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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

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

P.CtYBR.inv. 2666
Provenance: Unknown

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 fāʾ has one dot below it and qāf has one dot over it (l. 5 nafaqatī). 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 maʿāna; ll. 23-24 imraʿa).

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 (mahrr). 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 (wāfī), that he received the trousseau (matāʿ), 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.
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

فٱلله إلهى يزيد إلى مهديه سلم عليه

سوارين تنظيري مهماً، [برك، و] لجلفين والعَلَٰى. بين عجلٍ، فهل
فأسله رضيبي وايا واخير، بني في عافية فان رضى، [ول] تحسى
[هم السوارين عدنك فالعشرة (؟) ما يجمع الله على نفقتى فا]
[فعلى بالخيرة، و] لجلفين، فكما أخى، [ف] هاأن (؟)
وأما العهد فهو لى. فان الله جانا بالعطاء [فالخ، بين]
وأما الرثى، وهو اما بعد فقد بعثت [يك، ل] للك،xlabel]
[من الرحيم من نصاً (؟) ما يجمع الله على نفقتى فا]
[فأولى بالخيرة. و] لجلفين، فكما أخى، [ف] هاأن (؟)
[شان التحسى، و] لجلفين، والود لى، [ف] هاأن (؟)

الحكم لا يردك على، فيه، ولا خير، ولا عيناء، ولا خير، ولا
فأسله رضيبي وايا واخير، بني في عافية فان رضى، [ول] تحسى
[هم السوارين عدنك فالعشرة (؟) ما يجمع الله على نفقتى فا]
[فعلى بالخيرة، و] لجلفين، فكما أخى، [ف] هاأن (؟)
وأما الرثى، وهو اما بعد فقد بعثت [يك، ل] للك،xlabel]
[من الرحيم من نصاً (؟) ما يجمع الله على نفقتى فا]
[فأولى بالخيرة. و] لجلفين، فكما أخى، [ف] هاأن (؟)

لا يردك على في أسوال ول (؟) أبو [ال] الحكم ...
كله خمسة وعشرين وأخيرهنا. أدا رابتعاً الحلي، وعفنا
المتاح وكل شيء ورضيننا وهو كفنا سأل، [ابو] لا يكلونا مو
نة ولسلم عليك ولريح الله بيني وبيتك
في عافية وسرور ولبعلا صلاح لدينا. فان رسول
الله قال. لا، فيما بغرنا لا خير في رجل، لا خير في أمر
تتركي على بعد ثلاثة أيام شى فاكل، فان رضى

كما لا يريد شياً من، و...
فان (؟) إن يضع هذين سوارين... ذلك

Diacritical dots

(1) الرحمٍ (2) اللوك (3) الجلفين (4) عافن (5) رضي (6) نفقتى (7) ظين (8) خبيث (9) ورسى (10) الحلي (11) الرحلين (12) الطباخ (13) الرطبى (14) الرطبى (15) الرطبى

Translation

Side B:

1. In the name of God the [Companionate, the Merciful. From Naṣṣā[r b.] A[b]ū Zayd to Mahdiyya. Peace be upon you[.]
2. I praise for your sake God other [than Whom there] is no god. As for what follows, I sent to you
3. two bracelets to see your dowry 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. If God wills, there is neither strength nor power except in G[od,] so that you will be happy during the marriage ceremony.
10. [Arrange] 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 fresh
13. 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. apple[s] (?), (it should be) twenty five, for I only collect (from it) twenty five
16. [ ]
17. [ ]
18. Abū al-Hakam does not answer the question and the ... (?) of Abū al-Hakam ..... is in total twenty five and inform him that we have seen the jewelry and recognized the
19. 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-
20. ance expenses. Peace be upon you and God’s mercy. May God bring me and you together
21. in health and happiness and may He make our religion to thrive. For the messenger of
22. God said [no], for as much as reached us, there is no goodness in a man without a woman nor in a wom-
23. an without a man. I ask[k] you as I ask my wife not to
24. prolong your absence from me over three days, because you please me.
Right margin:

26. If I have had [...] 

Side A:

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

28. that [...] to put these two bracelets [...] this

Commentary

Side B:

1. The letter begins on the same line as the *basmala* which is very uncommon in early letters but occurs frequently in letters from 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries, see P.Khalili I, 158. The reading Naṣṣār is not certain. For this proper name and other possible readings, see al-Dhahabi (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. *Khalkhāluḥah* “her anklet,” (P.Marchands II 18r.7, 3rd/9th); *khurṣatayn fīda* “two silver earrings,” (P.Marchands II 28r.67, 3rd/9th); *khātam “ring,”* (P.Marchands V/I 2.9, 3rd/9th). For attestations of jewelry in Geniza documents; see W. Diem and H. Radenberg, *Dictionary of the Arabic material of S.D. Goitein’s A mediterranean society* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 29, 108, 147. For other attestations of the dowry (*mahr*) in private letters on papyrus, see P.Khalili I 18.16, 3rd/9th.

4. *Fa-asʿalu Allāh.* The post-consonantal medial *hamza* is omitted (Hopkins § 26). See also *asʿaluki bi-lilāh* in lines 14 and 24. The word *taḥbis* can also be understood as ʿ*hubus* (endowment). For other attestations of ʿ*hubus* in the papyri, see for example *wa-innī jaʿaltu al-dār wa-l-bayt habīs lā tubāَ* (P.HanafiWill, 299–306).

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

6. For expressions using the term al-ʿkhīra, see *wa-iyyāhu asʿalu al-ʿkhīra fī al-ʿājil wa-l-ʿājil bi-qudratihi* (P.Khalili I 18.4, 19, 3rd/9th=[= P.DiemKhalili, 47]); *asʿalu Allāh al-ʿkhīra fī jamīʿ al-umūr kullihā* (P.Cair.Arab. V 295.12, 3rd/9th); Qaddara Allāh lanā al-ʿkhīra awwalan (CPR XVI 29.9, 4th/10th); *nasʿalu Allāh al-tawfīq wa-l-ʿkhīra bi-manīhi wa-qudratihi* (the unpublished P.CIYBR. inv. 2959, line 10, 3rd/9th).

7. *Wa-ammā al-ʿiqd fa-huwa laki.* The singular form here contradicts with the dual in line three (*iʿqdayn*). *ʿAtā.* At the best of my knowledge, this is the first attestation of the term ʿ*atā* in a non-military context. For ʿ*atā*, ʿ*rizq* and ʿ*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
The hawqala (wa-lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwa illā bi-lāh) is frequently attested in the papyri; cf. P.Marchands V/I 4.12, 3rd/9th; P.David-WeillMusée, 103. See also in this corpus 30.8.

The scribe missed the letter fāʾ in the word yuqallifānā. 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 Maẓūr, Lisān, 4268. The term is unattested in the papyri. It occurs, however, in the Geniza documents; see Diem and Radenberg (1994), 205. For other private letters related to marriage, see P.Khalili I 18, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands V/I 11, 3rd/9th.


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-ḫulī (jewelry), see commentary in line 2.

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

21-22. For the eulogy jamāʿa Allāh baynī wa-baynaki fī ʿafṣiya wa-surūr, see for example asʿalu Allāh an an yajmaʿ baynanā wa-baynaka fī ʿafṣiya (P.Marchands II 8.7, 3rd/9th). See also in this corpus 12.9 and the commentary. Wa-l-salām ʿalayki wa-raḥmat Allāh. Salām is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10.a) and raḥmat is written with a tāʾ maṭḥūḥa instead of a tāʾ marbuṭa 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 fīma balaghānā. Thus, he crossed lā out.

23-24. I was not able to find an equivalent of the ḥadīth lā khayr fī rajul bi-ghayr irmaʿa wa-lā irmaʿa bi-ghayr rajul in canonical ḥadīth works. Quoting prophetic and non-prophetic traditions is well attested in letters. Cf. wa qad jāʿat al-ʿāthār ʿan rasūl Allāh ʿalāhī wa-sallam wa-lā yunfīqān nafaqa ṣaghīra wa-lā kābirā wa-lā yafī ʿan mawʿī yaghīṭu al-kuffār ............ wa qad jāʿat al-ʿāthār ʿan rasūl Allāh ʿalāhī wa-sallam (P.Marchands II 26.11-12, 22, 3rd/9th); li-annahu jāʿa ʿan rasūl Allāh ʿalāhī ṣallā Allāh ʿalayhi man amma qawm wa-hum lahu kāḥirīn fā-lā ṣalāt lahu wa-ʿalayhi laʾnat Allāh ................ wa-anta taʿlam anna rasūl Allāh ʿalāhī wa-sallā Allāh ʿalayhi qaḍa al-buṣāq fī al-masjid khaṭṭīyaḥ wa-kaffārātahu dafniyhu (P.RāġibLettres, 5.24, 15-16, 3rd/9th); la-qad jāʿa anna rasūl Allāh qaḍa inna min abār al-bīr šīlataka wudd abīka baʿda abīka (P.Marchands

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
Provenance: Unknown

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 aslahat). The upper part of dāl/dhāl bends backwards (l. 9 dhālika; l. 26 adbara). 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-turq; l. 22 al-haqq). Sād and dād are horizontally elongated (l. 14 al-arḍ; l. 22 al-sīhr). The tail of the final mīm is extremely short (l. 10 al-hakam, lam; l. 11 al-hirm). There is a marked extension of the tail of the final and independent yā’ to the right in a horizontal line (l. 14 ḍī; l. 15 warā’; l. 17 ǧā). Words are split across line endings (ll. 16-17 wa-arsaltu; ll. 27-28 amrihā; ll. 28-29 anjā; ll. 29-30 fa-ınnaka).

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-hakam) 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-‘Allānā, used to insult and curse him and that he tolerated it for a while. After his unsuccessful attempts to improve his wife’s ill nature, ‘Amr sent to her some pious men from his clan, amongst whom a certain Abū al-Gharrā’ by reminding her of God and advising her to improve her bad behavior and to restrain her tongue until the addressee would come and investigate everything himself. ‘Amr continues to express his dissatisfaction with his wife’s ill nature assuring his father-in-law that he was serious about the marriage. However, he informs the father-in-law that he has recently divorced his wife or, to be more precise, he has been divorced from her. ‘Amr asks the father-in-law not to be angry at him, because it was against his will. ‘Amr then ends his letter with the wish to remarry his ex-wife awaiting the father-in-law’s arrival and approval.

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

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280 See chapter one.
1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

2. [من عمو بن زيد بن عبد الله بن]

3. [سلم عليك فائدة الله]. الداء [ذي لا اله الا هو]

4. [أما بعد فائدة خبرك [من خبري و [خبر العلانة]]

5. [ لما رأته [كله] إبرار [ت]]

6. [الي [فيوم] اركبت العلل و نزعت بها مسيرة [ر]]

7. [ليها الل] [ه] [و ذلك كله من حضروي [رها]]

8. [م [اخرو] والطوفان في النبور والطرق]

9. [فلما رأته إن قمنتها ذلك كله [ذهبت اللى]]

10. [الحكم فأخبرته إنه يفعل بها ما لم يفعل بحرة من الضر] [ب]

11. [والبوس والحرح ثم أنها كانت تقول من القول ما لونك]

12. [كنت نسامعها لا رفعتي عليها نستقبل الشرف فيه] [و]

13. [والنفس وتقول قول ما سمعت امرة تقول لزوجها ما]

14. [تقول العلل أنه لا يسجد في السماء ولا يقع في الأرض فانظر]

15. [ما ورتي ذلك فلما رأيت منها إنها قد أرتكبت]

16. [إمكأرها بعثت إليها رجل صالحين من عشيرتي وار]

17. [سلت إلى أبو الأعراف قالت لهم اذهبوا فذكرها]

18. [والله إذ اقتلت الله واحتلها خلقها و كفت لسنها]

19. [حتى تقدم عينه [دها فانتقل كل شئ] تعود نفسه ونفسها]

20. [فانتقله [دها في ذلك شئ خلقه الله صلى عليه]

21. [ذى لا اله الا هو] لقد كنت كره لما فعلت العلل وما بي الا]

22. [رغبة في الذي جعل الله بيني وبينك من الصهر والحق وات]

23. [مرغب بمصيرتك وما قد الله لك من الشرف]

24. [والحق والتنا والحمد في الدين في ذلك يرغب الرجل]

25. [فيه فلا تجد في ذلك فلما رأته ذلك]

26. [لم رأته أدرت إلى القيم وزمعتنا لا تترو]

27. [بأمرك راس ولا أمرك فلا راعي من أمر]

28. [هانها ارتكبت من أمرها الذي ارتكبت لم اجد أمر]

29. [نجب لي ما فلت حتى تقدم النينا فاخبرت الخبر كله فا]

30. [ن ك ان شئ الله إذ قد قانت ساين من عند كان ذلك]

31. [من عددى أو من عددنا كتبك كتبها هذا واتي قسم]

32. [لكل بالله ما كنت أهوى ما فعلت واتي امكتان انت شئ الله]

33. [إذا قانت النينا ارجو من الله و منك ان تردها إلى]

34. [فانت لم تطلق ولم ياعن عن هدى مني مما أقتيت منها]

35. [بذلك من حضروي ومن لسنها حتى تقدم النينا كتب]

36. [اليك كتبها هذا واعظت قدمك كما تعلم انى لم]

37. [افعل ذلك عن هدى مني والسلم عليك ورحمت الله وبركتها]
[In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.]

[From ‘Amr b. Zubayd to ‘Abd Al-lāh b.]

[Peace be upon you. I praise for] your sake God, other than Whom there is no god.

[As for what follows, I want to let you know] my news [and the news of al-ʿAllāna]

[ ] when she saw that you[ ] depart[ed]

[for al-]Fayyūm. She made excuses and she claims that she is determined [. . .]

[ ] to her .[ . .] .. and this all, because I prevented h[er]

[from] [going ou]t and walking around in houses and streets.

When she saw that I prevented her from doing all[ ] that, she went t[o]

the arbitrator and she informed him that beat[ing],

suffering and oppression were done to her which would not be done to a free woman. And then she said (prohibited) things,

(on the basis of which) you would excuse me for her, if you heard it. (She) profaned by it the dignity [and]

the self-esteem. She said something, which I never heard a wife say to her husband.

al-ʿAllāna says what does not ascend to the heaven and does not settle in the earth. So look into

what is behind this. And when I saw that she c[o]mmitted

the worst of her state, I sent to her pious people from my clan and

I sent for Abū al-Gharrāʾ. I said to them, go (to her) and remind her

of God, so that she should fear God, improve her nature and restrain h[er] tongue

until you come t[o] her and investigate everything that he or she might wish.

They both followed their desires in this, namely something that God created and my eye likes. By God,

other than Whom there is no god, I disliked what al-ʿAllāna did and I only have

the desire for what God made between me and you through marriage and law and I desire to be related to you by marriage, because of what God has presented to you of honor,

law, glorification and praise through religion. Someone like you, anybody would desire (to be related with him)

through marriage. So, do not be angry at me regarding this, because she did this,

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 khulʿ according to a wish of mine. By 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  
do this according to a wish of mine. Peace be upon you and God’s mercy and bless[ings.]  

Side 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  
ilāh huwa ammā baʿdu, is reconstructed on the basis of countless parallels. See the other letters in  
this corpus. See also chapter one, formulary. The yāʾ of alladhī can be seen extending  
underneath the lacuna.  
4. [Fa-innī ukhbiruka min] khabārī [wa-khabar al-ʿAllāna] 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-ʿAllāna 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,  
Anbāʾ 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-Qalābā, see E. Gratzl,
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 llamā raʾatka annaka adbara 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 fāʾ, yāʾ, 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-tawafān fi al-buyūt wa-l-ṭurūq. Of al-khurūj only the jīm is visible. Fī has a short backward bending yāʾ in comparison to other fis in the text. See lines 14, 20, 22, 24, 25, 27. The word wa-l-ṭurūq is clearly readable below the lacuna.

9. The reading fa-lammā raʾat annī manaʾtuḥ ā dhālika kullahu dhahabat ilā can be made out with difficulty, because the ink has faded.

10. Al-ḥakam fa-akhbarathu annahu yuṭ ʾal bi-ḥurra. The lām and ḥāʾ 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-hirm in the next line. There is enough space available after al-ḥakam for the restoration of fa-akhbarathu which is partially fadded. 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 taḥkām system as a branch of the organized judicial system (al-qāḍāʾ), see the discussion on spouses. The term al-ḥurra is also attested in this corpus in 3.6.

11-12. Mā law annaka kunta tusāmī′uḥu laʾ-ḥartanī ʿalayhā. 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 imraʿa (Hopkins § 26.a). Tanwīn alif is missing in the direct object in qawl (Hopkins § 167.d).


14-15. Fa-nṣūr mā warāʾ ḍhālika. Unṣūr often introduces a request. For more about expressions using the combination of a formula with fa + unṣūr or other imperatives, see Grob (2010a), 60; P.Horak 85.6 and the examples provided in the commentary. Warāʾ is written with yāʾ (Hopkins § 20.b). Irtakabat is reconstructed on the basis of line 28 where the same word appears twice.

16. Aswaʾ amrihī baʿthtu ilayhā rjdūl ʿalāḥīn min ʿashīratī. Aswaʾ is spelled with yāʾ (Hopkins § 20.b). Rjdūl is written defectively without long ā, which is replaced by a little hook (Hopkins § 10) and the tanwīn alif is missing (Hopkins § 167.d). ʿalāḥīn 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; bi l. 21; wa-innī l. 22; ʿīlā ḥatta l. 29; fa-innī l. 34; anjā l. 29.

17. Wa-arṣaltu īlā Abū al-Gharrāʾ fa-qultu lahum idhhabū fa-dhkūrāhā. For the name al-Gharrāʾ, see Ibn Ḥajar, Taṣbīr, 1316. Īlā Abū al-Gharrāʾ. Abū is written for classical Arabic Abī (Hopkins § 162.a.i). The dḥāl of fa-dhkūrāhā has a very long upward shaft at the top.

18. Līsānahā 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, hāʾ and alif are still visible. The orthography shāy instead of shāy’ occurs frequently in papyri (Hopkins § 15.d). Also written so in the following line.

20. Fa-tabāʾa hawāhūmā. This expression echoes the Qur’ānic idiom wa-ttabāʾa 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-qaḍ kuntu kārih limā fa’alat al-ʿAllāna. Kārih is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10). The combination of a formula with la-qaḍ + kān + imperfect to express durative past appears frequently in papyri (Hopkins § 239). Ilāh is spelled with an extra tooth between the lām and hāʾ. See also in this corpus 5.3.

22. Fi alladhī jāʾa Allāh baynī wa-baynaka min al-ṣīhr wa-l-haqq. 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 muṣāhabaritihi in line 25 is written defectively without long ā. For similar expressions, see also an usāhīra jāriya ....... an usāhīrahu (P.Khalili I 18.15, 17, 3rd/9th).

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

25. Fa-lā tajid ʿalayya fi ḍhālika. This expression echoes expressions used in prophetic ḥadīths. Cf. innī sāʾiluka fa-mushadid ʿalayka fi al-masʾaḥa fa-lā tajid ʿalayya fi nafṣika (al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), Saḥīḥ, ed. M. Ludolf, (Leiden: Brill, 1862), vol. 1, 36). See also in this corpus wa-ukbiruka annī wājid ʿalayka, 26.7.

26. For the expression lammā raʾatka 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 shāʾa Allāh. The post-vocalic hamza is not written in shāʾa as usual (Hopkins § 20.c). See also line 32. The religious formula in shāʾa 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 kataṣṭu ilayka kitābī hādhā is written in exactly the same way in lines 35-36.

31-32. For wa-innī uqsimu laka bi-ilāh, see aqṣamtu ʿalayka bi-ilāh, Sijpesteijn (2013), 31.9, 2nd/8th. Oaths are parenthetically inserted into the text alike other religious formulae such as, short invocations, slide-in-blessings and in shāʾa 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-ilāh. For more about oaths in private and business letters, see Grob (2010a), 120.

33-34. Arjū min Allāh wa-mínka an taruddāhā ilayya fa-innī lam ʿuṭliq wa-lam akhlaʾ an hudan minnī. For more about divorce and khulʿ, see the discussion on spouses in chapter two.
36. *Wa-qad istalbānā qudūmaka kamā ta’lam.* Istalbānā is the 10th form of *labitha* (to delay). See Lane, vol. 7, 2654.

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

3.

Letter concerning a complaint of the addressee’s wife to the amīr

P.Cam.Michaelides A 1354 recto 33 x 23 2nd/8th
Provenance: Unknown 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 iyyāka; l. 13 al-hakam). There is a marked extension of the horizontal stroke of the final kāf (l. 4 baynaka; l. 8 iyyāka). The tail of the final mīm is very short and extends vertically downwards (l. 10 lam; l. 18 ghulām).

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

The letter is well written and composed with some means to highlight the text. The writer makes, however, many mistakes against grammar and spelling. The letter also shows a frequent use of the word shuʿn, 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:

الله الذ[ى] اليه مر[د كل شيء] فان الـ[ ] مرد[ها]
الله نسل الله القدر [لكم ولنا] العفية في الدنيا و
الاخرة وان برني ووجهك قبل الموات وإن يعرف
بيني وبينك في مستقر من رضوان [أنه بحنان]
ذلك وسمعنا الذي ذكرت من [شأن] أمراك
الاخرة إنها إلبت شناء الأمير فلحمد الله
الذي كفاك من عده فنسل الله الذي يليه
ورد كل شيء إنها وليك من مكاره الدنيا
والاخرة وانى اخبرك ان ميمون علمك
لم أرى له وجهه هو عند اخوك تميم
واني بثت الله مرار كثير فقلت لياني
ولا يرفع بقول رأسا فلا تظن ان هو
ولا كثير قالت الله الحكم العدل أن يكفيك
ما هنني من أمر الدنيا والاخرة واصبر و
احسب فيما اصابك من شان هذه المرة
يرحمك الله فإنك كافيك من عنه
اخوك كان يسرك والحمد لله وقد جانا
خبر ان سدتته قد ولدت علم واخرنا
ان الآخرة قد وليت جارية وانى اخبرك
انها قضا بعدك ماهية دين وتسعة [دنير]
فان هذا الامام به انا وانى اخبرك انه جهدا
في عمله وافق على الزبير السلم كثيرا
واخره ان الذي كانترك عندى كان
يحب فلا يهمنه شانه فانى أرجو ان لا
يلومني في شانه والسمل عليك وافقا علی [シー]
اهنا كلمك السلم [م]

Diacritical dots

Translation

1. God to Whom [everything is due.] Indeed the [ ] is attributable
2. to God. We ask God the most powerful [for you and us] health in this world and
3. the hereafter and (may He let me) see your face before death and may He let us know
4. each other in the resting place of His pleas[ure. We received]
5. your letter and we heard what you mentioned [about] 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 assist 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 dinār and nine dinārs were spent after your departure.
21. That is what I know. I inform you (further) that
22. he is keen 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’ fā-
ina [    ] maradduhā ilā Allāh is restored on the basis of lines 7 and 8 where the same
expression appears. Nas’alu Allāh al-qadîr [lakum wa lanā] al-ʿāfiya fī al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira wa-an
yuriyanī wajhaka qabl al-mawāt wa-an yu’arrif baynī wa-baynaka fī mustaqarr min riḍwānīhi. For
parallels of this expression, see in this corpus wa-lā amātānī ḥattā yuriyanī Allāh wujūhakum
qabl al-mawt fī khayr wa-ʿāfiya (23.14 and the examples provided in the commentary); wa-an
yu’arrif baynī wa-baynaka fī al-janna ḥaythu nardā al-thawāb (Sijpesteijn (2013), 33.8-9, 2nd/8th). Similar expressions are also attested on inscriptions; cf. wa-arrif baynahu wa-bayn nabiyyhi fī
mustaqarr riḍwānīka and wa-jma’ baynahu wa-bayn nabiyyka Muḥammad salā Allāh ‘alayhi wa-
salam fī mustaqarr min riḍwānīka (T. Premier, Répertoire chronologique d’Épigraphie Arabe (Cairo,
n.d.), 43, 55). Of riḍwānīhi only the rāʾ, dād and wāw are still visible before the lacuna.
Balagha is entirely missing; other readings such as waṣalanā, atānā, waradanā are also
possible.281 For al-mawāt, see Dozy, 630; Lane, vol. 7, 2741-2.

