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

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

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## 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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

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 لتتنظري مه[رك] و[الج]لجلين والع[ق]د ين 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 الججلين فكما اخ[بر]تك حسب [ا (؟)
7. واما العقد فهو لك فان الله جانا بالعطا فالجلجل[ين]
8. [ ] [ مريا (؟) وقد خبيت شى لكى اهبه لك اذا.]
9. ان[ن] 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. التفا[ح] (؟) خمسة وعشرين وانا ليس اجبى الا خمسة وعشرين
16. [ ]
17. [ ]
18. ابو[و] الحكم لا يردك على فى اسوال وفل (؟) ابو ا[ل]حكم .....
19. كله خمسة وعشرين واخبريه انا قد راينا الحلّى 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) مريا; قد; خبيت; شى; اهبه (9) ويسري (10) عند (11) الحبه; الي; احبريبي (12) الفاكهه; اليابسه; الرطبه (13) الرطبه;

اليوم; من; الجاكهه; اليا 14) بسه; وانا; بحلي; تكبي; عشرين; فان; فد 15) التفاح; خمسه; عشرين 18) بردك 19) عشرين;  
احبريه; راينا; الحلي; عرفنا 20) حفي 21) نه 22) عافيه; لديننا; فان 23) فيما; 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 *basma* which is very uncommon in early letters but occurs frequently in letters from 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> 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 fī 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. *Khalkhālūhā* “her anklet,” (P.Marchands II 18r.7, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *khursatayn fiḍa* “two silver earrings,” (P.Marchands II 28r.67, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *khātam* “ring,” (P.Marchands V/I 2.9, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>.

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]habiyy* (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 fī al-‘ājil wa-l-ājil bi-qudratihi* (P.Khalili I 18.4, 19, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>[= P.DiemKhalili, 47]); *as’alu Allāh al-khīra fī jamī’ al-umūr kullihā* (P.Cair.Arab. V 295.12, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *Qaddara Allāh lanā al-khīra awwalan* (CPR XVI 29.9, 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>); *nas’alu Allāh al-tawfiq wa-l-khīra bi-manihi wa-qudratihi* (the unpublished P.CtYBR. inv. 2959, line 10, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

7. *Wa-ammā al-‘iqd fa-huwa laki*. The singular form here contradicts with the dual in line three (*‘iqdayn*). *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 *hawqala* (*wa-lā hawla wa-lā quwwa illā bi-llāh*) is frequently attested in the papyri; cf. P.Marchands V/I 4.12, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Marchands V/I 11, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>.

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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Jahn 12 [= Chrest.Khoury I 98r].12, 19, late 2<sup>nd</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup>/late 8<sup>th</sup>- early 9<sup>th</sup>. Dried fruits are hardly attested in the papyri except for raisins. Cf. P.GrohmannWirtsch. 2r [= P.World, 168].8, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. The reading *tuffāh* 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *la-qad jā'a anna rasūl Allāh qāla inna min abarr al-birr ṣilataka wudd abīka ba'da abīka* (P.Marchands

II 9v.11, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *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 mimmā 'urifa* (P.Khalili I 18. 1-3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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

1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

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 *aṣṣaḥat*). 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-ṭuruq*; 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.<sup>280</sup> 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.

<sup>280</sup> See chapter one.

## Text

## Side A:

1. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
2. [من عمرو بن زبيد الـ] الى عبد الـ[له بن]
3. [سلم عليك فاني احمـ]د اليك اللـ[له الذي لا اله الا هو]
4. [اما بعد فاني اخبرك مـ]ن خبري و[خبر العلانة]
5. [ ] [لما راتك انـ]ك [ادبر]ت]
6. [الى الـ]فيوم ارتكبت العلل وتزعم انها مصرة تـ[ر ]
7. [ ] [اليها الـ ]بانه وذلك كله من حصري لـ[ها]
8. [مـ]ن [الخرو]ج والطوفان في البيوت والطرق
9. فلما رات اني قد منعته ذلك كلـ[ه] ذهبت الـ[ى]
10. الحكم فاخبرته انه يفعل بها ما لم يفعل بحرة من الضر[ب]
11. والبوس والحرم ثم انها كانت تقول من القول ما لونك
12. كنت تسامعه لعذرتني عليها تنتهك الشرف فيـ[ه] و[
13. النفس وتقول قول ما سمعت امرة تقول لزوجها ما
14. تقول العلانة ما لا يصعد في السما ولا يقعد في الارض فانظر
15. ما وري ذلك فلما رايت منها انها قد ا[ر]تكبت
16. اسوى امرها بعثت اليها رجل صلحين من عشيرتي 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 شاي تهوه نفسه ونفسها
20. فاتبع هواهما في ذلك شاي خلقه الله تحبه عيني فاولله
21. الذي لا اله الا هو لقد كنت كره لما فعلت العلانة وما بي الا
22. رغبة في الذي جعل الله بيني وبينك من الصهر والحق واني
23. مرتغب بمصهرتك وما قدم الله لك من الشرف
24. والحق والثنا والحمد في الدين فمثلك يرتغب الرجل الى
25. مصهرته فلا تجد على في ذلك فانما هي فعلت ذلك
26. لما راتك ادبرت الى الفيوم وزعمت انها لا تروع
27. بامرك راس ولا امر لك في امرها فلما رايت من امر
28. ها انها ارتكبت من امرها الذي ارتكبت لم اجد امر ا
29. نجى لي مما فعلت حتى تقدم اليها فاخبرك الخبر كله فا
30. نك ان شا الله اذا قدمت ساتخير من عند من كان ذلك
31. من عندي او من عندها كتبت اليك كتبي هذا واني اقسم
32. لك بالله ما كنت اهوى ما فعلت واني امانك ان شا الله
33. اذا قدمت اليها ارجو من الله ومنك ان تردا الى
34. فاني لم اطلق ولم اخلع عن هدى مني فانما افتديت منها
35. بذلك من حججها ومن لسنها حتى تقدم اليها كتبت
36. اليك كتبي هذا وقد استلبتني قدومك كما تعلم اني لم
37. افعل ذلك عن هدى مني 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*] *khavarī* [*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'talaḥ wa-l-mukhtalaḥ 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-khurūj] *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'athu 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-taba’a hawāhumā*. This expression echoes the Qur’anic idiom *wa-ttaba’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). *Ilāh* 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

24. *Al-ṭhanā’* 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 nafsika* (al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), *Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. M. Ludolf, (Leiden: Brill, 1862), vol. 1, 36). See also in this corpus *wa-ukhbiruka annī wājid ‘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 ḥādhā* 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>. 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-qad istalbathnā qudūmaka kamā ta'lam*. *Istalbathnā* is the 10<sup>th</sup> form of *labitha* (to delay). See Lane, vol. 7, 2654.

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

## 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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>  
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*). *Fāʾ* 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 *iyāka*; l. 13 *al-hakam*). There is a marked extension of the horizontal stroke of the final *kāf* (l. 4 *baynaka*; l. 8 *iyāka*). 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. الله الذى [الى] مر [د كل شى] 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 [شا]ن [ا]مراتك
6. الحرة انها ابلفت شأنك 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 ارا له وجهه هو عند اخوك تميم
11. وانى بعثت اليه مرار كثير فقلت ياتنى
12. ولا يرفع بقول راسا فلا تظن انه يـ[عـي]ننى 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 شأنها 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]ذى 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 شأنه فانى ارجو ان لا
25. يلومنى فى شأنه والسلم عليك واقرا علـ[ى]
26. اهلنا كلهم السلـ[م]

### Diacritical dots

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

### 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 [abou]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[ān]ihī*. 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>). 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.<sup>281</sup> For *al-mawāt*, see Dozy, 630; Lane, vol. 7, 2741-2.

5. *Wa-samī'nā alladhī dhakarta min sha'n imra'atika*. The word *samī'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

<sup>281</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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-iiyāka 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'athu 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 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *wa-lam adrī annahu bā'a qalīl wa-lā kathīr* (P.Jahn 17.14, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *mimmā qibalī min qalīl aw kathīr* (P.Marchand V/I 16.5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *fa-lam taṣna' fī dhālika qalīl wa-lā kathīr* (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 14.4 [= P.World, 179], 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

**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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-zada fī iḥsānīhī ilayka wa-'indaka fī al-dunā wa-l-ākhirā wa-kafāka mā hammaka bi-raḥmatihī* (P.Marchands II 35.3-4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *ḥafīzaka 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-atamma nī'amahu 'alayka wa-zada fī iḥsānīhī ilayka wa-ja'alanī fidā'aka wa-lā akhlā makānaka wa-kafāka mā hammaka* (CPR XVI 17.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). See also the conclusion.

**14-15.** *Wa-ṣbir wa-ḥtasib fī-mā aṣābaka min sha'n ḥādhihi 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 ḥādhā 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 qjhad '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'nihi.* The personal pronoun *hu* of *akhbirhu* refers to *al-Zubayr*, while the personal pronoun of *sha'nahu* and *sha'nihi* 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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>  
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-fiṭr*; 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 *Ṭsā* 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. *Ṭsā* 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. *Ṭsā* informs his wife further that he bought eggs for two *dīnārs* before breaking the fast of Ramaḍān (*al-fiṭr*) to bring to her, but all the eggs got spoiled due to the long delay and therefore he had to throw them away. *Ṭsā* 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, *Ṭsā* 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[ل]ى على نبينا محـ[م]د صلـ[ى] الله [عليه]
4. [و]سلم كثيرا [ما بعد] كتابي هذا [اليك] من ..
5. .... ان نخرج [ ] .... ما .. بنى مدلج
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 ابلى نفسك ا[ل]سلم كثر[ر]ا وادريس [و]اخته  
 15. وجميع اهل البيت واقرى ام[ى] السلم كثير[ا] وجميع  
 16. من عندها وانظ[ر]ى [ 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) ليحزنى; اشد; دخل 12) بيض; الفطر; جا; طافه 13) ففسد; البيض; طرحته 14) الخلف; 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 ʿIsā 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'aluhu an yuṣallī 'alā nabiyynā 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 *basmla*. The custom of adding the *taṣliya* to the *basmla* was introduced by the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170-193/786-809), who decreed that in the introduction of all official documents the *basmla* 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.<sup>282</sup> The first attestation of the *taṣliya* in private letters can be found in CPR XVI 18.4-5, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 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-raḥmat 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad al-nabiyy wa-ālihi wa-sallam taslīman* (CPR XVI 25.13-14, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad al-nabiyy wa-ālihi wa-sallam kathīran* (CPR XVI 31.9, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad wa-'alā jamī' ahlihi wa-sallam kathīran* (CPR XVI 32.2-3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *Muḥammad ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi bi-l-hudā wa-dīn al-ḥaqq wa-kull alladhī irtaḍā Allāh li-'ibādihī* (Sijpesteijn (2013), 8.5-7, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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

