

COPTICA PALATINA

Koptische Texte aus der
Heidelberger Papyrussammlung
(P.Heid.Kopt.)

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8. Letter with an Order to Arrest

Lincoln Blumell (Provo)

P.Heid. Inv. Kopt. 75

35,9 x 10,5 cm

Provenance unknown

7th–8th century

plate XIII

This papyrus contains a letter that was written along the fibers of a darkened sheet of papyrus. The body of the letter is comprised of eight lines that are mostly intact with the exception of a few lacunae. While the address on the back is largely effaced there are legible traces of a few Greek words.

The hand is clear and regular and has a slight rightward slant; the average line height is 0.95 cm. On paleographic grounds the letterforms are characteristic of the late seventh or eighth century with a close paleographic parallel being P.Brux.Bawit 4 (VIII). A reference to Fustât (Babylon/Cairo) in l. 6 secures a post-conquest date.

The provenance of this text is unknown. The acquisition records indicate that this papyrus was acquired by Heidelberg through Karl Reinhart at the end of the nineteenth century along with a number of other papyri in its collection. Nevertheless, it may be possible that this letter originally emanated from Aphrodito, or the region thereabouts, given that it contains a few orthographic peculiarities common in these region: β => ς (l. 4); ετβε => ντβε (ll. 6, 7, 8); ειρε => ηρ (l. 4); γεν- => γν- (l. 2, 3, 6, 7). Additionally, as some of the papyri acquired by Reinhart were known to have come from Aphrodito,¹ this proposal is a distinct possibility.

The letter concerns administrative matters and was sent between two lesser officials. Though the title of the sender is no longer extant, in the address on the verso the word *comes* (κόμης) can with confidence be reconstructed. Elsewhere the letter refers to the *dux* on two occasions. It seems that the sender was acting on his orders.

The sender of the letter is an official whom the *dux* apparently holds responsible for collecting and sending workers, sailors and craftsmen, or their works' money worth if they do not do the labor themselves. He reports that some sailors had paid money to a certain individual named Enoch in order not to have to go in person, but apparently Enoch had absconded with the money. They complained to the *dux* and now the sender asks the addressee to bring him the said Enoch for questioning.²

As the letter closes the sender asks the addressee to send some other workers, guardsmen this time, to patrol a certain district. A postscript follows in l. 8, possibly referring to payments that would release a sculptor from the obligation to work in person.

