet. *ʿIqd* (pl. *ʿuqūd*) is a necklace. For other jewelry items in the papyri; cf. *Khalkhāluhā* “her anklet,” (P.Marchands II 18r.7, 3rd/9th); *khursatayn fiḍa* “two silver earrings,” (P.Marchands II 28r.67, 3rd/9th); *khātam* “ring,” (P.Marchands V/I 2.9, 3rd/9th). For attestations of jewelry in Geniza documents; see W. Diem and H. Radenberg, *Dictionary of the Arabic material of S.D. Goitein’s A mediterranean society* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 29, 108, 147. For other attestations of the dowry (*mahr*) in private letters on papyrus, see P.Khalili I 18.16, 3rd/9th.

4. *Fa-as’alu Allāh*. The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted (Hopkins § 26). See also *as’aluki bi-llāh* in lines 14 and 24. The word *taḥbiṣī* can also be understood as *ḥubus* (endowment). For other attestations of *ḥubus* in the papyri, see for example *wa-innī ja’altu al-dār wa-l-bayt ḥabīs lā tubā’* (P.HanafīWill, 299–306).

5. It is a pity that the word describing the value of the two bracelets is partially legible at the beginning of the line. The reading [*dha*]habīyy (golden) fits nicely but it is not certain. The reading and translation are tentative.

6. For expressions using the term *al-khīra*, see *wa-iyyāhu as’alu al-khīra fi al-‘ājil wa-l-‘ajil bi-qudratihi* (P.Khalili I 18.4, 19, 3rd/9th[= P.DiemKhalili, 47]); *as’alu Allāh al-khīra fi jamī’ al-umūr kullihā* (P.Cair.Arab. V 295.12, 3rd/9th); *Qaddara Allāh lanā al-khīra awwalan* (CPR XVI 29.9, 4th/10th); *nas’alu Allāh al-tawfiq wa-l-khīra bi-manīhi wa-qudratihi* (the unpublished P.CtYBR. inv. 2959, line 10, 3rd/9th).

7. *Wa-ammā al-‘iqd fa-huwa laki*. The singular form here contradicts with the dual in line three (*ʿiqdayn*). *ʿAṭā’*. At the best of my knowledge, this is the first attestation of the term *ʿaṭā’* in a non-military context. For *ʿaṭā’*, *rizq* and *nafaqa* (payments in cash and kind) in military context, see Sijpesteijn (2011), 252-259; P.Khurasan, 34-37; K. Morimoto, “The dīwāns as registers of the Arab stipendiaries in early Islamic Egypt,” in: R. Curiel, R. Gyselen

(eds.). *Itinéraires d'Orient. Hommage à Claude Cahen, Res Orientales* 6 (1994): 353-65, 353. See also Younes, New governors, document 3, line 11 and the commentary. 'Aṭā' is written without post-vocalic hamza (Hopkins § 20.c).

8. Only traces of characters and words can be seen at the beginning of this line, the construction of which is difficult. *Tanwīn alif* is lacking in the direct object in *shay'* (Hopkins § 167.d).

9. The *ḥawqala* (*wa-lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwa illā bi-llāh*) is frequently attested in the papyri; cf. P.Marchands V/I 4.12, 3rd/9th; P.David-WeillMusée, 103. See also in this corpus 30.8.

10. The scribe missed the letter *fā'* in the word *yukallifūnā*. He then indicated his mistake by crossing it out by means of a horizontal line.

12. *Milāk* is the marriage ceremony in which the marriage contract is usually conducted. See Ibn Mazūr, *Lisān*, 4268. The term is unattested in the papyri. It occurs, however, in the Geniza documents; see Diem and Radenberg (1994), 205. For other private letters related to marriage, see P.Khalili I 18, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands V/I 11, 3rd/9th.

12-15. The dispatch of fresh fruits such as, grapes, bananas, apples, pomegranates from one city to another is frequently attested in the papyri. Cf. P.Marchands II 24. 19, 20, 3rd/9th; P.Jahn 12 [= Chrest.Khoury I 98r].12, 19, late 2nd-early 3rd/late 8th- early 9th. Dried fruits are hardly attested in the papyri except for raisins. Cf. P.GrohmannWirtsch. 2r [= P.World, 168].8, 3rd/9th. The reading *tuffāḥ* is uncertain.

16-17. These two lines are entirely missing due to the loss of a long horizontal fiber of the papyrus.

18. *Abū* is written with an extra *alif* after the *wāw*. The reading of this line is tentative. The last word on this line is unclear to me.

19. For *al-ḥulī* (jewelry), see commentary in line 2.

20. *Wa-raḍīnā bihi*. The plural form used here contrasts with the singular used in the rest of the letter. *Sālimīn* is spelled without long *ā* and mistakenly written with an extra *yā'* after the *lām*.

21-22. For the eulogy *jama'a Allāh baynī wa-baynaki fī 'āfiya wa-surūr*, see for example *as'alu Allāh an an yajma' baynanā wa-baynaka fī 'āfiya* (P.Marchands II 8.7, 3rd/9th). See also in this corpus 12.9 and the commentary. *Wa-l-salām 'alayki wa-raḥmat Allāh*. *Salām* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a) and *raḥmat* is written with a *tā'* *maftūḥa* instead of a *tā'* *marbūṭa* in the *status constructus* which is how this final greeting is written in all the letters of this corpus (Hopkins § 47.a).

23. The scribe wrote *lā* immediately after the verb *qāla*, he then decided to add the sentence *fīmā balaghanā*. Thus, he crossed *lā* out.

23-24. I was not able to find an equivalent of the *ḥadīth lā khayr fī rajul bi-ghayr imra'a wa-lā imra'a bi-ghayr rajul* in canonical *ḥadīth* works. Quoting prophetic and non-prophetic traditions is well attested in letters. Cf. *wa qad jā'at al-āthār 'an rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam wa-lā yunfiqūn nafaqa ṣaghīra wa-lā kabīra wa-lā yaṭa'ūn mawṭi' yaghīzu al-kuffār wa qad jā'at al-āthār 'an rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam* (P.Marchands II 26.11-12, 22, 3rd/9th); *li-annahū jā'a 'an rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi man amma qawm wa-hum lahu kārihūn fa-lā ṣalāt lahu wa-'alayhi la'nat Allāh wa-anta ta'lam anna rasūl Allāh ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi qāla al-buṣāq fī al-masjid khaṭīyah wa-kaffāratuhu dafnuhu* (P.RāḡibLettres, 5.24, 15-16, 3rd/9th); *la-qad jā'a anna rasūl Allāh qāla inna min abarr al-birr ṣilataka wudd abīka ba'da abīka* (P.Marchands

II 9v.11, 3rd/9th); *jā'a fī al-ḥadīth 'an al-nabiyy ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam fariḥān mustabshirān fa-idhā intahiyā bihi ḥaythu yashā' Allāh kharaja amr Allāh 'azza wa-jalla ilayhimā an qātilā bima rafa'tumā fī fa-yasjidā qad sabaqa 'ilm Allāh tabāraka wa-ta'ālā fī al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz bimā naṭaqa al-rajul dhālika al-yawm wa-mā juhila khayr mim mā 'urifa* (P.Khalili I 18. 1-3, 3rd/9th). The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *imra'a* (Hopkins § 26).

24. The post-vocalic *hamza* in *sa'ala* is omitted while the preceding short vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20).

25. *Thalātha* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 9.c).

Right margin:

Only few characters and words are recognizable, but not enough to extract a continuous sense from them.

Side A:

In order to continue on the back side the papyrus sheet is turned around the horizontal axis, i.e. the way one would turn over a playing card lying on a table. Due to the top is badly damaged and the ink is being effaced it is difficult to decipher much more than few words and fragment of words, the reading and the translation of which are difficult. The exterior address is missing.

2.

**Notification of divorce:
A letter from a divorcé to his father-in-law**

P.Cam.Michaelides A 1346

48 x 20.5

1st-2nd/7th-8th

Provenance: Unknown

Plate 3-4

Medium-brown long piece of papyrus which is darkly discolored at the bottom. The text is written in black ink with a medium-thick pen in a clear and proficient hand in 37 lines across the fibers. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on all four sides. The papyrus sheet was cut from the roll after it has been written leaving no margins. The top right and left corners are broken off resulting in the damage of the top 8 lines. There are some holes and lacunae in several places of the papyrus which have caused minimal damage to the text. On side B, traces of 1 line of the address can be detected. The papyrus sheet has been folded 6 times vertically and then rolled up horizontally for about 15 times. Diacritical dots are sparingly added.

The text shows many features of the early script, i.e. independent *alif* bends to the right at the bottom (l. 13 *imra'a*; l. 18 *aṣlahat*). The upper part of *dāl/dhāl* bends backwards (l. 9 *dhālika*; l. 26 *adbartā*). The attached and independent *rā's* are very short (l. 24 *al-rajul*; l. 33 *arjū*). The tail of the final and independent *qāf* extends downwards before bending to the left resembling the old Arabic *qāf* (l. 8 *al-turuq*; l. 22 *al-ḥaqq*). *ṣād* and *ḍād* are horizontally elongated (l. 14 *al-arḍ*; l. 22 *al-ṣihr*). The tail of the final *mīm* is extremely short (l. 10 *al-ḥakam, lam*; l. 11 *al-ḥirm*). There is a marked extension of the tail of the final and independent *yā'* to the right in a horizontal line (l. 14 *fi*; l. 15 *warā'*; l. 17 *ilā*). Words are split across line endings (ll. 16-17 *wa-arsaltu*; ll. 27-28 *amrihā*; ll. 28-29 *anjā*; ll. 29-30 *fa-innaka*).

In this letter, 'Amr b. Zubayd writes to his father-in-law, possibly named 'Abd Al[lāh?], about his wife, who complained to the arbitrator (*al-ḥakam*) stating that 'Amr oppressed and beat her, because he prevented her from going out. 'Amr informs his father-in-law further that his wife, al-'Allāna, used to insult and curse him and that he tolerated it for a while. After his unsuccessful attempts to improve his wife's ill nature, 'Amr sent to her some pious men from his clan, amongst whom a certain Abū al-Gharrā' by reminding her of God and advising her to improve her bad behavior and to restrain her tongue until the addressee would come and investigate everything himself. 'Amr continues to express his dissatisfaction with his wife's ill nature assuring his father-in-law that he was serious about the marriage. However, he informs the father-in-law that he has recently divorced his wife or, to be more precise, he has been divorced from her. 'Amr asks the father-in-law not to be angry at him, because it was against his will. 'Amr then ends his letter with the wish to remarry his ex-wife awaiting the father-in-law's arrival and approval.

The letter is written in a very practical style with almost no attention to common introductory and concluding expressions. It closes abruptly with the final *salām* greeting skipping blessings and salutations. The voice of the letter shows high respect to the addressee and points up to what extent the sender is concerned to keep the bond of relationship with his father-in-law strong. The letter is not written in the sender's own hand but by another person, most probably a professional scribe.²⁸⁰ The scribe uses different forms of verbs (l. 12 *tusāmi'*; l. 24 *yartaghib*) which indicate his good command of the language. The letter shows, however, some mistakes in grammar and spelling.

²⁸⁰ See chapter one.

Text

Side A:

1. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
2. [من عمرو بن زبيد الـ]ى عبد الـ]له بن
3. [سلم عليك فانى احمـ]د اليك اللـ]ه الذى لا اله الا هو]
4. [اما بعد فانى اخبرك مـ]ن خبرى و[خبر العلانة]
5. [] [لما راتك انـ]ك [ادبر]ت]
6. [الى الـ]فيوم ارتكبت العلل وتزعم انها مصره تـ]ر []
7. [] [اليها الـ]]بانه وذلك كله من حصرى لـ]ها]
8. [مـ]ن [الخرو]ج والطوفان فى البيوت والطرق
9. فلما رات انى قد منعته ذلك كلـ]ه [ذهبت الـ]ى]
10. الحكم فاخبرته انه يفعل بها ما لم يفعل بحره من الضر[ب]
11. والبوس والحرم ثم انها كانت تقول من القول ما لونها
12. كنت تسامعه لعذرتنى عليها تنتهك الشرف فيـ]ه و[]
13. النفس وتقول قول ما سمعت امره تقول لزوجها ما
14. تقول العلانة ما لا يصعد فى السما ولا يقعد فى الارض فانظر
15. ما ورى ذلك فلما رايت منها انها قد ا[ر]تكبت
16. اسوى امرها بعثت اليها رجل صلحين من عشيرتى وار
17. سلت الى ابو الغزا فقلت لهم اذهبوا فذكروها
18. بالله الا اتقت الله واصلحت خلقها وكفت لسنـ]ها]
19. حتى تقدم عـ]نـ]دها فتتظر كل شأى تهوه نفسه ونفسها
20. فاتبع هواها فى ذلك شأى خلقه الله تحبه عينى فاولله
21. الذى لا اله الا هو لقد كنت كره لما فعلت العلانة وما بى الا
22. رغبة فى الذى جعل الله بينى وبينك من الصهر والحق وانى
23. مرتغب بمصهرتك وما قدم الله لك من الشرف
24. والحق والثنا والحمد فى الدين فمثلك يرتغب الرجل الى
25. مصهرته فلا تجد على فى ذلك فانما هى فعلت ذلك
26. لما راتك ادبرت الى الفيوم وزعمت انها لا تروع
27. بامرك راس ولا امر لك فى امرها فلما رايت من امر
28. ها انها ارتكبت من امرها الذى ارتكبت لم اجد امر ا
29. نجى لى مما فعلت حتى تقدم اليها فاخبرك الخبر كله فا
30. نك ان شا الله اذا قدمت ساتخبر من عند من كان ذلك
31. من عندى او من عندها كتبت اليك كتبى هذا وانى اقسام
32. لك بالله ما كنت اهوى ما فعلت وانى امانك ان شا الله
33. اذا قدمت اليها ارجو من الله ومنك ان تردها الى
34. فانى لم اطلق ولم اخلع عن هدى منى فانما افتديت منها
35. بذلك من حججها ومن لسنها حتى تقدم اليها كتبت
36. اليك كتبى هذا وقد استلبتنا قدومك كما تعلم انى لم
37. افعل ذلك عن هدى منى والسلم عليك ورحمت الله وبركتـ]ه]

Side B:

[من] عمرو بن زبيد [الى عبد الله بن

Diacritical dots

(11 البوس 15) ارتكبت (24 الثنا 28) ارتكبت (36) اشتقنا

Translation

Side A:

1. [In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.]
2. [From ‘Amr b. Zubayd t]o ‘Abd Al[lāh b.
3. [Peace be upon you. I praise for] your sake Go[d, other than Whom there is no god.]
4. [As for what follows, I want to let you know] my news [and the news of al-‘Allāna]
5. [] when she saw that yo[u] depart[ed]
6. [for al-]Fayyūm. She made excuses and she claims that she is determined .[.]
7. [] to her ..[].. and this all, because I prevented h[er]
8. [f]rom [going ou]t and walking around in houses and streets.
9. When she saw that I prevented her from doing al[l] that, she went t[o]
10. the arbitrator and she informed him that beat[ing,]
11. suffering and oppression were done to her which would not be done to a free woman. And then she said (prohibited) things,
12. (on the basis of which) you would excuse me for her, if you heard it. (She) profaned by it the dignity [and]
13. the self-esteem. She said something, which I never heard a wife say to her husband.
14. al-‘Allāna says what does not ascend to the heaven and does not settle in the earth. So look into
15. what is behind this. And when I saw that she c[o]mmitted
16. the worst of her state, I sent to her pious people from my clan and
17. I sent for Abū al-Gharrā’. I said to them, go (to her) and remind her
18. of God, so that she should fear God, improve her nature and restrain h[er] tongue
19. until you come t[o] her and investigate everything that he or she might wish.
20. They both followed their desires in this, namely something that God created and my eye likes. By God,
21. other than Whom there is no god, I disliked what al-‘Allāna did and I only have
22. the desire for what God made between me and you through marriage and law and I
23. desire to be related to you by marriage, because of what God has presented to you of honor,
24. law, glorification and praise through religion. Someone like you, anybody would desire (to be related with him)
25. through marriage. So, do not be angry at me regarding this, because she did this,
26. when she saw that you left for al-Fayyūm. She claimed that she would not be afraid

27. of your direct command and that you have nothing to do with her. And when I saw that she
28. committed what she had committed, I did not find something
29. rescuing me other than what I have done until you come to us and then I will let you know about all the matter.
30. If you, if God wills, come (to us), you will know from whom it came
31. from me or from her. I am writing to you this letter of mine and I swear
32. to you by God that I did not like what I did. May I be the one you trust, If God wills,
33. if you come to us. I wish from God and from you that you return her to me.
34. For, I did not have a *ṭalāq* or *khul'* according to a wish of mine. By for doing so, I saved
35. (myself) from her and from her arguments and her tongue until you come to us. I am writing to
36. you this letter of mine, whereas we deemed your arrival slow, as you know. I did not
37. do this according to a wish of mine. Peace be upon you and God's mercy and bless[ings.]

Side B:

[From] 'Amr b. Zubayd [to 'Abd Allāh b.

Commentary

1. The beginning of this letter with the *basmala* is missing. The remains preserved on the second, third and fourth lines seem, however, to continue the opening formula and the contents of the letter suggest that not more than the *basmala* is missing at the top.

2. The forename and the patronymic of the sender are reconstructed on the basis of the partially preserved address on the back. For the name Zubayd, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 237. As for the name of the addressee, only traces of an *alif* and *lām* of may be *Allāh* are still visible after the prefix 'Abd. The name can also be reconstructed as 'Abd al-Raḥmān or 'Abd al-Jabbār or any other of God's names.

3. The introductory formula, *salām 'alayka fa-innī aḥmadu ilayka Allāh alladhī lā ilāh illā huwa ammā ba'du*, is reconstructed on the basis of countless parallels. See the other letters in this corpus. See also chapter one, formulary. The *yā'* of *alladhī* can be seen extending underneath the lacuna.

4. [*Fa-innī ukhbiruka min*] *khabarī* [*wa-khabar al-'Allāna*] is restored on the basis of the many attestations of this very common expression. See in this corpus 5.4-5; 6.4-5 and the examples provided in the commentaries. The name al-'Allāna is restored on the basis of lines 14 and 21 where the name appears. I was not able to trace this female name in the onomastica. Al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar list the names 'Ulātha and 'Allāna for males. Cf. al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 380 and Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1448), *Tabṣīr al-muntabih bi-taḥrīr al-mushtabih*, ed. 'A. al-Bajāwī, and M. al-Najjār (Cairo: al-Mu'assasa al-Miṣriyya al-Āmma li-l-Ta'līf wa-l-Anbā' wa-l-Nashr, 1956-1967), 962. Note that the two names are recorded without the definite article in both sources. For other possible readings such as *al-Qalāba*, see E. Gratzl,

Die Altarabischen Frauennamen (Leipzig: Druck Von W. Drugulin, 1906), 36; Ibn Ma'kūl (d. 475/1082), *al-Ikmāl fī raf' al-irtiyāb 'an al-mu'talaf wa-l-mukhtalaf fī al-asmā' wa-l-kunā wa-l-ansāb*, ed. 'A. Yahyā (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islamī and al-Fārūq al-Ḥadītha li-l-Ṭibā'a wa-l-Nashr, 1994), vol. 6, 180. The reading *al-fulāna* as an unidentified woman could also be possible. In my eyes, the third character is more likely a 'ayn or *ghayn* rather than a *fā'* or *qāf*.

5-7. These three lines are for the most part illegible and incomprehensible due to the fragmentary state of the top of the papyrus. The expression *lammā ra'atka annaka adbarta ilā al-Fayyūm* is reconstructed on the basis of line 26 where the same expression occurs. *Lammā* with the perfect expresses a *futurum exactum* (Hopkins § 307.a). Of *al-Fayyūm* only the upper traces of the *fā'*, *yā'*, *wāw* and *mīm* are visible. *Al-Fayyūm* appears also in this letter in line 26.

8. At least two or three words are missing at the beginning of this line due to the lacuna. *[Mi]n [al-khurū]j wa-l-ṭawafān fī al-buyūt wa-l-ṭuruq*. Of *al-khurūj* only the *jīm* is visible. *Fī* has a short backward bending *yā'* in comparison to other *fīs* in the text. See lines 14, 20, 22, 24, 25, 27. The word *wa-l-ṭuruq* is clearly readable below the lacuna.

9. The reading *fa-lammā ra'at annī mana'tuhā dhālika kullahu dhahabat ilā* can be made out with difficulty, because the ink has faded.

10. *Al-ḥakam fa-akhbarathu annahu yufalu bihā mā lam yufal bi-ḥurra*. The *lām* and *ḥā'* of *al-ḥakam* are written very closely together, but the reading is certain. The two characters are also written in exactly the same way in *al-ḥirm* in the next line. There is enough space available after *al-ḥakam* for the restoration of *fa-akhbarathu* which is partially faded. The negation particle *lam* occurs rarely in early papyri. On the contrary, the particles *lā*, *mā* and *laysa* are frequently attested (Hopkins § 155.a, 81.a, 82.d). For *al-ḥakam* and the *taḥkīm* system as a branch of the organized judicial system (*al-qaḍā'*), see the discussion on spouses. The term *al-ḥurra* is also attested in this corpus in 3.6.

11-12. *Mā law annaka kunta tusāmi'uhu la-'adhartanī 'alayhā*. For the use of *law* in the papyri, see Hopkins § 316. The verb following *law* in the protasis is generally the perfect (Hopkins § 317).

13. The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *imra'a* (Hopkins § 26.a). *Tanwīn alif* is missing in the direct object in *qawl* (Hopkins § 167.d).

14. *Taqūl al-'Allāna mā-lā yaṣ'adu fī al-samā' wa-lā yaq'udu fī al-arḍ*. This expression echoes expressions used in non-prophetic traditions. See for example *lam yakun lahum 'aml ṣāliḥ fī al-arḍ wa-lā 'aml yaṣ'adu fī al-samā'* and other variants in Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), *Tafsīr*, ed. M. al-Sayed et al., (Cairo: Mu'assasat Qurṭuba, 2000), vol. 12, 344. *Al-samā'* is written without the post-vocalic *hamza* (Hopkins § 20.c).

14-15. *Fa-nzur mā warā' dhālika*. *Unzur* often introduces a request. For more about expressions using the combination of a formula with *fā' + unzur* or other imperatives, see Grob (2010a), 60; P.Horak 85.6 and the examples provided in the commentary. *Warā'* is written with *yā'* (Hopkins § 20.b). *Irtakabat* is reconstructed on the basis of line 28 where the same word appears twice.

16. *Aswa' amrihā ba'athtu ilayhā rijāl ṣāliḥīn min 'ashīratī*. *Aswa'* is spelled with *yā'* (Hopkins § 20.b). *Rijāl* is written defectively without long *ā*, which is replaced by a little hook (Hopkins § 10) and the *tanwīn alif* is missing (Hopkins § 167.d). *Ṣāliḥīn* is written defectively

without long *ā* (Hopkins § 10). The *yā* of *‘ashīratī* extends downwards before bending to the left as it is written in *‘aynī* l. 20; *bī* l. 21; *wa-innī* l. 22; *lī*, *ḥatta* l. 29; *fa-innī* l. 34; *anjā* l. 29.

17. *Wa-arsaltu ilā Abū al-Gharrā’ fa-qultu lahum idhhabū fa-dhkurūhā*. For the name al-Gharrā’, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr*, 1316. *Ilā Abū al-Gharrā’*. *Abū* is written for classical Arabic *Abī* (Hopkins § 162.a.i). The *dhāl* of *fa-dhkurūhā* has a very long upward shaft at the top.

18. *Lisānahā* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a). Also written thus in line 35.

19. Of *‘indaha* only the upper half of the *‘ayn*, *dāl*, *hā* and *alif* are still visible. The orthography *shāy* instead of *shay*’ occurs frequently in papyri (Hopkins § 15.d). Also written so in the following line.

20. *Fa-tabā’a hawāhumā*. This expression echoes the Qur’anic idiom *wa-ttabā’a hawāhu* (Q 7:176; 18:28; 20:16; 28:50). The scribe switched the *wāw* and *alif* in the word *fa-wa-llāh*.

21. *La-qad kuntu kāriḥ limā fa’alat al-‘Allāna*. *Kāriḥ* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10). The combination of a formula with *la-qad* + *kān* + imperfect to express durative past appears frequently in papyri (Hopkins § 239). *llāh* is spelled with an extra tooth between the *lām* and *hā*’. See also in this corpus 5.3.

22. *Fī alladhī ja’ala Allāh baynī wa-baynaka min al-ṣihr wa-l-ḥaqq*. For similar expressions, see in this corpus 24.11-12 and the examples provided in the commentary.

23. *Muṣāharatika* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10). Similarly, the word *muṣāharatihi* in line 25 is written defectively without long *ā*. For similar expressions, see also *an uṣāhira jāriya an uṣāhirahu* (P.Khalili I 18.15, 17, 3rd/9th).

24. *Al-ghanā’* is written without the post-vocalic *hamza* (Hopkins § 20.c).

25. *Fa-lā tajid ‘alayya fī dhālīka*. This expression echoes expressions used in prophetic *ḥadīths*. Cf. *innī sā’iluka fa-mushadid ‘alayka fī al-mas’ala fa-lā tajid ‘alayya fī nafsīka* (al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. M. Ludolf, (Leiden: Brill, 1862), vol. 1, 36). See also in this corpus *wa-ukhbiruka annī wājīd ‘alayka*, 26.7.

26. For the expression *lammā ra’atka adbarta ilā al-Fayyūm*, see lines 5-6.

28-29. *Lam ajid amr anjā lī*. *Tanwīn alif* is missing in the direct object (Hopkins § 167.d).

30. *In shā’a Allāh*. The post-vocalic *hamza* is not written in *shā’a* as usual (Hopkins § 20.c). See also line 32. The religious formula *in shā’a Allāh* usually follows instructions and actions that are (hopefully) going to happen in the future, see Grob (2010a), 57-59.

31. *Kitābī* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* as it is written in line 36 (Hopkins § 10.a). The expression *katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā* is written in exactly the same way in lines 35-36.

31-32. For *wa-innī uqsimu laka bi-llāh*, see *aqsamtu ‘alayka bi-llāh*, Sijpesteijn (2013), 31.9, 2nd/8th. Oaths are parenthetically inserted into the text alike other religious formulae such as, short invocations, slide-in-blessings and *in shā’a Allāh*, see Grob (2010a), 37-38. The writer swears twice in this letter using two different formulae. First, in line 20 he uses the combination of a formula with *fa* + *Allāh* + the second part of the *shahāda*, i.e. *alladhī lā ilāh illā huwa*. Second, he uses the verb *qasama* + *laka* + *bi-llāh*. For more about oaths in private and business letters, see Grob (2010a), 120.

33-34. *Arjū min Allāh wa-minka an taruddahā ilayya fa-innī lam uṭliq wa-lam akhla’ an hudan minnī*. For more about divorce and *khul’*, see the discussion on spouses in chapter two.

36. *Wa-ḡad istalbathnā quḏūmaka kamā ta'lam*. *Istalbathnā* is the 10th form of *labitha* (to delay). See Lane, vol. 7, 2654.

37. For the final *salām* greeting, *wa-l-salām 'alayka wa-raḥmat Allāh*, see in this corpus 1.21 and the commentary. *Wa-barakātuḥu* is written like the Qur'anic orthography without long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a). The addition *wa-barakātuḥu* appears also in this corpus in 5.12; 8.8; 11.16; 22.12. See also P.Berl.Arab. II 24.14, 1st-2nd/7th-8th; 75.17-18, 2nd/8th; P.Jahn 5.11, 2nd/8th.

1.2. Household management

3.

Letter concerning a complaint of the addressee's wife to the *amīr*

P.Cam.Michaelides A 1354 recto
Provenance: Unknown

33 x 23

2nd/8th
Plate 5

Dark-brown long piece of papyrus written in black ink with a medium-thick pen in an elegant and clear hand at right angles to the fibers. The letter is incomplete at the top where an unknown number of lines is missing. There is also a big lacuna at the top left corner resulting in a loss of 2 words at the end of line 4. The original cutting lines have been preserved at the bottom and on the right hand side and partially on the left hand side. A margin of 2 cm has been left blank on the right hand side. The ink has faded in places at the top causing difficulties in reading. The papyrus sheet has been folded 15 times horizontally and 7 times vertically. Diacritical dots occur frequently but randomly. On side B, there is another letter written by the same hand in 14 lines parallel to the fibers (see the introduction to no. 6).

The writer has an archaic hand and writes the letters with large angular shapes. The text shows many features of the early script, i.e. the upper part of the stroke of *dāl/dhāl* bends backwards (l. 7 *alladhī*; l. 14 *al-dunyā*). The lower stroke of initial *ʿayn/ghayn* extends to the right (l. 18 *ghulām*; l. 10 *ʿinda*). The top of medial *ʿayn* is v-shaped (l. 8 *yaʿfinā*; l. 20 *baʿdaka*). *Fā* has one dot below the character and *qāf* has one dot over it (l. 8 *yaʿfinā*; l. 15 *fīmā*; l. 12 *bi-qawl*). Initial *kāf* is horizontally elongated with an extended base, an upper stroke parallel to the base line and a rightward shaft at the top (l. 5 *kitābuka*). Medial and final *kāfs* are hairpin-shaped (l. 8 *iyyāka*; l. 13 *al-hakam*). There is a marked extension of the horizontal stroke of the final *kāf* (l. 4 *baynaka*; l. 8 *iyyāka*). The tail of the final *mīm* is very short and extends vertically downwards (l. 10 *lam*; l. 18 *ghulām*).

This letter has been sent to the addressee from his brother as a response to the former's previous letter. Both the sender and the addressee are anonymous to us owing to the loss of the interior and exterior addresses. The sender informs his brother that he knew from the letter that the latter's free wife complained about him to the *amīr*. He asks him not to worry as he, i.e. the sender will take care of this matter. He informs him further that he did not meet the addressee's servant, Maymūn, and that he did not bring anything to him nor help him with little or much. The sender then reports on the birth to a boy and a girl. He also reports on costs of one hundred and nine *dīnārs* that were spent after the addressee's departure. The sender ends his letter with a short message to a certain al-Zubayr and by conveying greetings to the whole family.

The letter is well written and composed with some means to highlight the text. The writer makes, however, many mistakes against grammar and spelling. The letter also shows a frequent use of the word *shaʿn*, which is very unique, see lines 5, 6, 15, 16, 24, 25. The same scribe penned the letter no. 6 on behalf of a certain Umm Zurʿa using almost the same expressions.

Text

Side A:

1. اللّٰه الذّٰى [ى] اليه مر [د كل شىء] فان الـ [] [مرد] ها

2. الى الله نسل الله القدير [لكم ولنا] العفية فى الدنيا و
3. الاخرة وان يرينى وجهك قبل الموات وان يعرف
4. بينى وبينك فى مستقر من رضو[انه بلغنا]
5. كتابك وسمعنا الذى ذكرت من [شان] [ا]مراتك
6. الحرة انها اب لغت شانك الامير فالحمد لله
7. الذى كفاك من عنده فنسل الله الذى اليه
8. مرد كل شى ايعفنا واياك من مكاره الدنيا
9. والاخرة وانى اخبرك ان ميمون غلمك
10. لم ار له وجهه هو عند اخوك تميم
11. وانى بعثت اليه مرار كثير فقلت ياتنى
12. ولا يرفع بقول راسا فلا تظن انه يـ[عـي]ـنـى بقليل
13. ولا كثير فاسل الله الحكم العدل ان يكفينى
14. ما همنى من امر الدنيا والاخرة واصبر و
15. احتسب فيما اصابك من شان هذه المرة
16. يرحمك الله فانى كافيك شانها وانى
17. اخوك كالذى يسرك والحمد لله وقد جانا
18. خبر ان سدبته قد ولدت غلم واخبرنا
19. ان الاخرى قد ولدت جارية وانى اخبرك
20. انه قضا بعدك مائة دينار وتسعة د[ننير]
21. فان هذا [لـ]ـذـى اعلم به انا واخبرك انه جهـ[دا]
22. فى عمله واقرا على الزبير السلم كثيرا
23. واخبره ان الذى كان ترك عندى كالذى
24. يحب فلا يهمنه شانها فانى ارجو ان لا
25. يلومنى فى شانها والسلم عليك واقرا علىـ[ى]
26. اهلنا كلهم السلمـ[ح]

Diacritical dots

- (4) ببى; مستقر (5) كتابك; ذكرت; امراتك (6) انها; فد; اب لغت; الامير (7) كفاك; من; عنده (8) ايعفنا; اياك; الدنيا (9) اخبرك;
 ان (10) عند (11) اليه; فلفب; ياتنى (12) يرفع; بقول; تظن; انه; بقليل (13) كثير; ان; يـكـيـنـى (14) همنى; الدنيا; الاخره; اصبر
 (15) احتسب; فيما; اصابك; من; شان (16) فان; كافيك; شانها; انى (17) فد; جانا (18) خبر; ان; سدبته; ولدت; اخبرنا (19) ان;
 الاخرى; جاريه (20) انه; بعدك; مايه (21) فان; انا; احبرت (22) كثيرا (23) اخبره; ان; كان; ترك; عندى (24) يحب; يهمنه;
 فان (25) شانها

Translation

1. God to Whom [everything is due.] Indeed the [] is attributable
2. to God. We ask God the most powerful [for you and us] health in this world and
3. the hereafter and (may He let me) see your face before death and may He let us know
4. each other in the resting place of His pleas[ure. We received]
5. your letter and we heard what you mentioned [about]t your [w]ife,
6. the free woman, that she complained about you to the *amīr*. God be praised
7. that He protected you from His side. We ask God to Whom

8. everything is due to save us and you from evils of this world and
 9. the hereafter. I inform you that Maymūn, your servant,
 10. whose face I did not see, is with your brother Tamīm.
 11. I sent to him Mirār several times. I said, he would come
 12. and not to argue at all. So do not think that he ass[ist]s me with little
 13. or much. I ask God the judge (and) the just, to protect me
 14. from what grieved me in this world and the hereafter. And be patient and
 15. anticipate God's reward regarding what happened to you from this woman,
 16. may God have mercy upon you. Verily I will save you the trouble of her and I am
 17. your brother as you wish, God be praised. We were told
 18. that Sidbata gave birth to a boy and we were told that
 19. the other (woman) gave birth to a girl. I inform you
 20. that one hundred *dīnār* and nine *d[īnārs]* were spent after your departure.
 21. That is what I know. I inform you (further) that he is ke[en]
 22. in his work. Send to al-Zubayr greetings abundantly
 23. and tell him that the thing he had left with me is
 24. as he wishes, so he should not worry about it. I hope that he
 25. would not blame me for it. Peace be upon you. Send to all
 26. our family greet[ings.]

Commentary

1-4. The top of this letter with the *basmala* and the introductory formula is missing. The beginning of the first line, however, seems to continue the opening formula and the contents of the letter suggest that no more than the *basmala* and the prescript section are lost at the top. The ink has faded in these four lines to such a degree that the text has at times become illegible. The first part of the formula *Allāh alladhī ilayhi maradda kull shay' fa-inna [] maradduhā ilā Allāh* is restored on the basis of lines 7 and 8 where the same expression appears. *Nas'alu Allāh al-qadīr [lakum wa lanā] al-'āfiya fī al-dunyā wa-l-ākhirā wa-an yuriyanī wajhaka qabl al-mawāt wa-an yu'arrif baynī wa-baynaka fī mustaqarr min riḍw[ānīhi]*. For parallels of this expression, see in this corpus *wa-lā amātani ḥattā yuriyanī Allāh wujūhakum qabl al-mawt fī khayr wa-'āfiya* (23.14 and the examples provided in the commentary); *wa-an yu'arrif baynī wa-baynaka fī al-janna ḥaythu nardā al-thawāb* (Sijpesteijn (2013), 33.8-9, 2nd/8th). Similar expressions are also attested on inscriptions; cf. *wa-'arrif baynahu wa-bayn nabiyyhi fī mustaqarr riḍwānika* and *wa-jma' baynahu wa-bayn nabiyyka Muḥammad ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-salam fī mustaqarr min riḍwānika* (T. Premier, *Répertoire chronologique d'Épigraphie Arabe* (Cairo, n.d.), 43, 55). Of *riḍwānihi* only the *rā'*, *ḍād* and *wāw* are still visible before the lacuna. *Balaghanā* is entirely missing; other readings such as *waṣalanā*, *atānā*, *waradanā* are also possible.²⁸¹ For *al-mawāt*, see Dozy, 630; Lane, vol. 7, 2741-2.

5. *Wa-sami'nā alladhī dhakarta min sha'n imra'atika*. The word *sami'nā* is unusual and might indicate the reading out loud of the letter in front of the addressee and probably others who might have shared the content of the letter. In the confirmation section, the sender mostly

²⁸¹ See Grob (2010a), 50.

adds verbs such as *qara'a* and *fahima* to indicate personally reading and fully understanding of the letter's contents; cf. *waṣala ilayya kitābuka fa-qara'tuhu wa-fahimtu mā katabta* (P.Marchands II 24.5, 3rd/9th). See also in this corpus 13.8-9 and the examples given in the commentary.

6. *Annahā qad ablaghat sha'naka al-amīr*. The title *amīr* is one of the most confusing titles that occur in the papyri. In Arabic texts, the title is used for the governor, financial director, army leaders and most probably for local officials as well. In Coptic and Greek papyri, it is used for an army leader and pagarch. For other attestations of this title in Arabic, Coptic and Greek papyri, see P.Khalili I, 140; Sijpesteijn (2011), 249; F. Morelli "Consiglieri e comandanti: I titoli del governatore arabo d'Egitto *symbolos* e *amīr*," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 173 (2010): 158-166. It is not clear from the text whether the title *amīr* is referring to the governor or someone else.

It is worth mentioning here that in all documents related to the governor 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān (r. 65-86/685-705) the title *amīr* is always given after the name as follows: 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān *al-amīr* ('Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān *the crown prince*). This unique formula certainly indicates the special status of 'Abd al-'Azīz as the heir of the caliphate. See documents 1 and 2 in P.DiemFrüheUrkunden. See also the Arabic document in A. Merx, *Documents de paléographie hébraïque et arabe* (Leyde: Brill, 1894), 55-57 and pl. vii (to be republished by myself).

6-9. *Fa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh alladhī kafāka min 'indahū fa-nas'alu Allāh alladhī ilayhi maradd kull shay' an ya'finā wa-yyāka min makāriḥ al-dunyā wa-l-ākhirā*. The reading of these three lines can be made out with difficulty due to the ink being effaced. *Shay'* occurs in the text as an indefinite pronoun (Hopkins § 63). *Status constructus* is written as one word in *anya'finā* (Hopkins § 51). The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *fa-nas'alu* (Hopkins § 26). Similarly, *fa-as'alu* in line 13 is written defectively without the *hamza*.

9. *Wa-innī ukbiruka anna Maymūn ghulāmak*. *Ghulāmak* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of medial *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a). See also *ghulām* in line 18. The proper name *Maymūn* is well-attested in the papyri.

10. *Lam arā lahu wajhahu huwa 'inda akhūka Tamīm*. The long vowel is maintained in the jussive, *lam arā*, where classical Arabic requires a short vowel (Hopkins § 82.d). *Status constructus* is represented in *akhūka* for classical Arabic *akhīka* (Hopkins § 163.a). The same *Tamīm* appears in 6.8.

11. *Wa-innī ba'athtu ilayhi Mirār kathīr fa-qultu ya'tīnī*. The *qāf* of *fa-qultu* is written with a more triangular shape than other *qāfs* in the text, but the word cannot be read differently. Compare it with the *fā'* of *yakfīnī* in line 13. *Tanwīn alif* is absent against classical Arabic in *kathīr* (Hopkins § 167.a). For the name *Mirār* and other possible readings, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 372.

12-13. *Wa-lā yarfa' bi-qawl ra'san fa-lā tazunnu annahu ya'tīnī bi-qalīl wa-lā kathīr*. For expressions using the term *ra's*, see in this corpus *annahā lā tarū'u bi-amrika ra's* (2.26-27). The expression *qalīl wa-lā kathīr* is frequently attested in the papyri. Cf. *anā insān miskīn walaysa lī qalīl wa-lā kathīr* (P.Jahn 7.4-5, late 2nd/8th); *wa-lam adrī annahu bā'a qalīl wa-lā kathīr* (P.Jahn 17.14, 3rd/9th); *mimmā qibalī min qalīl aw kathīr* (P.Marchand V/I 16.5, 3rd/9th); *fa-lam taṣna' fī dhālika qalīl wa-lā kathīr* (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 14.4 [= P.World, 179], 3rd/9th).

13-14. *Fa-as'alu Allāh al-ḥakam al-'adl an yakfīnī mā hammanī min amr al-dunyā wa-l-ākhirā.* For prayers mentioning *hamm* (grief), see *akrama Allāh wajhaka bi-raḥmatihī wa-abqāka wa-kafāka mā hammaka bi-raḥmatihī* (P.Marchands II 3.1, 3rd/9th); *wa-zada fī iḥsānihī ilayka wa-'indaka fī al-dunā wa-l-ākhirā wa-kafāka mā hammaka bi-raḥmatihī* (P.Marchands II 35.3-4, 3rd/9th); *ḥafizaka Allāh wa-abqāka wa-amta'a bika wa-madda fī 'umrika wa-ja'alanī fidā'aka wa-kafāka mā hammaka min amr ākhiratika wa-dunyāka* (CPR XVI 11.3, 3rd/9th); *wa-atamma ni'amahu 'alayka wa-zada fī iḥsānihī ilayka wa-ja'alanī fidā'aka wa-lā akhlā makānaka wa-kafāka mā hammaka* (CPR XVI 17.4, 3rd/9th). See also the conclusion.

14-15. *Wa-ṣbir wa-ḥtasib fī-mā aṣābaka min sha'n hādhihi al-mara.* The orthography *al-mara* instead of *al-mar'a* is frequent in the papyri (Hopkins § 26). The expression *wa-ṣbir wa-ḥtasib fī-mā aṣābaka* echoes Qur'anic verses and ḥadīths. Cf. *wa-ṣbir 'alā mā aṣābaka* (Q 31:17); Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1234), *Usd al-ghāba fī ma'rifat al-ṣahāba*, ed. 'A.M. Mu'awwad, and 'A.A. Abd al-Mawjūd (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1996), vol. 6, 33, 54.

16. *Yarḥamuka Allāh fa-innī kāfika sha'nahā.* The three dots above the *shīn* of *sha'nahā* are aligned horizontally. Also placed thus above the *shīn* of *sha'nahu* in line 25. For prayers using the root *r-ḥ-m*, see in this corpus 39.13.

16-17. *Wa-innī akhūka ka-lladhī yasurruka wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh.* For expressions using the root *s-r-r*, see P.Horak 85, l.10 and the examples provided in the commentary. See also in this corpus 35.8 and the commentary. *Akhūka*. For the use of kinship terms in private and business letters, see the discussion on children. See also Bagnall and Cribiore (2006), 85-87; Worp (1995), 153.

17-19. *Wa-qad jā'anā khabar anna Sidbata qad waladat ghulām wa-ukhbirnā anna al-ukhrā qad waladat jāriya.* For other references to pregnancy and childbirth in private and business letters, see the discussion on children. *Ghulām* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of medial *ā* and the *tanwīn alif* is absent against classical Arabic rules (Hopkins § 10.a, 167.d). I was not able to trace the female name *Sidbata* in the onomastica. The *hamza* is omitted in *jā'nā* (Hopkins § 79.b).

19-20. *Wa-innī ukhbiruka annahu qaḍā ba'daka mi'at dīnār wa-tis'at d[ānānīr].* *Qaḍā* is written with an *alif mamdūda* instead of an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.c). *Dīnār* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of medial *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a). Of *dānānīr* only the *dāl* and traces of the *nūn* are still visible.

21. *Fa-innā hādihā a[lla]dhī a'lamu bihi anā.* The personal pronoun *anā* is postponed to the verbal form. This practice is rarely attested in the papyri, see Grob (2010a), 148.

21-22. For the sentence *wa-ukhbiruka annahu jah[dan] fī 'amalihi*, see also in this corpus *wa-innī ukhbiruka yā Abū Rāshid annī wajadtu Najīḥ ajhad 'alamtuka fī 'amalihi* (6.12-13).

22. *Wa-aqra' 'alā al-Zubayr al-salām kathīran.* Post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *aqra'* (Hopkins § 20.b). The proper name *al-Zubayr* appears also in this corpus in 13.18. The *alif maqṣūra* of *'alā* is omitted (Hopkins § 55.i).

23-25. *Wa-akhbirhu anna alladhī kāna taraka 'indī ka-lladhī yuḥibbu fa-lā yahimmannahu sha'nahu fa-innī arjū an-lā yalūmunī fī sha'nihī.* The personal pronoun *hu* of *akhbirhu* refers to *al-Zubayr*, while the personal pronoun of *sha'nahu* and *sha'nihī* refers to the thing. The practice of using allusions and key-words in case of mentioning sensitive and secret information is quite common in papyri especially in business letters. This practice might

have been shaped due to the fact that many persons were involved in the correspondence such as the writer, the carrier etc. See Grob (2010a), 101-102.

25-26. *Wa-l-salām* ‘*alayka wa-aqra*’ ‘*alā ahlinā kullihim al-salā[m.]*’ Of ‘*alā*’ only the ‘*ayn*’ and upper traces of the *lām* are still visible. The *mīm* of *al-salām* is missing.

4.

**Apology for the delay:
A husband writes to his wife (?)**

P.Cam. Michaelides A 605 verso
Provenance: Unknown

26 x 21

2nd/8th
Plate 6-7

Dark-brown papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in black ink in 18 lines parallel to the fibers. The original cutting lines have been preserved on all sides. At the top, a margin of 3.8 cm has been left blank. The right hand margin is 2.8 cm. There are several worm holes and lacunae on the top and the bottom of the papyrus which have resulted in some loss of text. On side A, the address co-exists with another text written in a different hand. The papyrus sheet has been folded 12 times horizontally and 7 times vertically. There are many diacritical dots.

The script is characterized by the way in which *fā'* has one dot below the letter and *qāf* has one dot over it (l. 12 *al-fīṭr*; l. 14 *al-khalaf*; l. 9 *uqīmu*). Initial *kāf* is horizontally elongated with an extended base, an upper stroke parallel to the base line and a rightward shaft at the top (l. 9 *kitābī*; l. 13 *kullihī*). Final *yā'* bends backwards in a straight line (l. 9 *kitābī*).

This letter has been written by a certain *Īsā* to a female addressee, whose name is missing, presumably his wife. After the introductory formulae, the sender explains to his wife the reasons for his delay. He claims that a big fight broke out between two men or two groups of people belonging to two different Arab tribes, *Banū Mudlij* being one of them. *Īsā* says that he was informed that the two fighting groups asked for an amicable settlement (*ṣulḥ*) and thus he had to wait a few days more for the agreement to have effect. *Īsā* informs his wife further that he bought eggs for two *dīnārs* before breaking the fast of *Ramaḍān* (*al-fīṭr*) to bring to her, but all the eggs got spoiled due to the long delay and therefore he had to throw them away. *Īsā* ends his letter as usual by conveying special greetings to the wife, a certain *Idrīs* and his sister, most likely his children, the household, and his mother and those who are with here. Finally, *Īsā* asks his wife not to blame him and to accept his excuse.

The letter is written as one block but clearly and carefully composed. There are several grammatical mistakes and incorrect spellings.

Text

Side B:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من عيسى الى [سلم عليك] فاني احمد اليك الله
3. الذي لا اله الا هو (vac.) واسله ان يصـ[لـ]ى على نبينا محـ[مـ]د صلـ[ى] الله [عليه]
4. [و]سلم كثيرا [ما بعد] كتابى هذا [اليك] من ..
5. ان نخرج [..... ما .. بنى مدج
6. واعمله السيف] [يقطر دم
7. فنسل الله الخلاص {بر} برحمته وقد بلغنا انهم
8. قد طلبوا الصلح فان الله اصلح ذات بينهم

9. رجوت الا اقيم بعد كتابي اليكم شى حتا اقدم
 10. والله ما يحبسنى بها بيع ولا اشترا وان امرك
 11. ليحزنى اشد ما دخل على من الخسارة اشتريت دينرين
 12. بيض لاقدم به اليكم قبل الفطر حتا جا امر لا طاقة
 13. لنا به ففسد البيض كله حتا طرحته فنسل الله
 14. الخلف ابلىغى نفسك ا[ل]سلم كئير[ر]ا وادريس [و]اخته
 15. وجميع اهل البيت واقرى ام[ى] السلم [ا] كثير [ا] وجميع
 16. من عندها وانظ[رى] الى شى فخذى منها
 17. ولا تلومنى فانه]
 18. واقرى نفسك السلم واعذرني]

Side A:

من عيسى الى []

Diacritical dots

(5 بنى مدلج (6 السيف; يفطر (7 الخلاص برحمته (8 طلبوا; دات بينهم (9 رحوت; اقيم; شى; حتا (10 بيع; اشترا (11
 لبحزنى; اشد; دخل (12 بيص; البطر; جا; طافه (13 ببسد; البيض; طرحته (14 الخلب; احته (16 فخذى

Translation

Side B:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From ʿĪsā to [] Peace be upon you]. I praise for your sake God,
3. other than Whom there is no god. (vac.) I ask Him to give many blessings to our prophet Muḥa[mm]ad, may God's blessings [and]
4. peace be [upon him] abundantly. A[s for what follows,] this letter of mine [to you] of
5. that we depart [] what .. the tribe of Mudlij
6. put to the sword [] bleeds blood.
7. We ask God the salvation {thr} through His mercy. It has reached us that they
8. asked for amicable settlement. So If God conciliate between them,
9. I wish not to stay for a little while after (writing) my letter to you until I come (to you).
10. By God, no buying or selling stop me (from coming). Your matter
11. grieves me more than the loss that happened to me. I bought for two *dīnārs*
12. eggs to bring them to you before *al-ḥiṭr*, but then this accident happened over which we have no power.
13. So all the eggs spoiled and I threw them away. I ask God
14. the compensation. Send to yourself m[an]y g[ree]tings and (send greetings) to Idrīs [and] his sister
15. and all the household. And send to my mo[ther many greetings] and to all

16. those who are with her. And make su[re] to me something, so take from her
 17. and do not blame me, because it [
 18. And send to yourself greetings and excuse me [

side A:

From ʿĪsā to []

Commentary

Side B:

2. The name of the sender is restored on the basis of the exterior address, where the name appears clearly. The addressee's name is totally effaced in the interior address and partially readable in the exterior address, where we can read a *sīn*, a hook, another *sīn* and a *rā'* or *zāy* before the lacuna. Only the forenames of the sender and the addressee are given in both addresses. Enough space is available after the address for the restoration of the initial greeting *salām* 'alayki which is partially effaced.

2-4. *Fa-innī aḥmadu ilayki Allāh alladhī lā ilāha illā huwa wa-as'aluḥu an yuṣallī 'alā nabiyyinā Muḥammad ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam kathīran*. The *taṣliya* is a blessing of glorification type bestowed usually upon the prophet. This highly formulaic eulogy is mainly used to express one's gratitude towards God. The *taṣliya* appears occasionally in the opening and closing formulae of letters, but sometimes occurs next to the *basmala*. The custom of adding the *taṣliya* to the *basmala* was introduced by the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170-193/786-809), who decreed that in the introduction of all official documents the *basmala* must be supplemented by the *taṣliya*. The scribe Yaḥyā b. Khālīd is said to be the first to put this decree into practice in 181/797 which was then introduced into legal documents and private letters.²⁸² The first attestation of the *taṣliya* in private letters can be found in CPR XVI 18.4-5, 1st-2nd/7th-8th, where it appears after the transitional element *ammā ba'du* in the following form, *fa-as'alu Allāh an yuṣallī 'alā Muḥammad nabiyyinā wa-an yuzakkiyanā wa-iyyāka bi-l-ṣalāt 'alayhi wa-l-salām 'alayhi wa-rahmat Allāh wa-barakātuhu*. There are also several variants of the *taṣliya*. Cf. *wa-ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad al-nabiyy wa-sallam kathīran* (P.khalili I 17.4, 14, 3rd/9th and the references given in the commentary). See also *wa-ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad al-nabiyy wa-'alā ahlihi al-ṭayyibīn al-akhyār* (P.Marchands II 8.1, 3rd/9th); *wa-ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad al-nabiyy wa-ālihi wa-sallam taslīman* (CPR XVI 25.13-14, 3rd/9th); *ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad al-nabiyy wa-ālihi wa-sallam kathīran* (CPR XVI 31.9, 3rd/9th); *wa-ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad wa-'alā jamī' ahlihi wa-sallam kathīran* (CPR XVI 32.2-3, 3rd/9th); *Muḥammad ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi bi-l-hudā wa-dīn al-ḥaqq wa-kull alladhī irtaḍā Allāh li-'ibādihī* (Sijpesteijn (2013), 8.5-7, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in the commentary).

5-6. These two lines are for the most part illegible due to the ink is being effaced. Banū Mudlij is a sub tribe of the north-Arabian tribe of Kināna. They participated in the conquest of Egypt and they are said to have settled with a group of Ḥimyar in Khirbitā in the western

²⁸² See P.Cair.Arab I, 215-216; P.Khalili I, 148; Grob (2010a), 27, note 11.

edge of the Delta.²⁸³ *Al-sayf* [] *yaqturu dam*. *Tanwīn alif* is missing in the direct object which would have been obligatory in classical Arabic (Hopkins § 167.d).

7. *Fa-nas'alu Allāh al-khalāṣ bi-raḥmatihī*. The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *fa-nas'alu* (Hopkins § 26). Also written so in line 14. *Bi-r* of *bi-raḥmatihī* is written twice by the scribe, who indicated his mistake by crossing out the first part.

8. *Qad ṭalabū al-ṣulḥ fa-in Allāh aṣḥaḥa dhāt baynihim*. For the term *ṣulḥ* (amicable settlement), see J. Schacht, *An introduction to Islamic law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 148, 181. The *tā'* of *dhāt* lacks an upward curve on the left.

9. *Rajawtu allā uqīmu ba'd kitābī ilaykum shay' ḥatta aqdim*. The *tā'* of *rajawtu* has two vertical dots over the right hand tip and lacks an upward curve on the left. The particle *ḥattā* is written with an *alif mamdūda* instead of an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.d). Also written thus in lines 13 and 14. *Shay'* lacks the *tanwīn alif*, which is obligatory in classical Arabic (Hopkins § 167.d).

10. The post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *ishtirā'* (Hopkins § 21.b).

11. *Alā* is written without the final *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 55.i). *Dīnārayn* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of medial *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a). The *tā' marbūṭa* of *al-khassāra* has an upward shaft at the top. The three dots above the *shīn* of *ashadda* are aligned horizontally. Also placed thus above the *shīn* of *shay'* in line 10 and *ishtirā'* in line 11.

12. *Bayḍ*. *Tanwīn alif* is missing in the direct object (Hopkins § 167.d). For other attestations of eggs in the papyri, see P.GrohmannWirtsch. 18.5, 3rd/9th. *Li-aqdimā bihi ilaykum qabl al-fiṭr ḥattā jā'a amr lā ṭāqa lanā bihi*. References to *īd al-fiṭr* or the feast of the breaking of the fast are well attested in letters. Cf. *mā kuntū atrukūka bi-salāmatika taghību 'annī fī al-fiṭr wa-anā taraktūka tuftīru 'indahum wa-tuḍaḥī 'indī taraktanā fī al-fiṭr mithl al-masākīn* (P.Marchand II 2.11-13, 3rd/9th); *innī uqīmu ilā al-fiṭr in shā'a Allāh* (P.Marchands II 14.4, 3rd/9th); *wa-dhakarta anaka turīdu al-quḍūm ilaynā ba'd al-fiṭr in shā'a Allāh* (P.Marchands V/I 20.13, 3rd/9th). The word *īd* is also attested in the papyri; cf. *lā taqṭa' bī fī hādhā al-īd* (P.Marchands V/I 8r.4, v.2, 3rd/9th). For more extensive discussion on *īd al-fiṭr*, see chapter two, feasts and festivities. The post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *jā'a* (Hopkins § 21.a).

13. *Fa-nas'alu Allāh al-khalaf*. For expressions mentioning *khalaf* (the compensation), see *fa-as'alu Allāh an yu'ajil 'alayka nafa'at al-ḥajj wa-khalaf al-ḥajj sarī* (P.Marchand III 3.4-5, 3rd/9th).

14-15. The orthography *aqrī* instead of *aqri'* reflects the construction of the verb as a *verbum tertiae yā'* rather than a *verbum tertiae Hamzatae* (Hopkins § 79.a). The expression *ahl al-bayt* appears also in this corpus in 41.10.

16-18. These three lines are for the most part illegible and incomprehensible due to the fragmentary state of the bottom of the papyrus.

Side A:

²⁸³ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 142; al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), *al-Mawā'iz wa-l-i'tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-l-āthār*, ed. A.F. Sayyid, (London: al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2002-2003), vol. 4, 48; al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 11, 197.

In order to write the address on the back side the scribe flipped the papyrus over around the horizontal axis with respect to the written lines, i.e. the way one would turn over a playing card lying on the table. On the left hand side next to the address, traces of ink are still visible, the reconstruction and translation of which are impossible.

5.

**Sending items of clothing:
A man writes to his family**

P.Cam.Michaelides Q 19
Provenance: Unknown

19 x 16

1st-2nd/7th-8th
Plate 8-9

Middle-brown papyrus written with a thin pen in black ink in 12 lines across the fibers. The papyrus fibers are frayed at the right hand side which have resulted in a damage to the text. Similarly, the top left corner is missing resulting in a loss of few characters at the end of the first three lines after the *basmala*. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on all sides. At the bottom, a margin of 2 cm has been left blank. On side B, the address and another text written in the same hand in 5 lines parallel to the fibers are still preserved. The letter has been folded 5 times horizontally, but there are no vertical folds perceptible. There are several diacritical dots.

The text shows many features of the early script, i.e. the upper part of *dāl/dhāl* bends backwards to the right (l. 3 *aḥmadu*, *alladhī*; l. 7 *fa-idhā*). The *rā'* is extremely short (l. 2 *Baḥr*; l. 5 *al-khayr*). The medial *'ayn* is open at the top (l. 2 *Rabī'a*; l. 4 *ba'du*; l. 6 *al-ni'ma*, *al-'āfiya*). *Fā'* has one dot below the letter, whereas *qāf* has one dot over it (l. 6 *faḍlihi*, *al-'āfiya*, *qaḍā'ihī*). The tail of the final *mīm* is extremely short (l. 1 *bi-sm*; l. 5 *tamām*). The ligature of *lām-alif* appears in two forms: with a triangular opened or closed base at the bottom (l. 3 *lā*; l. 11 *ilā*) and v-shaped (l. 3 *ilā*). Final *yā'* extends backwards in a straight line (l. 3 *fa-innī*, *alladhī*).

In this letter, a certain Baḥr b. Rabī'a writes to two women known as Umm 'Amūr and Umm Nujiyyāt and his entire family. The sender asks the two ladies to send him a pair of sandals, two laces and a shirt with a trustworthy person as soon as possible. The sender then wonders about the reason that prevented them from writing to him about their news and condition. Baḥr closes his letter with the final *salām* greeting, skipping common blessings and salutations. On the back of the papyrus, the exterior address co-exists with traces of 4 lines which are recognizable but not enough to extract a continuous sense from them.

The letter shows some spelling and grammatical mistakes. The voice of the letter is addressed in the masculine plural, while the letter is addressed basically to two women. The relationship between the sender and the two female addressees is not clear, but the voice of the letter indicates a very close kinship. The two women are most probably Baḥr's wives.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الر[ح]من [الر]حيم
2. من بحر بن ربيع[ة] الى ام عم[ور و] ام نجياة واهلنا ك[لهم]
3. سلم عليكم فاني احمد اليكم الله الذي لا اله الا هو [(vac.)]
4. اما بع[د] فاني [اخبر]كم من خبرنا انا سالمين صلحو[ن]
5. كال[ذي يسركم] من [لغفي]ة والخير نسال الله تمام
6. النعمة علينا و عليكم وال[زياد]ة من فضله والعفية في قضاء
7. والرغبة في {قضاه} ما [عنده] اما على اثر ذلك فاذا
8. جاكم [كتبي] هذا فابعثوا الى بنعلى وشركين حسني[ن] وبقميص

9. بدلة ولا ادري ماذا يمنعكم ان تكتبوا الينا بخبركم
 10. وسلمتكم و[حوايجكم وما فـ]عل نسال الله لنا ولك بالعافية
 11. وقد نخلت حبيبة ا[] اعلى بكتب ولا تبعثوا الينا الا
 12. و[السلام عليكم] و[حمت] الله وبركته مع ذا ثقة

Side B:

[من بحر] ر بن ربيعة الى اهله

1. [م ام عمور انظري انبعثي الى مف] [امرم كان
 2. [ان] كان سهل بن عبد الله جا] و[ا] خبروه
 3. [....ان ياتيك] [شديدا
 4. ولا يوجد عندنا القطر ا] [واقري منى السلم

Diacritical dots**Side A:**

(2 نجياه 5) الخير (6 النعمه; فضله; العفيه; فضاه 7) اثر (8) فاعثوا; شركين; حسنين; بقميص (9) بدله; نكتبوا (10) نسال;
 بالعفيه (11) نخلت; حبيبه; بكتب; تبعثوا; الينا (12) ثقه

Side B:

(address) ربيعة (1) انظري; انبعثي; صف (2) جا (3) ياتيك; شديدا (4) يوجد; عندنا; الفطر

Translation**Side A:**

1. In the name of God, the [Com]passionate, [the Mer]ciful.
2. From Baḥr b. Rabī[‘a] to Umm ‘Am[ūr and] Umm Nujiyyāt and [all] our family.
3. Peace be upon you. I praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no god. [(vac.)]
4. As for what foll[ows], [I want to] let you know our news, namely that we are well and in good heal[th,]
5. as [you wish] of [the wellbeing] and the beneficence. We ask God the completion
6. of His favour upon us and you and the [increase] in His munificence and the comfort in His judgement
7. and the wish for {His judgement} what [He has.] As for what comes after, when
8. [this letter of mine] reaches you, send me my sandals and two goo[d] laces and a shirt.
9. I do not know wh[at] prevents you from writing to me about your news and
10. your sound condition and [your needs and what] happened. We ask God the wellbeing for us and you.

11. (And know that) Ḥabība has sifted the[] to me letters. And send to me only with a trustworthy person.
12. [Peace be upon you] and God's mercy and blessings.

Side B:

[From Baḥr b.] Rabī'a to his family

1.]. Umm 'Amūr, consider to send to ... [] your matter that
2. if] Sahl b. 'Abd Allāh came [] and i]nform him
3.] until it reaches you [] hard
4. There is no with us [] and send to yourself from me greetings.