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

edge of the Delta.<sup>283</sup> *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-raḥmatihi*. The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *fa-nas'alu* (Hopkins § 26). Also written so in line 14. *Bi-r* of *bi-raḥmatihi* 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. *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 kuntu atrukuka bi-salāmatika taghību 'annī fī al-fiṭr wa-anā taraktuka tuftiru 'indahum wa-tuḍaḥī 'indī taraktanā fī al-fiṭr mithl al-masākīn* (P.Marchand II 2.11-13, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *innī uqīmu ilā al-fiṭr in shā'a Allāh* (P.Marchands II 14.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-dhakarta anaka turīdu al-quḍūm ilaynā ba'd al-fiṭr in shā'a Allāh* (P.Marchands V/I 20.13, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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:

<sup>283</sup> 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

19 x 16

1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 *ʿayn* is open at the top (l. 2 *Rabīʿa*; l. 4 *baʿdu*; l. 6 *al-niʿma*, *al-ʿāfiya*). *Fā'* has one dot below the letter, whereas *qāf* has one dot over it (l. 6 *faḍlihi*, *al-ʿāfiya*, *qaḍāʾihi*). 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. Rabīʿa writes to two women known as Umm ʿAmūr 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 الرحمن الرحيم
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 [اخبركم من خبرنا انا سالمين صلحو[ن]
5. كال[ذي يسركم] من ا[للعفية والخير نسال الله تمام
6. النعمة علينا و عليكم وال[زيادة من فضله والعفية في قضاء
7. والرغبة في {قضاه} ما [عنده] اما على اثر ذلك فاذا
8. جاكم [كتبى] هذا فابعثوا الى بنعلى وشركين حسني[ن] وبقميص

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

## Side B:

[من بحـ]ر بن ربيعة الى اهله

1. [م ام عمور انظرى انبعثى الى مف ] [ امرم كان  
 2. ان] كان سهل بن عبد الله جا ] وا[خبروه  
 3. [....ان ياتيك ] [ شديدا  
 4. ولا يوجد عندنا القطر ا[ ] واقرى منى السلم

## Diacritical dots

## Side A:

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

## Side B:

address (ربيعه 1) انظرى; انبعثى; 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[ʿa] to Umm ʿAm[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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *ka-lladhī yasurruka bi-ḥamd Allāh 'alaynā wa-ni'matihi* (P.RāḡibLettres 9.v4, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *ka-lladhī yasurruka wa-rabbunā maḥmūd* (P.RāḡibLettres 11.4-5, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *'alā mā yasurruka wa-rabbunā maḥmūd* (P.Khalili I 15r.4-5, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>). 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 fī 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *nas'alu Allāh tamām al-ni'ma 'alaynā wa-'alayka wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlihi* (P.Khalili I 15v.4-5, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *nas'alu Allāh 'āfiyatahu wa-karāmat al-ākhirā* (P.RāḡibLettres 9r.6, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *fa-nas'alu Allāh tamām al-ni'ma lanā wa-lakum bi-'āfiyat al-dunyā wa-karāmat al-ākhirā* (P.RāḡibLettres 9v.4-6, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *as'alu Allāh tamām al-ni'ma 'alaynā wa-'alayka wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlihi in shā'a Allāh an yaj'alānā wa-iyyākā mimman ya'malu bi-ṭā'atihi wa-yajtanibu ghaḍabahu wa-yabtaghi marḍātahu* (P.RāḡibLettres 11.5-7, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>). 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'ihi* 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'ihi* 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *fa-idhā jā'akum kitābī hādhā fa-ktubū ilaynā* (P.RāḡibLettres 12.4, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>). 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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 ḥasanayn 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.<sup>284</sup> 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*).<sup>285</sup> 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

<sup>284</sup> 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.

<sup>285</sup> P.World, 156 a.8, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>.

the norm in male footwear. It is said that the prophet usually wore double-laced sandals of tanned leather without animal hair.<sup>286</sup> 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.<sup>287</sup> The attestation of *naʿl* 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 *ḥidhāʾ* soles costs only the half price (“*naʿl ṣirār bi-dirhamān wa-naʿl ḥidhāʾ bi-dirham*,” P.Marchands III 9.11, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). A special pair of sandals, whose soles were imported from India “Sind” and whose laces were made in Tinnīs<sup>288</sup> costs a quarter of a *dīnār* (“*naʿl sindī bi-zimām tinnīsī bi-rubʿ dīnār*,” P.World, 156a.8, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).<sup>289</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). These two pairs of sandals were the cheapest sandals in the Fustāṭ markets.<sup>290</sup>

*Qamīṣ* (pl. *qumuṣ* or *qumṣān* or *aqmiṣa*) 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*.<sup>291</sup> 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.<sup>292</sup> 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-nḥzur al-qumuṣ allatī ʿalā arḍika fa-ʿajjil bihā ilayya waḥīna tanḥzur fī al-qumuṣ/kitābī fa-lā tuʾakhkhanna minhā shayʾ fa-innī urīdu an ursil bihā ilā amīr al-muʾminīn in shāʾa Allāh*,” P.BeckerPAF 5.[Abū Ṣafiyya 42]4-10, dated 90/709).<sup>293</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). The *qamīṣ badla* should perhaps be

<sup>286</sup> Stillman (2000), 22.

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

<sup>288</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; Nāṣir Khusraw, *Safr nāmāh* (1993), 91-94; Ibn Hawqal, *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, 143; al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam*, vol. 2, 51-54; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʾiz*, vol.1, 496-511.

<sup>289</sup> See also *wa-anā muʾajil ilayka bi-l-naʿl wa-l-kisāʾ*, P.Marchands V/I 6.4-5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; *baʾathtu ilayka bi-l-maḥbas wa-l-aḥwar wa-l-naʿl*, P.Marchands II 37.2, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. See also Dozy (1845), 421-424.

<sup>290</sup> *wa-shtarī lī khuffayn li-rijlī*, P.Marchands II 3.7, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; *wa-anā uṣību lahā al-khuffayn in shāʾa Allāh*, P.Marchands II 9.19, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; *khifāfan li Abī ʿAdiyy*, P.Marchands II 11.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>291</sup> Stillman (2000), 12; Ahsan (1979), 36-39.

<sup>292</sup> Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, 151-152; al-Balādhurī, *Buldān*, 215.

<sup>293</sup> See also Sijpesteijn (2013), 3.8, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *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 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>).

#### Side B:

[*Min Baḥr*]r b. *Rab'ā 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

41 x 23

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 فانی احمد اليك الله الذى
4. لا اله الا هو اما بعد فانی اخبركما انى سلمة
5. صلحة كما يسركما والحمد لله فنسل الله
6. الذى اليه مصير كل شى اعفنا واياكم من
7. مكاره الدنيا والاخرة واخبرك
8. ان تمیم ابنك سالم صلح كما يسرك
9. من فضل الله ورحمته واهله كلهم كما تحبون
10. وان يحبى وجميل ونجیح يقرون عليكم
11. السلم (vac.) والسلم عليك (vac.)
12. وانى اخبرك يابو راشد انى وجدت

13. نجیح اجد 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; ابرک (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. Yahyā 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-ıyyākum 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-ıyyāka 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-raḥmatihi.* Ṣāliḥ is written with *scriptio defectiva* of medial ā (Hopkins § 10.a). The same Tamīm also appears in 3.10. The *rā'* of *wa-raḥmatihi* 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

17.1 x 22.8

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 *fī*).

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 [الذي]
4. لا اله الا هو (vac.)
5. اما بعد عافانا الله واياك عافية يبلغ[نا واياك]
6. بها جسيم رحمته في جنته انه [و] الى ذلك [والقادر عليه كتبت]
7. اليك وانا ومن قبلي من اهلي وصبي[ان] الى على اح[سن حال]
8. الحمد لله لا نفقد من خير الدنيا [و] ما نحتاج ]
9. من نعمته ومنه علينا الا النظر في وج[هك قبل الموت فاسل الله]
10. القريب المجيب الا يمي[ت]ني حتا انظر]
11. في 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 رحمتك  
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 raḥmatihi fī jannatihi*, see in this corpus *‘āfānā Allāh wa-ıyyākum ‘āfiya yudkhilunā wa-ıyyākum bihā al-janna bi-raḥmatihi wa-yunajīnā wa-ıyyākum min shukḥihi wa-min al-nār bi-raḥmatihi* (42.6-8). The expression *jasīm raḥmatihi* 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> and the references given in the commentary. See also *fa-innahu waliyy dhālika wa-l-qādir ‘alayhi wa-l-marghūb ilayhi fīhi* (P.Berl.Arab. I 3.5-6, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>).

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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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 hādhā wa-anā ‘alā aḥsan ḥāl wa-llāh maḥmūd* (P.Horak 85.5, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-anā wa-man qibalī ‘alā aḥsan al-ḥāl wa-llāh maḥmūd* (P.RāḡibLettres 6.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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 yumūt[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 yarḏā ‘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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

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-ن [أ] الرحيم
2. [من عثمان بن ملد الى] /ابان\ ام حجر ابنت شريح وام عباس وحفصة وعيشة /وعديّة\ بنت اسـ[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)الدي 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 Dimyāt
7. [                            ]. from me and do not ..... [       ] Peace be upon you and
8. [God's mercy] and blessings. And [            ] that [       ] Yaḥyā

#### 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 *khābarinā* 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *lam yaḥduth 'alā aḥad minnā illā khayr al-amr* (P.Rāgib Lettres 10.5-6, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>).

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

6. The ancient Dimyāt (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 *ḥattā* 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  
Provenance: Unknown

22 x 13.5

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>  
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.<sup>294</sup> 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 وعك كتبت اليك وانا سالم صالح]
4. [كالذى يسرك والحمد لله بلغنى كتابك فقرا]ته وفهمت ما ذكرت من سلامتك وسلامة اهلنا
5. [وحمدت ا]لله 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

<sup>294</sup> See also the commentary for a different interpretation.