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

281 See Grob (2010a), 50.
adds verbs such as qara’a and fahima to indicate personally reading and fully understanding of the letter’s contents; cf. wasala ilayya kitābuka fa-qara’tuhu wa-fahimtu mā katabta (P.Marchands II 24.5, 3rd/9th). See also in this corpus 13.8-9 and the examples given in the commentary.

6. Annahā qad ablaghat sha’naka al-amīr. The title amīr is one of the most confusing titles that occur in the papyri. In Arabic texts, the title is used for the governor, financial director, army leaders and most probably for local officials as well. In Coptic and Greek papyri, it is used for an army leader and pagarch. For other attestations of this title in Arabic, Coptic and Greek papyri, see P.Khalili I, 140; Sijpesteijn (2011), 249; F. Morelli “Consiglieri e comandanti: I titoli del governatore arabo d’Egitto simboulos 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-ḥamdụ l-lālladḥī kāfāka min ‘indahu fa-nas’alū Allāh alladhī ilayhi maradd kull shay’an ya’fīnā wa-iyyāka min makāriḥ al-dunyā wa-l-ākhīra. 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’fīnā (Hopkins § 51). The post-consonantal medial hamza is omitted in fa-nas’alū (Hopkins § 26). Similarly, fa-as’alū in line 13 is written defectively without the hamza.

9. Wa-ḥannū ukbiruqa 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 akhāka 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 akhāka for classical Arabic akhīka (Hopkins § 163.a). The same Tamīm appears in 6.8.

11. Wa-iḥnin bā’athtu ilayhi Mirār kathīr fa-qultu ya’tīnī. The qāf of fa-qultu is written with a more triangular shape than other qāfs in the text, but the word cannot be read differently. Compare it with the fā’ of yaktīnī in line 13. Tawwīn alif is absent against classical Arabic in kathīr (Hopkins § 167.a). For the name Mirār and other possible readings, see al-Dhahabi, Mushtabiḥ, 372.

12-13. Wa-lā yarfa’ bi-qāwl ra’san fa-lā tāzunnu annahu ya’tīnī bi-qalīl wa-lā kathīr. For expressions using the term ra’s, see in this corpus annahā lā tarā’u bi-amrika ra’s (2.26-27). The expression qalīl wa-lā kathīr is frequently attested in the papyri. Cf. anā insān miskīn walaṣya lī qalīl wa-lā kathīr (P.Jahn 7.4-5, late 2nd/8th); wa-lam adār ‘annahu bā’ā qalīl wa-lā kathīr (P.Jahn 17.14, 3rd/9th); mimnā qibālī min qalīl aw kathīr (P.Marchand V/1 16.5, 3rd/9th); fa-lam taṣna’ fī dhālika qalīl wa-lā kathīr (P.Ryl.Arab.1 VI 14.4 [P.World, 179], 3rd/9th).
13-14. Fa-as’alu Allāh al-ḥakam al-ʿadl an yakfinī mā hammanī min amr al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira. For prayers mentioning hamn (grief), see akrama Allāh wajhaka bi-raḥmatihi wa-abqāka wa-kafāka mā hammaka bi-raḥmatihi (P.Marchands II 3.1, 3rd/9th); wa-zāda fī iḥsānīhī ilayka wa-ʿindaka fī al-dunā wa-l-ākhira wa-kafāka mā hammaka bi-raḥmatihi (P.Marchands II 35.3-4, 3rd/9th); hafizaka Allāh wa-abqāka wa-ʿamta’a bika wa-madda fī ʿumrika wa-jaʿalanī fīdāʾaka wa-kafāka mā hammaka min amr akhiratika wa-dunyāka (CPR XVI 11.3, 3rd/9th); wa-atamma niʿamahu ʿalayka wa-zāda fī iḥsānīhī ilayka wa-jaʿalanī fīdāʾaka wa-lā akhlā makānaka wa-kafāka mā hammaka (CPR XVI 17.4, 3rd/9th). See also the conclusion.


16. Yarhamuka Allāh fa-innī kāfika shaʾnahā. The three dots above the shīn of shaʾnahā are aligned horizontally. Also placed thus above the shīn of shaʾnahu in line 25. For prayers using the root r-h-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 Criboire (2006), 85-87; Worp (1995), 153.

17-19. Wa-qad jaʾanā khabar anna Sidbata qad waladat ghulām wa-ukhrīnā 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 onomastics. The hamza is omitted in jāʾnā (Hopkins § 79.b).

19-20. Wa-innī ukhrīraka annahu qaḍā baʾdaka miʿat dinār wa-tis at dīnānīr. Qaḍā is written with an alif mamdūda instead of an alif maqṣūra (Hopkins § 12.c). Dinār is written with scriptio defectiva of medial ā (Hopkins § 10.a). Of dīnānīr only the dāl and traces of the nūn are still visible.

21. Fa-innā hādhā a[llā]dhī aʿlamu 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-ukhrīraka annahu jah[dan] fī ʿamalihi, see also in this corpus wa-innī ukhrīraka yā Abū Rāshid annī wajadtu Najīh ajhād ʿalamtuka fī ʿamalihi (6.12-13).

22. Wa-aqraʿ alā al-Zubayr al-salām kathīrā. Post-vocalic hamza is omitted in aqraʿ (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-akhrīruhu anna alladhi kāna taraka ʿindī ka-lladhī yuḥhibbu fa-lā yahimmānahu shaʾnahu fa-innī arjū an-lā yalūmūnī fī shaʾnīhi. The personal pronoun hu of akhrīrhu refers to al-Zubayr, while the personal pronoun of shaʾnahu and shaʾnīhi 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 carrie etc. See Grob (2010a), 101-102.

25-26. Wa-l-salām ʿalayka wa-aqraʿ ʿalā ahlinā kullihim al-salā[m.] Of ʿalā only the ʿayn 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  26 x 21  2nd/8th
Provenance: Unknown  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 fāʿ has one dot below the letter and qāf has one dot over it (l. 12 al-ṣīr; l. 14 al-khalaf; l. 9 uḏmū). 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 kūṭābī; l. 13 kullīhī). Final yāʾ bends backwards in a straight line (l. 9 kūṭābī).

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

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

**Text**

**Side B:**

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من عيسى الى [سلم عليه] فاتى أحمد الملك الله
3. الذي لا الله الا هو (vac.) واسله أن يصلاة عليه في بني محمد صلى الله عليه
4. وسلم كثيرا [ما بعد] كتابي هذا [الملك] من ..
5. أن نخرج [ ] .... ما .. بنى منله ..
6. واعمله السيف [ ] يقطر دم
7. فنصهر الله الخلاقين [برحمتة وقد بلغنا انها]
8. قد طلبوا الصلح فان الله اصلح ذات بينهم
Side A:

۹. رجوت الا اقيم بعد كتابى اليكم شي حتا اقدم 
۱۰. والله ما يحسنني بها بيع ولا اشترى وان امرك 
۱۱. ليحزني اشد ما دخل علي من الخسارة اشترى دينرى 
۱۲. بيض لاقدم به اليكم قبل الفطر حتا ما امر لا طاقة 
۱۳. لنا به فسد البيض كل به حررمه فنشل الله 
۱۴. الخلف ابلغى نفسك وحرا امر لا طاقة 
۱۵. وجميع اهل البعض واقرى املى اذا طقعته [و] اهتمه 
۱۶. من عدها وانظرى الى شى حظى منها 
۱۷. ولا تلومنى فإن هة 
۱۸. واقرى نفسك السلام وا عذرينى 

Diacritical dots

۵) بنى منهلج ۶) السيف ۷) الخلاص برحمته ۸) طلبوا; دات بينهم ۹) رجوت; اقيم: شي: حتا: اشترى ۱۰) بيع; اشترى

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 Muḥammad, may God’s blessings [and] 
4. peace be [upon him] abundantly. [As 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-fitr, 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[anyl 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 sure 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 Ḥisā 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-‘inni aḥmadu ilayki Allāh alladhī lā ilāha illā huwa wa-as‘aluhu an yuṣallī ‘alā nabiyyīnā Muhammad 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 tašliya appears occasionally in the opening and closing formulae of letters, but sometimes occurs next to the basmala. The custom of adding the tašliya to the basmala was introduced by the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170-193/786-809), who decreed that in the introduction of all official documents the basmala must be supplemented by the tašliya. The scribe Yahyā b. Khālid is said to be the first to put this decree into practice in 181/797 which was then introduced into legal documents and private letters.282 The first attestation of the tašliya in private letters can be found in CPR XVI 18.4-5, 1st-2nd/7th-8th, where it appears after the transitional element ammā ba’du in the following form, fa-as’alu Allāh an yuṣallī ‘alā Muhammad nabiyyīnā wa-an yuzakkiyanā wa-iyāka bi-l-salāt ‘alayhi wa-l-salām ‘alayhi wa-raḥmat Allāh wa-barakātuhu. There are also several variants of the tašliya. Cf. wa-ṣallā Allāh ‘alā Muhammad al-nabiyy wa-sallam kathīran (P.khalili I 17.4, 14, 3rd/9th and the references given in the commentary). See also wa-ṣallā Allāh ‘alā Muhammad al-nabiyy wa-‘alā ahlihi al-ḏayālīn al-akhyār (P.Marchands II 8.1, 3rd/9th); wa-ṣallā Allāh ‘alā Muhammad al-nabiyy wa-‘alīhi wa-sallam taslīman (CPR XVI 25.13-14, 3rd/9th); ṣallā Allāh ‘alā Muhammad al-nabiyy wa-‘alīhi wa-sallam kathīran (CPR XVI 31.9, 3rd/9th); wa-ṣallā Allāh ‘alā Muhammad wa-‘alā jamī‘ ahlihi wa-sallam kathīran (CPR XVI 32.2-3, 3rd/9th); Muḥammad ṣallā Allāh ‘alayhi bi-l-hudā wa-din al-ḥaqqa wa-kull alladhī irtada Allāh li-İbādīhi (Sijpesteijn (2013), 8.5-7, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in the commentary).

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

edge of the Delta.283 Al-sayf [ ] yaqṭuru 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-raḥmatiḥi. The post-consonantal medial hamza is omitted in fa-nas’alu (Hopkins § 26). Also written so in line 14. Bi-r of bi-raḥmatiḥi is written twice by the scribe, who indicated his mistake by crossing out the first part.


9. Rajawtu allā uqīmu ba’d kitābī ilaykum shay’ ḥattā ṣuqīm. 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 māmdūda 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 shin of ashadda are aligned horizontally. Also placed thus above the shin of shay’ in line 10 and ishtirā’ in line 11.

12. Bayḍ. Tanwīn alif is missing in the direct object (Hopkins § 167.d). For other attestations of eggs in the papyri, see P.GrohmannWirtsch. 18.5, 3rd/9th. Li-aqīdima bihi ilaykum qab il-fīṭr ḥattā jā’a āmr lā tāqa lanā bihi. References to ‘īd al-fīṭr or the feast of the breaking of the fast are well attested in letters. Cf. mā kuntu atrukuka bi-salāmatika taghibu ‘ānni fī al-fīṭr wa-anā taratuka tuṭṣiru ‘indahum wa-tuḍaḥī ‘indā taratānā fī al-fīṭr mithl al-masākīn (P.Marchand II 2.11-13, 3rd/9th); innī uqīmu ilā al-fīṭr in shā’ā Allāh (P.Marchand II 14.4, 3rd/9th); wa-dhakarta anaka turidu al-ṣūdūm ilaynā ba’d al-fīṭr in shā’ā Allāh (P.Marchands V/I 20.13, 3rd/9th). The word ‘īd is also attested in the papyri; cf. lā taqṭa’ bī fī ḥādhā al-‘īd (P.Marchands V/I 8r.4, v.2, 3rd/9th). For more extensive discussion on ‘īd al-fīṭr, see chapter two, festivities 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’ajjil ʿalayka nafā’at al-hajj wa-khalaf al-hajj sarī’ (P.Marchand III 3.4-5, 3rd/9th).

14-15. The orthography aqrī instead of aqrī’ 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:

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In order to write the address on the back side the scribe flipped the papyrus over around the horizontal axis with respect to the written lines, i.e. the way one would turn over a playing card lying on the table. On the left hand side next to the address, traces of ink are still visible, the reconstruction and translation of which are impossible.
5.

Sending items of clothing:
A man writes to his family

P.Cam.Michaelides Q 19

Provenance: Unknown

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 ahmadu, alladhī; l. 7 fa-idhā). The rā’ is extremely short (l. 2 Bahr; l. 5 al-khayr). The medial ‘ayn is open at the top (l. 2 Rabī‘a; l. 4 ba‘du; l. 6 al-ni‘ma, al-‘āfiya). Fā’ has one dot below the letter, whereas qāf has one dot over it (l. 6 faḍlihi, al-‘āfiya, qaḍā’ihi). The tail of the final yāʾ extends backwards in a straight line (l. 3 fa-‘innī, alladhī).

In this letter, a certain Bahr b. Rabī‘a writes to two women known as Umm ‘Amūr and Umm Nujiyyāt and his entire family. The sender asks the two ladies to send him a pair of sandals, two laces and a shirt with a trustworthy person as soon as possible. The sender then wonders about the reason that prevented them from writing to him about their news and condition. Bahr 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 Bahr’s wives.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من بحر بن ريبيعة إلى أم عمور وام نجية واهلنا كناكم
3. سلم عليك فإنا حمود الله الذي لا نه الا هو [vac.]
4. اما بعدد فاتيك من خبرنا اننا سالمين صلحاء من تتيم
5. كاهل لكذى يسرككم من البغيضة والخير نسأل الله تمام
6. النعمة عليكم وعليكم والزبداء من فضله والغفرة في قضاه
7. والرغبة في قضاه ما عندهما اما على اثر ذلك إذا
8. واكم [كتبي] هذا فاعننا الى ينعي وشركين حسنين [ن] ويميص
In the name of God, the [Com]passionate, [the Mer]ciful.

From Bahr b. Rabīʿa to Umm ʿAmūr and Umm Nujiyyāt and [all] our family.

Peace be upon you. I praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no god.

As for what follows, [I want to] let you know our news, namely that we are well and in good health,

as [you wish] of [the wellbeing] and the beneficence. We ask God the completion of His favour upon us and you and the [increase] in His munificence and the comfort in His judgement and the wish for [His judgement] what [He has.] As for what comes after, when [this letter of mine] reaches you, send me my sandals and two good laces and a shirt.

I do not know w[h]at prevents you from writing to me about your news and 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, ʾIkmāl, vol. 1, 500–502. Note that these names are recorded without medial ā in both sources. The scribe first wrote Nujiyy (نحيفة) 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 onamastic.

3. Salām ‘alaykum fa-innī almadu 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 hamdala, in view of the fact that the transitional element ʿammā ba’dū appears in the next line.

4. Ammā ba’dū fa-innī akhbirukum min khabarīnā annā sālimīn šāliḥūn. The casus obliquis of the sound masculine plural is used in sālimīn where classical Arabic requires the casus rectus (Hopkins § 86.a). Šāliḥūn is spelled defectively without long ā (Hopkins § 10). An exact parallel for this formula can be found in P. Rāʿībī Lettres 12.4. See also fa-innī ukhbirukum min khabarīnā annā sālimīn šāliḥīn (P. Heid. Arab. II 24.4, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in the commentary).

5. Ka-lladhī yasurrukum min al-ʾāfiya wa-l-khayr. An exact parallel for this formula is not attested, but see ka-lladhī yasurruka bi-ḥamd Allāh illā khayr (P. Rāʿībī Lettres 9r.5–6, 2nd/8th); ka-lladhī yasurruka bi-ḥamd Allāh alayanā wa-niʿmatihi (P. Rāʿībī Lettres 9v.4, 2nd/8th); ka-lladhī yasurruka wa-rabbunā maḥmūd (P. Rāʿībī Lettres 11.4–5, 2nd/8th); ‘alā mā yasurruka wa-rabbunā maḥmūd (P. Khalili I 15r.4–5, 2nd/8th). The yā’ of alladhī can be seen extending below the lacuna. The nūn of min is still visible.

5–7. Nasʿalu Allāh tamām al-niʿma ʿalaynā wa-ʿalaykum wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlihi wa-l-ʾāfiya fī qaḍāʾihi wa-l-raghiba fī qaḍāʾihi mā ʿindahū. The first part of this formula and variants of it are well attested in letters. See for example nasʿalu Allāh tamām niʿmatihi ʿalaynā wa-ʿalaykum wa-
l-ziyāda min faḍlıhi fa-īnāmā nahnu bihi wa-la-hu (P.Jahn 5.4–5, 2nd/8th); nas’alu Allāh tamām ni matihi ‘alaynā wa-alayka wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlıhi wa-l-riqa bihi wa-l-twafiq finā bi-khayr wa-bi-ridā (P.Khalili I 15v.5–7, 2nd/8th); nas’alu Allāh tamām al-ni’ma ‘alaynā wa-alayka wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlıhi (P.Khalili I 15v.4–5, 2nd/8th); nas’alu Allāh ‘āfiyatahu wa-ka-rāmat al-ākhira (P.RāġibLettres 9r.6, 2nd/8th); fa-nas’alu Allāh tamām al-ni’ma lanā wa-lakum bi-āfiyat al-dunyā wa-ka-rāmat al-ākhira (P.RāģibLettres 9v.4–6, 2nd/8th); as’alu Allāh tamām al-ni’ma ‘alaynā wa-alayka wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlıhi in shā’ā Allāh an yaj’alānā wa-iyyāka minman ya-mal bi-tā’īthi wa-yajtāni bu ghadabahu wa-yabtaghi markātahu (P.RāġibLettres 11.5–7, 2nd/8th). Post-vocalic hamza in nas’alu is omitted while the preceding short vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20).

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

7. The expression ammā ‘alā ithr dhālikα is alternative to the transitional element ammā ba’du (Hopkins § 106). The same expression appears in this corpus in 8.7 and in Rāģib (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-īdāh jā’akum kitābī hādāh fa-b’athā. The combination of a formula with fa-īdāh jā’aka/um kitābī hādāh + 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, unẓur, ʿuktub, ‘ajjil, khudh and arsil are often used. Cf. fa-īdāh jā’aka kitābī hādāh fa-arṣil ilayyā (P.Heid.Abār. I 4.3, dated 90/709-710); fa-īdāh jā’aka kitābī hādāh fa-khudh (P.Cair.Abār. III 148.6, dated 90/708-710); fa-īdāh jā’aka kitābī hādāh fa-ʿajjil (P.Heid.Abār. I 13.2, dated 91/710); fa-īdāh jā’aka kitābī hādāh 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-īdāh jā’akum kitābī hādāh fa-ktubā lanā (P.RāģibLettres 9r.7, 2nd/8th); fa-īdāh jā’akum kitābī hādāh fa-ktūbū ilaynā (P.RāģibLettres 12.4, 2nd/8th). The expression can also be reversed as follows, fa-ʾnzur amtaʿa Allāh bika idhā jā’akum hādāh fa-shtarī (P.Horak 85.6, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary). Jā’akum is written without the post-vocalic hamza (Hopkins § 21a). Kitābī is written defectively with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10a).

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

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

285. P.World, 156 a.8, 3rd/9th.
the norm in male footwear. It is said that the prophet usually wore double-laced sandals of tanned leather without animal hair.\textsuperscript{286} The second category is the khuff (pl. khifāf or akhīfāf), 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.\textsuperscript{287} The attestation of na’il 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 šīrār soles costs two dirhams, whereas a pair of ḥidhā’ soles costs only the half price (“na’il šīrār bi-dirhamān wa-na’il ḥidhā’ bi-dirham,” P.Marchands III 9.11, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}). A special pair of sandals, whose soles were imported from India “Sind” and whose laces were made in Tinnīs\textsuperscript{288} costs a quarter of a dirār (“na’il sindī bi-zīmām tinnīsī bi-rub’ dinār,” P.World, 156a.8, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}).\textsuperscript{289} The price of the khifāf was almost closer to the price of the soles than to the price of the sandals. The price change was due to the size of the khuff, as the letters show. For instance, a small pair of sandals for a girl of seven years old costs two dirhams. Another one for a girl of ten years old costs two dirhams and one dāniq (P.Marchands III 41.5-6, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}). These two pairs of sandals were the cheapest sandals in the Fustāṭ markets.\textsuperscript{290}

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

\textsuperscript{286} Stillman (2000), 22.
\textsuperscript{287} Stillman (2000), 21-22. See also Ahsan (1979), 47-48.
\textsuperscript{288} Tinnīs is an ancient town located near Damietta. The city was so famous for its unique textiles as many papyri and narrative sources indicate, see P.Marchands III 33, 8, 10 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}; Nāṣir Khusraw, Safr nāmah (1993), 91-94; Ibn Hawqal, Sūrat al-ard, 143; al-Ḥamawī, Mu jam, vol. 2, 51-54; al-Ḍaqīrī, al-Ḍawāʾī, vol.1, 496-511.
\textsuperscript{289} See also wa-anā mu ajjil ilayya bi-l-nā wa-l-kisā’, P.Marchands V/1 6.4-5, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}; bā ʿitha ilayya bi-l-maḥbas wa-l-ahwar wa-l-nā I, P.Marchands II 37, 2, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}. See also Dozy (1845), 421-424.
\textsuperscript{290} wa-shtarī li khuffayn li-rījīl, P.Marchands II 3.7, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}; wa-anā usībū lahā al-ḥuffayn in shā’a Allāh, P.Marchands II 9.19, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}; khīfāfīn li Abī ʿAbbā, P.Marchands II 11, 4, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}.
\textsuperscript{291} Stillman (2000), 12; Ahsan (1979), 36-39.
\textsuperscript{292} Ibn Ḍabāl al-Ḥakam, Futūḥ, 151-152; al-Balāḏurī, Buldān, 215.
\textsuperscript{293} See also Sijpesteijn (2013), 3.8, 2\textsuperscript{nd}/8\textsuperscript{th} 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 yamnaʿukum can be made out with difficulty.

10. Salāmatikum is written defectively without the long ā (Hopkins § 10.α). The expression wa-hawāʾijikum is restored on the basis of countless parallels. The fāʿ of fuʿila is missing in the lacuna.

12. Wa-[l-salām ʿalaykum wa-rahmat] Allāh wa-barakātuhu. Wa-barakātuhu is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10.α). See also 2.37 and the commentary. Maʿa dhā thiqa. The orthography dhā is written with an alif mamdūda after the preposition maʿa where classical Arabic requires the genitive dhī (Hopkins § 164.αi). Expressions using the word thiqa are frequent in the papyri. Cf. ibʿath bihi ilayya maʿa dhī thiqa (P. David-Weill Louvre 12-13.18, 2nd/8th); fa-kun fihi thiqa (Sijpesteijn (2013), 15.15, 23.29); wa-kun thiqa fima qibalaka (Sijpesteijn (2013), 15.15); idhā baʿathta bihi fa-maʿa thiqa (Sijpesteijn (2013), 28.14, all 2nd/8th).

Side B:

[Mīn Baḥ)r b. Rabīʿa ilā ahlihi. Of Baḥr only the rāʾ 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-bʿathī instead of an tabʿathī (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 2nd/8th
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 ukbiruka; 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 Yahyā, 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

[بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]

1. لا بى تميم من ام زرعة
2. سلم عليك فاني احمد اليك الله الذي
3. لا الله الا هو اما بعد فاني اخيركما اني سلمة
4. صلحة كما يسركم والحمد لله فصل الله
5. الذي اليه مصير كل شي ابعفنا واياكم من
6. مكاره الدنيا والاخرة واخرك
7. ان تيمم ابك سلام صلح كما يسرك
8. من فضل الله ورحمته واله كليم كما تحبون
9. وإن بخي وجميل وتجيب يقرن عليكم
10. السلام (salām) والسلم عليك (salām)
11. واني اخبرك يا بو راشد اني وجدت
12. vac.)
1. [In the name of God, the] Compassionate, the Merciful.

2. To Abū Tamīm from Umm Zurʿa.

3. Peace be upon you. I praise for your sake God, other than Whom, there is no god. As for what follows, I want to let you know that I am well and in good health, as you wish, God be praised. We ask God, to Whom the destiny of everything is due, to protect us and you from evils of this world and the hereafter. I inform you that your son Tamīm is well and in good health which will please you, through God’s benevolence and mercy, and his whole family is as you wish.

4. Yahyā and Jamīl and Najīḥ send to you greetings. (vac.) Peace be upon you. (vac.)

5. I inform you, Abū Rāshid, that I found Najīḥ serious in his work and he is keen not to make you blame him. By God, he appears to me as only a good person.