Commentary

Side A:

2. For the name Baḥr and other possible readings, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 27. As for the female name Nujiyyāt, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 71-2. A number of other names listed by al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ma'kūl are also possible, e.g. Najīh and Nujiyya. See al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 71-2; Ibn Ma'kūl, *Ikmāl*, vol. 1, 500-502. Note that these names are recorded without medial ā in both sources. The scribe first wrote Nujiyy (نجية) and then added an *alif* to it. The name 'Amūr is restored on the basis of side B, where the name appears clearly. I was not able to trace the name 'Amūr in the onomastica.

3. *Salām 'alaykum fa-innī aḥmadu ilaykum Allāh alladhī lā ilāh illā huwa. Ilāh* is written with a little hook between the *lām* and *hā'* for the long ā (Hopkins § 11). A vacant space is to be expected after the *ḥamdala*, in view of the fact that the transitional element *ammā ba'du* appears in the next line.

4. *Ammā ba'du fa-innī ukhbirukum min khabarinā annā sālimīn ṣāliḥūn*. The *casus obliquus* of the sound masculine plural is used in *sālimīn* where classical Arabic requires the *casus rectus* (Hopkins § 86.a). *Ṣāliḥūn* is spelled defectively without long ā (Hopkins § 10). An exact parallel for this formula can be found in P.RāḡibLettres 12.4. See also *fa-innī ukhbiruka min khabarinā annā sālimīn ṣāliḥīn* (P.Heid.Arab. II 24.4, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in the commentary).

5. *Ka-lladhī yasurrukum min al-'āfiya wa-l-khayr*. An exact parallel for this formula is not attested, but see *ka-lladhī yasurruka bi-ḥamd Allāh illā khayr* (P.RāḡibLettres 9r.5-6, 2nd/8th); *ka-lladhī yasurruka bi-ḥamd Allāh 'alaynā wa-ni'matihi* (P.RāḡibLettres 9.v4, 2nd/8th); *ka-lladhī yasurruka wa-rabbunā maḥmūd* (P.RāḡibLettres 11.4-5, 2nd/8th); *'alā mā yasurruka wa-rabbunā maḥmūd* (P.Khalili I 15r.4-5, 2nd/8th). The *yā'* of *alladhī* can be seen extending below the lacuna. The *nūn* of *min* is still visible.

5-7. *Nas'alu Allāh tamām al-ni'ma 'alaynā wa-'alaykum wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlihi wa-l-'āfiya fi qaḍā'ihī wa-l-raghba fī {qaḍā'ihī} mā 'indahū*. The first part of this formula and variants of it are well attested in letters. See for example *nas'alu Allāh tamām ni'matihi 'alaynā wa-'alaykum wa-*

l-ziyāda min faḍlihi fa-innamā nahnu bihi wa-lahu (P.Jahn 5.4-5, 2nd/8th); *nas'alu Allāh tamām ni'matihi 'alaynā wa-'alayka wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlihi wa-l-rizq bihi wa-l-tawfiq finā bi-khayr wa-bi-riḍā* (P.Khalili I 15r.5-7, 2nd/8th); *nas'alu Allāh tamām al-ni'ma 'alaynā wa-'alayka wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlihi* (P.Khalili I 15v.4-5, 2nd/8th); *nas'alu Allāh 'āfiyatahu wa-karāmat al-ākhirā* (P.RāḡibLettres 9r.6, 2nd/8th); *fa-nas'alu Allāh tamām al-ni'ma lanā wa-lakum bi-'āfiyat al-dunyā wa-karāmat al-ākhirā* (P.RāḡibLettres 9v.4-6, 2nd/8th); *as'alu Allāh tamām al-ni'ma 'alaynā wa-'alayka wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlihi in shā'a Allāh an yaj'alanā wa-iyyāka mimman ya'malu bi-ṭā'atihi wa-yajtanibu ghaḍabahu wa-yabtaḡhi marḍātahu* (P.RāḡibLettres 11.5-7, 2nd/8th). Post-vocalic hamza in *nas'alu* is omitted while the preceding short vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20).

6. Of *al-ziyāda* only traces of the *alif* and *lām* before the lacuna and the *tā' marbūṭa* at the end of the lacuna are still preserved. *Al-'āfiya* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.c). Also written so in line 10. *Qaḍā'ihī* is written without the post-vocalic hamza as it is written in line 7 (Hopkins § 21.c).

7. The expression *ammā 'alā ithr dhālika* is alternative to the transitional element *ammā ba'du* (Hopkins § 106). The same expression appears in this corpus in 8.7 and in Rāḡib (2011), 273-284. For more about this formula, see chapter one, formulary. The scribe crossed out the word *qaḍā'ihī* by means of a horizontal line.

8. *Fa-idhā jā'akum kitābī hādhā fa-b'athū*. The combination of a formula with *fa-idhā jā'aka/um kitābī hādhā* + *fa* + imperative appears frequently in administrative letters. Commonly, the sender instructs the addressee to do something as soon as he reads the letter. Imperatives such as *ib'ath*, *unzur*, *uktub*, *'ajjil*, *khudh* and *arsil* are often used. Cf. *fa-idhā jā'aka kitābī hādhā fa-arsil ilayyā* (P.Heid.Arab. I 4.3, dated 90/709-710); *fa-idhā jā'aka kitābī hādhā fa-khudh* (P.Cair.Arab. III 148.6, dated 90/708-710); *fa-idhā jā'aka kitābī hādhā fa-'ajjil* (P.Heid.Arab. I 13.2, dated 91/710); *fa-idhā jā'aka kitābī hādhā fa-stakhrij* (P.Qurra 3.10, dated 91/709-710). The expression is also well attested in private correspondences using mainly the same imperatives; cf. *fa-idhā jā'akum kitābī hādhā fa-ktubū lanā* (P.RāḡibLettres 9r.7, 2nd/8th); *fa-idhā jā'akum kitābī hādhā fa-ktubū ilaynā* (P.RāḡibLettres 12.4, 2nd/8th). The expression can also be reversed as follows, *fa-nzur amta'a Allāh bika idhā jā'aka kitābī hādhā fa-shtarī* (P.Horak 85.6, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary). *Jā'akum* is written without the post-vocalic hamza (Hopkins § 21.a). *Kitābī* is written defectively with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a).

8-9. *Fa-b'athū lī bi-na'lī wa-shirākayn ḡasanayn wa-bi-qamīs badla*. The Arab usage of footwear goes back to the pre-Islamic times due to the harsh desert landscape of the Arabian Peninsula.²⁸⁴ Arab footwear for males and females usually fell into one of two main categories. First, *na'l* (pl. *ni'āl*) a pair of sandals, which could be made of palm fiber, smooth leather, or leather with animal hair with one or two laces *shirāk* (pl. *shuruk*) or *zimām* (pl. *azimma*).²⁸⁵ In pre-Islamic times, wearing fine sandals were a mark of a high-ranking personage, but after the advent of Islam, the prophet apparently considered the *na'l* to be

²⁸⁴ Many of the ancient inscriptions show some sort of distinctive shoe or sandal. The Talmud specifically mentions that the sandals worn by the Arabs are "close-fitting" and that they "are knotted tightly by the shoemakers" (Tractate, yevamot, 102a; Shabbat, 112a). The historian Strabo emphasizes this fact when says of the Arab Nabataeans that "they go without tunics, with girdles about their loins and with slippers on their feet," Y. Stillman, *Arab dress a short history from the dawn of Islam to modern times* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 7, 9.

²⁸⁵ P.World, 156 a.8, 3rd/9th.

the norm in male footwear. It is said that the prophet usually wore double-laced sandals of tanned leather without animal hair.²⁸⁶ The second category is the *khuff* (pl. *khifāf* or *akhfāf*), which is a sort of shoe or boot made of leather. A person who did not have a pair of sandals could wear *khuff* instead, but according to one tradition that probably reflected an ascetic tendency to consider *khuff* to be luxurious, the prophet recommended that one should cut the upper part of the boot down to ankle length.²⁸⁷ The attestation of *na'l* in the papyri refers either to soles of shoes or sandals/slippers. The price of a pair of soles seems to have fluctuated between one to two *dirhams* depending on the quality and the kind of shoes for which the soles were made. For example, a pair of *ṣirār* soles costs two *dirhams*, whereas a pair of *ḥidhā'* soles costs only the half price (“*na'l ṣirār bi-dirhamān wa-na'l ḥidhā' bi-dirham,*” P.Marchands III 9.11, 3rd/9th). A special pair of sandals, whose soles were imported from India “Sind” and whose laces were made in Tinnīs²⁸⁸ costs a quarter of a *dīnār* (“*na'l sindī bi-zimām tinnīsī bi-rub' dīnār,*” P.World, 156a.8, 3rd/9th).²⁸⁹ The price of the *khifāf* was almost closer to the price of the soles than to the price of the sandals. The price change was due to the size of the *khuff*, as the letters show. For instance, a small pair of sandals for a girl of seven years old costs two *dirhams*. Another one for a girl of ten years old costs two *dirhams* and one *dāniq* (P.Marchands III 41.5-6, 3rd/9th). These two pairs of sandals were the cheapest sandals in the Fustāṭ markets.²⁹⁰

Qamīṣ (pl. *qumuṣ* or *qumsān* or *aqmīṣa*) was the basic body shirt. It was worn by both sexes and children alike many items of the Islamic attire. It ranged from mid-thigh to full length and could have long or short sleeves with a round hole for the neck and with or without an opening in the front. A variety of robes and tunics, e.g. *thawb*, *jubba* and *ḥulla* could have been worn over the *qamīṣ*.²⁹¹ Arabic papyri do not tell us much about shirts and their prices in early Muslim Egypt. Literary sources, on the other hand, inform us that an agreement was made between the Muslim conquerors and the indigenous Egyptians after the Arab conquest of Egypt. According to the sources, the agreement stipulates that the Copts are required to deliver one shirt for each Muslim soldier every year.²⁹² Arabic papyri confirm this fact. To be sure, in one official letter, the governor Qurra b. sharīk asks the local official of Ishqāw/Aphrodit to send to him the shirts that have been allotted upon the people of his district (“*fa-nzur al-qumuṣ allatī 'alā arḍika fa-'ajjil bihā ilayya waḥīna tanzur fī al-qumuṣ/kitābī fa-lā tu'akhhanna minhā shay' fa-innī urīdu an ursil bihā ilā amīr al-mu'minīn in shā'a Allāh,*” P.BeckerPAF 5.[Abū Ṣafiyya 42]4-10, dated 90/709).²⁹³ On the other side, a private list records two different prices for two shirts, one for fifteen carats and the other for eight carats and a half of a carat (P.GrohmannWirtsch. 16r.2, 8, 3rd/9th). The *qamīṣ badla* should perhaps be

²⁸⁶ Stillman (2000), 22.

²⁸⁷ Stillman (2000), 21-22. See also Ahsan (1979), 47-48.

²⁸⁸ Tinnīs is an ancient town located near Damietta. The city was so famous for its unique textiles as many papyri and narrative sources indicate, see P.Marchands III 33. 8, 10 3rd/9th; Nāṣir Khusraw, *Safr nāmāh* (1993), 91-94; Ibn Hawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 143; al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'jam*, vol. 2, 51-54; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz*, vol.1, 496-511.

²⁸⁹ See also *wa-anā mu'ajil ilayka bi-l-na'l wa-l-kisā'*, P.Marchands V/I 6.4-5, 3rd/9th; *ba'athtu ilayka bi-l-maḥbas wa-l-aḥwar wa-l-na'l*, P.Marchands II 37.2, 3rd/9th. See also Dozy (1845), 421-424.

²⁹⁰ *wa-shtarī lī khuffayn li-rjilī*, P.Marchands II 3.7, 3rd/9th; *wa-anā uṣību lahā al-khuffayn in shā'a Allāh*, P.Marchands II 9.19, 3rd/9th; *khifāfan li Abī 'Adiyy*, P.Marchands II 11.4, 3rd/9th.

²⁹¹ Stillman (2000), 12; Ahsan (1979), 36-39.

²⁹² Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 151-152; al-Balādhurī, *Buldān*, 215.

²⁹³ See also Sijpesteijn (2013), 3.8, 2nd/8th and the commentary.

interpreted as a specific kind of garment rather than a shirt for which the word *qamīṣ* was commonly used.

9. The upper traces of the *dhāl* and *alif* of *mādhā* are still visible. The word *yamna'ukum* can be made out with difficulty.

10. *Salāmatikum* is written defectively without the long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a). The expression *wa-ḥawā'ijikum* is restored on the basis of countless parallels. The *fā'* of *fu'ila* is missing in the lacuna.

12. *Wa-[l-salām 'alaykum wa-raḥmat] Allāh wa-barakātuhu. Wa-barakātuhu* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a). See also 2.37 and the commentary. *Ma'a dhā thiqa*. The orthography *dhā* is written with an *alif mamdūda* after the preposition *ma'a* where classical Arabic requires the genitive *dhī* (Hopkins § 164.c.ii). Expressions using the word *thiqa* are frequent in the papyri. Cf. *ib'ath bihi ilayya ma'a dhī thiqa* (P.David-Weill Louvre 12-13.18, 2nd/8th); *fa-kun fīhi thiqa* (Sijpesteijn (2013), 3.15-16, 17.12, 23.29); *wa-kun thiqa fīma qibalaka* (Sijpesteijn (2013), 15.15); *idhā ba'athta bihi fa-ma'a thiqa* (Sijpesteijn (2013), 28.14, all 2nd/8th).

Side B:

[*Min Baḥ*]r b. *Rab'a ilā ahlihi*. Of *Baḥr* only the *rā'* is still visible. The names of the addressees are replaced by the word *ahlihi* and the addressees' domicile is unspecific, suggesting that the delivery of the letter was entrusted to an informal carrier, who could have been either a family member or a client who used to deliver letters on a regular basis. See also the discussion on the complaint about lack of prompt replies to one's written messages in chapter one. For the term *ahl*, see the discussion on children in chapter two. After a short vacant space another text is added by the same hand in four lines. The text is incomprehensible due to the fragmentary state of the papyrus.

1. The *status constructus* is written as one word in *an-b'athī* instead of *an tab'athī* (Hopkins § 51.d).

2. A *mīm* is still visible at the beginning of the line. The name Sahl appears also in this corpus in 12.3.

6.

**Reporting on some relatives:
A woman writes to two male relatives**

P.Cam.Michaelides A 1354 verso
Provenance: Unknown

41 x 23

2nd/8th
Plate 10

The text is written in black ink with a medium-thick pen in 15 lines parallel to the fibers. There is a lacuna at the top right corner resulting in the loss of the half of the *basmala*. The ink has faded at the top making difficulties in reading. The original cutting lines have been preserved on all sides. A broad margin of 10 cm has been left blank at the bottom. The top margin is about 6 cm and the right hand margin is about 2.5 cm. There are many diacritical dots.

The script is characterized by the way in which the characters are horizontally elongated especially at the end of the line (l. 7 *ukhbiruka*; l. 8 *yasurruka*; l. 11 *'alayka*) and large spaces have been left blank between lines. For more about the physical description of the papyrus and the script, see the introduction to no. 3.

In this letter, a certain Umm Zur'a writes to two male addressees, i.e. Abū Tamīm and Abū Rāshid. The letter is basically sent to Abū Tamīm as stated in the interior address. At the bottom and after the letter was completed and closed by salutations and the final *salām* greeting, Umm Zur'a added a short note to Abū Rāshid, suggesting that Abū Tamīm and Abū Rāshid were living in the same place or at least not far from each other so that the letter or the information in it could be exchanged with ease. Umm Zur'a starts her letter by informing Abū Tamīm about her wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of his son Tamīm and his family. Umm Zur'a then ends her letter to Abū Tamīm by sending him greetings from Yaḥyā, Jamīl and Najīḥ. After a short vacant space of one cm wide, Umm Zur'a informs Abū Rāshid that Najīḥ seems to her to be a good person who is very serious in his work.

The letter is written by the same hand that penned letter 3. Within the letter, the references to the addressees fluctuate between the plural, dual and singular. The scribe makes some grammatical mistakes and incorrect spellings similar to those on letter 3. The letter is, however, well written and composed.

Text

1. [بسم الله الر]حمن الرحيم
2. لابی تمیم من ام زرعة
3. سلم عليك فانى احمد اليك الله الذى
4. لا اله الا هو اما بعد فانى اخبركما انى سلمة
5. صلحة كما يسركما والحمد لله فنسل الله
6. الذى اليه مصير كل شى ايعفنا واياكم من
7. مكاره الدنيا والاخرة واخبرك
8. ان تميم ابنك سالم صلح كما يسرك
9. من فضل الله ورحمته واهله كلهم كما تحبون
10. وان يحيى وجميل ونجیح يقرون عليكم
11. السلم (vac.) والسلم عليك (vac.)
12. وانى اخبرك يابو راشد انى وجدت

13. نجیح اجهد علمتک فی عملہ واحرصہ
 14. علی ان لا یاتی ملامتک واللہ ما بدا لی
 15. منه الا علی خیر

Diacritical dots

- (2 من (6 الیہ; مصیر; من (7 دنیا; اخبیرک (8 ان; تمیم; ابنک (9 تحبون (10 ان; یفرون; علیکم (21 یابو; وحدت (13 علمتک (14 یاتی; ملامتک; بدا (15 منه; خیر

Translation

1. [In the name of God, the] Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To Abū Tamīm from Umm Zur'a.
3. Peace be upon you. I praise for your sake God, other than Whom,
4. there is no god. As for what follows, I want to let you know that I am well
5. and in good health, as you wish, God be praised. We ask God,
6. to Whom the destiny of everything is due, to protect us and you from
7. evils of this world and the hereafter. I inform you
8. that your son Tamīm is well and in good health which will please you,
9. through God's benevolence and mercy, and his whole family is as you wish.
10. Yaḥyā and Jamīl and Najīḥ send to you
11. greetings. (vac.) Peace be upon you. (vac.)
12. I inform you, Abū Rāshid, that I found
13. Najīḥ serious in his work and he is keen not to
14. make you blame him. By God, he appears to me
15. as only a good person.

Commentary

2. The name of the addressee can only be made out with difficulty. The *yā'* of *Abī* can be seen extending underneath the lacuna. For the name *Zur'a*, see Gratzl (1906), 28. See also P.Khurasan 26.14, dated 147/765; 32.12, dated 148/765.

4-5. *Fa-innī ukhibrukumā annī sālīma ṣālīḥa kamā yasurrukumā wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh*. For parallels, see in this corpus 5.4-5 and the examples provided in the commentary. Only traces of ink of *wa-l-ḥamdu* can be seen, but the reading is certain. *Sālīma ṣālīḥa* are written defectively without medial *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a). The dual used here contrasts with the singular used in the the rest of the letter. See also the plural in line 9.

5-7. *Fa-nas'alu Allāh alladhī ilayhi maṣīr kull shay' an ya'finā wa-iyyākum min makāriḥ al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira*. For this expression, see in this corpus *fa-nas'alu Allāh alladhī ilayhi maradd kull shay' an ya'finā wa-iyyāka min makāriḥ al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira* (3.8-9). The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *fa-nas'alu* (Hopkins § 26). Status constructus is written as one word in *a(n)-ya'fika* (Hopkins § 51). *Alif maqṣūra* is omitted in *'alā* (Hopkins § 55.i). Also written thus in lines 14 and 15. For the expression *al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira*, see Grob (2010a), 45.

7-9. *Wa-ukhbiruka anna ibnaka Tamīm sālim ṣāliḥ kamā yasurruka min faḍl Allāh wa-rahmatihī.* Ṣāliḥ is written with *scriptio defectiva* of medial ā (Hopkins § 10.a). The same Tamīm also appears in 3.10. The rā' of *wa-rahmatihī* is very short and the mīm is written above the line, but the word cannot be read differently. Compare this mīm with the mīm of Jamīl in the next line.

9. *Kamā tuḥibbūna.* The plural used here contrasts with the singular and the dual used in the rest of the letter.

10. The name Jamīl appears also in this corpus in 34.4, 7. For the name Najīḥ and other possible readings such as *Baḥbah*, *Nakhīkh*, *Nuḥayḥ* and *Bujbuj*, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 24.

11. A short vacant space is left at the end of this line signaling the end of the letter to Abū Tamīm.

12-13. *Wa-innī ukhbiruka yā Abū Rāshid annī wajadtu Najīḥ ajhad 'alamtuka fī 'amalihi.* For similar expressions, see in this corpus *wa-ukhbiruka annahu jahdan fī 'amalih* (3.21-22). The particle yā is written as part of the following word and the long ā is spelled defectively in *yabū* (Hopkins § 10.d). The orthography *'alamtuka* is written against classical Arabic *a'lamtuka*. See also letter 3.9.

14. A little v-shaped sign is written above the *lām-alif* of *illā*. For other attestations of this sign in the papyri, see P.World, 87.

7.

**“Seeing you is my wish before death,”:
A man writes to a female relative**

P.CtYBR.inv. 2607
Provenance: Unknown

17.1 x 22.8

2nd/8th
Plate 11-12

Light-brown papyrus written in black ink with a medium-thick pen by a neat hand across the fibers. The left hand side is lost with a considerable loss of text. Likewise, the letter is incomplete at the bottom where an unknown number of lines is missing. The original cutting lines are still preserved at the top and the right hand side. The papyrus has been folded 6 times vertically, but there are no horizontal folds perceptible. Diacritical dots are sparingly added.

The script is characterized by the way in which final *alif* extends below the base line (l. 3 *fa-innī*; l. 5 *‘āfānā*). *Ṣād* is horizontally elongated (l. 7 *ṣibyānī*). The lower stroke of initial *‘ayn* extends to the right (l. 2 *‘Abd Allāh*; l. 9 *‘alaynā*). Final *yā’* occasionally returns to the right (l. 7 *qibālī*; ll. 6, 11 *ḥī*).

In this letter, a certain *‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad* writes to a woman called *Unaysa bt. Ṭsā* expressing his painful longing and wishes to see her before death while she is well and in good health. *‘Abd Allāh* informs *Unaysa* that he is well and in good health as well as his family (wife) and children. The body of the letter is very rhetorical and full of blessings and prayers for the addressee. The relationship between the sender and the female addressee is unclear. The tone of the letter suggests, however, a very close kinship. *Unaysa* is probably *‘Abd Allāh’s* mother or sister.

The letter is well written and composed with some means to highlight the text. It shows few spelling and grammatical mistakes indicating the writer’s good command of the language and the writing.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من عبد الله بن محمد الى ام [] ان[يسة ابنت عيسى]
3. سلم عليك فاني احمد اليك الله [الذى]
4. لا اله الا هو (vac.)
5. اما بعد عافانا الله واياك عافية يبلغ[نا واياك]
6. بها جسيم رحمته فى جنته انه [و]الى ذلك [والقادر عليه كتبت]
7. اليك وانا ومن قبلى من اهلى وصبي[ان]ى على اح[سن حال]
8. الحمد لله لا نفقد من خير الدنيا [و] ما نحتاج]
9. من نعمته ومنه علينا الا النظر فى وج[هك قبل الموت فاسل الله]
10. القريب المجيب الا يمي[ن]نى حتا انظر]
11. فى وجهك ع[لى] احسن ما [يكون ان شا الله]
12. واسله ا[ن] ي[ر]ض[ى] عنك [وعنا]

Side B:

[من عبد الله بن محمد الى (vac.) انيسة ابنت عيسى بلغ رحمة
الله

Diacritical dots

(3 عليك 5) بعد (6 حسيم 7) فلي (12) عنك

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad to Umm [] Un[aysa bt. ‘Īsā]
3. Peace be upon you. I praise for your sake God, other than W[hom]
4. there is no god. (vac.)
5. As for what follows, may God grant us and you protection with which He makes [us and you reach]
6. the immense of His mercy in His paradise. Verily He is the One Who has [c]ontrol over this [and power to do it. I am writing to you,]
7. whereas I and those who are with me, namely my family and my chi[ldre]n are in the b[est condition,]
8. God be praised. We do not miss of the goods of this world [and] we do not need [
9. from His favor and His bounty upon us, except for sight of your fa[ce before death. I ask God]
10. the near (and) the responsive not to let [me die till I look]
11. at your face, i[n] the best [way possible, if God wills.]
12. I ask Him t[o] be plea[sed] with you [and us

Side B:

[From ‘Abd All]āh b. Muḥammad to (vac.) Unaysa bt. ‘Īsā. Deliver may the mercy
of God be upon you

Commentary

Side A:

2. *ilā* is written with a long space between the *alif* and *lām*, while the *yā* returns horizontally backwards to cover the space. Of the *kunya* of the female addressee only the prefix *Umm* is preserved. The *alif* and *nūn* of *Unaysa* are still visible. The name is reconstructed on the basis of the exterior address, where the name is clearly readable. For this name, see Gratzl (1906), 41.

3-4. The backward bending *yā* of *alladhī* can still be seen. A long vacant space has been left after the *ḥamdala*.

5-6. For parallels of the blessing *‘āfānā Allāh wa-ıyyāki ‘āfiya yuballighunā wa-ıyyāki bihā jasīm raḥmatihī fī jannatihī*, see in this corpus *‘āfānā Allāh wa-ıyyākum ‘āfiya yudkhillunā wa-ıyyākum bihā al-janna bi-raḥmatihī wa-yunajīnā wa-ıyyākum min shukḥṭihī wa-min al-nār bi-raḥmatihī* (42.6-8). The expression *jasīm raḥmatihī* is unattested in the papyri, at the best of my knowledge.

6. The expression *fa-innahu waliyy dhālika wa-l-qādir ‘alayhi* is reconstructed on the basis of countless parallels. See for example P.Khalili I 18.20, 3rd/9th and the references given in the commentary. See also *fa-innahu waliyy dhālika wa-l-qādir ‘alayhi wa-l-marghūb ilayhi fihī* (P.Berl.Arab. I 3.5-6, 2nd/8th).

7. For the expression *anā wa-man qibalī*, see in this corpus 38.6 and the commentary. See also the discussion on women of the house in chapter two. The orthography *‘al* is written for *‘alā* which is frequent in the papyri (Hopkins § 55). For *al-ṣibyān* in the papyri, see Sijpesteijn (2013), 33.4, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary. See also the discussion on children in chapter two. The expression *‘alā aḥsan ḥāl* is restored on the basis of parallels; cf. *katabtu ilayka kitābī hādḥā wa-anā ‘alā aḥsan ḥāl wa-llāh maḥmūd* (P.Horak 85.5, 2nd/8th); *fa-innī katabtu ilayka kitābī hādḥā wa-lladhī tuḥibbu an yablughaka ‘an khāṣṣatinā wa-ḥāl mā qibalanā ‘alā aḥsan ḥāl wa-l-rabb maḥmūd* (CPR XVI 4.4-6, 2nd/8th); *katabtu ilayka kitābī hādḥā wa-anā wa-man qibalī ‘alā aḥsan al-ḥāl wa-llāh maḥmūd* (P.RāḡibLettres 6.3, 3rd/9th). The term *ahl(ihi)* appears frequently in this corpus, see 3.26; 5.2, address; 6.9; 8.3; 9.4; 17v.3; 27.13; 31.2, 13; 32.11; 33.5; 41.11. See also the discussions on women of the house and children in chapter two.

10. *Al-qarīb al-mujīb*. The two adjectives refer to attributes of God. For similar eulogies; cf. *al-laṭīf al-khabīr al-qādir ‘alā mā yurīdu* (Sijpesteijn (2013), 33.8, 2nd/8th and the commentary). See also in this corpus *Allāh al-ḥakam al-‘adl* (3.13).

9-11. *illā al-naẓara fī waj[hiki qabla al-mawt fa-as’alu Allāh] al-qarīb al-mujīb an-lā yumīt[anī ḥattā anẓur] fī wajhiki ‘a[lā] aḥsan mā [yakūn in shā’a Allāh]*. This expression is restored on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus *wa-lā amātanī ḥattā yuriyanī Allāh wujūhakum qabla al-mawt fī khayr wa-‘āfiya* (23.14-15 and the examples provided in the commentary). See also *wa-an yuriyanī wajhaka qabl al-mawāt* (3.3). The upper traces of the long *ā* of *ḥattā* and the *alif* of *anẓur* are still visible above the lacuna.

12. *Wa-as’aluhu an yarḍā ‘anki*. The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *as’aluhu* (Hopkins § 26).

Side B:

The first name of the sender is restored on the basis of the internal address. *Ibnat* is written with a *tā’ maftūḥa* in the *status constructus* which is an archaic spelling (Hopkins § 47.a). For the expression *balligh raḥimaka Allāh* and other variants such as *balligh hudīta, raḥima Allāh man ballaghahā, balligh yarḥamuka Allāh, balligh sallamaka Allāh, balligh hadāka Allāh, balligh ṣaḥibaka Allāh, balligh arshadaka Allāh* that usually appear next to the exterior address, see Grob (2010a), 78; P.Khalili I, 238-239. See also chapter one, formulary.

8.

Reporting on the father's departure from Dimyāt

P.CtYBR.inv. 2710

14 x 17.2

2nd/8th

Provenance: Unknown

Plate 13-14

Dark-brown papyrus written in black ink with a medium-thick pen in 8 lines across the fibers. The right hand side is missing with a considerable loss of text. The original cutting lines are still preserved at the top and the bottom. The papyrus sheet has been folded 5 times horizontally and 7 times vertically. Diacritical dots are sparingly added. Side B bears the address in one line written parallel to the fibers.

The characteristics of the script points at early date. For example, the upper part of *dāl* bends backwards (l. 6 Dimyāt). On occasions, *dāl* has a very long vertical stroke (l. 5 *al-ḥamdu*; l. 6 *qad*). *Ṣād* is horizontally elongated (l. 2 Ḥafṣa). *Ṭā'* has a long downward shaft at the left (l. 6 Dimyāt). Initial *kāf* is horizontally elongated (l. 3 *ka-lladhī*). Words are split across line endings (ll. 7-8 *wa-raḥmat*).

In this letter, a certain 'Uthmān b. Malad writes to his family, mostly women, i.e. Umm Ḥajar bt. Shurayḥ, Umm 'Abbās, Ḥafṣa, 'Ā'isha and 'Adiyya in order to inform them that his father swore not to write them until he departs from Dimyāt.

The letter is very short and condensed and spends much time on lengthy introductory and concluding expressions and salutations.

Text

Side A:

1. [بسم الله الرحمن-] بن [أ] لرحيم
2. [من عثمان بن ملد الى] / ابان ام حجر ابنت شريح وام عباس وحفصة وعيشة / وعديّة بنت اسد [معيل]
3. [واهلنا] كلهم سلم عليكم فانا نحمد اليكم الله الذى لا اله الا [هو]
4. [اما بعد فانا نخبر]كم من خبرنا انا سالمين صلحين كالذى يسركم لم
5. [يحدث علي]نا بعدكم والحمد لله الا خيرا وانا ما دون ما لكم
6. [واخبركم] ان ابى قد حلف لا يكتب اليكم حتا يخرج من دميّاط
7. [منى ولا رايها حتى] [أ] والسلم عليكم ور
8. [حمت الله] وبركته و [] فان [] يحيى

Side B:

من عثمان بن ملد (vac.) الى ابان بن عثمان

Diacritical dots

(3) الذي (4) كالدي

Translation

Side A:

1. [In the name of God the Compassionate, [t]he Merciful.
2. [From ‘Uthmān b. Malad] to \Abān/ Umm Ḥajar bt. Shurayḥ and Umm ‘Abbās and Ḥafṣa \and ‘Adiyya/ and ‘Ā’isha bt. Is[mā’īl]
3. [and all our family.] Peace be upon you. We praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no [god.]
4. [As for what follows, we want to let you kn]ow our news, namely that we are well and in good health, which will please you. Nothing
5. [happened to u]s after you, God be praised, except for good things. We did not of what belongs to you
6. [And I inform you] that my father swore not to write to you till he leaves Dimyāṭ
7. []. from me and do not [] Peace be upon you and
8. [God’s mercy] and blessings. And [] that [] Yahyā

Side B:

From ‘Uthmān b. Malad (vac.) to Abān b. ‘Uthmān

Commentary

Side A:

1-2. The scribe added the names Abān and ‘Adiyya as an afterthought above the line. For other attestations of the name Abān in the papyri, see P.David-Weill Louvre 24.2, dated 123/741. As for the female name ‘Adiyya, see Gratzl (1906), 30.

2. The name of the sender is restored on the basis of the exterior address. *Ibnat* is written with a *tā’ maftūḥa* (Hopkins § 47.a). ‘Ā’isha is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 24). For this name, see CPR XVI 30.9-10 and the commentary. The supplement Is[mā’īl] is a mere suggestion, since nothing but an *alif* and *sīn* are preserved.

3. For the expression *wa-ahlinā kullihim*, see in this corpus 3.26 and 5.2.

4. The *casus obliquus* of the sound masculine plural is used in *sālimīn ṣālīḥīn* where classical Arabic requires the *casus rectus* (Hopkins § 86.a) and *ṣālīḥīn* is spelled with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10). The *khā’* of *khabarinā* is very small, see also the *ḥā’ ḥalafa* in line 6.

4-5. *Lam yaḥduth ‘alaynā ba’dakum wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh illā khayran*. This expression is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. Cf. *lam yaḥduth ‘alayhim ba’daka illā khayr* (P.Marchands V/I 17.5, 3rd/9th); *lam yaḥduth ‘alā aḥad minnā illā khayr al-amr* (P.Rāgib Lettres 10.5-6, 2nd/8th).

5. *Mā lakum* could also be read as *mālukum* (your money).

6. The ancient Dimyāṭ (Gr. Ταμιάθις or Λαμιάτα) was situated at a distance of about one mile from the sea on the east bank of the Nile, see C. Peust, *Die Toponyme vorarabischen Ursprungs im modernen Ägypten* (Göttingen: Seminar für Ägyptologie und Koptologie der Universität, 2010), 38; P.Levidella Vida Damietta, 212-221 [= P.Philad 75.6 and P.World, 122],

dated 241/855. Dimyāṭ also appears in this corpus in 32.6,9; 33.12. The particle *hattā* is spelled with an *alif mamdūda* while classical Arabic requires an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.d). It is written, however, with an *alif maqṣūra* in line 7.

8. For the final *salām* greeting and the addition *wa-barakātuhu*, see in this corpus 1.21 and the commentary. It is difficult to decipher the rest of this line due to the ink is being effaced.

Side B:

The name ʿUthmān seems to have been very popular in early Islamic Egypt as it is attested in numerous letters, see in this corpus 11.3 and the commentary. For the name Malad, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr*, 1316.

9.

**Request to sail:
A letter reports on and inquiries about personal affairs**

P.Cair.Arab.inv. 1735

22 x 13.5

2nd/8th

Provenance: Unknown

Plate 15

Light-brown papyrus written in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The right half of the letter is missing with a considerable loss of text. The original margins remain on the other three sides. The papyrus sheet has been folded 11 times horizontally and 7 times vertically. Diacritical dots occur occasionally. Side B is blank.

The script is characterized by the way in which *sīn* and *shīn* are written consistently with teeth. Initial *kāf* is occasionally hairpin-shaped (l. 4 *dhakarta*). Final *yā'* sometimes bends backwards (l. 7 *fī*).

In this letter, the sender asks the addressee, both anonymous to us, to hasten to send something that remains unknown to us as speedily as possible and to meet a certain 'Abd al-Hamīd, the husband of a certain 'Abda. The sender informs the addressee further that he did not hide anything from him so that the latter would not blame him for it. The sender also asks the addressee to sail to him and to ask a woman to sail to the sender's domicile as well, since the wind is good for sailing.²⁹⁴ At the end, the sender requests the addressee to send to him lotus leaves (*sidr*). In the afterthoughts, the sender inquires whether an unidentified woman gave birth or not. The sender then asks the addressee to ask others to take good care of this woman and her baby in case she already gave birth.

The relationship between the two correspondents and between the sender and the childbearing woman is unclear, but the voice of the letter indicates a very close kinship. The mention of a ship and the request to sail strongly suggest that the two localities, where the two parties live, were connected by Nile route.

The letter is written as one block with no means to highlight the text or to mark off the onset and the end of the sections. The letter shows some grammatical and spelling mistakes. A photograph with a very short description of the script and the content is given in the catalogue of the Arabic papyri in the national library of Egypt (P.DarAlKutub).

Text

1. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
2. [من الى سلم عليك فان-ى احمد اليك الله الذى لا اله الا هو (vac.)]
3. [اما بعد عافانا الله واياك وعفا ع-نا وعنا كتبت اليك وانا سالم صالح]
4. [كالذى يسرك والحمد لله بلغنى كتابك فقرا]ته وفهمت ما ذكرت من سلامتك وسلامة اهلنا
5. [وحدت ا]الله عليه حمدا كثيرا وسالته تمام ذلك علينا
6. [وعليك] م اليك الينا
7. [فيه ولم اخفى عنك شيئا ليلا تلومنى فى شى]
8. [ابى بصر يبعث الى نفر شى فتعاهد]
9. [تبعث]- به الينا ويكون /ذلك\ مع اول رسول يقدم من قبلكم

²⁹⁴ See also the commentary for a different interpretation.

10.] [سـ]فينة تتوجه فاقدم علينا فاذا اردت
 11.] [برا وتلقا عبد الحميد زوج عبدة فتوصيه
 12.] [برا ولا تضيعه وقف على الباب فارسل الى
 13.] [هم ما كانت لهم من حاجة ولا تدع خبر يكون
 14.] [به وحدثها تقدم اليها فان الريح طيبة
 15.] [عد ا ما كتبت به اليك واعلم لو انى قدرت
 16.] [واهدى لنا سدر نغسل به روسنا
 17.] [بلغ حـ]بيب السلم والسلم عليك ورحمت الله وكتب
 18.] [هـ]ل ولدت فان كانت قد ولدت فاوصيهم بها وبولدها
 19.] [ببت ولدها خيرا]

Diacritical dots

(3 اليك (4 اهلنا (5 سألته (7 سيا; ليلا (8 بصر (10 تتوجه (11 تلقا (15 اليك (16 اهدي²⁹⁵; لنا; روسنا (18 ولدت; ولدت; فاوصيهم (19 بيت

Translation

1. [In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.]
2. [From to Peace be upon you. I] praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no god. (vac.)
3. [As for what follows, may God protect us and you and may He forgive u]s and you. I am writing to you, whereas I am well and in good health,
4. [as you wish, God be praised. Your letter reached me and I read] it and understood what you mentioned about your wellbeing and the wellbeing of our family
5. [Therefore I praised G]od for it abundantly and I asked Him the completion of this for us
6. [and you] to you to us
7. [] in it. I did not hide anything from you, so that you would not blame me for it.
8. [] Abū Naṣr to send to anything, so take care
9. [send] it to us. And \this/ should be with the first messenger coming from your side
10. [a sh]ip heading for (our direction), so come to us. If you wanted
11. [].. and you have to meet ‘Abd al-Hamīd, the husband of ‘Abda, to command him
12. [].. and do not leave him standing at the door. So send to me
13. [] .. any need they have. Do not withhold any news that
14. [] .. and ask her to come to us, for the wind is good for sailing.
15. []... what I wrote to you. And know that if I was able
16. [] and supply us with lotus (leaves) in order to wash our heads.

²⁹⁵ The two dots of the final yā’ are placed inside the bend, see P.World, 85.

17. [send to Ḥa]bīb greetings. Peace be upon you and God's mercy and it has been written.
18. []. gave birth. If she gave birth, ask them to take good care of her and her child
19. []... and her child.

Commentary

1. Of the *basmala* only the tail of the *mīm* of *al-rahīm* can be seen intersecting with the *alif* of *aḥmadu* in the next line.

2-5. These lines are reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see the other letters in this corpus. See also Grob (2010a), 39-42.

6. This line is indecipherable due to the folding of the fibers.

7. The long vowel is maintained in the jussive, *wa-lam ukhfī*, where classical Arabic requires a short vowel (Hopkins § 81.a). The orthography *shayyan* for *shay'an* is frequent in the papyri (Hopkins §15.d). *Shay'* is written without final *hamza* (Hopkins § 19).

8. For the name Naṣr and other possible readings, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 528. See also P.Cair.Arab. II 93.5, dated 251/865 and the commentary. For the expression *fa-ta'āhad*, see in this corpus 31.19.

9. The scribe added the word *dhālika* as an afterthought above the line. For expressions using the word *qibla*, see P.khalili I, 127. See also in this corpus 38.6 and the commentary. For *rasūl* (courier), see Grob (2010a), 99-100 and P.Khalili I, 159.

10. The mention of the *saḥna* strongly suggests that the two places were connected by Nile route. This assumption could also be confirmed by the request to sail in line 14. For transportation via the Nile in early Muslim Egypt according to the papyri, P.SijpesteijnTravel, 115-152. See also Younes (2013), 320-323.

11. *Talqā* is spelled with an *alif mamdūda* while classical Arabic requires an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.c). For the female name 'Abda, see Gratzl (1906), 27.

12. The scribe misspelled the word *wāqifan* as *waqf. Ilā* could also be read as *ilayya*.

14. *Wa-ḥaddithhā taqdim ilaynā fa-inna al-rīḥ ṭayyiba*. *Asyndetic* clauses are extremely frequent in the papyri (Hopkins § 268-9). The sentence *al-rīḥ ṭayyiba* can also be understood as the weather is nice, see the discussion on sickness.

16. *Wa-hdī lanā sidr naghsil bihi ru'ūsanā*. For similar expressions using the root *h-d-ā*, see in this corpus *wa-nzur an tahdī lī* (26.6). *Sidr* (pl. *sudūr*) is the Lotus tree. The leaves of this tree were used as soap to wash the hair; cf. P.Genizah 4.7, 10. See also Ibn Manẓūr, 1971. *Ru'ūsanā* is written without *hamza* (Hopkins § 19).

17. The *ḥā'* of Ḥabīb is missing. For the expression *wa-kutiba* and other expressions to be used to signal the closure of letters, see P.Khalili I, 194. See also in this corpus 24.19 and 38.12.

18-19. For other references to childbirth in the papyri, see the discussion on children in chapter two.

10.

**Reporting on the sender's presence in Alexandria:
A letter addressed to a woman**

P.CtYBR.inv. 2603
Provenance: Unknown

22.9 x 19.2

2nd/8th
Plate 16-17

Medium-brown papyrus written in a somewhat flowing hand in black ink with a medium-thick pen in 13 lines across the fibers. The left hand side is missing with a considerable loss of text. The original cutting lines have been preserved on the other three sides. Two broad margins are left blank at the top and on the right hand side. There are some small lacunae in the middle of the papyrus that have caused minimal damage to the text. Side B bears traces of one line of the address. Diacritical dots occur frequently but randomly.

The script is characterized by the way in which final *alif* extends below the base line (l. 4 'āfānā; l. 6 anā). *Alif maqṣūra* occasionally has two dots below it or inside the bend (l. 2 ilā). The lower stroke of initial 'ayn extends to the right (l. 4 'āfānā). Fā has one dot below it and qāf has one dot over it (l. 9 ṣidqan; l. 10 fīlan). Initial kāf is horizontally elongated (l. 7 uktubī). The tail of the final yā occasionally bends backwards (ll. 3, 8 fa-innī).

In this letter, a certain 'Aṭā writes to a woman called Wahba bt. Sālim asking her to write to his master at his order. He informs her that they are in Alexandria at the present time. The letter closes as usual with the request to write back with her news, condition and needs, greetings to and from relatives and the final *salām* greeting.

The letter shows some means to highlight words in the text. It shows also some grammatical mistakes and incorrect spelling.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. الى وهبة ابنت سلم من عط[با سلم عليك]
3. فانى احمد اليك الله الذى لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. اما بعد عافانا الله واياك من كل سو وعفا عنا وعنك
5. برحمته كتبت اليك عافاك الله كتابي هذا
6. وانا وسيدى على الذى يسر[ك والحمد لله]
7. اكتبى الى سيدى وبامره عـ]
8. فانى ... بن يخبر الصلاح عنك ا]
9. صدقا وقد كتبتى الينا انك انتـ]
10. بالاسكندرية فعلا والله وذ لك
11. ان لو قفلنا اكتبى الى بما يكون لك [من حاجة فان]
12. فيها الذى انت اهله منا اقرى مـ[نى السلم]
13. وعلى ام يزيد السلام والسلم [عليك ورحمت الله]

Side B:

[إلى وهبة ابنت سلم مـ] (vac.) محمد

Diacritical dots

(1) الرحيم (2) الي; وهبه (3) الذي (4) بعد (5) برحمته (6) انا; سيدي; علي; يسرك (8) يحب; عنك (9) صدفا; فد; كتبتى; الي
(10) فعلا (11) ان; فعلنا; اكتبى (12) فيها; الذي; انت; منا.

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To Wahba bt. Sālīm from ‘Aṭ[ā]’ Peace be upon you]
3. I praise for your sake God, other than whom [there is no god. (vac.)]
4. As for what follows, may God save us and yo[u from all evils and may He forgive us and you]
5. through His mercy. I am writing to yo[u, may God save you, this letter of mine,]
6. whereas I and my lord are as you wi[sh, God be praised.]
7. Write to my lord at his order, [
8. because I knows about your righteousness .[
9. verily. You have written to us that you [
10. in Alexandria, indeed, by God and thi[s
11. only if we return. Write to me about [your needs, for]
12. in (fulfilling) it lies what you deserve most from us. Send [from me to greetings]
13. and send to Umm Yazīd greetings. Peace [be upon you and God’s mercy.]

Side B:

[To Wahba bt. Sālīm fr]om (vac.) Muḥammad

Commentary

Side A:

1. The *basmala* extends about one centimeter further into the right margin than the other lines do. There is a very long connecting line between the *sīn* and *mīm* of *bi-sm*. See also ‘Aṭā’ in line 2, ‘āfānā in line 4 and *bi-rahmatihī* in line 5.

2. *ilā* has an extremely long bending *yā’* which extends into the margin. For the female name Wahba, see Gratzl (1906), 28. *Ibnat* is written with a *tā’ maftūḥa* (Hopkins § 47.a). *Sālīm* is written defectively without long *ā* (Hopkins § 10). Of the name ‘Aṭā’ on the ‘ayn and ṭā’ are preserved.

3. The *ḥamdala* is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. A vacant space is to be expected after the *ḥamdala*, owing to the fact that the transitional element *ammā ba'du* appears in line 4.

4-5. The formula *'āfānā Allāh wa-ıyyāki min kull sū' wa-'afā 'annā wa-'anki bi-raḥmatihi* is restored on the basis of countless parallels. See the other letters in this corpus.

5-6. For the use of the expression *bi-raḥmatihi* to close a whole section of blessings, see Grob (2010a), 45. The formula *katabtu ilayyiki 'āfāki Allāh wa-ıyyānā kitābī hādhā wa-anā wa-sayyidī 'alā alladhī yasurruki wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh* is restored on the basis of parallels. See the parallels in this corpus in 5.4-5; 6.4-5; 23.6-7 and the examples provided in the commentaries. The orthography *'al* is written for *'alā* (Hopkins § 55). Also written thus in line 13.

7. The word *uktubī* is written differently from the way in which it is written in line 11, but the reading is the only fitting one.

9. *Bi-l-Iskandariyya*. The *lām-alif* is written differently here from the way in which this character is written in the rest of the text, but the reading is certain. Alexandria appears also in this corpus in 11.14; 39.address.

11. Expressions using the verb *qafala* (to return) are not attested in the papyri. *Uktubī ilayya bi-mā yakūn laki min ḥāja*. For this formula and variants of it, see P.Horak 85.10, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in the commentary.

12. For the expression *fa-inna fihā alladhī anti ahluhu minnā*, see *bimā anta ahluhu*, CPR XVI 26.7, 9, 2nd/8th.

13. *Al-salām* is written with long *ā* as standard in classical Arabic. It is written, however, without long *ā* in the final greetings.

Side B:

[*Ilā Wahba bt. Sālim*] *min Muḥammad*. The name of the female addressee is reconstructed on the basis of the internal address. In the exterior address the sender is given as Muḥammad, while the internal address mentions a certain 'Aṭā'.

11.

**Inquiring about the departure of the female addressee:
A man writes to his family**

P.Khalili II 28
Provenance: Unknown

17 x 13

2nd/8th
Plate 18-19

Dark-brown papyrus written in a somewhat flowing hand in 16 lines in black ink with a thin pen across the fibers. The both sides are missing with a considerable loss of text. The original margins remain at the top and the bottom. At the bottom, a margin of 3 cm has been left blank. Diacritical dots occur very sparingly. Side B bears one line of the address written parallel to the fibers.

The script shows some features of the early script, i.e. the tops of the letters *dāl/dhāl* sometimes bend at the top to the right (l. 15 *idhā*). Initial and medial *kāfs* are horizontally elongated (l. 7 *katabtu*; l. 8 *taktubi*). The tail of the final *yā'* bends backwards consistently (l. 3 *fa-innī*).

This letter is sent from two male senders, a certain al-Nu'mān b. Shu'ayb, being one of them, to four male and female addressees, i.e. Umm Nu'aym bt. Nu'aym, Ḥammād, Umm 'Uthmān and Yazīd b. 'Uthmān. Although the letter states that there are two senders and four addressees, the voice of the letter is first-person singular and the addressee of the letter is grammatically singular feminine. The content of the letter is somewhat incomprehensible due to the fragmentary state of the papyrus. In lines 7-11, the sender informs the female addressee that he wrote to her a letter before this one and asks her to write back to him and to inform him before she travels to him. At the end of the letter, the cities Kharbitā, Alexandria and Maryūt are mentioned in an unclear context. Probably, the female addressee will travel to or pass by these cities. The relationship between the senders and the addressees is not clear, but the voice of the letter indicates a very close kinship.

The letter is well composed and structured in three paragraphs separated each by a one cm space. A photograph with a short description of the script and the content of the papyrus is published in P.Khalili II 28.

Text

Side A:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| | .1 |
| [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم | |
| [من | .2 |
| [رنة والنعمان بن شعيب الى ام نعيم [ب-]نت نعيم وحماد] | |
| [و] ام عثمان ويزيد بن عثمان سلم عليكم فاني احمد اليكم الله الذ[ى] | .3 |
| [لا اله الا هو اما بعد ا]صلحنا الله واياكم صلاح من رضى عنه منا و[منكم | .4 |
| [| .5 |
| [| .6 |
| [فان كان | |
| [وقد كنت كتبت اليك ان وبما لك] | .7 |
| [| .8 |
| [تكتبى الى بجواب كتابى] | |
| [| .9 |
| [علينا (vac.) | |
| [| .10 |
| [اما الخروج الينا الا ما نرجوا لك من رفق] | |
| [| .11 |
| [ننظر] فى وجوهكم فان كنت خارجة الينا فكتبى لنا] | |

- .12 [شذك (vac.)]
 .13 [الذى قدم به مدرك] [رت ان يضعف]
 .14 [وخربتا والاسكندرية متاع.. م ومريوط ان شا [الله
 .15 [حميد عندنا اذا قدمتم ان شا الله ابغوا جميع ... منا [السلم
 .16 [والسلم عليكم ورحمت الله وبركته]

Side B:

بعد المغرب (؟) (vac.) مسجد الاحرون (؟)

Diacritical dots

(12) شذك (14) خربتا

Translation**Side A:**

1. [In the name of God the Companion]ate, the Merciful.
2. [From ...] and al-Nu'mān b. Shu'ayb to Umm Nu'aym bt. Nu'aym and Ḥammād [
3. [and] Umm 'Uthmān and Yazīd b. 'Uthmān. Peace be upon you. I praise for your sake God othe[r]
4. [than Whom there is no god. As for what follows, m]ay God mend us and you likewise He mend those He is pleased with from us and [you
5. [] we wrote to you
6. [] if there was
7. [] I have written to you that and what for you
8. [] write to me the answer of this letter of mine [
9. [] to us (vac.)
10. [] departure to us as we wish you [
11. [to look] at your faces. So if you are willing to depart to us, write to us [
12. [] ... (vac.)
13. [] which was brought by Mudrik [] .. to weaken
14. [] and Kharbitā and Alexandria andm and Maryūt, if [God wills.
15. [] ... with us if you come, if God wills. Send to all ... from us [greetings
16. [] Peace be upon you and God's mercy and blessings.

Side B:

After the sunset prayer (?) (vac.) the mosque of al-Aḥrūn (?)

Commentary

Side A:

2. The scribe added the second sender al-Nu‘mān b. Shu‘ayb as an afterthought. He first wrote *ilā*, he then changed his mind and modified it to al-Nu‘mān. The backward bending *yā* of *ilā* can still be seen underlining the name al-Nu‘mān. The proper name al-Nu‘mān is attested in this corpus both with and without long *ā*, see 30.2; 35.7. The proper name Nu‘aym appears also in this corpus in 24.2.

3. ‘Uthmān is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.b.ii). This name appears often in our corpus, see 8.2, address; 11.3; 19.17, address; 20.8; 31.2.

4. For the eulogy *aṣḥānā Allāh wa-iyyāki ṣalāḥ man raḍiya ‘anhu*, see *aṣḥānā Allāh wa-iyyāka bi-mā aṣḥā bihi awliyā’ahu wa-ahl ṭā’atihi* (CPR XVI 33.5-6, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); *aṣḥānā Allāh wa-iyyāka bi-mā aṣḥā bihi awliyā’ahu wa-aṣfiyā’ahu wa-aḥbā’ahu wa-ahl ṭā’atihi man raḍiya ‘anhu min khalqihī wa-kāna lahu wāliyan wa-naṣīran* (P.Genv.V 5.11-14, 2nd/8th).

5-9. These five lines are mostly destroyed. Only traces of words can be reconstructed, but the preserved vestiges are not enough to extract a continuous sense.

10. *Narjū* is spelled with an *alif fāṣila* at the end against classical Arabic rules (Hopkins § 50.a.i).

11. For the name Mudrik, see al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 11, 197. For the expression *nanzur fī wujūhikum*, see in this corpus 23.14 and the commentary.

12. Alexandria appears also in this corpus in 10.10; 39.address. For Khirbitā and Maryūt, see Peust (2010), 61-62, 102. The name of a fourth city is given of which only a *mīm* is preserved.

15. *Abliḡū jamī*. The scribe first wrote a singular imperative, i.e. *abliḡ*, and then he added a *wāw* and an *alif* at the end as follows: ابليغوا.

16. For the final *salām* greeting and the addition *wa-barakātuhu*, see 1.21 and the commentary. See also chapter one, formulary.

Side B:

Only traces of ink can be seen. The reading is tentative.

12.

A beginning of a letter from a man to his family

P.Cam.Michaelides X 8.13

10.5 x 9

1st-2nd/7th-8th

Provenance: Unknown

Plate 20

Medium-brown papyrus written with a thin pen in an elegant and clear hand in black ink across the fibers. The papyrus sheet is broken off on all four sides. Wide blank spaces have been left between words and lines. The papyrus sheet was folded 7 times horizontally and 6 times vertically. Side B contains traces of one line of the address written parallel to the fibers. There are very few diacritical dots.

The text shows many features of the early script, i.e. the upper part of *dāl/dhāl* bends to the right (l. 4 *aḥmadu*; l. 5 *wa-l-ḥamdu*). *Sīn* normally has teeth (l. 3 *Sahl*; l. 4 *salām*). Medial ‘*ayn* is open at the top (l. 7 *yaj’ala*). Initial and medial *kāfs* are horizontally elongated (l. 4 ‘*alaykum*; l. 7 *wa-iyyākum*; l. 9 *kullihī*). The tail of the final *mīm* is extremely short (l. 7 *iyyākum*). Final *yā* extends backwards (l. 4 *fa-innī*; l. 9 *fī*).

This letter has been sent from one ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān to a certain ‘Ammār and another three women, i.e. Umm ‘Abd al-Jabbār, Umm Sahl and Umm ‘Abd ?. Of the letter only the top with the introductory formulae and extensive blessings and prayers to the addressees is preserved.

Text

Side A:

1. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
2. [من عبد الـ]رحمن بن ابى عبد الر[رحمن الى عمار بن ابى
3. [وام عبد ا]الجبار وام سهل وام عـ[يد
4. [واهلنا كلهم] سلم عليكم فانى احمد [اليكم الله الذى لا اله هو]
5. [اما بعد كتابى اليكم] وانا والحمد لله سلمين [صلحين كالذى يسركم
6. [من فضل ورحـ]مته نسل الله ربنا ان يتم [علينا وعلينا نعمته
7. [وان يـ]بسننا واياكم عافيته وان يجعلـ[ل مصيرنا واياكم الجنة برحمته
8. [وان يرضى] عنا وعنكم وان نشكره حـ[ق شكره
9. [وان يجمع] بيننا فى الخير كله فالحمد لله
10. [] فيما احـ[د]

Side B:

[من عبد] الرحمن (vac.) الى عمار بن ابى]

Diacritical dots

(5) انا ; سلمين (7) بيننا

Translation

Side A:

1. [In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.]
2. [From ‘Abd al-]Raḥmān b. Abū ‘Abd al-[Raḥmān to ‘Ammār b. Abū
3. [and Umm ‘Abd al-]Jabbār and Umm Sahl and Umm ‘A[bd
4. [and all our family.] Peace be upon you. I praise [for your sake God, other than Whom there is no god.]
5. [As for what follows, my letter to you,] whereas we are, praise be to God, well [and in good health as you wish
6. [through God’s benevolence and mer]cy. We ask God, our Lord, to complete [for us and you His benefaction
7. [and to co]ver us and you with His beneficence and may He ma[ke the paradise our and your destiny through His mercy
8. [and may He be pleased with] us and you and may He make us capable of expressing [many thanks to Him
9. [and may He bring] us together in all good, praise [be to God
10. [] in that .. [

Side B:

[From ‘Abd] al-Raḥmān (vac.) to ‘Ammār b. Abū [

Commentary**Side A:**

1. The top of the letter is missing. The second line bears the address, suggesting that not more than the *basmala* is missing at the top.

2. Of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān only the *rā’*, *ḥā’*, *mīm* and *nūn* are still visible. *Abī* has a long backward bending *yā’*. The patronymic of the sender can be made out with difficulty. The name ‘Ammār is reconstructed on the basis of the exterior address.

3. Of Umm ‘Abd al-Jabbār only the *lām*, *jīm*, *bā’*, *alif* and *rā’* are preserved. The proper name Sahl is very common in the papyri; cf. P.Cair.Arab. I 39.26, 3rd/9th. The name appears also in this corpus in 5v.2. See also the female form Sahla in P.RāḡibLettres 11r.2, 2nd/8th.

4. The expression *wa-ahlinā kullihim* is restored on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 5.2; 8.3.

5. The formula *ammā ba’adu kitābī ilaykum wa-innā wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh sālimīn ṣaliḥīn kalladhī yasurrukum* is restored on the basis of countless parallels, see in this corpus 5.4-5 and the examples given in the commentary. The tail of the *mīm* of *ilaykum* is still visible. The *casus obliquus* of the sound masculine plural is used in *sālimīn* where classical Arabic requires the *casus rectus* (Hopkins § 86.a) and it is spelled without long *ā*. Most probably, *ṣaliḥīn* was also spelled without long *ā*.

6. The formula *min faḍl Allāh wa-raḥmatihī* is restored on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 6.9.

6-7. *Nas'alu Allāh an yutimma 'alaynā wa-'alaykum ni'matahu wa-an yulbisanā wa-iyyākum 'āfiyatahu wa-an yaj'ala maṣīranā wa-iyyākum al-janna bi-rahmatihī*. For the first part of this blessing; cf. *nas'alu Allāh an yutimma 'alaynā wa-'alaykum ni'matahu ayḍan* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 28.7, 2nd/8th); *nas'alu Allāh an yutimma 'alayka wa-'alaynā ni'matahu* (CPR XVI 27.2, 1st-2nd/7th-8th). For the middle part, see *nas'alu Allāh an yulbisanā wa-iyyāka 'āfiyatahu* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 25.4, 2nd/8th); *albasaka āfiyatahu* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 24.3, 2nd/8th and P.Heid.Arab. II 32.2, 3rd/9th). As for the final part; cf. *wa-ja'ala maṣīranā wa-iyyāka al-janna bi-rahmatihī* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 26.3, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in the commentary).

7. Only traces of the *yā'*, *lām* and *nūn* of *yulbisanā* are visible. The *lām* of *yaj'ala* is missing.

9. *Wa-an yajma'a baynanā fi al-khayr kullihī wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh*. For this formula, see in this corpus *jam'a Allāh baynī wa-baynaki fi 'āfiya wa-surūr* (1.21-22). See also *as'alu Allāh an yajma'a baynanā wa-baynaka fi 'āfiya* (P.Marchands II 8.7, 3rd/9th).

10. Only upper traces of letters can be detected among the ink traces remaining in this line.

Side B:

[*Min 'Abd*] *al-Rahmān ilā 'Ammār b. Abī* [.. . The name of the sender is restored on the basis of the partially preserved address on side A. The name 'Ammār is clearly visible after the preposition *ilā*.

13.

**About a poor and needy boy:
A woman writes to a male relative**

P.Cam.Michaelides A 1041 recto
Provenance: Unknown

40 x 15.5

2nd/8th
Plate 21

Dark-brown long piece of papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in black ink across the fibers. The right hand side is missing resulting in a loss of more than the half of the text. Likewise, the letter is incomplete at the bottom where an unknown number of lines is missing. The fibers are also crumbled in places at the top obscuring the reading. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on the top and the left hand side. On the top, traces of two lines belonging to the address of letter 23 can be detected (see the introduction to no. 23). There are very few diacritical dots.

The script is characterized by the way in which final *alif* extends below the connecting stroke (l. 18 *tabqā*). *Sīn* and *shīn* normally have teeth (l. 10 *salāmatihī*; l. 25 *shiqqa*). The tail of the final *yā'* bends backwards (l. 2 *alladhī*; l. 23 *ghulāmī*). Final *tā' marbūṭa* and *hā'* are occasionally v-shaped at the top (l. 17 *ma'ahu*).

In this letter, a woman, whose name is lost, writes to a certain Marwān b. Yazīd. Due to the fragmentary state of the papyrus only the introductory formulae and few sentences of the body of the letter can be reconstructed. The female sender informs the addressee about a certain al-Zubayr, who is poor and needy. She asks the addressee to buy him a garment as compensation. The sender asks the addressee further to send her her servant Jalbūb.

The letter is written as one block but shows some means to highlight the text. The letter also shows some grammatical mistakes and incorrect spellings.

Text

Side A:

1. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
2. [من الى مروان بن يزيد سلم عليك فاني احم]د [ا]ل[ب]ك الله الذي
3. [لا اله الا هو] (vac.)
4. اما بعد عافانا الله واياك من [السو برحمته
5.]د والله محم[ود] مشكو[ر]
6. واتم[نعمته علينا وعليك فانه ولي ذلك
7. والقادر عليه وصل كتابك وفهمت الذي ذكرت] من سلامة الله اياك
8. فحمدت الله على سلامته] اياك حمدا كثيرا فلذلك
9. [سلامته وفضله وعافية الله
10. فاسل الله ان يبقيك في خي[ر] وعافية وان يبقيك ما دام
11.]ا حتى نراك في خير وعافية
12. [كتابك الى وبعثت لك كل
13.] ما بعثت به الى فاسل الله
14.]ه خير وقره عين
15. [اسلمهم عنك وعن سلامتك
16.] باكر يخرج الا وانا اكتب اليك معه

17. [يه لك على من الحق وانه لم يبقا
 18. [اهم فاما الزبير فهو عند ايوب
 19. [مسكين ليس كما تعرفه فاعطف
 20. [فانه المعنى بامرك المهتم به
 21. [ا رزقك الله فانه قد بلغ وهو يذهب
 22. [ولك ان تبعث الى بغلامى واسمه حلبوب
 23. [به به فاسل الله ان يمتعك به وان يبيئك
 24. [وا شترى له شقة قطى تجعلها له جبر
 25. [له بسلامته ومعه جبة للبسنا
 26. [والا تشمت بى احدا فانى شقية
 27.

