COPTICA PALATINA

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


Herausgegeben von

Anne Boud’hors
Alain Delattre
Gesa Schenke
Tonio Sebastian Richter
Georg Schmelz
Studien und Texte
aus der Heidelberger Papyrussammlung (STHP)

Herausgegeben von
Andrea Jördens – Joachim F. Quack –
Rodney Ast – James M. S. Cowey

Band 1
8. Letter with an Order to Arrest

Lincoln Blumell (Provo)

P.Heid. Inv. Kopt. 75

Provenance unknown

7th–8th century

35,9 x 10,5 cm

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 Fustat (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: θ => η (l. 4); εται => ἐται (ll. 6, 7, 8); ειτε => ητε (l. 4); δεν => δεν (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 (κομες) 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.
[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 Fusâw 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 […].

Verse: …to [my] brother … and the illustrious comes …

2 [ζων ηεν] ἵππαξα: 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
Another possibility for the lacuna is: [ναοτητη νεμή οινιασκε (SB Kopt. I 296,1 [?]).

τεκτονικα(πεντα也很 lieu): On the title περιβλεπτος (περιβλεπτος) see: Förster, Wörterbuch, 638; cf. O. Hornnickel, Ehren-und Rangprädikate in den Papyrusurkunden, Mainz 1930, 31–2. This epithet is attested overwhelmingly for the κόμαζ 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]); μάνιστρος (PSI XIII 1344,5 [501–600]); οίκονομος (Oxy. XVI 2039,15 [562–63(?)]; διαπρήγματις (SPP VIII 1111,2 [633 (?)]; πάγαρχος (P.Apoll. 29,11 ([Later VII]); σκωρίναριος; PSI V 481,13 [V–VI]; χαρτουλάριος (P.Oxy. XVI 1843,3 [623]). While this epithet is masculine (περιβλεπτος) the author of the letter has rendered it as a feminine due to the feminine abstract prefix νη-, see line 4: τικεκλητερωσα(πεπτοτο) ένοθε νηνη. 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 περιβλεπτος he uses the masculine definite article.

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 περιβλεπτος he uses the masculine definite article.

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


5 The sender of the letter underlines that it is he who is held responsible. That is to say, the δυς 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 ηνημ: l. ενοθή (also in ll. 7 and 8). On the ενοθή => ηνημ interchange see P.Bal. I 73 n. 27 where examples are given (cf. Crum, dict. 61a).

tογηφαζο[ολακε]: For the meaning of the verb φιλοκαλε (φιλοκαλέω) see: Förster, Wörterbuch, 850. τογη- for τρογ-/τρεγ-, 3rd person plural of the causative infinitive.

7 Φοιαξοτον: 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 το Φοιαξοτον. In dated Greek texts the term is not attested before the beginning of the eighth century (P.Ross. Georg. 47,5 [20 September 709]).
8 ΜΗ ΕΙΡΕΨΤΙ ΤΗΝΟΥ ΤΙΣΠΑΖΕ: Seemingly echoes the Greek epistolary cliché ταῦτα γράφω ἀσπαζόμενος . . . (P.Gen IV 168,19 [576–625 CE]).

ΔΕΣΠΟ(ΤΑ): 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 δέσποτης; e.g. CPR XIX 30,3 (VIII); P.Ant. II 95,16 (VI); P.Oxy. XVI 1855,14 (VI/VII).

ΑΓΟ ΑΛΟΓ ΝΗΣΤΕ ΝΗΣΩΤΕ ΕΝΗ ΠΡΕΠΟΥΝΙΧ: Cote in this context most likely a form of αὑτῆ “ransom” (nn. m. Crum, dict. 362b), payments due for the release of a worker, perhaps here for a γιμογιθ “sculptor”, with γίν- für γαί- (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(τῃ) μ(ο)ῦ ἀδέλφῳ τῷ(δ) ο[ι] 1 ( ) περιβλ(έπτω).