6. Commentary

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

4-5. Fa-innī ukhibrukumā annī sālima šaliḥa 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. Sālima šaliḥa 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-nasʾalu Allāh alladhī ilayhi mašīr kull shayʾ an yaʿfīnā wa-iyyākum min makārih al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira. For this expression, see in this corpus fa-nasʾalu Allāh alladhī ilayhi maradd kull shayʾ an yaʿfīnā wa-iyyākum min makārih al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira (3.8-9). The post-consonantal medial hamza is omitted in fa-nasʾalu (Hopkins § 26). Status constructus is written as one word in a(n)-yaʿfīka (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 Ṣahḥah, 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 wajadt Najīḥ ajhad ʿalamtuka fī ʿamalihi.* For similar expressions, see in this corpus *wa-ukhbiruka annahu jahdan fī ʿamalih* (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 ʿalamtuka is written against classical Arabic aʿlamtuka. 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.
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-inni; l. 5 āfānā). Sād is horizontally elongated (l. 7 ṣibyānī). The lower stroke of initial āyn extends to the right (l. 2 ’Abd Allāh; l. 9 ’alaynā). Final yāʾ occasionally returns to the right (l. 7 qibalā; ll. 6, 11 fl).

In this letter, a certain ’Abd Allāh b. Muhammad writes to a woman called Unaysa bt. Īsā 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 إلى [ ] ابنت عيسى
3. سلم عليك فادي احمد الله [اذذي]
4. لا الله الا هو (vac.)
5. اما بعد اعفاانا الله وياك عافية بيلغنا وياك
6. بما تعمد رحمته في جئته انها [و] لئذك [والغدر عليه كنت]
7. التك وانا ومن قبلي من اهلي وصبي [ب] على اح [SEN حال]
8. الحمد الله لا نفقد من خير الدنيا [و] ما نحتاج [ ]
9. من نعمته ومنه علينا الا النظر في وجهك قبل الموت فاسله الله
10. القريب المجيب الا ميتاً لى حتا انظر [ ]
11. في وجهك علني احسن ما [كون ان شا الله]
12. واسله [إنا] بألبضام عنك [وعنا

**Side B:**
In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

From ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad to Umm [ ] Un[aysa bt. Īsā]

Peace be upon you. I praise for your sake God, other than W[hom]

there is no god. (vac.)

As for what follows, may God grant us and you protection with which He makes [us and you reach]

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,]

whereas I and those who are with me, namely my family and my chi[ldren are in the b[est condition,]

God be praised. We do not miss of the goods of this world [and] we do not need [ from His favor and His bounty upon us, except for sight of your fa[ce before death. I ask God]

the near (and) the responsive not to let [me die till I look]

at your face, [n] the best [way possible, if God wills.]

I ask Him t[o] be plea[sed] with you [and us]

[From ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad to (vac.) Unaysa bt. Īsā. Deliver may the mercy of God be upon you]

2. ʿIlā is written with a long space between the alif and lām, while the yāʾ 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 yāʾ of alladhī can still be seen. A long vacant space has been left after the hamdala.
5-6. For parallels of the blessing ‘āfānā Allāh wa-īyyāki ‘āfiya yuballighunā wa-īyyāki bihā jasīm raḥmatihi fi jannatihi, see in this corpus ‘āfānā Allāh wa-īyyākum ‘āfiya yuddhilunā wa-īyyākum bihā al-janna bi-raḥmatihi wa-yunajīnā wa-īyyākum min shukhṭihi 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 dhālīka wa-l-qādir ‘alayhi is reconstructed on the basis of countless parallels. See for example P.Khalili I 18.20, 3rd/9th and the references given in the commentary. See also fa-innahu waliyy dhālīka wa-l-qādir ‘alayhi wa{l-marghūb ilayhi fihi (P.Berl.Arab. I 3.5-6, 2nd/8th).

7. For the expression anā wa-man qibāli, see in this corpus 38.6 and the commentary. See also the discussion on women of the house in chapter two. The orthography ‘alā is written for ‘alā which is frequent in the papyri (Hopkins § 55). For al-ṣibyān in the papyri, see Sijpesteijn (2013), 33.4, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary. See also the discussion on children in chapter two. The expression ‘alā aḥsan ḥāl is restored on the basis of parallels; cf. katabtu ilayka kitābī ḥādha wa-anā ‘alā aḥsan ḥāl wa-l-lāh mahmūd (P.Horak 85.5, 2nd/8th); fa-īnmi katabtu ilayka kitābī ḥādha wa-l-lāhī tuḥbūb an yablughaka ‘an khāṣṣatinā wa-ḥālī mā qibalānā ‘alā aḥsan ḥāl wa-l-rabb mahmūd (CPR XVI 4.4-6, 2nd/8th); katabtu ilayka kitābī ḥādha wa-anā wa-man qibāli ‘alā aḥsan al-ḥāl wa-l-lāh mahmūd (P.Rāġib Lettres 6.3, 3rd/9th). The term aḥlīhi 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-latīf al-khabīr al-qādir ‘alā mā yurīdu (Sijpesteijn (2013), 33.8, 2nd/8th and the commentary). See also in this corpus Allāh al-ḥakam al-‘adl (3.13).

9-11. Illā al-nazara fī waj[hiki qabla al-mawt fa-as’alu Allāh] al-qarīb al-mujīb an-lā yumiṭ[anī hattā anzur] fī wajhiki ‘a[lā] aḥsan mā [yakūn in ša’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 anzur are still visible above the lacuna.

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

Side B:

The first name of the sender is restored on the basis of the internal address. Ibnat is written with a tā’ maftūha in the status constructus which is an archaic spelling (Hopkins § 47.a). For the expression balīgh rahīmaka Allāh and other variants such as balīgh hudīta, raḥīma Allāh man ballaghahā, balīgh yarḥumaka Allāh, balīgh sallamaka Allāh, balīgh hadāka Allāh, balīgh šahībaka Allāh, balīgh 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 Dimyāṭ

P.CTYBR.inv. 2710 14 x 17.2 2nd/8th
Provenance: Unknown Plate 13-14

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

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

In this letter, a certain ʿUthmān b. Malad writes to his family, mostly women, i.e. Umm Ḥajar bt. Shurayḥ, Umm ʿAbbās, Ḥafṣa, ʿĀʾisha and ʿAdiyya in order to inform them that his father swore not to write them until he departs from Dimyāṭ.

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

Text

Side A:

[بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم] 1

[من عثمان بن ملاد إلى ابناه أم حجر أم شريح وام عباس وحفصة ومعيمة بنت اس ميل] 2

[واهليا كلام علىكم فانا نحم ايكم الى الله الذي لا هوا] 3

[اما بعدنا نخبركم من خبرنا انا سلمين صلحين كالذي يسركم ل] 4

[يحدث عليكم بما بعدكم والحمد الى الله الا خيرا وانا ما دونكم] 5

[وما خبركم ان ابي قد حلف لا يكتب الىكم حتي يخرج من دمياط] 6

[مني ولا ... رابيها حتى لا والسلم علىكم ور] 7

[حما الله وبركته وفان [يجبي] 8

Side B:

[من عثمان بن ملاد (vac.) الى ابناه بن عثمان] 9

Diacritical dots

(الذي 4) كالدي 3

Translation

Side A:

...
1. [In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful.]

2. [From 'Uthmān b. Malad] to Abān/ Umm Ḥajar b. Shurayh and Umm 'Abbās and Ḥafṣa and 'Adiyya and 'Ā‘isha b. 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 know our news, namely that we are well and in good health, which will please you. Nothing]

5. [happened to us after you, God be praised, except for good things. We did not ..... of what belongs to you]

6. [And I inform you] that my father swore not to write to you till he leaves Dimyāṭ

7. [from me and do not ......] Peace be upon you and

8. [God’s mercy] and blessings. And [ that ] 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-WeillLouvre 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 sin are preserved.

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

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

4-5. Lam yaḥduth ʿalaynā baʿdakum wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh illā khayrana. This expression is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. Cf. lam yaḥduth ʿalayhim baʿdakā illā khayr (P.Marchands V/I 17.5, 3rd/9th); lam yaḥduth ʿalā aḥad minnā illā khayr al-amr (P.RāġibLettres 10.5-6, 2nd/8th).

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

6. The ancient Dimyāṭ (Gr. Τημιάθης 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.LevidellaVidaDamietta, 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, Ta büṣir, 1316.
9.

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

P.Cair.Arab.inv. 1735
Provenance: Unknown

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 yāʾ sometimes bends backwards (l. 7 ʿī).

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 ʿAbd al-Hamīd, the husband of a certain ʿAbda. 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. 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

[بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]

1. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
2. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
3. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
4. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
5. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
6. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
7. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
8. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]
9. [بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم]

See also the commentary for a different interpretation.
In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

From you, peace be upon you. I praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no god. (vac.)

As for what follows, may God protect us and you and may He forgive us and you. I am writing to you, whereas I am well and in good health,

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

Therefore I praised God for it abundantly and I asked Him the completion of this for us

and you ............... to you ............... to us

in it. I did not hide anything from you, so that you would not blame me for it.

Abū Naṣr to send to ......... anything, so take care

send it to us. And \this/ should be with the first messenger coming from your side

a ship heading for (our direction), so come to us. If you wanted

.. and you have to meet ʿAbd al-Hamīd, the husband of ʿAbda, to command him

.. and do not leave him standing at the door. So send to me

.. any need they have. Do not withhold any news that

.. and ask her to come to us, for the wind is good for sailing.

.... what I wrote to you. And know that if I was able

and supply us with lotus (leaves) in order to wash our heads.

The two dots of the final yāʾ are placed inside the bend, see P.World, 85.
17. [send to Ḥabīb 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-raḥīm can be seen intersecting with the alif of ahmadu 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 ukhfüf, 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-Dhahābī, Mushtabih, 528. See also P.Cair.Arab. II 935.5, 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 safīna 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.Sijpesteijn Travel, 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-ḥdī lanā sidr naghsil bihi ruʿūsanā. For similar expressions using the root h-d-ā, see in this corpus wa-nzūr an tahdī lī (26.6). Sidr (pl. sudār) 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. Ruʿūsanā is written without hamza (Hopkins § 19).

17. The hāʾ 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.ClyBR.inv. 2603  22.9 x 19.2  2nd/8th
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 īā). 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 sīdqa; l. 10 fīlan). Initial kāf is horizontally elongated (l. 7 ʿuktūbī). The tail of the final yā’ occasionally bends backwards (ll. 3, 8 fa-innī).

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

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

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. إلى وهمه أنتن سلم من عطبا
3. صلى الله على أحمد البك الله الذي لا إله إلا هو
4. فاني بعد عافانا الله وياك من كل سوء عنا وننك
5. برحمة كتبتي يا إية أعادك الله كتابي هذا
6. وانا وسدي على الذي يسر كوك الحمد لله
7. اكتب إلى سيدى ويارمه عـ[
8. فاني اني ن بخير الصلاح عنك
9. صدقا وقد كتبتي اليك انت
10. بالإسكندرية فعل والله وذكرك
11. ان لو قظنا اكتبنا هو ما يكون لك [من حاجة فان]
12. فيها الذي أنت اهله منا أفقي مريح في السلم
13. وعلى ام تزيد السلام والسلم [عليك ورحمت الله]

Side B:
In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

To Wahba bt. Sālim from 'At[ā’ Peace be upon you

I praise for your sake God, other than whom [there is no god. (vac.])

As for what follows, may God save us and you from all evils and may He forgive us and you

through His mercy. I am writing to you, this letter of mine,

whereas I and my lord are as you wish, God be praised.

Write to my lord at his order,

because I knows about your righteousness .

verily. You have written to us that you

in Alexandria, indeed, by God and this

only if we return. Write to me about [your needs, for]

in (fulfilling) it lies what you deserve most from us. Send from me to greetings

and send to Umm Yazīd greetings. Peace be upon you and God’s mercy.

[To Wahba bt. Sālim from (vac.) Muḥammad

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 'Atā’ in line 2, ‘āfānā in line 4 and bi-raḥmatīh in line 5.

Ilā has an extremely long bending yā’ which extends into the margin. For the female name Wahba, see Grätzl (1906), 28. Ibnat is written with a tā’ maftūḥa (Hopkins § 47.1.a). Sālim is written defectively without long ā (Hopkins § 10). Of the name ‘Atā’ on the ‘ayn and tā’ 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 baʿdu appears in line 4.

4-5. The formula ‘afānā Allāh wa-iyyāki min kull sū’ wa-ʿafī ʿannā wa-ʿanki 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 ilayyki ʿāfāki Allāh wa-iyyānā kitābī hādhā wa-anā wa-sayyidyī ʿalā alladhī yasurruki wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh is restored on the basis of parallels in this corpus in 4-5; 6.4-5; 23.6-7 and the examples provided in the commentaries. The orthography ʿal is written for ʿalā (Hopkins § 55). Also written thus in line 13.

7. The word ukṭūbī 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. Uktūbī ilayya bi-mā yakūn laki min ḥāja. For this formula and variants of it, see P.Horak 85.10, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in the commentary.

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

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

Side B:

[Ilā Wahba bt. Sālim] min Muḥammad. The name of the female addressee is reconstructed on the basis of the internal address. In the exterior address the sender is given as Muḥammad, while the internal address mentions a certain ‘Aṭāʿ.
11.

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

P.Khalili II 28
17 x 13
2nd/8th
Provenance: Unknown
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 ʾidhā). Initial and medial kāfs are horizontally elongated (l. 7 katabtu; l. 8 taktubī). The tail of the final yāʾ bends backwards consistently (l. 3 fa-inni).

This letter is sent from two male senders, a certain al-Nuʿmān b. Shuʿayb, being one of them, to four male and female addressees, i.e. Umm Nuʿaym bt. Nuʿaym, Ḥammād, Umm ʿUthmān and Yazīd b. ʿUthmān. 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 Maryūṭ 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:

[بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم] .1
[من شبيب بن سعيد إلى أم نعيم] .2
[وقام عثمان وزيد بن عثمان سلم عليك فأتمت الله الزهري] .3
[لا الله إلا هو] .4
[كتبنا إلىكم] .5
[فإن كان] .6
[وقد كنت كتبت اللك أن وما لك] .7
[تكتبي إلى بعاب كتبي] .8
[vac.] .9
[على نيبان] .10
[أما الخروج الينا إلا ما نرجوا لك من رفق] .11
[ننظر في وجوهكم فان كنت خارجة الينا فكتبي لنا] .12
Side A:

1. [In the name of God the Companionate, the Merciful.
2. [From ]... and al-Nu'mān b. Shu'ayb to Umm Nu'aym bt. Nu'aym and Ḥammād [
3. [and ]Umm ʿUthmān and Yazīd b. ʿUthmān. Peace be upon you. I praise for your sake God oth[e[r]
4. [than Whom there is no god. As for what follows, may 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 Maryūṭ, 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-Āḥrūn (?)

Commentary
Side A:

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

3. ṬUthmān 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 aṣlaḥanā Allāh wa-iyyāk salāḥ man raḍiya ’anhu, see aṣlaḥanā Allāh wa-iyyāka bi-mā aṣlaḥa bihi awliyā’ahu wa-aḥl tā’āthī (CPR XVI 33.5-6, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); aṣlaḥanā Allāh wa-iyyāka bi-mā aṣlaḥa bihi awliyā’ahu wa-aṣṭiyyā’ahu wa-aḥbā’ahu wa-aḥl tā’āthī man raḍiya ’anhu min khalqīhi wa-kāna lahu wāliyān wa-naṣīran (P.Genv.V 5.11-14, 2nd/8th).

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

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

11. For the name Mudrik, see al-Samʿānī, al-Ansāb, vol. 11, 197. For the expression nanẓur 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 Maryūṭ, see Peust (2010), 61-62, 102. The name of a fourth city is given of which only a mīm is preserved.

15. Ablighū jamī’. The scribe first wrote a singular imperative, i.e. abligh, and then he added a wāw and an alif at the end as follows: ابلاغ وا.

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
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 kāf are horizontally elongated (l. 4 ʿalaykum; l. 7 wa-iyyākum; l. 9 kullihī). The tail of the final mīm is extremely short (l. 7 iyyākum). Final yāʾ extends backwards (l. 4 fa-innî; l. 9 fi).

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

Text

Side A:

[بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم] 1
[من عبد الرحمن بن ابي عبد الرحمن الى عمر بن ابي] 2
[وام عبد الجبار وام سهل وام عبد] 3
[وهنا كلهم نسلم ايكم احمد الىكم اللله الذى لا اللها هو] 4
[اما بعد كتابي ايكم وانا والحمد لله صلى الله تعالى] 5
[من فضله ورحمة الله بنى ان يتم علىنا وعليكم نعمة الله] 6
[وان يلبسنا واياكم عافيتها وان يجمع بين مصرينا واياكمنهاره عند الله] 7
[وان يرضى عننا وع ولكم وان نشكره حق شكره] 8
[وان يجمع بينا في الخير كله فالحمد لله] 9
[فما اح] 10

Side B:

[من عبد الرحمن (vac.) الى عمر بن ابي] 1

Diacritical dots

(5) انا ; سلمين (7) بينا

Translation
Side A:

1. [In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.]
2. [From ʿAbd al-]Raḥmān b. Abū ʿAbd al-[Raḥmān to ʿAmmār b. Abū]
3. [and Umm ʿAbd al-]Jabbār and Umm Sahl and Umm ʿAbd al-Jabbār and Umm Sahl and Umm ʿA[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 mercy. 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[k]e 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 ʿAbd] al-Raḥmān (vac.) to ʿAmmār b. Abū[

Commentary

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 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān only the rāʾ, ḥāʾ, mīm and nūn are still visible. Abī has a long backward bending yāʾ. The patronymic of the sender can be made out with difficulty. The name ʿAmmār is reconstructed on the basis of the exterior address.
3. Of Umm ʿAbd al-Jabbār only the lām, jīm, bāʾ, alif and rāʾ are preserved. The proper name Sahl is very common in the papyri; cf. P.Cair.Arab. I 39.26, 3rd/9th. The name appears also in this corpus in 5v.2. See also the female form Sahla in P.Rāġib.Lettres 11r.2, 2nd/8th.
4. The expression wa-ahlinā kullihim is restored on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 5.2; 8.3.
5. The formula ammā baʿadu kitābī ilaykum wa-innā wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh sālimīn šaliḥīn 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 mīn 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, šaliḥīn was also spelled without long ā.
6. The formula min faḍl Allāh wa-raḥmatihi is restored on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 6.9.

7. Only traces of the yā’, lām and nūn of yulbisanā are visible. The lām of ya’jala is missing.

9. Wa-an ya’jma’a baynānā fi al-khayr kullihī wa-l-hamdu 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 baynānā wa-baynaka fi ‘āfiya (P.Marchands II 8.7, 3rd/9th).

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

Side B:

[Mīn ‘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
40 x 15.5
Provenance: Unknown
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 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 salāmatīhī; l. 25 shiqqa). The tail of the final yāʾ bends backwards (l. 2 alladhī; l. 23 ghulāmī). Final tāʾ marbūṭa and hāʾ are occasionally v-shaped at the top (l. 17 maʿahu).

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:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

1. إلى مروان بن يزيد سلم عليك فاني احمـ[ ][

من الله الا هو [ (vac.)]

2. الابعاد عائلا الله وبائك من السو برحمته

وامك تعمه عليلا وعليك فإنه ولي ذلك

3. يد والله محمدود مشكو[ ][

والله بادرتك وصل كتابك وفهمت الذي ذكرته من سلامت الله يايك

4. حمدت الله على سلامته] إياك حدا كثيرا فذلك

فهدت الله وإليك وفضلته وعافيته

5. والقادر عليه وصل كتابك وفهمت الذي ذكرته من سلامت الله يايك

سابلته وفضلته وعافيته

6. واسلك الله ان يفيق في خير وعافية وان يفيق ما دام

ما حتى نراك في خير وعافية

7. كتبتم لي وبعتت للك كل

ما بعثت به لي فاسل الله

8. [ بخير وقارة عين

فضلتم عنك وعن سلامتكم

15. فأنا بخرج الاد وانا اكتب اليلك معه

16.変わي وعائي
1. [بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَانِ الرَّحِيمِ]
2. [فَمَا أَلَى مِنْ الحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُ لَمَّا بَاقَ]
3. [أَهْلُ فَايْضَاءُ الْبَزِيرِ هَٰلِكُونَ عِنْدَ آيُوبَ]
4. [مَسْكِينٌ لَا يَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]
5. [فَاتَّهُ المَعْمِينَ بَامُرِكَ المَهْتَمِ بِهِ]
6. [أَرْزِقْكَ اللَّهُ وَانْبِعْثِ إِلَى بَعْلَّمِي وَاسْمُهُ حُلْبُوبٌ]
7. [أَوْلَى هُمْ بِهِ صَلَائِكَ ﻟَيْسَ كَمَا تَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]
8. [مَسْكِينٌ لَا يَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]
9. [فَاتَّهُ المَعْمِينَ بَامُرِكَ المَهْتَمِ بِهِ]
10. [أَرْزِقْكَ اللَّهُ وَانْبِعْثِ إِلَى بَعْلَّمِي وَاسْمُهُ حُلْبُوبٌ]
11. [أَوْلَى هُمْ بِهِ صَلَائِكَ ﻟَيْسَ كَمَا تَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]
12. [مَسْكِينٌ لَا يَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]
13. [فَاتَّهُ المَعْمِينَ بَامُرِكَ المَهْتَمِ بِهِ]
14. [أَرْزِقْكَ اللَّهُ وَانْبِعْثِ إِلَى بَعْلَّمِي وَاسْمُهُ حُلْبُوبٌ]
15. [أَوْلَى هُمْ بِهِ صَلَائِكَ ﻟَيْسَ كَمَا تَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]
16. [مَسْكِينٌ لَا يَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]
17. [فَاتَّهُ المَعْمِينَ بَامُرِكَ المَهْتَمِ بِهِ]
18. [أَرْزِقْكَ اللَّهُ وَانْبِعْثِ إِلَى بَعْلَّمِي وَاسْمُهُ حُلْبُوبٌ]
19. [أَوْلَى هُمْ بِهِ صَلَائِكَ ﻟَيْسَ كَمَا تَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]
20. [مَسْكِينٌ لَا يَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]
21. [فَاتَّهُ المَعْمِينَ بَامُرِكَ المَهْتَمِ بِهِ]
22. [أَرْزِقْكَ اللَّهُ وَانْبِعْثِ إِلَى بَعْلَّمِي وَاسْمُهُ حُلْبُوبٌ]
23. [أَوْلَى هُمْ بِهِ صَلَائِكَ ﻟَيْسَ كَمَا تَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]
24. [مَسْكِينٌ لَا يَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]
25. [فَاتَّهُ المَعْمِينَ بَامُرِكَ المَهْتَمِ بِهِ]
26. [أَرْزِقْكَ اللَّهُ وَانْبِعْثِ إِلَى بَعْلَّمِي وَاسْمُهُ حُلْبُوبٌ]
27. [أَوْلَى هُمْ بِهِ صَلَائِكَ ﻟَيْسَ كَمَا تَعْرِفُهُ فَاعْطِفْ]

**Translation**

**Side A:**

1. [In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.]
2. [From Marwān b. Yazīd. 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 protect us and you from evil through His mercy.]
5. [May God be praised and thanked.]
6. [and may He complete] for us and you His blessing as He [is the one to have control over this]
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. 
18. 
19. 
20. 
21. 
22. 
23. 
24. 
25. 
26. 

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. [ʿAfānā Allāh min] al-sūʿ bi-raḥmatihi. Blessings of this kind following the transitional element amma baʿdu are very common in early letters. Cf. ʿafānā Allāh wa-iyyāka min kull sūʿ wa-jaʿala maṣīranā wa-iyyāka jannāt al-naʿīm bi-raḥmatihi (Sijpesteijn (2013) 31.3-4, 2nd/8th and P.Horak 85.4-5, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in both commentaries). See also chapter one, formulary. Traces of bi-raḥmatihi can be made out at the end of this line. The expression bi-raḥmatihi appears sometimes in combination with the phrase fi al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira, see Grob (2010a), 45.

6. The formula wa-lāh māhmūd 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 niʿmatahu ʿalaynā wa-ʿalayka 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 niʿmatahu which is partially effaced.