Side B:

الى مروان بن يزيد]

Diacritical dots

15 (عين 16) سلامتك (17) انا (18) من (19) ايوب (20) مسكين (21) المهتم (22) يذهب (23) حلبوب (25) جبر (26) جبه;
 للسنا (27) شقيه

Translation

Side A:

1. [In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.]
2. [From to Marwān b. Yazīd. Peace be upon you. I praise for] y[ou]r sake God,
3. [other than Whom, there is no god.] (vac.)
4. [As for what follows, may God protect us and you from] evil through His mercy.
5.]. God be prai[sed] and thank[ed.]
6. and may He complete] for us and you His blessing as He [is the one to have control over th]is
7. and power to do it. Your letter reached me and I understood what you mentioned] about the safeguarding of God towards you.
8. Therefore, I praised God for His safeguarding] towards you abundantly, for this
9.] His safeguarding, His favour and God's blessing.
10. I ask God to protect you in good] and health and to prolong your life as long as
11.]. until we see you in good and health
12.] your letter to me and I sent to you all
13.] what you sent to me. So I ask God
14.]. in health and delight
15.] I ask them about you and about your sound condition
16.] leaves tomorrow morning, until I write to you with him

17.].. (in recognition of what) I owed you. He did not stay
 18.]... as for al-Zubayr, he is with Ayyūb
 19. p]oor not like how you know about him (from before,) so help
 20.] because he is the one who takes care of your affair
 21.] may God sustain you. He arrived and he goes
 22.] for you to send me my servant, whose name is Jalbūb
 23.] I ask God to give you enjoyment through him and to protect you
 24. and b]uy for him a garment as compensation
 25.] in his safeguarding and he has a garment to wear
 26.] and do not rejoice anyone over me as I am depressed
 27.

Side B:

To Marwān b. Yazīd [

Commentary

1-3. The top of this letter is missing. The beginning of the second line and the contents of the letter suggest that not more than the *basmala* is missing at the top. The name of the addressee is reconstructed on the basis of side B where the name appears clearly.

4. [‘*Āfānā Allāh min*] *al-sū’ bi-raḥmatihī*. Blessings of this kind following the transitional element *amma ba’dū* are very common in early letters. Cf. ‘*āfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka min kull sū’ wa-ja’ala maṣīranā wa-iyyāka jannāt al-na’īm bi-raḥmatihī* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 31.3-4, 2nd/8th and P.Horak 85.4-5, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in both commentaries). See also chapter one, formulary. Traces of *bi-raḥmatihī* can be made out at the end of this line. The expression *bi-raḥmatihī* appears sometimes in combination with the phrase *fī al-dunyā wa-l-ākhirā*, see Grob (2010a), 45.

6. The formula *wa-llāh maḥmūd mashkūr* and variants of it often follow the announcement of the wellbeing of the sender. See in this corpus 35.6 and the examples given in the commentary.

7. The expression *wa-atamma ni’matahu ‘alaynā wa-‘alayka* is reconstructed on the basis of countless parallels. See for example in this corpus 22.8-9. Enough space is available at the beginning of the line for the restoration of *ni’matahu* which is partially effaced.

7-8. The formula *innahu wāliyy dhālika wa-l-qādir ‘alayhi* occurs frequently in letters, see P.Khalili I 18.20, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands II 8.7, 3rd/9th and the references given in both commentaries. See also in this corpus 7.6.

8-9. *Waṣala kitābuka wa-fahimtu alladhī dhakarta min salāmat Allāh iyyāka fa-ḥamidtu Allāh ‘alā salāmatihī iyyāka ḥamdan kathīran* is reconstructed on the basis of many attestations of this very common formula. This expression and variants of it often follow the announcement of receiving the addressee’s letter and knowing his wellbeing. Cf. *atānī kitābuka wa-sarranī salāmat Allāh iyyāka wa-man qibalaka fa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh ‘alā dhālika kathīran* (P.Marchands V/I 6.3, 3rd/9th); *waṣala ilayya kitābuka ḥafizaka Allāh wa-fahimtu mā katabta bihi ilayya min salāmat Allāh iyyāka fa-ḥamidtu Allāh ‘alayhi ḥamdan kathīran* (P.Marchands V/I 18.4,

3rd/9th); *atānī kitābuka ḥafīẓaka Allāh yā akhī bi-mā sarranī min salāmat Allāh iyyāka wa-salāmat al-shaykh wa-‘ammika fa-sarranī dhālika wa-ḥamidtu Allāh ‘alayhi ḥamdan kathīran* (P.Marchands V/I 20.4, 3rd/9th); *wa-ṣala ilayya kitābuka fa-qara’ tuhu wa-fahimtu mā katabta min salāmat Allāh iyyāka fa-sarranī dhālika wa-ḥamidtu Allāh ‘alā dhālika kathīran* (P.Marchands II 24.5, 3rd/9th); *atānī kitābuka wa-fahimtu mā katabta fihi min salāmat Allāh iyyāka ...wa-qad ḥamidtu Allāh ‘alā dhālika ḥamdan kamā huwa ahluhu* (P.Marchands II 35.8, 3rd/9th); *qad fahimtu kitābuka wa-mā dhakarta fihi min khabar salāmat wa-ṣalāh ḥālika ‘alā mā sarraka* (CPR XVI 34.4, 3rd/9th). On other occasions, this expression follows the announcement of the wellbeing of the sender himself. See for example, *katabtu ilayka ‘an salāma wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh* (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 15[= P.World, 175 b].3, 2nd-3rd/8th-9th); *kitābī ilayka a‘azzaka Allāh ‘an salāma wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh kathīran* (P.Heid.Arab. II 18.4, 3rd/9th); *kitābī ilaykumā a‘azzakumā Allāh ‘an salāma wa-‘āfiya wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh kathīran* (P.Heid.Arab. II 57.3, 3rd/9th); *kitābī hādḥā wa-anā bi-ḥāl ‘āfiya wa-salāma wa-li-llāh al-ḥamdu lā sharīk lahu* (P.Khalili I 20v.2, 3rd/9th).

10-12. The formula *fa-as’alu Allāh an yubqiyaka fi khayr wa-‘āfiya wa-an yubqiyaka mā dāma ḥattā narāka fi khayr wa-‘āfiya* is restored on the basis of parallels. Cf. *fa-as’alu Allāh alladhī huwa fi khayr wa-‘āfiya wa-as’alu an yubqiyaka wa-an yadfa’ ‘anka al-sū’ bi-rahḥmatihi* (P.Marchands V/I 6.7-8, 3rd/9th); *fa-as’alu Allāh an yubqiyaki wa-yaj’ala yawmī qabla yawmiki* (P.Heid.Arab. II 51.6, 3rd/9th); *fa-as’alu Allāh al-rahḥmān al-rahīm an yubqiyaka wa-an yuriyanā fika al-‘āfiya* (P.Khalili I 14.7, 2nd/8th); *wa-as’alu an yubqiyaka wa-an yadfa’a ‘anka al-sū’ bi-rahḥmatihi* (P.Marchands V/I 6.7, 3rd/9th).

14. Post-consonantal medial hamza is omitted in *fa-as’alu* (Hopkins § 26). Also written so in line 24.

15. *Khayr* is written differently here from the way in which it is written in line 12, but this reading seems to be the only fitting one.

16. *As’aluhum ‘anka wa-‘an salāmatika*. One expects proper names to have preceded *as’aluhum* to whom the personal pronoun *hum* refers to. *As’aluhum* is written defectively without the post-consonantal medial hamza (Hopkins § 26). There are two ink spots that could be mistaken for diacritics above the *tā’* and under the *kāf* of *salāmatika*.

17. *Bākir yakhruju illā wa-anā aktubu ilayka mā’ahu*. One expects a subject to have preceded *bākir*, such as a person (proper name), to whom the personal pronoun *hu* in *mā’ahu* refers to. *Bākir* can also be understood as a proper name.

18. *Laka ‘alayya min al-ḥaqq wa-annahu lam yabqā*. The long vowel is maintained in the jussive, *lam yabqā*, where classical Arabic requires a short vowel (Hopkins § 81.d) and it is written with an *alif mamdūda* (Hopkins § 12.c).

19. *Fa-ammā* is written as one ligature. The name *al-Zubayr* appears also in this corpus in 3.22.

20. *Miskīn laysa kamā ta’rifahu fa-ṭif*. The term *miskīn* appears frequently in begging letters and petitions, where the sender usually describes himself as a weak, poor and needy person in order to entreat the addressee’s compassion and sympathy. Cf. *annī yatīm miskīn wa-anā insān miskīn* (P.World, 186, 2nd-3rd/8th-9th); *innī anā insān miskīn* (P.Jahn 7[= P.World, 185].4, 2nd/8th); *fa-innahu miskīn* (P.World, 162, 2nd/8th); *wa-naḥnu ḍu’afā’ masākīn* (P.Ryl.Arab. II (2) 11.9, 3rd/9th); *anā mar’a miskīna fa-innī miskīna ḍa’īfa mustaghītha bi-llāh thuma bika* (P.Ryl.Arab. I XV 1.2, 4-5, 3rd/9th); *masākīn ḍu’afā’* (P.Marchands II 20.5, 3rd/9th). Sometimes, the petitioner goes far to describe him as naked, hungry and thirsty. Cf. *wa-annā wa-llāh*

‘uryāna jā’i‘a ‘aṭshāna (P.Marchands II 23.13-14, 3rd/9th); wa-anā wa-llāh yā akhī fī ḥāl lā ya‘lamuhā illā Allāh ‘azza wa-jalla min al-jū‘ wa-lā thawb ‘alayya wa-lawlā annhu al-shitā’ mā ‘amiltu wa-akhāfu bard al-‘arā la-kharajtu hārib ‘alā wajhī min al-jū‘ wa-lakinī akhāfu al-bard wa-l-‘arā wa-qad taqāṭa‘at thiyābī wa-anā jā’i‘ mayt bi-l-jū‘ (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 8.5-12, 3rd/9th). The term *miskīn* also has another technical meaning related to alms’ payments (*ṣadaqa/zakāt*). A small number of documents recording the payment, collection and distribution of alms has already been published and studied. See P.Khalili I 1 and references given in the commentary; Sijpesteijn (2013), 8; Sijpesteijn (2011), 260-261.

22. The two dots of the *yā*’ of *yadhhab* are misplaced under the *hā*’.

23. *An tab‘atha ilayya bi-ghulāmī wa-smuhu Jalbūb*. The name *Jalbūb* and other possible readings such as *Ḥalbūb*, *Jalbūn* are not recorded in onomastic dictionaries.

25-26. *Shiqqa* (pl. *shiqāq*) is a piece of cloth.²⁹⁶ The term is widely attested in the papyri. Cf. P.World, 163[= P.Marchands V/I 7r.7], 3rd/9th; P.Marchands III 14r.4, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands V/I 9r.12, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands V/I 15.4, 3rd/9th. *Jibba* or *jubba* (pl. *jubab* or *jibāb*) is a long outer garment with an open front and wide sleeves which was usually worn over a *qamīṣ*.²⁹⁷ The term is well attested in commercial and private letters. Cf. *an ta’khudh bihim sitta buṭaṭ li-‘Alī khudh waḥid wa-jubba* (P.Marchands II 3.6-7, 3rd/9th); *ḥattā tab‘atha ilayhi bi-l-jubbatayn al-nabaṭī alladhī ba‘athta ma‘ahu bi-l-jubba qūṭn* (P.Marchands II 9.9, 17, 3rd/9th); *fī thaman jubba* (P.GrohmannWirtsch. 16v.6, 3rd/9th). A woolen *jubba* costs four *dirhams*, while another one costs twenty two and one sixth *dirhams*. See P.GrohmannWirtsch. 14.5, 2nd/8th; 16v.6, 3rd/9th. A luxurious blackish *jubba* of velvet costs eight *dīnārs* (“*thaman jubba khaz dakinā thamaniyat danānīr*,” P.Cair.Arab. VI 394B.11, 3rd/9th).

27. *Wa-allā tushmit bī aḥadan fa-innī shaqiya*. *Allā* is written for *an lā* (Hopkins § 51.e). The *tā’ ta’nīth* in *shaqiya* refers to the female sender.

Address:

Ilā Marwān b. Yazīd. *Ilā* has a very long bending *yā*’ which extends into the margin. The name of the sender is lost.

²⁹⁶ Stillman (2000), 12.

²⁹⁷ Ahsan (1979), 40; Stillman (2000), 12; Dozy (1845), 107-117. For *qamīṣ*, see in this corpus 5.8 and the commentary.

14.

Reporting on the presence of a certain 'Abd al-Jabbār in Fuṣṭāṭ

P.Cair.Arab.inv. 449
Provenance: Unknown

12.5 x 10

2nd/8th
Plate 22

Light-brown papyrus written in a flowing hand in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The top and the left hand side are missing resulting in a considerable loss of text. The original cutting lines have been preserved on the other two sides. An address may have been written at the top of side B but is now lost. There are few diacritical dots.

The script is characterized by the following, *sīn* is written sometimes with teeth and sometimes without (ll. 2, 3, 14 *al-salām*). Final *yā'* bends backwards (l. 4 *annī*).

In this letter, the sender, whose name is missing, writes to the addressee, also anonymous to us, that he wanted to travel in person to visit him, but when it turned out to be too difficult he apologized, wrote the letter instead and sent it with a neighbor of his. The sender informs the addressee that the carrier of the letter will first pass by a certain 'Abd al-Jabbār to inquire about something that remains unknown to us, and then he will head for the addressee's domicile. He also lets the addressee know that this 'Abd al-Jabbār is currently in Fuṣṭāṭ (*ghā'ib bi-l-fuṣṭāṭ*). The letter closes as usual with greetings to a certain 'Azīza and 'Abd al-Raḥīm, the request to write back and the final *salām* greeting.

The sender incorporates the salutation to and from relatives into the body of the letter which is very unusual.²⁹⁸ Grammatical mistakes and incorrect spellings are frequently attested in the letter. A photograph with a short description of the script of this papyrus is published in the catalogue of the Arabic papyri in the national library of Egypt (P.DarAlKutub).

Text

1. ما اعطاك (vac.) وقد احببت ابقاك الله ان تخصص نفسك [منى بالسلام
2. الله السلام وعلى عبد الرحيم وابى عبد الله ان كان حا]ضرا السلام
3. الله السلام وعلى جماعة اهل البيت وابلغ ابو عبد الله [به السلام واخبرك انى]
4. احب ان لو انى قدرت [ا]تى اسلم عليكم وادركم]
5. به انه على ذلك فانى]
6. اتى شى من مع على فاعذرنى]
7. ان صاحب كتابى هذا اليك جار يمر بعبد الجبار اتى]
8. العرج وحمارة له تمر و فاذا خبروك به وكان]
9. ان تحرص فى اجر اجهل به وان تقوم بذلك فانى]
10. فانك تعلم ان عبد الجبار غايب بالفسطاط]
11. عبد الجبار فيشركك فانظر ابقاك الله ان تكتب الى بخير
12. وخير [عز] عزيزة ابقاها الله وخير عبد الر[حيم
13. فابلغهما منى سلاما كثيرا مع كتابك الى بخبرك و[حالك وحوايحك]
14. والسلام عليك ورحمت الله وبركاه]ته

²⁹⁸ See chapter one, formulary. See also in this corpus letters 26.5-6; 31.20-23.

Diacritical dots

(4 احب; قدرت; اتي 6) فاعدرنى (8 تمر 12) عزيزه

Translation

1. what He gave you (vac.). I should like, may God preserve you, that you bestow upon yourself [greetings from me
2. Allāh greetings and upon ‘Abd al-Raḥīm and Abū ‘Abd Allāh, if he is [present greetings
3. Allāh greetings and upon the people of household (greetings). Send to Abū ‘Abd Allāh [greetings and I would like to let you know that I]
4. wish, if I could come to you to greet you and [
5. it is like that, because I am [
6. He came with with ‘Alī. So excuse me for [
7. The carrier of this letter of mine is a neighbor, who will pass by ‘Abd al-Jabbār. He came [
8. the lameness and a she-ass of his will pass by. If they told you about it and if it was [
9. you should take care of a payment that I am not aware of, because I am [
10. You know that ‘Abd al-Jabbār is away, in Fustāt [
11. ‘Abd al-Jabbār will thank you. So make sure, may God preserve you, to [write me about the news of
12. and the news of [‘Az] ‘Azīz\a/ and the news of ‘Abd al[-Raḥīm
13. Send to them from me many greetings, together with your letter to me about your news and [your condition and your needs.]
14. Peace be upon you and God’s mercy and bless[ings.]

Commentary

1. The beginning of this letter is missing. The remains of the first line, however, seem to continue the opening formula and the contents of the letter suggest that not more than three lines are lost at the top. *Wa-qaḍ aḥbabbtu abqāka Allāh*. For the difference between the two forms *aḥbabbtu* and *uḥibbu*, see Grob (2010a), 60-61.

1-4. *Al-salām* is written with long *ā* as normal in classical Arabic. It is written, however, without long *ā* in the final greeting. See also in this corpus 10.13. For the expression *jamā‘at ahl al-bayt*, see in this corpus *wa-jamī‘ ahl al-bayt* (4.15); *bi-ahl al-bayt wa-l-‘iyāl* (41.10-11). See also the discussion on women of the house in chapter two. *Wa-abligh Abū ‘Abd Allāh*. For unchangeable *Abū* in all syntactical positions, see Hopkins § 162.a.

5-6. The reading of these two lines is tentative.

7. *Anna ṣāḥib kitābī hādhā ilayyaka jār yamurru bi-‘Abd al-Jabbār*. Sending letters with neighbors is well attested in letters. Cf. *kitābī hādhā ma‘a jāri wa-ṣadiqī Abū al-Ḥadīd al-‘aṣṣār*

(CPR XVI 22.8, 3rd/9th); *wa-hādhā jārunā yusamā Bulbul arsaltu ma'ahu kitābī* (P.Marchands II 28.6, 3rd/9th). For more, see chapter one, formulary. See also Grob (2010a), 93-100.

10. *Fuṣṭāṭ* also appears in this corpus in 16.9; 38.3. See also 23.20 and the commentary. For the expression *ghā'ib bi-l-fuṣṭāṭ*, see in this corpus *ghā'ib bi-l-rīf* (29.6).

12. The scribe first wrote the 'ayn and zāy of the female name 'Azīza. He then, for no apparent reason, covered it with ink. The *tā' marbūṭa* of 'Azīza was added as an afterthought above the line. Of 'Abd al-Raḥīm only the *alif*, *lām* and *rā'* can be detected after the prefix 'Abd. The name can also be read as 'Abd al-Raḥmān or any other of God's names.

13. For the expression *ma'a al-kitāb ilayya* and the rest, see Grob (2010a), 69-70.

14. For the final *salām* greeting and the addition *wa-barakātuhu*, see in this corpus 1.21 and the commentary.

15.

Letter conveying greetings

P.CtYBR.inv. 2619
Provenance: Unknown

14.5 x 12.8

2nd/8th
Plate 23-24

Light-brown papyrus written in an untidy and unproficient hand in 13 lines in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The original margins remain on all four sides. There are some holes and lacunae all over the papyrus that have caused minimal damage to the text. Diacritical dots occur occasionally. The letter is continued on side B but the ink is being effaced.

The script is characterized by the way in which the upper part of *dāl/dhāl* bends backwards (l. 6 *maḥmūd*; l. 11 *dhālīka*). *Sīn* and *shīn* are written consistently without teeth (l. 9 *al-salām*; l. 8 *shā'a*). *Kāf* is hairpin-shaped (l. 6 *kamā*). The two dots of the final *yā'* are placed inside the bend (l. 3 *fa-innī*). Words are split across line endings (ll. 8-9 *Zikrī*).

In this letter, a certain *Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān* writes to one *Abū Yaḥyā b. Yasra* and *Abū Zikrī*. The letter is full of blessings and prayers to the addressees as well as greetings to and from relatives with no further important contents.

The letter is composed in a very simple style as one block with no means to highlight the text. The letter shows many incorrect spellings and grammatical mistakes indicating the scribe's poor command of the language. Within the letter the references to the addressees fluctuate between the plural, dual and singular.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من ابراهيم بن سليمان لابي يحيى [بن]
3. يسرة و ابي <ز> كرى سلم عليكما فانى
4. احمد اليكما الله الذى لا اله الا هو اما
5. بعد فانا اخبركم من خبرى ا[ن]ا سالم
6. صالح كما تحب وربنا محمود مشكور نسله
7. تمام انظر يبي زكرى [لا] ان لا تدعنى
8. من الكتاب ان شا <ا> الله وان امى تقريك و..
9. ك والتريك السلم اقرى عليهم منا السلم
10. انظر يبي زكرى ان كتبت الى بما كانت
11. [والسلم] لك من حاجة فان ذلك
12. مما تقر به عينى وانظر الى ان تحج (٤) بزكرى
13. ان شا <ا> له وانظر يبي زكرى

Side B:

1. [ان تهدى]
2.]

3. [حتا]

لاى يحيى ابن يسرة بلغ (vac.) يرحمك الله

Diacritical dots

(2 يحيى 7) ندعى (8 امي 10) بي: ركزي (12) عسي: بركري

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān to Abū Yaḥyā [b.]
3. Yasra and Abū [Z]ikrī. Peace be upon you. I praise
4. for your sake God, other than Whom there is no god. As for
5. what follows, I want to let you know my news, namely that I am well and
6. in good health, as you wish and our Lord be praised and thanked. We ask Him
7. (the) completion. Consider, Abū Zikrī, [not] not to neglect
8. to write to me, if God wills. My mother sends to you and to ...
9. . and al-Turayk greetings. Send to them from me greetings.
10. Consider, Abū Zikrī, to write to me of any
11. [greetings] need you have, because that
12. delights me a lot. Consider to(?) with Zikrī
13. if God wills, and consider, Abū Zikrī,

Side B:

1. [] to send us
2. []
3. [] till

To Abū Yaḥyā b. Yasra deliver (vac.) may God have mercy upon you.

Commentary

Side A:

2. Ibrāhīm is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long ā (Hopkins § 10.b.i). Also Sulaymān is written defectively without long ā (Hopkins § 10.b.ii).

3. For the names Zikrī and Yasra, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 241, 557.

5-7. *Fa-anā ukhbirukum min khabarī anā sālim šāliḥ kamā tuḥibbu wa-rabbunā maḥmūd mashkūr nas'aluhu tamām.* For this formula and variants of it, see in this corpus 5.4-5; 7.4-5; 8.5-7; 22.6-8; 21.5-6 and the commentaries. Note the plural in *ukhbirukum* and the singular in *tuḥibbu* which contrasts with the dual used in the *ḥamdala*. In the rest of the letter the singular form is dominant.

7. *Unḡur yā Abī Zikrī* [[*lā*]] *an lā tada' annī min al-kitāb.* An *alif* is absent after vocative *yā* (Hopkins § 49.a.ii) and the *alif mamdūda* is shifted to an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.e). It is written in exactly the same way in lines 10, 13. *Tada' annī* is written in the *status constructus* as one word (Hopkins § 51.f). The scribe crossed out the negation particle *lā* by means of a horizontal line.

8. *In shā'a Allāh.* *Shā'a* is written without the post-vocalic *hamza* (Hopkins § 20.c) and the scribe left the *alif* of *Allāh* out.

9. For the name al-Turayk, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr*, 197. The reading Burayk is also possible, see P.cair.Arab. VI 438.3, 3rd/9th. See also J. Hess, *Beduinennamen aus Zentralarabien* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1912), 11-12.

10-11. For the expression *bi-mā kānat laka min ḥāja* and variants of it, see in this corpus 31.30; 36.7 and the examples given in the commentary. See also P.Horak 85.10, 2nd/8th.

11. The scribe mistakenly wrote the word *wa-l-salām* at the beginning of this line, then he indicated his mistake by crossing out the word by means of a horizontal line. *Dhālika* is written with *scriptio plena* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 11).

11-12. *Fa-innā dhālika mimmā taqirru bihi 'aynī.* For similar expressions, see *wa-qarra bihi 'aynaka* (P.Marchands II 1r.6, 3rd/9th); *wa-qurra 'ayn* (in this corpus, 9.15). See also *wa-aqirra 'aynahu fī nafsīhi wa-ḥashamihi* (Premier (n.d.), 7).

Side B:

Due to the ink is being effaced and smudged on the back it is impossible to recover much more than some characters and words, the translation of which is impossible. For the expression *balliḡ yarḥamuka Allāh* and other similar expressions that appear next to the exterior address, see chapter one, formulary. See also Grob (2010a), 78; P.Khalili I, 238-239. Only the name of the addressee is given in the address. For parallels in this corpus, see 35.

16.

Reporting on sick persons in Fustāt

P.Cair.Arab.inv. 403

22 x 13.5

1st-2nd/7th-8th

Provenance: Probably Fustāt

Plate 25

Dark-brown papyrus written in 16 lines in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The left hand side is missing with a considerable loss of text. The original cutting lines have been preserved on the other three sides. Side B bears the address in one line written parallel to the fibers. Diacritical dots are sparingly added.

The text shows many features of the early script, i.e. the upper part of *dāl/dhāl* bends backwards (l. 3 *aḥmadu*; l. 8 *qad*). The attached and independent *rā's* are very short (l. 12 *al-qarya*). The medial *ʿayn/ghayn* is open at the top (l. 11 *taghfalā*). Initial, medial and final *kāfs* are horizontally elongated (l. 14 *kataba*). The tail of the final *mīm* is extremely short (l. 1 *bi-sm*). There is a marked extension of the tail of the final and independent *yā'* to the right in a horizontal line (l. 3 *fa-innī*). Words are split across line endings (ll. 3-4 *ukhbirkumā*; ll. 11-12 *raḥimakumā*).

In this letter, the sender, Salmān b. Muḡhīth, writes to one ʿUbayd b. Yasār and another person, whose name is missing, about Duwaylim and al-Admā', who are/were sick. He also inquires about a certain Abū Sulaymān and asks the two addressees to take care of him. Salmān informs the addressees further that a certain Maḥdī came to the village while he is well and in good health. The letter closes as usual with the final *salām* greeting. At the end, the writer of the letter, al-Rabī b. Muslim, sends his greetings to the two addressees and asks them to send to the sender a piece of papyrus.

The dual is consistently used throughout the letter and there are no grammatical mistakes indicating the writer's high command of the language.²⁹⁹ A photograph with a very short description of the script is published in the catalogue of the Arabic papyri in the national library of Egypt (P.DarAlKutub).

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من سلمن بن مغيث [الى عبيد بن يسار و سلم عليكما]
3. فاني احمد اليكما الله الذي لا اله الا [هو اما بعد فاني ا]
4. خبركما ان دويليم مـ[ريض
5. الادما كانت مر ضـ[ت
6. ها فقد هري تاكل اد]
7. اما بعد فاكتبنا الى بخبر]
8. فانه قد طال ما كتبت اليكما [فانه ليس]
9. لي في الفسطاط احدا هو اشفق على]
10. اليه ... اني لا اله الا الله ولا]
11. بابي سليمان كيف هو فلا تغفلا عـ[ن ذلك] ر

²⁹⁹ See also chapter one, script.

12. حمكما الله اما بعد فان مهدي قدم القرية [وهو]
 13. بخير كما تحبان والسلم عليكما ورحمت [الله]
 14. كتب الربيع بن مسلم وهو يقرأ عليكما [لسلم]
 15. وارسلنا لى قطعة من قرطاس اكتب ال[يكما]
 16. به

Side B:

من سلّم بن مغِيث الى عبيد بن يسار

Diacritical dots

(3 اليكما 4 ان 6 ففد 7 بعد 8 فد 9 اشفق 10 انى 11 باى; سليمان 12 بعد; فان; الفريه 13 بحير; تحبان

Translation**Side A:**

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Salmān b. Mughīth [to ‘Ubayd b. Yasār and Peace be upon you]
3. I praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no [god. As for what follows,]
4. I inform you that Duwaylim is si[ck
5. al-Admā’ fell si[ck
6. to eat [
7. As for what follows, write to me about the news of [
8. it is long time since I wrote to you [There is]
9. nobody in Fustāṭ, who is concerned about me [
10. to him there is no god but God. Do not [
11. with Abū Sulaymān, how he is. Do not neglect doing so,
12. May God have mercy upon you. As for what follows, Maḥdī came to the village [and he is]
13. well as you wish. Peace be upon you and [God’s] mercy.
14. al-Rabī b. Muslim wrote (this letter) and he sends to you g[reetings.]
15. Send to me a piece of papyrus so that I may write to yo[u]
16. on it.

Side B:

From Salmān b. Mughīth to ‘Ubayd b. Yasār

Commentary**Side A:**

2. For the name Mughīth, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 497. Salmān is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a.ii). The name of the addressee is restored on the basis of the exterior address where the name appears clearly. Another addressee is to be expected in the missing part, because the writer uses the dual consistently.

3. *lāh* is spelled with an extra tooth for the long *ā*. Also written thus in line 10. See also in this corpus 2.21; 5.3.

2-3. The introductory formula is reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see Grob (2010a), 39-42.

4. I was not able to trace the name Duwaylim in the onomastica. The supplement *m[arīd]* is a mere suggestion, since nothing but a *mīm* is preserved. See also *marīd[at]* in the next line.

5. For the female name Admā', see Gratzl (1906), 33, 58. In papyri, see P.RāḡibLettres 9.2, 2nd/8th.

9. Fuṣṭāṭ also appears in this corpus in 14.10; 38.3. See also 23.20; 41.address.

11. Sulaymān is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a.ii).

12. *Ammā ba'du* is used three times to mark off the onset of the different sections within the body of the letter. Different expressions such as *wa-ba'du*, *ammā 'alā ithr dhālika*, *fī ithr* were also used to structure the content of the letter and to mark off the onset of the different sections, see Grob (2010a), 40 and note 44; Hopkins § 106.

14. Direct references to professional scribes being involved in writing private letters are extremely rare in the papyri. See chapter one.

15-16. *Wa-arsilā ilayya qiṭ'a min qirṭās aktubu ilaykumā bihi*. For parallels, see *wa-b'ath ilayya qiṭ'a qirṭās aktubu fīhā* (P.Khalili I 27v.9, 3rd/9th). For *qirṭās* (pl. *qarāṭis*) papyrus rolls, see in this corpus 34.7.

Side B:

The name of the addressee 'Ubayd b. Yasār is clearly readable on the left hand side.

1.3. Death and consolation

17.

Notifying the death of the addressee's father and emancipation of the deceased's slave: A man writes to a female relative

P.Cam.Michaelides A 1355
Provenance: Unknown

44 x 22

2nd/8th
Plate 26-27

Dark-brown long piece of papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in a clear and skilled hand in black ink in 24 lines across the fibers. The original cutting lines have been preserved on all sides. At the top, a margin of 5 cm has been left blank. There are some lacunae and worm holes all over the papyrus that have caused minimal damage to the text. The ink has faded and come off in places to such a degree that the text has at times become unreadable. Side B contains the address and another short text written by the same hand in 6 lines parallel to the fibers. The papyrus has been folded 20 times horizontally and 10 times vertically. There are very few diacritical dots.

The text shows many features of the early script, i.e. final *alif* extends below the connecting stroke (l. 8 *tuwuffiya*). *Hasta* of *ṭā'* slants to the right (l. 2 *Ṭalq*). *Rā'* and *zāy* are very short (l. 1 *al-rahmān*, *al-rahīm*; l. 3 *Ziyād*). The tail of the final *qāf* projects straight downwards before bending to the left resembling the old Arabic *qāf* (l. 2 *Ṭalq*). The horizontal stroke of initial *ʿayn* is extended to the right (ll. 9, 16, 18 *ʿalayhi*). *Fā'* has one dot below the letter and *qāf* has one dot over it (l. 9 *fā'il*; l. 12 *Muqsim*). Final *nūn* extends vertically downwards (l. 2 *ibn*; l. 12 *ṣāliḥīn*). Final *yā'* bends backwards (l. 2 *ilā*; l. 3 *abī*). Words are split across line endings (ll. 14-15 *al-ṣahāba*; 18-19 *yas'amuhu*).

This letter has been sent from a certain Wusāma b. Ṭalq al-Tujībī to a woman called Zaynab bt. Abū Ziyād. In this letter, Wusāma informs Zaynab that her father, Abū Ziyād, passed away and that his slave Muqsim was nursing him all day and night. He informs her further that the father emancipated his slave Muqsim before death. Wusāma asks Zaynab to take care of this Muqsim in return of his loyalty and dependability towards the deceased father. Wusāma ends his letter abruptly with the final *salām* greeting, skipping blessings, salutations and other common closing formulae. The relationship between the sender and the female addressee is vague, but the voice of the letter indicates a close kinship. On side B, the same sender writes a note to a certain Abū Zaynab, asking him to pay one *dirham* to a woman called Umm Khālid to do something that remains unknown to us. Above this short note, traces of two lines giving proper names such as Abū Sinān, Tamīm and Sulaymān can be made out with difficulty.

The letter is well written and composed with broad blank spaces between lines. The scribe makes many incorrect spellings and grammatical mistakes.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من وسامة [ب] بن طلق الى زينب
3. ابنت ابى زياد [سلم] عليك فانى

4. احمد [اليك] الله [الذى]
5. لا اله الا هو [اما بعد] فانى اخبرك
6. من خبرنا [ن]ا سالمين صالحين كالذى
7. يسرك والحمد لله اما على اثر ذلك فانى
8. اخبرك ان ابو زياد توفى فيرحمه الله
9. وصلى عليه وادخله الجنة والله فاعل
10. ان شا الله وانه قد وجدنا توفيته فوق ما
11. تظنون وان كان قد [] من سنه وانه اع[حق]
12. مقسم فى شهيدا صالحين من اصحابنا من
13. قبل ان يتوفى بزمن وان مقسم والله
14. لقد كان ا [] فى ذلك واحسن له ا
15. لصحابه حتا [ل]و كنت انت لم تقومى
16. عليه كنعو ما كان يقوم عليه مقسم
17. فامرك به خيرا فيما كان يحسن الى
18. ابو زياد فى القيام عليه حين لم يسا
19. مه يوم ولا ليله لو كان والده ما صبر
20. عليه الا كنعو ما صبر على ابو زياد فى
21. رفعه اياه ووضعوه واخرجه من الخص
22. محمول على يد وادخله مثل ذلك لما كان
23. فيه من الضعف الله جزاه ذلك والسلم عليك
24. ورحمت الله

Side B:

من وسامة بن طلق التجيبي ثم [] (vac.) الى زينب ابنت ابي زياد

1. [] فيه انا
2. وابو سنان وتميم وسليمن ذلك
3. من وسامة بن طلق الى ابو زينب واهله سلم عليك
4. اما بعد فاننا سالمون صالحون وانظر اصلحك <الله>
5. ان تدفع الى ام خالد درهم فلوس تصنع به
6. الذى امرتها به والسلم عليكم ورحمت الله

Diacritical dots

(9) باعل (11) سنه; اعنق (12) مقسم (13) بز... (16) كنعو (18) يسا (20) كنعو; صبر (21) الخص (23) الضعف

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

2. From Wusāma [b.] Ṭalq to Zaynab
3. bt. Abū Ziyād. [Peace] be upon you. I
4. praise [for your sake] God, [other than Whom,]
5. there is no god. [As for what follows,] I want to
6. let you know our news, namely that [we are] well and in good health, which will
7. please you, God be praised. As for what comes after, I
8. inform you that Abū Ziyād died, may God have mercy upon him
9. and may He bless him and gu[ide] him to the paradise. God will do this,
10. If God wills. His death has come over what
11. you expected. He was [] since a year. He em[ancipated]
12. Muqsim in a group of sound witnesses from among our companions
13. long time before he died. By God, Muqsim
14. was [] in that and he gave him the best of
15. companionship. [Even if] it were you, you would not nurse
16. him in the same way as Muqsim nursed.
17. Therefore, I command you to take care of him in return of what he did
18. for Abū Ziyād, namely taking care of him. He did not ha-
19. ate him day or night. If he was his father, he would not have been more patient
20. towards him than he was towards Abū Ziyād in
21. carrying him and putting him down and getting him out from the cottage
22. carried on his hands and doing the same in entering him, despite
23. his personal weakness, may God reward him for it. Peace be upon you and
24. God's mercy.

Side B:

From Wusāma b. Ṭalq al-Tujībī and [] (vac.) to Zaynab bt. Abū Ziyād

1. [] in it. I
2. Abū Sinān and Tamīm and Sulaymān this
3. From Wusāma b. Ṭalq to Abū Zaynab and his family. Peace be upon you.
4. As for what follows, we are well and in good health. Consider, may <God> grant you prosperity,
5. to pay to Umm Khālid one *dirham* to make
6. what I ordered her. Peace be upon you and God's mercy.

Commentary

Side A:

2. The shift 'u to wu is frequent in the papyri, i.e. Wusāma instead of Usāma (Hopkins § 27.a). For the name Wusāma in the papyri, see P.Jahn 5.6, 8, 2nd/8th. As for the name Ṭalq, see

Ibn Ma'kūl, *Ikmāl*, vol. 5, 243. The *bā'* of Zaynab is horizontally elongated and lacks an upward curve on the left.

3. *Ibnat* is written with a *tā'* *maftūḥa* instead of a *tā'* *marbūṭa* in the *status constructus* which is an archaic spelling (Hopkins § 47.a). Also written thus in the exterior address. Enough space is available after the address for the restoration of the initial *salām* greeting, *salām 'alayki*, which is partially effaced.

5-7. For the formula *fa-innī ukhbiruki min khabarinā annā sālimīn ṣāliḥīn ka-lladhī yasurruki wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh*, see in this corpus 5.4-5; 6.4-5 and the examples provided in both commentaries. In *sālimīn ṣāliḥīn* the *casus obliquus* of the sound masculine plural is used where classical Arabic requires the *casus rectus* (Hopkins § 86.a).

7. For the expression *ammā 'alā ithr dhālika*, see in this corpus 5.7 and the commentary.

8. *Ukhbiruki anna Abū Ziyād tuwuffiya fa-yarḥamuhu Allāh*. For other notifications of death in papyri; cf. *wa-u'limuka yā akhī anna ... ibn khālika Abū 'Alī tuwuffiya raḥimahumā Allāh wa-dafannāhu yawm al-jum'a fa-a'ẓama Allāh ujūrakum wa-raḥimanā wa-iyyāhu wa-u'limuka annahu māta bi-l-rīf yawm al-thulāthā' wa-ḥumila ilā al-fuṣṭāṭ wašala yawm al-khamīs fī ākhir al-nahār wa-dufina yawm al-jum'a bi-l-ghadāt fa-raḥimanā Allāh wa-iyyāhu wa-huwa al-sabīl ḥattā lā yabqā aḥad* (P. Marchands II 24.11-15, 3rd/9th). For more extensive discussion on death, see chapter two, death and consolation. *Tuwuffiya* is written with an *alif mamdūda* instead of an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.c). *Anna Abū Ziyād*. The unchangeable *Abū* in *status constructus* for classical Arabic *Abā* is frequent in Arabic papyri (Hopkins § 162.a.ii). Likewise, *Abū* is written for classical Arabic *Abī* in *ilā Abū Ziyād* in line 18 and *'alā Abū Ziyād* in line 20 (Hopkins § 162.a.i).

8-10. *Fa-yarḥamuhu Allāh wa-ṣallā 'alayhi wa-adkhalahu al-janna wa-llāh fā'il in shā'a Allāh*. For parallels in this corpus, see *fa-yarḥamuhu Allāh wa-ṣallā 'alayhi wa-adkhalahu al-janna 'arrafahā lahu* (20.5-6). *Shā'a* is written without the post-vocalic *hamza* (Hopkins § 20.c).

10. *Qad jā'at* can be made out with difficulty. The post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *jā'at* (Hopkins § 21.a).

13-14. These two lines can be made out with difficulty due to the ink is being effaced.

15. The particle *ḥattā* is spelled with an *alif mamdūda* while classical Arabic requires an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.d). For the term *al-ṣaḥāba*, see in this corpus 32.6 and the commentary.

16. *'Alayhi ka-naḥw mā kāna yaqūmu 'alayhi Muqsim*. *'Alayhi* can be made out with difficulty, because the ink has smudged at the beginning of the line. This expression is restored on the basis of line 20 where a similar expression occurs.

19. *Yawm wa-lā layla law kāna wāliduhu mā ṣabara*. The *mīm* of *yawm* is extremely short in comparison to the other independent *mīms* in the text, e.g. l. 18 *al-qiyām*. The *hā'* of *wāliduhu* has an upward shaft.

20. *'Alā* is written without the final *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 55.i). Also written thus in line 22.

21. *Al-khuṣṣ* is a booth of reeds or canes, see lane, vol. 2, 746; Ibn Maẓūr, *Lisān*, 1174. To the best of my knowledge, the word is not attested in Arabic papyri.

22. *Tanwīn alif* is missing in the adverb *maḥmūl* which it would have been obligatory in classical Arabic (Hopkins § 167.a).

23-24. For the expression *Allāh jazāhu dhālika*, see *jazāhu Allāh khayran* (CPR XVI 14.8, 3rd-4th/9th-10th); *fa-aḥsana Allāh jazā'aka* (P.Marchand III 27.12, 3rd/9th); *fa-lā jazāhā Allāh khayran* (P.Heid.Arab. II 56.13, 3rd/9th); *wa-aḥsana jazā'aka aḥsana laka jazā'aka* (P.Marchand II 39.18, 21, 3rd/9th and Heid.Arab. II 42.2, 2nd/8th).

Side B:

Min Wusāma b. Ṭalq al-Tujībī thumma [] ilā Zaynab bt. Abī Ziyād. The address is written in slightly smaller characters. The tribal *nisba* al-Tujībī refers to Tujīb, a sub tribe of the south-Arabian tribe of Kinda. This clan formed an important element of 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ's conquering troops. After the conquest and the foundation of the city of Fuṣṭāṭ, Tujīb had their own *khiṭṭa* south of the 'Amr's mosque.³⁰⁰ For other attestations of this *nisba* in the papyri; cf. P.Worp 65.16, 1st-2nd/7th-8th and the commentary; P.David-WeillLouvre 6r.3, dated 211/826; 16.14, dated 256/870 and the commentaries. One might expect another *nisba* after *thumma*. For other attestations of two tribal *nisbas* using *thumma* in-between, see P.KhanLegalDocument, 362; P.Rāgiblettrefamiliale, 278.

1. Only traces of characters and words can be seen of this line, the construction of which is impossible.

2. For the name Sinān and other possible readings, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 276.

3. *Ilā Abū Zaynab.* *Abū* is written for classical Arabic *Abī* (Hopkins § 162.a.i).

4. *Wa-nzur aṣlahaka <Allāh> .* The scribe left the word *Allāh* out after the honorific *aṣlahaka*. For this honorific and variants of it following the mention of the *amīr*, see in this corpus 21.3 and the commentary. This honorific is also attested after the mention of the addressee, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 31.7; 36.5, both 2nd/8th.

5. For the Expression *dirham fulūs*, see Grohmann (1954), 217.

³⁰⁰ al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 3, 24; Ibn Maʿkūl, *Ikmal*, vol. 1, 214.

18.

**Notifying the death of the sender's son:
A woman writes to her aunt**

P.Utah 290
Provenance: Unknown

31.5 x 19.2

3rd/9th
Plate 28-29

Medium-brown papyrus written in black ink with a medium-thick pen in a flowing hand in 12 lines across the fibers. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on all four sides. There are holes and lacunae in several places which have caused minimal damage to the text. On side B, the address is still visible in 2 lines. Diacritical dots are sparingly added. There are two black stripes covering old texts on the upper margin on both sides of the papyrus.

The cursive handwriting points to a 3rd/9th century hand, see Grob (2010a), 161-172. See also chapter one, script.

In this letter, the female sender, Ruqayya bt. Yaḥyā, informs her aunt, Umm al-Qāsim bt. Zakariyā, that she is in good health although the affliction that has befallen her, namely the death of her son who died in the month of Ṣafar after the return of the people from pilgrimage (*ḥajj*). Ruqayya then shows how confused, lonely, poor and weak she feels after this loss, especially after her full brother's departure. Ruqayya was so depressed that she expressed the wish that she had died before facing these hard times. Afterwards, Ruqayya informs her aunt that a certain Abū 'Abd Allāh, known to the addressee, looked after her during this misfortune. Abū 'Abd Allāh also took good care of the deceased. Next, Ruqayya expresses her deep gratitude to Abū 'Abd Allāh and makes a supplication for him. Before ending her letter, Ruqayya asks her aunt not to withhold writing to her. The letter closes with the *taṣliya* and common closing blessings for the addressee.

The letter is to be delivered in Mecca as stated in the exterior address. It is written as one block with no means to highlight the text. The writer makes several mistakes in grammar and spelling.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. اطال الله بقاءك يا سيدتى [واعز]ك واکرمک [واتم نعمته] عليك [وزا]د فى فضله واحسانة
3. لديك وعندك كتابى [اليك يوم الاثني]ن [لثم]ان ليال بقين مـ[ن صفر وان]ا بحال سلامة والحمد لله كثيرا على ما دهانى
4. وافجنى من وفاة سيدى وولدى رضى الله عنه وال[له اسله ان] يعظم اجرک ويحسن عزاک ويجبر
5. بتقوا نفسك ويحسن الخلف عليك وعلى فقده وان يكافيه بجنات النعيم انه قريب مجيب
6. فهو السبيل حنا لا يبقا احد وكان وفاته رضى الله عنه فى صفر بعد دخول الناس من الحج فقد بقيت
7. حيرا وحيدة ضعيفة فقيرة ذهب الان الس[رور مع] الاخ الشقيق وبقيت وحيدة فليت
8. ان الموت قدمنى قبله ولست اسمع لآخى خبر ولا اسمع منه كتاب فاسكن الى علم ذلك واستريح اليه والله
9. اسله لسيدى ابو عبد الله البقا فلو رات عينك قيامه به وبنا جدير من الخلق ازر(?) لسرك سره الله

10. بدويته (؟) واعلانه على ما ولاه من امور] دنياه واخرته وانا [احب] احبك الله ان لا تقطعي عنى كتابك بخبرك وحالك وبحاجة ان كانت انت
11. فيها مسارك و[انت موفقة] ان شا] الله وصلى الله على محمد النبي وعلى اله وسلم كثيرا
12. اطال الله بقاءك وادام عزك وكرامتك واتم نعمته عليك وزاد فى فضله واحسانه لديك وعندك

Side B:

الى ام القسم ابنت زكريا اخت يحيى اطال الله بقاءها (vac.) من رقية ابنت يحيى بن زكريا المعروف بالحبال يدفع بمكة بد... بلغ هديت

Diacritical dots

3) يقين 4) وفاه 5) بنقوا 6) بنقا; وفاهه 7) صعيبه; فقيره; السقيى 8) قدمى; قبله 9) النقا (address) رفيه

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. May God prolong your existence, my mistress, [and strength]en you and honor you and fulfill His favor upon you and [augment] in His benevolence
3. towards you and with you. My letter [to you on Monday with eig]ht nights remaining of Şafar] while I am in good health, God be praised abundantly, though what happened to me
4. and stricken me of the death of my lord and my son, may God be pleased with him. [I ask God to] bestow upon you the greatest of returns and console (you)
5. through your righteousness and grant you a compensation that fully replaces the loss and to reward him with paradise, as He is near and responsive.
6. It is the inevitable fate so that no one will remain. He died, may God be pleased with him, in Şafar after people's return from pilgrimage. I remained
7. confused, alone, weak and poor. The [happiness] has gone along with the full brother and I remained alone. I wish if
8. death has taken me before him. I don't hear from my brother any news nor receive I a letter from him so that I can find solace and repose in it. I ask God
9. to grant my lord, Abū 'Abd Allāh, long life. If your eyes had seen how he took care of him and us and what he?, you would have been happy. May God make him happy
10. with his? and help him with what he has to administer of the affairs of his life and his hereafter. [I like], may God like you, that you would not withhold your letter from me with your news and condition and the need you have, for
11. in it lies your pleasure and be granted success, if God wills. May God give many blessings to Muḥammad the prophet and his family.
12. May God prolong your existence and strengthen you and honor you and fulfill His favor upon you and augment in His benevolence towards you and with you.

Side B:

1. To Umm al-Qāsim bt. Zakariyā, sister of Yaḥyā, may God prolong her life (vac.) from Ruqayya bt. Yaḥyā b. Zakariyā, known as the rope-maker. To be delivered in Mecca.
2. Deliver (the letter), may you be guided (in the right path).

Commentary**Side A:**

1. On the top margin above the *basmla* a black strip of 1 cm wide covering an old text is still visible.

2. For letters starting with initial blessings after the *basmla*, see Grob (2010a), 43-48. The initial blessings are restored on the basis of parallels, see Grob (2010a), 43-48. See also the closing formula which is slightly different.

3. The supplement [*yawm al-ithnayn*] is a mere suggestion, since nothing but the curve of may be a *nūn* is preserved at the end of the lacuna. Of *thamān* only the *alif* and *nūn* are still visible. *Ṣafar* is reconstructed on the basis of line 6 where the same word occurs.

4. For describing the son as *sayyidī wa-waladī*, see *yā sayyidī wa-yā ibnī wa-yā ḥabībī* (P.Marchands II 15r.7, 3rd/9th).

4-5. For the formula *wa-llāh as'aluhu an yu'azima ajraki wa-yuḥsina 'azā'aki wa-yajbura bi-taqwā nafsiki wa-yuḥsina al-khalaf 'alayki*; cf. *wa-Tamīma tusallimu 'alayki wa-taqūlu a'azam Allāh ajraki wa-jabara muṣībataki* (Younes, Arabic letters of condolence on papyrus 4.7, 2nd/8th). The sentence *wa-llāh as'aluhu* exhibits the placement of the object before the verb, see also in this corpus 4.8, 24.8; 29.4.

6. *Fa-huwa al-sabīl ḥattā lā yabqā aḥad*. An exact parallel can be found in P.Marchands II 24.11-15, 3rd/9th. *Ba'd dukhūl al-nās min al-ḥajj*. For other attestations of the *ḥajj* in Arabic papyri, see in this corpus 37. See also the discussion on the *ḥajj* in chapter two. The particle *ḥattā* is written with an *alif mamdūda* instead of an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.d). Similarly the verb *yabqā* is written with an *alif mamdūda* (Hopkins § 12.c).

7. *Ḥayrā waḥīdatan ḍa'ifatan faqīratan*. For similar expressions, see *ilā an baqiyat waḥīdatan farīdatan* (P.Marchands II 39.6, 3rd/9th). See also in this corpus 13.20 and the commentary.

7-8. For the expression *fa-layta anna al-mawt qadamanī qablahu*, see in this corpus 23.14-15 and the commentary.

8. *Wa-lastu asma' li-akhī khabar wa-lā asma' minhu kitāb*. *Tanwīn alif* is missing in the direct object in *khabar* and *kitāb* which would have been obligatory in classical Arabic (Hopkins § 167.d). The scribe mistakenly wrote *asma' minhu kitāb* instead of *aqra' lahu kitāb*. For the verb *sami'* indicating a loud reading of the letter before an audience, see in this corpus 3.5 and the commentary. For similar expressions, see *wa-lam arā laka kitāb wa-lā khabar* (P.Khalili I 36.4-6, 3rd/9th).

9. *Li-sayyidī Abū ‘Abd Allāh*. The *lām* of *li-sayyidī* is short. Compare it with the *lām* of *al-sabīl* in line 6. *Abū* is written for classical Arabic *Abī* (Hopkins § 162.a.i). The post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *al-baqā’* (Hopkins § 21).

10. The expression *wa-a‘ānahu ‘alā mā wallāhu min umūr dunyāhu wa-ākhiratihi* is restored on the basis of parallels. Cf. PERF 615[= P.World, 186r].2, 4th/10th. The formula *uḥibbu aḥabaka Allāh* is also reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see CPR XVI 22.10, 3rd-4th/9th-10th and the commentary. For the expression *lā taqṭa‘i ‘anī kitābakī*, see *fa-lā taqṭa‘nī min kitābika bi-‘ilm khabarika wa-jamī ḥawā’ijika* (P.Cair.Arab. V 339.7, 3rd/9th).

11. *Wa-anti muwaffaqa in shā’a Allāh*. This formula usually follows a conditional sentence with *in*, see P.Genizah, 303-317; P.KhanPetitions, 8-30; Grob (2010a), 61. For the *taṣliya*, see in this corpus 6.2-4; 19.3 and the examples provided in the commentaries. See also P.Cair.Arab. I, 215-216; P.Khalili I, 148; Grob (2010a), 27, note 11.

12. The final blessings are slightly different from the initial ones, see Grob (2010a), 74-77.

Side B:

For the profession *ḥabbāl* in the papyri, see P.MugawiriAlqab, 342. This profession is also attested in Geniza documents, see Diem and Radenberg (1994), 37. The letter is to be delivered in Mecca. For other attestations of Mecca in the papyri, see P.World, 156-157, dated 3rd/9th; P.GrohmannWirtsch. 3[= P.Marchands V/I 7].7-8, 3rd/9th. For the expression *yudfa‘* (to be delivered), see Grob (2010a), 78-79. For the expression *al-ma‘rūf bi* (known as) and similar expressions which introduce a further or closer identification, see in this corpus 23.16 and the commentary. For the blessing *balligh hudāta* and similar blessings for the carrier of the letter, see in this corpus 7.address and the commentary. See also chapter one, formulary.

19.

Letter of condolence addressed to a man

P.CtYBR.inv. 2605

27.9 x 12.7

2nd/8th

Provenance: Unknown

Plate 30-31

Medium-brown papyrus written in a somewhat flowing hand in 19 lines in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The left hand side is missing with a considerable loss of text. The original margins remain on the other three sides. The letter has been folded 11 times horizontally and 3 times vertically. Diacritical dots occur sparingly. Side B bears traces of one line of the address written parallel to the fibers.

The script is characterized by the way in which *kāf* is horizontally elongated (l. 6 *kāna*). Final *yā* consistently bends backwards (l. 2 *abī*).

In this letter, the sender writes to the addressee, both having the same *kunya*, i.e. Abū al-Azhar, trying to soothe the addressee's pains by expressing his sincere condolences, profound sadness and sympathy after hearing of the death of a certain Abū 'Abd al-'Azīz.

The right half of the letter is missing with a considerable loss of text, but it is possible to reconstruct some of the missing parts with the help of other letters of the same genre, Qur'an, traditions (*aḥādīth*) and other literary texts. The relationship between the writer, the addressee and the deceased is unclear. The letter is written as one block with no means to highlight the text and shows many mistakes in grammar and spelling.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. لابي الازهر من ابى الازهر سلم [عليك فانى احمد اليك الله الذى لا اله]
3. الا هو واسله ان يصلى على محمد [النبي واله وسلم كثيرا]
4. اما بعد عافاك الله وحفظك وعفا عنا وعنك ودفع عنا وعنك السوء
5. فى الدنيا والاخرة برحمته]
6. [بل]غنا الذى كان من قضا ابى عبد العزيز رحمة
7. الله ومغفر <ت>ه عليه فعند [ال]له احتسب مصيبتيه واقول على
8. ذلك انا لله وانا [اليه را]جعون صبرا واحتسابا وتسليما لامر الله
9. فهذه <ه> مصيبة ما اعظمها و]
10. فاسأل الله ان يرحمه وان يـ[غفر له وان يبارك له فيما]
11. صار اليه وارجوا ان يكون]
12. ما علمته محمود فى جمـ[يع]
13. ولكن المصيبة قد عظمت]
14. ولكنه سبيل الماضين والـ[لاحقين]
15. فرزقك الله و[ايانا]ـ[الاسـ]
16. يعمل صالحا يبلغك وايانا]
17. برحمته ابلغ ابا عثمان منا [لسلم وابلغ]
18. تعزيتنا اياه بابى عبد العـ[زيز]
19. تولاك الله وايانا بالعا[فية والسلم عليك ورحمت الله]

Side B:

[الى ابى الازهر من] ابى الازهر عثمان بن عمار

Diacritical dots

(16 تعزيتنا; اياه

Translation**Side A:**

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To Abū al-Azhar from Abū al-Azhar. Peace [be upon you. I praise for your sake God, other than whom there]
3. is no god. I ask Him to give many blessings to Muḥammad [the prophet and all his family.]
4. As for what follows, may God save you and protec[t you and may He forgive us and you and may He repel from us and you the adversity]
5. in this world and the hereafter through His mercy. [
6. We got to know about the death of Ab[ū ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, may the mercy of]
7. God and <His> forgiveness be upon him. With God [I sacrifice his misfortune in anticipation of God’s reward and I say]
8. in this, indeed, we belong to God and indeed to Him we will return, [being with patience, in anticipation (of God’s reward), and surrendering to God’s command.]
9. there is no greater misfortune than this [
10. I ask God to have mercy upon him and to [forgive him and to bless him in what]
11. happened to him and I wish that [
12. I know how praiseworthy he was in al[l]
13. But the misfortune became greater [
14. But it is the fate of all people from the first to the [last
15. May God grant you and us the .[
16. to do good deeds that reach you and us [
17. through His mercy. Send to Abū ‘Uthmān from us [greetings and send]
18. our condolence to him for (the death of) Abū ‘Abd al-‘A[zīz
19. May God grant you and us the hea[lth. Peace be upon you and God’s mercy.]

Side B:

[To Abū al-Azhar from] Abū al-Azhar ‘Uthmān b. ‘Ammār

Commentary

Side A:

2. For the *kunya* Abū al-Azhar, see al-Dūlābī (d. 310/923), *al-Kunā wa-l-asmā'*, ed. A. Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999), vol. 1, 215; al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 1, 205. For other attestations in the papyrus; cf. P.Cair.Arab. IV 234.4, dated 270/883-4.

3. For different forms of the *taṣliya* in letters, see in this corpus 4.3-4 and the examples provided in the commentary. There is no vacant space left after the *ḥamdala*. The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *asʿaluhu* (Hopkins § 26). *Yuṣallī* and *ʿalā* are written without the final *yā'* (Hopkins § 55).

4. The formula *ʿāfāka Allāh wa-ḥafiẓa[ka wa-ʿafā ʿannā wa-ʿanka wa-dafaʿa ʿannā wa-ʿanka]* is reconstructed on the basis of countless parallels; cf. P.Horak 85.4, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary.

6. [*Bala*]ghanā alladhī kāna min qaḍāʾ Ab[ū ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. The *bā'* and *lām* of *balaghanā* are missing in the lacuna at the beginning of the line. The *kunya* of the deceased is restored on the basis of line 18 where the same *kunya* appears. *Qaḍāʾ* is written without the final *hamza* (Hopkins § 20.c). For *qaḍāʾ* meaning death, see Ibn Maẓūr, *Lisān*, 3666. For other Arabic synonyms for death such as *maniyya*, *halāk*, *radā*, *ḥimām* and *wafāt*, see M. Abdesslem, "Mawt," E.I.2, vol. 6, 910-911.

6-7. The eulogy *raḥmat Allāh wa-maghfirat<ah> ʿalayhi* is restored on the basis of parallels, see letter 5.1. The scribe left out the *tā'* of *maghfiratah* by mistake.

7-8. These two lines are reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see *wa-qad balaghanī wafāt Mūsā b. Walīd fa-ghammanī dhālika ghamm shadīd fa-ʿinda Allāh naḥtasibu muṣibatāh wa-naqūlu innā li-llāh wa-innā ilayhi rājiʿūn fa-raḥimahu Allāh wa-ghafara lahu wa-raḍiya ʿanhu* (P.Jahn 14.13-17, 3rd/9th). For the final part, *ṣabran wa-ḥtisāban wa-tasliman li-amr Allāh*, see Younes, Arabic letters of condolence 5.16, 3rd/9th. For the Qurʾanic verse *innā li-llāh wa-innā ilayhi rājiʿūn*, see in this corpus 20.4 and the commentary.

9. The demonstrative *hādh<ihi>* is spelled without the final *hā'* (Hopkins § 61.d). See also in this corpus the demonstrative *hādhā* without the final *alif* (23.31). Representing death as a disaster echoes the Qurʾanic verse *in antum ḍarabtum fī al-arḍi fa-aṣabatkum muṣibatū al-mawti* (Q 5:106).

10-11. *Fa-asʿalu Allāh an yarḥamahu wa-an ya[ghfira lahu wa-an yubārika lahu fīmā] ṣāra ilayhi*. The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *fa-asʿalu Allāh* (Hopkins § 26). Of *yaghfira* only the *yā'* is preserved. The supplement *wa-an yubārika lahu fīmā* is my suggestion. For variants of this formula, see the discussion on death and consolation.

11. *Arjū* is spelled with an *alif fāṣila* at the end against classical Arabic rules (Hopkins § 50.a.i).

12. Of *jamī'* only the *jīm* and *mīm* are preserved.

14. For the expression *wa-lākinnaḥu sabīl al-māḍīn wa-l-lāḥiqīn*, see in this corpus *inna al-mawt sabīl al-awwalīn wa-l-ākhirīn* (20.9); *fa-innaḥu yā akhī amr lā budda minhu wa-lā maḥiṣ ʿanhu wa-ʿalā dhālika halaka al-awwalūn wa-ilayhi yaṣīru al-ākhirūn* (Younes, Arabic letters of condolence 5.5-6, 17-18, 3rd/9th).

15. *Fa-razaqaka Allāh wa-ıyyānā al-as*[. *Wa-ıyyānā* can be made out with difficulty due to the ink being effaced. Of the last word on this line only the *alif*, *lām-alif* and *sīn* or *shīn* are conserved.

17. *ʿUthmān* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.b.ii). For this very common name in letters, see in this corpus 11.3 and the commentary.

18. For the expression *taʿziyatanā ıyyāhu*, see *bi-taʿziyatika ıyyāya* (Younes, Arabic letters of condolence 5.2, 13, 3rd/9th). Of the name *ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz* only the *alif*, *lām* and *ʿayn* are visible after the prefix *ʿAbd* at the end of the line.

19. For the eulogy *tawallāka Allāh wa-ıyyānā bi-l-ʿāfiya*, see *tawallāki Allāh bi-ḥifẓihi* (P.Marchands II 28r.9, 3rd/9th). The final *salām* greeting is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. See the other letters in this corpus.

Side B:

Only the name of the sender *Abū al-Azhar ʿUthmān b. ʿAmmār* is preserved on the exterior address which is written in exactly the same form as it is written in the internal address. *ʿUthmān* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.b.ii). The name of the addressee is restored on the basis of the internal address.