10. ] س[فينة تتوجه فاقدم علينا فاذا اردت  
 11. ] برا وتلقا عبد الحميد زوج عبدة فتوصيه  
 12. ] برا ولا تضعه وقف على الباب فارسل الى  
 13. ] بهم ما كانت لهم من حاجة ولا تدع خبر يكون  
 14. ] به وحدثها تقدم اليها فان الريح طيبة  
 15. ] بعد ا ما كتبت به اليك واعلم لو اني قدرت  
 16. ] واهدي لنا سدر نغسل به روسنا  
 17. ] ابلىح ح[بيب السلم والسلم عليك ورحمت الله وكتب  
 18. ] ه[ل ولدت فان كانت قد ولدت فاوصيهم بها وبولدها  
 19. ] بيت ولدها خيرا

### Diacritical dots

(3 اليك 4 اهلنا 5 سألته 7 سيا; ليلا 8 بصر 10 تتوجه 11 تلقا 15 اليك 16 اهدي<sup>295</sup>; 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.

<sup>295</sup> 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 *saḥīna* 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-nṣur 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

22.9 x 19.2

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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. Sālīm 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[ا سلم عليك]
3. فاني احمد اليك الله الذي لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. اما بعد عافانا الله وايا[ك من كل سو وعفا عنا وعنك]
5. برحمته كتبت الي[يك عافاك الله كتابي هذا]
6. وانا وسيدى على الذي يسر[ك والحمد لله]
7. اكتبى الى سيدى وبامر[ه ع-]
8. فاني ... ن يخبر الصلاح عنك ا[ ]
9. صدقا وقد كتبتى الي[نا انك انت-]
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 م[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; ففلنا; اكتبني (12) فيها; الذي; انت; منا.

### Translation

#### Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To Wahba bt. Sālim 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. Sālim 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-raḥmatihī* 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). *Sālim* 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and the examples provided in the commentary.

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

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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>  
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 *taktubī*). 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]
2. [من] رنة والنعمان بن شعيب الى ام نعيم [ب-] انت نعيم وحماد ]
3. [و] ام عثمان ويزيد بن عثمان سلم عليكم فاني احمد اليكم الله الذ[ي]
4. [لا اله الا هو اما بعد ا] صلحنا الله واياكم صلاح من رضى عنه منا و[منكم]
5. [ ] كتبنا اليكم
6. [ ] فان كان
7. [ ] وقد كنت كتبت اليك ان وبما لك ]
8. [ ] تكتبني الى بجواب كتابي ]
9. [ ] علينا (vac.)
10. [ ] اما الخروج الينا الا ما نرجوا لك من رفق ]
11. [ ] ننظر في وجوهكم فان كنت خارجة الينا فكتبني 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 ] السلام  
 16. [ والسلام عليكم ورحمت الله وبركته ]

**Side B:**

بعد المغرب (٤) (vac.) مسجد الاحرون (٤)

**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 and .....m 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 *aṣḥaḥanā Allāh wa-īyyāki ṣalāh man raḍiya 'anhu*, see *aṣḥaḥanā Allāh wa-īyyāka bi-mā aṣḥaḥa bihi awliyā'ahu wa-ahl ṭā'atihi* (CPR XVI 33.5-6, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>); *aṣḥaḥanā Allāh wa-īyyāka bi-mā aṣḥaḥa 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>).

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. *Abliḡhū jamī'*. The scribe first wrote a singular imperative, i.e. *abliḡh*, 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

1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

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 *ʿayn* is open at the top (l. 7 *yajʿala*). Initial and medial *kāfs* are horizontally elongated (l. 4 *alaykum*; l. 7 *wa-yyākum*; l. 9 *kullihī*). The tail of the final *mīm* is extremely short (l. 7 *yyākum*). Final *yā* extends backwards (l. 4 *fa-innī*; l. 9 *fī*).

This letter has been sent from one ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān to a certain ʿAmmār and another three women, i.e. Umm ʿAbd al-Jabbār, Umm Sahl and Umm ʿAbd ?. 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[حمن الى عمار بن ابى]
3. [وام عبد ا]لجبار وام سهل وام عـ[بد]
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 وعليكم نعمته]
7. [وان يـ]لبسنا وايكم عافيته وان يجعلـ[ل مصيرنا وايكم الجنة برحمته]
8. [وان يرضى]عنا وعنكم وان نشكره حـ[ق شكره]
9. [وان يجمع]بيننا فى الخير كله فالحمد لله
10. [ ] [فيما احـ]

## 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. The name appears also in this corpus in 5v.2. See also the female form Sahla in P.RāgibLettres 11r.2, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>.

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 ka-lladhī 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-iiyyākum 'āfiyatahu wa-an yaj'ala maṣīranā wa-iiyyākum al-janna bi-raḥmatihi.* For the first part of this blessing; cf. *nas'alu Allāh an yutimma 'alaynā wa-'alaykum ni'matahu ayḍan* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 28.7, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *nas'alu Allāh an yutimma 'alayka wa-'alaynā ni'matahu* (CPR XVI 27.2, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>). For the middle part, see *nas'alu Allāh an yulbisanā wa-iiyyāka 'āfiyatahu* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 25.4, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *albasaka 'āfiyatahu* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 24.3, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and P.Heid.Arab. II 32.2, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). As for the final part; cf. *wa-ja'ala maṣīranā wa-iiyyāka al-janna bi-raḥmatihi* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 26.3, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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 kullihi 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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

#### Side B:

[*Min 'Abd*] *al-Raḥmān 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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>  
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 *salāmatihi*; 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] لـ [ج] لك 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 ذل] لك
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 يقيقك في خبـ [ر وعافية وان يقيقك ما دام]
11. [ا حتى نراك في خير وعافية]
12. [كتابك الى وبعثت لك كل]
13. [ما بعثت به الى فاسل الله]
14. [له خير وقره عين]
15. [اسلمهم عنك وعن سلامتك]
16. [باكر يخرج الا وانا اكتب اليك معه]

17. [فيه لك على من الحق وانه لم يبقا  
 18. [اهم فاما الزبير فهو عند ايوب  
 19. مـ[سكين 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. [عه به فاسل الله ان يمتعك به وان يبقيك  
 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-raḥmatihi*. Blessings of this kind following the transitional element *amma ba’dū* are very common in early letters. Cf. ‘*āfānā Allāh wa-īyyāka min kull sū’ wa-ja’ala maṣīranā wa-īyyāka jannāt al-na’īm bi-raḥmatihi* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 31.3-4, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and P.Horak 85.4-5, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and the examples provided in both commentaries). See also chapter one, formulary. Traces of *bi-raḥmatihi* can be made out at the end of this line. The expression *bi-raḥmatihi* 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Marchands II 8.7, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> 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 salāmatihi 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *waṣala ilayya kitābuka ḥafīẓaka Allāh wa-fahimtu mā katabta bihi ilayya min salāmat Allāh iyyāka fa-ḥamidtu Allāh ‘alayhi ḥamdan kathīran* (P.Marchands V/I 18.4,

3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-ṣala ilayya kitābuka fa-qara’uhu wa-fahimtu mā katabta min salāmat Allāh iyyāka fa-sarranī dhālika wa-ḥamidtu Allāh ‘alā dhālika kathīran* (P.Marchands II 24.5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *qad fahimtu kitābaka wa-mā dhakarta fihi min khabar salāmat wa-ṣalāh ḥālika ‘alā mā sarraka* (CPR XVI 34.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>); *kitābī ilayka a‘azzaka Allāh ‘an salāma wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh kathīran* (P.Heid.Arab. II 18.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *kitābī ilaykumā a‘azzakumā Allāh ‘an salāma wa-‘āfiya wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh kathīran* (P.Heid.Arab. II 57.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *kitābī hādhā wa-anā bi-ḥāl ‘āfiya wa-salāma wa-li-llāh al-ḥamdu lā sharīk lahu* (P.Khalili I 20v.2, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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

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, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>); *innī anā insān miskīn* (P.Jahn 7 [= P.World, 185].4, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *fa-innahu miskīn* (P.World, 162, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *wa-naḥnu ḍu’afā’ masākīn* (P.Ryl.Arab. II (2) 11.9, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *anā mar’a miskīna ..... fa-innī miskīna ḍa’īfa mustaghītha bi-llāh thuma bika* (P.Ryl.Arab. I XV 1.2, 4-5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *masākīn ḍu’afā’* (P.Marchands II 20.5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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.<sup>296</sup> The term is widely attested in the papyri. Cf. P.World, 163 [= P.Marchands V/I 7r.7], 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Marchands III 14r.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Marchands V/I 9r.12, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Marchands V/I 15.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. *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*.<sup>297</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *hattā tab’atha ilayhi bi-l-jubbatayn ..... al-nabaṭī alladhī ba’athta ma’ahu bi-l-jubba quṭn* (P.Marchands II 9.9, 17, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *fī thaman jubba* (P.GrohmannWirtsch. 16v.6, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). A woolen *jubba* costs four *dirhams*, while another one costs twenty two and one sixth *dirhams*. See P.GrohmannWirtsch. 14.5, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>; 16v.6, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. A luxurious blackish *jubba* of velvet costs eight *dīnārs* (“*thaman jubba khaz dakinā thamaniyat danānīr*,” P.Cair.Arab. VI 394B.11, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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.

<sup>296</sup> Stillman (2000), 12.

<sup>297</sup> 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

12.5 x 10

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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.<sup>298</sup> 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 تخص 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 [له 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 .... 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 فيشكرك فانظر ابقاك الله ان تكتب الى بخبر
12. وخبر [عز] عزيزة ابقاها الله وخبر عبد الر[حيم
13. فابلغهما منى سلاما كثيرا مع كتابك الى بخبرك و[حالك وحوايحك]
14. والسلام عليك ورحمت الله وبركا[ته]

<sup>298</sup> See chapter one, formulary. See also in this corpus letters 26.5-6; 31.20-23.

## Diacritical dots

(4) احب; قدرت; اتي (6) فاعدني (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-qad 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 ilayyka jār yamurru bi-‘Abd al-Jabbār*. Sending letters with neighbors is well attested in letters. Cf. *kitābī hādhā ma‘a jārī wa-ṣadiqī Abū al-Ḥadīd al-‘aṣṣār*

(CPR XVI 22.8, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-hādhā jārunā yusamā Bulbul arsaltu ma‘ahu kitābī* (P.Marchands II 28.6, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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

14.5 x 12.8

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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> لله 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 ]

لا بى يحيى ابن يسرة بلغ (vac.) يرحمك الله

### Diacritical dots

(2 يحيى 7) بدعني 8) امي 10) بني ركري 12) عسي ركري

### 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>.

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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-qurra 'ayn* (in this corpus, 9.15). See also *wa-aqirr '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 *balligh 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 Fuṣṭāṭ

P.Cair.Arab.inv. 403

22 x 13.5

1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Probably Fuṣṭāṭ

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-Admāʾ, 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-Rabīʿ 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.<sup>299</sup> 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 سلم 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

<sup>299</sup> See also chapter one, script.