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

8-9. Waṣala kitābuka wa-fahimtu alladhī dhakarta min salāmat Allāh iyyāka fa-ḥamidtu Allāh ʿalā salāmatihi iyyāka ḥamdan kathīrānu 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 ʿalā dhālika kathīrān (P.Marchands V/I 6.3, 3rd/9th); waṣala ilayyya kitābuka ḥafīzaqā Allāh wa-fahimtu mā katabta bihi ilayyya min salāmat Allāh iyyāka fa-ḥamidtu Allāh ʿalayhi ḥamdan kathīrān (P.Marchands V/I 18.4,
3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}); atānī kitābuka ḥafizaka Allāh yā akhī bi-mā sarranī min salāmat Allāh iyyāka wa-salāmat al-shaykh wa-ʾammika fa-sarranī ḥalika wa-ḥamidū Allāh alayhi āmīn karīn Allāh yā bi mā qata bi-yyāka wa-salāmat Allāh iyyāka fa-sarranī ḥalika wa-ḥamidū Allāh ʾala ḥalika kathīrān (P.Marchands V/I 20.4, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}); wa-ṣala ilayya kitābuka fa-qaraʾtuḥu wa-fahimtū mā katabta min salāmat Allāh iyyāka fa-sarranī ḥalika wa-ḥamidū Allāh ʾala ḥalika kathīrān (P.Marchands II 24.5, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}); atānī kitābuka wa-fahimtū mā katabta fīhi mīn salāmat Allāh iyyāka ... wa-qad ḥamidū Allāh ʾala ḥalika ḥamdan kamā huwa ahlahu (P.Marchands II 35.8, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}); qad fahimtū kitābuka wa-mā ḥakarta fīhi mīn khabar salāmat wa-salāḥ ḥalika ʾala mā sarraka (CPR XVI 34.4, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}). On other occasions, this expression follows the announcement of the wellbeing of the sender himself. See for example, katabtu ilayya ʾan salāma wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 15[= P.World, 175 b].3, 2\textsuperscript{nd}-3\textsuperscript{rd}/8\textsuperscript{th}-9\textsuperscript{th}); kitābī ilayka aʾazzaka Allāh ʾan salāma wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh kathīrān (P.Heid.Arab. II 18.4, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}); kitābī ilaykumā aʾazzakumā Allāh ʾan salāma wa-ʾāfiya wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh kathīrān (P.Heid.Arab. II 57.3, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}); kitābī hādhā wa-anā bi-hāl ṣalāma wa-salāma wa-llāh al-ḥamdu la sharīk lahu (P.Khalili I 20v.2, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}).

10-12. The formula fa-asʾalu Allāh an yubqiyaka fi khayr wa-ʾāfiya wa-an yubqiyaka mā dāma .... hattā narākā fi khayr wa-ʾāfiya is restored on the basis of parallels. Cf. fa-asʾalu Allāh alladhi huwa fi khayr wa-ʾāfiya wa-asʾalu an yubqiyaka wa-an yadfaʾ ʾanqa al-sū bi-raḥmatihi (P.Marchands V/I 6.7-8, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}); fa-asʾalu Allāh an yubqiyaka wa-yajāla yawmī qabla yawmikī (P.Heid.Arab. II 51.6, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}); fa-asʾalu Allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm an yubqiyaka wa-an yuriynā fīka al-ʾāfiya (P.Khalili I 14.7, 2\textsuperscript{nd}/8\textsuperscript{th}); wa-asʾalu an yubqiyaka wa-an yadfaʾ ʿanqa al-sū bi-raḥmatihi (P.Marchands V/I 6.7, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}).

14. Post-consonantal medial hamza is omitted in fa-asʾalu (Hopkins § 26). Also written 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. Asʾaluhum ʾanqa wa-an salāmatika. One expects proper names to have preceded asʾaluhum to whom the personal pronoun hum refers to. Asʾaluhum is written defectively without the post-consonantal medial hamza (Hopkins § 26). There are two ink spots that could be mistaken for diacritics above the tāʾ and under the kāf of salāmatika.

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

18. Laka ʾalayya min al-ḥaq 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 maddūda (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 taʾrifahu fa-ʾtif. 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 ʾinṣān miskīn (P.World, 186, 2\textsuperscript{nd}-3\textsuperscript{rd}/8\textsuperscript{th}-9\textsuperscript{th}); inni anā ʾinṣān miskīn (P.Jahn 7[= P.World, 185].4, 2\textsuperscript{nd}/8\textsuperscript{th}); fa-innahu miskīn (P.World, 162, 2\textsuperscript{nd}/8\textsuperscript{th}); wa-nāḥnu ʿu faʾāfāʾ masākīn (P.Ryl.Arab. II (2) 11.9, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}); anā marʾā miskīna ... fa-innnī miskīna ḍaʾīfā mustaqṭīmu bi-llāh thuμa bika (P.Ryl.Arab. I XV 1.2, 4-5, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}); masākīn ḍaʾīfāʾ (P.Marchands II 20.5, 3\textsuperscript{rd}/9\textsuperscript{th}). Sometimes, the petitioner goes far to describe him as naked, hungry and thirsty. Cf. wa-annā wa-llāh
'uryāna jāʾa 'atshāna (P.Marchands II 23.13-14, 3rd/9th); wa-anā wa-llāh yā ḥākī fi ḥāl lā ya'lamūhā illā Allāh 'azza wa-jalla min al-jā' wa-lā thawb 'alayya .... wa-lawlā annhu al-shi'tā' mā 'amīlu wa-akhfū bard al-ʿarā' la-kharajtu ĥārib 'alā wajhī min al-jā' wa-lakinī akhāfu al-bard wa-l-'arā' wa-qad taqata'at thiyyūbī wa-anā jāʾi mayt bi-l-jāʾ (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 8.5-12, 3rd/9th). The term miskīn also has another technical meaning related to alms' payments (ṣadaqa/zakāt). A small number of documents recording the payment, collection and distribution of alms has already been published and studied. See P.Khalili I 1 and references given in the commentary; Sijpesteijn (2013), 8; Sijpesteijn (2011), 260-261.

22. The two dots of the yāʾ of yadḥhab are misplaced under the ḥāʾ.

23. An tabʾatha ilayya bi-ghulāmī wa-smuḥu Jalbūb. The name Jalbūb and other possible readings such as Ḥalbūb, Jalbūn are not recorded in onomastic dictionaries.

25-26. Shiqqa (pl. shiqqā) is a piece of cloth. The term is widely attested in the papyri. Cf. P.World, 163[= P.Marchands V/I 7r.7], 3rd/9th; P.Marchands III 14r.4, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands V/I 9r.12, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands V/I 15r.4, 3rd/9th. Jībba or jubba (pl. jubub or jībāb) is a long outer garment with an open front and wide sleeves which was usually worn over a qamīṣ. The term is well attested in commercial and private letters. Cf. an taʾkhudh bihim sitta buṭaṭ li-ʿAlī khudh waḥīd wa-jubba (P.Marchands II 3.6-7, 3rd/9th); ḥattā tabʾatha ilayhi bi-l-jubbatayn ...... al-nabāṭī alladhi ba athta maʾahu bi-l-jubba qaṭn (P.Marchands II 9.9, 17, 3rd/9th); fi thaman jubba (P.GrohmannWirtsch. 16v.6, 3rd/9th). A woolen jubba costs four dirhams, while another one costs twenty and one sixth dirhams. See P.GrohmannWirtsch. 14.5, 2nd/8th; 16v.6, 3rd/9th. A luxurious blackish jubba of velvet costs eight dinārs (“thaman jubba khaz dakinā thamaniyat danānrīn,” P.Cair.Arab. VI 394B.11, 3rd/9th).

27. Wa-alla tushmit bī aḥadan fa-innī shaqiya. Allā is written for an lā (Hopkins § 51.e). The tāʾ taʾnīth in shaqiya refers to the female sender.

Address:

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

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297 Ahsan (1979), 40; Stilllman (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 Fusṭāṭ

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

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, sin is written sometimes with teeth and sometimes without (ll. 2, 3, 14 al-salām). Final yāʾ 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 Fusṭāṭ (ghāʾib bi-l-fusṭāṭ). 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. 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

ما اعطاك (vac.) وقد احببت ابقاك اللّه ان تخص نفسك [مني بالسلام]  
الله السلام وعلى عبد الرحيم وابي عبد الله ان كان حاضرا السلام  
الله السلام وعلى جماعة عائلة بي وأبلغ أبو عبد الله [السلام واخبرك]  
احب ان لو اني قدرت [يأني اسلام عليكم وادركم [  
] نه ...  
اهلي] نه على ذلك ثاني [  
ان صاحب كتبى هذا اليم جار يمر بعد الجبار ثاني [  
العرج .... وحمارة له تمر .... وفذا خبرك به و كانوا [  
ان تحرص في اجر اجل به وان تقوم بذلك ثاني [  
فتاكل تعمل ان عبد الجبار غايب بالفسطاط [  
عبد الجبار فيشترك فانظر ابقاك الله [إن تكتب الي بخير [  
وخير [عذر] عذرًا ابقاك اللّه وخير عبد الرحمن [  
فابلغهما مني سلاما كثيرا مع كتابك الى بخيرك و[حاعدوك وحوايحك]]  
والسلام عليك ورحمة اللّه وبركاته]  

See chapter one, formulary. See also in this corpus letters 26.5-6; 31.20-23.
Diacritical dots

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-Rahīm 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 ‘Ali. 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 Fustāṭ [
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-Rahīm
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 aḥbabtu abqāka Allāh. For the difference between the two forms aḥbabtu 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-îyāl (4.10-11). See also the discussion on women of the house in chapter two. Wa-ablīgh 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 şāhib kitābī hādīhā ilayyka jār yamurru bi-‘Abd al-Jabbār. Sending letters with neighbors is well attested in letters. Cf. kitābī hādīhā ma’a jārī wa-ṣadiqī Abū al-Ḥadiḥ al-‘aṣṣār
(CPR XVI 22.8, 3rd/9th); wa-hādhā jārunā yusamā Bulbul arsaltu maʾahu kitābī (P.Marchands II 28.6, 3rd/9th). For more, see chapter one, formulary. See also Grob (2010a), 93-100.

10. Fustāṭ also appears in this corpus in 16.9; 38.3. See also 23.20 and the commentary. For the expression ghāʾib bi-l-fusṭāṭ, see in this corpus ghāʾib bi-l-rīf (29.6).

12. The scribe first wrote the ʿayn and zāy of the female name ʿAzīza. He then, for no apparent reason, covered it with ink. The tāʾ marbūṭa of ʿAzīza was added as an afterthought above the line. Of ʿAbd al-Raḥīm only the alif, lām and rāʾ can be detected after the prefix ʿAbd. The name can also be read as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān or any other of God’s names.

13. For the expression maʾa 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.
Letter conveying greetings

P.CtYBR.inv. 2619  14.5 x 12.8  2nd/8th
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 dhālika). Sīn and shīn are written consistently without teeth (l. 9 al-salām; l. 8 shāʾa). Kāf is hairpin-shaped (l. 6 kāmā). The two dots of the final yāʾ are placed inside the bend (l. 3 fa-ʾinī). 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 إبرهيم بن سليمان لأبي يحيى [إبن] بيسرة وأبي [زكرى] سلم عليكما فانى
3. أحمد الليكما الله الذي لا إله إلا هو اما
4. بعد فانا اخبركم من خبرى [إنها] سلام
5. صالح كما تحب وربنا محمود مشكور نسله
6. تمام انظر بيب زكرى [لا] ان لا تدعني من الكتاب إن شاء الله ولانى تقريكم و...
7. ك والتركيك السلم أقرى عليهم منا السلم انظر بيب زكرى أن كنتي أي بما كنت
8. [والسلم] لك من حاجة في ذلك مما تقر به عيني ولانظر إلى ان نحج (؟) بزكرى
9. إن شاء الله ولانظر بيب زكرى

Side B:

[ ] إن تهدى  1.  
[ ] 2.
Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān to Abū Yahyā [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 Yahyā 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 sāliḥ 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. Unẓur yā Abī Zikrī 〚lā〛 an lā tadaʿ ʿannī min al-kitāb. An alif is absent after vocative yā (Hopkins § 49.a.ii) and the alif maḏūda is shifted to an alif maqṣūra (Hopkins § 12.e). It is written in exactly the same way in lines 10, 13. Tadaʿ ʿannī 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 shāʾa Allāh. Shāʾa is written without the post-vocalic ḥamza (Hopkins § 20.c) and the scribe left the alif of Allāh out.

9. For the name al-Turayk, see Ibn Ḥajar, Ṭabṣīr, 197. The reading Burayk is also possible, see P.cair.Arab. VI 438.3, 3rd/9th. See also J. Hess, Beduinennamen aus Zentralarabien (Heidelberg: Winter, 1912), 11-12.

10-11. For the expression bi-mā kānat laka min ḥāja and variants of it, see in this corpus 31.30; 36.7 and the examples given in the commentary. See also P.Horak 85.10, 2nd/8th.

11. The scribe mistakenly wrote the word wa-l-salām at the beginning of this line, then he indicated his mistake by crossing out the word by means of a horizontal line. Dhālika is written with scriptio plena of long ā (Hopkins § 11).

11-12. Fa-innā dhālika mimmā taqirru bihi ʿaynī. For similar expressions, see wa-qarr bihi ʿaynaka (P.Marchands II 1r.6, 3rd/9th); wa-qurrat ʿayn (in this corpus, 9.15). See also wa-aqīr ʿaynahu fī nafsihi 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 yarhamuka 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.
Reporting on sick persons in Fustat

P.Cair.Arab.inv. 403  22 x 13.5  1st-2nd/7th-8th Plate 25
Provenance: Probably Fustat

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 ahmadu; l. 8 qad). The attached and independent rā’s are very short (l. 12 al-qarya). The medial āyn/ghayn is open at the top (l. 11 taghalā). 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 ukhbirkum; ll. 11-12 rahimakum).

In this letter, the sender, Salmān b. Mughith, writes to one ‘Ubayd 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 Mahdī came to the village while he is well and in good health. The letter closes as usual with the final salām greeting. At the end, the writer of the letter, al-Rabī’ b. Muslim, sends his greetings to the two addressees and asks them to send to the sender a piece of papyrus.

The dual is consistently used throughout the letter and there are no grammatical mistakes indicating the writer’s high command of the language. 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 [إلى] عبد بن يسار و سلم عليكم
3. فاتي أحمد ليكم الله الذي لا إله إلا [هو] ما بعد فاتي
4. خبركم ما دوييلم [ب] دويليم
5. الآدمما كانت مر ضمسست
6. ها فقد هري تاكلد
7. اما بعد فاكبنا أي بخبر
8. فانه قد طال ما كتبنا ليكماما [فاته ليس]
9. لى في الفسطاط إحدا هو ينقف على
10. اليه ... إني لا إله إلا الله ولا []
11. بابي سليمان كيف هو فلا تعفلا ع[ن] ذلك [ ر]

299 See also chapter one, script.
1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Salmān b. Mughīth [to ʿUbayd 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 sick
5. al-Admāʾ fell sick
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 [ ]
9. nobody in Fuṣṭāt, who is concerned about me [ ]
10. to him [ ]
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]
13. is [ ]
14. well as you wish. Peace be upon you and [God's] mercy.
15. al-Rabīʾ b. Muslim wrote (this letter) and he sends to you greetings.
16. Send to me a piece of papyrus so that I may write to you [ ]
16. on it.

Side B:

From Salmān b. Mughīth to ʿUbayd b. Yasār

Commentary

Side A:
2. For the name Mughīth, see al-Dhahabī, Mushtabīh, 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. *Ilāh* 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 onamastica. The supplement *m[arīḍ]* is a mere suggestion, since nothing but a *mīm* is preserved. See also *marīḍ*[ar] in the next line.

5. For the female name Admāʾ, see Gratzl (1906), 33, 58. In papyri, see P.RāḡibLettres 9.2, 2nd/8th.

9. Fusṭāṭ 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 baʿdu* is used three times to mark off the onset of the different sections within the body of the letter. Different expressions such as *wa-baʿdu*, *ammā ʿalā 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 qiṭʿa min qirṭās aktubu ilaykum bihi*. For parallels, see *wa-bʿath ilayya qiṭʿa qirṭās aktubu fīhā* (P.Khalili I 27v.9, 3rd/9th). For *qirṭās* (pl. *qarāṭis*) papyrus rolls, see in this corpus 34.7.

**Side B:**

The name of the addressee ʿUbayd b. Yasār is clearly readable on the left hand side.
1.3. Death and consolation

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 44 x 22 2nd/8th
Provenance: Unknown 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 time 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 tā‘ slants to the right (l. 2 ṭalq). Rā‘ and zāy are very short (l. 1 al-raḥmān, al-raḥīm; 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 ‘ayn is extended to the right (ll. 9, 16, 18 ‘alayhi). Fā‘ has one dot below the letter and qāf has one dot over it (l. 9 fā‘; l. 12 Muqsim). Final nūn extends vertically downwards (l. 2 ibn; l. 12 sāliḥīn). Final yā‘ bends backwards (l. 2 ilā; l. 3 abī). Words are split across line endings (ll. 14-15 al-ṣahāba; 18-19 yas‘amu hi).

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 salve 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 يبِن طلق الابي زينب
3. ابنت أبى زياد [سلم] عليك فاني
Side B:

من وسامة بن طلق السطهي ثم [ vac. ] (الى زينب ابنت ابي زياد)

1. فينا
2. وأبو سنان وتميم وسلمين ذلك
3. من وسامة بن طلق الى اب زينب واهل الله سلم عليك
4. اما بعد فاكا سالمون صاحب ومنظر السلموان <الله>
5. ان تدعى الى أمرك دارهم فلمن تصنع به
6. الذي امرتنه به والسلم عليك ورحمة الله

Diactritical dots

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Wusāma [b.] Ṭalq to Zaynab
4. praise [for your sake] God, [other than Whom,]
5. there is no god. [As for what follows,] I want to
6. let you know our news, namely that [we are] well and in good health, which will
7. please you, God be praised. As for what comes after, I
8. inform you that Abū Ziyād died, may God have mercy upon him
9. and may He bless him and gu[ide] him to the paradise. God will do this,
10. If God wills. His death has come over what
11. you expected. He was [    ] since a year. He em[ancipated]
12. Muqsim in a group of sound witnesses from among our companions
13. long time before he died. By God, Muqsim
14. was [    ] in that and he gave him the best of
15. companionship. [Even if] it were you, you would not nurse
16. him in the same way as Muqsim nursed.
17. Therefore, I command you to take care of him in return of what he did
18. for Abū Ziyād, namely taking care of him. He did not ha-
19. ate him day or night. If he was his father, he would not have been more patient
20. towards him than he was towards Abū Ziyād in
21. carrying him and putting him down and getting him out from the cottage
22. carried on his hands and doing the same in entering him, despite
23. his personal weakness, may God reward him for it. Peace be upon you and
24. God’s mercy.

Side B:

From Wusāma b. Ṭalq al-Tujībī and [    ] (vac.) to Zaynab bt. Abū Ziyād

1. [    ] in it. I
2. Abū Sinān and Tamīm and Sulaymān this
3. From Wusāma b. Ṭalq to Abū Zaynab and his family. Peace be upon you.
4. As for what follows, we are well and in good health. Consider, may <God> grant you
   prosperity,
5. to pay to Umm Khālid one dirham to make
6. what I ordered her. Peace be upon you and God’s mercy.

Commentary

Side A:

2. The shift ʾu to wu is frequent in the papyri, i.e. Wusāma instead of Usāma (Hopkins § 27.a). For the name Wusāma in the papyri, see P.Jahn 5.6, 8, 2nd/8th. As for the name Ṭalq, see
Ibn Ma’kūl, *Ikmal*, 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’ *maftūha* instead of a tā’ *marbūta* 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 *sālim* greeting, *sālam* ‘alayki, which is partially effaced.

5-7. For the formula fa-inni *ukhbiruki min khabarinā annā *sālimin* ʿālihīn ka-lladhī Yasuruki *wa-l-ḥamdu li-lāh* see in this corpus 5.4-5; 6.4-5 and the examples provided in both commentaries. In *sālimin* ʿālihīn the *casus obliquus* of the sound masculine plural is used where classical Arabic requires the *casus rectus* (Hopkins § 86.a).

7. For the expression annā ‘alā ithr dhālīka, see in this corpus 5.7 and the commentary.


8-10. *Fa-yarḥamuhu Allāh wa-ṣallā ʿalayhi wa-adkhālahu al-jannā wa-l-lāh fāʾ il in shāʾa Allāh*. For parallels in this corpus, see *fa-yarḥamuhu Allāh wa-ṣallā ʿalayhi wa-adkhālahu al-jannā ʿarrafahā lahu* (20.5-6). Shāʾa is written without the post-vocalic *hamza* (Hopkins § 20.c).

10. *Qad jāʾ at* can be made out with difficulty. The post-vocalic *hamza* is omitted in jāʾat (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 maqsūra* (Hopkins § 12.d). For the term al-ṣahāba, see in this corpus 32.6 and the commentary.

16. ‘Alayhi ka-nahw mā kāna yaqūmu ʿalayhi Muṣīm. ‘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 wālīduhu mā sabara. The *mīm* of *yawm* is extremely short in comparison to the other independent *mīms* in the text, e.g. l. 18 al-qiyām. The hāʾ of wālīduhu has an upward shaft.

20. ‘Alā is written without the final *alif maqsūra* (Hopkins § 55.i). Also written thus in line 22.

21. *Al-khuṣṣ* is a booth of reeds or canes, see lane, vol. 2, 746; Ibn Maẓūr, *Lisān*, 1174. To the best of my knowledge, the word is not attested in Arabic papyri.

22. *Tanwīn alif* is missing in the adverb *maḥmūl* which it would have been obligatory in classical Arabic (Hopkins § 167.a).
23-24. For the expression Allāh jazāhu dhālika, see jazāhu Allāh khayran (CPR XVI 14.8, 3rd-4th/9th-10th); fa-ahṣāna Allāh jazā’aka (P.Marchand III 27.12, 3rd/9th); fa-lā jazāhā Allāh khayran (P.Heid.Arab. II 56.13, 3rd/9th); wa-ahṣāna jazā’aka .... aḥṣāna laka jazā’aka (P.Marchand II 39.18, 21, 3rd/9th and Heid.Arab. II 42.2, 2nd/8th).

Side B:

Min Wusāma b. Ṭalq al-Tujībī thumma [ ] ilā Zaynab bt. Abī Ziyād. The address is written in slightly smaller characters. The tribal nisba al-Tujībī refers to Tujīb, a sub tribe of the south-Arabian tribe of Kinda. This clan formed an important element of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ’s conquering troops. After the conquest and the foundation of the city of Fustāṭ, Tujīb had their own khīṭṭa south of the ‘Amr’s mosque.300 For other attestations of this nisba in the papyri; cf. P.Worp 65.16, 1st-2nd/7th-8th and the commentary; P.David-WeillLouvre 6r.3, dated 211/826; 16.14, dated 256/870 and the commentaries. One might expect another nisba after thumma. For other attestations of two tribal nisbas using thumma in-between, see P.KhanLegalDocument, 362; P.Rāġiblettrefamiliale, 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, Mushtabiḥ, 276.

3. ilā Abū Zaynab. Abū is written for classical Arabic Abī (Hopkins § 162.a.i).

4. Wa-nṣur aṣlaḥaka <Allāh> . The scribe left the word Allāh out after the honorific aṣlahaka. For this honorific and variants of it following the mention of the amīr, see in this corpus 21.3 and the commentary. This honorific is also attested after the mention of the addressee, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 31.7; 36.5, both 2nd/8th.

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

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18.

Notifying the death of the sender’s son:
A woman writes to her aunt

P. Utah 290
Provenance: Unknown
Plate 28-29

Medium-brown papyrus written in black ink with a medium-thick pen in a flowing hand in 12 lines across the fibers. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on all four sides. There are holes and lacunae in several places which have caused minimal damage to the text. On side B, the address is still visible in 2 lines. Diacritical dots are sparingly added. There are two black stripes covering old texts on the upper margin on both sides of the papyrus.

The cursive handwriting points to a 3rd/9th century hand, see Grob (2010a), 161-172. See also chapter one, script.