20.

Letter of condolence addressed to a woman

P.Cair.Arab.inv. 397
Provenance: Unknown

12 x 21

2nd/8th
Plate 32

Dark-brown papyrus written in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The top and the bottom are missing with a considerable loss of text. The original cutting lines are partially preserved on both sides. There are few diacritical dots. Side B is blank.

The script is characterized by the way in which *kāf* is hairpin-shaped (l. 7 *ḥuznakum*). The ligature *lām-alif* is v-shaped (l. 10 *li-aḥad*). Words are split across line endings (ll. 5-6 *wa-adkhalahu*).

In this letter, the sender, whose name is lost, sends condolences to a woman, whose *kunya* is Umm ʿUthmān, who had lost, presumably, her husband Nawfal. In order to express his deepest sympathy with the addressee's misfortune the sender shows how grief and sorrow have affected him after hearing this sad news. The sender assures the addressee that "their" misfortune is a misfortune for him, their sorrow is for him a sorrow and their joy is for him a joy. He then asks the addressee to be patient, reminding her of God's reward for the patients and stating that death is a universal truth. At the end of the fragment, the sender cites a Qur'anic verse, but it is missing. The relationship between the writer, the female addressee and the deceased is vague. The sender refers to the deceased as his brother, but this should not be taken literally.³⁰¹

A photograph with a very short description of the script and the content is given in the catalogue of the Arabic papyri in the national library of Egypt (P.DarAlKutub).

Text

1. [] []
2. [] []
3. [] []
4. [] []
5. [] []
6. [] []
7. [] []
8. [] []
9. [] []
10. [] []

Diacritical dots

(6 حرن; فرحكم; فرج 8) منحا 9) لنبيه

Translation

³⁰¹ See the discussion on children in chapter two.

1. [] ..[
2. [] on .[
3. [] .. in [] my brother .[
4. [I say in this,] indeed, we belong to God and indeed to Him we will return in
5. our misfortune of my brother, [Na]wfal, may God have mercy upon him and pray for him and make
6. him entre the paradise, which He make it known to him. By God, your misfortune is verily for me
7. a misfortune and your sorrow is for me a sorrow and your joy is for me a joy, God
8. knows that. O Umm 'Uthmān, you must have patience, for in patience
9. there is salvation. Verily the death is the fate of all people from the first to the last.
10. Nobody is saved from the death. God said to his prophet .[].. [

Commentary

1-3. These three lines are badly damaged, so that very little can be made out.

4. The Qur'anic verse *innā li-llāh wa-innā ilayhi rāji'ūn* is always attested in letters of condolence and letters reporting on the death of someone, see in this corpus 19.8. See also P.Jahn 14.16, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands III 29.3, 3rd/9th.

4-5. For the expression *fa-yarḥamuhu Allāh wa-ṣallā 'alayhi wa-adkhalahu al-janna 'arrafahā lahu*, see in this corpus *fa-yarḥamuhu Allāh wa-ṣallā 'alayhi wa-adkhalahu al-janna wa-llāh fā'il in shā'a Allāh* (17.8-10). The final part of this expression echoes the Qur'anic verse *wa-yudkhilluhum al-janna 'arrafahā lahum* (Q 47:6).

5. The *nūn* of Nawfal is missing in the lacuna.

6-7. *Fa-wa-llāh inna muṣībatakum lī la-muṣība wa-inna ḥuznakum lī ḥuzn wa-faraḥakum lī faraḥ*. This expression knows no parallels in the papyri. The final part of this expression can also be read as *wa-farajakum lī faraj* (you release from suffering is for me a release).

7-8. The expression *Allāh ya'lam dhālika* usually appears in parenthesis as an oath to confirm a statement by the sender. See also *Allāh bihi 'alīm* (P.Marchands II 24.20, 3rd/9th).

8. *Yā-mm 'Uthmān*. The *alif* of *Umm* is absent after vocative *yā* (Hopkins § 49.a.ii). *'Uthmān* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.b.ii).

9. For the expression *inna al-mawt sabīl al-awwalīn wa-l-ākhirīn*, see in this corpus *wa-lākinnahu sabīl al-māḍīn wa-lāḥiqīn* (19.14 and the commentary). *Manjā* is spelled with an *alif mamdūda* while classical Arabic requires an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.a).

8-9. *Fa-'alayki yā-mm 'Uthmān bi-l-ṣabr fa-inna al-ṣabr manjā*. For similar expressions, see *fa-'alaykum bi-l-ṣabr fa-inna Allāh wa'ada al-ṣābirīn khayran* (Younes, Arabic letters of condolence 4.5, 2nd/8th).

9-10. *Laysa li-aḥad barā'a min al-mawt*. *Barā'a* is written without the *hamza* (Hopkins § 19).

10. *Qāla Allāh li-nabiyyihi*. *Li-nabiyyihi* is fully dotted. A Qur'anic verse is to be expected in the next line, e.g. *innaka maytun wa-innahum maytūn* (Q 39:30) or *wa-mā ja'alnā li-basharin min qabluka al-khulda a-fa-in mitta fa-hum al-khālidūn* (Q 21:34).

1.4. Maintaining relationships

21.

Blessings addressed to the governor and the caliph

P.Cam.Michaelides A 930 recto

27 x 17.5

ca. 105-108/724-727

Provenance: Unknown

Plate 33

Dark-brown papyrus written in black ink with a thin pen in 8 lines across the fibers. The original cutting lines have been preserved on all sides. The text is written on the bottom margin of a Coptic text.³⁰² The papyrus sheet has been folded 11 times horizontally and 5 times vertically. There are very few diacritical dots. For side B, see letter 22.

The text shows many features of the early script, i.e. the vertical stroke of *dāl/dhāl* bends backwards at the top (ll. 4, 6 *alladhī*). The attached and independent *rā*'s are extremely short (l. 2 *al-Ḥurr*; l. 5 *ukhbiruka*). Initial and final *kāfs* are horizontally extended (l. 5 *ukhbiruka*; l. 8 *kull*). There is a marked extension of the tail of the final and independent *yā*' to the right in a horizontal line (l. 6 *alladhī*). Words are split across line endings (ll. 5-6 *ka-lladhī*). *Alif maqṣūra* has two dots below it (ll. 2, 3 *ilā*, l. 6 *alladhī*; l. 7 *bi-taqwā*). The tail of the final *mīm* is long (l. 1 *al-raḥīm*; l. 3 *salām*). *Ḍaḍ* is converted to *zā*' and vice versa. Note the spellings, *faḏluhu* instead of *faḍluhu* (l. 7) and *'aḏīm* instead of *'aḏīm*.³⁰³

In this letter, a certain Usāma b. 'Imrān writes to the governor of Egypt al-Ḥurr b. Yūsuf (in office 105-108/724-727) and the caliph Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 105-125/724-743). Although the letter states that there are two addressees, the addressee of the letter is grammatically singular. The sender misspelled the forename of the governor. The letter contains only blessings and prayers.

It is hard to discern whether this letter was actually sent or it was only a draft or a writing exercise. The latter possibility might be confirmed by the absence of the exterior address and the reuse of the back by the same writer (see the introduction to letter 22). The letter is well written and composed with wide spaces between lines. It shows, however, some mistakes in grammar and spelling.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من اسامة ابن عمران الى الحر {ب} ابن يوسف
3. والى هشام امير المومنين اصلحت [الله] سلم
4. عليك فاني احمد اليك الله الذي لا اله الا هو اما بعد
5. فاني اخبرك من خبرنا انا سالمين صالحين كا
6. لذي يسرك وربنا محمود اسال الله ان يتم علينا
7. و عليك نعمته وفضله علينا عظيم واصيدك بتقوى
8. الله ان الله راس كل حكمة والسلم عليكم

Diacritical dots

³⁰² The Coptic text will be published by Alain Delattre.

³⁰³ Hopkins § 39.b, 41. See also language in chapter one.

(2 الي (3 الي (4 الي (5 فاني; صلحن (6 الدي (7 سعوي

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Usāma b. ʿImrān to al-Ḥurr {b} b. Yūsuf
3. and to Hishām, the commander of faithful, may you be granted prosperity [[God]] .
Peace
4. be upon you. I praise for your sake God, other than Whom, there is no god. As for what follows,
5. I want to let you know our news, namely that we are well and in good health, as you
6. wish, God be praised. I ask God to complete for us
7. and you His benefaction. His munificence over us is immense. I commend you to show piety
8. toward God, for God is the fount of all wisdom. Peace be upon you.

Commentary

1. The *basmala* extends about half a centimeter further into the right hand margin than the other lines do.

2-3. *Ibn* between the name of the son and the father is written with an *alif*, whereas classical Arabic omits it (Hopkins § 49.b.vii). The *ḥāʾ* and *rāʾ* of al-Ḥurr are written very closely together, but the reading is certain. The *fāʾ* of Yūsuf extends horizontally at the end of the line and lacks an upward curve on the left. For the use of *amīr al-muʿminīn* in the papyri, see Sijpesteijn (2011), 249. *Muʿminīn* is written without *hamza* (Hopkins § 19). The eulogy *uṣliḥta* in passive is not attested in the papyri, at the best of my knowledge. The scribe added the word *Allāh* to the passive form, *uṣliḥta*, who then indicated his mistake by crossing out the word by covering it with ink. For the common eulogy *aṣlahaka Allāh* after the first mention of the caliph (*amīr al-muʿminīn*) or the governor (*amīr*), see Sijpesteijn (2013) 1.4, 2nd/8th and the commentary; CPR XXI, 119. For other blessings on the *amīr* such as *ḥafīzahu Allāh*, see PERF 624 [= P.World, 132-134].4, 11, cr. 176-177/795; PERF 638 [= Chrest.Khoury II 26.2, CPR XXI 4], cr. 179-180/796; *aṭāla Allāh baqāʾahu* (PERF 631 [= Diem (1984), 6.4, dated 180/796; 7.3, dated 168/784]. For more references, see P.Khalili I, 138-140.

5-6. For the formula *fa-innī ukhbiruka min khabarinā annā sālimīn ṣāliḥīn ka-lladhī yasurruka wa-rabbunā maḥmūd*, see in this corpus 5.4-5 and 35.6 and the examples provided in the commentaries. The *casus obliquus* of the sound masculine plural is used in *sālimīn ṣāliḥīn*, where classical Arabic has the *casus rectus* (Hopkins § 86.a).

6-7. For the eulogy *asʾalu Allāh an yutimma ʿalaynā wa-ʿalayka niʾmatahu*, see in this corpus 22.8-9. Post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *asʾalu* while the preceding short vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20).

7. *Wa-faḥluhu ʿalaynā ʿaḍīm*. The orthography of writing *zāʾ* instead of *dād* as in *faḥluhu* for *faḍluhu* and *ʿaḍīm* for *ʿaẓīm* is frequent in early papyri. See for example, *wa-l-ziyāda min faḥlihi*

fa-innamā naḥnu bihi wa-lahu (P.Loth 2[= P.Berl.Arab. II 75].8-9, 2nd/8th). See also Grohmann (1954), 104; Hopkins § 39.b.

7-8. *Wa-awṣīka bi-taqwā Allāh inna Allāh ra's kull ḥikma*. This expression echoes expressions used in prophetic *ḥadīths*. Cf. *awṣīka bi-taqwā Allāh innahu ra's kull shay'* (Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, nos. 11774, 2157, 8310, 8385). For the same expression, see in this corpus 22.10-11. See also *fa-innī awṣīkum bi-ittiqā' Allāh fa-innahu man yattaqi Allāh yaj'al lahu min amrihi makhraja wa-yarzuqahu min ḥaythu lā yaḥtasib* (Rāḡib (2011), ll. 9-11 and the commentary).

22.

Blessings addressed to three friends

P.Cam.Michaelides A 930 verso
Provenance: Unknown

27 x 17.5

2nd/8th
Plate 34

The text is written in black ink with a thin pen in 14 lines parallel to the fibers. At the bottom, a broad margin of 10.3 cm has been left blank except for one line of the address. The original cutting lines have been preserved on all sides. There are few diacritical dots.

The text shows many features of the early script, i.e. *ṣād* is horizontally elongated (l. 7 *ṣāliḥīn*). Words are split across line endings and continued in the next line (ll. 3-4 Kurayb; ll. 6-7 *sālimūn*; ll. 10-11 *inna*; ll.13-14 *al-arḍ*). For more extensive discussion about the physical description of the papyrus and the script, see the introduction to letter 21.

The letter was written on a reversed piece of papyrus by the same hand as 21. In this letter, a certain Ayyūb b. Abū al-Muṣawwar writes to three addressees, i.e. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Saʿd al-Yaḥṣubī, Bīnsa b. Kurayb al-Mudalī and Murthāh. The letter contains only blessings and prayers for the addressees similar to those appearing on side A, no. 21.

The letter is written in a simple style but clearly and carefully executed. It shows some grammatical and spelling mistakes. The voice of the letter fluctuates between singular and plural.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من ايوب ابن ابى المصور {و} الى عبد ا
3. لرحمن ابن سعد البحصي والى بنسة ابن كر
4. يب المدلى والى مرثاة سلم عليكم فانى
5. احمد اليك الله الذى لا اله الا هو اما
6. بعد فانى اخبرك من خبرنا انا سالمو
7. ن صالحين كالذى يسرك
8. وربنا محمود اسال الله ان يتم علينا
9. و عليكم نعمته وفضله علينا عظيم وشكره
10. عليكم صناعة واصيك بتقوى الله ا
11. ن الله راس كل حكمه والسلم
12. عليكم ورحمت الله وبركته و[..]
13. ت بنعمة الله واصطفكم به ان الا
14. رض عزيز علينا عظيم

الى عبد الرحمن ابن (vac.) اليحصي

Diacritical dots

(2) ابي; الي (3) الرحمن (4) الي; فاي (7) كالدي (9) علتنا (add) الحصي

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Ayyūb b. Abū al-Muṣawwar {and} to ‘Abd
3. al-Raḥmān b. Sa’d al-Yaḥsubī and Bīnsa b. Kur-
4. ayb al-Mudalī and Murthāh. Peace be upon you. I
5. praise for your sake God, other than Whom, there is no god. As for
6. what follows, I want to let you know our news, namely that we are well
7. and in good health, as you wish,
8. God be praised. I ask God to complete for us
9. and for you His benefaction. His munificence over us is immense and for Him
10. you owe thanks. I commend you to show piety toward God,
11. for God is the fount of all wisdom. Peace be
12. upon you and God’s mercy and blessings. And [..]
13. . the God’s favour. He endows you with it, for the
14. earth is hard and vast for us.

To ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. (vac.) al-Yaḥsubī

Commentary

1. The *basmala* extends about half a centimeter further into the right hand margin than the other lines. There is a long connecting line between the *sīn* and *mīm* of *bi-sm*. The tail of the *mīm* of *bi-sm* is very short in comparison to other *mīms* in the text.

2. *Ibn* is written consistently with an *alif* between the name of the son and the father, whereas classical Arabic omits it (Hopkins § 49.b.vii). *Ilā* is written with a long space between the *alif* and *lām*, while the *yā’* extends horizontally to the right to cover this space. Also written thus in lines 3 and 4. The scribe mistakenly added *wa* before the name of the first addressee.

3. The *nisba* Yaḥsubī refers to Yaḥsub, a large south-Arabian tribe affiliated with Ḥimyar. This tribe had moved to Syria by the time of the rise of Islam and dwelt in the region of Himṣ and they participated in the conquest of Egypt.³⁰⁴ After the conquest and the foundation of the city of Fuṣṭāṭ, Yaḥsub had their own *khiṭṭa* to the east of the *khiṭṭa* of al-Ma‘āfir.³⁰⁵

4. For the name Kurayb, see Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansāb*, 460. As for the *nisba* al-Mudalī, see Ibn Ma‘kūl, *Ikmāl*, vol. 7, 303.

3-4. I was not able to trace the names, Bīnsa and Murthāh in the onomastica.

6-8. For the formula *fa-innī ukhbiruka min khabarinā annā sālimūn ṣāliḥīn ka-lladhī yasurruka wa-rabbunā maḥmūd*, see in this corpus 21.5-6, 5.4-5 and 35.6 and the examples provided in the commentaries.

³⁰⁴ Al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 12, 390.

³⁰⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz*, vol. 2, 36; Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 123, 126, 128.

8-9. For the formula *as'alu Allāh an yutimma 'alaynā wa-'alayka ni'matahu wa-faḥluhu 'alaynā 'aḍīm*, see 20.6-7 and the commentary. Post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *as'alu* while the preceding short vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20).

9-10. The addition *wa-shukruhu 'alaykum ṣāni'a* is not attested in 21.7. The reading is uncertain.

10-11. For the expression *wa-awṣīka bi-taqwā Allāh inna Allāh ra's kull ḥikma*, see 21.7-8 and the commentary.

13-14. The reading and translation of these two lines are tentative.

Address. Only the name of the addressee is given in the address. See also in this corpus letters 15 and 35. The patronymic is missing after *Ibn*.

23.

Recommendation letter about a dear friend of the sender:

A woman writes to her sister³⁰⁶

P.Cam.Michaelides A 1041 verso

39 x 15.5

2nd/8th

Provenance: Probably Fustāṭ

Plate 35

The letter is incomplete at the bottom where an unknown number of lines is missing. Likewise, the top left corner is lost resulting in a loss of one or two words at the end of the first 4 lines after the *basmala*. The original cutting lines have been preserved at the top and on both sides. At the top, a margin of 6 cm has been left blank. The text is written with a medium-thick pen in black ink parallel to the fibers. Above the *basmala*, traces of one line belonging to the address of the letter on side A can be detected. There are few diacritical dots. For more about the physical description of the papyrus, see the introduction to letter no. 13.

The text shows some features of the early script, i.e. final *alif* extends below the connecting stroke (l. 11 *jaḥā'*; l. 19 *zawjuhā*). The upper part of the stroke *dāl/dhāl* bends backwards (l. 23 *dār*; l. 22 *dhālika*). *Fā'* has one dot below it (l. 11 *jaḥā'*). Initial *kāf* is horizontally elongated (l. 29 *karīma*). On occasions the tail of the final *yā'* extends backwards (l. 3 *fa-innī*; l. 26 *taqdiri*).

This letter has been written between two sisters. The letter's main concern is about a certain Ḥammāda bt. Ibrāhīm b. al-Manāzilī, who moved with her husband from Zawīla, the sender's domicile, to Fustāṭ (*Miṣr*), where the addressee lives. The sender asks her sister to look for this woman at the address she gives in full in the letter, i.e. near Bilāl, the vet, in the house of Ṣard Abū al-Ḥussām. She then asks her to become good friend with Ḥammāda, because she is a dear friend to the sender.

The female sender did not write the letter herself, but asked the servant of a certain 'Amr to pen it for her. The scribe made a lot of mistakes against grammar and spelling. Furthermore, he retained the masculine participle in places. The letter is written as one block, but carefully and clearly composed.³⁰⁷

Text

Side B:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من غلام عمرو [إلى]
3. سلم عليك فاني احمد [اليك الله]
4. الذي لا اله الا هـ [و اما بعد]
5. احسن [الله اليك] في [الدنيـ]ـا والاخرـ[رة]
6. كتبت [اليك] كتابي هذا وانا [على]
7. الذي يسرك وربنا محمود
8. مع الشدة والحاجة التي نحن فيها
9. فانسئ الله ان يفرج لنا منها
10. وما كان يمنعني من الكتاب

³⁰⁶ For other published recommendation letters, see P.RāgibLettres 14, 3rd/9th.

³⁰⁷ See also chapter one, script.

11. اليك بها من نامرك (؟) ولا جفا
 12. [اليك] واني كتبت الى امي اقريك
 13. السلم واخبرك امتعنى الله بحيا<ت>ك
 14. ولا اماتنى حتا يرني الله وجوهكم
 15. قبل الموت فى خير و عافية [ان امرأة]
 16. ممن كانت تسـ[كـ]ـن زويلة يقال لـ[ها]
 17. حمادة بنت ابرهيم بن المنزلى
 18. وامها ام عمر كنت نازل فى
 19. دارهم ثم انها خرج بها زوجها
 20. الى مصر وكان الذى بينى وبينها
 21. حسن احببت ان اعلمك
 22. ذلك وزعمت انها تنزل عند
 23. بلل البيطار فى دار صرد ابو الحسام
 24. فان رايت ياختى امتعنى الله بك ان
 25. تذهبي انت نفسك فتسلى عنها حتا
 26. تقدرى عليها وتلقيها فافعلى فان ذلك
 27. حبيب الى اسلك بحقى عليك الا ما فعلتى
 28. ذلك وان اسطعت ان يكون بينك وبينها
 29. معرفة فافعلى فانها كريمة على وقد
 30. احزنى خروجها من زويلة وقد كتبت
 31. اليها واكتبى الى بجواب كتابى هذ<ا>
 32. مع كتب امى فان قدرتى عليها فخذى
 33. [] الـ [] الـ بهـ ا

Side A:

[من غلام] عمرو الى (vac.)

Diacritical dots

(11 حبا (17 بب; المنزلى (18 كانب; نازل (19 ثم (22 رعمت; تنزل (23 البيطار (24 باحى (25 عنها; حتا (29 فد
 (30 رويله (32 كتب

Translation

Side B:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From the servant of 'Amr t[o
3. Peace be upon you. I praise [for your sake God,]
4. other than Whom, there is no go[d. As for what follows,]
5. may God bestow His favour [upon you] in [this world] and the hereafter.
6. I am writing to [you] this letter of mine, whereas I am [in a state,]
7. which pleases you and our God be praised,

6-7. The formula *katabtu ilayki kitābī hādhā wa-anā ‘alā alladhī yasurruki wa-rabbunā maḥmūd* is reconstructed on the basis of many attestations of this very common expression. Cf. *katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-anā ‘alā aḥsan ḥāl wa-llāh maḥmūd* (P.Horak 85.5, 2nd/8th); *katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-anā wa-man qibalī ‘alā afḍal ḥāl wa-aḥsan hay’a wa-llāh maḥmūd mashkūr* (CPR XVI 33.7-9, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); *fa-innī katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-lladhī tuḥibbu an yablughaka ‘an khāṣṣatinā wa-ḥāl mā qibalanā ‘alā aḥsan ḥāl wa-l-rabb maḥmūd* (CPR XVI 4.4-6, 2nd/8th); *katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-anā wa-man qibalī ‘alā aḥsan al-ḥāl wa-llāh maḥmūd* (P.RāḡibLettres 6.3, 3rd/9th); *katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-anā wa-ummuka wa-jāriyatuka wa-jamī ‘iyālikum bi-khayr kamā tuḥibbu lam yaḥduth ‘alayhim ba’daka illā khayr inna Allāh maḥmūd lā sharīk lahu* (P.Marchands V/I 17.3-6, 3rd/9th).

8. *Ma’a al-shidda wa-l-ḥāja allatī naḥnu fihā.* Expressions using words such as *shidda* and *ḥāja* are common in private letters. These expressions usually occur in two contexts. First, to indicate the sender’s bad condition in order to justify not having something done. Second, to seek the addressee’s compassion to do something and urge him to do it quickly. Cf. *fa-lā tada’ yā bunay bi-ḥurmat Allāh wa-bi-ḥurmatī al-thawb ... wa-anā fī shidda yā bunay* (P.Marchands II 9.22, 3rd/9th); *wa-innī fī shidda mā uḥibbu wa-llāh kull mā bi-yaddika* (P.Gen.inv 13.10-11, 3rd/9th); *wa qad ta’lam anā fī shidda* (P.Gen.V 15.6, 3rd/9th); *fa-’jjil ‘alayya wa-lā tata’akhhkar ... kharaja fī shidda* (P.Gen.V 19.5-6, 3rd/9th).

9. *Fa-nas’alu Allāh an yufarrija lanā minhā.* The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *fa-nas’alu* (Hopkins § 26).

10-11. *Wa-mā kāna yamna’unī min al-kitāb ilayka bihā min ... wa-lā jafā’.* For similar expressions, see in this corpus 25.9-10. *Jafā’* is written without *hamza* (Hopkins § 20.c). I was not able to find a satisfactory reading for the word before *wa-lā jafā’*.

13. The long *ā* of *al-salām* is written defectively (Hopkins § 10.a). *Bi-ḥayā<ti>ki.* The writer left the middle *tā’* out. For the expression *amta’anī Allāh bi-ḥayātiki*, see for example *amta’anī Allāh bi-ḥayātiki wa-ḥayāt Mājida* (P.Jahn 5.6, 2nd/8th).

14-15. *Wa-lā amātānī ḥattā yuriyanī Allāh wujūhakum qabla al-mawt fī khayr wa-’āfiya.* A similar expression is to be found in this corpus in 3.3; 7.9-11. See also *as’alu Allāh an yuriyanī wajhaka qabla al-mawt* (P.RāḡibLettres 15.6, 3rd/9th); *wa-yaj’alu yawmī qabla yawmiki wa-lā yumītānī yā sittī ḥamy minki ‘alayya qabla an yuriyanī wajhaki* (P.Heid.Arab. II 51.8, 3rd/9th); *wa-lā amātānī Allāh yā Umm Muḥammad wa-yā Umm ‘Abbāsa ḥattā arākum fī ‘āfiya* (CPR XVI 30.13-14, 3rd/9th). The particle *ḥattā* is spelled with an *alif mamdūda*, while classical Arabic requires an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.d). Also written thus in line 25. The lower half of *khayr wa-’āfiya* is effaced. Of *anna imra’a* only traces of ink can be seen.

16. *Mimman kānat taskunu Zawīla yuqālu lahā.* *Mimman* is written for *min man* (Hopkins § 51.c). *Yuqālu lahu/ā.* Expressions introducing further or closer identification such as *tud’ā* (named), *tu’raf bi* (known as), *yukannā* (whose *kunya* is) are very common in the papyri. See Hopkins § 69. See also in this corpus *al-ma’rūf bi* (18.address). *Zawīla* is located on the first point of the land of Sūdān. It is there where caravans from all directions meet on their way to east, west and south.³⁰⁸ The city was inhabited by Arabs since early Islamic times.³⁰⁹ In the eighth century, the city developed into an important commercial centre of the Ibādīs. In

³⁰⁸ al-Ḥamawī, *Mu’jam*, vol. 3, 159-160.

³⁰⁹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 197.

306/918-9, it became the centre of a small Ibādī state ruled by Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and his descendants.³¹⁰ Zawīla also appears in this letter in line 30.

17. For the female name Ḥammāda, see Gratzl (1906), 35. As for al-Manāzilī, see Ibn Ma'kūl, *Ikmāl*, vol. 7, 203. Ibrāhīm is written with *scriptio defectiva* of medial ā (Hopkins § 10.b.i).

18. The writer retains the masculine participle in *nāzil* instead of the feminine *nāzila* (Hopkins § 143.a).

20. *Miṣr* in this sense refers to Fustāṭ. Normally, Fustāṭ occurs together with *Miṣr*; cf. *allatī bi-fustāṭ miṣr* (P.Khalili I 13.3, dated 280/894); *bi-fustāṭ miṣr* (P.David-WeillLouvre 20.6, dated 208/823); *al-sākin fustāṭ miṣr* (P.RāgībTroisDocuments 1.5, dated 215/865); *fī bayt al-māl bi-fustāṭ miṣr* (P.World, 121, 3rd/9th).

21-22. *Aḥbabbtu an u'limaki dhālika*. This expression and variants of it are frequent in letters. Cf. *aḥbabbtu i'lāmaka dhālika abqāka Allāh* (P.RāgībLettres 13.4, 3rd/9th); *aḥbabbtu i'lāmaka dhālika limā a'lamu min surūrika bihi* (P.Marchands II 35.5, 3rd/9th and P.Marchands V/I 20.1, 3rd/9th); *aḥbabbtu i'lāmaka dhālika li-takūna minhu 'alā 'ilm* (P.Ryl.Arab. I I 5[= P.World, 171].18, 2nd/8th); *aḥbabbtu i'lāmaka dhālika li-taqifa 'alayhi in shā'a Allāh* (P.Hamb.Arab. II 1v.5, 3rd/9th).

23. The name Bilāl is written defectively without long ā, see Hess (1912), 13. At the best of my knowledge, the profession *al-bīṭār* (the vet) is not attested in the papyri. For the name Ṣard, see Ibn Ma'kūl, *Ikmāl*, vol. 7, 203. *Abū* is written for classical Arabic *Abī* (Hopkins § 162.a.i).

24. *Fa-in ra'ayti yā ukhtī amta'anī Allāh biki an*. The *ra'y* formula is one of the formulaic phrases that have been taken from petitions and were widely used in letters. For more extensive discussion on this formula, see P.Genizah, 303-317; P.KhanPetitions, 8-30; Grob (2010a), 61. The expression *amta'anī Allāh biki/a* occurs often in the second position as a slide-in-blessing, see Grob (2010a), 33. The particle *yā* is written as part of the word *yā ukhtī* and the long ā is spelled defectively (Hopkins § 10.d, 27.d).

25. *Tadhabī anti nafsaki fa-tas'alī 'anhā*. *Nafsaki* is a colloquial expression meaning (yourself, personally), see M. Hinds and M. Badawi, *A dictionary of Egyptian Arabic* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1986), 876. This expression occurs also in this corpus in 24.17. *Fa-tas'alī* is written without *hamza* (Hopkins § 26). Likewise, the word *as'aluki* in line 27 is written defectively without *hamza*. The personal pronoun *anta/anti* is rarely attested in the papyri especially when we compare it to the abundant use of *anā*, see Grob (2010a), 147.

27. *As'aluki bi-ḥaqqī 'alayki illā mā fa'alti*. For similar expressions, see for example *fa-bi-ḥaqqī 'alayka illā fa'alta* (P.Marchands V/I 9.7, 13, 3rd/9th). See also in this corpus *wa-nzur bi-ḥaqq mā baynī wa-baynaka min al-ikhā' illā m[ā fa'alta* (26.11). The verb *sa'ala* mainly introduces prayers and less frequently introduces requests to the addressee, see Grob (2010a), 60. *Illā* announces a positive oath (Fischer § 456).

28. *Wa-in iṣṭa'ti an takūna baynaki wa-baynahā*. *An takūna* + perfect should be translated as past (Hopkins § 313.c). The form *iṣṭa'a* instead of *istaṭa'a* omitting the *tā'* before the *ṭā'* echoes a Qur'an form, i.e. *famā iṣṭā'ū an yaẓharūhu wa-mā istaṭā'ū lahu naqba* (Q 18:97).

³¹⁰ For more about the city in early Arabic sources, see N. Levtzion and J.F.P. Hopkins, *Corpus of early Arabic sources for West African history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 13, 22, 41, 42, 46, 57, 59, 63, 64, 87, 122, 125, 129, 130, 135, 151, 169, 172, 173, 194, 198, 199, 200, 206, 210, 211, 354.

29. The orthography *ʿal* is written for *ʿalā* which is frequent in the papyri (Hopkins § 55).

30. Reference to previous writing is conventionally expressed by a past perfect, i.e. *qad katabtu* or *qad kuntu katabtu*, see Grob (2010a), 132.

31. *Wa-ktubī ilayya bi-jawāb kitābī hādhā<ā>*. The demonstrative *hādhā* is spelled without the final *alif* which is an archaic spelling (Hopkins § 61.d). The request to write back usually comprises the first stage towards the end of a letter, suggesting that not much is missing at the bottom.

24.

A letter between two brothers-in-law

P.Cam.Michaelides A 5
Provenance: Unknown

26.5 x 18

2nd/8th
Plate 36-37

Light-brown papyrus written in black ink with a medium-thick pen in 19 lines across the fibers. The left hand side is missing resulting in the loss of two or three words at the end of each line. The original cutting lines have been preserved on the other three sides. There is a big vertical tear at the top and several small holes and lacunae at the middle of the papyrus which have resulted in some loss of text. At the right hand side, a margin of 2 cm has been left blank. The papyrus has been folded 14 times horizontally, whereas there are no vertical folds perceptible. On side B, one line of the address is still preserved. There are few diacritical dots.

The text shows some features of the early script, i.e. final *alif* extends below the connecting stroke (l. 11 *iyānā*; l. 12 *al-ikhā*). The upper stroke of *dāl/dhāl* bends back at the top (l. 19 *dhī*). *Sīn* is written occasionally as a straight line with three dots written over it to represent the teeth (l. 18 *al-salām*). Initial *kāf* is hairpin-shaped (l. 17 *kitābukum*). Final *yā* extends backwards in a straight line (l. 2 *li-abi*).

This letter is sent from a certain Abū ‘Amr and his wife Umāma to one Abū Nu‘aym and his family. The main reason of the letter is to get in touch and to maintain the *ṣihr* relationship (relationship through marriage). The letter closes after blessings for the addressee and the final *salām* greeting with the date.³¹¹

The references to the addressee within the letter fluctuate between the plural and the singular. The scribe makes mistakes in grammar and spelling. The letter is well structured with gaps to mark off the onset of sections.

Text

Side A:

1. بس[م الله الرحمن الرحيم]
2. لابی نعیم واهـ[له من ا]بی عمرو]
3. وامامة سلـ[م علیکم فانا] نحمد الیـ[کم الله الذی]
4. لا اله الا هو (vac.)
5. اما بعد رز[قک]م الله [وايانا العـ]فـ[یة وجعلنا وایاکم]
6. من اهل جنته کتبـ[نا الیکم و] نحن [بحا]ل [عافیة وربنا]
7. محمود (vac.) بلغنا کتا[بکم ف]سرنا [سلامتکم عنا و]
8. عنکم فالله اسله [ان] بـ[ر]حـ[م]ته]
9. وقد فهمت ما ذکر[ت من قـ]بولک لا]
10. ایاک وبالـ[..] ما اجهل وذـ[ل] ایاک و]
11. ايانا وذلك لما قد اجرا الله بیننا [وبینکم]
12. من الاخا والصهر فوالله انا لنراک]
13. بخیر لانا نرجوک لحياتنا ولموتنا من] نسل[
14. الله بک المتاع وطول البقا کن]
15. تبعنا هديا بکتابک قبل ذلك مما]

³¹¹ See chapter one, dating.

16. بها عيالنا اذا عابثوه [اذ] ا]
 17. عن صلتهم بنفسك قادم كتابكم [ان شا الله]
 18. ورضى عنك وعنا والسلم عليك و[رحمت الله]
 19. وكتب ليومين بقيا من ذى الحجة

Side B:

[بن عبد الله (vac.) ومنزله فى ... لان عند منزل
 ابى الاخنس]

Diacritical dots

(2 نعيم 12) لئراك (13 لانا; نرحوك; لحياتنا 18) الشلم

Translation**Side A:**

1. In the nam[e of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.]
2. To Abū Nu‘aym and his fami[ly from A]bū ‘Amr [
3. and Umāma. Peac[e be upon you. We] praise for yo[ur sake God, other than Whom]
4. there is no god. (vac.)
5. As for what follows, May God be[stow upon] you [and us health and may He make us
6. of the people of His paradise. We are writ[ing to you,] while we [are in good health,
7. praised. (vac.) [Your] letter reached me and we were pleased (to hear of) [your health
8. you. I ask God [that He] through His me[r]cy [
9. I understood what you mentioned in your words [
10. you [..] what I am not aware of [you and]
11. us, because of what God made between us [and you
12. of brotherhood and in-law relationship. By God, we see you [
13. well, because we need you for our life and our death [we ask]
14. God to grant (us) through you enjoyment and longevity [
15. according to the guidance of your letter before that ..[
16. with it our children to amuse him [if] .[
17. about their relationship with yourself in your future letter, [if God wills.
18. May (He) be pleased with you and us. Peace be upon you [and God’s mercy.]
19. It has been written when two days still remain of Dhū al-Ḥijja.

Side B:

[To b.] ‘Abd Allah (vac.) and his house is in near the house of
Abū al-Akhnas

Commentary

Side A:

1. Of the *basmala* only the *bā*’ and *sīn* of *bi-sm* and the *mīm* of *al-raḥīm* are still visible. The *sīn* of *bi-sm* is elongated horizontally. See also *salām* in line 3.

2. *Lī-Abī Nu‘aym wa-ahlihi min Abī ‘Amr*. The *yā*’ of *abī* extends backwards into the margin. The name *Nu‘aym* appears also in this corpus in 11.2.

3. For the female name *Umāma*, see Gratzl (1906), 61.

3-4. The formula *salām ‘alayka fa-innī aḥmadu ilayka Allāh alladhī lā ilāh illā huwa ammā ba‘du* is restored on the basis of the other letters in this corpus. A long vacant space has been left after the *ḥamdala* as usual.

5. *Razaqakum Allāh wa-iyyānā al-‘āfiya*. An exact parallel for this formula is not attested, but see *wa-razaqaka ‘alayhi al-ṣiḥa* (CPR XVI 24.3, 3rd/9th and the examples provided in the commentary). Of *al-‘āfiya* only the *fā*’ is preserved.

5-6. *Wa-ja‘alanā Allāh wa-iyyākum min ahl jannatihi*. This formula is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. See for example *wa-ja‘alanā Allāh wa-iyyāka min ahl al-janna bi-‘izzatihi wa-qudratihi* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 29.5, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in the commentary). Likewise, the formula *katabnā ilaykum wa-naḥnu bi-ḥāl ‘āfiya wa-rabbunā maḥmūd* is reconstructed on the basis of many attestations of this very common expression; cf. *kitābī ilayka akrama Allāh wajhaka wa-anā wa-man qibalī ‘alā aḥdā ḥāl wa-rabbunā maḥmūd* (P.Marchands II 1.3, 3rd/9th). The *alif* of *katabnā* is missing. Of *bi-ḥāl* only the *lām* is visible.

7. A short vacant space has been left after *maḥmūd* to mark off the onset of the next section.

8. *Fa-llāh as‘aluhu*. This sentence exhibits the placement of the object before the verb, see P.Khalili I 18.19, 3rd/9th and the examples given in the commentary. The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *as‘aluhu* (Hopkins § 26). For the widespread expression *bi-raḥmatihī* as a closure of an entire section of blessings, see Grob (2010a), 45.

9. *Wa-qad fahimtu mā dhakarta min qawlika*. The right tip of the *tā*’ of *dhakarta* is still visible before the lacuna. Only the lower traces of the *nūn* of *min* are visible while the *qāf* of *qawlika* is missing.

10. The *kāf* of *iyyāka* is horizontally elongated. More satisfactory reading for this line cannot be provided.

11-12. *Wa-dhālika limā qad ajrā Allāh baynanā wa-baynaka min al-ikhā’ wa-l-ṣihr*. For parallels of this formula, see *limā ajrā Allāh baynanā wa-baynaka min al-ikhā’ wa-l-qarāba* (CPR XVI 7.10, 1st-2nd/7th-8th). See also in this corpus *fī alladhī ja‘ala Allāh baynī wa-baynaka min al-ṣihr wa-l-ḥaqq* (2.22). The post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *al-ikhā’* (Hopkins § 21). *Fa-wa-llāh*. For more about oaths in private and business letters, see Grob (2010a), 26, 37. See also in this corpus 2.20, 31-32 and chapter one, formulary.

13. *Bi-khayr li-annā narjūka li-ḥayātinā wa-li-mawtinā*. The *khā'* of *bi-khayr* is written differently from the way in which it is written in *al-ikhā'*. The expression *li-annā narjūka li-ḥayātinā wa-li-mawtinā* is not attested in the papyri, at the best of my knowledge.

14. *Nas'alu Allāh bika al-matā' wa-ṭūl al-baqā'*. For variants of this formula, see *nas'alu Allāh bika al-matā' wa-lā bi-l-ḍilā'* (P.khalili 15.8, 2nd/8th and the commentary). The post-vocalic hamza is omitted in *al-baqā'* (Hopkins § 21).

16. *Idhā* is written twice by the scribe, who indicated his mistake by crossing out the second word by means of a horizontal line.

17. *'An ṣilatihim bi-nafsika qādim kitābikum in shā'a Allāh*. Of *in shā'a Allāh* only the *alif* of *in* is visible.

18. For the prayer *raḍiya Allāh 'annā wa-'anka*, see in this corpus 35.9 and the examples given in the commentary. *Wa-l-salām 'alaykum [wa-raḥmat Allāh]*. The *sīn* of *al-salām* is written with a straight stroke with three dots written over the line to represent the teeth. For this practice, see P.Khurasan, 76. *Wa-raḥmat Allāh* is restored on the basis of the other letters in this corpus.

19. *Wa-kutiba li-yawmayn baqiyā min dhī al-Ḥijja*. For dating private and business letters, see chapter one, dating. See also *katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā li-thalāth wa-'ishrūn khalawn min jumādā al-aūlā sitta wa-'ishrīn min ba'ūna* (P.SijpesteijnTravel 1.17-18); *wa-kutiba yawm al-khamīs li-thalāth layāl khalawn min shahr rabī al-ākhir* (P.RāḡibLettres 7.4-5, 3rd/9th); *kitābī ilayka ju'iltu fidā'aka min al-fuṣṭāt fī arba'at ayyām maḍaw min sha'bān* (P.RāḡibLettres 17.4, 3rd/9th); *wa-kutiba yawm al-khamīs ḍaḥwatan* (P.Heid.Arab. II 7.9, 3rd/9th); *kitābī ilayka a'azaka Allāh yawm al-jum'a* (P.Heid.Arab. II 35.3, 4th/10th); *yawm katabtu ilayka wa-huwa al-khamīs* (CPR XVI 11.8, 3rd/9th); *wa-katabtu ilayka yawm al-aḥad ṣalāt al-ghadā* (CPR XVI 22.5, 3rd-4th/9th-10th); *kitābī ilayka abqāka Allāh min al-iskandariyya laylat al-thulāthā'* (P.Marchands II 35.2, 3rd/9th); *wa-kutiba yawm al-sabt* (P.Marchands V/I 10.5, 3rd/9th); *innī katabtu ilayka hādhā al-kitāb ba'da al-suḥūr* (P.Marchand II 1m.1-2, 3rd/9th).³¹²

Side B:

On side B traces of two lines of the address can be detected. The place of delivery is specified on the left hand side.

1. The second word after *fī* is unclear to me. The final letter is quite clearly a *nūn* preceded by *lām-alif*. Preceding it seems to be written a *rā'* or *zāy*.

2. For the name *al-Akhnas*, see Ibn Ma'kūl, *Ikmāl*, vol. 1, 40.

³¹² See also Grob (2010a), 49-50, note 72.

25.

Letter maintaining the relationship between the sender and the addressee

P.Cam.Michaelides A 15
Provenance: Unknown

14.5 x 25

2nd/8th
Plate 38

Light-brown papyrus which is darkly discolored in places at the top and the bottom. It is written with a medium-thick pen in black ink in 12 lines across the fibers. The letter is incomplete at the top as well as the bottom where an unknown number of lines is missing. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on both sides. The papyrus has been folded 14 times vertically and 8 times horizontally. The text is laid out in paragraphs and there are very few diacritical dots. Side B is blank.

The text shows many features of the early script, i.e. independent *alif* bends to the left at the bottom (l. 10 *sadāka*). The horizontal stroke of initial 'ayn is extended to the right (l. 2 'alaynā; 'alayka). Initial and medial *kāfs* are horizontally elongated with an extended base, an upper stroke parallel to the base line and a rightward shaft at the top (l. 5 *yakun*; l. 7 *kitābihi*).

This is a correspondence between two relatives, whose names and relationship remain unknown to us. The sender structured his letter in three paragraphs. The first paragraph is devoted to blessings and prayers for the addressee. In the second paragraph, the sender stresses the close relationship, reminding the addressee of the ties that God made between them, i.e. the ties of Islam and kinship. In the third paragraph, the sender complains about the lack of replies. He claims that he wrote to the addressee before his current letter several subsequent letters but he did not receive for any of them an answer.

The writer uses a very rich vocabulary and complex sentences with many conjunctions and connective particles with minor grammatical and spelling mistakes which indicates his high command of the language.

Text

1. اما بعد [] الله واياك من طاعته وخشيته ما []
2. به الكرام-ة وي-تم علينا وعليك به النعمة فانه ليس من امر يقرب
3. الى منه الله الا وقد سببه بيننا وبينك حق الاسلام وحر [مته] وحق القرابة
4. ومعرفته بم []
5. ولم يكن احد اولا بحسن النظر فيه ولا المدوامه ع[ل-ي]ه ولا الرعية
6. فيه ولا الصلة له منك للذى ج[ع]-ل الله فيك وعندك [ك] ولما قسم الله
7. لك من حسن الراى وسداك اليه وبصرك من حلال كتنا [به] وحرامه
8. وان كان حكم ذلك واجبا علينا وعليك (vac.)
9. وقد كتبت اليك قبل كتابى هذا بكتب كثيرة متوا [ترة] فلم يبلغنى لشى
10. منها جوابا فالله يغفر لنا ولك ما كنت اظن [هذ]ا الجفا
11. ك[ل]-ه بك [] حالك به واس[ل]-ل الله ان []
12. وصلنا اح[م]-د الله بلطف[ه]

Diacritical dots

(5 به; عليك 11) عليك 12) اليك 14) به

Translation

1. As for what follows, [May God us] and you of His obedience and His fear with which ..[]
2. through it the dignit[y and may He co]mplete for us and you through it the benefaction. There is nothing that God made dearer to me than what
3. He made between us, namely the bond of Islam and its holi[ness] and the bond of kinship
4. and its acknowledgement. Then, [
5. nobody was worthy to take consideration of it nor the endurance fo[r it] nor the attention
6. for it nor the relation to it except you, because of what God p[u]t in you and with [you] and because of what God gives
7. you of the levelheadedness and by guiding you to it and enlightening you with what is permitted in [His] book and what it is prohibited.
8. However, the verdict of (knowing all) these (laws) is compulsory on us and you. (vac.)
9. I wrote to you before this letter of mine several subse[quent] letters but I did not receive for
10. any of them an answer. May God forgive us and you. I did not believe that you bear all [thi]s aversion
11. (towards me) []... I as[k] God to [
12. I pr[ai]se God through His kind[ness]

Commentary

1. The beginning of this letter is missing. The first line contains the transitional element *ammā ba'du*, suggesting that not more than three lines are lost at the top.

1-3. *Ammā ba'du* [] *Allāh wa-iykāka min ṭā'atihi wa-khashyatihi mā* [] *bihi al-karāma wa-yutimma 'alaynā wa-'alayka bihi al-ni'ma fa-innahu laysa min amr yuqaribu ilayyā minhu Allāh*. These blessings are unique. The *tā'* of *yuqaribu* is horizontally elongated at the end of the line and lacks an upward curve on the left. For the prepositional extension using *bi-ṭā'atihi*, see Grob (2010a), 26.

3-4. *Illā wa-qad sabbabahu baynanā wa-baynaka ḥaqq al-islām wa-ḥurmatihī wa-ḥaqq al-qarāba wa-ma'rifatihī*. For stressing the close relationship between the sender and the addressee, see in this corpus *wa-dhālika limā qad ajrā Allāh baynanā wa-baynaka min al-ikhā' wa-l-ṣihr* (24.11 and the examples provided in the commentary).

4. Only upper traces of letters can be detected among the ink traces remaining of this line.

5-6. *Wa-lam yakun aḥad awlā bi-ḥusn al-naẓar fihī wa-lā al-mudāwama 'alayhī wa-lā al-ri'āya fihī wa-lā al-ṣila lahu minka*. *Awlā* is written with an *alif mamdūda* instead of an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.c). *Al-ri'āya* is written defectively without long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a).

7-8. *Li-lladhī ja'ala Allāh fika wa-'indaka wa-limā qasama Allāh laka min ḥusn al-ra'y wa-sadāk ilayhī wa-baṣṣaraka min ḥalāl kitābihī wa-ḥarāmihī*. The two *lāms* of *li-lladhī* are very short, but

the reading seems the only fitting one. The scribe added the *alif* of *Allāh* as an afterthought above the *mīm* of *qasama*.

9-10. *Wa-qad kuntu katabtu ilayka qabl kitābī hādhā bi-kutub kathīra mutawātira fa-lam yablughnī li-shay' minhā jawāban.* The complaint about lack of a prompt reply to one's written messages are mentioned on countless occasions in letters. Cf. *qad katabtu ilayka ghayr kitāb lam arā laka kitāb ukhtika fī ḥaqqī 'alā mā fāraqatnī 'alayh wa-ḥalafat 'alayhi fī manzil Abū al-Ḥasan thumma kharajat fa-lam taṣna' fī dhālika qalīl wa-lā kathīr ta'īdu al-tamallī wa-tū'īdu marra ba'da ukhrā fa-lam arā li-dhālika taḥqīqa shay' fa-Allāh al-musta'an wa-mā kāna ra'yī aktubu ilayka bi-ḥarf wāḥid lawlā khurūj rasūl Yaḥyā wa-qad qadima ghayr wāḥid fa-lam arāka katabta ilayya shay' (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 14.[= P.World, 179-180]2-8, 3rd/9th); u'limuka akramaka Allāh annī qad katabtu ilayka min al-kutub mā-lā uḥṣīhā wa-lam arā laka kitāb wa-lā khabar (P.Khalili I 36.4-6, 3rd/9th); wa-lā adrī mā mana'aka an taktuba ilaynā bi-khabarika wa-salāmatika (CPR XVI 4.6, 1st-2nd/8th-9th); wa-innī qad kuntu muntaẓir arā minka kitāb fa-lā adrī mā mana'aka an taktub ilayya bi-salāmatika wa-ṣalāḥika (P.RāḡibLettres 11.10-13, 2nd/8th); wa-mā adrī mā mana'akum min al-kitāb ilayya fī amr al-ṣabiyya (P.Heid.Arab. II 30.10, 3rd/9th); mā adrī mā alladhī mana'aka kamā wa'adtanī fī kitābika (P.Marchands V/I 18.5, 3rd/9th); wa-fahimtu mā dhakarta min istibṭāka amr 'Abd al-Raḥmān wa-ta'khīrinā al-ghālī li-jawābika fīhi marra ukhrā (CPR XVI 27.4, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); wa-waqafu bihi 'alā alladhī dhakarta fīhi min ta'khīr kitābī 'anka (CPR XVI 32.3, 3rd/9th); lam aqra' laka kitāb fī hādhihi al-jum'a (P.Marchands III 1.2-3; 5.2-3 all 3rd/9th); lam asma' laka a'azzaka Allāh khabar (P.Heid.Arab. II 35.4, 3rd/9th); mundhu thalāthat ashhur mā ānasanā minkum khabar marra wa-lā marra (CPR XVI 30.4, 3rd/9th); qad katabtu ilayka kitābayn lam arā lahumā jawāb wa-ākhir mā katabtu ilayka kitābayn wa-lam arā li-wāḥid minhumā jawāb (P.Cair.Arab. V 339.5-6, 3rd/9th); qad katabtu ilayka kitāban qabla hādhā wa-lam aqra' laka jawāb kitābī ilayka (P.Berl.Arab. II 77.2-3, 3rd/9th); qad katabtu ilayka kathīr fa-lam ya'tinī minka jawāb kitāb ilayka (P.Berl.Arab. II 72.10-11, 2nd/8th).³¹³ See also in this corpus *wa-ukhbiruka annī wājid 'alayka ilayka bi-hādhihi sab'at kutub fa-lam arā minka li-shay' minhā jawāban (26.7-8); qad katabtu ilayka bi-kitāb qabla hādhā lam tujībni fīhi bi-shay' (27.7-8).* For more extensive discussion on the lack of replies, see chapter one, formulary. *Shay'* occurs as an indefinite pronoun (Hopkins § 63).*

10-11. *Fa-llāh yaghfiru lanā wa-laka mā kuntu azunnu hādhā al-jafā' kulluhu bika.* For the prayer *fa-llāh yaghfiru lanā wa-laka*, see *fa-llāh yaghfiru laka yā akhī* (P.Marchand V/I 20.9, 3rd/9th). The post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *al-jafā'* (Hopkins § 21.b). *Mā kuntu azunnu.* The combination *kān* + imperfect in addition to expressing a durative past is frequently used in the papyri as in classical Arabic (Hopkins § 239). For other attestations of *jafā'* (aversion) in the papyri, see in this corpus 23.11 and the commentary.

11-12. These two lines are for the most part illegible due to the fragmentary state of the bottom of the papyrus.

³¹³ See also Grob (2010a), 52.

26.

Complaining about the lack of replies

P.CtYBR.inv. 2714
Provenance: Unknown

20.2 x 13.5

2nd/8th
Plate 39-40

Dark-brown papyrus written in a regular hand in 13 lines in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The both sides are missing resulting in a considerable loss of text. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved at the top and the bottom. There are few diacritical dots. Side B bears traces of the address in one line written parallel to the fibers. The papyrus sheet has been folded 9 times horizontally.

The script is characterized by the way in which *sīn* is written consistently with teeth (l. 5 *al-salām*). Initial *kāf* is sometimes hairpin-shaped (l. 8 *kutub*). Final *yā'* occasionally returns backwards to the right (l. 6 *lī*).

In this letter, a certain Rābiḥ, who describes himself as the servant of one Sa'īd, angrily writes to a certain Abū Yazīd about the lack of replies and asks him to always keep in touch. He claims that he wrote to him seven letters including the current one, but he never received for any of them an answer. He asks him further to look into something that remains unknown to us. In the letter, Rābiḥ stresses the bond of brotherhood with the addressee.

The letter is composed in a very simple style but carefully executed.

Text

Side A:

1. [بسم الله الرحيم-بن الرحيم]
2. [الى] ابى يزيد من رايح فتا سعيد سلم علي-ك فانى احمد اليك الله الذى لا اله]
3. [الا هو اما ب-]عد رضى الله عنا وعنك من مكاره الدين-ا والاخرة برحمته]
4. [كتبت اليك و] انا سالم صالح كما يسرك وال-ل-ه مح-مو]د]
5.] ر السلم واقرا منى على طلحة السلم-م
6. [وعلى ا]يوب السلم وانظر ان تهدي لى ابر]
7.] يل واخبرك انى واجد عليك]
8. [قد كتبت] اليك بهذه سبعة كتب فلم ارا من-ك لشي منها جوابا]
9.] -صله العنب فلا تدع الكتاب الينا ب-خبرك وحالك وسلامتك]
10.] وبالحاجة] تكون لك فان فيها الذى يسرك]
11.] [وانظر بحق ما بينى وبينك من الاخا الا م-ا فعلت
12.] [بينك وبينه فانى مسرور بسور رد]
13.] و[السلم عليك ورحمت الله

Side B:

رقعة [الى] ابى يزيد (vac.) من رايح فتا س-عيد]

Diacritical dots

(1 الرحيم (3 عنك (4 يسرك (7 يل; عليك (8 سبعة; كتب; منك (11 بيني (12 بينك; بينه; بسرورك

Translation

Side A:

1. [In the name of God the Compassion]ate, the Merciful.
2. [To] Abū Yazīd from Rābiḥ the servant of Sa'īd. Peace be upon yo[u. I praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is]
3. [no god. As for what] follows, may God be pleased with us and you from evils of this wo[rld and the hereafter through His mercy.]
4. [I am writing to you, whereas] I am well and in good health, which pleases you, G[o]d be pr[ais]ed. [
5. []r greetings and send from me to Ṭalḥa greet[ings
6. [and (send) to A]yyūb greetings. Consider to provide me with ... [
7. [] .. I would like to let you know you that I am angry with you [
8. [I have written] to you seven letters including this one but I have not seen from y[ou for any of them an answer]
9. []... the grapes. So do not neglect writing to me about [your news and your state and your sound condition]
10. [and need] you have, for in it lies your pleasure [
11. [] and consider, in recognition of brotherhood between me and you, to [do so
12. [] between you and him, because I am pleased [
13. [] And] peace be upon you and God's mercy.

Side B:

A letter [to] Abū Yazīd (vac.) from Rābiḥ the sevant of S[a'īd]

Commentary

Side A:

2. The proper name Rābiḥ could also be read as Rā'ih, see P.Cair.Arab. II 126.5,12, dated 225/840. *Fatā* is spelled with an *alif mamdūda* while classical Arabic requires an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.a). Also written thus in the exterior address. For other attestations of this term in the papyri, see for example P.Marchands III 35.11, 3rd/9th. The *ḥamdala* is reconstructed on the basis of parallels.

3. For the expression *makāriḥ al-dunyā wa-l-ākḥira bi-raḥmatihi*, see Grob (2010a), 45.

5-6. The author incorporates the final greetings to and from relatives and friends into the body of the letter which is uncommon. For other examples, see in this corpus 14.2-4; 15.8-9; 31.20-23.

6. *Wa-nzur an tahdī lī*. For similar expressions using the verb *ahdā*, see in this corpus *wa-ahdī lanā sidr nagh silu bihi ru'ūsanā* (9.16). One expects a second object to have followed *lī*, i.e. the thing to be sent.

7. For the expression *wa-ukhbiruka annī wājid 'alayka*, see in this corpus *fa-lā tajid 'alayya fī dhālika* (2.25 and the commentary).

8. *Wa-qad katabtu ilayka bi-hādhihi sab'at kutub fa-lam arā min[ka li-shay' minhā jawāban]*. This formula is reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 25.9-10 and the commentary. See also chapter one, formulary. The long vowel is maintained in the jussive, *lam arā*, where classical Arabic requires a short vowel (Hopkins § 82.d).

9. For other attestations of *al-'inab* (the grapes) in private letters; cf. *hādhihi ayyām al-ṣayf ilā an yajī'a al-'inab* (P.Marchands II 7.12, 3rd/9th); *wa-in kāna 'indaka 'inab shatawiyy fa-b'ath ilayya bi-shay' minhu* (P.Jahn 12r[= Chrest.Khoury I 98].12-13, 2nd/8th). For the expression *fa-lā tada' al-kitāb ilaynā bi-khabarika wa-ḥālika wa-salāmatika*, see Grob (2010a), 69.

10. The expression *wa-bi-l-ḥāja takūnu laka* is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. See in this corpus 31.30; 36.7 and the commentaries.

11. For the expression *wa-nzur bi-ḥaqq mā baynī wa-baynaka min al-ikhā' illā m[ā fa'alta* and variants of it, see in this corpus 2.22; 24.11; 25.3-4 and the commentaries. The post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *al-ikhā'* (Hopkins § 21).

Side B:

Traces of ink can be detected after the name of the addressee but difficult to restore. The reconstruction of the exterior address is made on the basis of the internal address. *Ruq'a* is a commonly used word for note and letter, see P.RāgibPlusAncienneLetter, 5; Diem (2008), 857.

27.

Request for replies and taking care of the sender's family

P.CtYBR.inv. 2604

28x 22.4

2nd/8th

Provenance: Unknown

Plate 41

Medium-brown papyrus written in a somewhat flowing hand in 14 lines in black ink with a thin pen across the fibers. The top has torn off where 5 lines are destroyed and the left hand side is missing with a considerable loss of text. Two broad margins of 3 cm have been left blank at the bottom and on the right hand side. The papyrus sheet has been folded about 12 times horizontally, but there are no vertical folds perceptible. An address may have been written at the top of side B but is now lost. There are diacritics in one word.

The script is characterized by the way in which *sīn* is written sometimes with teeth and others without (l. 13 *istawṣī*; l. 12 *al-salām*; l. 14 *al-salām*). The tail of the final *yā'* usually returns backwards to the right (l. 14 *raḍīya*). The ligature *lām-alif* is v-shaped and the *lām* inclines to the right at the top (l. 13 *wa-lā*).

In this letter, the sender, whose *kunya* is partially preserved, writes to a certain Abū Muḥammad blaming him for not answering his previous letter and urging him to answer this one. He also asks him to deliver the enclosed letter to a certain Abū Muḥammad. At the end, the sender asks the addressee to take good care of his family.

The letter is carefully executed with some minor grammatical and spelling mistakes.

Text

1. [بِسْمِ-] الله الرحمن الرحيم [بِسْمِ]
2. لابي محمد [د] من ابى [] سلم عليك فانى []
3. [ا]حم [د] [ا]لي [ك] الله الذى لا اله الا هو (vac.) []
4. اما [بع] د [عافانا الله واياك وعفا عنا]
5. وعنك كتبت [اليك كتابى هذا وانا على الذى يسرك]
6. وقد عرضناهم ور [] ما []
7. قد كتبت اليك بكتاب [قبل هذا]
8. لم تجبنى فيه بشى فظننت [] وقد بعثت []
9. بكتاب الى ابى محمد عاف [ل] ه [الله] مع [كتابى هذا]
10. فادفعه اليه وابعث بجوابك ان ش [ا] الله []
11. واكتب الى باخبار ما قبلكم فانى [اسر بذلك]
12. ابو زكير وعبد الرحمن بن مسلم يقرياك السلم []
13. واستوصى باهلنا خيرا ولا الومنك فيهم ان شا [الله]
14. رضى الله عنا وعنك والسلم عليك ورح [مت الله]

Diacritical dots

(11) فبلكم

Translation

1. [In the n]a[me of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.]

2. To Abū Muḥamma[d] from Abū [Peace be upon you.] I
3. [p]rai[se] for y[our sak]e G[od, other than whom there is no god. (vac.)]
4. As for what [follo]ws, [may God protect us and you and may He forgive us]
5. and you. I am writing [to you this letter of mine, whereas I am as you wish.]
6. We have displayed them and .. [] .. [
7. I wrote to you a letter [before this one
8. you did not send to me an answer to it at all, so I thought [and I sent]
9. a letter to Abū Muḥammad, may G[od] sa[ve] him, with [this letter of mine.]
10. So deliver it to him and send to me your reply, if [God wills.]
11. And write to me about the news of those who are with you, because this [delights me.]
12. Abū Zakīr and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muslim send to you greetings [
13. And take good care of my family, so that I would not blame you concerning them, if G[od] wills.
14. May God be pleased with us and you. Peace be upon you and [God’s] mer[cy.]

Commentary

1-5. These five lines are badly damaged due to the fragmentary state of the top of the papyrus. The opening formulae are reconstructed on the basis of parallels. See for example in this corpus **9.3**; **23.6-7**. A vacant space is to be expected after the *ḥamdala*, owing to the fact that *ammā ba‘du* appears in line 4.

6. For the term *‘araḍa* (to present/expose for sale), see P.SijpesteijnTravel **1.6**, 2nd/8th and the commentary.

7-8. For the complaint about lack of replies, see chapter one, formulary. See also **25.9-10**.

9. *Bi-kitāb ilā Abī Muḥammad ‘afāhu Allāh ma‘a* [*kitābī hādḥā*]. A proper name or the word *kitābī* (my letter) is to be expected in the lacuna after the preposition *ma‘a* at the end of the line. The latter possibility might be confirmed by the request to deliver it in line 10.

11. For the expression *mā qibalakum*, see chapter two, women of the house. The formula *fa-innī usarru bi-dhālika* is reconstructed on the basis of parallels; cf. P.Khalili I **36.15**, 3rd/9th; CPR XVI **29.9**, 4th/10th; P.Heid.Arab. II **65.24th/10th**. See also *ḥattā usarru bihā* (P.Jahn **15.6**, 2nd/8th); *fa-innī usarru bihā* (P.David-WeillEdfou **1r.17**, 3rd/9th).