12. حمكما الله اما بعد فان مهدى قدم القرية [وهو]  
 13. بخير كما تحبان والسلم عليكما ورحمت [الله]  
 14. كتب الربيع بن مسلم وهو يقرأ عليكما [السلم]  
 15. وارسلنا لى قطعة من قرطاس اكتب الـ[يكما]  
 16. به

**Side B:**

من سلمن بن مغيث الى عبيد بن يسار

**Diacritical dots**

(3 اليكما 4 ان 6 ففد 7 بعد 8 فد 9 اشفق 10 انى 11 بانى; سليمان 12 بعد; فان; القرية 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, Mahdī 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.RāgibLettres 9.2, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>.

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 qit'a min qirtās aktubu ilaykumā bihi*. For parallels, see *wa-b'ath ilayya qit'a qirtās aktubu fihā* (P.Khalili I 27v.9, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). For *qirtās* (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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>  
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-ṣaḥāba*; 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 ابي زياد [سلم] عليك فاني

4. احمد [اليك] الله [الذى]
5. لا اله الا هو [اما بعد] فانى اخبرك
6. من خبرنا ا[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 وا[د]خله الجنة والله فاعل
10. ان شا الله وانه قد وجدنا توفيته فوق ما
11. تظنون وان كان قد [ ] من سنه وانه اع[تق]
12. مقسم فى شهيدا صالحين من اصحابنا من
13. قبل ان يتوفى بزمان وان مقسم والله
14. لقد كان ا[ ] فى ذلك واحسن له ا
15. لصحابه حت[ا] ل[و] كنت انت لم تقومى
16. عليه كنحو 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 كنحو 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 فانا 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) فاعل (11) سنه; اعنى (12) مقسم (13) بز... (16) كنحو (18) يسا (20) كنحو; صبر (21) الخص (23) الضعيف

## 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 Khālīd 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>. 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'ḏama Allāh ujūrakum wa-raḥimanā wa-iyyāhu wa-u'limuka 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 fa-raḥimanā Allāh wa-iyyāhu wa-huwa al-sabīl ḥattā lā yabqā aḥad* (P. Marchands II 24.11-15, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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 Maḏūr, *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, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>); *fa-aḥsana Allāh jazā'aka* (P.Marchand III 27.12, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *fa-lā jazāhā Allāh khayran* (P.Heid.Arab. II 56.13, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-aḥsana jazā'aka ..... aḥsana laka jazā'aka* (P.Marchand II 39.18, 21, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> and Heid.Arab. II 42.2, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>).

#### 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.<sup>300</sup> For other attestations of this *nisba* in the papyri; cf. P.Worp 65.16, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and the commentary; P.David-Weill Louvre 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 aṣḥāka* <Allāh> . The scribe left the word *Allāh* out after the honorific *aṣḥāka*. 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 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>.

5. For the Expression *dirham fulūs*, see Grohmann (1954), 217.

<sup>300</sup> 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

3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>  
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 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> 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. اطل الله بقاءك يا سيدتي [واعز]ك واكرمك [واتم نعمته] عليك [وزا]د في فضله واحسانة
3. لديك وعندك كتابي [اليك يوم الاثنين]ن [لثم]ان ليال بقين مـ[ن صفر وان]ا بحال سلامة والحمد لله كثيرا على ما دهاني
4. وافجعني 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 السـ[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 (؟) واع[انه على ما ولاه من امور] دنياه واخرته وانا [احب] احبك الله ان لا تقطعي عني كتابك بخبرك وحالك وبحاجة ان كانت انت
11. فيها مسارك و[ا]نت موفقة [ان شا] الله وصلى الله على محمد النبي وعلى اله وسلم كثيرا
12. اطل الله بقاءك وادام عزك وكرامتك واتم نعمته عليك وزاد في فضله واحسانه لديك وعندك

### Side B:

الى ام القسم ابنت زكريا اخت يحيى اطل الله بقاءها (vac.) من رقية ابنت يحيى بن زكريا المعروف بالحبال يدفع بمكة بد.... بلغ هديت

### Diacritical dots

(3 بقين 4 وفاه 5 بنقوا 6 بنقا; وفاه 7 صعيقه; 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 *basmala* a black strip of 1 cm wide covering an old text is still visible.

2. For letters starting with initial blessings after the *basmala*, 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>). 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. *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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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, 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>. The formula *uḥibbu aḥabaka Allāh* is also reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see CPR XVI 22.10, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.GrohmannWirtsch. 3[= P.Marchands V/I 7].7-8, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. 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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

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. لابی الازهر من ابی الازهر سلم [عليك فانی 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 <ه عليه فعند> الـ [له احتسب مصيبتيه واقول على]
8. ذلك انا لله وانا الـ [يه را] جعو [ن 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 والـ [يانـ] الـ [الاسـ]
16. يعمل صالحا يبلغك وایانا ]
17. برحمته ابلغ ابا عثمان منا [لسلم وابلغ]
18. تعزيتنا اياه بابى عبد العـ [زيز]
19. تولاك الله وایانا بالعا [فية والسلم عليك ورحمت الله]

**Side B:**

[إلى أبي الأزهر من] أبي الأزهر عثمان بن عمار

**Diacritical dots**

(16) تعزيتنا; إياه

**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-asmāʾ*, 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 papyri; 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 *yāʾ* (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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and the examples given in the commentary.

6. [Bala]ghanā alladhī kāna min qaḍāʾ Ab[ū ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. The *bāʾ* 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 *tāʾ* 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). For the final part, *ṣabran wa-ḥtisāban wa-taslīman li-amr Allāh*, see Younes, Arabic letters of condolence 5.16, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. 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 *hāʾ* (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 ʿarabtum fī al-arḍi fa-aṣabatkum muṣibatu 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 *yāʾ* 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 *jamīʿ* 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

15. *Fa-razaqaka Allāh wa-īyyānā al-as*[. *Wa-īyyānā* 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 iyyāhu*, see *bi-taʿziyatika iyyāya* (Younes, Arabic letters of condolence 5.2, 13, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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-īyyānā bi-l-ʿāfiya*, see *tawallāki Allāh bi-ḥifẓihi* (P.Marchands II 28r.9, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>  
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 'Uthmān, 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.<sup>301</sup>

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. [ ] ي ا حـ ]
2. [ ] على ا ]
3. [ ] به حا فى [ ] ا حـ ]
4. [ ] اقول على ذلك [ ] انا لله وانـ ] اليه راجعون فى
5. مصيبتنا فى ا حـ ] نـ ] وفل فيرحمه الله وصلى عليه وا
6. دخله الجنة [ عـ ] رفقها له فوالله ان مصيبتكم لـ ] يـ ]
7. لمصيبة وان حزنكم لى حزن وفرحكم لى فرح الله
8. يعلم ذلك فعليك يام عثمان بالصبر فان الصـ ] بر ]
9. منجا وان الموت سبيل الاولين والاخرين ليس
10. لاحد براة من الموت قال الله لنبيه ا [ ] ما ]

## Diacritical dots

(6 حرن; فرحكم; فرج 8) منحا (9 لنبيه

## Translation

<sup>301</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Marchands III 29.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>.

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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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-lākin nahu 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>).

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  
Provenance: Unknown

27 x 17.5

ca. 105-108/724-727  
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.<sup>302</sup> 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 *ʿaḏīm* instead of *ʿaḏīm*.<sup>303</sup>

In this letter, a certain Usāma b. ʿImrān writes to 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). 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 المؤمنين 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. وعليك نعمته وفضله علينا عظيم واصيدك بتقوى
8. الله ان الله راس كل حكمة والسلم عليكم

#### Diacritical dots

<sup>302</sup> The Coptic text will be published by Alain Delattre.

<sup>303</sup> Hopkins § 39.b, 41. See also language in chapter one.

(2 الي (3 الي (4 الي (5 فاني; صلحن (6 الي (7 سوي

### 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and the commentary; CPR XXI, 119. For other blessings on the *amīr* such as *ḥafīẓahu 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 *asʿalu Allāh an yutimma ʿalaynā wa-ʿalayka niʿmatahu*, see in this corpus 22.8-9. Post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *asʿalu* 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>). See also Grohmann (1954), 104; Hopkins § 39.b.

**7-8.** *Wa-awṣika bi-taqwā Allāh inna Allāh ra's kull ḥikma*. This expression echoes expressions used in prophetic *ḥadīths*. Cf. *awṣika 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 awṣikum 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

27 x 17.5

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sa'd 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 صانعة 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-Yaḥṣubī 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-Yaḥṣubī

## 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* Yaḥṣubī refers to Yaḥṣub, 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.<sup>304</sup> After the conquest and the foundation of the city of Fuṣṭāṭ, Yaḥṣub had their own *khiṭṭa* to the east of the *khiṭṭa* of al-Ma‘āfir.<sup>305</sup>

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.

<sup>304</sup> Al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 12, 390.

<sup>305</sup> 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 sister<sup>306</sup>

P.Cam.Michaelides A 1041 verso

39 x 15.5

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Probably Fustāt

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 Fustāt (*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.<sup>307</sup>

## Text

## Side B:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من غلام عمرو الى
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. فانسل الله ان يفرج لنا منها
10. وما كان يمنعني من الكتاب

<sup>306</sup> For other published recommendation letters, see P.RāgibLettres 14, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>307</sup> See also chapter one, script.

11. اليك بها من بامرك (؟) ولا جفا
12. [اليك] وانى كتبت الى امى اقريك
13. السلم واخبرك امتعننى الله بحيا<ت>ك
14. ولا اماتنى حتا يرنى الله وجوهكم
15. قبل الموت فى خير وعافية [ان امرأة]
16. ممن كانت تسـ[كـ]ـن زويلة يقال لـ[ها]
17. حمادة بنت ابراهيم 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 وز عمت انها تنزل عند
23. بلل البيطار فى دار صرد ابو الحسام
24. فان رايت ياختى امتعننى الله بك ان
25. تذهبى انت نفسك فتسلى عنها حتا
26. تقدرى عليها وتلقبها 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 باحنى (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,

- Side A:**

## Commentary

5. The expression [aḥsana Allāh ilayka fī al-dunyā] wa-l-ākḥira is restored on the basis of parallels. Cf. wa-u'limuka aḥsana Allāh ilayka (P.Berl.Arab. II 25-6, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>). Of al-dunyā only the final *alif* is preserved. The *rā'* and *tā'* *marbūta* of al-ākḥira are missing.