In this letter, the female sender, Ruqayya bt. Yahyā, 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 (hajj). 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 ʿAbd Allāh, known to the addressee, looked after her during this misfortune. Abū ʿAbd Allāh also took good care of the deceased. Next, Ruqayya expresses her deep gratitude to Abū ʿAbd 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:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم


لديك وعندك كتابه [عليك يوم الاثنين] أن يليل يلقى [من صفر وادي] باجال سلامة والحمد لله كثيرًا على ما

dahati

وافجعتني من وفاة سيدى، وولدى رضي الله عنه ورسله، إلهان ان [يعظم اجرك ويسكن عزك ويجبر

بقوا نفسك ويسكن الخلف عليك وعلى فهو، وكان أفراده رضي الله عنه في صغر بعد دخول الناس من الحج فقد بقيت

حبرًا وحيدة ضعيفة فقيرة ذهب الآن السوء [برور مع] الآخ الشقيق وقبر وحيدة قليل

إن الموت قدمنى قبله، ولست أسمع لأخى خير ولا أسمع منه كتاب، فاسكن إلى علم ذلك، واستريح الله واله

رسله، سيدى أبو عبد الله الباقي فلو رات يعينك قيامه به وبا جدير من الخلق إزه (؟) لسرك سره الله
In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

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
towards you and with you. My letter [to you on Monday with eig]ht nights remaining of Ṣafar] while I am in good health, God be praised abundantly, though what happened to me
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)
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.
It is the inevitable fate so that no one will remain. He died, may God be pleased with him, in Ṣafar after people’s return from pilgrimage. I remained
confused, alone, weak and poor. The [happiness] has gone along with the full brother and I remained alone. I wish if
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
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
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
in it lies your pleasure and be granted success, if God wills. May God give many blessings to Muḥammad the prophet and his family.
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. Yahyā 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 of 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 sayyiḍi wa-waladī, see yā sayyiḍi wa-yā ibnī wa-yā ḥabībī (P.Marchands II 15r.7, 3rd/9th).

5-5. For the formula wa-llāh as’aluhu an yu’azima ajraki wa-yuḥṣina ‘azā’akī wa-yajbura bi-taqwā nafṣiki wa-yuḥṣina al-khalaf ‘alayki; cf. wa-Tamīma ṣulallimu ‘alayki wa-taqūlu a’azam Allāh ajraki wa-jabarā muṣibatāki (Younes, Arabic letters of condolence on papyrus 4.7, 2nd/8th). The sentence wa-llāh as’aluhu exhibits the placement of the object before the verb, see also in this corpus 4.8, 24.8; 29.4.

6. Fa-huwa al-sabil hattā lā yabqā aḥad. An exact parallel can be found in P.Marchands II 24.11-15, 3rd/9th. Ba’d dukhūl al-nāṣ 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. Hayrā wahḍatan ḍa’ifatan faqīratan. For similar expressions, see ilā an baqīyat wahḍatan farīdatan (P.Marchands II 39.6, 3rd/9th). See also in this corpus 13.20 and the commentary.

8-8. 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 habar 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 samī indicating a loud reading of the letter before an audience, see in this corpus 3.5 and the commentary. For similar expressions, see wa-lam arā laka kitāb wa-lā khabar (P.Khalili I 36.4-6, 3rd/9th).
9. Li-sayyidî Abū ‘Abd Allâh. The lâm of li-sayyidî is short. Compare it with the lâm of al-sabîl in line 6. Abū is written for classical Arabic Abî (Hopkins § 162.a.i). The post-vocalic hamza is omitted in al-baqâ’ (Hopkins § 21).

10. The expression wa-aʿānahu ʿalā mā wâllâh u min umûr dunyâhu wa-āakhiratihi is restored on the basis of parallels. Cf. PERF 615 [= P.World, 186r], 2, 4th/10th. The formula uhibbu ahabaka Allâh is also reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see CPR XVI 22.10, 3rd-4th/9th-10th and the commentary. For the expression lâ taqâ’i ’ anî kitâbî, see fâ-lâ taqâ’i nî min kitâbîka bi-ʾilm khabarîka wa-jamî ʾ hawâjiika (P.Cair.Arab. V 339.7, 3rd/9th).

11. Wa-anti muwaffaka in shâ’a Allâh. This formula usually follows a conditional sentence with in, see P.Genizah, 303-317; P.KhanPetitions, 8-30; Grob (2010a), 61. For the tašliya, 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 ḥabbâl in the papyri, see P.MugawiriAlqab, 342. This profession is also attested in Geniza documents, see Diem and Radenberg (1994), 37. The letter is to be delivered in Mecca. For other attestations of Mecca in the papyri, see P.World, 156-157, dated 3rd/9th; P.GrohmannWirtsch. 3 [= P.Marchands V/I 7].7-8, 3rd/9th. For the expression yudfaʿ (to be delivered), see Grob (2010a), 78-79. For the expression al-maʿrûf 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 hudîta and similar blessings for the carrier of the letter, see in this corpus 7.address and the commentary. See also chapter one, formulary.
19.

Letter of condolence addressed to a man

P.CTYBR.inv. 2605 27.9 x 12.7 2nd/8th
Provenance: Unknown
Plate 30-31

Medium-brown papyrus written in a somewhat flowing hand in 19 lines in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The left hand side is missing with a considerable loss of text. The original margins remain on the other three sides. The letter has been folded 11 times horizontally and 3 times vertically. Diacritical dots occur sparingly. Side B bears traces of one line of the address written parallel to the fibers.

The script is characterized by the way in which kāf is horizontally elongated (l. 6 kāna). Final yā consistently bends backwards (l. 2 abī).

In this letter, the sender writes to the addressee, both having the same kunya, i.e. Abū al-Azhar, trying to soothe the addressee’s pains by expressing his sincere condolences, profound sadness and sympathy after hearing of the death of a certain Abū ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.

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, Qurʾan, traditions (ahādīth) and other literary texts. The relationship between the writer, the addressee and the deceased is unclear. The letter is written as one block with no means to highlight the text and shows many mistakes in grammar and spelling.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. لابي الازهر من ابي الازهر سلم [عليك فاتي احمد الابيك الله الذي لا اله]
3. الا هو وسلمه ان يصلى على محمد [النبى والله وسلم كثيرا]
4. اما بعد عافاك الله وحفظك وعفا عنك وطيع وعنك السو [في الدنيا والاخرة برحمته]
5. يغفر الله من قضا ابى عبد الازهر رحمه [لا ابي الازهر من ابي ازهر سلم]
6. الله ومغفرتته عليه فاعل [نذيره احسب مصيره وافول على]
7. ذلك اننا لله ان له راجعون صبرًا واحتشابا وسلمت لما أسر الله [فهذه مصيبه ما أعظمها]
8. فاسل الله ان يرحمه وان يغفر له وان يبارك له فيما [فالله ان يرحمه وان يغفر له وان يبارك له فيما]
9. صار اليه وارحوا ان يكون [ما علمته محمود فى جمع]
10. ولكن المصيبة قد عظمت [ما علمته محمود فى جمع]
11. ولكن المصلحة قد عظمت [ما علمته محمود فى جمع]
12. ولكنه سبيل الماضين واللاحفين [ما علمته محمود فى جمع]
13. فرفق الله ويانا باك ياب اس [يا لنا بابا عبد العزيز]
14. يعمل صالحنا بلبنك وايانا [يا لنا بابا عبد العزيز]
15. برحمة ابها عثمان منا [يا لنا بابا عبد العزيز]
16. تعزينا اباه بالعافية والسلام عليك ورحمته الله [يا لنا بابا عبد العزيز]
17. تولاك الله وايانا بالعافية والسلام عليك ورحمته الله [يا لنا بابا عبد العزيز]
18. فاسل الله ان يرحمه وان يغفر له وان يبارك له فيما [يا لنا بابا عبد العزيز]
Side B:

[ألى أبي الازهر من] أبي الازهر 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 protect 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 Abū ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, 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 all]
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 ʿUthmān from us [greetings and send]
18. our condolence to him for (the death of) Abū ʿAbd al-ʿA[żīz
19. May God grant you and us the hea[lt. Peace be upon you and God’s mercy.]

Side B:

[To Abū al-Azhar from] Abū al-Azhar ʿUthmān b. ʿAmmār
Commentary

Side A:


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 ʾhamdala. The post-consonantal medial hamza is omitted in asʾaluhu (Hopkins § 26). Yuṣallī and ʿalā are written without the final yāʾ (Hopkins § 55).

4. The formula ʾāfaka Allāh wa-hafīza[ka wa-ʾafāʾ annā wa-ʾanka wa-dafaʾaʾ annā wa-ʾanka] is reconstructed on the basis of countless parallels; cf. P.Horak 85.4, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary.

6. [Balā]ghanā alladhi kāna min qaḍāʾ Ab[āʾ Abd al-ʿAzīz. The bāʾ and lām of balaghānā 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 manīyya, halāk, radāʾ, himām and wafūt, see M. Abdesselem, “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.

8-9. These two lines are reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see wa-qad balaghānī wafāt Mūsā b. Walīd fa-ghammanī ḥālika gham shadīd faʿinda Allāh naḥtasibu musībatah wa-naqūlu innā li-llāh wa-innā ilayhi rājiʿūn fa-raḥimahu Allāh wa-ghafara lahu wa-raḍiya ʿanhu (P.Jahn 14.13-17, 3rd/9th). For the final part, ʿabrān wa-ḥtisāban wa-taslīman li-amr Allāh, see Younes, Arabic letters of condolence 5.16, 3rd/9th. For the Qurʾanic verse innā li-llāh wa-innā ilayhi rājiʿūn, see in this corpus 20.4 and the commentary.

9. The demonstrative ḥādī<ihī> is spelled without the final hāʾ (Hopkins § 61.d). See also in this corpus the demonstrative ḥādī without the final alif (23.31). Representing death as a disaster echoes the Qurʾanic verse in antum darabtum fī al-arḍi fa-aṣabatkum musībatu al-mawtī (Q 5:106).

10. Fa-asʿalū Allāh an yarḥamahu wa-an ya[ghfira lahu wa-an yuḥārika lahu fīma] sāra ilayhi. The post-consonantal medial hamza is omitted in fa-asʿalū Allāh (Hopkins § 26). Of yaghfira only the yāʾ is preserved. The supplement wa-an yuḥārika lahu fīma 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 jamīʾ only the jīm and mīm are preserved.

14. For the expression wa-lākinannahu sabīl al-mādīn wa-l-lāhīqīn, see in this corpus inna al-mawt sabīl al-awwalīn wa-l-ʾakhirīn (20.9); fa-innahu yā akhī amr lā budda minhu wa-lā maḥīṣʾ anhu wa-ʾalā ḥālika halakā al-awwalīn wa-ilayhi yaṣīrū al-ʾakhirīn (Younes, Arabic letters of condolence 5.5-6, 17-18, 3rd/9th).
15. *Fa-razaqa Allāh wa-iyyānā al-as*. *Wa-iyyānā* 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 *shān* are conserved.

17. ‘Uthmān 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 *taʿziyatānā iyyāhu*, see *bi-taʿziyatika iyyāya* (Younes, Arabic letters of condolence 5.2, 13, 3rd/9th). Of the name ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz only the *alif, lām* and *ʿayn* are visible after the prefix ‘Abd at the end of the line.

19. For the eulogy *tawallāka Allāh wa-iyyānā bi-l-ʿāfiya*, see *tawallāki Allāh bi-hifzihi* (P.Marchands II 28r.9, 3rd/9th). The final *salām* greeting is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. See the other letters in this corpus.

Side B:

Only the name of the sender Abū al-Azhar ʿUthmān b. ‘Ammār is preserved on the exterior address which is written in exactly the same form as it is written in the internal address. ‘Uthmān 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.
Letter of condolence addressed to a woman

P.Cair.Arab.inv. 397
Provenance: Unknown

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 ʿuṣnakum). The ligature lām-ʿalif is v-shaped (l. 10 ʿl-ʿahd). Words are split across line endings (ll. 5-6 wa-adkalahu).

In this letter, the sender, whose name is lost, sends condolences to a woman, whose kunya is Umm ʿUthmān, who had lost, presumably, her husband Nawfal. In order to express his deepest sympathy with the addressee’s misfortune the sender shows how grief and sorrow have affected him after hearing this sad news. The sender assures the addressee that “their” misfortune is a misfortune for him, their sorrow is for him a sorrow and their joy is for him a joy. He then asks the addressee to be patient, reminding her of God’s reward for the patients and stating that death is a universal truth. At the end of the fragment, the sender cites a Qur’anic verse, but it is missing. The relationship between the writer, the female addressee and the deceased is vague. The sender refers to the deceased as his brother, but this should not be taken literally.301

A photograph with a very short description of the script and the content is given in the catalogue of the Arabic papyri in the national library of Egypt (P.DarAlKutub).

Text

|دنم| 1|
|دنا| 2|
|دم| 3|
|وانا| 4|
|كملا| 5|
|جنا| 6|
|فهو| 7|
|لقد| 8|
|منوا| 9|
|ما| 10|

Diacritical dots

6) حزن،برحمه الله (فرح 8) منحا 9) لنينه

Translation

301 See the discussion on children in chapter two.
1. [ .. ] ..[
2. [ .. ] on [ .. ]
3. [ .. ] .. in [ .. ] my brother [ .. ]
4. [I say in this,] indeed, we belong to God and indeed to Him we will return in
5. our misfortune of my brother, [Na]wfal, may God have mercy upon him and pray for
6. him entre the paradise, which He make it known to him. By God, your misfortune is
7. verily for me
8. a misfortune and your sorrow is for me a sorrow and your joy is for me a joy, God
9. knows that. O Umm 'Uthmān, you must have patience, for in patience
10. there is salvation. Verily the death is the fate of all people from the first to the last.
11. 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-līlāh wa-innā ilayhi rājī'ūn is always attested in letters of
condolence and letters reporting on the death of someone, see in this corpus 19.8. See also
4-5. For the expression fa-yarḥāmuhu Allāh wa-ṣallā ʿalayhi wa-adkh alahu al-janna ʿarrafahā
lahu, see in this corpus fa-yarḥāmuhu Allāh wa-ṣallā ʿalayhi wa-adkh alahu al-janna wa-llāh fāʾil in
shaʾa Allāh (17.8-10). The final part of this expression echoes the Qur'anic verse wa-
yudkhiluhum al-janna ʿarrafahā lahmun (Q 47:6).
5. The nān of Nawfal is missing in the lacuna.
6-7. Fa-wa-llāh inna muṣibatakum li la-muṣība wa-inna ḥuznakum li ḥuzn wa-faraḥakum li
farah. This expression knows no parallels in the papyri. The final part of this expression can
also be read as wa-farajakum li faraj (you release from suffering is for me a release).
7-8. The expression Allāh yaʿlam dhālika usually appears in parenthesis as an oath to
confirm a statement by the sender. See also Allāh bihi ʿālim (P.Marchands II 24.20, 3rd/9th).
8. Yā-mm 'Uthmān. The alif of Umm is absent after vocative yā (Hopkins § 49.a.ii). 'Uthmān
is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10.b.ii).
9. For the expression inna al-mawt sabīl al-awwalīn wa-l-ākhīrīn, see in this corpus wa-
lākinnahu sabīl al-mādīn wa-lāhiqīn (19.14 and the commentary). Manjā is spelled with an alif
mamdūda while classical Arabic requires an alif maqsūra (Hopkins § 12.a).
8-9. Fa-ʿalayki yā-mm 'Uthmān bi-l-ṣabr fa-inna al-ṣabr manjā. For similar expressions, see
fa-ʿalaykum bi-l-ṣabr fa-inna Allāh waʿada al-ṣābirīn khayran (Younes, Arabic letters of
condolence 4.5, 2nd/8th).
9-10. Layṣa li-ḥad barāʾa min al-mawt. Barāʾa is written without the hamza (Hopkins § 19).
10. Qāla Allāh li-nabīyyihī. Li-nabīyyihī 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 jaʿalnā li-basharin min
qablika al-khulda a-fa-in mitta fa-hum al-khālidūn (Q 21:34).
1.4. Maintaining relationships

21.

Blessings addressed to the governor and the caliph

P.Cam.Michaelides A 930 recto 27 x 17.5 ca. 105-108/724-727 Plate 33

Provenance: Unknown

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. 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 yāʾ to the right in a horizontal line (l. 6 alladhī). Alif maqṣūra has two dots below it (ll. 2, 3 ʾilā, l. 6 alladhī; l. 7 bi-taqwā). The tail of the final mīm is long (l. 1 al-raḥīm; l. 3 salām). Daḏ is converted to ẓāʾ and vice versa. Note the spellings, faẓluhu instead of faḍluhu (l. 7) and ʿaḍīm instead of ʿaẓīm.

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 اسماء ابن عمران الى الحر [ب] ابن يوسف
3. وعليه هشام أمير المؤمنين اصلح [الله] سلام
4. عليك فاتني احمد اليك الله الذي لا اله الا هو اما بعد
5. فاتني اخبرك من خبرنا انا سالمين صالحين كا
6. لدى يسرك وريبا محمود أسال الله ان يتم علينا
7. وعلى نعمة وفظه علينا عضيم واصبع يقوى
8. الله ان الله راس كل حكمة والسلم علينا

Diacritical dots

302 The Coptic text will be published by Alain Delattre.
303 Hopkins § 39.b, 41. See also language in chapter one.
Translation

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Usâma b. 'Imrân to al-Ḥurr (b) b. Yûsuf
3. and to Hishâm, 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 wish, God be praised. I ask God to complete for us and you His benefaction. His munificence over us is immense. I commend you to show piety 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 ḥâ' and râ' of al-Ḥurr are written very closely together, but the reading is certain. The fâ' of Yûsuf extends horizontally at the end of the line and lacks an upward curve on the left. For the use of amîr al-mu'mînin in the papyri, see Sijpesteijn (2011), 249. Mu'mînin 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 Allâh to the passive form, uṣliḥta, who then indicated his mistake by crossing out the word with ink. For the common eulogy aṣlaḥaka Allâh after the first mention of the caliph (amîr al-mu'mînin) or the governor (amîr), see Sijpesteijn (2013) 1.4, 2nd/8th and the commentary; CPR XXI, 119. For other blessings on the amîr such as ḥafizahu Allâh, 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; aṭâla Allâh baqâ'ahu (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-inni ukbiruqa min khabarinâ annâ sâlimîn šâlihîn ka-llassîh yasurrûka wa-rabbûna maḥmûd, see in this corpus 5.4-5 and 35.6 and the examples provided in the commentaries. The casus obliquis of the sound masculine plural is used in sâlimîn šâlihîn, where classical Arabic has the casus rectus (Hopkins § 86.a).

6-7. For the eulogy as'alu Allâh an yutimma 'alaynâ wa-'alayka ni'matahu, see in this corpus 22.8-9. Post-vocalic hamza is omitted in as'alu while the preceding short vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20).

7. Wa-faẓluhu 'alaynà' aẓîm. The orthography of writing zâ' instead of ḍâd as in faẓluhu for faḍluhu and 'aẓîm for 'aẓîm is frequent in early papyri. See for example, wa-l-ziyâda min faẓlihi
fa-innamā nahnu bihi wa-lahu (P.Loth 2[= P.Berl.Arab. II 75], 8-9, 2nd/8th). See also Grohmann (1954), 104; Hopkins § 39.b.

7-8. Wa-awsīka bi-taqwā Allāh inna Allāh ra’s kull ḥikma. This expression echoes expressions used in prophetic ḥadīths. Cf. awsīka 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-inni awṣīkum bi-ittiqāʾ Allāh fa-innahu man yattaqi Allāh yaj’al lahu min amrihi makhraja wa-yarzuqahu min haythu lā yahtasib (Rāğib (2011), ll. 9-11 and the commentary).
22.

Blessings addressed to three friends

P.Cam.Michaelides A 930 verso
Provenance: Unknown

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.  сыd is horizontally elongated (l. 7  ۡسۡلِیحۡی۴). Words are split across line endings and continued in the next line (ll. 3-4 Kurayb; ll. 6-7  ۡسُلِیم۴ن۴; ll. 10-11 ۡینَا۴; ll.13-14 ۡاَل۴ر۴د۴). 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-Řahmān b. Sa’d al-Yahṣubī, Bīnsa b. Kurayb al-Mudallī 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

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

1.

من ايوب ابن ابى المصصور [و] الى عبد الرحمن ابن سعد المصري والى بنسه ابن کر

2.

يب المدلى والى مرثأة سلم عليك فاني

3.

امحمد البک لله الذي لا اله الا هو اما

4.

بعد فاني اخبرك من خبرنا انا سلمو

5.

ن صالحين كالذي يسرک

6.

ورينا مجحد أسال الله ان يتمعنا

7.

و عليك نعمتٮا وفضله علينا عضيم وشكره

8.

عليم صائعة واصبك بتقوى الله ا

9.

ن الله راس كل حكمه والسلم

10.

عليم ورحمت الله وبركته و[...

11.

ت بنعمة الله واصطفكم به ان الا

12.

رض عزيز علينا عضيم

13.

عليكم الى عبد الرحمن ابن (vac.) المصري

14.

Diacritical dots

(2) ابي: (لى 3) الرحمن 4) الى 3) فاني 7) كالذي 9) علنتا (add) المصري
Translation

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Ayyūb b. Abū al-Muṣawwar {and} to ʿAbd
3. al-Raḥmān b. Saʿd al-Yaḥṣubī and Bīnsa b. Kur-
4. ayb al-Mudalī and Murthāḥ. 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 a
10. and for Him you owe thanks. I commend you
11. for God is the fount of all wisdom. P
12. eace upon you and God’s mercy
13. and blessings. And [..]
14. earth is hard and vast for us.

To ʿAbd 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 yāʾ extents 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 Yaḥsub, a large south-Arabian tribe affiliated with Ḥimyar. This tribe had moved to Syria by the time of the rise of Islam and dwelt in the region of Himṣ and they participated in the conquest of Egypt.304 After the conquest and the foundation of the city of Fusṭāt, Yaḥsub had their own khiṭṭa to the east of the khiṭṭa of al-Maʿāfir.305

4. For the name Kurayb, see Ibn Ḥazm, Ansāb, 460. As for the nisba al-Mudalī, see Ibn Maʾkūl, Ikmāl, vol. 7, 303.

3-4. I was not able to trace the names, Bīnsa and Murthāḥ in the onamastica.

6-8. For the formula fa-innī ukbiruka min khabarinā annā sālimūn sāliḥīn ka-lladhī yasurruka wa-rabbūnā maḥmaid, see in this corpus 21.5-6, 5.4-5 and 35.6 and the examples provided in the commentaries.

304 Al-Samʿānī, al-Ansāb, vol. 12, 390.
8-9. For the formula as’alu Allāh an yutimma ‘alaynā wa-‘alayka ni’matahu wa-faẓlulu ʿalaynā ʿadīm, 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 ʂāniʿa 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

P.Cam.Michaelides A 1041 verso 39 x 15.5 2nd/8th
Provenance: Probably Fusṭāṭ 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 jafāʾ; l. 19 zawjuhā). The upper part of the stroke dāl/dhāl bends backwards (l. 23 dār; l. 22 dhālika). Fāʾ has one dot below it (l. 11 jafāʾ). Initial kāf is horizontally elongated (l. 29 karīma). On occasions the tail of the final yāʾ extends backwards (l. 3 fa-innī; l. 26 taqdirī).

This letter has been written between two sisters. The letter’s main concern is about a certain Ḥammāda bt. Ibrāhīm b. al-Manāzīlī, who moved with her husband from Zawīla, the sender’s domicile, to Fusṭāṭ (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 Şard 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.

Text

Side B:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من غلام عمرو [إلى]
3. سلم عليك فاني أحمد [اليك الله]
4. [الذي لا الله الا هـ [ـو أ ما بعد]
5. [الله عليك في [الدنبيا والاخـرة]
6. كتبتي [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

For other published recommendation letters, see P.RāġibLettres 14, 3rd/9th.

See also chapter one, script.
In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

From the servant of ‘Amr to

Peace be upon you. I praise [for your sake God,]

other than Whom, there is no god. As for what follows,

may God bestow His favour [upon you] in [this world] and the hereafter.