12. The name Zakīr is well attested in the papyri; cf. CPR XXVI **19.17**, early 3rd/9th; P.Philad.Arab. **33.9**, dated 366/977. The name appears also in this corpus in **36.2**, 8. The reading Zukayr is also possible. As for the name Muslim, see in this corpus **16.14**; **30.2**, address; **32.2**, address.

13. For the formula *wa-stawṣī bi-ahlinā khayran wa-lā alumannka fīhim in shā‘a Allāh*, see *wa-ṣṭawṣīhā khayran* (CPR XVI **14v.1**, 3rd-4th/9th-10th and the commentary). See also in this corpus **40.10-11**.

14. For the prayer *raḍiya Allāh ‘annā wa-‘anka*, see in this corpus **35.9** and the examples given in the commentary.

28.

**A letter of request:
A man writes to his friend**

P.CtYBR.inv. 2713
Provenance: Unknown

8.5 x 12.2

2nd/8th
Plate 42-43

Dark-brown papyrus written in a neat and flowing hand in black ink in 9 lines with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The left hand side is missing with a considerable loss of text. The original margins remain on the other three sides. Side B bears the address in one line written parallel to the fibers. The papyrus sheet has been folded 5 times horizontally. There are no diacritical dots.

The script is characterized by the way in which *šād* is oval in shape (l. 6 *šāhib*). Initial *kāf* is hairpin-shaped (l. 6 *kitābī*). There is a marked extension of the tail of the final and independent *yā'* to the right in a horizontal line (l. 2 *ilā*; l. 3 *alladhī*).

In this letter, the sender 'Abd al-Malik b. Ṣalatān informs Musāfir b. Kathīr, the addressee, about the carrier of the letter and something that remains unknown to us. Due to the fragmentary state of the papyrus only the introductory formulae can be reconstructed. The preserved vestiges are not enough to extract a continuous sense. At the end of the letter, the sender claims that no body could suffice his needs except the addressee.

The letter is very short and condensed, written as one block with no means to highlight the text. The scribe makes mistakes against spelling and grammar.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن [الرحيم]
2. من عبد الملك بن صلتان الى [مسافر بن كثير سلم عليك فانى]
3. احمد اليك الله الذى لا اله الا هـ [و (vac.)]
4. اما بعد عافنا الله واياك [وعفا عنا وعناك]
5. الله ابي كثير اذا خرج [الى]
6. صاحب كتابى هذا فانه ليس لى [احد]
7. امتع الله <بك> فانه لا احد يكفى الا [الله وانت]
8. اسل الله لنا ولك بالعفو والعافية]
9. والسلم عليك ورحمت [الله]

Side B:

[من عبد الملك بن صلتان الى] مسافر ابن كثير

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God the Compassionate, [the Merciful.]
2. From ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ṣalatān to [Musāfir b. Kathīr. Peace be upon you. I]
3. praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no go[d. (vac.)]
4. As for what follows, may God save us and you [and forgive us and you
5. Allāh, Abū Kathīr, when he departs [to
6. the carrier of this letter of mine, because there is [no body
7. May God grant enjoyment < through you>. No body suffices (my needs) except [God and you
8. I ask God for us and you forgiveness and health [
9. Peace be upon you and [God’s] mercy.

Side B:

[From ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ṣalatān to] Musāfir b. Kathīr

Commentary

Side A:

2. The name of the addressee, Musāfir b. Kathīr, is reconstructed on the basis of the exterior address. For the name Ṣalatān, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr*, 1083. As for the name Musāfir, see Ibn Ma’kūl, *Ikmāl*, vol. 7, 254. For other attestations in the papyri, see P.Cair.Arab. II 89.10, dated 209/824.

3. A vacant space is to be expected after the *ḥamdala*, owing to the fact that *ammā ba’dū* appears in line 4.

4. ‘Āfānā is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long ā, which is replaced by a little hook (Hopkins § 10.c). See chapter one, language. The formula *wa-‘afā ‘annā wa-‘anka* is restored on the basis of countless parallels, see for example in this corpus 29.3.

5. The *alif maqṣūra* of *ilā* can be seen extending backwards at the end of this line.

6. References to the carrier of the letter as *ḥāmil al-kitāb* or *ṣāhib al-kitāb* occur in several occasions in private and business letters, see Grob (2010a), 96.

6-7. *Fa-innahu laysa lī [aḥad] amta‘a Allāh <bika> fa-innahu lā aḥad yakfīnī illā* [Allāh wa-anta. This formula and variants of it appear frequently in petitions and letters of request. Cf. *wa-mā lī aḥad illā Allāh wa-anta yā sayyidī* (P.Word, 186.5, 2nd-3rd/8th-9th); *wa-anta ta‘lam an laysa lī khalq illā Allāh wa-anta* (P.Khalili I 24.5-6, 3rd/9th). See also *annahu laysa lī al-yawm akh bi-māḥabbatihi ghayraka* (P.Jahn 9.3, 3rd/9th); *fa-in laysa lī akh ghayraka* (P.David-WeillLouvre 3.12, 3rd/9th); *laysa aḥad illā antum* (P.Marchands II 19.7, 3rd/9th). For more extensive discussion on expressions showing the sender’s trust in the addressee, see Grob (2010a), 93.

7. The scribe left the word *bika* out after the blessing *amta‘a Allāh*.

8. The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *as’alu* (Hopkins § 26).

9. The final *salām* greeting is cursive, especially the word *al-salām*.

Side B:

Of the exterior address only the name of the addressee is still preserved. *Ibn* between the name of the son and the father is written with an *alif*, whereas classical Arabic omits it (Hopkins § 49.b.vii).

29.

Inquiring about the presence of the addressee in *al-Rīf*

P.CtYBR.inv. 2634
Provenance: Unknown

12 x 12.5

2nd/8th
Plate 44

Slightly damaged dark brown papyrus written in a flowing hand in black ink in 11 lines with a medium-thick pen perpendicular to the fibers. The left hand side is missing resulting in a considerable loss of text. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on the other three sides. The papyrus sheet has been folded 5 times vertically. An address may have been written at the top of side B but is now lost. There are no diacritical dots.

The script is characterized by some early features, i.e. the horizontal stroke of initial *ʿayn* is extended to the right (l. 3 *ʿāfānā*). Initial *kāf* is hairpin-shaped (l. 6 *kānat*).

This letter has been sent by a certain Abū Ḥamza to one Abū Ḥuwayy. In the letter, the sender wonders whether the addressee is still in the countryside (*al-rīf*), since he was informed that the addressee has already departed. The letter closes with the common closing formulae.

The letter is well written and composed. The writer uses several means to highlight the text and to mark off the onset and the end of the different sections within the letter such as gaps between words, lengthening of words and alignment of writing line. He makes, however, several mistakes in grammar and spelling.

Text

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. لابی حوی من ابی حمزة س[ل]م عليك [فانى احمد اليك الله الذى لا اله الا هو]
3. اما بعد عافنا الله واياك وعفا عنا وع[نك كتبت اليك وانا بحال عافية والله]
4. محمود الله (vac.) نسل تمام ما بنا وبك من نعمة (vac.) اح[د] ما يبلغك]
5. وايانا به جنته ومرافقة نبيه محمد صلى الله [عليه وسلم]
6. اذ انى ظننت انك غايب بالريف ولم علمت انك خ[رجت]
7. وارسل لك بافاقك والحفظ لك ... بذلك اما]
8. حفظه وبقاه وعافية الله اياه فالله ن[س]ل ان
9. واكتب الينا بحالك وهيتك وحوادث نعم الل[له] عندك
10. الله وبالحاجة تكون لك ابلغ من قبلك ال[س]لم رضى الله
11. عنا وعنك رضا لا سخط بعده والسلم ع[ل]يك ورحمت الله]

Translation

1. In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To Abū Ḥuwayy from Abū Ḥamza. P[ea]ce be upon you. [I praise for your sake God other than Whom there is no god.]
3. As for what follows, may God preserve us and you and forgive us and y[ou]. I am writing to you, whereas I am in good health, God be]

4. praised. (vac.) We ask God the completion of what we and you have of benefaction (vac.) ..[and may He make you]
5. and us reach the paradise and the company of His prophet Muḥammad, may God's peace [and blessings be upon him.]
6. As I thought that you are absent in the countryside, and when I learned that you depar[ted
7. and send your protection ... with it [
8. his protection and existence and God's safeguarding towards him. We a[sk] God [to
9. And write to us about your condition and state and the new of God's favor [with you
10. Allāh and the need you have. Send to those who are with you g[reetings]. May God be pleased]
11. with us and you, a pleasure for which there is no displeasure beyond it. Peace be upon y[ou and God's mercy.]

Commentary

1. There is a long connecting line between the *sīn* and *mīm* of *bi-sm*. For more extensive discussion about this practice and other ways to highlight the *basmla*, see Grob (2010a), 188.

2. *Li-Abī* has a long bending *yā'* which extends into the margin. For the name Ḥuwayy, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 130. For other attestations of this name in the papyri, see Younes, "New governors," no. 2[=P.Ryl.Arab. I I 5 and P.World, 171-173;].16, 18, c.a. 181/797. The bending *yā'* of *fa-innī* can still be seen.

3. *Āfānā* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā*, which is replaced by a little hook (Hopkins § 10.c). The expression *katabtu ilayka wa-anā bi-ḥāl 'āfiya wa-llāh maḥmūd* is restored on the basis of countless parallels, see Grob (2010a), 48-52.

4. *Allāh nas'al*. This sentence exhibits the placement of the object before the verb, see P.Khalili I 18.19, 3rd/9th and the examples given in the commentary. See also *fa-llāh nas'al* in line 8. A short vacant space has been left after the blessings, indicating the end of this section.

4-5. The formula *yuballighuka wa-iyyānā bihi jannatahu* is restored on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 7.5-6 and the commentary. The word before *jannatahu* is unclear to me due to the ink is being effaced.

5. The *taṣliya* is restored on the basis of countless parallels. For different forms of the *taṣliya* in private letters, see in this corpus 4.3-4 and the examples provided in the commentary.

6. The initial *ghayn* of *ghā'ib* is written differently from the way in which it is written in the rest of the text, but the reading seems the only fitting one. For the expression *ghā'ib bi-l-rīf*, see in this corpus *ghā'ib bi-l-fuṣṭāṭ* (14.10). For other attestations of *al-rīf* in the papyri, see *wa-u'limuka annahu māta bi-l-rīf yawm al-thulāthā' wa-ḥumila ilā al-fuṣṭāṭ* (P.Marchands II 24r.13, 3rd/9th).

7. This line is for the most part illegible due to the ink is being faded.

9-10. For the formula *uktub ilaynā bi-khabarika wa-hay'atika*, see *uktub ilayya bi-khabarika wa-salāmika wa-ḥālīka wa-hay'atika wa-bi-l-ḥāja takūnu laka* (CPR XVI 18.10, 1st-2nd/7th-8th and the examples in the commentary). The expression, *wa-ḥawādīth ni'am Allāh 'indaka*, is reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see for example P.RāgibLettres 13.5-6, 3rd/9th.

10-11. For the blessing *raḍīya Allāh 'annā wa-'anka riḍan lā sukḥṭa ba'dahu* and variants of it, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 33.7-8, 2nd/3rd and the examples provided in the commentary.

11. The final *salām* greeting is reconstructed on the basis of the other letters of this corpus.

30.

Inquiring about the addressee's previous letter

P.Khalili II 115
Provenance: Unknown

15 x 14.5

2nd/8th
Plate 45-46

Dark-brown papyrus written in an elegant and clear hand in black ink in 11 lines with a thin pen across the fibers. The left hand side is missing with a considerable loss of text. Likewise, the right hand side is lost where one word is missing at the beginning of each line. The original margins remain at the top and the bottom. There are no diacritical dots. Side B bears traces of one line of the address written parallel to the fibers.

The script shows some features of the early script, i.e. the upper part of *dāl/dhāl* bends backwards and the horizontal part is extremely short (l. 7 *al-dunyā*; l. 11 *dhālika*). *Sīn* is written as a straight line without teeth (l. 3 *al-majlis*). *Ṣād* is horizontally elongated (l. 10 Ḥafṣa). Medial *ʿayn* is open at the top (l. 6 *niʿmā*). The tail of the final *yā* returns backwards consistently (l. 10 *Abī*).

In this letter, the sender al-Nuʿmān b. Muslim al-Ḥaḍramī writes to a certain Abū Ḥafṣa and others including the attendants to the session (*ahl al-majlis*). The letter is full of extensive prayers and blessings. In the letter, the sender inquires about something that the addressee did not mention in his previous letter. The letter closes with the request to write back with his news, condition and needs which is followed directly by the final *salām* greeting, skipping salutations to and from relatives and friends.

The letter is short but very well written and composed. The writer makes mistakes in grammar and spelling. A photograph with a short description of the script and the content of this papyrus is published in P.Khalili II, 115.

Text

Side A:

1. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. [من] النعمان بن مسلم الحضرمي الى ابي [حفصة]
3. [وم]ـن معه واهل المجلس سلم [عليكم فاني احمد اليكم الله الذي لا اله
4. [الا] هو وانا ومن قبلنا من اخوتنا [على ما يسرك]
5. [] علينا من الله بد (?) جنته ونعمـ]ته
6. [وان] نعد نعماً الله لن نحصيها نسال الله ربنا و[ربكم
7. [ان يعفنا و]اياكم من مكاره الدنيا والاخرة اما []
8. [لا حول و]لا قوة الا بالله وانا لم نعرف من كنا [بك] الذي
9. []ـرانا الينا فنحن للناس فيما سالتهم وكنا قد []
10. [] يا ابي حفصة سالم صالح وتظرون ان تكتبون ا[لينا بخبركم وسلامتكم]
11. [وحوايجكم] فان ذلك مما نحب والسلم ورحمت الله وبر[كته]

Side B:

[من النعمان بن مسلم الحضرمي] الى ابي حفصة

Translation

Side A:

1. [In the na]me of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. [From] al-Nu'mān b. Muslim al-Ḥaḍramī to Abū [Ḥafṣa]
3. [and those] who are with him and the attendants to the session. Peace [be upon you. I praise for your sake God other than Whom there is]
4. [no] god. I and our brothers, who are with me, are [as you wish
5. [] upon us from God His paradise and His benevol[ence
6. [If] we count God's blessings, we will never number it. We ask God, our Lord and [your Lord
7. [to protect us and] you from evils of this world and the hereafter, as for [
8. [There is no strength] nor power except in God. We did not know from [your letter] wha[t
9. [] to us. We are owed to the people regarding what you asked them and we have [
10. [] Abū Ḥafṣa, well and in good health. Consider to write to [us about your news and condition]
11. [and your needs,] for this is what we like. Peace be upon you and God's mercy and ble[ssings.]

Side B:

[From al-Nu'mān b. Muslim al-Ḥaḍramī] to Abū Ḥafṣa

Commentary

Side A:

1. Of *bi-sm* only the *mīm* is preserved.

2. The proper name al-Nu'mān appears in this corpus in 11.2; 35.7 without medial *ā*. The name Muslim is also common in this corpus, see 16.14; 32.2, address. The *nisba* al-Ḥaḍramī refers to the city of Ḥaḍra-mawt in Yemen. It is well known that the Yemenis formed the main part of 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ's conquering army. Most of the Yemeni conquerors were in fact large clans from Ḥaḍra-mawt such as *Mazḥaj* and *Ṣadaf*.³¹⁴ For other attestations of this *nisba* in the papyri; cf. P.Khalili I 9v.8-9, dated 104/723; P.MugawiriAlqab, 350. The name of the addressee is restored on the basis of the exterior address. For the female name Ḥafṣa, see Gratzl (1906), 27. This name appears also in this corpus in 8.2.

3. The *ḥamdala* is reconstructed on the basis of the other letters of this corpus. The expression *wa-man ma'ahu wa-ahl al-majlis* indicates the reading out loud of the letter in

³¹⁴ Al-Samʿānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 4, 159-161.

front of the addressee and others who might have shared the content of the letter. For more, see in this corpus 3.5 and the commentary.

4. *Wa-anā wa-man qiblanā min ikhwatinā*. For the expression *wa-man qiblanā*, see chapter two, women of the house.

5. *Wa-in na'uda ni'amā Allāh lan nuḥṣihā*. This expression echoes the Qur'anic verse *wa-in ta'udū ni'mata Allāh lā tuḥṣūhā* (Q 16:18). *Ni'amā* is spelled with an *alif* at the end (Hopkins § 170). *Nas'alu Allāh*. The post-vocalic *hamza* in *nas'alu* is omitted while the preceding short vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20).

7. For blessings with the expression *iyyānā wa-iyyākum min makārih al-dunyā wa-l-ākhirā*, see in this corpus 3.8-9; 6.6-7. See also Grob (2010a), 45.

8. For the *ḥawqala* (*lā ḥawla wa-lā qūwwa illā bi-llāh*), see letter 1.9 and the commentary.

10. *Yā Abī Ḥafṣa*. *Abī* is written for classical Arabic *Abā* (Hopkins § 162.a).

10-11. The formula *wa-tanzūrūna an taktubūna ilaynā bi-khabarikum wa-salāmatikum wa-ḥawā'ijikum* is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. The plural imperative in *wa-tanzūrūn* ends with *ūn* against classical Arabic rules (Hopkins § 66).

Side B:

Only the *kunya* of the addressee after the preposition *ilā* is preserved. The name of the sender is restored on the basis of the internal address.

2. Work related

2.1. Business and financial affairs

31.

Reporting on the arrival of the sender, building a house, buying oil and other business matters

P.Heid.inv.Arab. 499
Provenance: Unknown

23.8 x 40.6

2nd/8th
Plate 47

Medium-brown papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in black ink in 31 lines at right angles to the fibers. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on all sides. There are two large horizontal tears in the middle of the papyrus which have resulted in the damage of lines 14-19. The ink has also faded in places obscuring the reading. The papyrus sheet has been folded 19 times horizontally and 6 times vertically. There are no diacritical dots. Side B contains only traces of ink of one line of the address.

The text shows some features of the early script, i.e. final *alif* extends below the connecting stroke (l. 4 *fa-innā*; l. 7 *minhā*). *Sīn* and *shīn* occasionally have teeth. In places, the teeth of *sīn* and *shīn* are reduced to a slight ripple in the stroke (l. 1 *bi-sm*; l. 2 *salām*). The horizontal stroke of initial *ʿayn* is extended to the right (l. 2 *ʿalayka*; l. 11 *ʿashr*). Initial *kāf* is sometimes hairpin-shaped (l. 5 *dhakarta*; l. 7 *katabtu*). The tail of the final *yā* bends to the right (l. 2 *ilā*; l. 3 *alladhī*). The ligature *lām-alif* joins together at the bottom without triangular base forming the shape of the letter *v* (l. 3 *lā*).

In this letter, a certain ʿUthmān b. ʿAbd Allāh writes to one Mūsh b. Sal[?], informing him about his arrival on the eleventh of the current month. ʿUthmān asks the addressee to inform his family about his arrival so that they get ready. ʿUthmān informs Mūsh that he learned from the latter’s letter that a female relative called Ijtihād has rented what the sender had asked her to rent in a previous letter. Thus, ʿUthmān asks the addressee to inform Ijtihād that they are willing to build the house “this year”. He informs the addressee further that he met a certain Marzūq, who informed him that the horse gave birth to a healthy foal. After a section of salutations to and from relatives and friends, the sender asks the addressee to inform a certain Abū Faraj that the former bought him oil for one *dīnār*. ʿUthmān informs the addressee also that one Dawūd sent the latter one *dīnār* with Marzūq and will send a sheep with the sender. The letter closes as usual with the request to write back which is followed by the final *salām* greeting.

The text shows an extensive commercial network in which a woman was involved. The sender incorporates the final salutation into the body of the letter which is uncommon.³¹⁵ Regardless of the grammatical and spelling mistakes that appear through out the text the letter is very well executed with several means to highlight the text. A photograph with a primal edition of the text is given in P.MugawiriAlqab, 238-239.

Text

³¹⁵ See chapter one, formulary.

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من عثمان بن عبد الله الى موش بن سا[..] سلم عليك فاني
3. احمد اليك الله الذي لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. اما بعد فانا بنعمة الله وفضله [كم-]ا تح-[ب] نسل الله
5. [تم]-ام نعمته والزيادة في الشكر [ل-]ه قد بلغني كتابك
6. فاحمد الله على حسن عافيته لنا ولك برحمته ذكرت
7. اجتهاد تكرر[ى] فيما كتبت اليها وقد رايت ذلك منها
8. [بار]ك الله فيها فاعلمها ذلك عافاك الله
9. نحن نرجو بنيان تلك الدار عامنا هذا ان قدر الله
10. ذلك ان شا الله وقد كتبنا [ا]ليك انا قادمون
11. ونحن نريد ذلك ان شا الله الى عشر ليال تخلو
12. من الشهر [ف]-اكثر اطلاع اهلنا[ا ر]-حم[ك] الله فانما هم
13. اهلك وقد قدم علينا مرزوق[وق] وذكرت ان اشترى
14. [] (vac.)
15. واقسم لك من انى به [] ذكرته الا اشتر
16. اما و[ا]لا خرة [] رافقك الله بعلمه
17. [] عافاك الله
18. [] له زيتا
19. وتحسن اليه ان محبته لعمل (؟) فتعاهد امره
20. واقرا على عبيدة السلم كثيرا وعلى وعبد الله
21. ومهدى وحميدة وطلحة يقرون عليها السلم كثيرا
22. ورحمت الله ويدعون الله لها بالخالص والعافية
23. فى الامور كلها برحمته واقرا على ابى فرج السلم
24. واخبره انى قد اشتريت له بدينر زيتا وكرابة (؟) {له}
25. وقد اخبرنى مرزوق وسالته قبل ذلك فاخبرنى ان قد
26. نتجت تلك المباركة مهرا فيارك الله لك فيها
27. وفيما رزقك وداود يقرأ عليك السلم كثيرا وقد
28. بعث اليك بدينر مع مرزوق وهو باعث اليك معى
29. ان شا الله بشاة عزيزة وهو يقرأ على عبيدة السلم
30. واكتبوا الينا بحاجة ان كانت والسلم
31. عل-[ي]ك ورحمت الله

Side B:

لاى ا]

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From 'Uthmān b. 'Abd Allāh to Mūsh b. Sal[..]. Peace be upon you. I

3. praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no god. (vac.)
4. As for what follows, we are by God's favour and munificence [a]s you wi[sh]. We ask God
5. [the com]pletion of His favour and the increase in gratitude [to Hi]m. Your letter reached me.
6. I praise God for His best safeguarding towards us and you through His mercy. You mentioned (that)
7. Ijtihād ren[ts] what I wrote to her about and that you witnessed that from her,
8. may God [bless] her. So inform her about that, may God save you,
9. we wish to build this house this year, if God determines
10. this, if God wills. We are writing to (inform) you that we are coming,
11. because we want this, if God wills, on the eleventh of
12. this month. So inform our family may God have mercy upon you, as they are
13. your family. Marzūq came to us and you mentioned to buy
14. [] (vac.)
15. [] and I swear []
16. [] and the hereafter [] may God accompany you with His knowledge.
17. [] may God save you
18. [] oil for him
19. (?) take care of his matter
20. Send to 'Ubayda greetings abundantly and 'Alī and 'Abd Allāh and
21. Mahdī and Ḥamīda and Ṭalḥa send to her many greetings
22. and God's mercy. They ask God for her salvation and wellbeing
23. in all things through His mercy. Send to Abū Faraj greetings
24. and inform him that I bought for him oil and (?) for one *dīnār* {for him}.
25. Marzūq has informed me and I asked him before. He informed me that
26. *al-mubarāka* (the horse) produced a foal, may God bless it for you and
27. what He gave you. Dāwūd sends to you many greetings and he
28. has sent to you one *dīnār* with Marzūq and he will send to you with me,
29. if God wills, a good sheep. He sends greetings to 'Ubayda.
30. And write to us about your needs, if there were. Peace be
31. upon y[o]u and God's mercy.

Side B:

To Abī A[

Commentary**Side A:**

1. There is a long connecting line between the *ḥā'* and *mīm* of *al-raḥmān*.

2. The name 'Uthmān is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long ā (Hopkins § 10.b.ii). *Ilā* is written with a long space between the *alif* and *lām* and the *yā'* returns to the right to cover the space. See also *alladhī* in the next line. For the name Mūsh, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 509.

4. *Fa-innā bi-ni'mat Allāh wa-faḍlihi kamā tuḥibb*. For parallels, see in this corpus 36.6 and the examples given in the commentary.

4-5. *Nas'alu Allāh tamām ni'matihi wa-l-ziyāda fī al-shukr lahu*. This formula can only be made out with difficulty, because the ink has faded. For parallels, see in this corpus *nas'alu Allāh tamām al-ni'ma 'alaynā wa-'alaykum wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlihi* (5.5-7 and the examples provided in the commentary). The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *nas'alu* (Hopkins § 26). See also *as'aluhu* in line 13.

6. *Fa-aḥmadu Allāh 'alā ḥusn 'āfiyatihi lanā wa-laka bi-raḥmatihī*. An exact parallel for this formula is not attested, but see *wa-ḥamdu Allāh 'alā 'āfiyatihi iyyāka* (CPR XVI 18.6, 1st-2nd/7th-8th). The *yā'* of *'alā* extends vertically directly from the bottom of the *lām* which is an archaic spelling (Hopkins § 55.i). Also written so in lines 20, 23. The *tā'* of *dhakarta* extends horizontally and lacks an upward curve on the left.

7. The *yā'* of *tukrī* is faded. The root *k-r-y* is used in lease contracts written on papyrus in the first three centuries of Islam after that it is replaced by words of the root *'jr*, see P.Genizah, 143-144; CPR XXI, 152. I was not able to trace the female name *Ijtihād* in the onomastica. The reading is tentative.

8. The blessing *'āfāka Allāh* is restored on the basis of lines 8 and 17, where the same blessing appears.

9. For the expression *in qaddara Allāh dhālika*, see *wa-mā qaddara Allāh* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 36.15, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary).

10. *In shā'a Allāh*. The post-vocalic *hamza* is not written in *shā'a* (Hopkins § 20.c). Also written so in line 11.

10-11. For the expression *wa-innā qādimūna wa-naḥnu nurīdu dhālika in shā'a Allāh*, see in this corpus *fa-qad aradtu dhālika wa-anā qādim 'alayka qabla al-ḥilāl in shā'a Allāh* (37.6-7); *wa-innā qādimīn in shā'a Allāh* (41.5-6).

11-12. *Ilā 'ashr layāl takhlū min al-shahr*. For dating documents using a form of the verb *khalā*, see Grohmann, *Arabische Chronologie. Arabische Papyrskunde* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 19-20.

13. The proper name *Marzūq* is restored on the basis of lines 25 and 28 where the name appears clearly.

14-18. These six lines are for the most part illegible due to the fragmentary state of this part.

19. The reading of this line is tentative.

20. *Al-salām* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long ā (Hopkins § 10.a). Also written thus in lines 21, 23, 27, 29, 30. For the female name 'Ubayda, see Gratzl (1906), 42. The name appears also in line 29.

22. *Raḥmat* is written as usual with a *tā'* *maftūḥa* instead of a *tā'* *marbūṭa* (Hopkins § 47.a). Also written so in the final *salām* greeting in line 31.

22-23. *Wa-yad'ūna Allāh lahā bi-l-khalāṣ wa-l-'āfiya fī al-umūr kullihā bi-rahmatihī*, see in this corpus 35.4 and the examples given in the commentary.

24. *Lahu* is written twice by the scribe, who indicated his mistake by crossing out the second word at the end of the line. *Bi-dīnār*. The preposition *bi* is used to indicate the amount for which a product is to be bought. See P.Horak 85.6, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary. *Dīnār* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a). Also written so in line 29. *Zayt*. Vegetable oils produced in Egypt were made from olives or seeds, mostly radish seeds and they were mainly used for cooking and lighting. For more extensive discussion on oil in the papyri, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 28.12 and the commentary. The word after *zayt* is not clear to me.

25. *Wa-qad akhbaranī Marzūq wa-sa'altuhu qabla dhālika fa-akhbaranī*. Reports of what a third person said appear in letters either converted to indirect or direct speech. Indirect speech is mostly introduced by means of verbs *dhakara* or *akhbara*, while direct speech is introduced by means of the verb *qāla*, see Grob (2010a), 64-66. Post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted *sa'altuhu* while the preceding short vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20).

26. *Natajat tilka al-mubāraka muhran*. *Al-mubāraka* is probably the name of the horse. For horses' names, see Ibn al-Kalbī, *Ansāb al-khayl fī al-jāhiliya wa-l-islam wa-akhbāruhā*, ed. A. Zakī (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmiyya, 1965).

28. Requests to buy or send goods using the combination of *bi* + amount of money appear often in the papyri. See above line 24.

29. *Bi-shāt 'azīza*. For other attestations of sheep (*ḍa'n* and *ghanam*) in the papyri, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 8.23 and the commentary.

30. For the expression *wa-ktubū ilaynā bi-ḥāja in kānat*, see in this corpus 36.7 and the examples given in the commentary.

Side B:

Only upper traces of few letters can be detected among the ink traces remaining in this line.

32.

Reporting on the arrival at Dimyāṭ and buying linen

P.CtYBR.inv. 2705

14.1 x 9.5 & 14.7 x 13.2

2nd/8th

Provenance: Unknown

Plate 48-49

Medium-brown papyrus consisting of two fragments. The middle part of the letter is broken off resulting in a loss of three to four words in each line. The original cutting lines have been preserved on all four sides. The text is written in black ink in 11 lines by a clear hand with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The papyrus sheet has been folded 7 times horizontally and 9 times vertically. There are diacritics in one word. Side B bears the partially preserved address in one line.

The script is characterized by some early features, i.e. *ṭā'* has a downward shaft at the left (ll. 6, 8 Dimyāṭ). The teeth of *sīn* are reduced to a slight ripple in the stroke (l. 1 *bi-sm*; l. 8 *salāmatika*). Final *yā'* bends occasionally backwards (l. 2 *alladhī*).

In this letter, the sender al-Khayr b. Muslim informs his business partner al-Miswar b. Rajā' that he reached the city of Dimyāṭ in good health and bought the linen he was looking for. Al-Khayr expresses his happiness because he was accompanied by a good group of people in this long business journey. The sender closes his letter by conveying greetings to the addressee and his family.

The sender and the addressee are from the same clan as stated in the exterior address. The letter is short but carefully executed with the exception of some minor grammatical and spelling mistakes.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم [م]
2. للمسور بن رجا من الخير بن مس[لم سلم عليك] فانى احمد اليك الله الذى
3. لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. اما بعد عافنا [ال]له واياك باحسن] عاف[يت]ه فى الدنيا والاخرة
5. وجعل مصيرنا و[اياك الجنة برحمت]ه كتبت اليك حي[ن] قدمت
6. دمياط وانا سا[لم صالح والله مح]مود [ق]د [ا] حسن الله لنا الصحابة
7. وله الحمد وكان [] واكتب الينا ابا رجا بخبرك
8. وسلامتك وب[حالك وحوايحك] اخ[ب]رك انى قدمت دمياط
9. فوجدت البز فشر[يته] [ا]ف[ل]نسل [ال]له ان يوفق لنا حاجتنا
10. وان يبارك لنا ف[بيها ان شا الله و] السلم عليك ورحم[ت]ت الله
11. اقرا منى على كل [اصحابنا السلم] وعلى اهلك وعيالك منى السلم

Side B:

للمسور بن رجا الونبى من (vac.) [الخير بن مس]لم الونبى

Diacritical dots

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To al-Miswar b. Rajā' from al-Khayr b. Mus[lim. Peace be upon you.] I praise for your sake God, other than Whom,
3. there is no god. (vac.)
4. As for what follows, may God grant [us and you the best] of health in this world and the hereafter
5. and may He make [paradise your] and our destiny through His [merc]y. I wrote to you, when I arrived at
6. Dimyāt, whereas I am [well and in good health, God be praised. God has given us a good company,
7. praise be to Him. It was [] and write to me, Abū Rajā', about your news and
8. your sound condition and [your state and your needs.] I would like to let you know that I arrived at Dimyāt
9. and that I found the linen and I bought it []. I ask God to grant us success in our needs
10. and to bless us in [it, if God wills.] Peace be upon you and God's mercy.
11. Send from me to all [our partners greetings] and to your family and your children from me greetings.

Side B:

To al-Miswar b. Rajā' al-Wanbī from (vac.) [al-Khayr b. Mus]lim al-Wanbī

Commentary

Side A:

1. For the name al-Miswar and other possible readings, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr*, vol. 4, 1286; al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 482. The patronymic Rajā' is written without the post-vocalic *hamza* (Hopkins § 23). Written also thus in line 7 and in the exterior address. The name of the sender is reconstructed on the basis of the partially preserved address on the back. For the name al-Khayr and other possible readings, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 193-194.

2-3. A long vacant space has been left after the *ḥamdala* as standard in early letters.

4. The formula *'āfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka bi-aḥsan 'āfiyatihi fī al-dunyā wa-l-ākhirā* is restored on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 41.4-5. See also Grob (2010a), 45. *'Āfānā* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.c).

5. *Wa-ja'ala maṣīranā wa-iyyāka al-janna bi-rahmatihī*. An exact parallel for this formula can be found in Sijpesteijn (2013) 26.3-4, 2nd/8th. *Qadimtu* is written differently from the way in which it is written in line 8, but the reading is certain.

6. *Dimyāṭ* also appears in this letter in line 8 and in this corpus in 8.6; 33.12. For other attestations of this city in the papyri, see 8.6 and the commentary. The expression *wa-anā sālim ṣāliḥ wa-llāh maḥmūd* is reconstructed on the basis of countless parallels, see for example in this corpus 7.8, 11.6 and the commentaries. For the expression *aḥsan Allāh lanā al-ṣahāba*, see in this corpus *wa-aḥsan lahu al-ṣahāba* (17.14-15). See also 'asā an yuḥsina Allāh laka al-ṣahāba wa-yaqḍiya laka ḥājataka (P.Louvre6842.2-4, 3rd/9th); wa-nas'alu Allāh an yuḥsina lakumā al-ṣahāba wa-yusallimakumā (P.Leiden OR 12885-18, l. 5, 3rd/9th (unpublished)). Expressions using the term *ṣuḥbat* is uncommon in the papyri (Hopkins § 118).

7-8. *Uktub ilayynā, Abā Rajā', bi-khabarika wa-salāmatika wa-[ḥālika wa-ḥawa'ijika]* is restored on the basis of countless parallels, see in this corpus 5.9-10; 36.7 and the examples given in the commentaries. The vocative article *yā* is omitted before the *kunya*, see also in this corpus 36.8.

9. *Al-bazz* (the linen) was sold as a raw material, in different stages of preparation and in the form of textiles and cloths. For textile trade in early Muslim Egypt, see Rāḡib (1988), 25-33; Younes (2013), 313-334. *Dimyāṭ* was famous for its precious *sharb*-linen as many papyri indicate, see for example P.Cair.Arab. VI 389.12-13, 3rd/9th. The reading *al-burr* (wheat) instead of *al-bazz* is also possible. For other attestations of *al-burr* in the papyri, see P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 15 [= P.World, 175].8, 3rd/9th. Of *fa-sharaytuhu* only the *fā'*, *shīn* and *rā'* are still visible.

9-10. *Fa-as'alu Allāh an yuwafiqa lanā ḥājatinā wa-an yubārīka lanā fihā*. For the final part of this expression; cf. *fa-nas'alu Allāh an yubārīka laka fī ...* (CPR XVI 11.12, 3rd/9th).

10. *Raḥmat* is spelled with an extra tooth and the loop of the *mīm* is written above the line. Of *fihā* only upper traces of the *fā'* can be seen before the lacuna.

11. Post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *aqri'* (Hopkins § 20.b) and the *alif maqṣūra* of 'alā is omitted (Hopkins § 55.i). The ink is smudged obscuring the reading of the word *aqri'*. The *lām* and *alif* of 'iyālīka are not connected. For the reconstruction of *aṣḥabinā*, see in this corpus 33.13. The salutations are added to the letter after the final *salām* greeting.

Side B:

The name of the sender is restored on the basis of the interior address. Of the patronymic of the sender only the *lām* and *mīm* are still visible. The *nisba* al-Wanbī refers to the clan of Wanba a sub-tribe of the southern-Arabian tribe of Murād, see al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 12, 290.

33.

Business instructions including the buying of olives in Dimyāt

P.CtYBR.inv. 2715

19.2 x 13.9

2nd/8th

Provenance: Unknown

Plate 50-51

Dark-brown papyrus written in black ink in 14 lines with a medium-thick pen by a clear and elegant hand across the fibers. The both sides are missing with a considerable loss of text. The original margins remain at the top and the bottom. The papyrus sheet has been folded 11 times horizontally, while there are no vertical folds visible. There are no diacritical dots. Side B bears traces of one line of the address written parallel to the fibers.

The script shows some early features, i.e. the lower stroke of initial ‘ayn extends to the right (l. 4 ‘alayka). Initial kāf is horizontally elongated (l. 7 kunā). The tail of the final yā’ occasionally returns backwards (l. 3 fa-innī).

In this letter, one Shurayḥ b. ‘Amr instructs a certain b. Abū ‘Ābid, the addressee, to help a certain Abū Yazīd with something that remains unknown to us, to provide a certain Muḥammad b. Usayd with four unknown things and to buy him olives from Dimyāt for one dirham.

The letter is carefully executed and well structured in paragraphs to mark off the onset and the end of the different sections within the letter. The letter shows some grammatical mistakes and incorrect spelling.

Text

Side A:

1. [بسم الله الـرحمن الرحيم]
2. [من شريح بن عمرو الى الـصد بن ا[بى عابد سلم عليك فانى احـ[مد اليك الله]
3. [الذى لا اله الا هو] (vac.)
4. [اما بعد عافانا اللـه واياك فى الامور كلها و[عفا عنا وعنك]
5. [با اخبرك ا[ن اهلك وولدك عدلى ما يسرك]
6. [ان نفذ راحين (؟) بالبيعة وزعمـ[وا]
7. [وقد احصاه والقا العلق فتشـ[ترى]
8. [لنا بـ[در] هم راحين (؟) ان شا الله (vac.)]
9. [ر متعت بك ان تعين ابو يزيد عدـ]
10. [محمد بن اسيد وهو اربعة اسـ]
11. [به كنا جميعا فى كـ]
12. [وتشـ[ترى] لى بدرهم زيتون من دمياط وبد[رهم]
13. [اقرى على] اصحابنا السلم كثير وعدلى السلم]
14. [عافانا الله] واياك والسلم عليك ور[حمت الله]

Side B:

[من شر[يح بن عمرو الى الـصد بن ابى عا[بد]

Translation

Side A:

1. [In the name of God, the] Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. [From Shurayḥ b. ‘Amr to al-ṣad b. A]bū ‘Ābid. Peace be upon you. I pra[ise for your sake God,]
3. [other than Whom there is no god.] (vac.)
4. [As for what follows, may God save us] and you in all matters and [may He forgive us and you]
5. [].. I inform yo[u th]at your family and your children are [as you wish
6. [](?) is sold out in the sale. They claimed [
7. [] he counted it and throw (?) away. So b[uy
8. [for us for one *dir*]ham(?), if God wills. (vac.)
9. []. may I be granted enjoyment through you, to help Abū Yazīd .[
10. [] Muḥammad b. Usayd. It is four [
11. [].. we were all in .[
12. [Buy] for me for one *dirham* olives from Dimyāṭ and for another *di[rham*
13. [Send to] our partners many greetings and to [greetings.]
14. [May God save us] and you. Peace be upon you and [God’s mercy.]

Side B:

[From Shur]ayḥ b. ‘Amr to al-ṣad b. Abū ‘Ā[bid.]

Commentary

Side A:

2. The internal address is reconstructed on the basis of the exterior one.

2-3. The *ḥamdala* is restored on the basis of parallels, see the other letters in this corpus. A long vacant space has been left after the *ḥamdala* as standard in early letters.

4. This line is restored on the basis of parallels, see for instance in this corpus 29.3; 35.4.

6. For other attestations of *al-bay‘a* (sale) in the papyri, see P.Cair.Arab. V 292.11, 3rd/9th.

8. Of *dirham* only the *hā’* and *mīm* are preserved. A vacant space has been left at the end of this line, indicating the end of this paragraph.

9. A *rā’* or *zāy* is still visible at the beginning of this line. The eulogy *muti‘tu bika* in passive is uncommon in the papyri. *Anna tu‘īna Abū Yazīd*. For unchangeable *Abū* in all syntactical positions, see Hopkins § 162.a. An initial ‘ayn is still discernible at the end of this line.

10. For the name Usayd, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 12.

12. *Wa-tashtarī lī*. Of *tashtarī* only the final *yā’* is visible. Dimyāṭ appears also in this corpus in 8.6; 32.6, 8.

13. [Aqri' 'alā] aṣḥābinā al-salām kathīr. For the supplement aqri' 'alā, see Grob (2010a), 73. *Tanwīn alif* is absent in the adverb *kathīr* (Hopkins § 167.a).

14. The blessing 'āfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka is reconstructed on the basis of line 4 where the same blessing appears.

Side B:

Of Shurayḥ only the *yā'* and *ḥā'* are preserved. The first character of the name of the addressee after the definite article is unclear to me. The second character is probably a *ṣād* and the final character is quite clearly a *dāl*. Of 'Ābid only the 'ayn is visible. The patronymic is reconstructed on the basis of the internal address.

34.

Request to buy a black female slave and papyrus rolls

P.CtYBR.inv. 2655 qua
Provenance: Unknown

13.2 x 31

2nd/8th
Plate 52

Medium-brown papyrus written in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The letter is incomplete at the top where an unknown number of lines is missing. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on the other three sides. There are some worm holes and lacunae all over the papyrus that have caused minimal damage to the text. The papyrus sheet has been folded 5 times horizontally. An address may have been written at the top of side B but is now lost. Diacritical dots occur sparingly. There are also some ink spots that could be mistaken for diacritics.

The script is characterized by the way in which the upper part of *dāl/dhāl* bends backwards (l. 9 *dhālika*). *Sīn* is written consistently with teeth. Initial *kāf* is horizontally elongated (l. 2 *dhakarta*; *kitābinā*). The tail of the final *mīm* extends vertically downwards (l. 4 *khādim*; l. 9 *al-salām*).

In this letter, the sender, unknown to us, instructs the addressee, Abū Salama, to meet a slave trader in order to buy a black female servant for a woman, anonymous, for eighteen *dīnārs*. The sender urges Abū Salama to do so as promptly as possible, because the woman needs a servant instantaneously. The sender informs the addressee further that the money (gold) is with a certain Ḥammād, to whom the sender wrote as well. The sender also sent to the addressee one *dirham* with one Jamīl in order to buy him papyrus rolls. At the end of the letter, the sender complains that Ḥammād neither answered his request to buy the rolls nor did he write back to him. The sender claims that Ḥammād is busy with his animals and that that is why he did write to the sender.

The body of the letter is written as one block with no means to highlight the text. Many grammatical and spelling mistakes are present.

Text

1.] ح [
2.] ذلك من ابى مسكين على [
3. وذكرت له ان تعينه بابلنا واجرانا حتا ياتيک ان شا الله على اثر كتابنا ا.
4. الدينر لقد اعلمت جميل ان هو فعل وان لا قضينا حاجة ابى سلمة من قرطنا الذى اشترينا من علف دوابنا
5. فان رايت ابا سلمة رحمك الله ان تلقا بعض من يشتري الرقيق تامره ياشرى خا[د]م افديسة (؟) سودا
6. بثما[نية] عشر دينر والذهب عند حماد وقد كتبت اليه بذلك فاحرص على ذلك اصلحك الله فا[ن]-ها
7. محتاج[ة] ال[ى] خادم وقد بعثت مع جميل بدرهم تامر من يشتري لنا به قراطيس ثم تبعث به مع اد [من] لك
8. ان شا الله فان حماد مشغول قد اشغلته ما عنده من الدواب حتى لم يكتب الينا اقرى على عبد الله
9. السلم منا والسلم عليكم ورحمت الله وكتبت تتدينى فالله يغفر لك اعلم ان
10. ذلك ليس لى بموافق او لا اريده اصلحك الله

Diacritical dots

(2 ان 4) ان; من 7) فان; الدواب

3rd/9th). For attestations of *khādim* as “eunuch” in the papyri, see P.Khalili I 17.address, 3rd/9th and the commentary. *Sawdā*’ is written without the *hamza* (Hopkins § 20.c). The word before *sawdā*’ is unclear to me and the reading is tentative.

6. *Bi-thamāniyat ‘ashr dīnār wa-l-dhahab ‘inda Ḥammād.*³¹⁶ The *tanwīn alif* is missing in *dīnār* after the numerals (Hopkins § 167.h). Both long and short forms of the numeral eighteen occur in the papyri (Hopkins § 99). For the name Ḥammād and other possible readings such as Ḥimmād, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 112. The prayer *aṣṣalāḥaka Allāh* is reconstructed on the basis of line 9 where the same prayer appears. For this eulogy, see in this corpus 21.3 and the commentary. *Fa-ḥriṣ ‘alā dhālika*. The *fa* in *fa-ḥriṣ* introduces the apodosis of the conditional clause in line 4. For other attestations of *al-dhahab* in the papyri; cf. *fa-nzur an tashtarī bi-l-qīṭa’ al-dhahab ḥattā ab’atha ilayka bi-l-dhahab* (P.Marchands V/I 2.4, 10, 3rd/9th); *wa-anna al-dhahab allatī arsalt ma’a Qays b. Ḥajar min thaman al-thalāthat athwāb allatī ma’a Qays b. Ḥajar wa-l-thawb alladhī li-ḥaqqī fī al-ḥajj* (P.HanafiBusinessLetter, 154 and the commentary).

7. For *qarāṭis* (sing. *qirṭās*) papyrus rolls, see P.World, 22-30; Grohmann (1954), 68-71. See also in this corpus 16.15.

³¹⁶ For prices of female and male slaves in the papyri, see P.Vente, 42-48.

35.

Letter about the wage of the addressee's peasant

P.Cam.Michaelides A 53
Provenance: Unknown

14 x 25

2nd/8th
Plate 53-54

Dark-brown papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in black ink in 10 lines across the fibers. The original cutting lines have been preserved on the top and the right hand side and partially on the bottom and the left hand side. The bottom left corner is broken off causing practically no damage to the text. Side B contains one line of the address. The papyrus sheet has been folded 5 times horizontally but there are no vertical folds perceptible. There are no diacritical dots.

The text shows some features of the early script, i.e. initial *kāf* is occasionally horizontally elongated (l. 6 *katabtu*). The tail of the final *mīm* is short (l.1 *bi-sm*, l. 2 *salām*). Final *yā'* extends backwards (l. 2 *fa-innī*, *alladhī*).

This letter has been sent from a certain Qurra b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān to one Rabī'a b. Yūna. The sender structured his letter in four paragraphs. He devotes the first paragraph to the prescript. The second is devoted to blessings and prayers for the addressee and the confirmation section, in which he affirms the arrival of the addressee's letter. In the third paragraph, the sender informs the addressee that he wrote to a certain al-Nu'mān about the addressee's peasant urging him to fix his wage as two *dīnārs*. The fourth paragraph carries only the final *salām* greeting.

The writer many mistakes in grammar and spelling.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من قرّة بن عبد الرحمن الى ربيعة بن يونة سلم عليك فاني احمد اليك [ا]الله الذي
3. لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. اما بعد عافنا [الله] واياك في الامور كلها فقد بلغنى كتابك
5. فسرني صلاحك وعافية الله اياك (vac.)
6. ونحن [ح]بين كتبت اليك صالحون في هيتنا وحالنا والله محمود
7. وقد كتبت الى النعمن في نبطيك وثقلت عليه فيه وسالته ان يقره
8. على [د]ينرين وكان حسنا الى حفظك واتيان ما يسرك ابلغ نفسك
9. السلم رضى الله [عند]ا وعنك (vac.)
10. والسلم ع[ليك]م و[ر]حمت الله

Side B:

لاى يونة

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Qurra b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān to Rabī‘a b. Yūna. Peace be upon you. I praise for your sake [G]od, other than
3. Whom there is [no] god. (vac.)
4. As for what follows, may G[od] protect us and you from all things. Your letter reached me
5. and I was pleased (to hear of) your health and the safeguarding of God towards you. (vac.)
6. [W]hile we are writing to you, (we are) in good state and condition, God be praised.
7. I wrote to al-Nu‘mān regarding your peasant and I asked him to approve for him
8. two [d]īnārs and he was in favor of fulfilling and doing what pleases you. Send to yourself
9. greetings. May God be pleased with [u]s and you. (vac.)
10. Peace be upon y[o]u and God’s me[r]cy.

Side B:

To Abū Yūna

Commentary**Side A:**

2. *Min Qurra b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ilā Rabī‘a b. Yūna.* The *tā’ marbūṭa* of Qurra has a leftward shaft at the top. The *alif maqṣūra* of *ilā* is not written. For the name Yūna in the papyri, see P.Cair.Arab. I 48.2, dated 233/847; 56.2, dated 239/854 and the commentaries.

4. *Ammā ba‘du ‘āfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka fī al-umūr kullihā.* Blessings on the addressee of this kind following the transitional element *ammā ba‘du* are very common in early letters. An exact parallel for this formula can be found in Sijpesteijn (2013) 29.4-5, 2nd/8th. See also *wa-arāka al-‘āfiya fī umūrika kullihā* (P.Heid.Arab. II 1.11-12, 1st-2nd/7th-8th and P.Jahn 1.11-12, 2nd/8th); *wa-atamma ni‘matahu ‘alayka fī al-umūr kullihā* (CPR XVI 9.5-6, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); *wa-atamma fī al-umūr kullihā ni‘matahu* (P.Khalili I 14.4, 2nd/8th); *‘āfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka wa-‘afā ‘annā wa-‘anka* (P.Horak 85.4 and the examples given in the commentary). *‘Āfānā* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.c).

4-5. *Fa-qad balaghanī kitābuka fa-sarranī ṣalāḥuka wa-‘āfiyat Allāh iyyāka.* The first and the final parts of this formula are well attested in the papyri, see in this corpus 9.8-9 and the examples provided in the commentary. The middle part is unattested but, see *wa-sarranī salāmatuka wa-‘āfiyatuka* (P.Heid.Arab. II 38r. 5 3rd/9th; 42r.5, 3rd/9th); *fa-sarranī salāmatuka* (P.Khalili I 14.6, 2nd/8th); *fa-sarranī salāmukūm ajma‘īn* (P.Khalili I 20v.3, 3rd/9th); *wa-surirrtu bi-‘ilm salāmatika* (P.Khalili I 30.4, 3rd/9th); *wa-sarranī salāmatuka* (P.Marchands II 2.4, 3rd/9th); *wa-sarranī salāmat Allāh iyyāka* (P.Marchands V/I 6.3, 3rd/9th); *bi-mā sarranī min salāmat Allāh iyyāka* (P.Marchands V/I 20.3-4, 3rd/9th).

6. *Wa-naḥnu [ḥ]īna katabtu ilayka ṣāliḥūn fī hay'atinā wa-ḥālinā wa-llāh maḥmūd*. The ḥā' of ḥīna is missing in the lacuna. For parallels of the middle part of this formula, see *uktub ilayyā bi-khabarika wa-salāmika wa-ḥālika wa-hay'atika* (CPR XVI 18.10, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); *uktub ilayyā bi-khabarika wa-ḥālika wa-hay'atika wa-bi-mā anta 'alayhi* (P.Jahn 17.25-26, 3rd/9th); *wa-anā wa-man qibalī 'alā afḍal ḥāl wa-aḥsan hay'a* (CPR XVI 33.9, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); *bi-khabarika wa-ḥālika wa-hay'atika* (P.Ryl.Arab. I VII 33.13, 3rd/9th). Note the singular form in *katabtu* which contradicts with the rest of the sentence. *Wa-llāh maḥmūd* is a religious formula of a glorification type. It is well attested in letters and often follows the announcement of the wellbeing of the sender. Cf. CPR XVI 11.4, 3rd/9th; 12.3, 10, 3rd/9th; P.RāḡibLettres 6.3, 3rd/9th; 13.3, 3rd/9th; P.Khalili I 14.6, 2nd/8th; P.SijpesteijnTravel 1.5-6, 2nd/8th. This expression is sometimes further extended, e.g. *wa-llāh maḥmūd lā sharīka lahu* (P.Marchands II 2.3-4, 3rd/9th, 35.5, 3rd/9th; P.David-WeillLouvre 1.4, 3rd/9th; P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 2.3, dated 3rd/9th; VI 14.2, 3rd/9th; VI 21.4, 3rd/9th; VI 25.5, 2nd/8th) or *wa-llāh maḥmūd mashkūr rabb al-'alāmīn* (P.Marchands II 4.3, 3rd/9th) or *wa-llāh maḥmūd mashkūr lā ilāh illā huwa wa-ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad* (P.Marchands II 30.2-3, 3rd/9th; 33.3-4, 3rd/9th; 34.3, 3rd/9th) or *wa-llāh maḥmūd mashkūr lā sharīk lahu* (P.Marchands III 19.3, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands V/I 20.1, 3rd/9th) or *wa-llāh maḥmūd mashkūr lā ilāh illā huwa wa-ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad al-nabī wa-salam kathīran* (P.Khalili I 17.3-4, 3rd/9th). Variants such as *wa-l-rabb maḥmūd* are also well attested in letters; cf. CPR XVI 4.6, 1st-2nd/7th-8th. See also *wa-rabbunā maḥmūd* (P.Khalili I 15r.5, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary); *wa-rabbunā maḥmūd lā sharīk lahu* (P.Marchands II 1.3-4, 3rd/9th); *wa-rabbunā maḥmūd kathīran kamā huwa ahluhu* (P.Marchands II 24.4, 3rd/9th).

7. *al-Nu'mān* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.b). Post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *sa'altuhu* while the preceding short vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20). The term *nabaṭī* (pl. *anbāṭ*), in both singular and plural, appears frequently in the papyri, see P.Cair.Arab. III, 154.7, dated 91/710 and the commentary; P.Qurra, 49; P.Cair.Arab. III, 32. See also *al-nabaṭī alladhī ba'athta ma'ahu bi-l-jubba quṭn fa-idhā al-nabaṭī qad kharaja wa-lam yab'ath ilayhi bi-l-quṭn* (P.Marchands II 9.17, 3rd/9th).

7-8. *An yuqirrahu 'alā dīnārayn*. The personal pronoun *hu* in *yuqirrahu* refers to the peasant. *Dīnārayn* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a).

8. *Wa-kāna ḥasanan ilā ḥifzika wa-ityān mā yasurruka*. Expressions using the root *s-r-r* are commonly attested at the beginning of letters after the sender has announced his wellbeing. Other formulae using the same root are also used at the end of letters to express the enjoyment on the side of the sender with a future letter from the addressee. See P.Horak 85.10, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in the commentary. See also Grob (2010a), 51, 70. The *nūn* of *ityān* is written differently from the way in which it is written in the rest of the text, but see also the *nūn* of *ṣāliḥūn* in line 6.

8-9. *Abligh nafsaka al-salām*. Conveying special greetings to the addressee is well attested in private and business letters. The most widespread expression is *khuṣṣ/akhiṣṣ nafsaka (bi)-l-salām* "send to yourself greetings". Verbs such as *abligh/balligh* and *aqri'* are also used. Cf. *baligh nafsaka al-salām kathīran* (P.Marchands V/I 10.3, 3rd/9th; 20.26, 3rd/9th); *abligh khāṣṣat nafsaka al-salām* (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 25.10, 2nd/8th); *ablighū anfusākum al-salām* (P.Marchands V/I 8.8, 3rd/9th); *aqri' nafsaka wa-man aḥbabta al-salām* (CPR XVI 12.10, 3rd/9th); *khuṣṣ nafsaka bi-l-salām* (P.Marchands II 1m.3, 3rd/9th); *akhuṣṣ nafsaka bi-l-salām* (P.Marchands II 17.10, 3rd/9th);

18.17, 3rd/9th; 24.17-18, 3rd/9th; 28.8, 3rd/9th); *akhuṣṣ nafsaka minī bi-l-salām* (P.Marchands V/I 5.10, 3rd/9th); *akhuṣṣ nafsaka bi-l-salām kathīran* (P.Marchands V/I 16.10, 3rd/9th); *akhuṣṣ nafsaka bi-akthar al-salām wa-aṭyabihi* (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 3.3, 3rd/9th); *iqtaḍū minnī aḡḡal al-salām* (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 15.14, 3rd/9th).³¹⁷ See also in this corpus, *ablighī nafsaki minī al-salām kathīran* *aqri' i nafsaki al-salām* (4.14, 18); *wa-qad aḡbaltu an takhuṣṣ nafsaka minī bi-l-salām* (14.1); *aqri' nafsaka al-salām* (41.12). The prayer *raḡiya Allāh 'annā wa-'anka* and variants of it are very common in letters. See for example CPR XVI 18.12-13, 1st-2nd/7th-8th. See also *raḡiya Allāh 'anka* (P.Cair.Arab. V 295.6, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands II 1.4, 3rd/9th; 6.4; 19.10; 33.7; P.David-WeillLouvre 18.9, all 3rd/9th); *wa-raḡiya 'anka riḡā'an lā sukḡt ba'dahu wa-iyyānā bi-raḡmatihi* (P.Marchands V/I 16r.1-2, 3rd/9th); *raḡiya Allāh 'anka riḡā'an lā yaskḡtu 'alayka fīhi* (P.Marchands II 11.2-3, 3rd/9th); *raḡiya Allāh 'annā wa-'ankum* (P.David-WeillLouvre 11.21, 3rd/9th). See also in this corpus *wa-an yardā 'annā wa-'anka* (12.8); *raḡiya Allāh 'anhu* (18.4, 6); *raḡiya Allāh 'anka wa-'annā* (24.18); *wa-raḡiya Allāh 'annā wa-'anka* (26.3; 27.14; 40.13); *raḡiya Allāh 'annā wa-'anka riḡā'an lā sukḡta ba'dahu* (29.10-11); *raḡiya Allāh 'anka* (37.12).

Side B:

Li-Abī Yūna. *Li-Abī* is written with a long space between the ligature *lam-alif* and the *bā'* and *yā'*, while the *yā'* returns backwards to cover the space. Only the *kunya* of the addressee is given in the exterior address. See also in this corpus letter no. 15.

³¹⁷ See also Grob (2010a), 72-74; P.Khalili I, 149-150.

36.

Letter about weaving a garment

P.Cam.Michaelides A 55
Provenance: Unknown

17 x 16.5

2nd/8th
Plate 55-56

Light-brown papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in black ink in 10 lines at right angles to the fibers. The left hand side is broken off resulting in a loss of three to four words at the end of each line. The original cutting lines have been preserved on the other three sides. A margin of 3.7 cm has been left blank at the bottom. Side B contains one line of the address. The papyrus sheet has been folded 6 times horizontally. Few diacritical dots are attested.

The text shows some features of the early script, i.e. final *alif* extends below the connecting stroke (l. 4 'āfānā). On occasions, *sīn* is written as a long horizontal line with three teeth written above it (l. 1 *bi-sm*; l. 4 *al-sū*). *Fā'* has one dot below it (l. 9 *li-fatlihā*). Initial *kāf* is horizontally extended (l. 2 *Zakīr*). The tail of the final *mīm* is short (l. 1 *bi-sm*).

In this letter, a certain Misk, describing himself as client of one 'Imrān, writes to a certain Abū Zakīr Yaḥyā b. Marzūq inquiring about the latter's needs and informing him about the weaving of a garment.

The letter is very short but carefully and correctly executed with few grammatical and spelling mistakes.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحـ[من] الرحيم
2. لابي زكير من مسك مولى عمران بن ا [سلم عليك]
3. فانى احمد اليك الله الذى لا اله الا [هو (vac.)]
4. اما بعد عافانا الله واياك من السـ[و كله وجعل مصيرنا]
5. واياك الجنة برحمته كتبت [اليك كتابى هذا ونحن]
6. سالمون صالحون كما تحب ان يبلغك مـ[ن فضل الله ورحمته]
7. انظر عافاك <الله> ما كانت لك حاجة تاتـ[يكم ان شا الله]
8. واعرفك ابا زكير عافاك الله انك و[]
9. الريطة لفتلها اقرى منى على جـ[ميع السلم وعلى]
10. حفص الازرق السلم كثيرا و[لسلم عليك ورحمت الله]

Side B:

[من مسك مولى عمران بن ... الى يحيى بن مرزوق وهو فى مخزنه

Diacritical dots

(1 الرحيم (2 ركير (3 اليك (4 بعد (8 ابا زكير (9 لفتلها

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compass[ionate], the Merciful.
2. To Abū Zakīr from Misk the client of ‘Imrān b. .[Peace be upon you.]
3. I praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no [god. (vac.)]
4. As for what follows, may God protect us and you from [all] evi[l and may He make our and your resting place]
5. the paradise through His mercy. I am writing [to you this letter of mine, whereas we are]
6. well and in good health, as you wish to hear throu[gh God’s benevolence and mercy.]
7. Look, may <God> save you, if you need anything, then it will [reach you, If God wills.]
8. I inform you, Abū Zakīr, may God save you, that you and ..[
9. the garment to weave. Send from me to all [greetings. And (send) to]
10. Ḥafṣ al-Azraq many greetings. Pe[ace be upon you and God’s mercy.]

Side B:

[From Misk the client of ‘Imrān b.] to Yaḥyā b. Marzūq and he is in his storage

Commentary

Side A:

1. There is a long connecting line between the *sīn* and *mīm* of *bi-sm*. The ink has chipped off at the end of this line, resulting in a loss of the *mīm* and *nūn* of *al-rahmān*.

2. *Li-Abī Zakīr min Misk mawlā ‘Imrān b. I*. *Abī* has a very long backward bending *yā* that extends into the margin. For the name *Zakīr* and other possible readings, see in this corpus in 27.12 and the commentary. As for the name *Misk*; cf. P.Cair.Arab. V 355.5, dated 249/865. For the meaning of *mawlā*, see P. Crone, “Mawlā,” E.I.2, VI, 874-82. Of the patronymic of the sender’s master only an *alif* is preserved. ‘Imrān is a common name in the papyri. The name appears also in this corpus in 21.2.

2-3. The formula [*salām ‘alayka*] *fa-innī aḥmadu ilayka Allāh alladhī lā ilāh illā [huwa]* is reconstructed on the basis of countless parallels. See the other letters in this corpus. A vacant space is expected after the *ḥamdala*, because the transitional element *ammā ba’dū* occurs in line 4.