**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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *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, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>); *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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-anā wa-man qibalī ‘alā aḥsan al-ḥāl wa-llāh maḥmūd* (P.RāḡibLettres 6.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

**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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-innī fī shidda mā uḥibbu wa-llāh kull mā bi-yaddika* (P.Gen.inv 13.10-11, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa qad ta’lam anā fī shidda* (P.Gen.V 15.6, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *fa-’jjil ‘alayya wa-lā tata’akhhkar ... kharaja fī shidda* (P.Gen.V 19.5-6, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

**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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>).

**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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-yaj’alu yawmī qabla yawmiki wa-lā yumītānī yā sittī ḥamy minki ‘alayya qabla an yuriyanī wajhaki* (P.Heid.Arab. II 51.8, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-lā amātānī Allāh yā Umm Muḥammad wa-yā Umm ‘Abbāsa ḥattā arākum fī ‘āfiya* (CPR XVI 30.13-14, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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.<sup>308</sup> The city was inhabited by Arabs since early Islamic times.<sup>309</sup> In the eighth century, the city developed into an important commercial centre of the Ibādīs. In

<sup>308</sup> al-Ḥamawī, *Mu’jam*, vol. 3, 159-160.

<sup>309</sup> 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.<sup>310</sup> 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 *Fuṣṭāṭ*. Normally, *Fuṣṭāṭ* occurs together with *Miṣr*; cf. *allatī bi-fuṣṭāṭ miṣr* (P.Khalili I 13.3, dated 280/894); *bi-fuṣṭāṭ miṣr* (P.David-WeillLouvres 20.6, dated 208/823); *al-sākin fuṣṭāṭ miṣr* (P.RāḡibTroisDocuments 1.5, dated 215/865); *fī bayt al-māl bi-fuṣṭāṭ miṣr* (P.World, 121, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

21-22. *Aḥbābtu an u'limaki dhālika*. This expression and variants of it are frequent in letters. Cf. *aḥbābtu i'lāmaka dhālika abqāka Allāh* (P.RāḡibLettres 13.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *aḥbābtu i'lāmaka dhālika limā a'lamu min surūrika bihi* (P.Marchands II 35.5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> and P.Marchands V/I 20.1, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *aḥbābtu i'lāmaka dhālika li-takūna minhu 'alā 'ilm* (P.Ryl.Arab. I I 5[= P.World, 171].18, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *aḥbābtu i'lāmaka dhālika li-taqifa 'alayhi in shā'a Allāh* (P.Hamb.Arab. II 1v.5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). See also in this corpus *wa-nṣur 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).

<sup>310</sup> 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 hādh<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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>  
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-abī*).

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.<sup>311</sup>

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. بسم 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[ا 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 نرجو ک لحياتنا ولموتنا من ] نسل[
14. الله بک المتاع وطول البقا کن ]
15. تبعا هديا بکتابک قبل ذلك مما ]

<sup>311</sup> See chapter one, dating.

16. بها عيالنا اذا عابثوه [اذ] ا ]  
 17. عن صلتهم بنفسك قادم كتابكم ا[ن 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) لنراك (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 *bāʾ* 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 Nuʿaym wa-ahlihi min Abī ʿAmr*. The *yāʾ* of *abī* extends backwards into the margin. The name *Nuʿaym* appears also in this corpus in 11.2.

3. For the female name *Umāma*, see Gratzl (1906), 61.

3-4. The formula *salām ʿalayka fa-innī aḥmadu ilayka Allāh alladhī lā ilāh illā huwa ammā baʿdu* 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-ʿāfiya*. An exact parallel for this formula is not attested, but see *wa-razaqaka ʿalayhi al-ṣiḥa* (CPR XVI 24.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> and the examples provided in the commentary). Of *al-ʿāfiya* only the *fāʾ* is preserved.

5-6. *Wa-jaʿalanā Allāh wa-iyyākum min ahl jannatihi*. This formula is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. See for example *wa-jaʿalanā Allāh wa-iyyāka min ahl al-janna bi-ʿizzatihi wa-qudratihi* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 29.5, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and the examples provided in the commentary). Likewise, the formula *katabnā ilaykum wa-naḥnu bi-ḥāl ʿāfiya 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 ʿalā aḥdāl ḥāl wa-rabbunā maḥmūd* (P.Marchands II 1.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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 asʿaluhu*. This sentence exhibits the placement of the object before the verb, see P.Khalili I 18.19, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> and the examples given in the commentary. The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted in *asʿaluhu* (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 *tāʾ* 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-ikhāʾ wa-l-ṣiḥr*. For parallels of this formula, see *limā ajrā Allāh baynanā wa-baynaka min al-ikhāʾ wa-l-qarāba* (CPR XVI 7.10, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>). See also in this corpus *fī alladhī jaʿala Allāh baynī wa-baynaka min al-ṣiḥr wa-l-ḥaqq* (2.22). The post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *al-ikhāʾ* (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-ḥayātīnā 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-ḥayātīnā 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *kitābī ilayka ju'iltu fidā'aka min al-fuṣṭāṭ fī arba'at ayyām maḍaw min sha'bān* (P.RāḡibLettres 17.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-kutiba yawm al-khamīs ḍaḥwatan* (P.Heid.Arab. II 7.9, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *kitābī ilayka a'azaka Allāh yawm al-jum'a* (P.Heid.Arab. II 35.3, 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>); *yawm katabtu ilayka wa-huwa al-khamīs* (CPR XVI 11.8, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-katabtu ilayka yawm al-aḥad ṣalāt al-ghadā* (CPR XVI 22.5, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>); *kitābī ilayka abqāka Allāh min al-iskandariyya laylat al-thulāthā'* (P.Marchands II 35.2, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-kutiba yawm al-sabt* (P.Marchands V/I 10.5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *innī katabtu ilayka hādhā al-kitāb ba'da al-suḥūr* (P.Marchand II 1m.1-2, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).<sup>312</sup>

## 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.

<sup>312</sup> See also Grob (2010a), 49-50, note 72.

## 25.

**Letter maintaining the relationship between the sender and the addressee**

P.Cam.Michaelides A 15

14.5 x 25

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 ا[ الله وايـاك من طاعته وخشيته ما ]
2. به الكرامـة ويـا 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. ومعرفة به [ ]
5. ولم يكن احد اولا بحسن النظر فيه ولا المدوامـة عـ[لـيـه] ولا الرعاية
6. فيه ولا الصلة له منك للذي جـ[عـ]ـل الله فيك وعند[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 لشي
10. منها جوابا فالله يغفر لنا ولك ما كنت اظن [هذا] الجفا
11. كـ[لـ]ـه بك [ ] حالك به واسـ[لـ] الله ان [ ]
12. وصلنا احـ[مـ]ـد الله بلطفـ[هـ]

**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-iyyāka 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-ḥurmatihi wa-ḥaqq al-qarāba wa-ma'rifatihi*. 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 fīhi wa-lā al-mudāwama 'alayhi wa-lā al-ri'āya fīhi 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 fīka wa-'indaka wa-limā qasama Allāh laka min ḥusn al-ra'y wa-sadāk ilayhi wa-baṣṣaraka min ḥalāl kitābihi wa-ḥarāmihi*. 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'ān 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); wa-lā adrī mā mana'aka an taktuba ilaynā bi-khabarika wa-salāmatika (CPR XVI 4.6, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>); wa-innī qad kuntu muntaẓir arā minka kitāb fa-lā adrī mā mana'aka an taktub ilayya bi-salāmatika wa-ṣalāhika (P.RāḡibLettres 11.10-13, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); wa-mā adrī mā mana'akum min al-kitāb ilayya fī amr al-ṣabiyya (P.Heid.Arab. II 30.10, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); mā adrī mā alladhī mana'aka kamā wa'adtanī fī kitābika (P.Marchands V/I 18.5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); wa-fahimtu mā dhakarta min istibṭāka amr 'Abd al-Raḥmān wa-ta'khīrīnā al-ghālī li-jawābika fīhi marra ukhrā (CPR XVI 27.4, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>); wa-waqaftu bihi 'alā alladhī dhakarta fīhi min ta'khīr kitābī 'anka (CPR XVI 32.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); lam aqra' laka kitāb fī hādhihi al-jum'a (P.Marchands III 1.2-3; 5.2-3 all 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); lam asma' laka a'azzaka Allāh khabar (P.Heid.Arab. II 35.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); mundhu thalāthat ashhur mā ānasanā minkum khabar marra wa-lā marra (CPR XVI 30.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); qad katabtu ilayka kitāban qabla hādhā wa-lam aqra' laka jawāb kitābī ilayka (P.Berl.Arab. II 77.2-3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); qad katabtu ilayka kathīr fa-lam ya'tinī minka jawāb kitāb ilayka (P.Berl.Arab. II 72.10-11, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>).<sup>313</sup> 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 tujībī 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 aẓunnu 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). The post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *al-jafā'* (Hopkins § 21.b). *Mā kuntu aẓunnu.* 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.

<sup>313</sup> See also Grob (2010a), 52.

## 26.

## Complaining about the lack of replies

P.CtYBR.inv. 2714

20.2 x 13.5

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 الرحمن الرحيم]
2. [الى] ابى يزيد من رايح فتا سعيد سلم عليـك فانى احمد اليك الله الذى لا اله الا هو اما بـ[عد رضى الله عنا وعناك من مكاره الدينـ]ـا والاخرة برحمته
3. [كتبت اليك و] انا سالم صالح كما يسرك والـ[لـ]ـه محـ[مو]ـد ]
4. [ ] ر السلم واقرا منى على طلحة السـ[لـ]ـم
5. [وعلى ا] يوب السلم وانظر ان تهدي لى ابر ]
6. [ ] يل واخبرك انى واجد عليك ]
7. [قد كتبت] اليك بهذه سبعة كتب فلم ارا منـ[ك لشي منها جوابا]
8. [ـ]ـصله العنب فلا تدع الكتاب اليـنا بـ[خبرك وحالك وسلامتك]
9. [وبالحاجة] تكون لك فان فيها الذى يسرك ]
10. [ ] وانظر بحق ما بينى وبينك من الاخا الا مـ[ـ]ـا فعلت
11. [ ] بينك وبينه فانى مسرور بسور رد ]
12. [و]السلم عليك ورحمت الله ]
- 13.

## Side B:

رقعة [الى] ابى يزيد (vac.) من رايح فتا سـ[عـ]ـيد

## 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 Saʿīd. 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 servant of S[aʿīd]

### Commentary

#### Side A:

2. The proper name Rābiḥ could also be read as Rāʿiḥ, 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. The *ḥamdala* is reconstructed on the basis of parallels.