I am writing to [you] this letter of mine, whereas I am [in a state,]

which pleases you and our God be praised,
8. in spite of the distress and the neediness that we are in.
9. We ask God to take it away from us.
10. that which prevented me from writing to you
11. about it was …… (?) and not aversion
12. greetings. I inform you, may God grant me the fulfillment of my wish through your life
13. and may He do not let me die until He let me see your faces
14. before death, while you are well and healthy, about a woman,
15. who was residing in Zawīla. She is named
17. (She) and her mother Umm ʿUmar were living in their house, then her husband took her
18. to Egypt. There was between me and her
19. a good relationship; I wanted to let you know
20. that. She claimed that she will inhabit near Bilāl, the vet, in the house of Ŝard Abū al-Ḥussām.
21. So if you think, my sister, may God give me enjoyment through you, that
22. you go yourself to ask for her until
23. you reach and meet her, then please do so, because
24. this is desirable to me. I ask you (in recognition of what) you owed me to do
25. so. If you were able to make a good acquaintance with her,
26. please do so, because she is valuable to me. I was really
27. upset, because of her departure from Zawīla and I have written to
28. her (as well). And write to me the answer of this letter of mine,
29. together with the letters of my mother. So if you reached her, take
30. [ .. ]
31. [ .. ]

Side A:

[From the servant of] ʿAmr to (vac.) .................

Commentary

2. Of the interior address only the name of the writer is preserved. The address is restored on the basis of the exterior address, which is partially conserved on the back.

3-4. The introductory formula salām ʿalayka fa-innī aḥmadu ilayka Allāh alladhī ĥū li lā ilāh illā huwa ammā baʿdu is reconstructed on the basis of countless parallels. See the other letters in this corpus.

5. The expression [aḥsana Allāh ilayka fi al-dunyā] wa-l-ākhira is restored on the basis of parallels. Cf. wa-uʿlimuka aḥsana Allāh ilayka (P.Berl.Arab. II 25.5-6, 2nd/8th). Of al-dunyā only the final alif is preserved. The rāʾ and tāʾ marbūṭa of al-ākhira are missing.
6-7. The formula katabtu ilayki kitābī hādhā wa-anā ‘alā alladhī yasurruki wa-rabbunā mahmūd is reconstructed on the basis of many attestations of this very common expression. Cf. katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-anā ‘alā aḥsān ĥāl wa-l-lāh mahmūd (P.Horak 85.5, 2rd/8th); katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-anā wa-man qibāli ‘alā afḍal ĥāl wa-aḥsān hay’a wa-l-lāh mahmūd mashkūr (CPR XVI 33.7-9, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); fa-innī katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-l-illaẖi tuḥibbu an yabluhaka ‘an khāṣṣatinā ‘alā aḥsān ĥāl wa-l-rabb mahmūd (CPR XVI 4.4-6, 2rd/8th); katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-anā wa-man qibāli ‘alā aḥsān al-ḥāl wa-l-lāh mahmūd (P.Rāġib.Lettres 6.3, 3rd/9th); katabtu ilayka kitābī hādhā wa-anā wa-ummu�a wa-jāriyyatuka wa-jamī‘ iyālikum bi-ḥkayr kamā tuḥibbu lam yahduth ‘alayhim ba’daka illā khayr inna Allāh mahmūd lā sharik lahu (P.Marchands V/I 17.3-6, 3rd/9th).

8. Ma’a al-shidda wa-l-ḥāja allati nāhnu fīhā. 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-hurmat Allāh wa-bi-hurmatī al-thawb ... wa-anā fi shidda yā bunay (P.Marchands II 9.22, 3rd/9th); wa-innī fi shidda mā uhībbu wa-l-lāh kull mā bi-yaddika (P.Gen.inv 13.10-11, 3rd/9th); wa qad ta’lam anā fi shidda (P.Gen.V 15.6, 3rd/9th); fa-jjīl ‘alayya wa-lā tata’akkhhar ... kharajā fi shidda (P.Gen.V 19.5-6, 3rd/9th).

9. Fa-nas’alu Allāh an yuṣfurrija 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 jafta’. For similar expressions, see in this corpus 25.9-10. Jaf’ta’ is written without hamza (Hopkins § 20.c). I was not able to find a satisfactory reading for the word before wa-lā jafta’.

13. The middle ā of al-salām is written defectively (Hopkins § 10.a). Bi-ḥayāt<ti>-ki. The writer left the middle tā’ out. For the expression amta’ani Allāh bi-ḥayātiki, see for example amta’ani Allāh bi-ḥayātiki wa-ḥayāt Mājid’a (P.Jahn 5.6, 2rd/8th).

14-15. Wa-lā amātānī ḥattā yuriyanī Allāh wujūḥakum qabla al-mawt fī khayr wa-ʿaʃīya. 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.Rāġib.Lettres 15.6, 3rd/9th); wa-yaj’alu yawmī qabla yawmikī wa-lā yumītānī yā sītī hany minkī ‘alayya qabla an yuriyanī wajhaki (P.Heid.Arab. II 51.8, 3rd/9th); wa-lā amātānī Allāh yā Umm Muḥammad wa-yā Umm ‘Abbāsā ḥattā arākum fī ʿaʃīya (CPR XVI 30.13-14, 3rd/9th). The particle ḥattā is spelled with an alif maddāda, while classical Arabic requires an alif maqṣūra (Hopkins § 12.d). Also written thus in line 25. The lower half of khayr wa-ʿaʃīya is effaced. Of anna imra’a only traces of ink can be seen.

16. Minman kānat taskunu Zawila yuqālū laḥā. Minman is written for min man (Hopkins § 51.c). Yuqālū laḥā/ā. Expressions introducing further or closer identification such as tuḍ’ā (named), tuʿraf bi (known as), yukannā (whose kunya is) are very common in the papyri. See Hopkins § 69. See also in this corpus al-marāf bi (18.address). Zawila is located on the first point of the land of Sūdān. It is there where caravans from all directions meet on their way to east, west and south.308 The city was inhabited by Arabs since early Islamic times.309 In the eighth century, the city developed into an important commercial centre of the Ibādīs. In

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309 Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, Futūḥ, 197.
306/918-9, it became the centre of a small ḫāṭṭāb state ruled by Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and his descendants.310 Zawīla also appears in this letter in line 30.

17. For the female name Ḥammāda, see Gratzl (1906), 35. As for al-Manāzili, see Ibn Maʾkūl, 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 nāzīl instead of the feminine nāzīla (Hopkins § 143.a).

20. Miṣr in this sense refers to Fustāt. Normally, Fustāt occurs together with Miṣr; cf. allatī bi-fustāt miṣr (P.Khalili I 13.3, dated 280/894); bi-fustāt miṣr (P.David-WellisLouvre 20.6, dated 208/823); al-sākin fustāt miṣr (P.RāǧibTroiDocument 1.5, dated 215/865); fī bayt al-māl bi-fustāt miṣr (P.World, 121, 3rd/9th).

22. Ḥabību an uʾlīmaki dhālika. This expression and variants of it are frequent in letters. Cf. ḥabību iʾlāmaka ḥālika abqāka Allāh (P.RāǧibLettres 13.4, 3rd/9th); ḥabību iʾlāmaka dhālika limāʾalamu min surūrika bihi (P.Marchands II 35.5, 3rd/9th) and P.Marchands V/I 20.1, 3rd/9th; ḥabību iʾlāmaka dhālika li-takānā minhuʾ al ʾilm (P.Ryl.Arab. 1 I 5 = P.World, 171.18, 2nd/8th); ḥabību iʾlāmaka dhālika li-taqīfa ʾalayhi in shāʾa Allāh (P.Hamb.Arab. II 1v.5, 3rd/9th).

23. The name Bīlāl is written defectively without long ā, see Hess (1912), 13. At the best of my knowledge, the profession al-biṯār (the vet) is not attested in the papyri. For the name Šard, see Ibn Maʾkūl, Ikmāl, vol. 7, 203. Abū is written for classical Arabic Abī (Hopkins § 162.a.i).

24. Fa-in raʾayti yā ukhitī amatʾanī Allāh biki an. The raʾy 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 amatʾanī 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 ukhiti and the long ā is spelled defectively (Hopkins § 10.d, 27.d).

25. Tadhhabī anti nafsaki fa-tasʾalīʾ 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-tasʾalī is written without hamza (Hopkins § 26). Likewise, the word asʾalik in line 27 is written defectively without hamza. The personal pronoun anti/anti is rarely attested in the papyri especially when we compare it to the abundant use of anā, see Grob (2010a), 147.

27. Asʾalik bi-ḥaqqīʿ alayki illā mā faʾalṭī. For similar expressions, see for example fa-bi-ḥaqqīʿ alayka illā faʾalṭa (P.Marchands V/I 9.7, 13, 3rd/9th). See also in this corpus wa-nẓur bi-ḥaqq mā baynī wa-baynīka min al-ikhāʾ illā mā faʾalṭa (26.11). The verb saʾalā 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 istaʿtiʾ an takānā baynāki wa-baynahā. An takānā * perfect should be translated as past (Hopkins § 313.c). The form istaʿa instead of istaʿaʾa omitting the tāʾ before the ūtāʾ echoes a Qurʾān form, i.e. fāmā istāʿā an yazḥarāhu wa-mā istatāʿū lahu naqābā (Q 18:97).

310 For more about the city in early Arabic sources, see N. Levtzion and J.F.P. Hopkins, Corpus of early Arabic sources for West African history (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 13, 22, 41, 42, 46, 57, 59, 63, 64, 87, 122, 125, 129, 130, 135, 151, 169, 172, 173, 194, 198, 199, 200, 206, 210, 211, 354.
29. The orthography ‘al is written for ‘alā 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.
A letter between two brothers-in-law

P.Cam.Michaelides A 5  
Provenance: Unknown  

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 iyyānā; l. 12 al-‘ikhā’). The upper stroke of dāl/dhāl bends back at the top (l. 19 dhī). Sin 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 sīhr relationship (relationship through marriage). The letter closes after blessings for the addressee and the final salām greeting with the date.311

The references to the addressee within the letter fluctuate between the plural and the singular. The scribe makes mistakes in grammar and spelling. The letter is well structured with gaps to mark off the onset of sections.

Text

Side A:

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See chapter one, dating.
The Texts

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To Abū Nuʿaym and his family [from A]bū ʿAmr [and Umāma. Peace be upon you. We praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no god. (vac.)
3. As for what follows, May God bestow upon you [and us health and may He make us and you]
4. of the people of His paradise. We are writing to you, while we [are in good health, God be]
5. praised. (vac.) [Your] letter reached me and we were pleased (to hear of) [your health and you]
6. you. I ask God [that He through His mercy []
7. I understood what you mentioned in your words [you and]
8. us, because of what God made between us [and you]
9. of brotherhood and in-law relationship. By God, we see you [well, because we need you for our life and our death [we ask]
10. God to grant (us) through you enjoyment and longevity... [according to the guidance of your letter before that. ]
11. with it our children to amuse him [if ]...
12. about their relationship with yourself in your future letter, [if God wills.]
13. May (He) be pleased with you and us. Peace be upon you [and God’s mercy.]
14. It has been written when two days still remain of Dhū al-Ḥijja.

Diacritical dots

Translation

Side B:

بن عبد الله (vac.) ومنزله في... لان عند منزل
ابي الاخنس

Translation
THE TEXTS

[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 ἀmmār. 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 ‘alayka fa-ʾinnī ahmadu ilayka Allāh alladhi 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-īyyānā al-ʾāfiya. An exact parallel for this formula is not attested, but see wa-razaqaka ‘alayhi al-ṣiha (CPR XVI 24.3, 3rd/9th and the examples provided in the commentary). Of al-ʾāfiya only the fāʾ is preserved.

5-6. Wa-jaʾalanā Allāh wa-īyyākum min ahl jannatihi. This formula is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. See for example wa-jaʾalanā Allāh wa-īyyāka min ahl al-jamā bi-ʾizzatihi wa-qadratihi (Sijpesteijn (2013) 29.5, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in the commentary). Likewise, the formula katabnā ilaykum bi-ḥāl ʾāfiya wa-rabbunā maḥmūd is reconstructed on the basis of many attestations of this very common expression; cf. kitābī ilaykum akrama Allāh wajhaka wa-anā wa-man qibalī ‘alā afḍal ḥāl wa-rabbunā maḥmūd (P.Marchands II 1.3, 3rd/9th). The alif of katabnā is missing. Of bi-ḥāl only the lām is visible.

7. A short vacant space has been left after maḥmūd to mark off the onset of the next section.

8. Fa-llāḥ wa-ʾāl ʿalhu. This sentence exhibits the placement of the object before the verb, see P.Khalili I 18.19, 3rd/9th and the examples given in the commentary. The post-consonantal medial hamza is omitted in wa-ʾāluhu (Hopkins § 26). For the widespread expression bi-raḥmatihi 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 ʾāliyya 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-ṣihr. For parallels of this formula, see limā ajrā Allāh baynanā wa-baynaka min al-ikhāʾ wa-l-qarāba (CPR XVI 7.10, 1st-2nd/7th-8th). See also in this corpus fī alladhī jaʿala Allāh baynī wa-baynaka min al-ṣihr wa-l-haq (2.22). The post-vocalic hamza is omitted in al-ikhāʾ (Hopkins § 21). Fa-wa-llāḥ. For more about oaths in private and business letters, see Grob (2010a), 26, 37. See also in this corpus 2.20, 31-32 and chapter one, formulary.
13. *Bi-khayr li-annā narjūka li-ḥayātinā wa-li-mawtinā*. The ḥā of *bi-khayr* is written differently from the way in which it is written in *al-ikhā*. The expression *li-annā narjūka li-ḥayātinā wa-li-mawtinā* is not attested in the papyri, at the best of my knowledge.

14. *Nas'alu Allāh bika al-matāʾ wa-ṭūl al-baqāʾ*. For variants of this formula, see *nas'alu Allāh bika al-matāʾ wa-lā bi-l-dilāʾ* (P.Khalili 15.8, 2nd/8th and the commentary). The post-vocalic hamza is omitted in *al-baqāʾ* (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 silatiḥim bi-nafsika qādim kitābikum in shā’ā Allāh*. Of in *shā’ā Allāh* only the alif of *in* is visible.

18. For the prayer *radiya Allāh ‘annā wa-ʾanka*, see in this corpus 35.9 and the examples given in the commentary. *Wa-l-salām ʿalaykum [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 baqīyā min dhī al-Ḥijja*. For dating private and business letters, see chapter one, dating. See also *katabtu ilayka kitābī ḥadhā li-thalāth wa-ʾishrūn khalawn min jumādā al-aʿīlā sittā wa-ʾishrūn min baʿūna* (P.SijpesteijnTravel 1.17-18); *wa-kutiba yawm al-khamīs li-thalāth layāl khalawn min shahr rabīʿ al-ākhīr* (P.RāġibLettres 7.4-5, 3rd/9th); *kitābī ilayka juʿīltu fidāʾaka min al-fustāṭ fi arbaʿat ayyām maḏaw min baʿūna* (P.RāġibLettres 17.4, 3rd/9th); *wa-kutiba yawm al-khamīs ḏahwatan* (P.Heid.Arab. II 7.9, 3rd/9th); *kitābī ilayka aʿazaka Allāh yawm al-jumʿa* (P.Heid.Arab. II 35.3, 4th/10th); *yawm katabtu ilayka wa-huwa al-khamīs* (CPR XVI 11.8, 3rd/9th); *wa-katabtu ilayka yawm al-ḥaḍād ṣalāt al-ghadāl* (CPR XVI 22.5, 3rd-4th/9th-10th); *kitābī ilayka abqāʾa Allāh min al-iskandariyya laylat al-thulāthāʾ* (P.Marchands II 35.2, 3rd/9th); *wa-kutiba yawm al-sabt* (P.Marchands V/I 10.5, 3rd/9th); *innī katabtu ilayka ḥādhā al-kitābī baʿda al-suḥūr* (P.Marchand II 1m.1-2, 3rd/9th).

**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 ʿa is unclear to me. The final letter is quite clearly a ʾnūn preceded by lām-alif. Preceding it seems to be written a rāʾ or zāy.

2. For the name al-Akhnas, see Ibn Maʾkūl, *Ikūn* vol. 1, 40.

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312 See also Grob (2010a), 49-50, note 72.
25.

Letter maintaining the relationship between the sender and the addressee

P.Cam.Michaelides A 15
Provenance: Unknown

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

اما بعد ا[الله وأ]lk من طاعته وخششتاه ما ]
به الكرامة وو[ علينا و عليك به النعمة فاذن ليس من أمر يقرب
اليه الله إلا وقد صحبت و ابتلف بك حق الإسلام وحرمه [ ] وحق القرابة
ومعروفه ب [ ]
ولم يكن أحد أولا بحسن النظر فيه ولا المدامة علنيه ولا الرعية
فيه ولا الحرة له منك للذى ج [عسل الله فيك وعندك] ولما قسم الله
لك من حسن الرأى وسداد الله وصبرك من خلال كتاطبه وحرارمه
وكان حكم ذلك واجبا علينا وعلينك (vac.)
وقد كتبتي اليك قبل كتاتب هذا بكثرة متواء [ ] فلم يبلغنى لما
منها جوابا فالفعل يغفر لنا ولكل ما كنت اطن [ ] الحفا
كلك به واس [ ] الله ان ]
وصلنا اح [ ] الله بلطفه [ ]

Diacritical dots

(5) به: علك 11 (علك 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 holiness and the bond of kinship
4. and its acknowledgement. Then, []
5. nobody was worthy to take consideration of it nor the endurance for it nor the attention
6. for it nor the relation to it except you, because of what God put 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 subsequent letters but I did not receive for any of them an answer. May God forgive us and you. I did not believe that you bear all this aversion (towards me) [                          ]..... I ask God to []
10. ..... 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 baʿdu, suggesting that not more than three lines are lost at the top.

1-3. Ammā baʿdu [    ] Allāh wa-iyyāka min ṭatīhi wa-khashyatīhi mā [    ] bihi al-karāma wa-yutimma ʿalaynā wa-ʿalayka bihi al-nīʿa fa-innuhu layṣa min amr yuqaribu ilayyā minhu Allāh. These blessings are unique. The tāʾ 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-ṭāʾatīhi, see Grob (2010a), 26.

3-4. Illā wa-qad sabbabahu baynanā wa-baynaka ḥaqq al-islām wa-ḥurmatihi wa-ḥaqq al-qarāba wa-maʿrifatihi. 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 ʿal-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.


7-8. Li-lladhī jaʿala Allāh fīka wa-ʿindaka wa-limā qasama Allāh laka min ḥusn al-raʿy wa-sadāk ilayhi wa-baṣṣaraka min ḥalāl kitābihi wa-ḥarāmihi. The two lāms of li-lladhī are very short, but
9-10. Wa-qad kuntu katabtu ilayka qabl kitābī hādhā bi-kutub kathīra mutawātīra fa-lam yabughnī 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 ḥaqīq ‘ālā mā fāraqātnī ‘alayh wa-ḥalaṣaf ‘alayhi fī manzil Abū al-Hasan thumma kharjat fa-lam ṭasna’ fī dhālik qalîl wa-lā kathīr ta’idu ta-amalilī wa-tū’idu marra ba’da ukrhra fa-lam arā li-dhālik taḥqīqa shay’ fī-Allāh al-musta’ān wa-mā kāna ra’yī aktubu ilayka bi-hāruf wāḥid lawlā khurūj rasūl Yahyā wa-qad qadima ghayr wāḥid fa-lam arāka katabta ilayya shay’ (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 14.[= P.World, 179-180]2-8, 3rd/9th); u’limuka akramaka Allāh annī qad katabatu ilayka min al-kutub mā-lā uḥṣīhā ... ... ... ... ... wa-lam arā laka kitāb wa-lā khabar (P.Khalili I 36.4-6, 3rd/9th); wa-lā adrī mā mana’aka an taktuba ilaynā bi-khabarika wa-salāmatika (CPR XVI 4.6, 1st-2nd/8th-9th); wa-innī qad kuntu muntazir arā mink a kitāb fa-lā adrī mā mana’aka an taktuba ilayya bi-salāmatika wa-salāhika (P.RāġibLettres 11.10-13, 2nd/8th); wa-mā adrī mā mana’akum min al-kitāb ilayya fī amr al-ṣabbiyya (P.Heid.Arab. II 30.10, 3rd/9th); mā adrī mā alladhi mana’aka kamā wa-ʾadānti fī kitābika (P.Marchands V/I 18.5, 3rd/9th); wa-fahimtu mā ḥakarta min istītīṭaka amr ‘Abd al-Raḥmān wa-ta’khīrīnā al-ghalāli li-jawābika fihi marra ukrhra (CPR XVI 27.4, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); wa-qaqtū bihi ‘alā alladhi ḥakarta fihi min ta’khīr kitābī anka (CPR XVI 32.3, 3rd/9th); lam aqrā’ laka kitāb fī ḥādiḥī al-jum’a (P.Marchands III 1.2-3; 5.2-3 all 3rd/9th); lam asma’ laka a’azzaka Allāh ḥabar (P.Heid.Arab. II 35.4, 3rd/9th); Mundhu thalāṭhat ashshur mā ānasānā minkum khabar marra wa-lā marra (CPR XVI 30.4, 3rd/9th); qad katabtu ilayka kitābwayn lam arā lahumā ṣawāb wa-ʾākhīr mā katabtu ilayka kitābwayn wa-lam arā li-wāḥid minhumā ṣawāb (P.Cair.Arab. V 339.5-6, 3rd/9th); qad katabtu ilayka kitāban qabla hādhā wa-lam aqrā’ laka ṣawāb ktabī ilayka (P.Berl.Arab. II 77.2-3, 3rd/9th); qad katabtu ilayka kathīr fā-lam ya’tini minka ṣawāb ktab ktab ilayka (P.Berl.Arab. II 72.10-11, 2nd/8th). See also in this corpus wa-ukbiruka annī wājīd ‘alayka ‘... ... ... ilayka bi-hādhihi sab’at kutub fā-lam arā mina ni-shay’ minhumā ṣawāb (26.7-8); qad katabtu ilayka bi-kitāb qabla ħādha ... lam tuğānīni fihi 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-lālāh yaghfiru lanā wa-laka mā kuntu azūnna hādhā al-jāfā kulluha bika. For the prayer fa-lālāh yaghfiru lanā wa-laka, see fa-lālāh yaghfiru laka yā akhī (P.Marchand V/I 20.9, 3rd/9th). The post-vocalic hamza is omitted in al-jāfā (Hopkins § 21.b). Mā kuntu azūnna. 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 jāfā (aversion) in the papyri, see in this corpus 23.11 and the commentary.

11-12. These two lines are for the most part illegible due to the fragmentary state of the bottom of the papyrus.

313 See also Grob (2010a), 52.
26.

Complaining about the lack of replies

P.CYBR.inv. 2714 20.2 x 13.5 2nd/8th
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 sin is written consistently with teeth (l. 5 al-salām). Initial kāf is sometimes hairpin-shaped (l. 8 kutub). Final yāʾ occasionally returns backwards to the right (l. 6 lī).

In this letter, a certain Ṣaʿīd, who describes himself as the servant of one Saʿīd, 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, Rābih stresses the bond of brotherhood with the addressee.

The letter is composed in a very simple style but carefully executed.

Text

Side A:

[بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم] 1
[الله يزيد من رايح فتا سعيد سلم عليكم فتا احمد الليك الله الذي لا اله] 2
[لا هو آباه] 3
[كتب ليك ونا صال صالح كما يسرك واللله] 4
[رس السلم واقرأ مني على طلحة السلم] 5
[وعللى ] 6
[يوب السلم وانظر ان تهدى لي ابر] 7
[ بل واخبرك اني واجد على ] 8
[قد كتبت] 9
[وسلم عليك ورحمت الله] 10
[صله العنب فلا تدع الكتاب الينا بالخرير والحلال وسلمتكم] 11
[والحاجة] 12
[والسمن محل فيها الذي يسرك ] 13

Side B:

رقعة [الى] ABI يزيد (vac.) من رابح فتا سعيد [1111]
THE TEXTS

185

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 please[s you, G[o]d
   be pr[ais]ed. [ 
5. [ ]r greetings and send from me to Ṭalḥa greet[ings 
6. [and (send) to A]l’yūb 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 Rāʾiḥ, see P.Cair.Arab. II 126.5.12, dated
   225/840. Fatā is spelled with an alif mamduḍa while classical Arabic requires an alif maqṣūra
   (Hopkins § 12.a). Also written thus in the exterior address. For other attestations of this
   term in the papyri, see for example P.Marchands III 35.11, 3rd/9th. The ḥamdalā is
   reconstructed on the basis of parallels.

3. For the expression makārīḥ al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira bi-raḥmatihi, see Grob (2010a), 45.