4-5. ‘*Āfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka min al-sū*’ *kullihī wa-ja’ala maṣīranā wa-iyyāka*] *al-janna bi-rahmatihī*. An exact parallel of this formula can be found in Sijpesteijn (2013), 26.3-4, 2nd/8th. See also ‘*āfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka min al-sū*’ *kullihī wa-ja’ala maṣīranā wa-iyyāka jannāt al-na’īm bi-rahmatihī* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 31.3-4, 2nd/8th); ‘*āfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka min al-sū*’ *kullihī* (P.Jahn 3.4, dated 127/745); ‘*āfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka min al-sū*’ (P.Heid.Arab. II 31r.2, 3rd/9th; P.RāḡibLettres 14.2, 3rd/9th; CPR XVI 2.2-3, 8, early 3rd/9th). A short vacant space is left after the transitional element *ammā ba’dū*.

5-6. *Katabtu ilyka* [kitābī hādhā wa-nahnu] sālimūn ṣāliḥūn. The tooth of the final tā' of *katabtu* is written higher than the other teeth and lacks an upward curve on the left. This formula is well attested in early letters, see in this corpus 2.6; 8r.4. See also *katabtu ilyka wa-nahnu sālimūn mu'āfūn* (P.RāgibLettres 13.3, 3rd/9th). Note the singular form in *katabtu* and the plural in *sālimūn ṣāliḥūn*. The expression *kamā tuḥibbu an yablughaka* [min faḍl Allāh wa-rahmatihī] is restored on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 6.8-9. See also *wa-lladhī tuḥibbu an yablughaka* (CPR XVI 4.4-5, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); 'alā mā tuḥibbu wa-yasurruka (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 5v.6, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands II 8.3, 3rd/9th); *kamā tuḥibbu yakūnu min al-salāma* (P.David-WeillLouvre 12-13.4, 2nd/8th); 'alā mā tuḥibbu an nakūna (P.RāgibLettres 4.5, 2nd/8th). The *ghayn* of *yablughaka* is written rounder like *fā'* or *qāf*, but the word cannot be read differently.

7. *Unzur 'āfāka <Allāh> mā kānat laka min ḥāja ta't[īkum in shā'a Allāh]*. The scribe left the word *Allāh* out after the honorific 'āfāka. An exact parallel for the formula *mā kānat laka min ḥāja ta't[īkum in shā'a Allāh]* can be found in P.Loeth 2[= P.Berl.Arab. II 75r].10, 2nd/8th. See also *wa-mā kānat laka min ḥāja* (P.David-WeillLouvre 12-13.15, 2nd/8th); *wa-ktub ilayya bi-mā kānat laka min ḥāja* (P.Heid.Arab. II 24.16, 2nd/8th); *uktub ilayya bi-khabarika wa-salāmika wa-ḥālīka wa-ḥay'atika wa-bi-l-ḥāja takūnu laka* (CPR XVI 18.10, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); *wa-ktub ilaynā bi-khabarika wa-ḥālīka wa-bi-mā kānat laka min ḥāja* (P.Horak 85.9-10, 2nd/8th). The verb *kāna* followed by an imperfect should not be translated as a past perfect (Hopkins § 239).

8. *Wa-u'arrifuka Abā Zakīr 'āfāka Allāh wa* [. The verb 'arrafa is one of the widespread verbs of communication in addition to *akhbara*, *a'lama*, *ash'ara* and *anhā* that were usually used by writers to start new paragraphs, see Grob (2010a), 55. A wāw and an *alif* are still preserved at the end of this line. The vocative article *yā* is omitted before the *kunya*, see also in this corpus 32.7.

9. *Al-rayṭa* (pl. *riyāt*) is defined in Arabic dictionaries both as a *mulā'a* that is made of two stitched pieces and also as a *milḥafa*, a wrap similar to the *izār*.³¹⁸ The term is widely attested in the papyri; cf. *wa-shiqāq wa-riyāt* (P.Marchands V/I 5.6, 3rd/9th); *wa-madīlayn riyāt thalāthat riyāt* (P.Marchands V/I 7[= P.World, 163].7-8, 3rd/9th); *wa-madīl riyāt ... wa-yakūn sab' wa-'ishrīn 'adad al-riyāt* (P.Marchands V/I 9.12, 14, 3rd/9th); *riyāt kullīha* (P.Marchands V/I 11.27, 3rd/9th); 'alā matā'ī al-riyāt (P.Marchands V/I 16.13, 3rd/9th); *bi-dīnār riyāt jayyid li-dīnār riyāt* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 27.7,10, 2nd/8th and the commentary). The *lām* of *bi-fatlihā* is shorter than other *lāms* in the text, but this reading seems the only fitting one. Of *jamī* only the *jīm* is still visible.

10. *Ḥafṣ al-Azraq*. For the *nisba* al-Azraq, see al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 1, 121. See also in the papyri *Ishāq al-Azraq* (P.Cair.Arab. IV 237.6, dated 249/863-4). The ligature *lam-alif* in al-Azraq is written differently from the way in which it is written in line 3. A short space is left blank between *al-salām* and *kathīran*. The final greeting *wa-l-salām 'alayka wa-rahmat Allāh* is restored on the basis of the other letters in this corpus.

Side B:

³¹⁸ Stillman (2000), 14.

The address is written in smaller characters in the same hand. The name of the sender is restored on the basis of the interior address. The place of delivery is to be expected after the addressee's name where traces of ink are still visible.

37.

Arranging a pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) journey

P.Cam.Michaelides A Q 17
Provenance: Unknown

21.5 x 20

2nd/8th
Plate 57-58

Middle-brown papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in black ink in 12 lines across the fibers. The left hand side is missing resulting in a loss of two words at the end of each line. The original cutting lines have been preserved on the other three sides. At the top and the right hand side, margins of 3 cm have been left blank. There are some lacunae along the left hand side that have caused damage to the text. Side B contains one line of the address. The papyrus sheet has been folded 10 times horizontally and 7 times vertically. There are very few diacritical dots.

The text shows some features of the early script, i.e. the upper part of *dāl/dhāl* occasionally bends to the right at the top (l. 5 *maḥmūd*; l. 7 *aradtu*). On occasions *sīn* and *shīn* are written as a long horizontal line with three teeth written above (l. 1 *bi-sm*; l. 6 *ishrīn*). The tail of the final *yā'* extends backwards (l. 2 *li-abī*; l. 3 *alladhī*; ll. 6, 8, 9 *lī*). The ligature *lām-alif* joins together at the bottom without triangular base forming the shape of the letter *v* (l. 3 *lā*; l. 11 *illā*). Some letters have been elongated horizontally and vacant spaces have been left blank between sections.

In this letter, the sender Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh b. Mufaḍḍal writes to a certain Abū Sa'īd informing him that he has planned to perform pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) "this year". For this reason Abū Muḥammad sent to Abū Sa'īd twenty *dīnārs* so that the latter would rent for the sender and one 'Umar something that remains unknown to us, presumably a beast, a camel more precisely, and to buy them enough food supplies for the journey. Abū Muḥammad informs Abū Sa'īd further that he is coming to the latter's domicile before the appearing of the moon and asks him to wait until he arrives, otherwise, he, the addressee, should rent from a trustworthy person.

The letter is well written and composed with several gaps to mark off the onset and the end of the different sections within the letter. The author uses different forms of verbs, indicating his good command of the language.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. لابی محمد من ابی سعید سلم ع[ل]یک فانی احمد [الیک الله]
3. الذی لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. اما بعد عافاک الله ورحمک [کت]بت الیک و[انا بحال]
5. عافیة والله محمود (vac.) وقد کتبت الیک و[عنت الیک]
6. عشرين دینرا فتکارا لی [لل]حج ان شا [الله فقد]
7. اردت ذلك (vac.) وانا قادم ع[ل]یک قبل الهلال[ل]
8. ان شا الله تکارا لی ولعمر لی وسوار (?) مل[]
9. لی وله [] ما [] وسفرة راتبة فی [] لطریق مع ب[] فان رايت[]
10. ان يكون ذلك معک فی رقتک فافعل[] ان شا الله
11. ان اکون معک والا فتکارا مع ثقة []

12. رضى الله عنك والسلام عليك و[رحمت الله]

Side B:

[لابى محمد عبد] الله بن مفضل من (vac.) ابى سعيد

Diacritical dots

(6 لي 8) لي; لعلي address سعيد

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To Abū Muḥammad from Abū Saʿīd. Peace be upon you. I praise [for your sake God,]
3. other than Whom there is no god. (vac.)
4. As for what follows, may God save you and have mercy upon you. I am writing to you, [whereas I am in good]
5. health, God be praised. (vac.) I am writing to you and s[ending to you]
6. twenty *dīnārs* so that you could rent for me for the pilgrimage, if [God wills. Because I]
7. wanted to do so. (vac.) I am coming to you before the (new) moo[n,]
8. if God wills. Rent for me and for Umar (?) ..[
9. for me and for him [what] and enough food supplies for the journey with .[, so if you think that]
10. this should be enclosed with your letter, then do [so, if God wills.
11. I should be with you, otherwise you should rent from a trustworthy person. [
12. May God be pleased with you. Peace be u[pon you and] G[od's] mercy.

Side B:

[To Abū Muḥammad 'Abd] Allāh b. Mufaḍḍal from (vac.) Abū Saʿīd

Commentary

Side A:

1. There is a long connecting line between the *sīn* and *mīm* of *bi-sm*. See also the *shīn* of *'ishrīn* in line 6.

2. *Li-Abī Muḥammad min Abī Saʿīd*. The *yā'* of *Abī* bends backwards to fill in the space left at the beginning of the line. Also the *yā'* of *alladhī* is written thus in line 3.

2-3. The *ḥamdala* is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. The *lām* of *'alayka* is chipped off. A long empty space has been left after the *ḥamdala* as usual.

4. *Ammā ba'du 'āfāka Allāh wa-raḥimaka*. An exact parallel for this formula can be found in P.GrohmannWirtsch. 7.4-5, 3rd-9th.

4-5. The expression *katabtu ilayka wa-[anā bi-ḥāl] 'āfiya wa-llāh maḥmūd* is restored on the basis of many attestations of this very common expression. See in this corpus 24.5-6 and the examples given in the commentary.

5. *Wa-qad katabtu ilayka wa-[ba'athtu ilayka]*. A short space has been left blank between the wellbeing section and the confirmation section. Of *wa-ba'athtu* only the *wāw* and *bā'* are still visible.

6. *'Ishrīn dīnāran fa-takārā lī li-l-ḥajj in shā'a Allāh*. *Dīnāran* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a). *Fa-takārā* is written with an *alif mamdūda* instead of an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.c). Also written so in lines 8 and 11. For the root *k-r-y* in documents, see P.Genizah, 143-144. The word *ḥajj* is well attested in the papyri, see the discussion on the *ḥajj* in chapter two. The term is also attested in Geniza documents, see Diem and Radenberg (1994), 37.

7. *Wa-anā qādim 'alayka qabla al-hilāl*. The *kāf* of *'alayka* is chipped off. The final *lām* of *al-hilāl* is missing. The appearance of the new moon was not only significant in matters of absolute dating as in Islamic law, but was also generally used in the Islamic world to indicate the day of the month. The *adab al-kuttāb* literature discusses expressions used to indicate the beginning of the month such as *fī mustahall shahr kadhā* or *li-mustahall (istihlāl) kadhā*. In the papyri these expressions are well attested; cf. *wa-istahalla 'alaynā li-hilāl laylat al-aḥad bi-l-fuṣṭāṭ* (P.SijpesteijnTravel 1.3, dated 117/735 and the commentary). For the use of *anā* at the onset of discourse spans, see Grob (2010a), 152.

8. *In shā'a Allāh*. The post-vocalic *hamza* is not written in *shā'a* (Hopkins § 20.c). A short vacant space is left after *in shā'* *Allāh* indicating a beginning of a new section within the text.

9. *Fī* has a short backward bending *yā'* as it is written in the following line. The *alif* of *al-tarīq* has chipped off.

9-10. The formula *fa-inn ra'ayta fa-fal in shā'a Allāh* is restored on the basis of countless parallels. See in this corpus 23.24 and the commentary.

10. *Fī ruq'atika*. The term *ruq'a* is a commonly used word for note and letter, see Diem 2008, 857; P.RāḡibPlusAncienneLetter, 5. The term appears also in this corpus in 26.address.

11. *Wa-illā fa-takārā ma'a thiqa*. For expressions using the term *thiqa*, see in this corpus 5.12 and the examples provided in the commentary.

12. *Raḍiya Allāh 'anka wa-l-salām 'alayka wa-raḥmat Allāh*. For this common closing formula, see in this corpus 35.9 and the examples provided in the commentary.

Side B:

The name of the addressee is restored on the basis of the interior address where the name appears clearly. Only the *kunya* of the of sender is given. The place of delivery is unspecified.

38.

**Reporting on the situation in Fustāṭ:
A Muslim writes to a Copt**

P.Cam.Michaelides A Q 22

29.5 x 15

2nd/8th

Provenance: Probably Fustāṭ

Plate 59-60

Light-brown papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in black ink in 12 lines across the fibers. The papyrus is destroyed in the middle resulting in some loss of text. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on all sides. Margins of 3 cm have been left blank on the top and at both sides. Side B contains one line of the address. The papyrus has been folded 9 times horizontally and 10 times vertically. There are very few diacritical dots.

The script is characterized by the way in which final *alif* extends below the connecting stroke (l. 4 *mā*; l. 8 *shā'a*). *Sīn* and *shīn* normally have teeth (l. 1 *bi-sm*; l. 2 *salām*, l. 3 *al-fustāṭ*; l. 8 *shā'a*). Medial *kāf* is just a vertical stroke resembling *lām* (ll. 3, 9 *katabtu*). The tail of the final *mīm* is very short (l. 1 *bi-sm*; l. 4 *lakum*). The tail of the final *yā'* bends backwards (l. 2 *ilā*; l. 12 *hattā*). Some letters have been elongated horizontally and short vacant spaces have been left blank between sections.

In this letter, the sender al-Muṣ'ab b. Ṣubayḥ writes to a certain Jurayj reporting on his arrival at Fustāṭ and the situation there. Al-Muṣ'ab informs Jurayj further that a certain Ibrāhīm told him that they, anonymous, wanted to send a messenger to beat the messenger who is staying with the addressee, for reasons unknown to us, but they postponed it in the end. Finally, Al-Muṣ'ab asks Jurayj to look for the bridle of Ibrāhīm. The letter closes with the expression *wa-kutiba*.

This letter is one of the earliest correspondences that record contact and business relations between Arab Muslims and Christian Egyptians in early Islamic Egypt. The letter uses the archaic and pre-Islamic greeting *silmun anta* instead of the familiar greeting *salām 'alayka*.³¹⁹ The letter is written as one block but also uses *linea dilatans* to highlight words and gabs to indicate the onset of sections.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم [الر] حيم
2. من المصعب بن صبيح الى جريج الابخر بن فين (؟) سلم انت
3. اما بعد كتبت اليك حي- [ن قد] منا الفسطاط وقد ادخلنا
4. ما لكم ولم يكن [خ] بر وقد حدثني ابراهيم انه
5. ارادوا يبعثوا اليكم [ر] سولا في ضرب الرسول الذي
6. قبلكم ويوخر ابو خير اياما في البقية ثم اخروا
7. ذلك ولم يكن شيا [بعد] وقد اصاب الله لكم حين رجعتم
8. وارجوا لكم تما[م العا]فية ان شا الله ولو كا[ن]
9. حدث خبر كتبت ال[يك لت] علم ذلك (vac.) وانظر لجام
10. ابراهيم والحكمة (؟) ان [] بقاء الله [] به حين لم

³¹⁹ See chapter one, formulary.

11. اقدم بهم حبيب [] اخبرته الا يمر بنا ع..
 12. حتى ياتيكم ولا [] بعد بها بعد ان تورقهم وكتب

Side B:

من ابي المجد الى (vac.) جريج الابخر بن فين (?)

Diacritical dots

(3 بعد; قدمنا 4) انه 6) البقيه 7) سيا

Translation**Side A:**

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, th[e Mer]ciful.
2. From al-Muṣ'ab b. Ṣubayḥ to Jurayj the (?) You are at peace.
3. As for what follows, I am writing to you at the moment we arrived at Fuṣṭāṭ and we entered
4. what belongs to you and we have no (more) [ne]ws. Ibrāhīm told me that He/they
5. wanted to send to you a [m]essenger to beat the messenger who
6. is with you and to delay Abū al-Khayr for some days. But they postponed
7. this and nothing happened [afterwards]. God favoured you when you returned.
8. I wish you the complet[ion of bene]faction, if God wills. If
9. something happens, I will write to [you to be aware] of. Look to (find) the bridle of
10. Ibrāhīm and the (?) that [] may God protect you [] when I did not
11. bring them. Ḥabīb [] and I informed him not to
12. until he comes to you and do not [] until you make them worried. It has been written.

Side B:

From Abū al-Majd to (vac.) Jurayj (?)

Commentary**Side A:**

1. A long connecting stroke is attested between the *sīn* and *mīm* of *bi-sm*. See also *mā* in line 4, *qiblakum* in line 6 and *lakum* in line 8. The *lām* and *rā'* of *al-raḥīm* are missing in the lacuna.

2. *Min al-Muṣ'ab b. Ṣubayḥ ilā Jurayj* For the name al-Muṣ'ab in the papyri, see CPR XXI 2[= P.World, 116].2, dated 176/792; P.DiemFrüheUrkunden 7.2, dated 168/784. As for the name Ṣubayḥ, see al-Dhahābī, 312. *Ilā* is written with a very long space between the *alif* and *lām* as it is written in the exterior address. *Jurayj* is the Arabic diminutive form of the name George which corresponds to different Coptic forms.³²⁰ The name is well attested in the papyri; cf. P.Heid.Arab. II 31.3, 3rd/9th; P.David-WeillLouvre 10.6, 3rd/9th. Owing to the fact that the letter is addressed to a non-Muslim, the *ḥamdala* is omitted altogether and the familiar *salām* greeting “*salām 'alayka*” is replaced by the archaic formula “*silmun anta*”. For more about this unique expression, see chapter one, formulary.

3. There is a very short vacant space after *ammā ba'du*. The *lām* of *ilayka* is extremely short resembling a tooth, but the reading seems the only fitting one. Likewise, the *lām* of al-Fuṣṭāṭ is shortened. The *nūn* of *ḥīna* and the *qāf* and *dāl* of *qadimnā* are missing in the lacuna. The scribe left out one tooth of the *sīn* of Fuṣṭāṭ.

4. *Mā lakum*. It is also possible to read it as *mālakum* (your money). *Ibrāhīm* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.c). Also written thus in line 10. The singular used in *innahu* contrasts with the plural used in the rest of the sentence.

5. *Aradū yab'athū*. Asyndetic clauses are very widespread in the papyri (Hopkins § 269.i). The *rā'* of *rasūlan* is missing, while the ligature *lām-alif* joins together at the bottom without triangular base forming the shape of the letter *v*. There is an ink spot attached to the word *al-rasūl* obscuring the reading, but this reading seems to be the only fitting one.

6. *Alladhī qiblakum*. *Alladhī* is used for a substantive relative clause instead of *mā* which is more often used in classical Arabic (Hopkins § 291.a.i). For expressions such as *qibalanā/kum* or *qibalī/aka*, see chapter two, women of the house. *Wa-yu'akhir Abū al-Khayr ayyāman*. *Abū* is written for classical Arabic *Abā* (Hopkins § 162.a.ii). The name al-Khayr appears also in this corpus in 32.2.

7. The orthography *shayyan* for *shay'an* is frequent in Arabic papyri (Hopkins § 19).

8. *Alif fāṣila* is added in *wa-arjū* against classical Arabic rule (Hopkins § 50.a.i). The *mīm* of *tamām* and the *alif*, *lām* and *'ayn* of *al-'āfiya* are missing in the lacuna. The post vocalic *hamza* is not written in *shā'a* (Hopkins § 20.c).

9. For *lijām* (the bridle), see Dozy, 525.

11. *Allā* is written for *an lā* (Hopkins § 51.e). The name Ḥabīb occurs also in this corpus in 9.17; 43.13. See also the female name Ḥabība 5.11.

12. The expression *wa-kutiba* was used to signal the closure of letters, see P.Khalili I, 194. This expression appears also in this corpus in 9.17.

Side B:

The name of the sender is replaced by his *kunya*, while the name of the addressee is written in exactly the same way as it is written in the interior address. The place of delivery is not specified.

³²⁰ Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī (13th), *The churches and monasteries of Egypt and some neighboring countries*, ed. B.T. Evetts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), 122, note 1.

39.

Letter reporting on business affairs

P.Cam.Michaelides A 390
Provenance: Unknown

23.5 x 15

2nd/8th
Plate 61-62

Dark-brown papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in black ink across the fibers. The left hand side is missing resulting in a loss of four or five words at the end of each line. Similarly, the bottom is broken off where an unknown number of lines is missing. There are also several lacunae and worm holes all over the papyrus that have caused some damage to the text. The ink has faded in places to such a degree that the text has become illegible. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on the top and at the right hand side. A margin of 2 cm has been left blank at the top. Side B contains traces of one line of the address. There are very few diacritical dots which are placed on a vertical plane. The papyrus sheet has been folded 6 times vertically and 9 times horizontally.

The script is characterized by the way in which final *alif* extends below the connecting stroke (l. 1 Hishām; l. 10 *kullihā*). The teeth of *sīn* are occasionally reduced to a slight ripple in the stroke (l. 1 *bi-sm*; l. 2 *salām*). The horizontal stroke of initial *ʿayn* is extended to the right (l. 4 *ʿāfānā*). Initial *kāf* is hairpin-shaped (l. 5 *kitābuka*). Final *yāʾ* bends backwards in a straight line (l. 2 *ilā*).

In this letter, the sender Hishām b. Mahdī writes to a certain Salām b. Ṣuhayb about some business transactions and asks him to help someone, anonymous to us. Due to the fragmentary state of the bottom of the papyrus only few sentences can be restored but not enough to extract a continuous sense from it. The letter is to be delivered in Alexandria as stated in the exterior address.

The letter is well composed and structured in paragraphs. The writer makes mistakes in grammar and spelling.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من هشام بن مهدى الى سلام بن صهيب سلم عـ[ليك فانى احمد اليك الله]
3. الذى لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. [اما بعد عافنا الله واباك باحسن عـ[افيته فى الدنيا والاخرة]
5. [وجعل] مصيرنا واباك الجنة برحمته بلغنى كتابك و[فهمت الذى كتبت]
6. الى به من خبرك وسلامتك وعافية الله ايـ[اك فحمدت على ذلك حمدا كثيرا]
7. بلغنى ابقرصلاس (؟) ولا تقدم ابا عبد الله وقد فرغنا من
8. والبيض فاكتب الى عافاك الله بـ[كتاب
9. منها حبيب الى مسرتك ورضاك]
10. كلها فانى لا اعتل لمثلك]
11. لما قد اوجبه الله من حقـ[ى عليك] فان من]
12.] الله ان يعين]
13.] فاعنه برحمك الله]
- 14.
- 15.

.16

.17

.18

.19

.20

Side B:

لابى الطبرانى {من} عند منزل الا... بالاسكندرية

Diacritical dots

(10) اعل; لمتلك (address الطبرني; من

Translation**Side A:**

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Hishām b. Maḥdī to Salām b. Ṣuḥayb. Peace be upon y[ou. I praise for your sake God, other than]
3. Whom, there is no god. (vac.)
4. [As for what follows,] may God save us and you [through His best safeguarding in this world and the hereafter]
5. [and make] the paradise our and your destiny through His mercy. Your letter reached me and [I understood what you wrote to]
6. me in it about your news and sound condition and the wellbeing of God [towards you and I praised God for it abundantly.]
7. (?) came to me, thus do not send Abū ‘Abd Allāh. We are done [with
8. and the eggs. So write to me, may God save you, [a letter
9. from it. It is desirable (to me) to fulfil your pleasure and satisfaction [
10. all of it. I do not make excuses to a person like you [
11. in recognition of what God has made due on you to
12. [] Allāh to help []
13. [] So assist him, may [God] have mercy upon you.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

Side B:

To Abū al-Ṭabarānī near the house of..... in Alexandria.

Commentary**Side A:**

1. There is a long connecting line between the *sīn* and *mīm* of *bi-sm*.

2-3. *ilā* is written with a very long space between the *alif* and *lām*, while the *yā'* returns horizontally backwards to cover the space. The *ḥamdala* is restored on the basis of parallels. A long space has been left empty after the *ḥamdala* as usual.

4. Of *ammā ba'du* only the *dāl* is visible. *ʿĀfānā* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.c). See chapter one, language.

5. For the prayer [*wa-ja'ala*] *maṣīranā wa-ıyyāka al-janna bi-raḥmatihī*, see in this corpus 7.5-6; 36.4-5 and the examples given in the commentary. The expression *balaghanī kitābuka wa-[fahimtu mā katabta] ilayya bihi min* is restored on the basis of parallels. Cf. *waṣala ilayya kitābuka ḥafīzaka Allāh wa-fahimtu mā katabta bihi ilayya min* (P.Marchands V/I 18.4, 3rd-9th). *Balaghanī* is written in exactly the same form in line 7.

6. For the expression *min khabarika wa-salāmatika wa-ʿāfiyat Allāh ıyyāka*, see 35.5 and the examples provided in the commentary. Of *ıyyāka* only the *alif* and the right tip of the *yā'* are preserved.

7. A more satisfactory reading for the proper name after *balaghanī* cannot be provided. The *nūn* and *alif* of *faraghnā* are missing.

8. *Wa-l-bayḍ fa-ktub lī ʿāfāka Allāh bi[-kitāb]*. For other attestations of *al-bayḍ* in the papyri, see in this corpus 4.12 and the commentary. Of *bi-kitāb* only the *bā'* and traces of *kāf* are visible.

9. *Minhā ḥabīb ilā masarratika wa-riḍāka*. The *ḥā'* of *ḥabīb* is written differently from the way in which it is written in the rest of the text, but this reading seems the only fitting one. For parallels of this expression, see *wa-usārī'u ilā masarratika* (P.Marchands II 30.5, 3rd/9th); *fa-inna fihā masarratika* (P.Horak 85.10, 2nd/8th and the commentary).

10-20. These ten lines are for the most part illegible due to the fragmentary state of the bottom of the papyrus. The reading is tentative.

Side B:

Only the *kunya* of the addressee is given in addition to the place of delivery. For the name al-Ṭabarānī, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 321. The writer mistakenly added the preposition *min* intending to write his name, but he changed his mind and followed the name of the addressee by the place of delivery. The name following *manzil* is difficult to decipher, because the ink is totally effaced. *Bi-l-iskandariyya*. Alexandria appears also in this corpus in 10.10; 11.14.

40.

Letter giving instructions

P.Cam.Michaelides A 130
Provenance: Unknown

21 x 18

2nd/8th
Plate 63

Dark-brown papyrus written in black ink with a medium-thick pen in 19 lines at right angles to the fibers. The letter is incomplete at the top, the bottom and the left hand side which have resulted in a considerable loss of text. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on the right hand side. The ink has faded and come off at the bottom to such a degree that the text has at times become illegible. The papyrus sheet was folded 6 times horizontally. Side B is blank. There are very few diacritical dots.

The text shows some features of the early script, i.e. final *alif* extends below the connecting stroke (l. 4 *ṣāhib*; l. 11 *annā*). The ligature *lām-alif* joins together at the bottom forming the shape of the letter *v* (l. 5 *li-Abī*; l. 10 *al-ṣalāḥ*). The tail of the independent *mīm* is very short (l. 9 *umm*). The tail of the final *yā'* extends backwards (ll. 5, 6, 9 *Abī*; l. 12 *raḍiya*).

This letter, whose both parties are unknown to us, is structured in three paragraphs. In the first paragraph, the sender refers to a previous letter from the addressee in which the latter mentioned that he bought two hundred *irdabbs*, most probably of wheat or barley. The sender then asks the addressee in the same paragraph to keep this commodity in a certain house, to seal it and to bring out of it only two *irdabbs* by two *irdabbs*. In this manner, the owner of the barley shop and his journeymen cannot take it away, the sender says. In the second paragraph, the sender asks the addressee to keep in mind the matter of a certain *Abū Muḥammad* and to inform one *Abū Ismā'īl* about something that remains unknown to us. In the same paragraph, the sender refers to a third person, who should be put in confinement in his office and house. He also instructs the addressee to order a woman called *Umm Falīḥ* to order a certain *Umm al-Qāsim* to do something that remains unknown to us. The sender, then, asked the addressee to write to *Abū Ismā'īl* and *Abū Zurāra* regarding the same issue. The third paragraph is devoted to prayers and blessings for the addressee and the common closing formula. Some afterthoughts were added after the letter has been completed, but they are for the most part illegible due to the fragmentarily state of the bottom of the papyrus.

The letter is very well written and structured with several means to highlight the text. The voice of the letter indicates the superiority of the sender over the addressee and the contents show an extensive commercial network in which two women are involved, i.e. *Umm Falīḥ* and *Umm al-Qāsim*.

Text

1. بلغ]
2. [و]أفد فـ[هم]ت الذى ذكرت من اشتراك لنا الميى اردب [قمح/شعير
3. [فلا] تغفل عنها حتى تحرزها فى بيت من بيوب داد ا (؟)]
4. عليه ويطبع ثم لا تخرج منه الا اردبين اردبين وـ]
5. لا يغتاله صاحب الاشعيرية او اجراوه (vac.)
6. وليكن امر ابى محمد منك على بال وقل لابى اسمعيل]

7. ما كنتم صانعيه فى حفظى فليكن منكم افضل ما []
 8. عنه فى التعقد له والزامه مجلسه وبيته والـ []
 9. وامر ام فليح ان تامر ام القاسم ان تقمت منه []
 10. تبعث الى ابى اسمعيل وابى زراره فيه وا []
 11. له من الصلاح وحسن /الحال\ ودفع المكروه افضل ا []
 12. وانا استخلف (vac.)
 13. رضى الله عنا وعنك وا [] سلم عليك [ورحمت الله
 14. وقد كتبت الى ميمون ان يهيا له بيع []
 15. [] ا [] ويعجبنا []
 16. [] فقد ذكر به فى []
 17. [] عند []
 18. ان شا الله فابعث الى []
 19. بعد ان فعل [ان شا الله

Diacritical dots

(4 اردبيي; اردبيي 5) بعثا (6 ابى 7) كنتم; صانعيه (8) الزامه

Translation

1. reaches [] . greetings []
2. [and] I understood what you mentioned that you purchased for us two hundred *irdabbs* of [wheat/barely
3. [So do not] neglect to take care of it until you keep it in one of the houses of ... (?) [
4. on it and it must be sealed and then bring out of it only two *irdabbs* by two *irdabbs*.
5. so that the owner of the barley shop or his journeymen cannot take it away. (vac.)
6. And bear in mind the matter of Abū Muḥammad and tell Abū Ismā'īl [
7. what you are going to do about Ḥafzī. You should do better than [
8. in judging and forcing him to stay in his office and his house and ..[
9. And order Umm Falīḥ to order Umm al-Qāsim to receive from him [
10. and to send to Abū Ismā'īl and Abū Zurāra about it ..[
11. to him of the righteousness and the sound condition and the propulsion of evil is better than [
12. I adjure. (vac.)
13. may God be pleased with us and you. Peace be upon you [and God's mercy
14. I wrote to Maymūn to prepare it for him for sale [
15. [] . we like it []
16. [] and he mentioned it in []
17. [] with []
18. [if] God wills, send to me []
19. after he did, [if God wills

Commentary

1. The top of this letter with the *basmala* and the introductory formulae is missing. The beginning of the second line, however, seems to continue the opening formula and the contents of the letter suggest that not more than four lines are missing at the top.

2. *Wa-]qad fahimtu alladhī dhakarta min ishtirā'ika lanā mi'atay irdabb*. The spelling *miatay* instead of *mi'atay* is frequent in Arabic papyri. For various forms of the numeral two hundred in the papyri, see Hopkins § 101.b. For the weight of one *irdabb* in medieval Egypt, see Grohmann (1954), 156; Hinz, *Gewichte*, 39; J. Burton-Page "Mawazin," E.I.2, vol. 6, 117–22. A commodity of may be wheat or barley qualifying *irdabbs* is to be expected at the end of this line. In the 2nd/8th century, the price of wheat seems to have fluctuated between ten to fifteen *irdabbs* per *dīnār* and barley costed about half of this price, see A. Grohmann, "Weizenpreis im arabischen Ägypten," *Bulletin de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire* 30 (1930), 541–3.

3-4. *Ḥattā tuhrizahā fī bayt min buyūt (?) wa-taṭba' wa-lā tukhrij minhu illā irdabbayn irdabbayn*. The practice of sealing goods is well attested in the papyri. Cf. *thumma iṭba' mā qabaḍta min dhālika bi-l-ṭābi' fa-dfa'ahā ilayhi ba'd an taṭba'ahā* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 8.19, 22, 2nd/8th and the commentary). Sealing animals by the owner's seal in order to be easily identified is also attested in the papyri, see *wa-'alayhā ṭābi'uka fa-ṣiḥtu 'alā 'Ubayd ḥattā ijtama'a 'alayya al-nās wa-'arafū al-nās ṭābi'aka 'alā ādhānihā* (P.Jahn 17.19, 3rd/9th). At the end of this line a *wāw* and traces of a hook can be detected.

5. *Ṣāhib al-ash'ariyya aw ujarā'uhu*. *Al-ash'ariyya* is the place where the barley was to be sold. The term *ujarā'* (sing. *ajīr*) journeymen occurs frequently in the papyri. Cf. P.Cair.Arab. IV 224-225.4; P.Cair.Arab. VI 378.9, 12; P.Cair.Arab. VI 415.10, all 2nd-3rd/8th-9th. A long vacant space has been left at the end of this line, indicating the end of this paragraph.

6. The *yā'* of *'alā* extends vertically directly from the bottom of the *lām* which is an archaic spelling (Hopkins § 55.i). *Ismā'īl* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of medial *ā* (Hopkins § 10.b.i). Written also thus in line 10. Traces of a backward bending *yā'* can be detected at the end of this line. *Wa-qul li-Abī Ismā'īl*. Transmitting messages in direct speech using the verb *qāla* within the letter is common in private and business letters, see Grob (2010a), 68–69.

8. A *wāw*, *alif*, *lām* and traces of may be *fā'* or *qāf* can be detected at the end of this line.

9. For the name *Falīḥ* and other possible readings such as *Fulayḥ* and *Qalīḥ*, see *al-Dhahabī, Mushtabih*, 408.

10. For the name *Zurāra*, see *Ibn Ma'kūl, Ikmāl*, vol. 1, 89.

11. *Min al-ṣalāḥ wa-ḥusn \al-ḥāl/ wa-daf' al-makrūh*. The writer added the word *al-ḥāl* as an afterthought above the line. For similar expressions, see *as'alu Allāh an yuḥsina 'awnaka wa-l-'āfiya wa-ṣalāḥ* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 24.10-11, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary).

12. *Wa-anā astahlif*. *Astahlif* (to appoint a deputy) is also a possible reading. The scribe left an empty space at the end of this line and started a new paragraph in the next line.

13. For the prayer *raḍiya Allāh 'annā wa-'anka*, see in this corpus 35.9 and the examples given in the commentary.

14-19. These six lines are for the most part illegible due to the fragmentary state of the bottom of the papyrus. Only traces of words and letters are still visible, the reconstruction and translation of which are difficult.

41.

Reporting on the senders' departure and sending animals

P.Cam.Michaelides Q 14
Provenance: Probably Fustāt

19 x 19

2nd/8th
Plate 64-65

Middle-brown papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in black ink in 15 lines across the fibers. The original margins have been preserved on all sides. There are some lacunae at the top and the middle of the papyrus which have caused some damage to the text. The papyrus sheet has been folded 10 times horizontally and 6 times vertically. There are very few diacritical dots. Side B contains the address in two lines.

The script is characterized by the way in which final *alif* extends very long below the base line. Words are split across line endings and continued in the next line (ll. 9-10 *awajihā*). The text is written in a fast and cursive handwriting with ligatures resembling the 3rd century script, see Grob (2010a), 161-172.

This letter has been sent to a certain Abū Sulaymān Ismā'īl b. Ayyūb from a certain 'Ubayd b. Jinān and another person describing himself as the servant of one Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd. Although the letter states that there are two senders, the voice of the letter is first-person singular. The sender informs the addressee that he sent the animals and that he is about to leave. The sender informs the addressee further that Ḥamdūn, Khālīd and Faraj will take care of some issues during the sender's absence. The sender also lets the addressee know that he received the letters and that he will send them to the addressee afterwards. At the end, the sender asks the addressee to take care of his family.

The letter is written as one block with no means to highlight the text. The writer makes some grammatical mistakes and incorrect spellings.

Text

Side A:

1. بس[م] الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. لابي سل[ب] من اس[م] معيل[ب] بن ايوب من عبيد بن جنان وخادم محمد بن عبيد
3. سلم عليك [فانى] [احمد] اليك الله الذى لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. اما بعد حفظ[ك] الله وعافاك وابقاك وابقا النعمة عليك فى الدنيا
5. والاخرة اعلمك ابقاك الله انى بعثت الدواب وانا قادمين
6. ان شا الله[ه] يجينى الامسا (?) وانا اخلف حمدون
7. عنده وار[سل] ان شا الله الى يقبضه وقد كنت
8. ارسلت حمدون الى خلد فى حال بقى فرج فما ابقا
9. منه شيا وقد اخذنا الكتب حفظك الله وانا او
10. جها اليكم ان شا الله فاستوصى باهل البيت
11. وبالعيال خيرا فانما هم اهلك مع اناك مستوصى
12. ان شا الله اقرى نفسك السلم وعلى ابراهيم وفايق
13. وعلى من احببت السلم والسلم عليك
14. ورحمت الله حمدون يقريك السلم ومازن
15. وفرج يقروك السلم وايراهيم يقريك السلم

Side B:

لابى سليمان ابقاه <الله> من عبيد (vac.) بن جنان يدفع بمصر
فى المكارين (?) ان شا (vac.) اللـه

Diacritical dots

(5 فادمنن (6 حمدون (8 حمدون (11 مسنوصى

Translation**Side A:**

1. In the na[me] of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To Abū Sulaymān Is[mā'īl] b. Ayyūb from 'Ubayd b. Jinān and the servant of Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd.
3. Peace be upon y[ou. I praise] for your sake God, other than Who[m,] there is no god. (vac.)
4. As for what follows, may God protect yo[u] and grant you health and prolong your life and extend His benevolence upon you in this world
5. and the hereafter. I inform you, may God prolong your life, that I sent the animals and that we are coming,
6. if Go[d] wills. The (?) will come to me and I will leave Ḥamdūn
7. with him. And se[nd,] if God wills, to me in order to receive it. I already
8. sent Ḥamdūn to Khālid in case Faraj remains. He did not leave
9. anything from it. We received the letters, may God protect you, and I will
10. send them to you, if God wills. Take care of the household
11. and the children as they are your family and your are the best caretaker,
12. if God wills. Send to yourself greetings. And (send also greetings) to Ibrāhīm and Fā'iḳ
13. and all those you wish to greet. Peace be upon you
14. and God's mercy. Ḥamdūn sends to you greetings. Māzin
15. and Faraj send to you greetings and Ibrāhīm sends to you greetings.

Side B:

To Abū Sulaymān may <God> save him From 'Ubayd (vac.) b. Jinān to be delivered in Miṣr (Fusṭāṭ) (?) If God (vac.) wills.

Commentary**Side A:**

2. Sulaymān is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.b.ii). Also written thus in the exterior address. Of Isma'īl only the *alif* and *sīn* are visible. For the name Jinān and other possible readings such as Ḥibbān, Ḥubbān, Ḥabbān, Ḥayyān and Jayyān, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 82, 84-86. For other attestations of *khādim* in the papyri; cf. CPR XVI 19.20, 3rd/9th; P.Heid.Arab. II 26.12, 2nd-3rd/8th-9th; P.Khurasan 30.3, dated 160/777. See also in this corpus 23, 26 and 34.

4-5. *Ammā ba'du ḥafīzaka Allāh wa-āfāka wa-abqāka wa-abqā al-ni'ma 'alayka fī al-dunyā wa-l-ākhirā*. Writing extensive blessings for the addressee after the transitional element is very uncommon in early letters. The verb *abqā* is written with an *alif mamdūda*, whereas classical Arabic requires an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.c). It is also written thus in line 8. For other attestations of the shift from *iya* to *ā* as in *abqā*, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 28.12, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary.

5. *Wa-innā qādimīn*. The *casus obliquus* of the sound masculine plural is used where classical Arabic requires *casus rectus* (Hopkins § 86). See also in this corpus 37.7 and 31.10.

6. The shift of *ā* to *ū* before *n* is represented in the name Ḥamdūn (Hopkins § 8). The post-vocalic *hamza* is not written in *shā'a* (Hopkins § 20.c). Also written so in lines 7, 10, 12.

7-8. *Wa-qad kuntu arsaltu*. For the combination *qad* preceding both *kāna* and the perfect in the papyri, see Hopkins § 238.b.ii.

8. Khālīd is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.b.i).

9. The orthography *shayyan* for *shay'an* is frequent in Arabic papyri (Hopkins § 19).

10. The right tip of the *tā'* of *al-bayt* is written higher than the other teeth, horizontally elongated and lacks an upward curve on the left.

12. The long *ā* of *al-salām* is written defectively (Hopkins § 10.a). Also written thus in lines 13, 14, 15. Ibrāhīm is written with *scriptio defectiva* of medial *ā* as in line 15 (Hopkins § 10.b.i).

13. *Wa-ālā man aḥbabta al-salām*. For this expression, see CPR XVI 12.10, 3rd/9th and the commentary.

15. The name Faraj is written as one ligature.

Side B:

Li-Abī Sulaymān abqāhu <Allāh> min 'Ubayd (vac.) b. Jinān yudfa' bi-miṣr fī al-kārayn (?) in shā'a (vac.) Allāh. The scribe left out the word *Allāh* after the honorific *abqāhu*. For the expression *yudfa'* preceding the place of delivery, see Grob (2010a), 79. *Miṣr* appears also in this corpus in 23.20.

2.2. Administration

42.

Reporting on measuring the city of Dalāṣ, sending surplus to the *amīr* and the sickness of the sender

P.CtYBR.inv. 2716
Provenance: Unknown

29.3 x 18.8

2nd/8th
Plate 66-67

Medium-brown papyrus which is darkly discolored at the bottom. The text is written in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The letter is incomplete at the bottom where an unknown number of lines are missing and the top right corner is lost resulting in the damage of 5 lines. The original cutting lines have been preserved on both sides and partially at the top. The papyrus sheet has been folded 9 times horizontally. Side B contains traces of the address in one line. There are very few diacritical dots.

The script shows some early features, i.e. initial and medial *kāfs* are horizontally elongated (l. 7 *iyyākum*; l. 11 *al-kūra*). Long connecting strokes between characters are frequently attested (l. 6 *ammā*; l. 11 *sāra*). The tail of the final *mīm* extends vertically downwards (l. 17 *anām*). *Sīn* and *shīn* are written consistently with teeth (l. 13 *qiyāsa*; l. 8 *shadīd*).

This correspondence is of special value for the history of taxation in early Islamic Egypt. The sender of this letter Abū al-Sayyid Hishām is, most likely, a surveyor (*qaṣṣāb*), who was on a mission in the hot upper Egyptian countryside measuring the city of Dalāṣ while writing this letter. The city's landscape was very inconvenient for Hishām. "It is the worst city that God created; its soil is the most distasteful and sickening," says Hishām. After measuring the city in the best possible way, the surveyors found too much surplus which they had to send to the *amīr* with the local official and the people of the district. The team of surveyors including Hishām had to wait some more days for their return. Finally, Hishām informs the addressee that he is very sick because of the boil that he showed him between the backside and penis.

The letter is well composed with several means to highlight the text. The writer makes many mistakes in grammar and spelling.

Text

Side A:

1. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم-م]
2. [من ابى السيد هشام بن] الى
3. [ابى]
4. [سلم]
5. [عليك فانى احمد اليك الله الذى لا اله الا هو]
6. [م-ا بعد عافان-ا الله وا]ياكم عافية يدخلنا
7. واياكم بها الجنة برحمته و[ين-ا]جينا واياكم من
8. سخطه ومن النار برحمته (vac.)
9. كتبنا اليكم ونحن فى مدينة دلاص

10. فى اشرف مدينة خلقها الله وثرها اثقله واخبثه
 11. وقد سار العامل واهل الكورة الى الامير
 12. ونحن مقبمين فى غير شى ننتظر قدومهم علينا
 13. لم يتهدنا لنا مما نريد شيا وقد فرغنا من قياسة
 14. المدينة على احسن حال والحمد لله وجدنا فيها
 15. فضل كثير قد بعثنا به الى الامير وانا مريض منذ
 16. فارقتكم من ذلك الدم الذى كنت اريتكه
 17. بين مقعدتى ومذاكرتى قد اهلكنى لا انام
 18. ولا اقعد وانا حين كتبت اليكم شديد المرض
 19. [] فاسأل الله [] الدنيا والاخرة
 20. [] احب [] احبك
 21. [] الله

Side B:

من ابى السيد هشام بن []

Diacritical dots

(3 ابى (8 برحمته (11 الامير (12 عير; سي (13 سيا; فرعنا; فاسيه (15 الامير (17 مفعدتى; مذاكرتى; اهلكتى

Translation

Side A:

1. [In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful].
2. [From Abū al-Sayyid Hishām b.] to
3. [] Abū
4. [] Peace
5. [be upon you. I praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no] god.
6. As [for what] follows, may [God give us and] you the health with which He makes us
7. and you enter the paradise through His mercy and may He [sa]ve us and you from
8. His anger and from the hellfire through His mercy. (vac.)
9. We are writing to you, while we are in the city of Dalās;
10. in the worst city that God created. Its soil is distasteful and sickening.
11. The local official and the people of the city departed to the *amīr*.
12. We dwell in nothing, waiting for their arrival.
13. Nothing of what we want is ready so far. We finished measuring
14. the city in the best possible way, God be praised. We found in it
15. much surplus, which we had sent to the *amīr*. I am sick since
16. I left you from the boil that I showed you
17. between my backside and my penis. It ruins me so that I cannot sleep
18. nor can I sit down. While I am writing to you, I am very sick
19. [] I ask God [] in this world and hereafter

20. [I like], may
 21. [God like you

Side B:

From Abū al-Sayyid Hishām b. [

Commentary**Side A:**

1-4. The top of this letter with the *basmala* and the introductory formula is missing. The remnants of lines 2-4, however, seem to continue the opening formula and the contents of the letter suggest that not more than 4 lines are lost at the top. The name of the sender is restored on the basis of the partially preserved address on side B.

4-5. The *ḥamdala* is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. See the other letters in this corpus.

6-8. The eulogy *‘āfānā Allāh wa-ıyyākum ‘āfiya yudkhillunā wa-ıyyākum bihā al-janna bi-rahmatihī wa-yunajīnā wa-ıyyākum min shukhṭihī wa-min al-nār bi-rahmatihī* knows no parallel. But see in this corpus 7.5-6; 36.4-5 and the commentaries.

9. For other attestations of the city of Dalāṣ (Gr. Neiloúpolis) in the papyri, see A. Grohmann, *Studien zur historischen Geographie und Verwaltung des Frühmittelalterlichen Ägypten* (Wien: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1959), 37-38; P.Khalili I, 65-66. See also Peust (2010), 32.

10. For *asharr*, see Hopkins § 90.b.

11. The title *‘āmil* (pl. *‘ummāl*) occurs frequently in the papyri. From the early Abbasid period onwards the *‘ummāl* appear as the officials issuing tax receipts and safe conducts, but in earlier times *‘ummāl* function in the fiscal administration and their responsibilities are less well defined, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 14.22, 2nd/8th and the commentary; CPR XXI, 118. *Wa-qad sār al-‘āmil wa-ahl al-kūra ilā al-amīr*. The *amīr* mentioned here might refer to the financial director. For the title *amīr*, see in this corpus 3.6 and the commentary. For *kūra* (Gr. χώρα; pl. *kuwar*), see Grohmann (1959), 34; P.Khalili I, 65-66.

12. For other attestations of the expression *wa-naḥnu muqīmīn fī ghayr shay’*, see *fa-innī muqīm mundhu fāraqtanī fī ghayr shay’* (P.RāgibLettres 13.16, 3rd/9th).

13. The orthography *shayyan* for *shay’an* is frequent in Arabic papyri (Hopkins § 19). *Mimmā* is written for *min mā* (Hopkins § 51.b).

13-15. *Wa-qad faraghnā min qiyāsāt al-madīna ‘alā aḥsan ḥāl wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh wajadnā fīhā faḍl kathīr qad ba’athnā bihi ilā al-amīr*. According to literary sources, in September and November of each year the fields all over Egypt were measured and documents known as the canon (*qānūn*) and the registers of disposition (*siġllāt al-taḥḍīr*) were compiled by an official known as the recorder (*dalīl*). These documents record the estimated number of the irrigated *faddans* and the estimated tax assessments. In the spring another survey is carried out by another official known as the surveyor (*qaṣṣāb*). After the second survey, the *qaṣṣāb* composes a document known as the difference (*al-ta’rīj*), in which he compares the actual areal assessment and the tax rates of the cultivators to the estimated areal assessments and

their tax rates recorded in the registers of disposition and calculates the difference between the two. The difference was called the survey increase (*zā'id al-misāḥa*). For more extensive discussion, see P.Khalili I, 61-67 and the sources cited there. The two dots of the *yā'* of *qiyāsat* are misplaced under the *sīn*.

15. *Faḍl kathīr*. The *tanwīn alif* is missing in the direct object (Hopkins § 167.d). The reading *kaḅīr* instead of *kathīr* is also possible. For the technical meaning of the term *faḍl* (pl. *fuḍūl*), see J. Abū Ṣafiyya, *Bardiyyāt Qurra Ibn Sharīk al-'Absī* (Riyadh: Markaz al-Malik Fayṣal li-l-Buḥūth wa-l-Dirāsāt al-Islamiyya, 2004), 94.

15-16. *Wa-anā marīḍ mundhu fāraqtukum*. For expressions using the verb *fāraqa*, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 36.5, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary. The word *Mundhu* (since) is well attested in the papyri (Hopkins § 131).

16. *Min dhālika al-dummal alladhī kuntu araytukah*. The singular form used here contrasts with the plural used in the rest of the letter. For *al-dummal* (pl. *damāmil* and *damāmīl*), see Ibn Manẓūr, 1425.

17. *Bayna maq'adatī wa-madhākiratī*. For the unusual plural form *madhākīr*, see Ibn Manẓūr, 1509.

19. Of *fa-as'alu Allāh* only the upper half of letters is visible.

20-21. The formula *uḥibbu aḥabaka Allāh* is reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 18.10 and the commentary.

Side B:

Only the name of the sender is still preserved on the right side.

43.

Measuring vineyards of indigenous Egyptians and a translator

P.CtYBR.inv. 2718

21.3 x 10.7

2nd/8th

Provenance: Unknown

Plate 68-69

Dark-brown papyrus written in a regular hand in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The top and the right hand side are missing with a considerable loss of text. Likewise, the left hand side is damaged. The original margins remain only at the bottom. There are few diacritical dots. Side B bears traces of two line of the address written parallel to the fibers. The papyrus sheet has been folded 13 times horizontally and 7 times vertically.

The script is characterized by the way in which *sīn* is written consistently with teeth (l. 15 *laysa*). The tail of the final *yā'* returns backwards (l. 11 '*alā*').

This letter deals with approximately the same topic as the previous one (42). It deals with measuring vineyards belong to native Egyptians and recording tax assessments (*kharāj*). This is why a translator was very much needed to ease the communication. The text shows that two measurements were conducted by two different persons and that different categories for fields and vineyards were made afterwards. The sender, 'Amr b. Mālik, ends his letter with greetings and the final *salām* greeting as usual. Unfortunately, because of the fragmentary state of the papyrus we don't learn much on the modalities of measuring nor the records that were made.

Text

Side A:

1. [البعيدة]
2. [ابا النصر امر الترجمان وراس (؟)] [مصر
3. [/يحب\ التكشف ساير (؟) من امورهم]
4. [يا واعلمته بقرب]
5. [قد كتب اليك بامرك]
6. [ان الكتب انت بعا]فية
7. [قد افرق في القياسة كلها ولم بيقا]
8. [من القبط وبعث اليهم بابى رشد بن]
9. [با والعنب بامر الكتاب بخبرك و]حالك وحوايحك
10. [اللقلم ولعمرى لقد اعجبنتى منه]
11. [قبيح لى ان اقيم على]
12. [وحمق بالرجل ان يقيم على رزق]
13. [حتى ويخرج معى حبيب فى قياساة]
14. [ما خبر وقد افرق فى قياساة كرومات]
15. [رجل ليس يفوض كتابة الخراج]
16. [من احد احق برفق ما عنده منا]
17. [ول-و كنت لا املك شيا ما اقامت]
18. [من كتابة الرسايل وعاد الرجل]

- .19 [منه شيئا فذلك ما كنا نرجوا]
 .20 [اتيه لى الا مكرما حافظا]
 .21 [ويريدة وسهيل وابرهيم
 .22 [والسلم]عليك ورحمت الله

Side B:

- [م-ن عمرو بن مالك السمنانى]
 [به ان شا الله]

Diacritical dots

(3 يحب (6 انت (10 اعحبتنى; منه (11 لى; افيم (17 سىا

Translation**Side A:**

1.] far away [
2.] Abū al-Naṣr ordered the translator Warās (?) [] Miṣr
3.] like (?) of their matters [
4.] and I informed him about the proximity [
5.] he wrote to you at your order [
6.] the letters arrived in a good [state
7.] he made different categories in measuring and nothing remained [
8.] from the Copts and he sent to them Abū Ruṣd b. [
9.] sending the letter with your news and [your condition and you needs
10.] the pen. (I swear) by my life, I liked from him [
11.] It is bad for me to stay [
12.] It is fool of the man to make a living on the substance [
13.] until. Ḥabīb is coming along with me to measure [
14.] what news. He made different categories in measuring the vineyards [
15.] the man is not authoried to register the *kharāj* [
16.] there is no one worthy to keep what he has except us [
17. if] I possessed nothing, I would not have stayed [
18.] from writing letters and the man has returned [
19.] from him anything. This is what we were looking for [
20.] to me being honored and [
21.] and Burayda and Suhayl and Ibrāhīm
22. Peace be] upon you and God's mercy.

Side B:

[f]from 'Amr b. Mālik al-Samnānī

[] If God wills.

Commentary

Side A:

2. The profession *al-Turjumān* (the translator) is not attested in Arabic papyri, at the best of my knowledge,.

3. The verb *yuhibbu* was added as an afterthought above the line. The two words following *yuhibbu* are not clear to me. The reading is tentative.

7. *Qad afraqa fī al-qiyāsa kullihā*. The same expression appears also in line 14. *Lam yabqā*. *Yabqā* is written with an *alif mamdūda* instead of an *alif maqṣūra* (Hopkins § 12.c) and the long vowel is maintained in the jussive where classical Arabic requires a short vowel (Hopkins § 81.d).

8. For other attestations of *al-qibṭ* in the papyri; cf. P.SijpesteijnArchivalMind 1.3, 2nd/8th and the commentary; P.Berl.Arab. II 78.3, 3rd/9th. See also the expression *min shuhūr al-qibṭ* (CPR XXVI 20.5; 23.6; Diem 2006, 3.5; P.Cair.Arab. II 143.3); ‘*adad al-qibṭ* (P.Cair.Arab. II 101[= Chrest.Khoury II 28].4, dated 273/889; PERF 837[= Chrest.Khoury II 63].6, 3rd/9th). For more references, see P.Cair.Arab. II, 185; Grohmann (1954), 220, 230-232. The native Egyptians were also described in the papyri as *ahl al-dhimma*, see P.World, 132-134.

9. The formula *al-kitāb bi-khabarika wa-[ḥālīka wa-ḥawa’ijika* is restored on the basis of countless parallels, see in this corpus 5.9-10; 36.7 and the examples in the commentaries.

10. For the expression *wa-l-‘amrī* (by my life), see Lane, vol. 5, 2155. This form of oaths is unattested in the papyri, at the best of my knowledge.

12. For *rizq*, ‘*aṭā*’ and *nafaqa* (payments in cash and kind), see Sijpesteijn (2011), 252-259; P.Khurasan, 34-37; Morimoto (1994), 353.

14. *Al-kurūmāt* (the vineyards). For more extensive discussion on measuring vineyards, see P.Khalili I 2, 2nd/8th and the commentary.

17. For the orthography *shayyan* instead of *shay’an*, see Hopkins §15.d. It is written also thus in line 19.

19. *Narjū* is spelled with an *alif fāṣila* at the end against classical Arabic rules (Hopkins § 50.a.i).

21. The proper names *Suhayl* and *Ibrāhīm* are very common in the papyri. *Ibrāhīm* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.b.i). I was not able to trace the name *Burayda* in the onomastica but the reading is certain.

Side B:

In order to write the address the scribe turned the papyrus sheet around the horizontal axis, i.e. the way one would turn over a playing card lying on a table. Only half of the address is preserved on the back. For the *nisba* *al-Samnānī*, see *al-Sam‘ānī*, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 3, 306.

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P.Cam.Michaelides Q 14	41	64-65
P.Cam.Michaelides Q 19	5	8-9
P.Cam.Michaelides X 8. 13	12	20

2.2. Beinecke library of Yale University

Inventory number	Edition number	Plate
P.CtYBR.inv. 2603	10	16-17
P.CtYBR.inv. 2604	27	41
P.CtYBR.inv. 2605	19	30-31
P.CtYBR.inv. 2607	7	11-12

P.CtYBR inv. 2619	15	23-24
P.CtYBR.inv. 2634	29	44
P.CtYBR.inv. 2655	34	52
P.CtYBR.inv. 2666	1	1-2
P.CtYBR.inv. 2705	32	48-49
P.CtYBR.inv. 2710	8	13-14
P.CtYBR.inv. 2713	28	42-43
P.CtYBR.inv. 2714		
P.CtYBR.inv. 2715	26	39-40
P.CtYBR.inv. 2716	42	66-67
P.CtYBR.inv. 2718	43	68-69

2.3. National library of Egypt (*Dār al-kutub al-miṣriyya*)

Inventory number	Edition number	Plate
P.Cair.Arab.inv. 397	20	32
P.Cair.Arab.inv. 403	16	25
P.Cair.Arab.inv. 449	14	22
P.Cair.Arab.inv. 1735	9	15

2.4. Khalili collection

Inventory number	Edition number	Plate
P.Khalili II 28	11	18
P.Khalili II 115	30	45-46

2.5. J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah

Inventory number	Edition number	Plate
P.Utah 290	18	28-29

2.6. Papyrus collection of the institute of papyrology Heidelberg

Inventory number	Edition number	Plate
P.Heid.Arab.inv. 499	31	47

3. List of dates

1 st -2 nd /7 th -8 th	2, 5, 12, 16
2 nd /8 th	1, 3, 4, 6-11, 13-15, 17, 19, 20, 22-43
3 rd /9 th	18

4. Index of *nisbas*

al-Azraq 36.10
 al-Ḥaḍramī 30.2
 al-Mudalī 22.4
 al-Samnānī 43.address
 al-Tujībī 17.address
 al-Wanbī 32.address
 al-Yaḥṣubī 22.3, address

5. Index of professions

al-Biṭār (the vet) 23.23
al-Ḥabbāl (the rope-maker) 18.address
al-Turjumān (the translator) 43.2

6. Index of place names

Iskandariyya (Alexandria) 10.10; 11.14; 39.address
 al-Rīf (the countryside) 29.6
 Dalāṣ 42.9
 Dimyāṭ 8.6; 32.6, 8; 33.12
 Fuṣṭāṭ 14.10; 16.9; 38.3
 Kharbitā 11.14
 Maryūṭ 11.14
 Makka (Mecca) 18.address
 Miṣr (Fuṣṭāṭ) 23.20; 41.address
 Zawīla 23.16, 30

7. Index of proper names

[] b. Abū ʿĀbid 33.2, address

Abān/b. ʿUthmān **8.2**, address
 ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd **9.11**
 ʿAbd al-Jabbār **14.7**, **10**
 ʿAbd Allāh **24**.address
 ʿAbd Allāh b. **2.2**
 ʿAbd Allāh b. Mufaḍḍal **37**.address
 ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad **7.2**, address
 ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ṣalatān **28.2**, address
 ʿAbd al-Raḥīm **14.2**, **12**
 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān **12.2**
 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muslim **27.12**
 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Saʿd al-Yaḥṣubī **22.2-3**, address
 ʿAbda **9.11**
 Abū ʿAbd Allāh **14.2**, **3**; **18.9**; **39.7**
 Abū al-Akhnas **24**.address
 Abū al-Azhar **19.2**, address
 Abū al-Gharrāʾ **2.17**
 Abū al-Ḥakam **1.18**
 Abū al-Khayr **38.6**
 Abū al-Naṣr **43.2**
 Abū al-Sayyid Hishām b. **42.2**, address
 Abū ʿAmr **24.2**
 Abū Faraj **31.23**
 Abū Ḥafṣa **30.2**, **10**, address
 Abū Ḥamza **29.2**
 Abū Ḥuwayy **29.2**
 Abū Ismāʿīl **40.6**, **10**
 Abū Miskīn **34.2**
 Abū Muḥammad **27.2**, **9**; **37.2**; **40.6**
 Abū Nuʿaym **24.2**
 Abū Rushd b. [**43.8**
 Abū Saʿīd **37.2**, address
 Abū Salama **34.4**, **5**
 Abū Sulaymān **16.11**
 Abū Sulaymān Ismāʿīl b. Ayyūb **41.2**
 Abū Tamīm **6.2**
 Abū ʿUthmān **19.17**
 Abū Yaḥyā **15.2**
 Abū Yazīd **26.2**, address; **33.9**
 Abū Yūna **35**.address
 Abū Zakīr/Zukayr **27.12**; **36.2**, **8**
 Abū Zaynab **17v.3**
 Abū Zikrī **15.3**, **7**, **10**, **12**, **13**

Abū Ziyād **17.8**, 18, 20
 Abū Zurāra **40.10**
 ʿĀ'isha bt. Ismā'īl **8.2**
 al-ʿAllāna **2.4**, 14, 21
 al-Ḥurr b. Yūsuf **21.2**
 al-Khayr b. Muslim **32.2**, address
 al-Miswar b. Rajā' **32.2**, address
 al-Muṣ'ab b. Ṣubayḥ **38.2**
 al-Nu'mān **35.7**
 al-Nu'mān b. Muslim al-Ḥaḍramī **30.2**, address
 al-Nu'mān b. Shu'ayb **11.2**
 al-Rabī' b. Muslim **16.14**
 al-Turayk/Burayk **15.9**
 al-Zubayr **3.22**; **13.19**
 ʿAmmār **12**.address
 ʿAmr **2.2**; **23.2**, address
 ʿAmr b. Mālik **43**.address
 ʿAṭā' **10.2**
 Ayyūb **13.19**
 Ayyūb b. Abū al-Muṣawwar **22.2**
 ʿAzīza **14.12**
 Baḥr b. Rabī'a **5.2**, address
 Bilāl **23.23**
 Bīnsa b. Kurayb al-Mudalī **22.3-4**
 Burayda **43.21**
 Dāwūd **31.27**
 Fā'iḳ **41.12**
 Faraj **41.8**, 15
 Ḥabīb **9.17**; **38.11**; **43.13**
 Ḥafṣ al-Azraq **36.10**
 Ḥafṣa **8.2**
 Ḥamdūn **41.6**, 8, 14
 Ḥamīda **31.21**
 Ḥammād **11.2**; **34.6**, 8
 Ḥammāda bt. Ibrāhīm b. al-Manāzilī **23.17**
 Hishām b. Maḥdī **39.2**
 Ibrāhīm **38.4**, 10; **41.12**, 15; **43.21**
 Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān **15.2**
 Idrīs **4.14**
 Ijtihād **31.7**
 ʿImrān **36.2**, address
 ʿĪsā **4.2**
 Jalbūb **13.23**

Jamīl **6.10**; **34.4**, 7
 Jurayj **38.2**, address
 Khālid **41.8**
 Mahdī **16.12**; **31.21**
 Mahdiyya **1.1**
 Marzūq **31.13**, 25, 28
 Maymūn **3.9**; **40.14**
 Māzin **41.14**
 Mirār **3.11**
 Misk **36.2**, address
 Muḥammad **10**.address
 Muḥammad b. ‘Ubayd **41.2**
 Muḥammad b. Usayd **33.10**
 Muqsim **17.12**, 13, 16
 Murthāh **22.4**
 Mūsā **1.24**
 Musāfir b. Kathīr **28.2**, address
 Mūsh b. Sal[**31.2**
 Najīḥ **6.10**, 13
 Naṣṣār b. Abū Zayd **1.1**
 Nawfal **20.5**
 Nujiyyāt **5.2**
 Qurra b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān **35.2**
 Rabī‘a b. Yūna **35.2**
 Rābiḥ **26.2**, address
 Ruqayya bt. Yaḥyā b. Zakariyā **18**.address
 Sahl b. ‘Abd Allāh **5v.2**
 Saīd **26.2**
 Salām b. Ṣuhayb **39.2**
 Salmān b. Mughīth **16.2**
 Ṣard Abū al-Ḥussām **23.23**
 Shurayḥ b. ‘Amr **33.2**, address
 Sidbata **3.18**
 Suhayl **43.21**
 Ṭalḥa **31.21**
 Tamīm **3.10**; **6.8**
 ‘Ubayd b. Jinān **41.2**
 ‘Ubayd b. Yasār **16.2**, address
 Umāma **24.3**
 Umm ‘Abbās **8.2**
 Umm ‘Abd al-Jabbār **12.3**
 Umm al-Qāsim **40.9**
 Umm al-Qāsim bt. Zakariyā **18**.address

Umm ʿAmūr **5.2; 5v.1**
 Umm Falīḥ **40.9**
 Umm Ḥajar bt. Shurayḥ **8.2**
 Umm Khālīd **17v.5**
 Umm Nuʿaym bt. Nuʿaym **11.2**
 Umm Nujiyyāh **5.2**
 Umm Sahl **12.3**
 Umm ʿUthmān **11.3; 20.8**
 Umm Yazīd **10.13**
 Umm Zurʿa **6.2**
 Unaysa bt. ʿIsā **7.2**, address
 Usāma b. ʿImrān **21.2**
 ʿUthmān b. ʿAbd Allāh **31.2**
 ʿUthmān b. ʿAmmār **19**.address
 ʿUthmān b. Malad **8.2**, address
 Wahba bt. Sālim **10.2**
 Wusāma b. Ṭalq al-Tujībī **17.2**, address
 Yaḥyā **6.10**
 Yaḥyā b. Marzūq **36**.address
 Yasara **15.3**
 Yazīd b. ʿUthmān **11.3**
 Zaynab bt. Abū Ziyād **17.2-3**, address

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Other abbreviations

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Nederlandse samenvatting

Mensen in vroeg-islamitisch Egypte, net als mensen elders in deze periode, hadden goede en slechte ervaringen, kenden leuke en vervelende tijden, hadden te lijden onder ziektes en depressies en ontsnapten niet aan de dood. In wat zij schreven drukten zij hun gevoelens uit, hun zorgen en hun hoop, en hoe zij de lotsbeschikkingen ervaarden. Het onderzoek in dit proefschrift poogt de sociale en emotionele aspecten van persoonlijke brieven te bestuderen in de hoop aan te tonen hoe mensen in de eerste eeuwen van de islam hun plezier en verdriet uitte, hoe zij in wat zij schreven reageerden op tegenspoed, wat hen kon interesseren en wat hen boos maakte, waarover zij zich opwonden en waarin zij geloofden. Dit proefschrift presenteert drieënveertig uitgaves van brieven relevant voor de studie van emoties. Daarnaast wordt op basis van nagenoeg alle uitgegeven persoonlijke en handelsbrieven die op papyrus en in het Arabisch geschreven zijn en dateren uit de eerste vier eeuwen van de islamitische overheersing in Egypte (1e-4e/7e-10e eeuw), maar met de nadruk op de eerste twee eeuwen, de uiting van emoties bestudeerd. Deze studie maakt ook gebruik van enkele documenten die nog niet uitgegeven zijn.