3. For the expression *makāriḥ al-dunyā wa-l-ākḥira bi-raḥmatiḥi*, 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 naghṣilu 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 wājīd 'alayka*, see in this corpus *fa-lā tajīd '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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-in kāna 'indaka 'inab shatawiyy fa-b'ath ilayya bi-shay' minhu* (P. Jahn 12r [= Chrest. Khoury I 98].12-13, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>). 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. RāḡibPlusAncienneLetter, 5; Diem (2008), 857.

## 27.

## Request for replies and taking care of the sender's family

P.CtYBR.inv. 2604

28x 22.4

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

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. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
2. لابی محمد [د] من ابی [سلم عليك فانی]
3. [ا]حم [د] [لی]ك الله الذى لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. اما [بع]د [عافانا الله وایاك وعفا عنا]
5. وعنك كتبت [اليك كتابی هذا وانا على الذى يسرك]
6. وقد عرضناهم ور [ما]
7. قد كتبت اليك بكتاب [قبل هذا]
8. لم تجبني فيه بشئ فظننت [وقد بعثت]
9. بكتاب الى ابی محمد عاف [ل]ه الله [مع كتابی هذا]
10. فادفعه اليه وابعث بجوابك ان شاء الله
11. واكتب الى باخبار ما قبلکم فانی [سر بذلك]
12. ابو زکیر وعبد الرحمن بن مسلم یقریاک السلم [ ]
13. واستوصی باهلنا خیرا ولا الومنک فیهم ان شاء الله
14. رضى الله عنا وعنك والسلم عليك ورحم [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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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 ḥādhā]*. 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-dhālīka* is reconstructed on the basis of parallels; cf. P.Khalili I 36.15, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; CPR XVI 29.9, 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>; P.Heid.Arab. II 65.24<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>. See also *ḥattā usarru bihā* (P.Jahn 15.6, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *fa-innī usarru bihā* (P.David-WeillEdfou 1r.17, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

12. The name Zakīr is well attested in the papyri; cf. CPR XXVI 19.17, early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> 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

8.5 x 12.2

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 فاني]
3. احمد اليك الله الذي لا اله الا هـ-و (vac.)
4. اما بعد عافنا الله واياك [وعفا عنا وعناك]
5. الله ابي كثير اذا خرج [الى]
6. صاحب كتابي هذا فانه ليس لي ا[حد]
7. امتع الله <بك> فانه لا احد يكفني الا [الله وانت]
8. اسأل 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'du* 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 *illā* 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-anta ta'lam an laysa lī khalq illā Allāh wa-anta* (P.Khalili I 24.5-6, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). See also *annahu laysa lī al-yawm akh bi-māḥabbatihi ghayraka* (P.Jahn 9.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *fa-in laysa lī akh ghayraka* (P.David-WeillLouvre 3.12, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *laysa aḥad illā antum* (P.Marchands II 19.7, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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

12 x 12.5

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 'ayn is extended to the right (l. 3 'āfānā). 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 و[نك كتبت اليك وانا بحال عافية والله]
4. محمود الله (vac.) نسل تمام ما بنا وبك من نعمة (vac.) اح[ 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[سل ان]
9. واكتب الينا بحالك وهيتك وحوادث نعم الله[له عندك]
10. الله وبالحاجة تكون لك ابلغ من قبلك ال[سلم رضى الله]
11. عنا وعنك رضا لا سخط بعده والسلام ع[ليك 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 *basmala*, 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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**, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and the examples in the commentary). The expression, *wa-ḥawādith ni'am Allāh 'indaka*, is reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see for example P.RāḡibLettres **13.5-6**, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>.

**10-11.** For the blessing *raḍiya Allāh 'annā wa-'anka riḍan lā sukhṭa ba'dahu* and variants of it, see Sijpesteijn (2013) **33.7-8**, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> 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

15 x 14.5

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 *nīmā*). 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]-ن 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 ونعم-ته
6. [وان] نعد نعمنا 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. [ ] -رانا اليها فنحن للناس فيما سالتهم وكنا قد [ ]
10. [ ] يا ابي حفصة سالم صالح وتنتظرون ان تكتبونا [لينا بخبركم وسلامتكم]
11. [وحوايحكم] 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*.<sup>314</sup> 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

<sup>314</sup> 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 *īyyānā wa-īyyākum 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 quwwa illā bi-llāh*), see letter 1.9 and the commentary.

10. *Yā Abī Ḥaḥṣa*. *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

23.8 x 40.6

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 *ashr*). 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.<sup>315</sup> 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

<sup>315</sup> 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 اهلن[ا ر]حم[ك] الله فانما هم
13. اهلك وقد قدم علينا مرز[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 بالخلاص والعافية
23. فى الامور كلها برحمته واقرا على ابي 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 فبارك 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:

لا بى 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. Maḥdī 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-raḥmatihi*. An exact parallel for this formula is not attested, but see *wa-ḥamdu Allāh 'alā 'āfiyatihi iyyāka* (CPR XVI 18.6, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>). 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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 Dimyāt and buying linen

P.CtYBR.inv. 2705

14.1 x 9.5 &amp; 14.7 x 13.2

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

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 Dimyāt). 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 Dimyāt 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 مسـ[لم سلم عليك] فاني احمد اليك الله الذي
3. لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. اما بعد عافنا الـ[له واياك باحسن] عافـ[يتـ]ه في الدنيا والاخرة
5. وجعل مصيرنا و[اياك الجنة برحمتـ]ه كتبت اليك حيـ[ن] قدمت
6. دمياط وانا سا[لم صالح والله مدـ]مود [قد]د [ا] حسن الله لنا الصحابة
7. وله الحمد وكان [ ] واكتب اليك ابا رجا بخبرك
8. وسلامتك وبـ[حالك وحوايحك] اخـ[بـ]رك اني قدمت دمياط
9. فوجدت البز فشر[يته] ا[فـ]ا[نسل] الـ[له ان يوفق لنا حاجتنا
10. وان يبارك لنا فـ[يها ان شا الله و] السلم عليك ورحمـ[ت] الله
11. اقرا مني على كل [اصحابنا السلم] وعلى اهلك وعيالك مني السلم

## Side B:

للمسور بن رجا الونبى من (vac.) [الخير بن مسـ[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 prai]sed. 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 bou[ght 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-iyāka al-janna bi-rahmatihi*. An exact parallel for this formula can be found in Sijpesteijn (2013) 26.3-4, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>. *Qadimtu* is written differently from the way in which it is written in line 8, but the reading is certain.

6. *Dimyāt* 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 ṣālīḥ 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-ṣaḥāba*, see in this corpus *wa-aḥsan lahu al-ṣaḥāba* (17.14-15). See also '*asā an yuḥsina Allāh laka al-ṣaḥāba wa-yaqḍiya laka ḥājataka* (P.Louvre 6842.2-4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-nas'alu Allāh an yuḥsina lakumā al-ṣaḥāba wa-yusallimakumā* (P.Leiden OR 12885-18, l. 5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> (unpublished)). Expressions using the term *ṣuḥbat* is uncommon in the papyri (Hopkins § 118).

7-8. *Uktub ilayynā, Abā Rajā', bi-khabarika wa-salāmatika 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 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. *Dimyāt* was famous for its precious *sharb*-linen as many papyri indicate, see for example P.Cair.Arab. VI 389.12-13, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. Of *fa-sharaytuhu* only the *fā'*, *shīn* and *rā'* are still visible.

9-10. *Fa-as'alu Allāh an yuwaḥḥiq lanā ḥāḡatinā wa-an yubārīka lanā fīhā*. For the final part of this expression; cf. *fa-nas'alu Allāh an yubārīka laka fī ...* (CPR XVI 11.12, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

10. *Raḡmat* is spelled with an extra tooth and the loop of the *mīm* is written above the line. Of *fīhā* only upper traces of the *fā'* can be seen before the lacuna.

11. Post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in *aqrī'* (Hopkins § 20.b) and the *alif maqṣūra* of '*alā* is omitted (Hopkins § 55.i). The ink is smudged obscuring the reading of the word *aqrī'*. The *lām* and *alif* of '*iyālīka* are not connected. For the reconstruction of *aṣḡabinā*, 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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

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 *ʿayn* extends to the right (l. 4 *ʿalayka*). 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. ʿAmr instructs a certain b. Abū ʿĀbid, 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 الله واياك فى الامور كلها و] عفا عنا وعنك]
5. [با اخبرك ا] ان اهلك وولدك عـ[لى ما يسرك]
6. [ان نفذ راحين (؟) بالبيعة وزعمـ]وا]
7. [وقد احصاه والقا العلق فتشـ]ترى]
8. [لنا بـدر] هم راحين (؟) ان شا الله (vac.)
9. [ر متعت بك ان تعين ابو يزيد عـ]
10. [محمد بن اسيد وهو اربعة اسـ]
11. [به كنا جميعا فى كـ]
12. [وتشـترى] لى بدرهم زيتون من دمياط وبد[رهم]
13. [اقرى على] اصحابنا السلم كثير وعـ[لى 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>.

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 *mutī'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-ıyyāka* 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 clear 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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>  
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. وذكر له ان تعينه بابلنا واجرانا حتا ياتييك 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 تامله يا شترى 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] الى خادم وقد بعثت مع جميل بدرهم تامل 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

## Translation

1. [ ] . [ ]
2. [ ] this from Abū Miskīn for [ ]
3. and I mentioned to him that you will assist him with our camels and workmen until he comes to you, if God wills, soon after our letter [ ]
4. the *dīnār*. I should be informed if Jamīl did (what he is supposed to do) and if not, we will fulfill the need of Abū Salama from our trefoil which we bought as our animals' fodder.
5. If you agree, Abū Salama, may God have mercy upon you, to meet someone who buy slaves, you should order him to buy a ..... (?) black servant
6. for eigh[teen] *dīnārs*. The gold is with Ḥammād. I wrote to him concerning that, so do the best you can, may God preserve you, because she
7. needs a servant. I sent with Jamīl one *dirham*, so that you can order someone to buy for us papyrus rolls with it. Then you should send it with [ ] from [ ],
8. if God wills. For, Ḥammād is busy, the animals with him occupy him, so that he did not write to us. Send to 'Abd Allāh
9. greetings from us. Peace be upon you and God's mercy. You wrote to me asking for a debt, may God forgive you. Know that
10. this is inconvenient to me, or, I do not like it, may God preserve you.

## Commentary

2. For the name Miskīn, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr*, 1281. This name is also well attested in the papyri; cf. P.RāgibTroisDocuments 2.5, dated 255/869; P.Cair.Arab. IV 225v.5, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>; P.Marchands I 5.14, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>.