5-6. The author incorporates the final greetings to and from relatives and friends into
   the body of the letter which is uncommon. For other examples, see in this corpus 14.2-4;
   15.8-9; 31.20-23.
6. Wa-nzur an tahdī lī. For similar expressions using the verb ahdā, see in this corpus wa-ahdī lanā sidr 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 wājid ‘alayka, see in this corpus fa-lā tajid ‘alayya fī dhālika (2.25 and the commentary).

8. Wa-qad katabtu ilayka bi-hādhihi sabʿat 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).


10. The expression wa-bi-l-ḥāja takānu 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 mā 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.RāġibPlusAncienneLetter, 5; Diem (2008), 857.
27.

Request for replies and taking care of the sender’s family

P.CtYBR.inv. 2604  28x 22.4  2nd/8th
Provenance: Unknown  Plate 41

Medium-brown papyrus written in a somewhat flowing hand in 14 lines in black ink with a thin pen across the fibers. The top has torn off where 5 lines are destroyed and the left hand side is missing with a considerable loss of text. Two broad margins of 3 cm have been left blank at the bottom and on the right hand side. The papyrus sheet has been folded about 12 times horizontally, but there are no vertical folds perceptible. An address may have been written at the top of side B but is now lost. There are diacritics in one word.

The script is characterized by the way in which stdlibis written sometimes with teeth and others without (l. 13 istawṣī; l. 12 al-salām; l. 14 al-salām). The tail of the final ya’ usually returns backwards to the right (l. 14 raḍiyā). 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

[بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم] 1
[سلام عليك وآتي] 2
[قل على إني علمت من أبي [الله الذي لا إله إلا هو (Vac.)] 3
[ما عفت والباء واياك] 4
وقد كتبت إني على ذلك يسرك 5
وقد كتبتك كتاب هذى 6
أنا على ذلك يسرك 7
[وقد بعثت] 8
[بكتاب إلى أبي محمد عافناه على الله] 9
[وقد عفت يابا] 10
[فادعه على وابعه يامكل] 11
[وبكبت إلى باخبار ما يفلك فائتي] 12
[ابو زكير وعبد الرحمن بن سلم بن قريش] 13
[استوصي باهتنا خيرا ولا ومنك فيهم أن شأ] 14
[وأكتب إني على إني علمت من أبي] 15
[وأكتب إني على إني علمت من أبي] 16
[وأكتب إني على إني علمت من أبي] 17
[وأكتب إني على إني علمت من أبي] 18
[وأكتب إني على إني علمت من أبي] 19
[وأكتب إني على إني علمت من أبي] 20
[وأكتب إني على إني علمت من أبي] 21

Diacritical dots

Translation

1. [In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.]
2.  To Abū Muḥammad[d] from Abū [Peace be upon you.] I
3.  [p]ral[se] for y[our sak]e G[od, other than whom there is no god. (vac.)]
4.  As for what [follo]w[s, [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 hamdālā, owing to the fact that ammā ba’dū appears in line 4.

6.  For the term ‘araḍa (to present/expose for sale), see P.SijpesteijnTravel 1.6, 2nd/8th and the commentary.

7-8.  For the complaint about lack of replies, see chapter one, formulary. See also 25.9-10.

9.  Bi-kitāb īlā Abī Muḥammad ʿāfāhu Allāh maʿa [kitābī hādhā]. A proper name or the word kitābī (my letter) is to be expected in the lacuna after the preposition maʿa at the end of the line. The latter possibility might be confirmed by the request to deliver it in line 10.

11.  For the expression mā qibalakum, see chapter two, women of the house. The formula fa-innī usarru bi-dhālika is reconstructed on the basis of parallels; cf. P.Khalili I 36.15, 3rd/9th; CPR XVI 29.9, 4th/10th; P.Heid.Arab. II 65.24/10th. See also ḥattā usarru biḥā (P.Jahn 15.6, 2nd/8th); fa-innī usarru biḥā (P.David-WeillEdfou 1r.17, 3rd/9th).

12.  The name Zakīr is well attested in the papyri; cf. CPR XXVI 19.17, early 3rd/9th; P.Philad.Arab. 33.9, dated 366/977. The name appears also in this corpus in 36.2, 8. The reading Zukayr is also possible. As for the name Muslim, see in this corpus 16.14; 30.2, address; 32.2, address.

13.  For the formula wa-stawṣī bi-ahlīnā khayran wa-lā alumānka fīhim in shāʿa Allāh, see wa-stawṣīḥā khayran (CPR XVI 14v.1, 3rd-4th/9th-10th and the commentary). See also in this corpus 40.10-11.

14.  For the prayer radiya Allāh ‘annā wa-ʾanka, see in this corpus 35.9 and the examples given in the commentary.
A letter of request: A man writes to his friend

P.CTYBR.inv. 2713
Provenance: Unknown

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 sād is oval in shape (l. 6 ṣāḥīb). Initial kāf is hairpin-shaped (l. 6 kitābī). There is a marked extension of the tail of the final and independent yāʾ to the right in a horizontal line (l. 2 ʾilā; l. 3 alladhī).

In this letter, the sender ʿAbd 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 إلى [مسافر بن كثير سلم عليك فاني]
3. احمد الملك الله الذي لا الله الا هو [vac.]
4. اما بعد عافنا الله وى بك وعفا عليك و عنك
5. الله أبي كثير إذا خرج [الي]
6. صاحب كتابي هذا فإنه ليس لي أحد
7. امع الله بك فإنه لا أحد يكفني الا [الله وانت]
8. اسل الله لنا ولك بالعفو والعافية [الله]
9. والسلام عليك ورحمة [الله]

Side B:

[من عبد الملك بن صلتان إلى] 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[ld. (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

8. I ask God for us and you forgiveness and health [


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, Ṭabṣīr, 1083. As for the name Musāfir, see Ibn Maʾkūl, 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 baʿdu appears in line 4.

4. ʿAfānā 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-ʿafā ʿannā waʾanka is restored on the basis of countless parallels, see for example in this corpus 29.3.

5. The alif maqṣūra of ilā can be seen extending backwards at the end of this line.

6. References to the carrier of the letter as ḥāmil al-kitāb or ẓāhib al-kitāb occur in several occasions in private and business letters, see Grob (2010a), 96.

6-7. Fa-innuhu laysa lī [aḥad] .......... amtaʾa Allāh <bika> fa-innuhu lā aḥad yakfīnī illā [Allāh wa-ant a. This formula and variants of it appear frequently in petitions and letters of request. Cf. wa-mā lī aḥad illā Allāh wa-anta yā sayyidī (P.Word, 186.5, 2nd/3rd/8th-9th); wa-anta taʾlam an laysa lī khalq illā Allāh wa-anta (P.Khalili I 24.5-6, 3rd/9th). See also annahu laysa lī al-yawm akh bi-māḥabbatihī ghayraka (P.Jahn 9.3, 3rd/9th); fa-in laysa lī akh ghayraka (P.David-WellLouvre 3.12, 3rd/9th); laysa aḥad illā antum (P.Marchands II 19.7, 3rd/9th). For more extensive discussion on expressions showing the sender’s trust in the addressee, see Grob (2010a), 93.

7. The scribe left the word bika out after the blessing amtaʾa Allāh.

8. The post-consonantal medial hamza is omitted in asʾalu (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).
Inquiring about the presence of the addressee in *al-Rīf*

P.CYBR.inv. 2634 12 x 12.5  2\textsuperscript{nd}/8\textsuperscript{th}
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 ʿayn is extended to the right (l. 3 ʿāfān). 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. لابي حوى من ابى حمزة س[ل[ه]م عليك [فائني احمد الابك الله الذي لا اله الا هو]
3. اما بعد عافنا الله واباك وعفا عنا وع[ن[ك كتبت الابك وانا بحال عافية و[الله]
4. محمود الله (vac.) نسل تمام ما بنا بك من نعمة (vac.) اح[ما] ما يبلغك
5. واباك به نعمة ورضا الله [م[ه]]
6. إذ اني ظننت انك غايب بالريف ولم علمت انك خرجت وارسل كن سافك والحفظ لك ... بذلك اما [ع[ن[ك بالله وحاسىshuffle=
7. حفظه وآفته وعامه الله اياه فانه نرسل ان واكتب البينا بحلك وحاسى [ع[ن[ك بالله] [ضرى الله]
8. الله وبالحاجة تكون لك ابلغ من قبلك [سلم]
9. عنا واباك رضا لا سخط بعده والسلم ع[ل[ه ورحمت الله]

**Translation**

1. In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To Abū Ḥuwayy from Abū Ḥamza. [Please 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 you. [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 departed
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 yāʾ which extends into the margin. For the name Ḥuwayy, see al-Dhahabī, Mushtabiḫ, 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 yāʾ of fa-ʾinna can still be seen.
3. ʿĀfānā is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā, which is replaced by a little hook (Hopkins § 10.c). The expression katabtu ila yīka wa-ʾnā bi-ḥāl āfiya wa-llāh maḥmūd is restored on the basis of countless parallels, see Grob (2010a), 48-52.
4. Allāh nasʾal. This sentence exhibits the placement of the object before the verb, see P.Khalili I 18.19, 3rd/9th and the examples given in the commentary. See also fa-llāh nasʾal in line 8. A short vacant space has been left after the blessings, indicating the end of this section.
4-5. The formula yuballihuka wa-ʾyyānā bihi ..... janatahu is restored on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 7.5-6 and the commentary. The word before janatahu 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 ghāʾib 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 ghāʾib bi-l-riḍ, see in this corpus ghāʾib bi-l-fustāṭ (14.10). For other attestations of al-riḍ in the papyri, see wa-uʿlimuka annahu māta bi-l-riḍ yawm al-thulāthāʾ wa-ḥumila ilā al-fustāṭ (P.Marchands II 24r.13, 3rd/9th).
7. This line is for the most part illegible due to the ink is being faded.
9-10. For the formula ʿuktub ilaynā bi-khabarika wa-hayʾatika, see ʿuktub ilayya bi-khabarika wa-salāmika wa-ḥālika wa-hayʾatika wa-bi-l-ḥāja takūnu laka (CPR XVI 18.10, 1st-2nd/7th-8th and the examples in the commentary). The expression, wa-ḥawādith niʾam Allāh ḍindaka, is reconstructed on the basis of parallels, see for example P.RāġibLettres 13.5-6, 3rd/9th.

10-11. For the blessing ṭadiya Allāh ʿannā wa-anqa ʾridān ā sukḥṭa baʿdahu and variants of it, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 33.7-8, 2nd/3rd and the examples provided in the commentary.

11. The final salām greeting is reconstructed on the basis of the other letters of this corpus.
30.

Inquiring about the addressee’s previous letter

P. Khalili II 115

Provenance: Unknown

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 dhālikā). Sīn is written as a straight line without teeth (l. 3 al-majlis). Ṣād is horizontally elongated (l. 10 Ḥafṣa). Medial ‘ayn is open at the top (l. 6 ni‘mā). The tail of the final yāʾ 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 relative s 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 النعما م بن مسلم الحضرمي الى أبي [حفصا]]
3. [وممن معاه واهل المجلس سلم [عليكم فاني أحمد النيم الله الذي لا الله]]
4. [الآن هوانا ومن قبلنا من أخوتنا [على ما يسركم]]
5. [علينا من الله بد (؟) جفته ونعمسته]
6. [وان نعد نعما الله لن نحصيها نسال الله وربكم]
7. [لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله وانا لم نعرف من كتا بك] الذاذ]
8. [لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله وانا لم نعرف من كتا بك [من النعما م بن مسلم الحضرمي الى أبي حفصا]]
9. [وحاياكم في ذلك مما نحب وسلم ورحمت الله وبركاته]

Side B:

[من النعما م بن مسلم الحضرمي الى أبي حفصا]
Translation

Side A:

1. [In the na]me of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. [From] al-Nuʿmān 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
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
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]
9. [ ] ..... to us. We are owed to the people regarding what you asked them and we
10. [ ] Abū Ḥafṣa, well and in good health. Consider to write to [us about your news
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-Nuʿmān b. Muslim al-Ḥaḍramī] to Abū Ḥafṣa

Commentary

Side A:

1. Of bi-sm only the mīm is preserved.
2. The proper name al-Nuʿmān 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 ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ’s conquering army. Most of the Yemeni conquerors were in fact
large clans from Ḥaḍra-mawt such as Mazḥaj and Ṣadaf.314 For other attestations of this nisba
in the papyri; cf. P.Khalili I 9v.8-9, dated 104/723; P.MugawiriAlqab, 350. The name of the
addressee is restored on the basis of the exterior address. For the female name Ḥafṣa, see
Gratzl (1906), 27. This name appears also in this corpus in 8.2.
3. The ḥamdala is reconstructed on the basis of the other letters of this corpus. The
expression wa-man maʾahu wa-ahl al-majlis indicates the reading out loud of the letter in

314 Al-Samʿānī, al-Ansāb, vol. 4, 159-161.
front of the addressee and others who might have shared the content of the letter. For
more, see in this corpus 3.5 and the commentary.

4. Wa-anā wa-man qiblanā min ikhwatinā. For the expression wa-man qiblanā, see chapter
two, women of the house.

5. Wa-in naʿuda niʿamā Allāh lan nuḥṣīhā. This expression echoes the Qurʾanic verse wa-in
 taʿudā niʿama Allāh lā tuḥṣūhā (Q 16:18). Niʿamā is spelled with an alif at the end (Hopkins §
170). Nasʿalu Allāh. The post-vocalic hamza in nasʿalu is omitted while the preceding short
vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20).

7. For blessings with the expression iyānā wa-iyyākum min makārih al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira,
see in this corpus 3.8-9; 6.6-7. See also Grob (2010a), 45.

8. For the ḥawqala (lā hawla wa-lā qūwwa illā bi-llāh), see letter 1.9 and the commentary.

10. Yā Abī Ḥafṣa. Abī is written for classical Arabic Abā (Hopkins § 162.a).

10-11. The formula wa-tanzūrāna an taktubūna ilaynā bi-khabarīkum wa-salāmatikum wa-
hawāʾijikum is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. The plural imperative in wa-tanzūrūn
ends with ān 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\textsuperscript{nd}/8\textsuperscript{th} 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-\text{inn\={a}}; l. 7 min\={h}\={a}). S\={i}n and sh\={i}n occasionally have teeth. In places, the teeth of s\={i}n and sh\={i}n are reduced to a slight ripple in the stroke (l. 1 bi-sm; l. 2 sal\={a}m). The horizontal stroke of initial ʿayn is extended to the right (l. 2 ʿalayka; l. 11 ʿashr). Initial kāf is sometimes hairpin-shaped (l. 5 dhakarta; l. 7 katabtu). The tail of the final yāʾ bends to the right (l.2 ilä; 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 dinār. ʿUthmān informs the addressee also that one Dawūd sent the latter one dinār 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.\textsuperscript{315} Regardless of the grammatical and spelling mistakes that appear through out the text the letter is very well executed with several means to highlight the text. A photograph with a primal edition of the text is given in P.MugawiriAlqab, 238-239.

Text

\textsuperscript{315} See chapter one, formulary.
Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
   من عظم بن عبد الله إلى موسى بن سا[..] سلم عليك فاتني
   احمد الله الذي لا إله إلا هو

2. اما بعد فانتاب بتسمية الله وفضله [كم] سلم الله
   [تمام] تعظمه والزيادة في الشعر [ل.] قد بلغني كتابك
   فأحمد الله على حسن عفافك لنا ولك برجمته ذكرت
   اجتهاد نكر في كتبنا وقد رائب ذلك منها
   [بارك الله فيها] فعلهمها ذلك عفلك الله

3. نحن نرجو بنيان تلك الدار عالما هذا أن قدر الله
   ذلك أن شا الله وقد كتبنا [إليك اننا قادمون
   ونحن نريد ذلك أن شا الله إلى عشر ليل تخلو
   من الشهر [فإلا أكثر] إطلاع أهلنا [إليك] الله فائما هم
   اهلك وقد قد علينا مزر [وق] وذكرنا أن استرى
   (vac.) [ ]

4. ذكرته الا اشت[ ]
   واقفكم لك من أنى به [ ] رافق الله بعظمه
   [ ] لا خر[ ] [ ] [ ]

5. عفاك الله [ ] [ ]
   لزيتا [ ]
   وحسن العه ان محبته لعمل (؟) فتعاهد أمه
   واقرأ على عبيدة السلم كثيرا وعلى وعى عبده الله
   ومهدي ومحمد وطلحة يقرون عليها السلم كثيرا
   ورحمت الله ويدعون الله بالخلاص والعافية
   في الامور كلها برحمة واقرأ على أبي فرج السلم
   واخبره انني قد اشترى له بدين زيتا وكرابة (؟) [اله]

6. وقد أخبرني مرزوق وسائتة قبل ذلك فأخبرني ان قد
   نتجت تلك المباركة مهرا فبارك الله ك فيها
   فيما رفعت وداود يقر على السلم كثيرا وقد
   بعد اللك بدئن مع مرزوق وهو باعت اللك معي
   أن شا الله بشاة خيزة وهو يقر على عبيدة السلم
   واكتبوا البا بحاجة أن كانت والسلم
   عليه [ك] ورحمه الله

Side B:

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 [as you wish]. We ask God
5. [the completion of His favour and the increase in gratitude [to Him]. Your letter reached me.
6. I praise God for His best safeguarding towards us and you through His mercy. You mentioned (that)
7. Ijtihād ren[ts] what I wrote to her about and that you witnessed that from her,
8. may God [bless] her. So inform her about that, may God save you,
9. we wish to build this house this year, if God determines
10. this, if God wills. We are writing to (inform) you that we are coming,
11. because we want this, if God wills, on the eleventh of
12. this month. So inform our family may God have mercy upon you, as they are
13. your family. Marzūq came to us and you mentioned to buy
14. [ ] (vac.)
15. [ ] and I swear [ ]
16. [ ] and the hereafter [ ] may God accompany you with His knowledge.
17. [ ] may God save you
18. [ ] oil for him
19. ......................... (?) take care of his matter
20. Send to ’Ubayda greetings abundantly and ‘Alī and ‘Abd Allāh and
21. Mahdī and Ḥamīda and Ṭalḥa send to her many greetings
22. and God’s mercy. They ask God for her salvation and wellbeing
23. in all things through His mercy. Send to Abū Faraj greetings
24. and inform him that I bought for him oil and ....... (?) for one dīnār {for him}.
25. Marzūq has informed me and I asked him before. He informed me that
26. al-mubarāka (the horse) produced a foal, may God bless it for you and
27. what He gave you. Dāwūd sends to you many greetings and he
28. has sent to you one dīnār with Marzūq and he will send to you with me,
29. if God wills, a good sheep. He sends greetings to ’Ubayda.
30. And write to us about your needs, if there were. Peace be
31. upon you and God’s mercy.

Side B:

To Abī A[  

Commentary

Side A:

1. There is a long connecting line between the ħāʾ and mīm of al-raḥmān.
2. The name ʿUthmān 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 yāʾ returns to the right to cover the space. See also alladhī in the next line. For the name Mūsh, see al-Dhahabī, Mushtabīh, 509.

4. Fa-innā bi-nīʾmat Allāh wa-ṣalālim kamā tuhibb. For parallels, see in this corpus 36.6 and the examples given in the commentary.

4-5. Nasʾalu Allāh tamām nīʾmatihi wa-l-ziyāda fa al-shukr lahu. This formula can only be made out with difficulty, because the ink has faded. For parallels, see in this corpus nasʾalu Allāh tamām al-nīʾma ʿalaynā wa-ʿalaykum wa-l-ziyāda min faḍlihi (5.5-7 and the examples provided in the commentary). The post-consonantal medial hamza is omitted in nasʾalu (Hopkins § 26). See also asʾaluhu in line 13.

6. Fa-aḥmadu Allāh ʿalā ḥusn ʿāflyatihi lanā bi-raḥmatihi. An exact parallel for this formula is not attested, but see wa-ḥamdatu Allāh ʿalā ʿāflyatihi iyyāka (CPR XVI 18.6, 1st-2nd/7th-8th). The yāʾ of ʿalā extends vertically directly from the bottom of the lām which is an archaic spelling (Hopkins § 55.1). Also written so in lines 20, 23. The tāʾ of dhakarta extends horizontally and lacks an upward curve on the left.

7. The yāʾ 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 ḥ-r, see P.Genizah, 143-144; CPR XXI, 152. I was not able to trace the female name Ijtiḥād in the onomastica. The reading is tentative.

8. The blessing ʿāfīka Allāh is restored on the basis of lines 8 and 17, where the same blessing appears.

9. For the expression in qaddara Allāh dhālika, see wa-mā qaddara Allāh (Sijpesteijn (2013) 36.15, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary).

10. In shāʾa Allāh. The post-vocalic hamza is not written in shāʾa (Hopkins § 20.c). Also written so in line 11.

10-11. For the expression wa-innā qādimūna wa-nāḥnu nurūdu dhālika in shāʾa Allāh, see in this corpus fa-qad aradtu dhālika wa-anā qādim ʿalayka qabla al-ḥilāl in shāʾa Allāh (37.6-7); wa-innā qādimūn in shāʾa Allāh (41.5-6).


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 ʿUbayda, see Gratzl (1906), 42. The name appears also in line 29.

22. Raḥmat is written as usual with a tāʾ maftūḥa instead of a tāʾ marbūṭa (Hopkins § 47.a). Also written so in the final salām greeting in line 31.
22-23. Wa-yadʿūna Allāh lahā bi-l-khalāṣ wa-l-ʿāfiya fī al-umūr kullihā bi-raḥmatihi, see in this corpus 35.4 and the examples given in the commentary.

24. Lahu is written twice by the scribe, who indicated his mistake by crossing out the second word at the end of the line. Bi-dīnār. The preposition bi is used to indicate the amount for which a product is to be bought. See P.Horak 85.6, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary. Dīnār is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10.a). Also written so in line 29. Zayt. Vegetable oils produced in Egypt were made from olives or seeds, mostly radish seeds and they were mainly used for cooking and lighting. For more extensive discussion on oil in the papyri, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 28.12 and the commentary. The word after zayt is not clear to me.

25. Wa-qad akhbaranī Marzūq wa-saʾaltuhu qabla dhālika fa-akhabaranī. 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 saʾaltuhu while the preceding short vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20).


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-shātʿ azīza. For other attestations of sheep (ḍaʿn and ghanam) in the papyri, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 8.23 and the commentary.

30. For the expression wa-ktubū ilaynā bi-ḥāja in kānat, see in this corpus 36.7 and the examples given in the commentary.

Side B:

Only upper traces of few letters can be detected among the ink traces remaining in this line.
32.

Reporting on the arrival at Dimyāṭ and buying linen

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. ūāʾ has a downward shaft at the left (ll. 6, 8 Dimyāṭ). The teeth of sin are reduced to a slight ripple in the stroke (l. 1 bi-sm; l. 8 salāmatika). Final yāʾ bends occasionally backwards (l. 2 alladhi).

In this letter, the sender al-Khayr b. Muslim informs his business partner al-Miswar b. Rajāʾ that he reached the city of Dimyāṭ in good health and bought the linen he was looking for. Al-Khayr expresses his happiness because he was accompanied by a good group of people in this long business journey. The sender closes his letter by conveying greetings to the addressee and his family.

The sender and the addressee are from the same clan as stated in the exterior address. The letter is short but carefully executed with the exception of some minor grammatical and spelling mistakes.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم[
2. للمسور بن رجا من الخبر بن مسلم عليكم [الفاني أحمد اليك الله الذي
3. (vac.)
4. ما بعد عافنا الله ويايك باحسن [عاف[ب+[ه في الدنيا والاخرة
5. وجعل مصرتبنا و[يايك الجنة برحمته[ه كنيت الياك حي[ن] قدمت
6. دمياط والمسور بن محمد [صالح والله مهدود [قدد[د [حسن الله لنا الصحابة
7. ولله الحمد وكان [ واكتب الينا يا رجا بخيرك
8. وأنا برسالتك و[يايك وحوايجك] اخ[د]روك اني قدمت دمياط
9. فوجدت الازز فش [يته [فاينسل [الله ان يوفق لنا حاجتنا
10. وان يبارك لنا فسيبها ان شا الله و[السلم عليك ورحمته] وت الله
11. اقرأ منى على كل [اصحابنا السلم] وعلى اهلك وعلى كإنا منى السلم

Side B:

للمسور بن رجا الونن

Diacritical dots
Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To al-Miswar b. Rajāʾ from al-Khayr b. Muslim. 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 [mercy]. I wrote to you, when I arrived at
6. Dimyāṭ, whereas I am [well and in good health, God be praised]. God has given us a good company,
7. praise be to Him. It was [ ] and write to me, Abū Rajāʾ, 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 Dimyāṭ
9. and that I found the linen and I bought it [ ] . I ask God to grant us success in our needs
10. and to bless us in [it, If God wills.] Peace be upon you and God’s mercy.
11. Send from me to all [our partners greetings] and to your family and your children from me greetings.