Naast een introductie en een conclusie bestaat dit proefschrift uit twee hoofddelen. Het eerste deel bestaat uit twee hoofdstukken die een historische analyse van de inhoud van de brieven bieden. Het tweede deel presenteert de uitgaves van de brieven. Hoofdstuk 1 bestudeert de praktische zaken omtrent het schrijven van brieven in vroeg-islamitisch Egypte. Dit hoofdstuk toont hoezeer de vroege, Arabische bewoners van Egypte belang hadden bij het schrijven van brieven om de korte en lange afstanden die hen scheidde te overbruggen en om goed handel te kunnen drijven. Dit hoofdstuk beargumenteert dat het schrijven van brieven een zeer veelvoorkomend gebruik was binnen de Arabische gemeenschap van vroeg-islamitisch Egypte, in het bijzonder vanaf de late-2e/8e eeuw, in zoverre dat men dagelijks brieven schreef. Dit hoofdstuk geeft ook nieuwe inzichten in de manier waarop brieven werden geschreven in vroeg-islamitisch en middeleeuws Egypte. Het toont hoe schrijfstijlen geleidelijk veranderden en brieven van een bepaalde periode erg van brieven uit een andere periode verschilden.

Hoofdstuk 2 tracht de sociale en emotionele aspecten van persoonlijke brieven te bestuderen. Uit de studie komt een aantal onderwerpen veelvoudig naar voren als redenen voor plezier en verdriet. Vier van de onderwerpen bestudeerd in dit hoofdstuk zijn altijd aanwezig: relaties binnen de familie, feesten en festiviteiten, ziekte en de dood. Dit hoofdstuk laat de brieven spreken, zij staan centraal in de discussie. De studie resulteert in verschillende bruikbare analyses voor niet alleen de geschiedenis van emoties maar ook voor de geschiedenis van vroeg-islamitisch Egypte.

Het hoofdstuk begint met de samenstelling van families, relaties in de familie en de emoties en verhalen die hieruit voortkomen. De brieven tonen aan dat de islamitische gemeenschap in Egypte georganiseerd was rond kleine en grote families en, buiten de familiekring, in kleine en grote, complexe netwerken van vrienden en handelspartners die soms de landsgrenzen overschreden. Deze relaties waren soms gebaseerd op sterke emoties en gevoelens van genegenheid. De brieven geven veel informatie over relaties binnen de

familie en over de zeer persoonlijke gevoelens tussen echtgenoten, ouders en kinderen, broers en zussen. Ook laten zij gevoelens van verantwoordelijkheid zien en hoezeer kinderen, vrouwen en andere mannelijke en vrouwelijk familieleden aanspraak doen op het hoofd van de familie.

De in dit proefschrift bestudeerde handelsbrieven suggereren dat handelspartners aan elkaar gebonden waren door zowel sociale als emotionele banden. Naast bloedverwantschap en de sociale en financiële relaties die de Arabisch-islamitische gemeenschap van vroeg-islamitisch Egypte bijeen hield, blijken religieuze (islamitische) banden emotioneel belangrijk en affectief. De brieven tonen ook dat termen van verwantschap als 'broer' en 'zus' veelvuldig gebruikt werden op een niet-letterlijke manier die verschilt van hun lexicale betekenis.

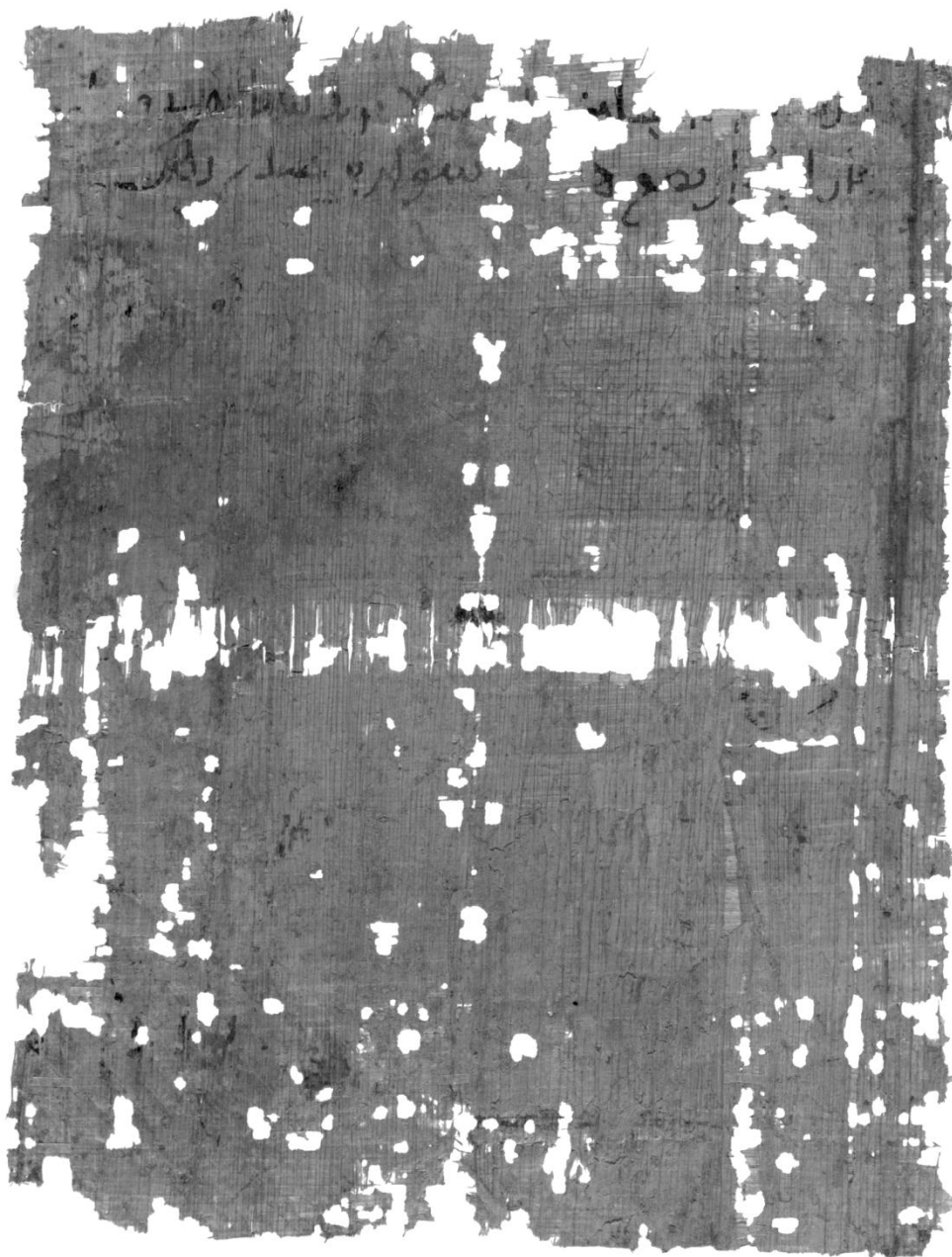
Wat vertellen de brieven over hoe men zichzelf presenteerde en over hoe men omging met emoties gedurende feesten en festiviteiten, in antwoord op ziekte, of wanneer een bekende overleed? Wat betreft feesten en festiviteiten tonen de brieven duidelijk het belang van de emotionele dimensies van gebed en het bestaan van een gelijkgestemde gemeenschap van gelovigen en pelgrims. Zij laten ook zien hoe gevoelens uitgedrukt, ontwikkeld en gebruikt werden tijdens zulke omstandigheden. Verwijzingen naar ziekte in papyri, echter, tonen een gemeenschap die zeer bezorgd is over zijn eigen gezondheid en altijd bang is voor ziektes, een gebrek aan medicijnen en de dood.

De in dit proefschrift gepresenteerde, goede en nauwkeurige bestudering van brieven met betrekking tot de dood vergroot onze kennis van de bekendmaking van en kennisname met iemands overlijden en hoe er in vroeg-islamitisch Egypte met iemands overlijden werd omgegaan. De brieven tonen dat een overlijden diep verdriet en leed binnen de familie teweeg bracht. Het overlijden van een mannelijk familielid bezorgde in het bijzonder vrouwen naast verdriet ook onzekerheid omdat zij niet alleen emotioneel met hem verbonden waren maar ook financieel van hem afhankelijk waren.

Ten slotte, alhoewel dit proefschrift slechts de meest direct zichtbare informatie verzegeld in de originele, Arabische persoonlijke en handelsbrieven die geschreven zijn op papyrus behandelt, toont het de grote waarde van de brieven als bronnen voor de sociale, culturele en economische geschiedenis van vroeg-islamitisch Egypte (1e-4e/7e-10e eeuw). Zoals in dit proefschrift beargumenteerd drongen correspondenties bijna overal door in nagenoeg alle lagen van de maatschappij. Zij geven daarom een duidelijk beeld *from below*. Dit proefschrift moet gezien worden als een zeer gewenste stap vooruit in de bestudering van de inhoud van brieven. Een logische volgende stap zou een comparatieve studie van Griekse, Koptische en Arabische teksten zijn om zo de verassende, unieke eigenschappen van de vroeg-Arabisch-islamitische maatschappij van Egypte en de impact die de Arabische verovering had op de diverse bestaande culturen te begrijpen.

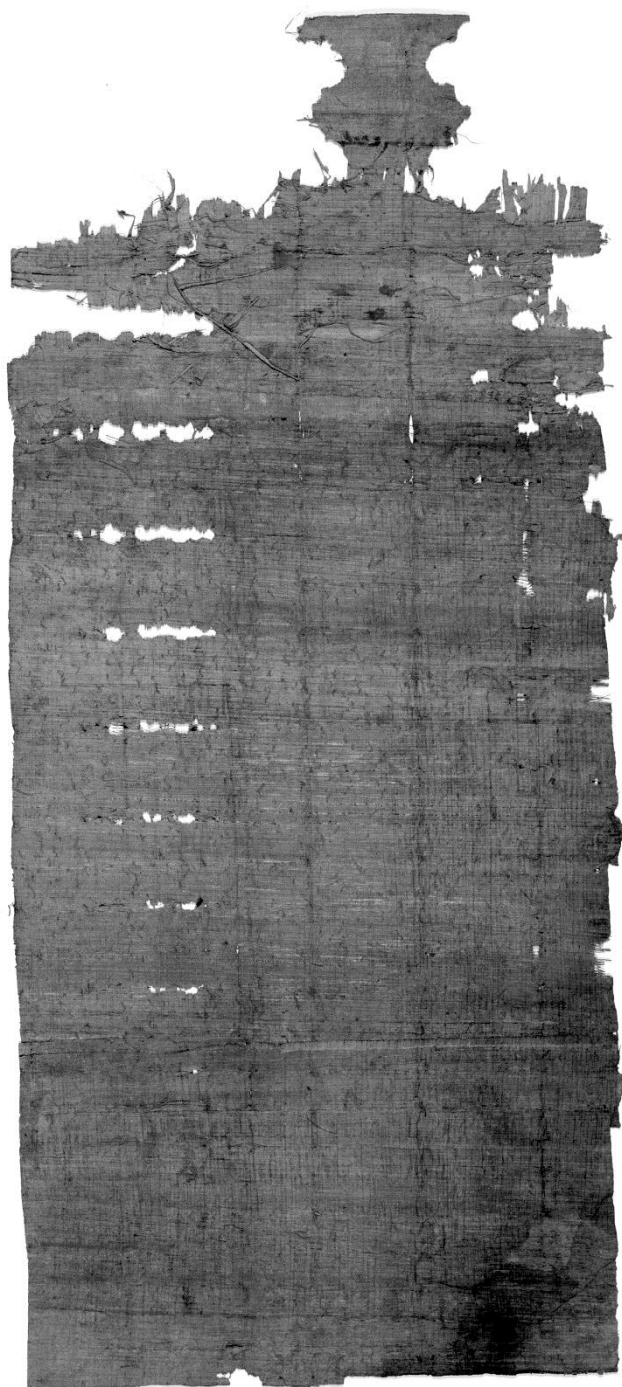
Plates

Plate 2

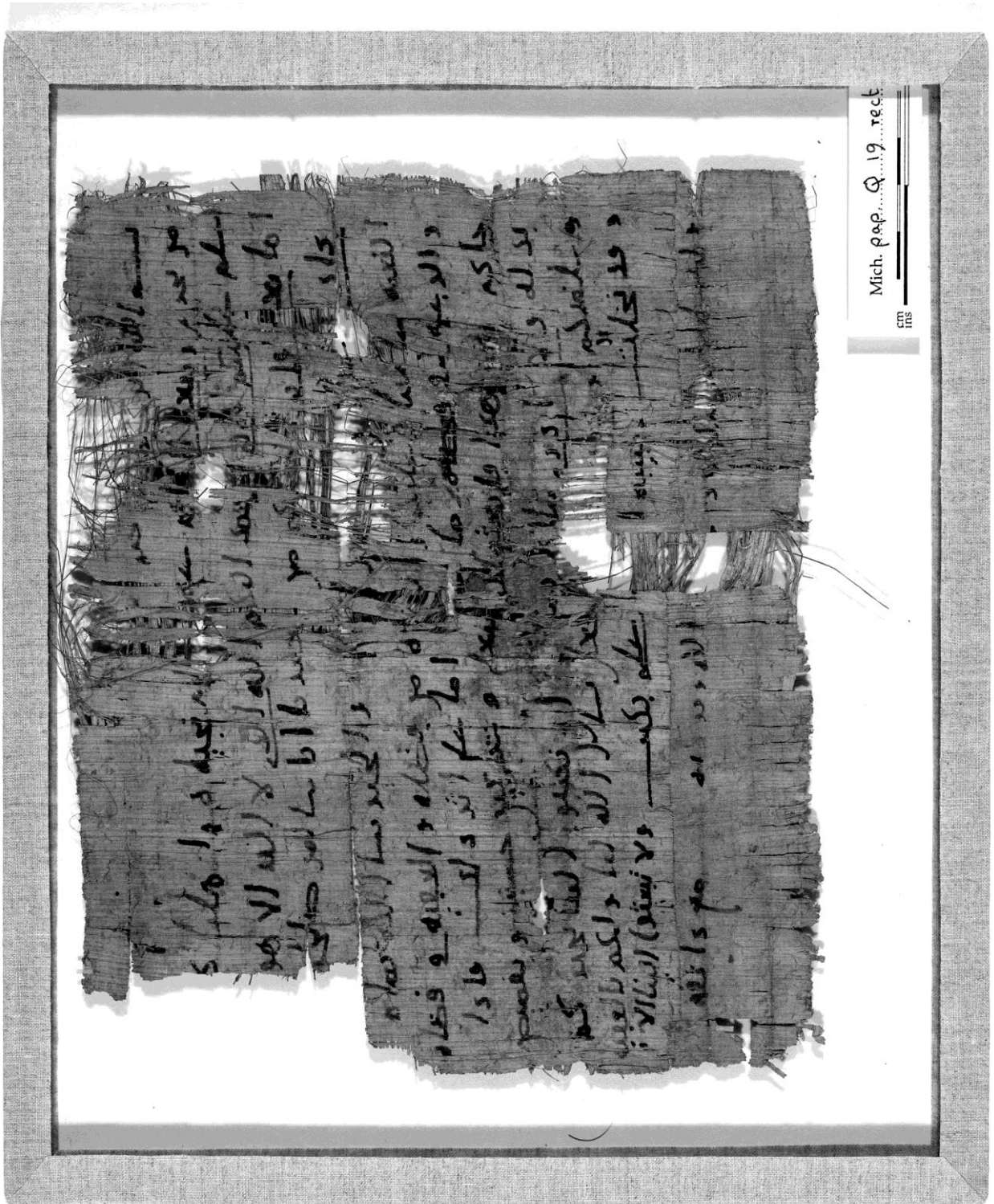


P.CtYBR.inv. 2666 v

Plate 4

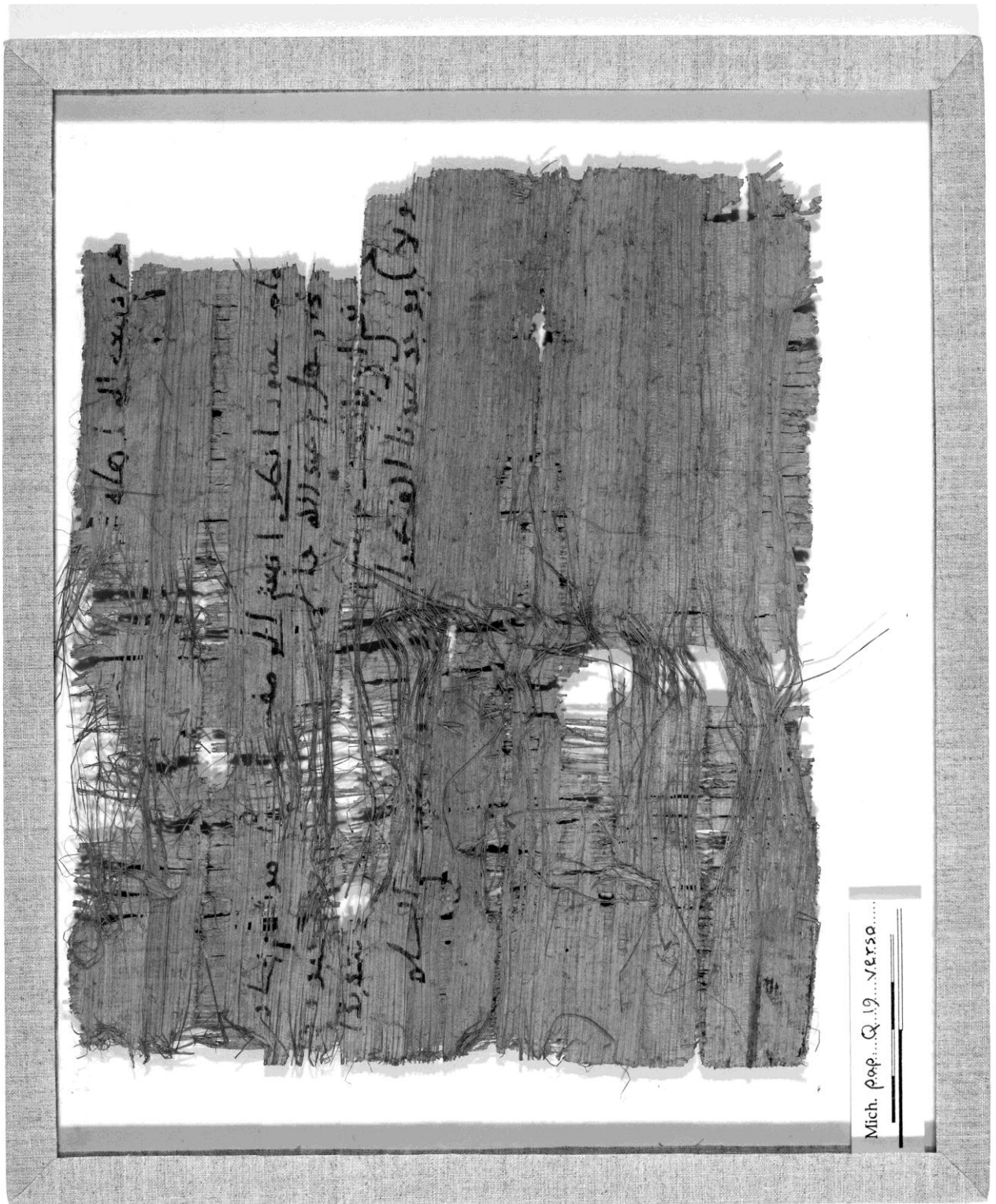


P.Cam.Michaelides A 1346 v



P.Cam.Michaelides Q 19 r

Plate 9



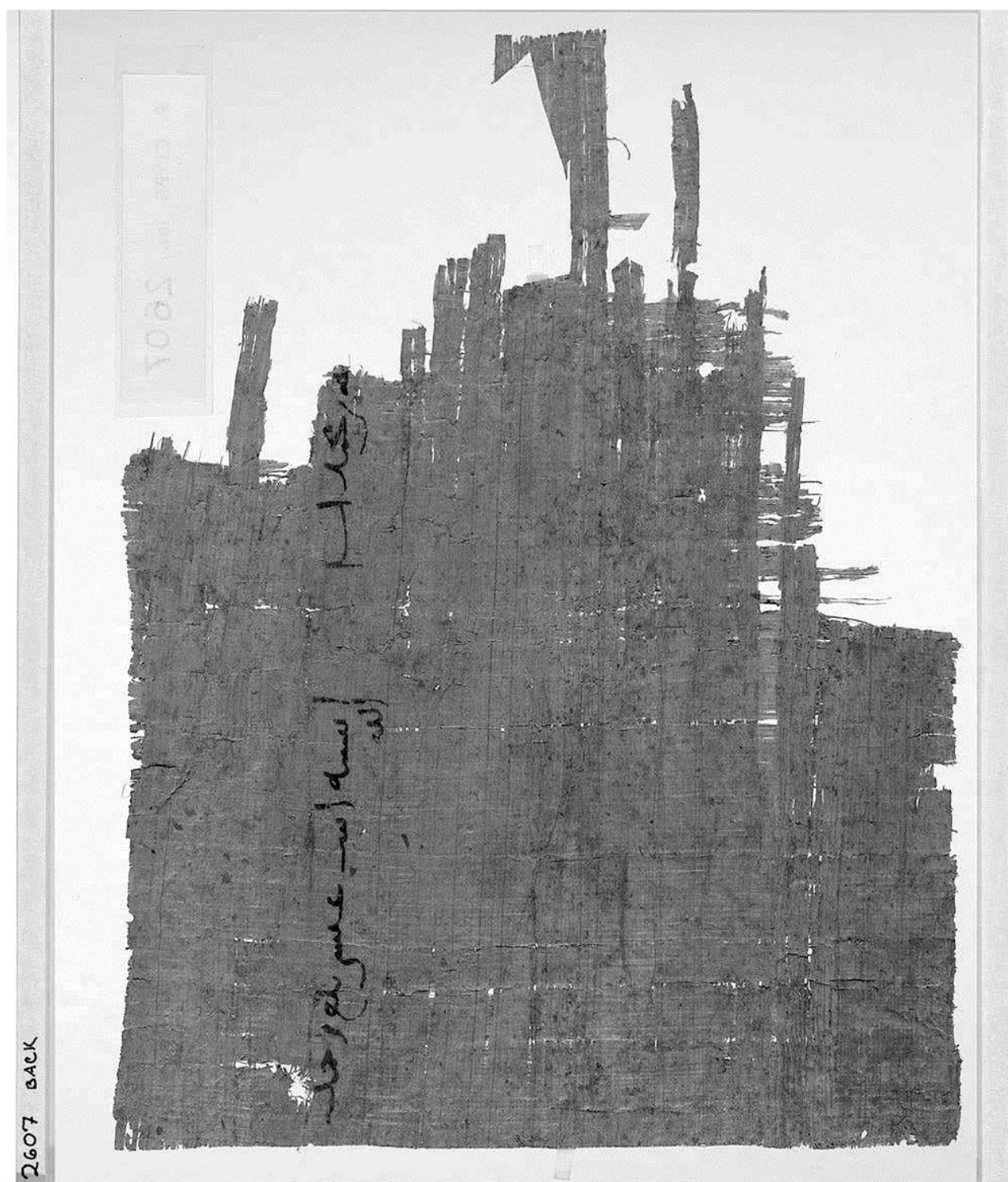
P.Cam.Michaelides Q 19 v

Plate 11



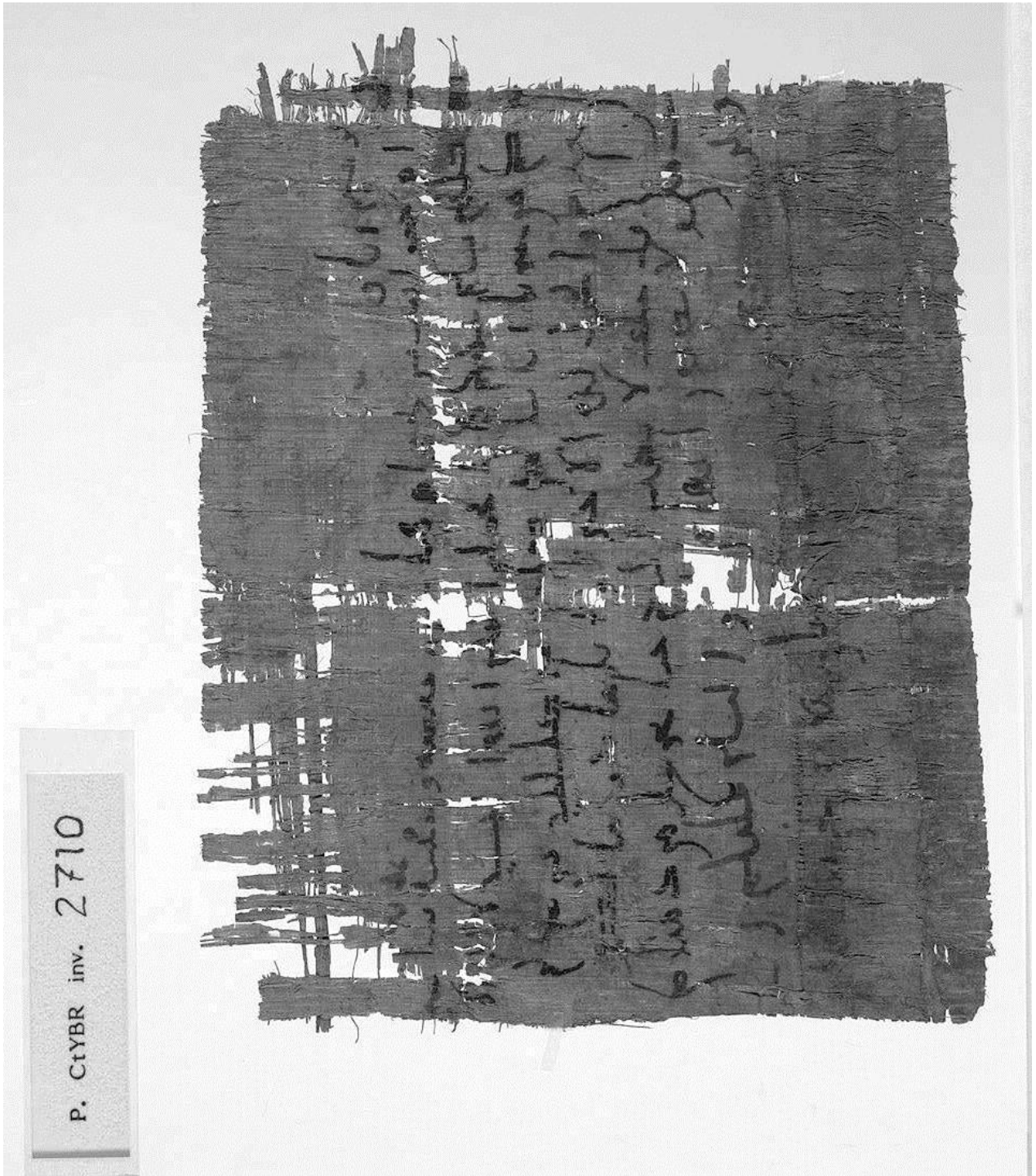
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Plate 12



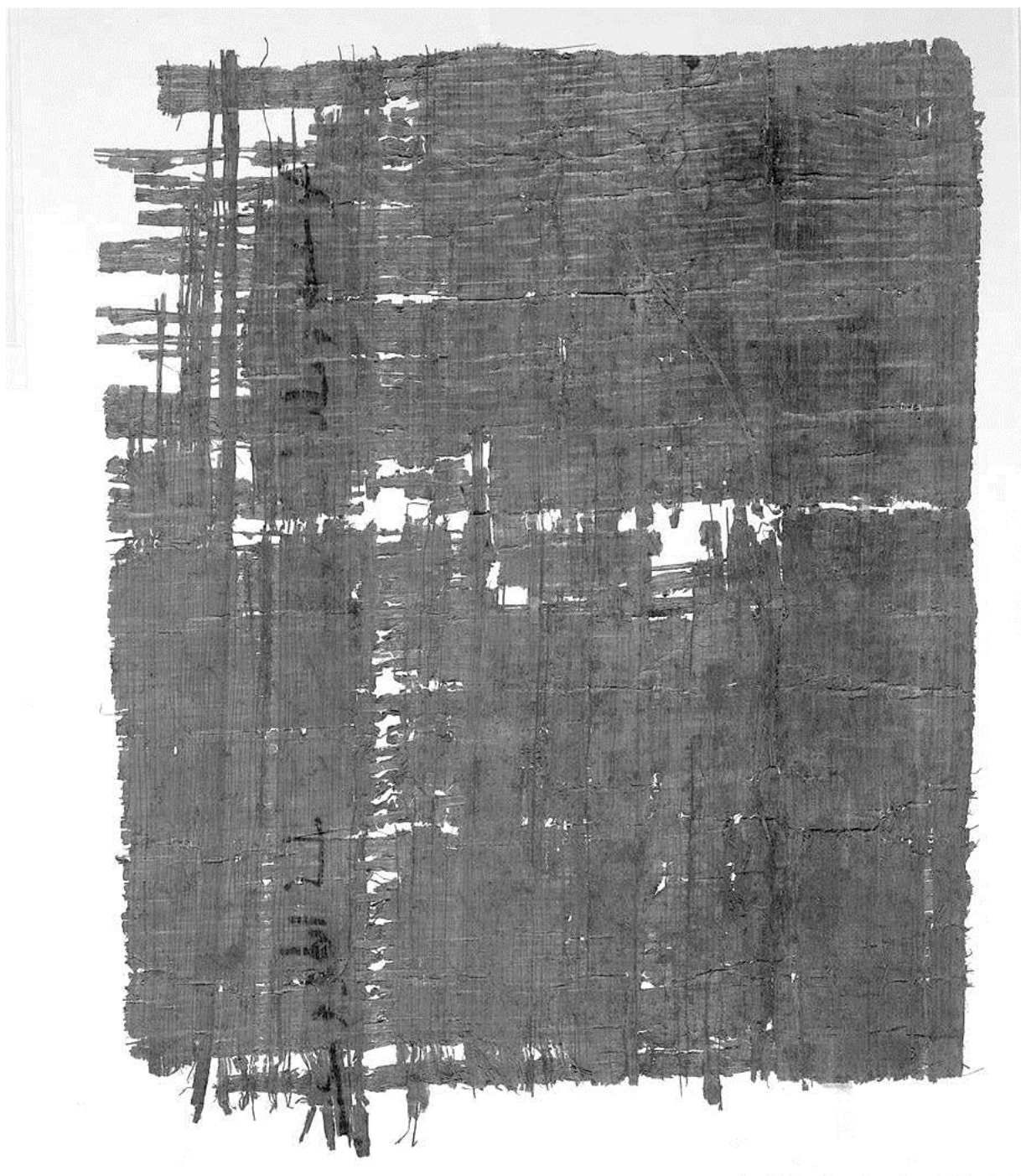
P.CtYBR.inv. 2607 v

Plate 13



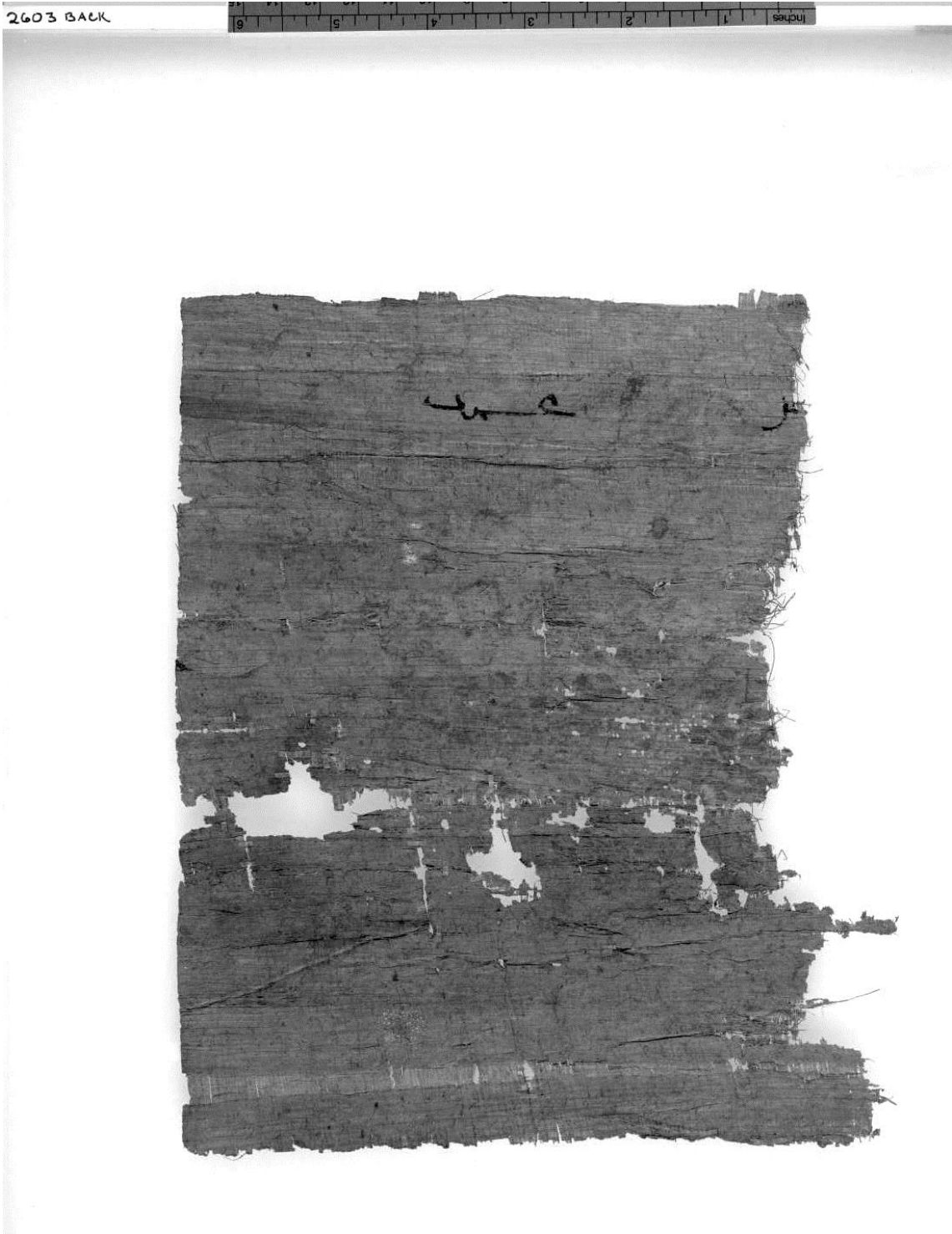
P.CtYBR.inv. 2710 r

Plate 14



P.CtYBR.inv. 2710 v

Plate 17



P.CtYBR.inv. 2603 v

Plate 18



P.Khalili II 28 r

Plate 19



P.Khalili II 28 v

Plate 20



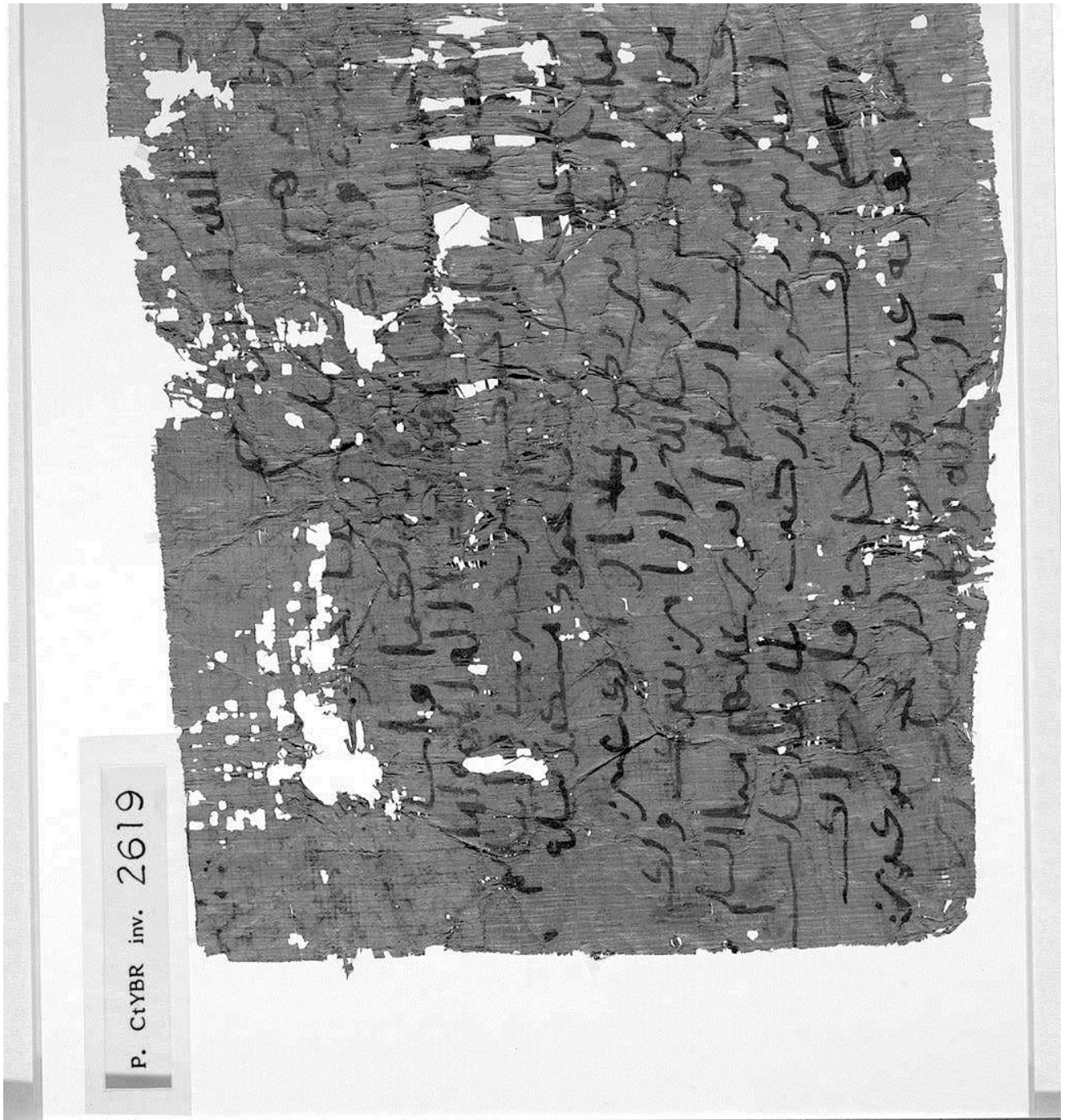
P.Cam.Michaelides X 8.13

Plate 21



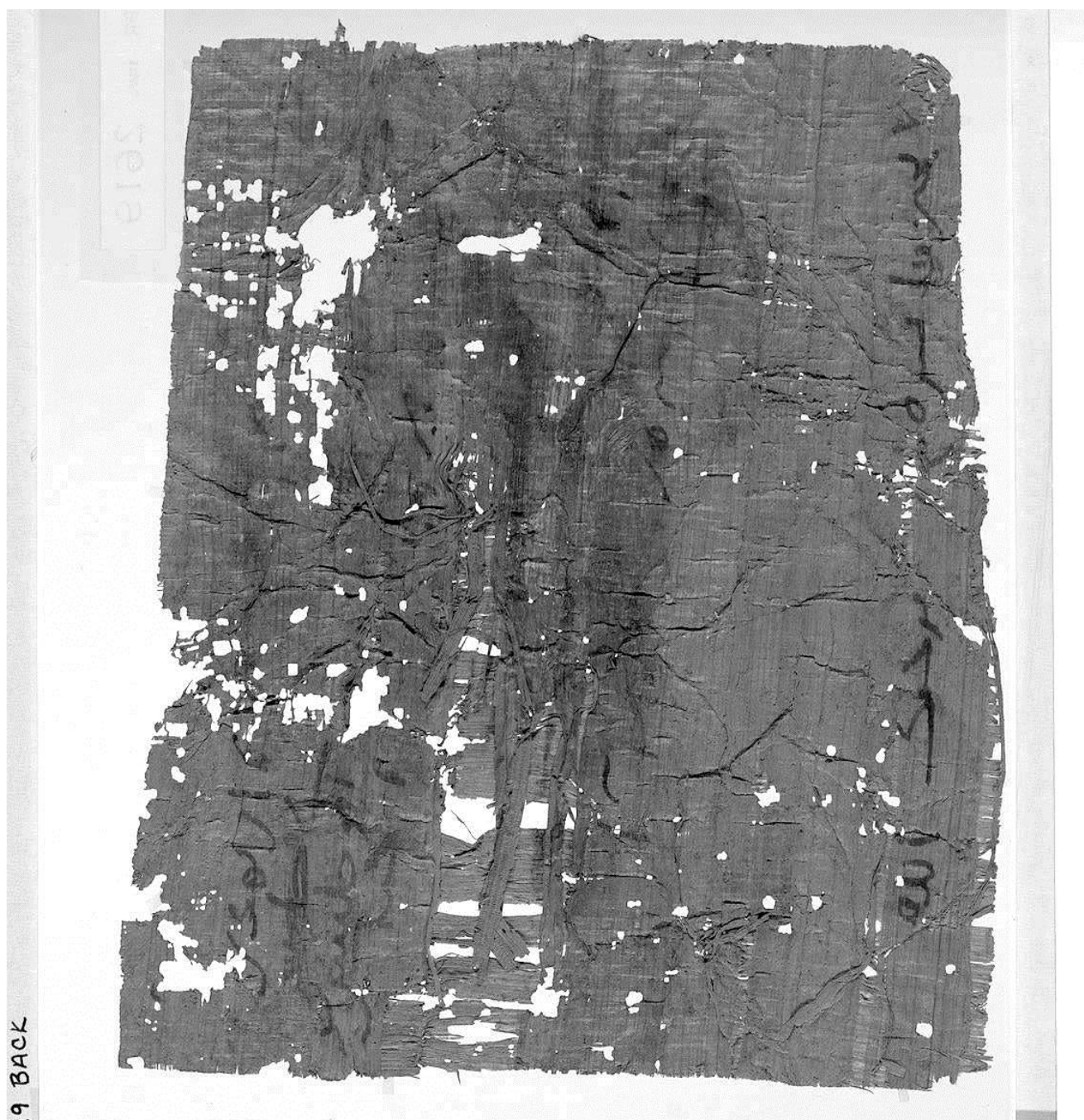
P.Cam.Michaelides Q 1041 r

Plate 23



P.CtYBR.inv. 2619 r

Plate 24



19 BACK

P.CtYBR.inv. 2619 v

Plate 25



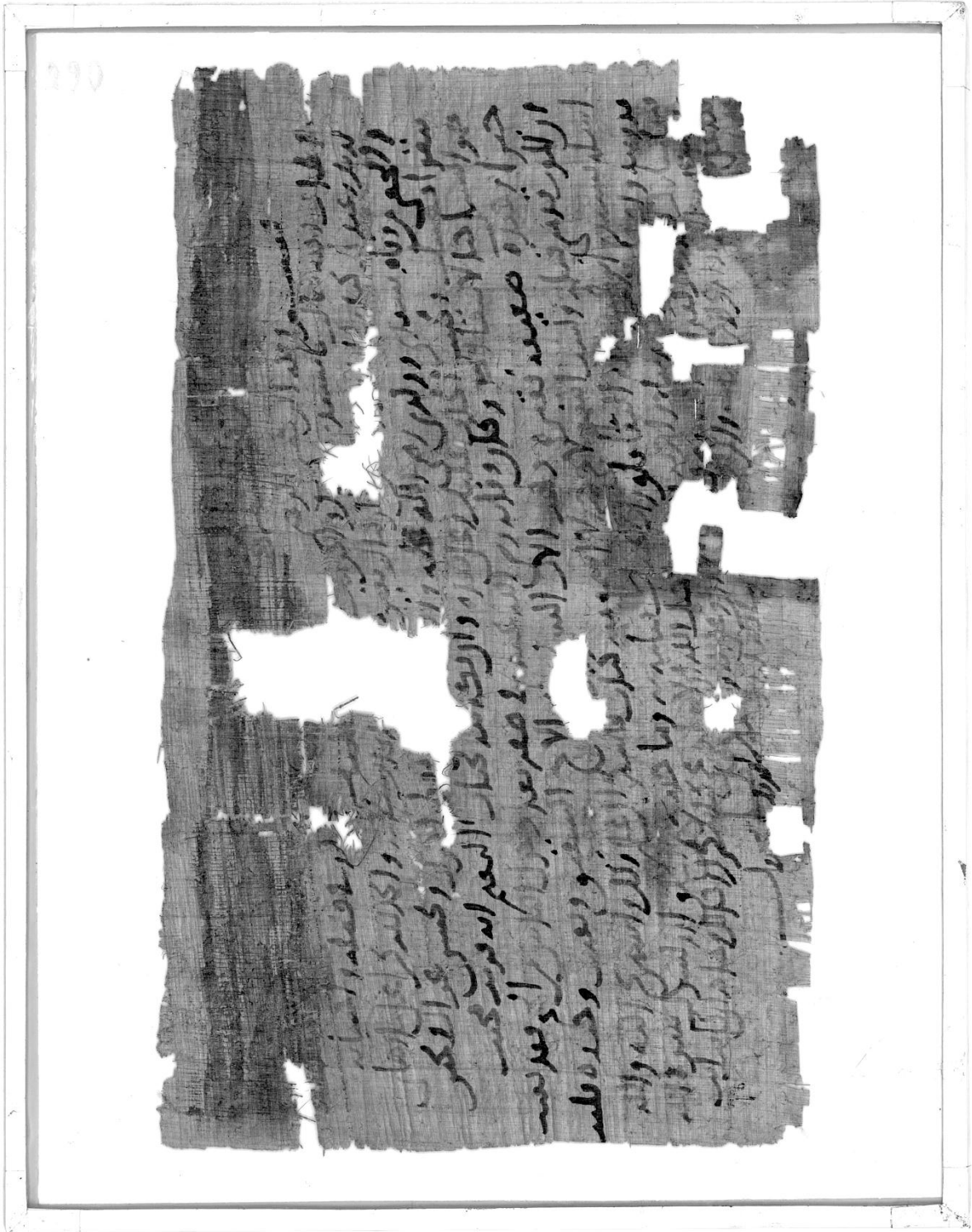
P.Cair.Arab.inv. 403

Plate 27



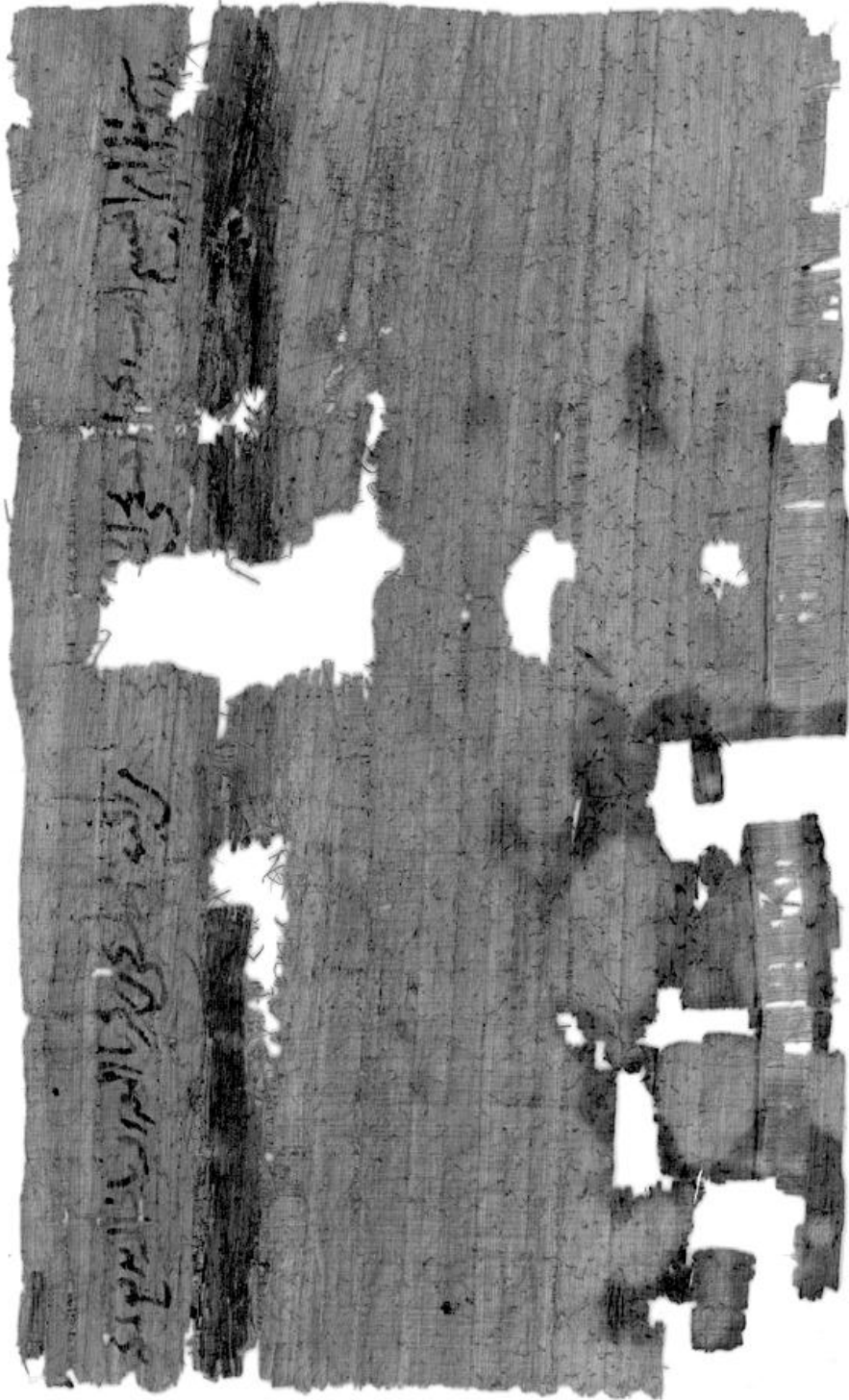
P.Cam.Michaelides A 1355 v

Plate 28



P.Utah 290 r

Plate 29



520

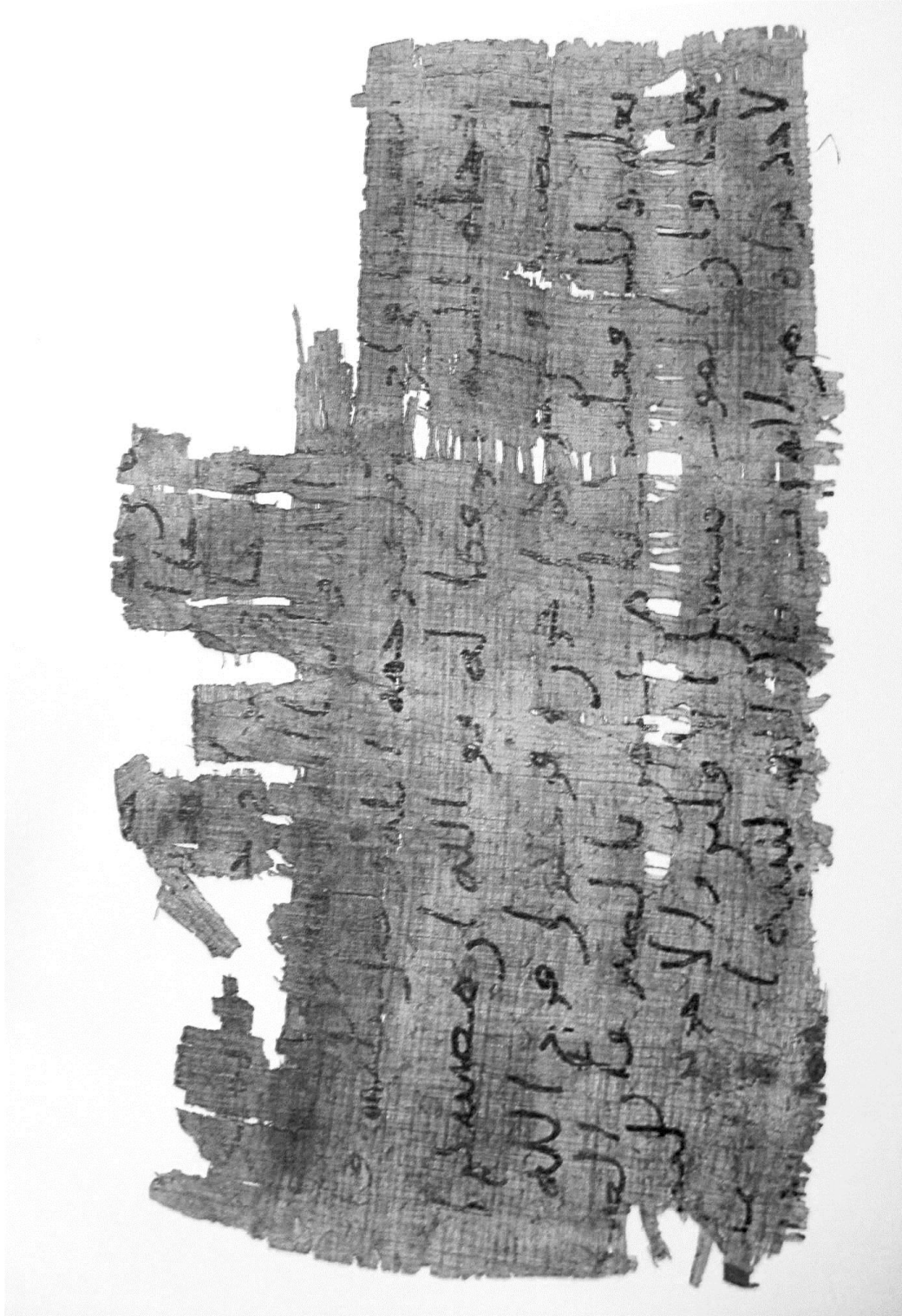
P.Utah 290 v

Plate 31



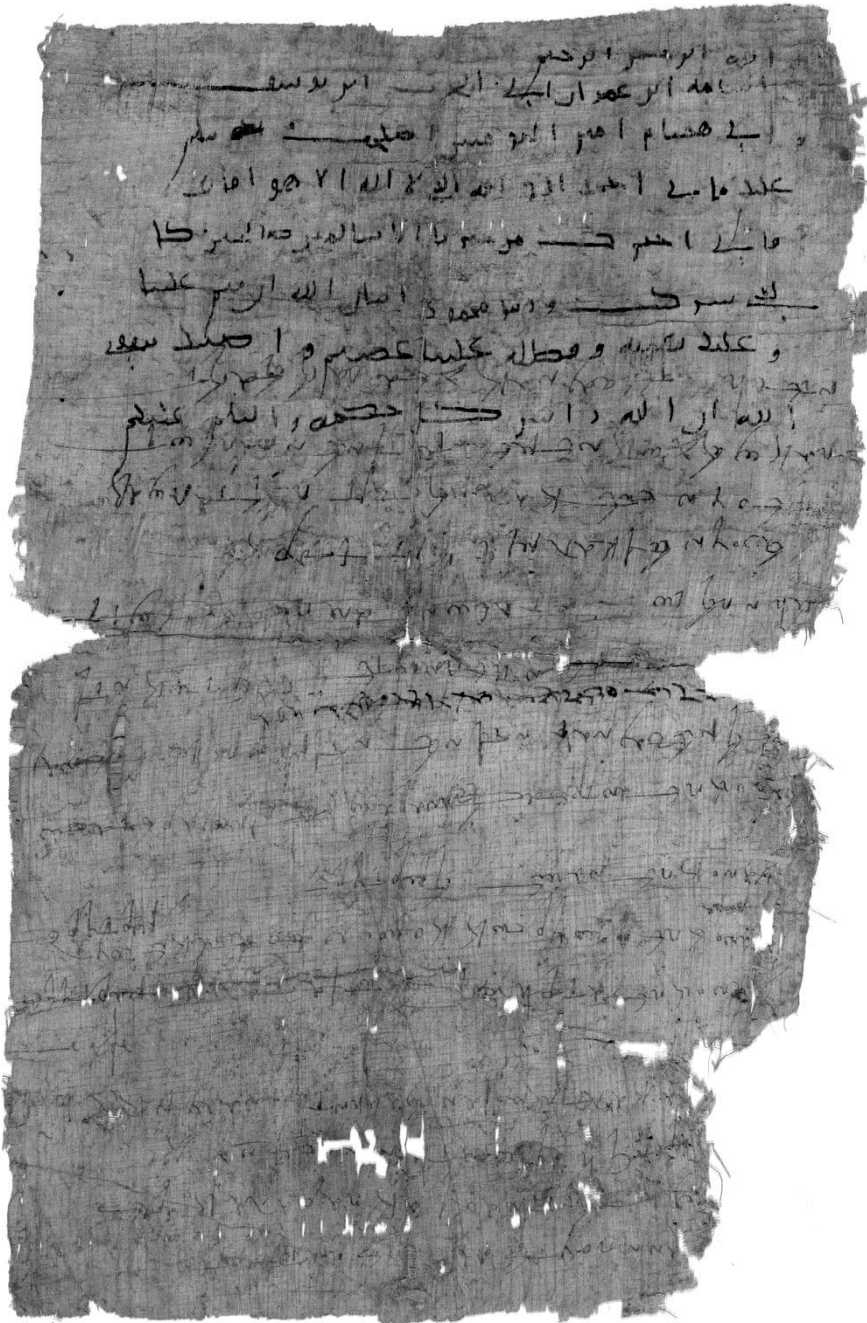
P.CtYBR.inv. 2605 v

Plate 32



P.Cair.Arab.inv. 397

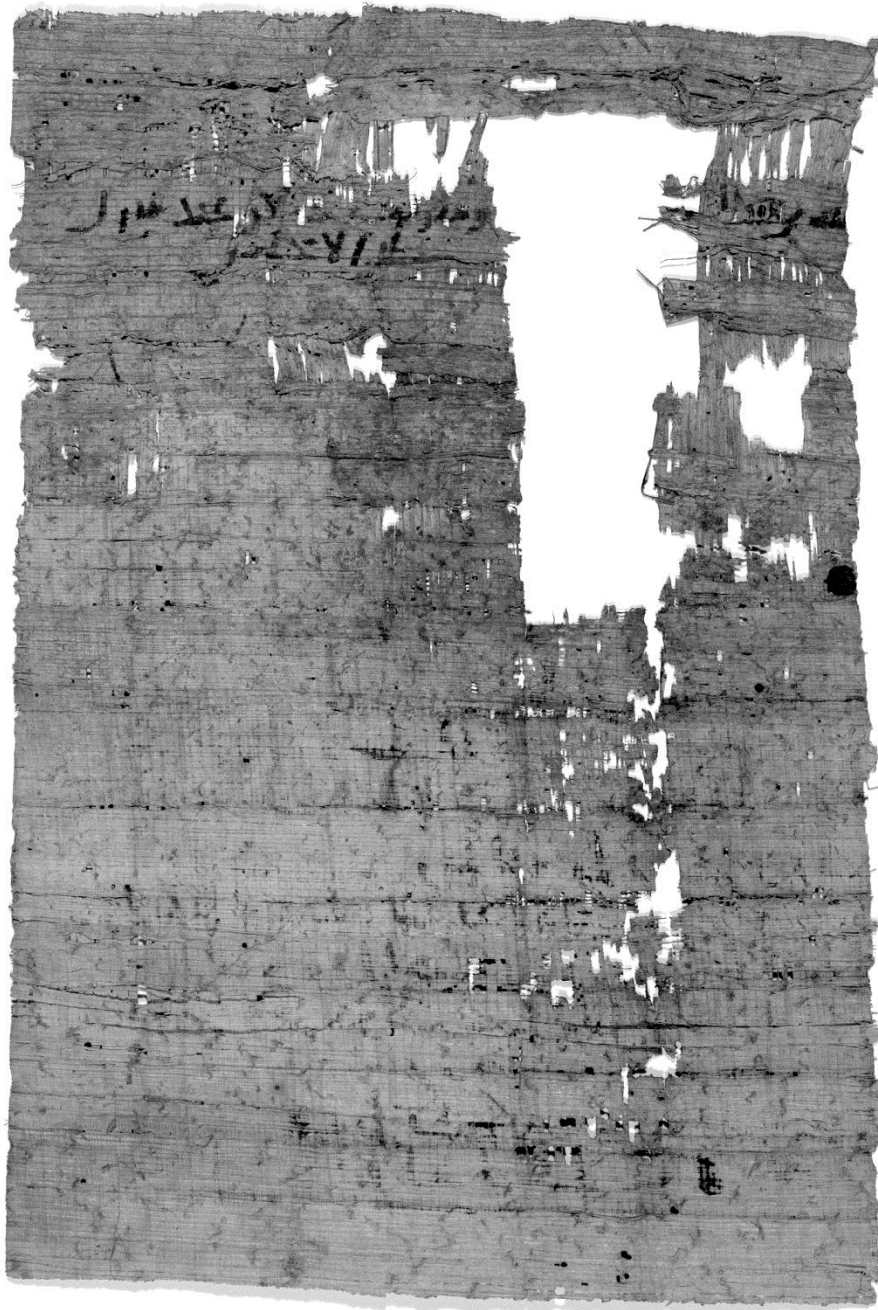
Plate 33



Mich. A930
 cm
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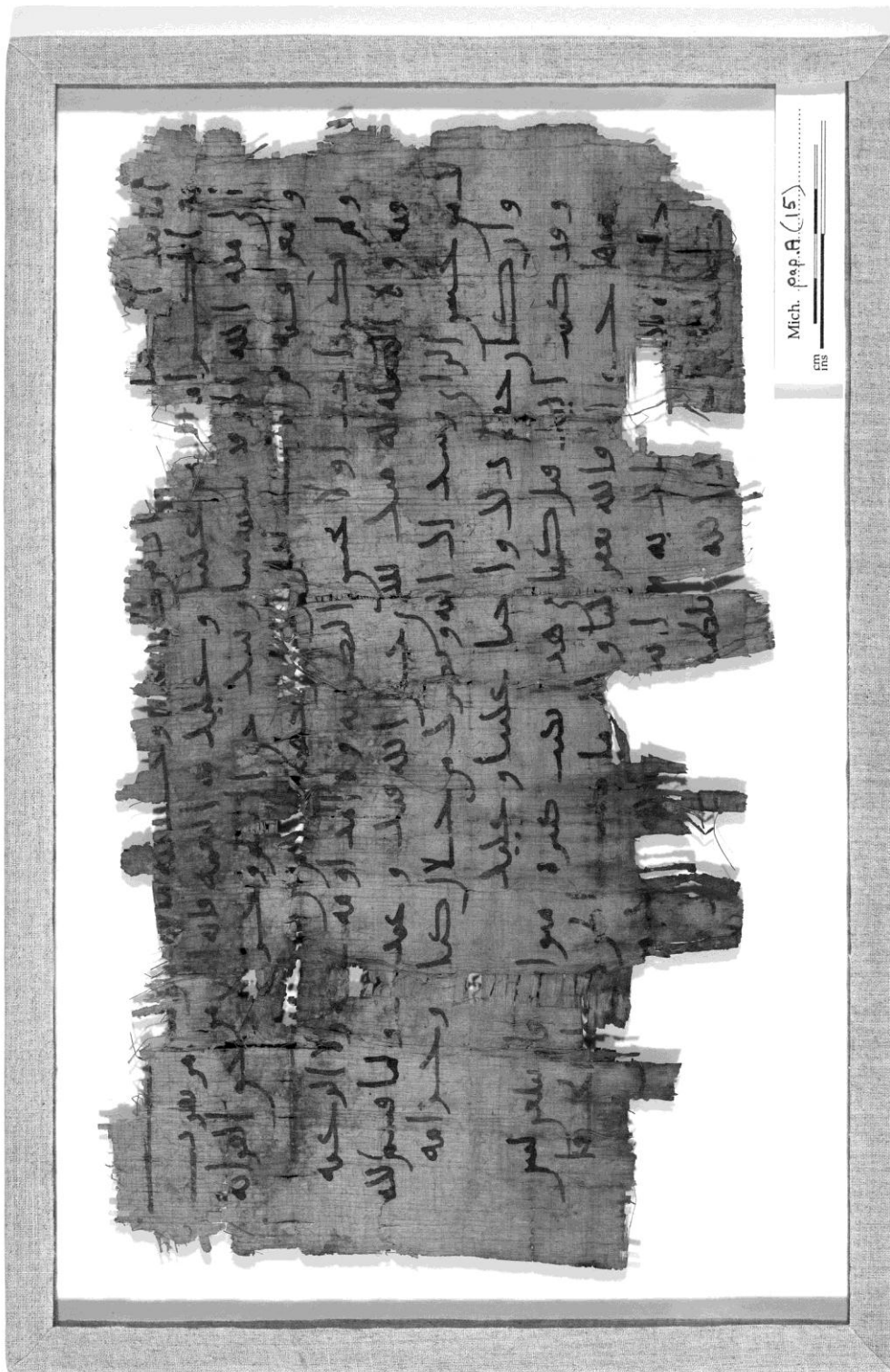
P.Cam.Michaelides A 930 r