1 For this see P.Lond. IV p. xi.

2 For texts illustrating similar situations see e.g. P.Lond. IV 1494, 1496, 1497, 1508, or 1509.

→

+

[ῥαθ̄η με]̄η̄ ἡ̄π̄ω̄ᾱδε̄ τῑπροσκ̄ῡνεῑ ἡ̄τε̄κ̄πε̄ρῑβλ̄(ε̄π̄)τ̄(ο̄ς) ἡ̄μ̄η̄τ̄χ̄ο̄εῑς̄ ἡ̄ς̄ον̄
 ἐπ̄[ε̄ιδ̄η] ἡ̄τ̄ᾱ ῥ̄η̄η̄ε̄ε̄[β]
 [κᾱτη̄γο̄ρ]ε̄(?) ἡ̄π̄εν̄χ̄ο̄εῑς̄ πε̄γκ̄λ̄(ε̄ε̄ς̄τ̄ᾱ)τ̄(ο̄ς) π̄ᾱο̄ῡζ̄ κ̄ᾱτ̄ᾱ ἐ̄νω̄χ̄ δε̄ ἡ̄τ̄ᾱγ̄τι
 ῥ̄η̄τ̄ρῑμη̄[ς]ε̄η̄ ἡ̄ᾱφ̄ ῥ̄ᾱ ἡ̄ε̄χ̄η̄γ̄
 ἡ̄τ̄ᾱγ̄τ̄νο̄ο̄γ̄ ἡ̄αῑ ἐ̄π̄ρο̄ο̄γ̄. λ̄ο̄ῑπο̄ν̄ ἡ̄ᾱρε̄ τ̄[ε̄κ]ἡ̄η̄τ̄π̄ε̄ρῑβλ̄(ε̄π̄)τ̄(ο̄ς) ἡ̄χ̄ο̄εῑς̄ ἡ̄ς̄ον̄
 ἡ̄ρ̄φ̄ω̄φ̄ ἡ̄γ̄ᾱς̄φ̄ᾱλῑζε̄ ἡ̄μο̄ο̄
 5 ἡ̄ς̄ο̄ο̄γ̄τ̄η̄ ἡ̄γ̄τ̄νο̄ο̄γ̄φ̄ ἡ̄αῑ ἐ̄πεῑ π̄η̄ο̄ῡτε̄ σ̄ο̄ο̄γ̄η̄ν̄ πε̄ν̄χ̄ο̄εῑς̄ π̄ᾱο̄ῡζ̄ ᾱφ̄κε̄λε̄ῡε̄ ἡ̄αῑ δε̄
 τ̄νο̄ο̄γ̄ ἡ̄γ̄π̄λ̄[ἡ̄ρο̄γ̄]
 ἡ̄[γ̄]ω̄ ἡ̄τ̄β̄ε̄ π̄η̄ο̄ῡτε̄ πᾱμε̄ρῑτ̄ ἡ̄ς̄ον̄ ἐ̄ω̄ω̄πε̄ ἡ̄κο̄ω̄φ̄ τ̄ω̄ω̄ ῥ̄η̄ρ̄ω̄με̄ ἡ̄ξ̄ικ̄ᾱνο̄ς̄ ἡ̄η̄
 ῥ̄η̄ε̄ρ̄γᾱτ̄η̄ς̄ το̄γ̄φῑλ̄[ο̄κᾱλε̄]
 ἡ̄η̄ε̄κ̄με̄ρῑς̄ τ̄η̄ρο̄γ̄ ω̄ᾱν̄το̄γ̄εῑ ἐ̄ρο̄γ̄η̄ν̄ ἐ̄φ̄ω̄σᾱτο̄ν̄ ἐ̄πεῑ ῥ̄η̄κ̄ο̄γ̄ῑ ἡ̄ν̄ ἡ̄ε̄ ἡ̄ε̄ν̄τ̄ᾱγ̄ω̄ω̄πε̄
 ἡ̄π̄ρο̄ο̄γ̄ ἡ̄τ̄β̄ε̄ τε̄[. . .]
 ἡ̄αῑ ε̄ῑς̄ῥ̄αῑ ἡ̄μο̄ο̄γ̄ τ̄ιᾱς̄πᾱζε̄ ἡ̄τε̄κ̄πε̄ρῑβλ̄(ε̄π̄)τ̄(ο̄ς) ἡ̄(ἡ̄μ̄η̄τ̄)χ̄ο̄εῑς̄ ἡ̄ς̄ον̄ δε̄σ̄πο̄(τ̄ᾱ) +
 ἡ̄γ̄ω̄ ἡ̄νᾱγ̄ ἡ̄τ̄β̄ε̄ ἡ̄ς̄ο̄τε̄ ἐ̄τ̄η̄ π̄ρ̄η̄μο̄γ̄ἡ̄[κ

Verso (→)

[±10] ἡ̄δ̄ε̄λ̄(φ̄ω̄) κ̄[α]ἰ̄ τ̄ω̄ πε̄ρῑβλ̄(ε̄π̄)τ̄(ω̄) κ̄ό̄μ̄ε̄τι +
 κᾱ [±8]

2 προσκυνέω, περιβλεπτος, par. περιβλ^T, [ἐπειδή] 3 [κατηγορέω], εὐκλεέστατος, par. ἐγκλ^T, δούξ, κατά, τριμήσιον 4 λοιπόν, περιβλεπτος, par. περιβλ^T, ἀσφαλίζω 5 ἐπεί, δούξ, κελεύω, πληρώω 6 ἰκανός, ἐργάτης, φιλοκαλέω 7 μερίς, ἐπεί 8 ἀσπάζομαι, περιβλεπτος, par. περιβλ^T, δεσπότης, par. δεσπ^o

Translation

[First] of all I make obeisance to your brotherly *spectabilis* lordship.