3. 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. For the expression '*alā ithr kitābinā*', see *wa-anā 'alā ithr kitābī hādhā* (P.Jahn 5.7, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>). See also in this corpus '*alā ithr dhālika*' (5.7 and 17.7 and the commentary).

4. *Al-dīnār* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.a). Also written thus in line 5. For the name Jamīl and other possible readings such as Jumayl, Ḥumayl and Khumayl, see al-Dhahabī, *Mushtabih*, 117. This name is very common in the papyri; cf. P.Cair.Arab. I, 261; II, 148; VI, 122. The name appears also in this corpus in 6.10. For *qirṭ* (Gr. *χότος*) in the papyri, see P.Cair.Arab. IV, 64-65.

5. *Fa-in ra'yta*. For the *ra'y* formula, see Grob (2010a), 61-62. *Talqā* is written with an *alif mamdūda* (Hopkins § 12.c). *Yashtarī* is written with *scriptio plena* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 11). For the blessing *raḥimaka Allāh*, see in this corpus 3.16 and the commentary. *Yashtarī khādim ifdīsa* (?) *sawdā'*. The *tanwīn alif* is missing in the direct object (Hopkins § 167.d). *Khādim* is restored on the basis of line 5 where the same word occurs. *Khādim* is also attested in this corpus in 41.2. *Khādim* is followed by feminine participles, indicating a female servant. For parallels, see *wa-qad ishtaraytu khādim ṣaqlabiya lam yabī'hā ṣāḥibuhā illā bi-sharṭ li-man yukhrijuhā 'an al-fuṣṭāṭ fa-ḍamintu lahā an ukhrijahā wa-anā ukhrijuhā ma'ī* (CPR XVI 19.20,

3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). For attestations of *khādim* as “eunuch” in the papyri, see P.Khalili I 17.address, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> 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.*<sup>316</sup> 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 *aṣḥaḥaka 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *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 *qarātīs* (sing. *qirtās*) papyrus rolls, see P.World, 22-30; Grohmann (1954), 68-71. See also in this corpus 16.15.

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<sup>316</sup> 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

14 x 25

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 قرة بن عبد الرحمن الى ربيعة بن يونة سلم عليك فاني احمد اليك [ا] لله الذي
3. لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. اما بعد عافنا [الله] واياك في الامور كلها فقد بلغني 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 وعذك (vac.)
10. والسلم ع[ليك] م و[ر] حمت الله

## Side B:

لا بى 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-īyyāka 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>. See also *wa-arāka al-‘āfiya fī umūrika kullihā* (P.Heid.Arab. II 1.11-12, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and P.Jahn 1.11-12, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *wa-atamma ni‘matahu ‘alayka fī al-umūr kullihā* (CPR XVI 9.5-6, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>); *wa-atamma fī al-umūr kullihā ni‘matahu* (P.Khalili I 14.4, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *‘āfānā Allāh wa-īyyāka 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 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; 42r.5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *fa-sarranī salāmatuka* (P.Khalili I 14.6, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *fa-sarranī salāmukūm qjma‘īn* (P.Khalili I 20v.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-surirrtu bi-‘ilm salāmatika* (P.Khalili I 30.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-sarranī salāmatuka* (P.Marchands II 2.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-sarranī salāmat Allāh iyyāka* (P.Marchands V/I 6.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *bi-mā sarranī min salāmat Allāh iyyāka* (P.Marchands V/I 20.3-4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

6. *Wa-naḥnu [h]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, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>); *uktub ilayyā bi-khabarika wa-ḥālika wa-hay'atika wa-bi-mā anta 'alayhi* (P.Jahn 17.25-26, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-anā wa-man qibalī 'alā afḍal ḥāl wa-aḥsan hay'a* (CPR XVI 33.9, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>); *bi-khabarika wa-ḥālika wa-hay'atika* (P.Ryl.Arab. I VII 33.13, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; 12.3, 10, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.RāgibLettres 6.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; 13.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Khalili I 14.6, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>; P.SijpesteijnTravel 1.5-6, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>. This expression is sometimes further extended, e.g. *wa-llāh maḥmūd lā sharīka lahu* (P.Marchands II 2.3-4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>, 35.5, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.David-WeillLouvre 1.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 2.3, dated 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; VI 14.2, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; VI 21.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; VI 25.5, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>) or *wa-llāh maḥmūd mashkūr rabb al-'alāmīn* (P.Marchands II 4.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>) or *wa-llāh maḥmūd mashkūr lā ilāh illā huwa wa-ṣallā Allāh 'alā Muḥammad* (P.Marchands II 30.2-3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; 33.3-4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; 34.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>) or *wa-llāh maḥmūd mashkūr lā sharīk lahu* (P.Marchands III 19.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Marchands V/I 20.1, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>) 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). Variants such as *wa-l-rabb maḥmūd* are also well attested in letters; cf. CPR XVI 4.6, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. See also *wa-rabbunā maḥmūd* (P.Khalili I 15r.5, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and the examples given in the commentary); *wa-rabbunā maḥmūd lā sharīk lahu* (P.Marchands II 1.3-4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-rabbunā maḥmūd kathīran kamā huwa ahluhu* (P.Marchands II 24.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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. *anbāt*), 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

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 ḥasanān 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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 *aqrī* are also used. Cf. *baligh nafsaka al-salām kathīran* (P.Marchands V/I 10.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; 20.26, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *abligh khāṣṣat nafsika al-salām* (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 25.10, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *ablighū anfasākum al-salām* (P.Marchands V/I 8.8, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *aqrī nafsaka wa-man aḥbabta al-salām* (CPR XVI 12.10, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *khuṣṣ nafsaka bi-l-salām* (P.Marchands II 1m.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *akhuṣṣ nafsaka bi-l-salām* (P.Marchands II 17.10, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>);

18.17, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; 24.17-18, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; 28.8, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *akhuṣṣ nafsaka minī bi-l-salām* (P.Marchands V/I 5.10, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *akhuṣṣ nafsaka bi-l-salām kathīran* (P.Marchands V/I 16.10, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *akhuṣṣ nafsaka bi-akthar al-salām wa-aṭyabihi* (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 3.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *iqtaḍū minnī afḍal al-salām* (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 15.14, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).<sup>317</sup> See also in this corpus, *ablighī nafsaki minī al-salām kathīran* ..... *aqri' i nafsaki al-salām* (4.14, 18); *wa-qad aḥbabtu an takhuṣṣ nafsaka minī bi-l-salām* (14.1); *aqri' nafsaka al-salām* (41.12). The prayer *raḍiya Allāh 'annā wa-'anka* and variants of it are very common in letters. See for example CPR XVI 18.12-13, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. See also *raḍiya Allāh 'anka* (P.Cair.Arab. V 295.6, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Marchands II 1.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; 6.4; 19.10; 33.7; P.David-WeillLouvre 18.9, all 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-raḍiya 'anka riḍā'an lā sukḥṭ ba'dahu wa-iyyānā bi-raḥmatihi* (P.Marchands V/I 16r.1-2, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *raḍiya Allāh 'anka riḍā'an lā yaskhaṭu 'alayka fīhi* (P.Marchands II 11.2-3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *raḍiya Allāh 'annā wa-'ankum* (P.David-WeillLouvre 11.21, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). See also in this corpus *wa-an yardā 'annā wa-'anka* (12.8); *raḍiya Allāh 'anhu* (18.4, 6); *raḍiya Allāh 'anka wa-'annā* (24.18); *wa-raḍiya Allāh 'annā wa-'anka* (26.3; 27.14; 40.13); *raḍiya Allāh 'annā wa-'anka riḍā'an lā sukḥṭa ba'dahu* (29.10-11); *raḍiya 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.

<sup>317</sup> See also Grob (2010a), 72-74; P.Khalili I, 149-150.

## 36.

## Letter about weaving a garment

P.Cam.Michaelides A 55

17 x 16.5

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 الرح- [من] الرحيم
2. لابی زکیر من مسک مولی عمران بن ا [سلم عليك]
3. فانی احمد الیک الله الذی لا اله الا [هو (vac.)]
4. اما بعد عافانا الله وایاک من الس- [و کله وجعل مصیرنا]
5. وایاک الجنة برحمته کتبت [الیک کتابی هذا ونحن]
6. سالمون صالحون کما تحب ان یبلغک م- [بن فضل الله ورحمته]
7. انظر عافاک <الله> ما کانت لک حاجة تات- [یکم ان شا الله]
8. واعرفک ابا زکیر عافاک الله انک و ا]
9. الریطة لفتلها اقرى منى على ج- [میع السلم وعلى]
10. حفص الازرق السلم کثیرا و ا [لسلم عليك ورحمت الله]

## Side B:

[من مسک مولی عمران بن ... الى یحیی بن مرزوق وهو فی مخزنه ....]

## Diacritical dots

- (1) الرحيم (2) رکیر (3) الیک (4) بعد (8) ابا زکیر (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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>. 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); ‘*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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.RāḡibLettres 14.2, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; CPR XVI 2.2-3, 8, early 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). A short vacant space is left after the transitional element *ammā ba’dū*.

5-6. *Katabtu ilayka* [kitābī hādhā wa-naḥnu] sālīmūn 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 ilayka wa-naḥnu sālīmūn mu'āfūn* (P.RāḡibLettres 13.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). Note the singular form in *katabtu* and the plural in *sālīmūn ṣāliḥūn*. The expression *kamā tuḥibbu an yablughaka* [min faḍl Allāh wa-raḥmatihī] 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, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>); 'alā mā tuḥibbu wa-yasurruka (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 5v.6, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Marchands II 8.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *kamā tuḥibbu yakūnu min al-salāma* (P.David-WeillLouvre 12-13.4, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); 'alā mā tuḥibbu an nakūna (P.RāḡibLettres 4.5, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>). 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.Loṭh 2[= P.Berl.Arab. II 75r].10, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>. See also *wa-mā kānat laka min ḥāja* (P.David-WeillLouvre 12-13.15, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *wa-ktub ilayya bi-mā kānat laka min ḥāja* (P.Heid.Arab. II 24.16, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>); *uktub ilayya bi-khabarika wa-salāmika wa-ḥālīka wa-hay'atika wa-bi-l-ḥāja takūnu laka* (CPR XVI 18.10, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>); *wa-ktub ilaynā bi-khabarika wa-ḥālīka wa-bi-mā kānat laka min ḥāja* (P.Horak 85.9-10, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>). 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*.<sup>318</sup> The term is widely attested in the papyri; cf. *wa-shiqāq wa-riyāt* (P.Marchands V/I 5.6, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-madīlayn riyāt .... thalāthat riyāt* (P.Marchands V/I 7[= P.World, 163].7-8, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *wa-madīl riyāt ... wa-yakūn sab' wa-'ishrīn 'adad al-riyāt* (P.Marchands V/I 9.12, 14, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *riyāt kulliha* (P.Marchands V/I 11.27, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); 'alā matā'ī al-riyāt (P.Marchands V/I 16.13, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *bi-dīnār riyāt jayyid .... li-dīnār riyāt* (Sijpesteijn (2013) 27.7,10, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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-raḥmat Allāh* is restored on the basis of the other letters in this corpus.