Plate 37



P.Cam.Michaelides A 5 v

Plate 38



P.Cam.Michaelides A 15

Plate 39

CtYBR inv. 2714

برالر حبر
 كبريد من رايكنا سصيد سلام
 على روم الله كياوتك من مشارة الله
 باسم صلح كيايسر لى - والله
 والسلام وامر ام عن طاعة الله
 بى السلام وانما ان هلو
 بل و احرك لى واحد عليه
 الله بعله سبعة ثنت علم اراعت
 طله الله صلايح الليات الله
 للعرك مات فيها الله سرى
 اطر كوياسم وسيت من الآط الام
 بيتك وبيتك ملك سرور سرور
 السلام عليك ورحمة الله

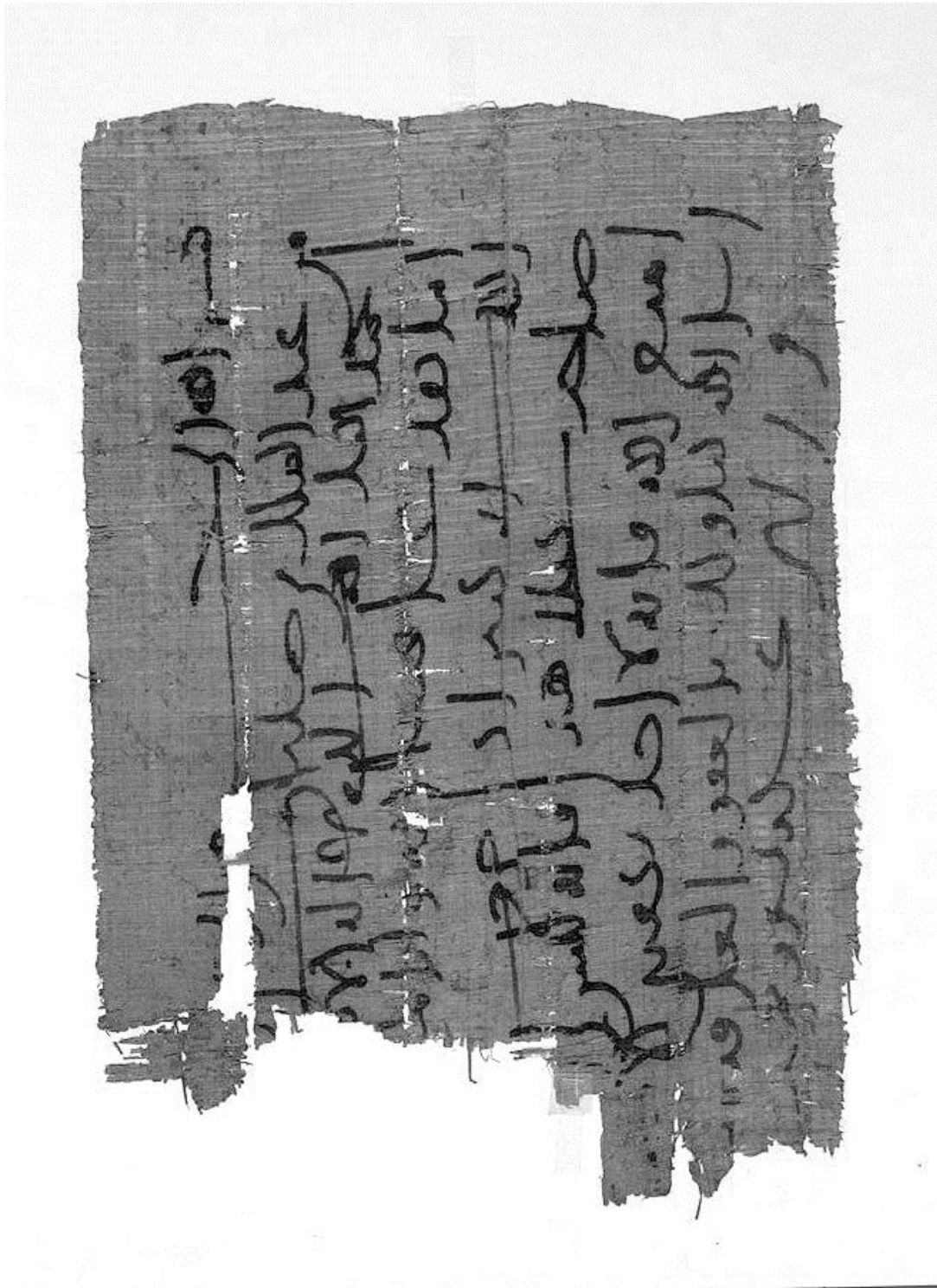
P.CtYBR.inv. 2714 r

Plate 40

BACK

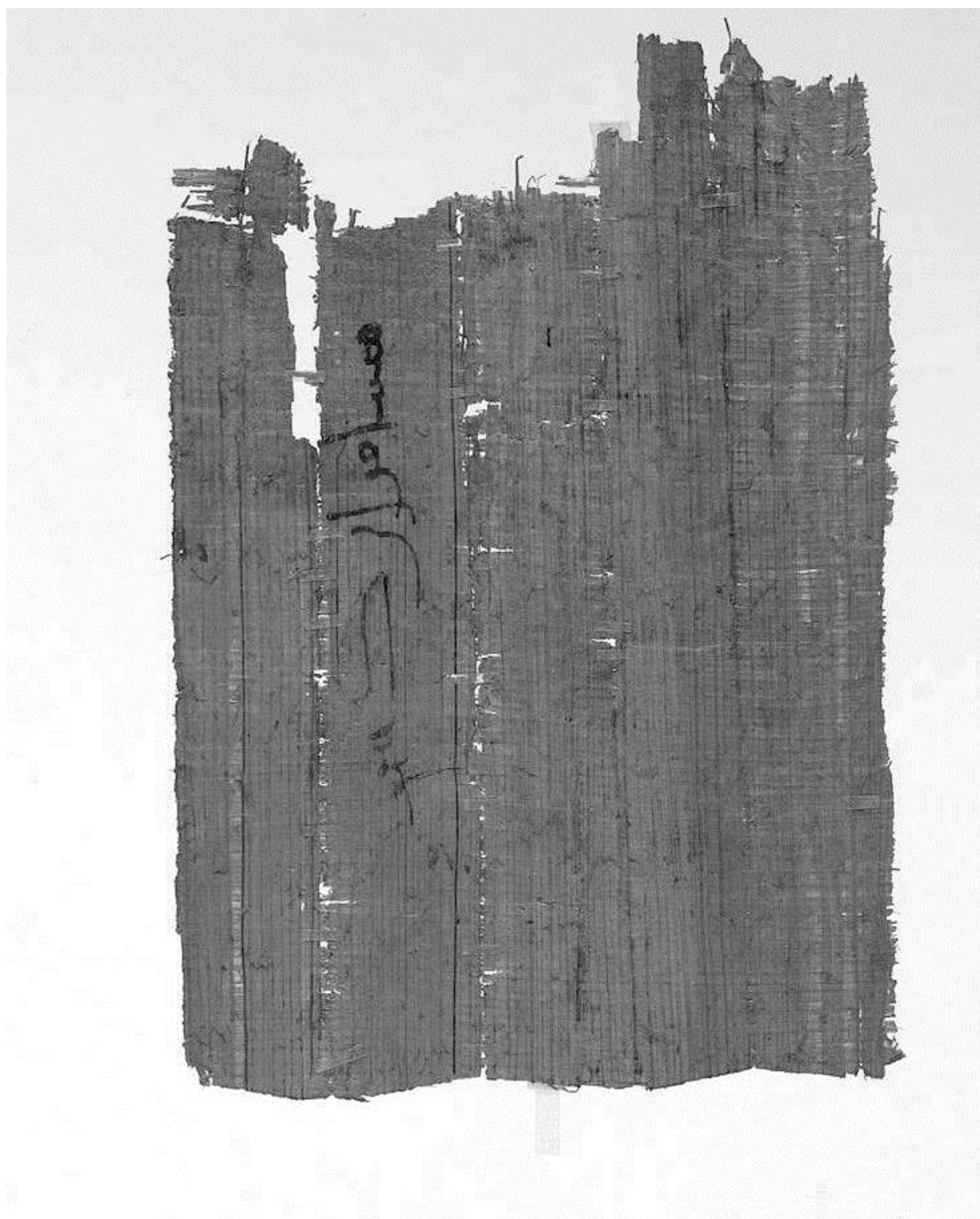
P.CtYBR.inv. 2714 v

Plate 42



P.CtYBR.inv. 2713 r

Plate 43



P.CtYBR.inv. 2713 v

Plate 44



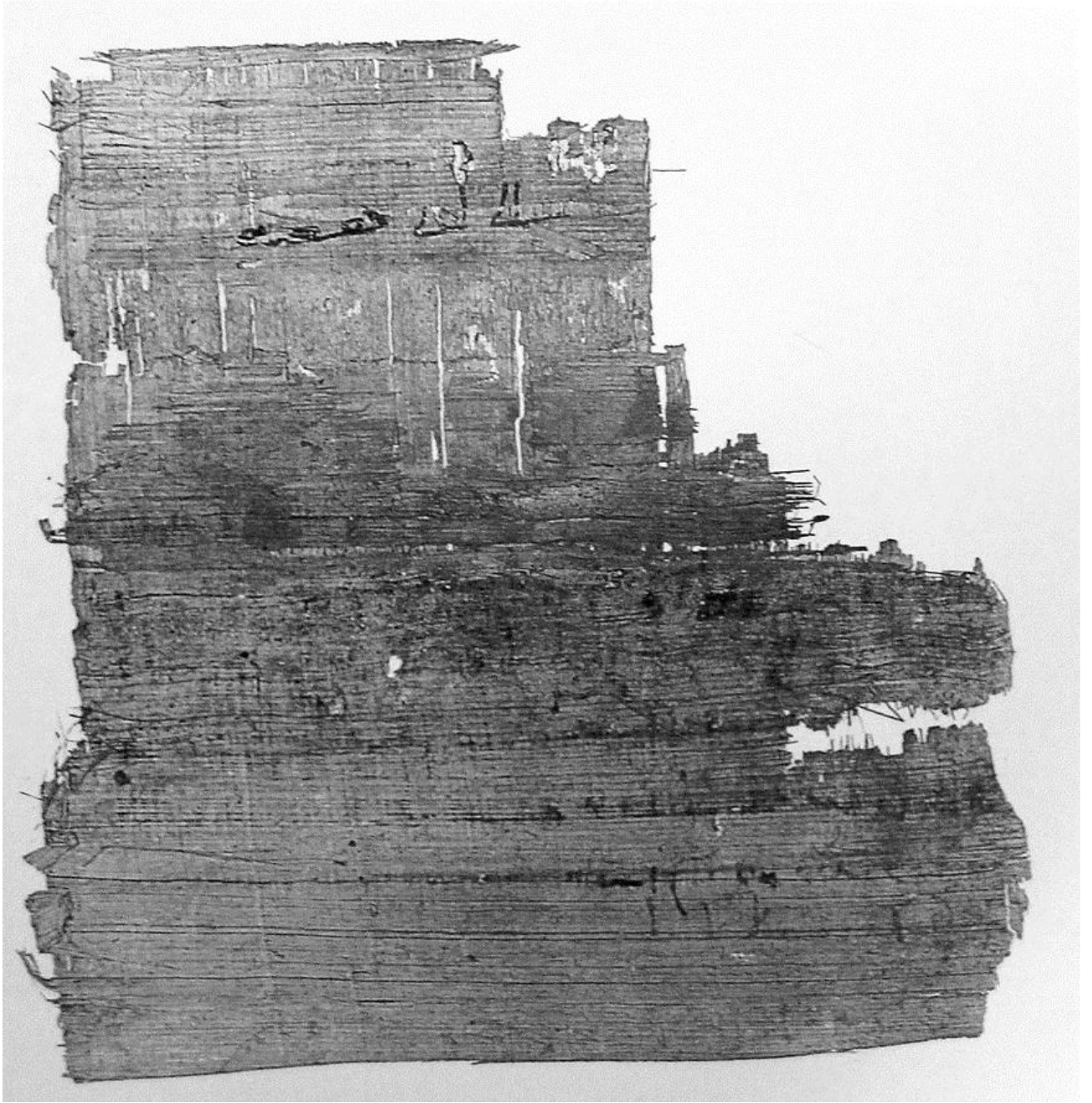
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Plate 45



P.Khalili II 115 r

Plate 46



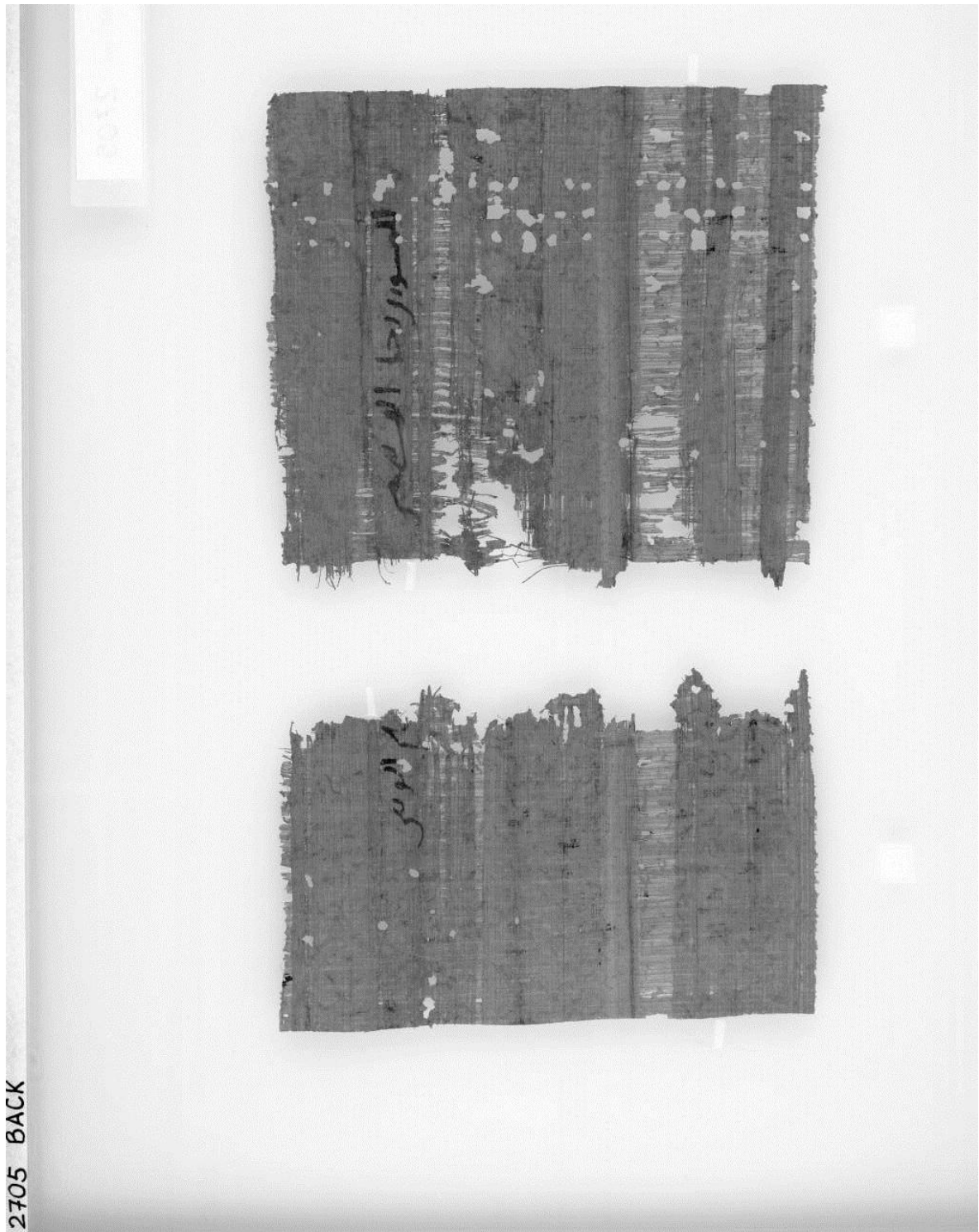
P.Khalili II 115 v

Plate 48



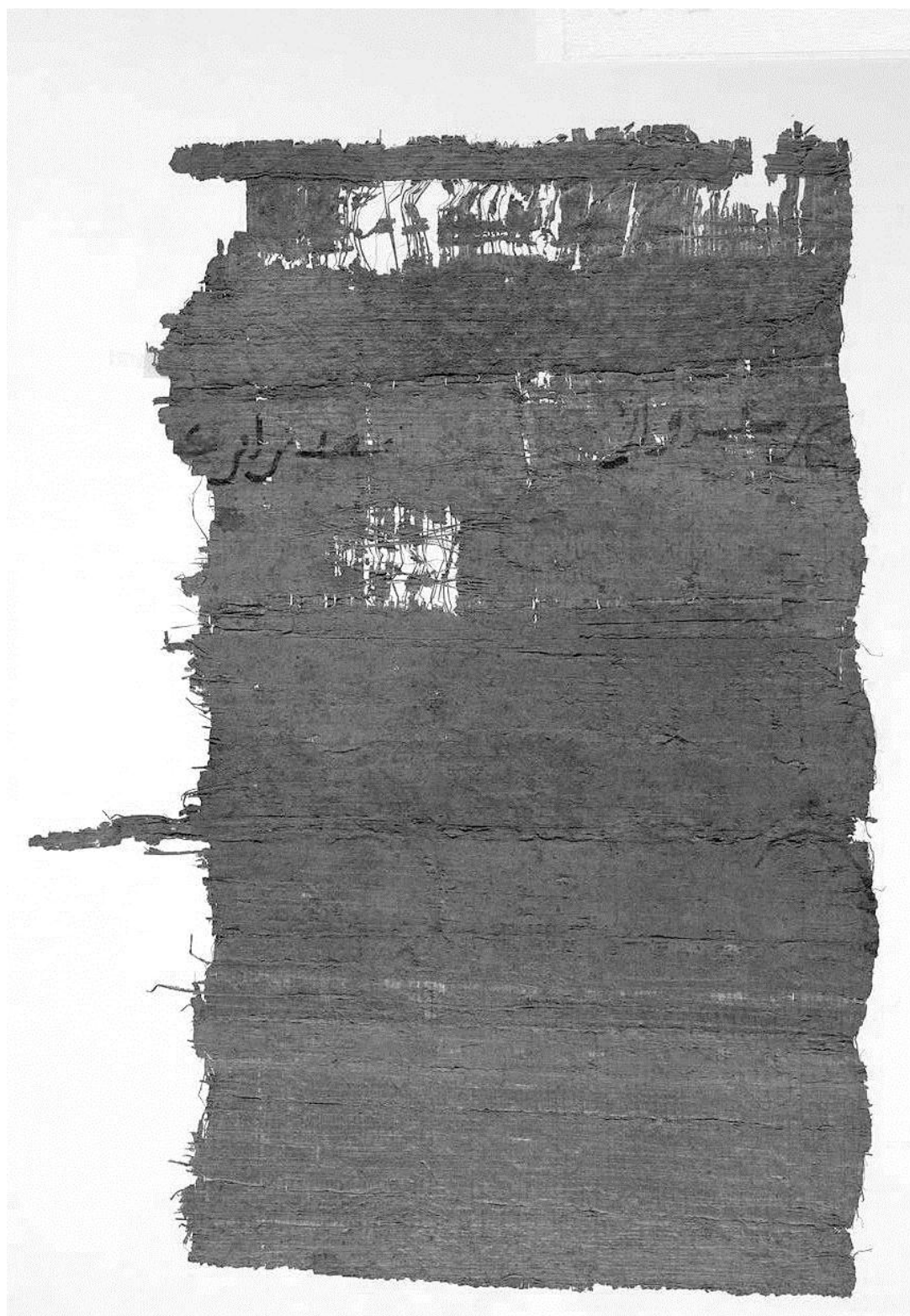
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Plate 49



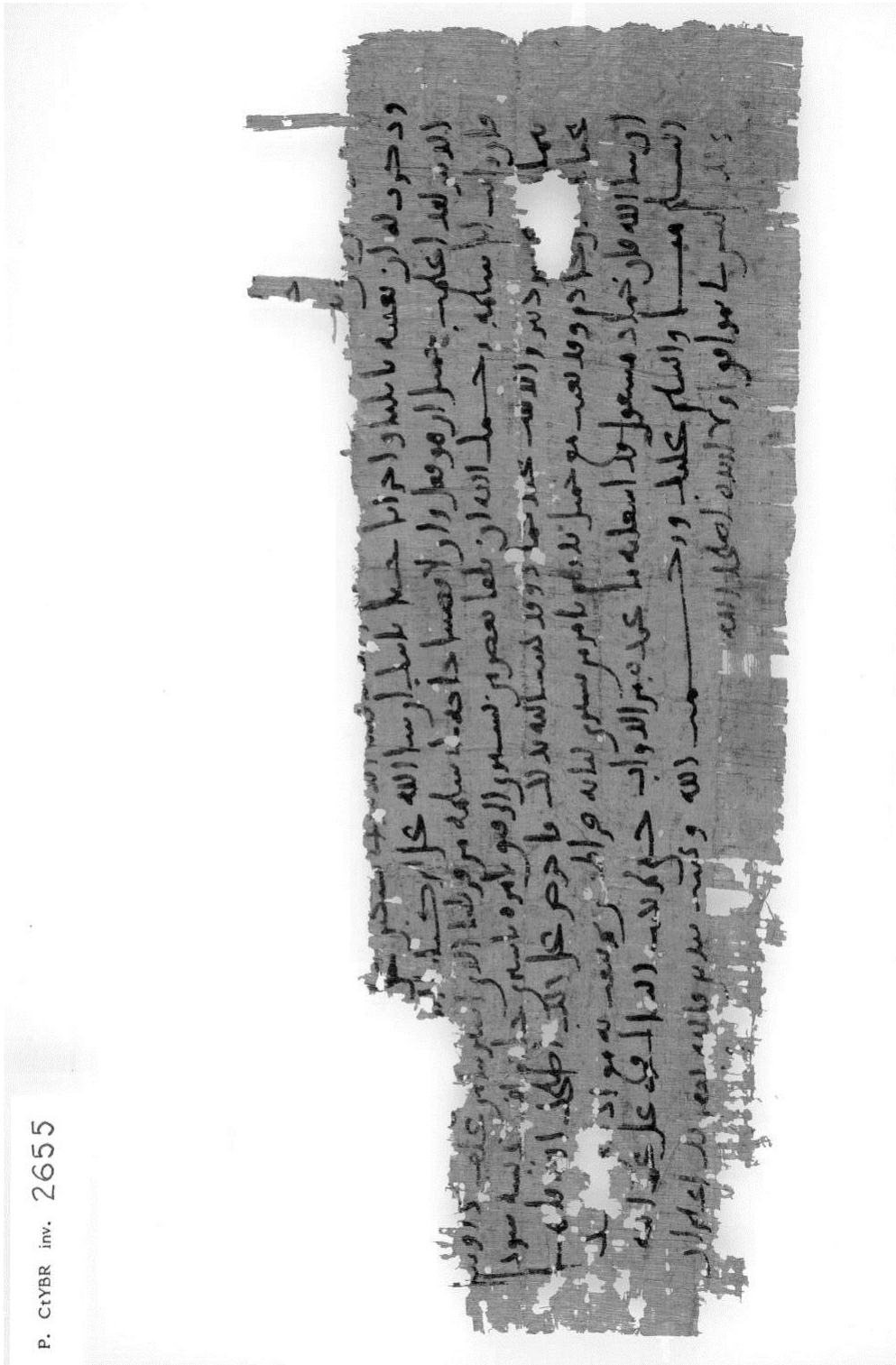
P.CtYBR.inv. 2705 v

Plate 51



P.CtYBR.inv. 2715 v

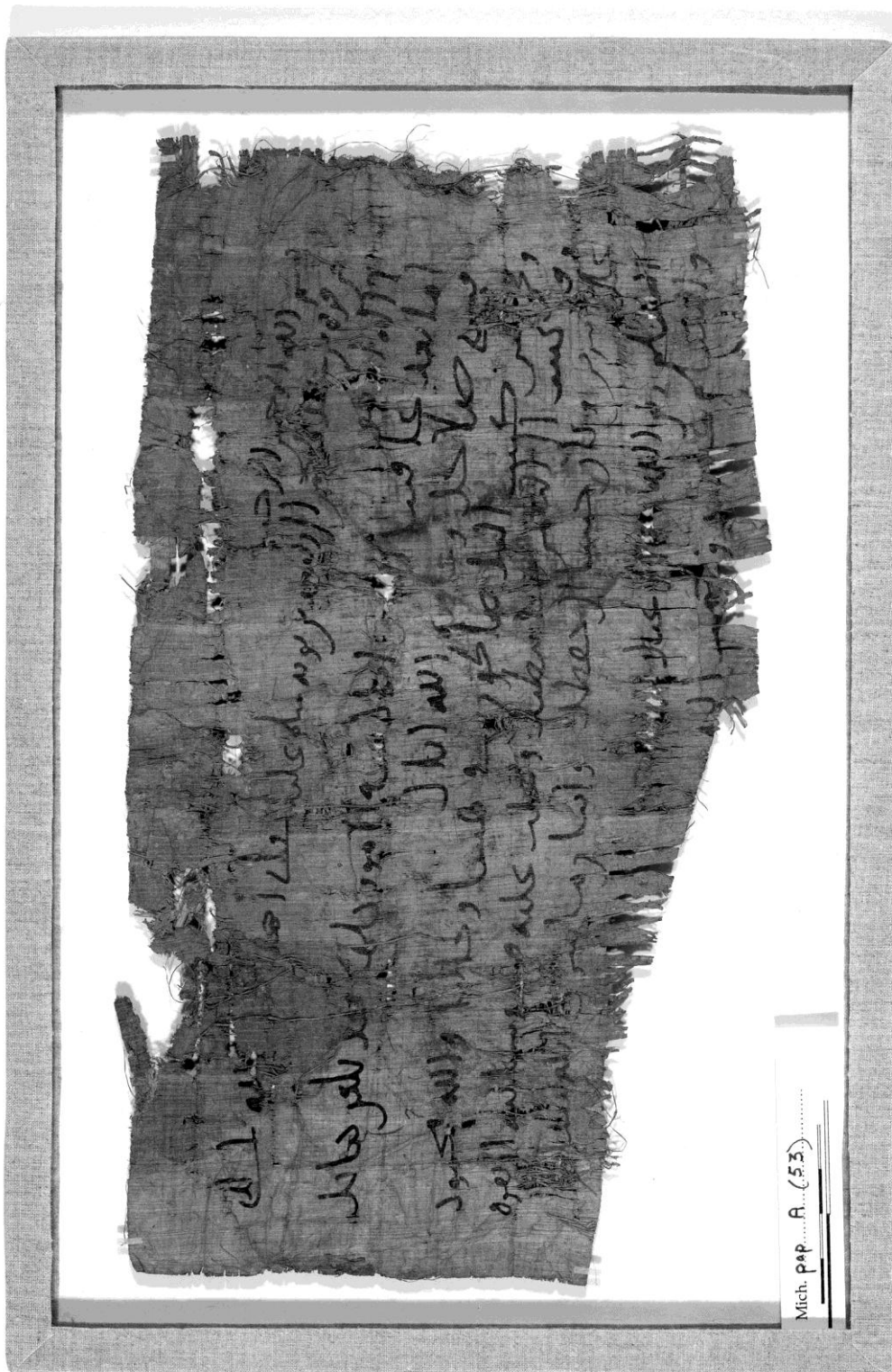
Plate 52



P. CtYBR inv. 2655

P.CtYBR.inv. 2655

Plate 53



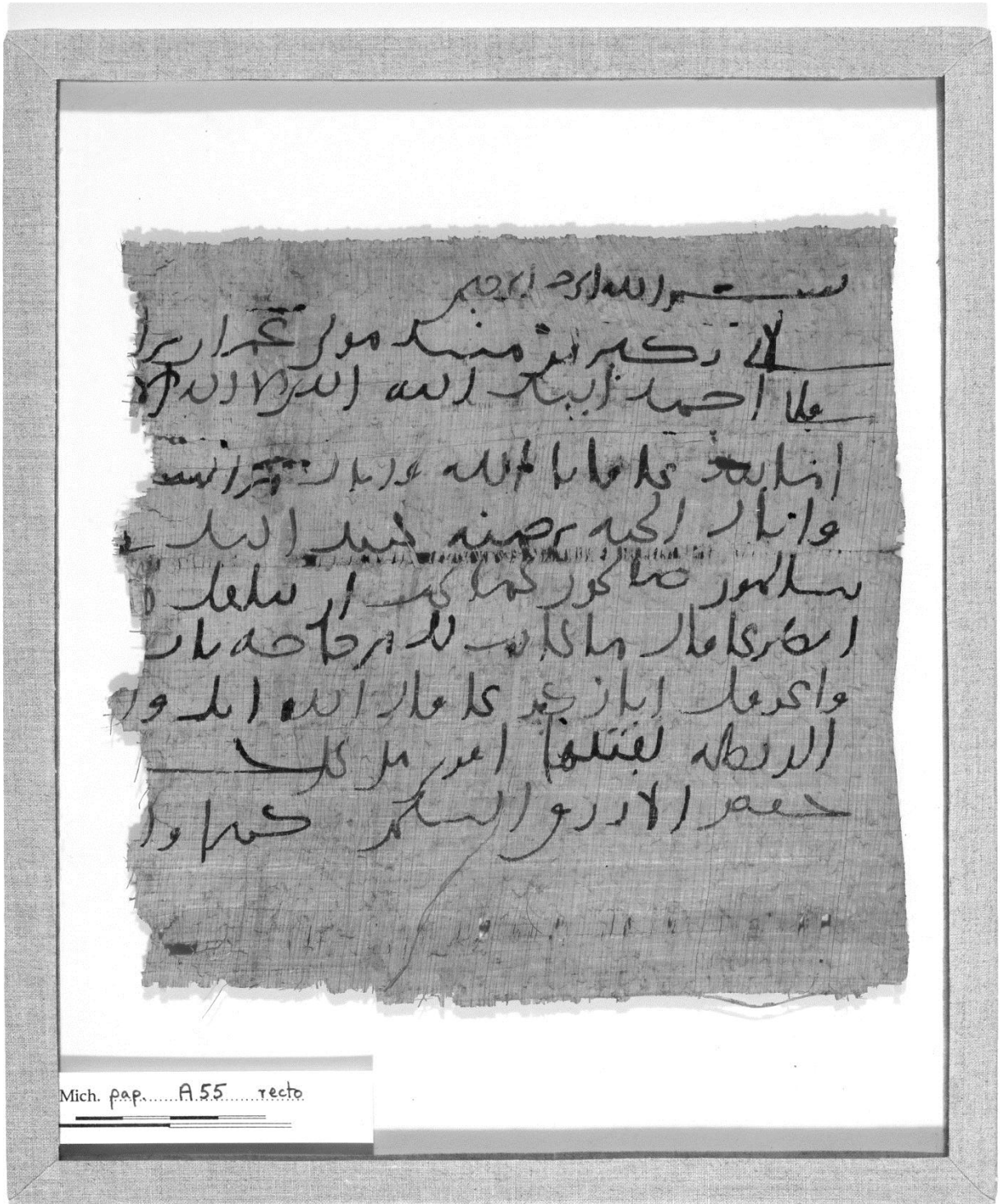
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Plate 54



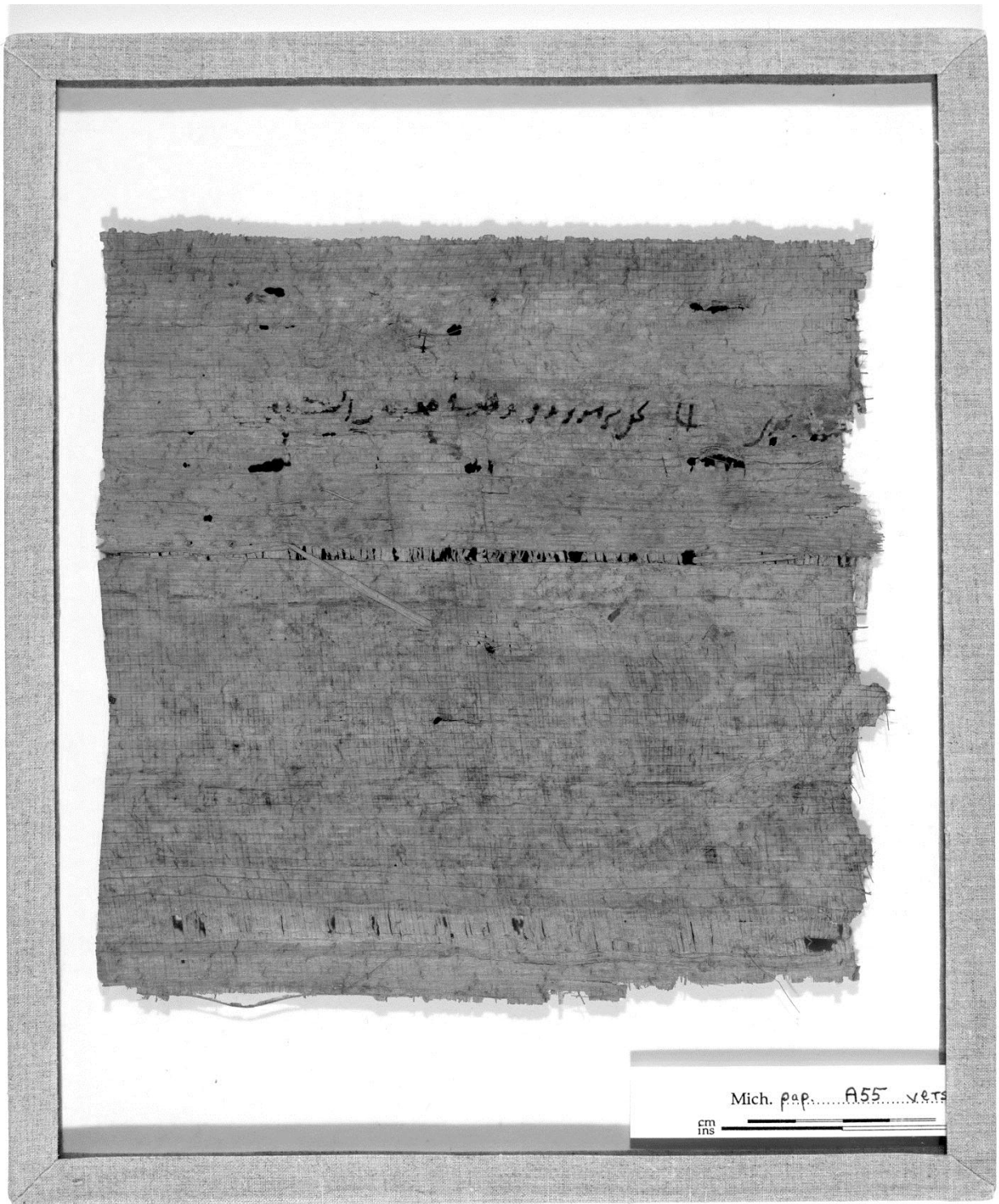
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Plate 55



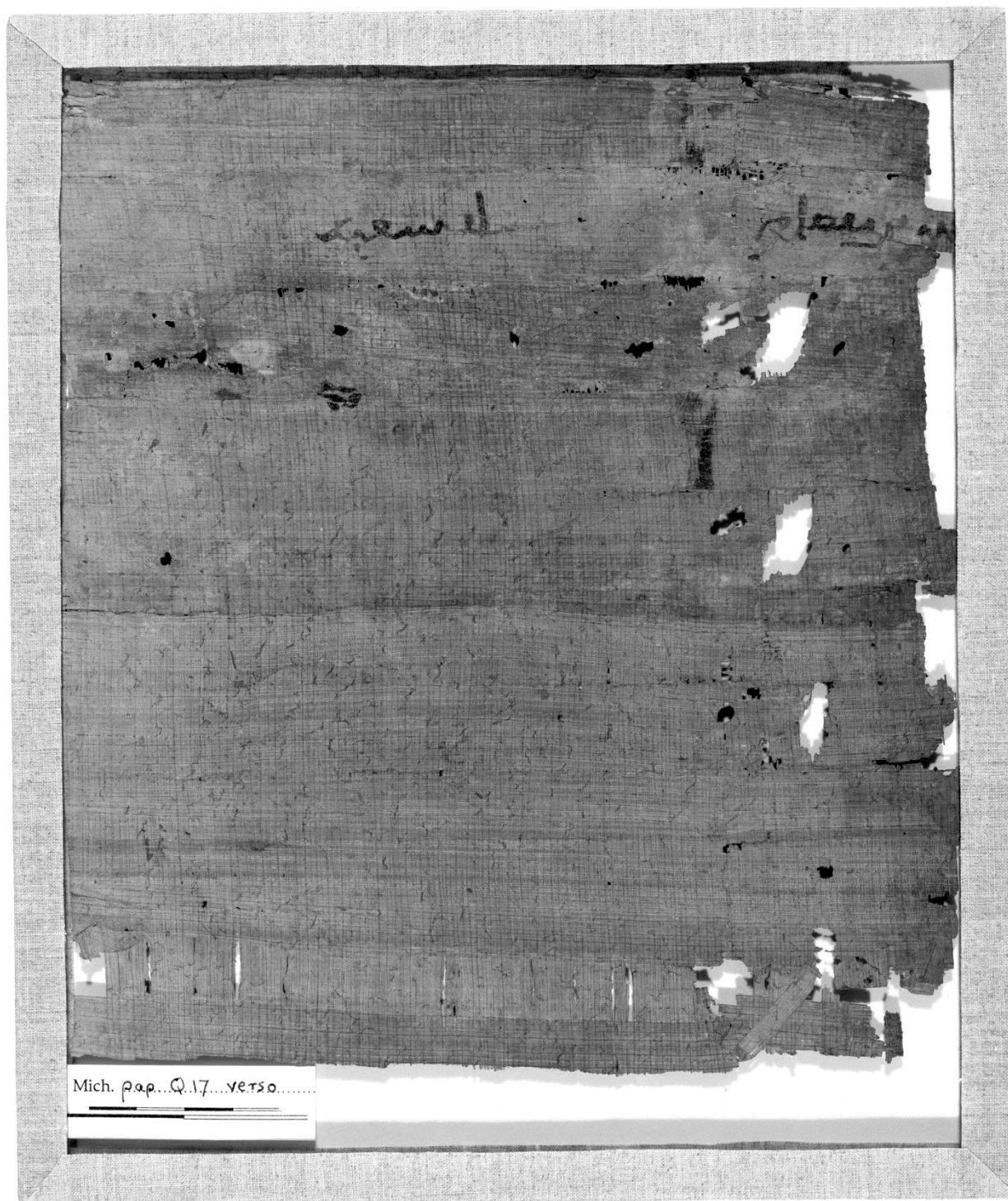
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Plate 56



P.Cam.Michaelides A 55 v

Plate 58



P.Cam.Michaelides A Q 17 v

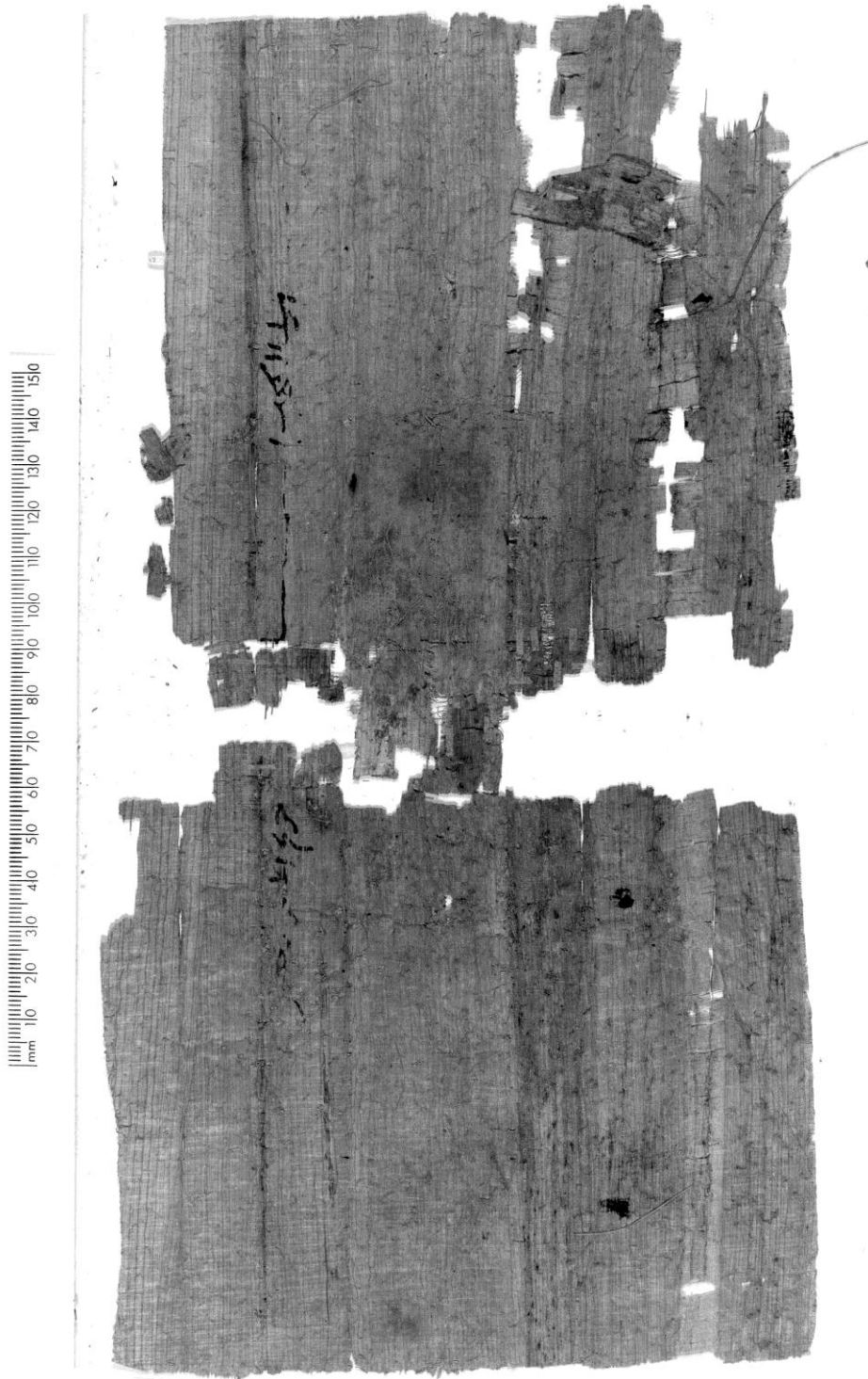
Plate 59



سید الله ابراهيم
 من الكعبه - ربيع
 ايام بعد سنة
 الكعبه وكم
 اراد واسعد
 فله و
 ربه وكم
 واراد
 حدر حدر
 ارهم
 اعد
 حدر حدر
 ارهم
 اعد
 حدر حدر
 ارهم
 اعد

P.Cam.Michaelides A Q 22 r

Plate 60



P.Cam.Michaelides A Q 22 v

Plate 61



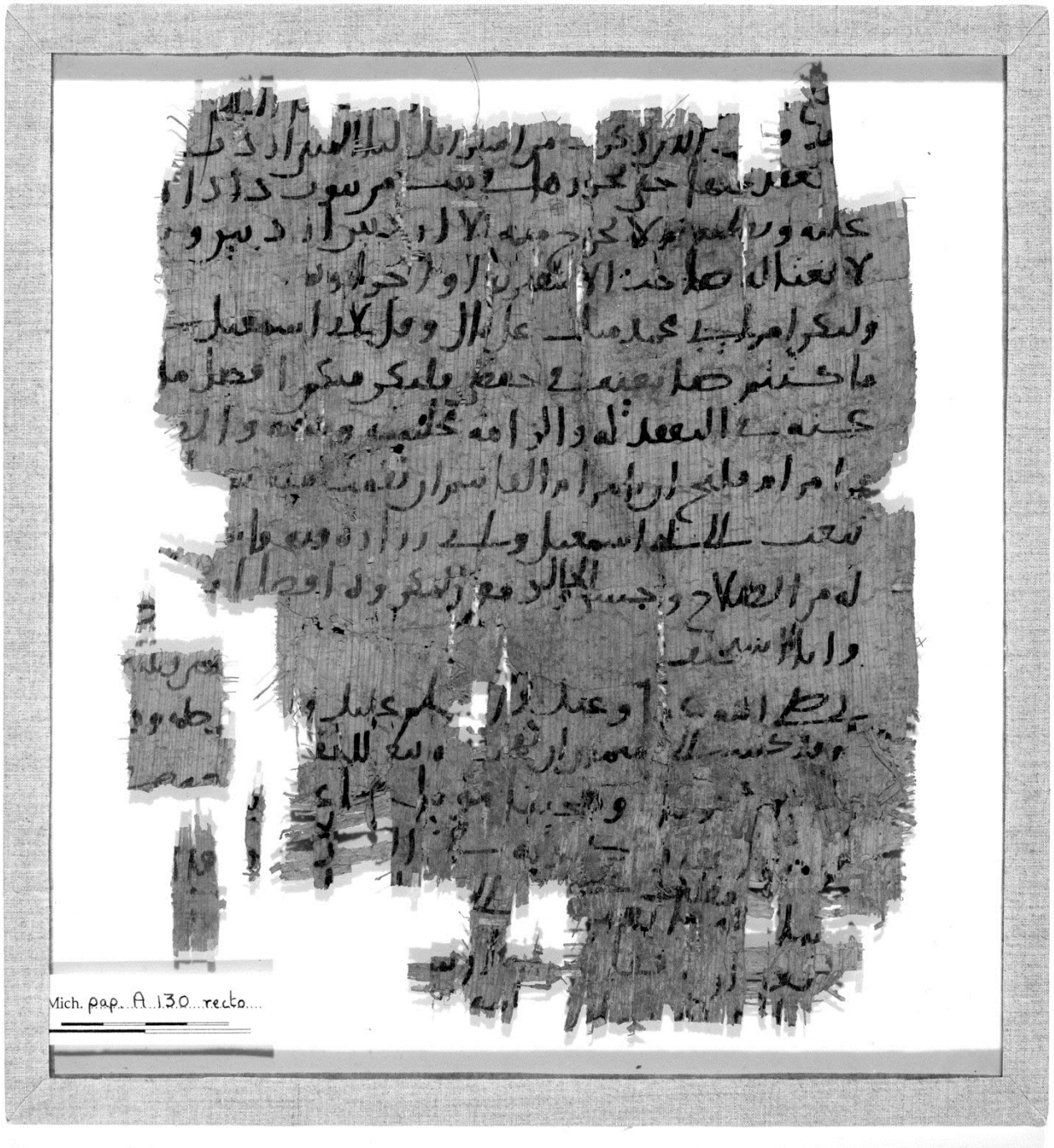
P.Cam.Michaelides A 390 r

Plate 62



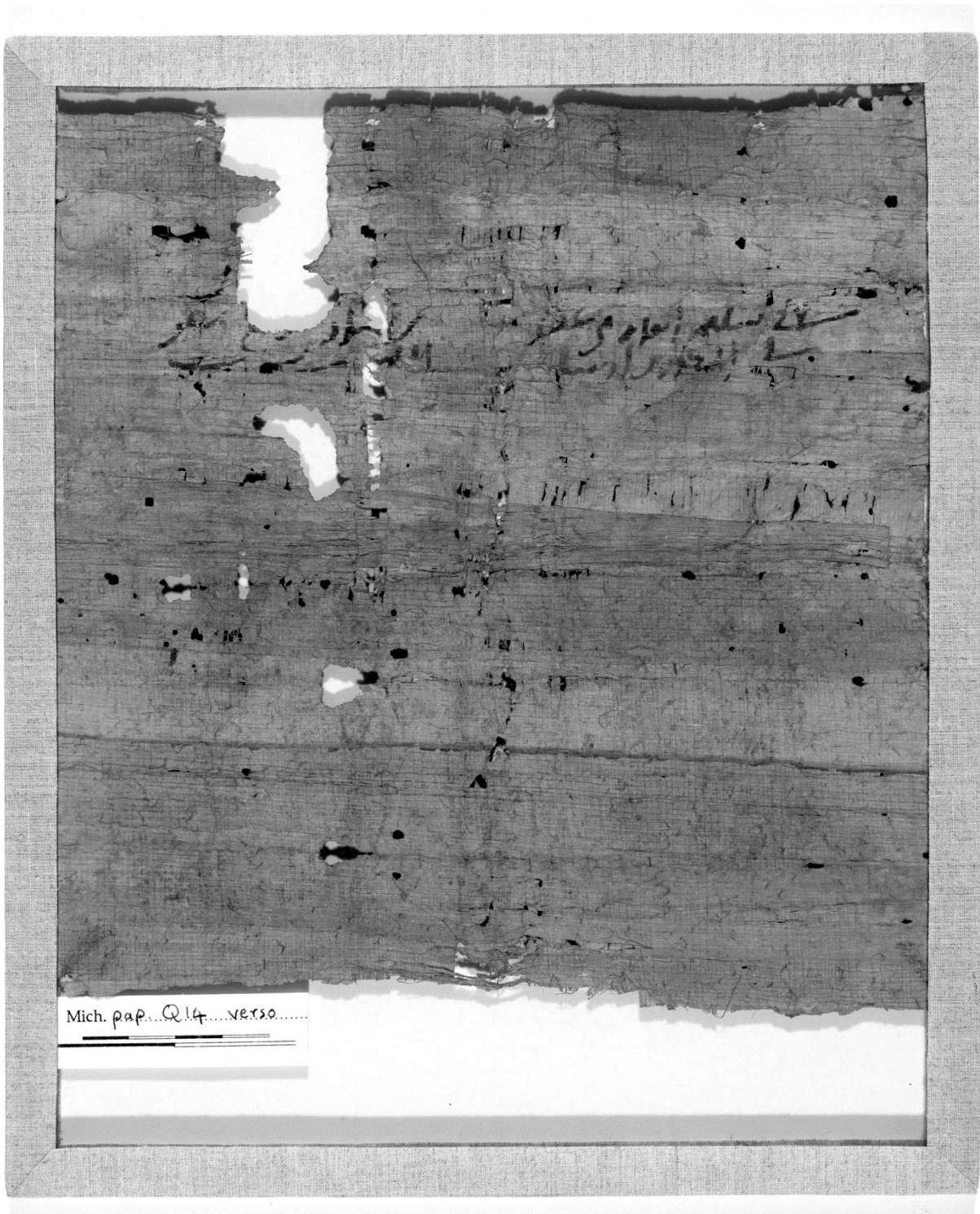
P.Cam.Michaelides A 390 v

Plate 63



P.Cam.Michaelides A 130

Plate 65



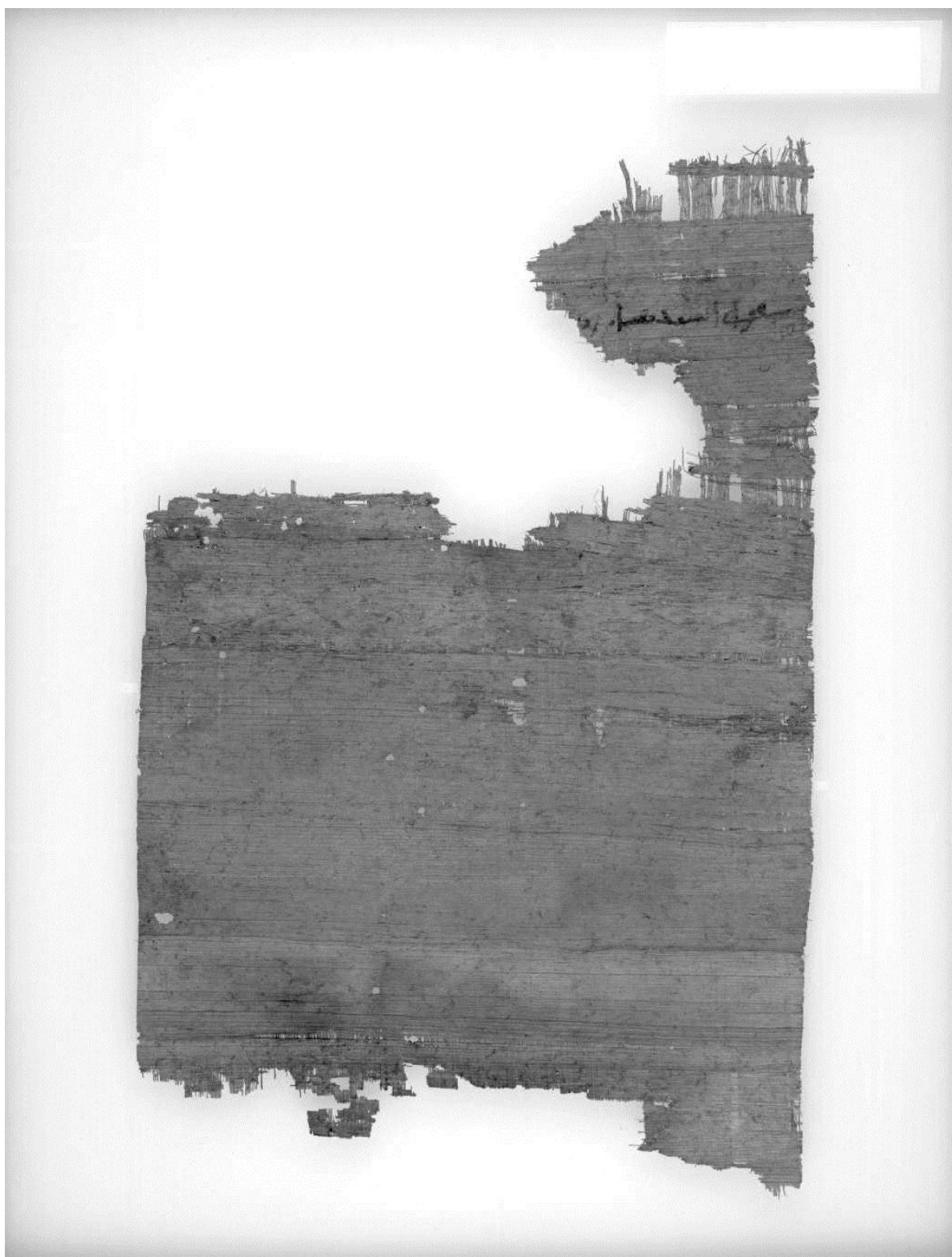
P.Cam.Michaelides Q 14 v

Plate 66



P.CtYBR.inv. 2716 r

Plate 67



P.CtYBR.inv. 2716 v

Plate 68



P. CtYBR inv. 2718

(2)

(1)

P.CtYBR.inv. 2718 r

Plate 69



P.CtYBR.inv. 2718 v

Curriculum vitae

Khaled Mohamed Younes (Born in 1983, in Subk al-Ahad, Minufiya, Egypt) studied tour guidance (Egypt's history and archeology) at Minufiya University and received his bachelor's degree with distinction (excellent with honors) in 2003. Since then Khaled has been a teaching assistant of Islamic history and archeology at the same University. In 2008, he obtained his Master's degree in Islamic history from Suez Canal University. In March 2009, Khaled started his PhD research at Leiden University within the ERC project The Formation of Islam: the View from Below under the supervision of Prof. Petra M. Sijpesteijn (LIAS) and Prof. Geoffrey Khan (University of Cambridge).

Khaled's research has so far been based on Arabic papyri, making editions of unpublished documents and using them to study the history of early Islamic Egypt from the mid-seventh to the ninth/tenth centuries. His future projects involve editing the Arabic papyrus collection in the library of Geneva. He shall also expand his research on legal, literary and Quranic texts on papyrus in comparison with the manuscript tradition, e.g. how the form and lay-out of a text facilitated its use and how, in times before printing, stylistic features were used to distinguish different sections of a text.