[Since] some sailors ⁽³⁾ made [accusations (?)] against Enoch before our most famous *dux*, because they had given him *trimesia* for the ships, ⁽⁴⁾ (and a message) was sent to me today, then may your *spectabilis* brotherly lordship act accordingly and arrest him ⁽⁵⁾ immediately, and send him to me. For, God knows, our lord the *dux* has ordered me: “send and [fulfill]!”

⁽⁶⁾ Furthermore, by God, my beloved brother, when you have finished order some able men and some workers that they [maintain] ⁽⁷⁾ your entire district until they come to Fustât since there are no small matters which have happened today concerning the [...].

⁽⁸⁾ These things I write them. I greet your brotherly *spectabilis* lordship, master.

And take a look concerning the ransom for the sculptor [...]?

Verso: . . .to [my] brother . . . and the illustrious *comes* . . .

2 [ῥαθ̄η με]̄η̄ ἡ̄π̄ω̄ᾱδε̄: For parallels of phraseology see: SB Kopt. II 811,1 (VI/VII); 853,1 (VI/VII ?); 895,1 (?); cf. SB Kopt. I 292,1–2 (VII); SB Kopt. II 804,1 (VII); 836,1

(VII/VIII). Another possibility for the lacuna is: [νωρορι με]ν νπωαχε (SB Kopt. I 296,1 [?]).

τεκπεριβλ(επ)τ(οc): On the title περιβλεπτος (περίβλεπτος) see: Förster, Wörterbuch, 638; cf. O. Hornickel, Ehren-und Rangprädikate in den Papyrusurkunden, Mainz 1930, 31–2. This epithet is attested overwhelmingly for the κόμες but is also used as an honorific title for various other lesser officials: βοηθός (CPR XXV 32,6 [c. 643–44]); διοικητής (CPR XXX 2,14 [c. 643–44]); μάγιστρος (PSI XIII 1344,5 [501–600]); οικονόμος (Oxy. XVI 2039,15 [562–63?]); όσπριγίτης (SPP VIII 1111,2 [633 ?]); πάγαρχος (P.Apoll. 29,11 ([Later VII]); σκρινιάριος; PSI V 481,13 [V–VI]); χαρτουλάριος (P.Oxy. XVI 1843,3 [623]). While this epithet is masculine (ππεριβλεπτος) the author of the letter has rendered it as a feminine due to the feminine abstract prefix μνητ-, see line 4: τ[εκ]μνητπεριβλ(επ)τ(οc) νχωειc νcοm. On this phenomenon see: Layton, Coptic Grammar, 109; P.Bal. II 622. It is also worthy of note that in the Greek address on the verso (l. 9) where the writer also employs περίβλεπτος he uses the masculine definite article.

ρ̄ν̄νεε[β]: Alternatively it might be ρ̄ν̄νεε[Ϸ]. ρ̄ν̄- here for ρεν-, likewise in l. 3, 6 and 7).

3 ν̄πενχωειc πεγκλ(εεcτα)τ(οc) π̄λοϷζ: For this phrase see: P.KRU 10,18 (VIII); BKU III 420,6 (?); P.Mich.Copt. 14,2 (VIII); SB Kopt. 242,29 (649 CE). On the title εγκλεεcτατοc (εὐκλεέcτατοc) see: Förster, Wörterbuch, 305; cf. O. Hornickel, Ehren-und Rangprädikate in den Papyrusurkunden, 13. The latest dated reference to a *dux* can be found in KRU 41,64 (29 April 749 CE). It is not known if the office of the *dux* survived into the ‘Abbāsid period. See N. Gonis, Another Look at Some Officials in Early ‘Abbāsid Egypt, ZPE 149 (2004), 195. For the office of the *dux* in the sixth century see J. L. Fournet, Hellénisme dans l’Égypte du VIe siècle: La bibliothèque et l’oeuvre de Dioscore d’Aphrodité (MIFAO 115/1), Le Caire 1999, 330–36. Besides the *dux* the epithet εγκλεεcτατοc is primarily used for the αμπα (άμπα).