## Side B:

<sup>318</sup> 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

21.5 x 20

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 الهلا[ل]
8. ان شا الله تکارا لی ولعمر لی وسوار (?) مل[ل]
9. لی وله [ما] وسفرة راتبة فی [ا]لطریق مع ب[ل] فان رايت
10. ان يكون ذلك معک فی رقتک فافعل[ل] ان شا الله
11. ان اکون معک والا فتکارا مع ثقة ]

12. رضى الله عنك والسلام عليك ورحمت الله

Side B:

[لابى محمد عبد] الله بن مفضل من (vac.) ابى سعيد

### Diacritical dots

(6 لي 8) لي; لعلي سعيد (address)

### 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>.

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.RāgibPlusAncienneLetter, 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 Fuṣṭāṭ:  
A Muslim writes to a Copt**

P.Cam.Michaelides A Q 22  
Provenance: Probably Fuṣṭāṭ

29.5 x 15

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>  
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-fuṣṭāṭ*; 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 Fuṣṭāṭ 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*.<sup>319</sup> 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 الع-] افية 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

<sup>319</sup> 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-Muṣʿab 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 Fustāṭ 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 *rāʾ* of *al-raḥīm* are missing in the lacuna.

2. *Min al-Muṣʿab b. Ṣubayḥ ilā Jurayj* ..... For the name al-Muṣʿab 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.<sup>320</sup> The name is well attested in the papyri; cf. P.Heid.Arab. II 31.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.David-WeillLouvre 10.6, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. Owing to the fact that the letter is addressed to a non-Muslim, the *ḥamdala* is omitted altogether and the familiar *salām* greeting “*salām ʿalayka*” 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 baʿdu*. 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 yabʿathū*. Asyndetic clauses are very widespread in the papyri (Hopkins § 269.i). The *rāʾ* 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-yuʿakhir 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 *shayʿan* 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 *ʿayn* of *al-ʿāfiya* are missing in the lacuna. The post vocalic *hamza* is not written in *shāʿa* (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.

<sup>320</sup> 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

23.5 x 15

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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. Maḥdī 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 ابقر صلاس (؟) 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) اعتل; 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. Ṣuhayb. 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. *Āfānā* is written with *scriptio defectiva* of long *ā* (Hopkins § 10.c). See chapter one, language.

5. For the prayer [*wa-ja'ala*] *maṣīranā wa-īyyāka al-janna bi-raḥmatihi*, 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 ḥafīẓaka Allāh wa-fahimtu mā katabta bihi ilayya min* (P.Marchands V/I 18.4, 3<sup>rd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>). *Balaghanī* is written in exactly the same form in line 7.

6. For the expression *min khabarika wa-salāmatika wa-‘āfiyat Allāh iyyāka*, see 35.5 and the examples provided in the commentary. Of *iyyāka* 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 ‘āfāka 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>); *fa-inna fihā masarratuka* (P.Horak 85.10, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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

21 x 18

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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-ṣalāh*). 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 ] با السلم [
2. [و] قد فـ[همـ]ت الذى ذكرت من اشتراك لنا الميتى اردب [قمح/شعير
3. [فلا] تغفل عنها حتى تحرزها فى بيت من بيوب داد ا (؟) ]
4. عليه ويطلع 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 استحلف (vac.)
13. رضى الله عنا وعناك 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 Ḥafẓī. 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 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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'instiut 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). At the end of this line a *wāw* and traces of a hook can be detected.

5. *Ṣāhib al-ash'ariyya aw ujarā'uḥu*. *Al-ash'ariyya* is the place where the barley was to be sold. The term *ujarā'* (sing. *qjīr*) 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 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>. 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and the examples given in the commentary).

12. *Wa-anā astakhlif*. *Astakhlif* (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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>  
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 3<sup>rd</sup> century script, see Grob (2010a), 161-172.

This letter has been sent to a certain Abū Sulaymān Ismāʿīl b. Ayyūb from a certain ʿUbayd b. Jinān and another person describing himself as the servant of one Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd. 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. بسـ[م] الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. لابی سلـ[ب] من اسـ[م] معیل [بن ایوب من عبید بن جنان وخادم محمد بن عبید
3. سلم عليك [فانی] [احمد] اليك الله الذى لا اله الا هو (vac.)
4. اما بعد حفظـ[ك] الله وعافاك وابقاك وابقا النعمة عليك فى الدنيا
5. والاخرة اعلمك ابقاك الله انى بعثت الدواب وانا قادمين
6. ان شا اللهـ[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 وابراهيم يقريك السلم

**Side B:**

لابى سليمان ابقاه <الله> من عبيد (vac.) بن جنان يدفع بمصر  
فى المكارين (?) ان شا (vac.) الله

**Diacritical dots**

(5 فادمن 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[māʿīl] b. Ayyūb from ʿUbayd b. Jinān and the servant of Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd.
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 Khālīd 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 you are the best caretaker,
12. if God wills. Send to yourself greetings. And (send also greetings) to Ibrāhīm and Fāʾiq
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 ʿUbayd (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 Ismaʿīl 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>; P.Heid.Arab. II 26.12, 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>; P.Khurasan 30.3, dated 160/777. See also in this corpus 23, 26 and 34.

4-5. *Ammā baʿdu ḥafizaka Allāh wa-ʿāfāka wa-abqāka wa-abqā al-niʿma ʿalayka 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> 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 *shāʿa* (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 *shayʿan* is frequent in Arabic papyri (Hopkins § 19).

10. The right tip of the *tāʾ* 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-ʿalā man aḥbabta al-salām*. For this expression, see CPR XVI 12.10, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> and the commentary.

15. The name Faraj is written as one ligature.

#### Side B:

*Li-Abī Sulaymān abqāhu <Allāh> min ʿUbayd (vac.) b. Jinān yudfaʿ bi-miṣr fī al-kārayn (?) in shāʿa (vac.) Allāh*. The scribe left out the word *Allāh* after the honorific *abqāhu*. For the expression *yudfaʿ* 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

29.3 x 18.8

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

Provenance: Unknown

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 *īyyākum*; 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]
3. [ابى]
4. [سلم]
5. [عليك فانى احمد اليك الله الذى لا اله الا هو]
6. [م]-ا بعد عافان-ا الله واياكم عافية يدخلنا]
7. واياكم بها الجنة برحمته و[ين]-جينا واياكم من]
8. سخطه ومن النار برحمته (vac.)
9. كتبنا اليكم ونحن فى مدينة دلاص

10. فى اشرف مدينة خلقها الله وثرها اثقله واخيئه
11. وقد سار العامل واهل الكورة الى الامير
12. ونحن مقبمين فى غير شى ننتظر قدومهم علينا
13. لم يتهيا لنا مما نريد شيا وقد فرغنا من قياسية
14. المدينة على احسن حال والحمد لله وجدنا فيها
15. فضل كثير قد بعثنا به الى الامير وانا مريض منذ
16. فارقتكم من ذلك الدملى الذى كنت اريته
17. بين مقعدتى ومذاكرتى قد اهلكنى لا انام
18. ولا اقعد وانا حين كتبت اليكم شديد المرض
19. [ ] فاسل 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 yudkhilunā wa-ıyyākum bihā al-janna bi-rahmatihi wa-yunajīnā wa-ıyyākum min shukhṭihi wa-min al-nār bi-rahmatihi*’ 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 ‘*āmīl* (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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and the commentary; CPR XXI, 118. *Wa-qad sār al-‘āmīl 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, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>).

**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 fihā 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 (*siḡllāt 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 *qiyāsāt* are misplaced under the *sīn*.

**15.** *Faḍl kathīr*. The *tanwīn alif* is missing in the direct object (Hopkins § 167.d). The reading *kabīr* 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and the examples given in the commentary. The word *Mundhu* (since) is well attested in the papyri (Hopkins § 131).

**16.** *Min dhālika al-dummāl alladhī kuntu araytukah*. The singular form used here contrasts with the plural used in the rest of the letter. For *al-dummāl* (pl. *damāmīl* 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

2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

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. Mālīk, 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 القياسه كلها ولم يبقا ]
8. [ من القبط وبعث اليهم بابى رشد بن ]
9. [با والعنب بامر الكتاب بخبرك و]حالك وحوايحك
10. [القلم ولعمري لقد اعجبنتى منه ]
11. [ قبيح لى ان اقيم على ]
12. [ وحمق بالرجل ان يقيم على رزق ]
13. [ حتى ويخرج معى حبيب فى قياسه ]
14. [ ما خبر وقد افرق فى قياسه كرومات ]
15. [ رجل ليس يفوض كتابة الخراج ]
16. [ من احد احق برفق ما عنده منا ]
17. [ولـ]و كنت لا املك شيا ما اقممت ]
18. [ من كتابة الرسايل وعاد الرجل ]

19. [ منه شيئا فذلك ما كنا نرجوا ]  
 20. [ اتيه لي الا مكرما حافظا ]  
 21. [ ويريدة وسهيل وابرهيم  
 22. [ والسلم عليك ورحمت الله ]

## Side B:

- [م]ن عمرو بن مالك السمناى  
 [ به ان شا الله ]

## Diacritical dots

(3 يحب 6) انت 10) اعحبتنى; منه 11) لي; افيم 17) سينا

## 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 Ruṣḥd 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 authorised 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:

[ 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and the commentary; P.Berl.Arab. II 78.3, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>. See also the expression *min shuhūr al-qibṭ* (CPR XXVI 20.5; 23.6; Diem 2006, 3.5; P.Cair.Arab. II 143.3); *ʿadad al-qibṭ* (P.Cair.Arab. II 101 [= Chrest.Khoury II 28].4, dated 273/889; PERF 837 [= Chrest.Khoury II 63].6, 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>). 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-ḥawaʾijika* 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-ʿamrī* (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*, *ʿatā* 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, 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and the commentary.

17. For the orthography *shayyan* instead of *shayʿan*, 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-Samʿānī*, *al-Ansāb*, vol. 3, 306.