κατα ενωx: For the meaning of κατα as “against” see Förster, Wörterbuch, 384 where he cites CPR IV 1,7 (VII/VIII).

4 ηρφωϷ: l. π̄ρωβ. See P.Bal. I pp. 54–5 and 93–4 where ειρε => ηρ and β => Ϸ interchanges are explained; cf. W. Vycichl, Koptische Quellen zur Topographie von Hermopolis, in: Günther Roeder (ed.), Hermopolis 1929–1939, Hildesheim 1959, 137–39.

5 The sender of the letter underlines that it is he who is held responsible. That is to say, the *dux* made him responsible for collecting and sending money for the sailors/workers if these do not go in person. Now, since some sailors say that they have paid their money to Enoch, Enoch needs to be brought in, to be questioned on what had happened to that money.

6 ν̄τ̄βε: l. ετβε (also in ll. 7 and 8). On the ετβε => ν̄τ̄βε interchange see P.Bal. I 73 n. 27 where examples are given (cf. Crum, dict. 61a).

τοϷφιλ[οκαλε]: For the meaning of the verb φιλοκαλε (φιλοκαλέω) see: Förster, Wörterbuch, 850. τοϷ- for τροϷ-/τρεϷ-, 3rd person plural of the causative infinitive.

7 φωcατον: This is the post-conquest name of Babylon, which is derived from the Latin *fossatum* (“ditch”). See: Herbert Verreth (ed.), A Survey of the Toponyms of Egypt in the Graeco-Roman Period, Köln/Leuven 2008, 93; P.Lond. IV p. xviii. In Greek the name is typically rendered τὸ Φοcσῶτον. In dated Greek texts the term is not attested before the beginning of the eighth century (P.Ross. Georg. 47,5 [20 September 709]).

Ⲫ ⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲓⲥⲗⲁⲓ ⲙ̀ⲙⲟⲟϥ ⲧⲓⲁⲥⲡⲁⲗⲉ: Seemingly echoes the Greek epistolary cliché ταῦτα γράφω ἀσπαζόμενος . . . (P.Gen IV 168,19 [576–625 CE]).

Δⲉⲥⲡⲟ(ⲧⲁ): This term seems to be rendered in Greek script δέσπο(τα). It seems more likely that the author is employing the vocative form δέσποτα instead of the nominative form δεσπότης; e.g. CPR XIX 30,3 (VIII); P.Ant. II 95,16 (VI); P.Oxy. XVI 1855,14 (VI/VII).

ⲁϫⲱ ⲁⲛⲁϫ ⲛ̀ⲧⲃⲉ ⲛ̀ϫⲟⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲙ ⲡⲗⲙ̀ⲟϥⲛ̀ⲓⲕ: ⲟⲧⲉ in this context most likely a form of ⲟⲱⲧⲉ “ransom” (nn. m. Crum, dict. 362b), payments due for the release of a worker, perhaps here for a ϫⲙ̀ⲟϥⲛ̀ⲓⲕ “sculptor”, with ϫⲙ̀- für ϫⲁⲙ̀- (Crum, dict. 673b) denoting a craftsman, who prefers to pay money rather than to go and work in person.

Verso:

The closest Greek parallel to the fragmentary remains of the address may be found in P.Amh. II 154,12 (643–44 CE) where the address begins with: † τῷ δεσπό(τη) μ(ο)υ ἀδελφῷ τ(ῷ) α[] () περιβλ(έπτῳ).

Plate XIII

Recto



Verso