Side B:

To al- Miswar b. Rajāʾ al-Wanbī from (vac.) [al-Khayr b. Muslim al-Wanbī

Commentary

Side A:

1. For the name al-Miswar and other possible readings, see Ibn Ḥajar, Tabṣīr, vol. 4, 1286; al-Dhahabī, Mushtabiḥ, 482. The patronymic Rajāʾ 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, Mushtabiḥ, 193-194.

2-3. A long vacant space has been left after the ḥamdala as standard in early letters.

4. The formula ʿafānā Allāh wa-iyyāka bi-ḥsan ʿāfiyatihī fī al-dunyā wa-l-ākhira is restored on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 41.4-5. See also Grob (2010a), 45. ʿĀfānā is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10.c).
Wa-ja’ala maṣīranā wa-iyyāka al-janna bi-raḥmatihi. An exact parallel for this formula can be found in Sijpesteijn (2013) 26.3-4, 2nd/8th. Qadīmtu is written differently from the way in which it is written in line 8, but the reading is certain.

Dimyāṯ 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 ʿalāh mahmūd 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 lahu al-ṣaḥāba, see in this corpus wa-aḥsan lahu al-ṣaḥāba (17.14-15). See also ‘asā an yuhsīna Allāh laka al-ṣaḥāba wa-yaqḍiya laka ḥājataka (P.Louvre 6842.2-4, 3rd/9th); wa-nas’a al-lāh an yuhsīna lakumā al-ṣaḥāba wa-yuṣallimakumā (P.Leiden OR 12885-18, l. 5, 3rd/9th (unpublished)). Expressions using the term ṣuḥbat is uncommon in the papyri (Hopkins § 118).

Uktub ilayynā, Abā Rajāʾ, bi-khabarika wa-salāmatika wa-[ḥālika wa-ḥawāʾiika] 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.

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 Rāġib (1988), 25-33; Younes (2013), 313-334. Dimyāṯ was famous for its precious sharb-linen as many papyri indicate, see for example P.Cair.Arab. VI 389.12-13, 3rd/9th. The reading al-burr (wheat) instead of al-bazz is also possible. For other attestations of al-burr in the papyri, see P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 15= P.World, 175].8, 3rd/9th. Of fa-sharaytuhu only the fāʿ, shīn and rāʾ are still visible.

Fa-as’a al-lāh an yuwafṣiqan laḥa ḥaṭatifān wa-an yubārika laḥa fi. For the final part of this expression; cf. fa-nas’ al-lāh an yubārika laka fī (CPR XVI 11.12, 3rd/9th).

Rahmat is spelled with an extra tooth and the loop of the mīm is written above the line. Of fīhā only upper traces of the fāʿ can be seen before the lacuna.

Post-vocalic hamza is omitted in aqriʾ (Hopkins § 20.b) and the alif māṣūra of ʿalā is omitted (Hopkins § 55.i). The ink is smudged obscuring the reading of the word aqriʾ. The lām and alif of iyālika are not connected. For the reconstruction of ʾaṣḥabinā, see in this corpus 33.13. The salutations are added to the letter after the final salām greeting.

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-Wanbi refers to the clan of Wanba a sub-tribe of the southern-Arabian tribe of Murād, see al-Samʿānī, al-Ansāb, vol. 12, 290.
33.  

Business instructions including the buying of olives in Dimyāṭ

P.CYBR.inv. 2715  
19.2 x 13.9  
2nd/8th

Provenance: Unknown

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 ‘alayka). Initial kāf is horizontally elongated (l. 7 kunā). The tail of the final yā’ occasionally returns backwards (l. 3 fa-innī).

In this letter, one Shurayḥ b. ʿAmr instructs a certain b. Abū Ābid, the addressee, to help a certain Abū Yazīd with something that remains unknown to us, to provide a certain Muhammad b. Usayd with four unknown things and to buy him olives from Dimyāṭ 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:

[بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم] 1

[من شریح بن عمرو الى الحمد بن ابي عابد سلم عليك فاني اح[مد الله]]

[الذي لا الله الا هو] (vac.) 3

[اما بعد عافانا الى بن ولدك ع[لى ما يسرك] ] 4

[لا يخبرك ان الهموم كله و[عقا عنا ونعك ] ] 5

[وقد احصاء وافق البلق فنتش] (vac.) 7

[بى دارد] (ان شاء الله) (ان شاء الله) (ان شاء الله) 8

[ان نفذ راحين ال] 6

[باليعة وزعما ء وا] 9

[محمد بن اسد وهو اربعة اس] 10

[مهما كنا جميعا في ك] 11

[ولتشيئني الى بدرهم زينون من دمياط وبد[رهم] ] 12

[اقرر على اصحابنا السلم كثير وع[لمن السلم] ] 13

[عافانا الله] 14

Side B:

[من شريح بن عمرو الى الحمد بن ابي عابد]
Translation

Side A:

1. [In the name of God, the] Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. [From Shurayh b. Amr to al-.ṣad b. A]bū ʿAbīd. 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 dirham
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 Shurayḥ b. ‘Amr to al-.ṣad b. Abū ʿĀ[bid.]

Commentary

Side A:

2. The internal address is reconstructed on the basis of the exterior one.
2-3. The ḡamdala is restored on the basis of parallels, see the other letters in this corpus. A long vacant space has been left after the ḡamdala 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-bayʿa (sale) in the papyri, see P.Cair.Arab. V 292.11, 3rd/9th.
8. Of dirham only the hāʾ and mīm are preserved. A vacant space has been left at the end of this line, indicating the end of this paragraph.
9. A rāʾ or zāy is still visible at the beginning of this line. The eulogy mutītu bika in passive is uncommon in the papyri. Anna tuʾīna Abū Yazīd. For unchangeable Abū in all syntactical positions, see Hopkins § 162.a. An initial ʿayn is still discernible at the end of this line.
10. For the name Usayd, see al-Dhahabī, Mushtabiḥ, 12.
12. Wa-tashtarī lī. Of tashtarī only the final yāʾ is visible. Dimyāṭ appears also in this corpus in 8.6; 32.6, 8.
13. [Aqriʿ alā] aṣḥābinā al-salām kathīr. For the supplement aqriʿ alā, see Grob (2010a), 73. 
Tanwīn alif is absent in the adverb kathīr (Hopkins § 167.a).

14. The blessing ċāfānā Allāh wa-iyyāka is reconstructed on the basis of line 4 where the 
same blessing appears.

Side B:

Of Shurayḥ only the yāʿ and ḥāʾ 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 šād 
and the final character is quite clearly a dāl. Of ʿĀbid only the ʿayn is visible. The patronymic 
is reconstructed on the basis of the internal address.
The text is:

**Text**

```
1. حـ
2. ذلك من ابى مسكيى على
3. وذكرت له ان تعینه بابننا واجراتنا حتا ياتيك اى شا ا
4. BIOS الى ابى مسكينا حاجية ابى سلمة من قرطننا الذي اشترينا من علف دوابنا
5. فان رايت ابى سلمة رحمك الله ان تلقا بعض من يشترى الرقيق تامره ياشترى خا
6. د [؟] سودا بثما [نئة] عشر دينر وذهب عند حماد وقد كتبت الى ذلك اصلحك الله فا [نها]
7. محتاجة الى خادم وقد بعتت مع جميل بدرهم تامر من يشترى لنا به قراطيس ثم تبعث به مع د [؟] من
8. ان شا الله فان حماد مشغول قد اشغله ما عنده من الدواب حتى لم كتب الى ابى اقرى على عبد الله
9. السلام مع السلم عليك ورحمت الله ولكبت تدبيني فالله يغفر لك اعلم ان
10. ذلك ليس لي بموقف او لا اريدك اصلحك الله
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**Diacritical dots**

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٢ (٢٤) ان ٤; ٧) فان: الدواب
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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 dinār. 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 eight[teen] dinārs. 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.RāġibTroisDocuments 2.5, dated 255/869; P.Cair.Arab IV 225v.5, 2nd-3rd/8th-9th; P.Marchands I 5.14, 3rd/9th.

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

4. Al-dinār 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-Dahabī, 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. χόρος) 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 rahimaka 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 ṣaqaluṣayta lam yabiḥā sāḥibuhā illa bi-shaṟṭ li-man yukhrijuhā ‘an al-fusṭāṭ fa-ḏaminto laḥā an ukhrijahā wa-anā ukhrijuhā maʾ (CPR XVI 19.20,
3rd/9th). For attestations of khādim as “eunuch” in the papyri, see P.Khalili I 17. address, 3rd/9th and the commentary. Sawdāʾ is written without the hamza (Hopkins § 20.c). The word before sawdāʾ is unclear to me and the reading is tentative.

6. Bi-thamāniyat ʿashr dīnār wa-l-dhahab ʿinda Ḥammād. 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 ʿaṣlahaka 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-hriṣʿ alā dhālika. The fa in fa-hriṣ introduces the apodosis of the conditional clause in line 4. For other attestations of al-dhahab in the papyri; cf. fa-nẓur an tashtarī bi-l-qitaʿ al-dhahab .... ḥattā ʿab’atha ilayka bi-l-dhahab (P.Marchands V/I 2.4, 10, 3rd/9th); wa-anna al-dhahab allatī arsalt maʿa Qays b. Ḥajar min thaman al-thalāṭhat athwāb allatī maʿa Qays b. Ḥajar wa-l-thawb alladhī li-ḥaqī fi al-ḥajj (P.HanafiBusinessLetter, 154 and the commentary).

7. For qarāṭis (sing. qirṭās) papyrus rolls, see P.World, 22-30; Grohmann (1954), 68-71. See also in this corpus 16.15.

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316 For prices of female and male slaves in the papyri, see P.Vente, 42-48.
35.

Letter about the wage of the addressee's peasant

P.Cam.Michaelides A 53 14 x 25 2nd/8th
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, alladhi).

This letter has been sent from a certain Qurra b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān to one Rabīʿa 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-Nuʿmān 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 إلى ربيعة بن يونه سلم عليك فإني أحمد اليك (الله الذي)

3. لا الله [لا] هو (vac.)

4. اما بعد عافنا [الله] وياك في الأمور كلها فقد بلغني كتابك

5. فسرني صلاحك وعافية الله اياك (vac.)

6. ونحن [ابن] كنتك اليك صالحون في هيئة وحائنا وكنه محمود

7. وقد كنتب إلى النعمان في نبطيك وثقبت عليه فيه وسالته ان يقره

8. على [د] ينير وكان حسننا إلى حظلك واتيان ما يسرك ابلغ نفسك

9. السلام رضي الله [عن]ا وعنك (vac.)

10. والسلام على [ليك] و[ر] جتم الله

Side B:

لانب يونه

Translation
Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

2. From Qurra b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān to Rabī’ā b. Yūnā. 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 Yūnā

Commentary

2. Min Qurra b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān ilā Rabī’ā b. Yūnā. The tā’ marbūta of Qurra has a leftward shaft at the top. The alif maqṣūra of ilā is not written. For the name Yūnā 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 fi al-umūr kullihā. Blessings on the addresser of this kind following the transitional element ammā ba’du are very common in early letters. An exact parallel for this formula can be found in Sijpesteijn (2013) 29.4-5, 2nd/8th. See also wa-arāka al-‘āfiya fi umūrika kullihā (P.Heid.Arab. II 111-12, 1st-2nd/7th-8th and P.Jahn 111-12, 2nd/8th); wa-atamma ni’matahu ‘alayka fi al-ulmūr kullihā (CPR XVI 9.5-6, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); wa-atamma fi al-ulmūr kullihā ni’ matahu (P.Khalili I 14.4, 2nd/8th); ‘āfānā Allāh wa-īyyāka wa-‘āfā ‘annā wa-‘anka (P.Horak 85.4 and the examples given in the commentary). ‘Afānā is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10.c).

4-5. Fa-quad balaghānī kitābuka fa-sarrānī šalāhuka 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-sarrānī salāmatuka wa-‘āfiyatuka (P.Heid.Arab. II 38r. 5 3rd/9th; 42r.5, 3rd/9th); fa-sarrānī salāmatuka (P.Khalili I 14.6, 2nd/8th); fa-sarrānī salāmukīm ajma’īn (P.Khalili I 20v.3, 3rd/9th); wa-surīrītu bi-‘ilm salāmatika (P.Khalili I 30.4, 3rd/9th); wa-sarrānī salāmatuka (P.Marchands II 2.4, 3rd/9th); wa-sarrānī salāmat Allāh iyyāka (P.Marchands V/I 6.3, 3rd/9th); bi-mā sarrānī min salāmat Allāh iyyāka (P.Marchands V/I 20.3-4, 3rd/9th).
6. Wa-naḥnu [ḥ]īnā katabtu ilayka šāliḥūn fi hayʿatinā wa-ḥālinā wa-llāh mahmūd. The ḥāʾ of ḥīnā is missing in the lacuna. For parallels of the middle part of this formula, see ukūṭ ilayyā bi-khabarika wa-salāmika wa-hayʿatika (CPR XVI 18.10, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); ukūṭ ilayyā bi-khabarika wa-ḥālikā wa-hayʿatika wa-bi-mā antaʾ alayhi (P.Jahn 17.25-26, 3rd/9th); wa-anā wa-man qibālī alaʾ asafal ḥāl wa-āhsan hayʿa (CPR XVI 33.9, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); bi-khabarika wa-ḥālikā wa-hayʿatika (P.Ryl.Arab. I VII 33.13, 3rd/9th). Note the singular form in katabtu which contradicts with the rest of the sentence. Wa-llāh mahmūd is a religious formula of a glorification type. It is well attested in letters and often follows the announcement of the well-being of the sender. Cf. CPR XVI 11.4, 3rd/9th; 12.3, 10, 3rd/9th; P.Rāǧib Letters 6.3, 3rd/9th; 13.3, 3rd/9th; P.Khalili I 14.6, 2nd/8th; P.SijpesteijnTravel 1.5-6, 2nd/8th. This expression is sometimes further extended, e.g. wa-llāh mahmūd lā sharika lahu (P.Marchands II 2.3-4, 3rd/9th, 35.5, 3rd/9th, P.David-WeillOuvrre 1.4, 3rd/9th; P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 2.3, dated 3rd/9th; VI 14.2, 3rd/9th; VI 21.4, 3rd/9th; VI 25.5, 2nd/8th) or wa-llāh mahmūd mashkūr rabb al-ʿalāmīn (P.Marchands II 4.3, 3rd/9th) or wa-llāh mahmūd mashkūr lā ilāh illā huwa wa-ṣallā Allāh ʿalā Muḥammad (P.Marchands II 30.2-3, 3rd/9th; 33.3-4, 3rd/9th; 34.3, 3rd/9th) or wa-llāh mahmūd mashkūr lā sharik lahu (P.Marchands III 19.3, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands V/I 20.1, 3rd/9th) or wa-llāh mahmūd mashkūr lā ilāh illā huwa wa-ṣallā Allāh ʿalā Muḥammad al-nabi wa-salam kathirān (P.Khalili I 17.3-4, 3rd/9th). Variants such as wa-l-rabb mahmūd are also well attested in letters; cf. CPR XVI 4.6, 1st-2nd/7th-8th. See also wa-rabbunā mahmūd (P.Khalili I 15r.5, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary); wa-rabbunā mahmūd lā sharik lahu (P.Marchands II 1.3-4, 3rd/9th); wa-rabbunā mahmūd kathirān kamā huwa ahlulu (P.Marchands II 24.4, 3rd/9th).

7. al-Nūmān is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10b). Post-vocalic hamza is omitted in saʿaltuḥ while the preceding short vowel is lengthened (Hopkins § 20). The term nabaṭī (pl. anbāṭī), in both singular and plural, appears frequently in the papyri, see P.Cair.Arab. III, 154.7, dated 91/710 and the commentary; P.Quarra, 49; P.Cair.Arab. III, 32. See also al-nabaṭī alladhi baʿathta maʿahu bi-l-jubba quṭn .... fa-idhā al-nabaṭī qad kharaja wa-lam yabʿath ilayhi bi-l-quṭn (P.Marchands II 9.17, 3rd/9th).

8. An yuqirrahu alaʾ dīnārayn. The personal pronoun hu in yuqirrahu refers to the peasant. Dīnārayn is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10a).

8. Wa-kāna hasanan illa hifżika wa-ītyān mā yasurruka. Expressions using the root s-s-r are commonly attested at the beginning of letters after the sender has announced his well-being. Other formulae using the same root are also used at the end of letters to express the enjoyment on the side of the sender with a future letter from the addressee. See P.Horak 85.10, 2nd/8th and the examples provided in the commentary. See also Grob (2010a), 51, 70. The nūn of ītyān is written differently from the way in which it is written in the rest of the text, but see also the nūn of šāliḥūn in line 6.

8. Ablīgh nafsaka al-salām. Conveying special greetings to the addressee is well attested in private and business letters. The most widespread expression is khūṣṣ/akhiṣṣ nafsaka (bi)-l-salām “send to yourself greetings”. Verbs such as ablīgh/ballīgh and aqīrī are also used. Cf. ballīgh nafsaka al-salām kathirān (P.Marchands V/I 10.3, 3rd/9th; 20.26, 3rd/9th); ablīgh khāṣṣat nafsika al-salām (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 25.10, 2nd/8th); ablīghu anfusākum al-salām (P.Marchands V/I 8.8, 3rd/9th); aqīrī nafsaka wa-man ahbabta al-salām (CPR XVI 12.10, 3rd/9th); khūṣṣ nafsaka bi-l-salām (P.Marchands II 1m.3.3rd/9th); akhuṣṣ nafsaka bi-l-salām (P.Marchands II 17.10, 3rd/9th,
**Side B:**

Li-Abī Yūnā. 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.

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317 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 2nd/8th
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 ʿāfānā). On occasions, sīn is written as a long horizontal line with three teeth written above it (l. 1 bi-sm; l. 4 al-sū). Fāʾ has one dot below it (l. 9 li-fatlīhā). 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 ʿImrān, writes to a certain Abū Zakīr Yahyā 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. بـمـ الله الرحمن الرحـمن
2. لابي زكير من مسك مولى عمران بن [أو ـ سلم عليك]
3. [vac.]
4. اما بعد عافانا الله واياك من السوكله وجعل مصربنزا
5. واياك الجنة برحمته كتبك [الملك كتبك هذا ونحن]
6. سالمون صالحون كما تحب ان يبلغك مـن فضل الله ورحمته
7. انتظ عافاك والله ما كانت لك حاجة تأتىكم [بكم ان شا الله]
8. واعرفك ابا زكير عافاك والله انك وا[....]
9. الريطة الفئلها أقوى مني على جـمع السلم وعلى[....]
10. حفص الأزرق السلم كثيرا والسلم عليك ورحمت الله

Side B:

[من مسك مولى عمران بن] [.... الى يحيى بن مرزوق وهو في مخزنه....]

Diacritical dots

(1) الرحمن (2) زكير (3) الامك (4) بعد (8) ابا زكير (9) لبتها
Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. To Abū Zakīr from Misk the client of Ḥimrān b. [peace be upon you.]
3. I praise for your sake God, other than Whom there is no god.
4. As for what follows, may God protect us and you from all evil 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 through 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.
10. Ḥafṣ al-Azraq many greetings. Peace be upon you and God’s mercy.

Side B:

[From Misk the client of Ḥimrān b. ] .... to Yahyā 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-raḥmān.
2. Li-Abī Zakīr min Misk mawlā Ḥimrān b. Ḥ. Abī has a very long backward bending yāʾ 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. Ḥimrān 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 aḥmadū ilayka Allāh alladhī lā iḥlā 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’du occurs in line 4.

4-5. ‘Afānā Allāh wa-’iyyāka min al-sū[’ kullihi wa-ja’ala maṣīranā wa-iyyāka] al-janna birāḥmatihi. An exact parallel of this formula can be found in Sijpesteijn (2013), 26.3-4, 2nd/8th. See also ‘afānā Allāh wa-iyyāka min al-sū’ kullihi wa-ja’ala maṣīranā wa-iyyāka jannāt al-naʿīm biraḥmatihi (Sijpesteijn (2013) 31.3-4, 2nd/8th); ‘afānā Allāh wa-iyyāka min al-sū’ kullihi (P.Jahn 3.4, dated 127/745); ‘afānā Allāh wa-iyyāka min al-sū’ (P.Heid.Arab. II 31r.2, 3rd/9th; P.Rāġib.Lettres 14.2, 3rd/9th; CPR XVI 2.2-3, 8, early 3rd/9th). A short vacant space is left after the transitional element ammā ba’du.
5-6. Katabtu ilayka [kitābī hādhā wa-naḥnu] sālimūn sāliḥīn. 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 sālimūn mu‘āfūn (P.Rāgīb.Letters 13.3, 3rd/9th). Note the singular form in katabtu and the plural in sālimūn sāliḥīn. The expression kamā tuḥību an yablughaka [min faḍl Allāh wa-raḥmaṭiḥi] is restored on the basis of parallels, see in this corpus 6.8-9. See also wa-lladhī tuḥību an yablughaka (CPR XVI 4.4-5, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); ‘alā mā tuḥību wa-yasurruka (P.Ryl.Arab. I VI 5v.6, 3rd/9th; P.Marchands II 8.3, 3rd/9th); kamā tuḥību yakānu min al-salāmā (P.David-Weill.Louvre 12-13.4, 2nd/8th); ‘alā mā tuḥību an nakāna (P.Rāgīb.Letters 4.5, 2nd/8th). The ghayn of yablughaka is written rounder like fā‘ or qāf, but the word cannot be read differently.

7. Unzūr ‘afāka <Allāh> mā kānāt laka min ḥāja ta‘[tikum in shā‘a Allāh]. The scribe left the word Allāh out after the honorific ‘afāka. An exact parallel for the formula mā kānāt laka min ḥāja ta‘[tikum in shā‘a Allāh] can be found in P.Loth 2[= P.Berl.Arab. II 75r].10, 2nd/8th. See also wa-mā kānāt laka min ḥāja (P.David-Weill.Louvre 12-13.15, 2nd/8th); wa-ktub ilayya bi-mā kānāt laka min ḥāja (P.Heid.Arab. II 24.16, 2nd/8th); uktab ilayya bi-khabarika wa-salāmika wa-hālīka wa-hay’atika wa-bi-l-ḥāja takānu laka (CPR XVI 18.10, 1st-2nd/7th-8th); wa-ktub ilaynā bi-khabarika wa-hālīka wa-bi-mā kānāt laka min ḥāja (P.Horak 85.9-10, 2nd/8th). The verb kāna followed by an imperfect should not be translated as a past perfect (Hopkins § 239).

8. Wa-u arrifūka Abā Zakir ‘āfāka Allāh wa [i]. 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. riyyāt) is defined in Arabic dictionaries both as a mulā‘a that is made of two stitched pieces and also as a milhā‘a, a wrap similar to the izār. The term is widely attested in the papyri; cf. wa-shiqāq wa-riyyāt (P.Marchands V/I 5.6, 3rd/9th); wa-madīlayn riyyāt …. thalāthat riyyāt (P.Marchands V/I 7[= P.World, 163].7-8, 3rd/9th); wa-madīl riyyāt …. wa-yakān sab‘ wa-‘ishrīn ‘adad al-riyyāt (P.Marchands V/I 9.12, 14, 3rd/9th); riyyāt kullīha (P.Marchands V/I 11.27, 3rd/9th); ‘alā matā‘i al-riyyāt (P.Marchands V/I 16.13, 3rd/9th); bi-dīnār riyyāt jayyid …. li-dīnār riyyāt (Sijpesteijn (2013) 27.7,10, 2nd/8th and the commentary). The lām of bi-fatīlā‘ 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. Ḥaṣṣ al-Azraq. For the nīṣa bi al-Azraq, see al-Sam‘ānî, al-Ansāb, vol. 1, 121. See also in the papyri Ishqāq al-Azraq (P.Cair.Arab. IV 237.6, dated 249/863-4). The ligature lam-alif in al-Azraq is written differently in 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.
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.
Arranging a pilgrimage (ḥajj) journey

P.Cam.Michaelides A Q 17
Provenance: Unknown

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.

In this letter, the sender Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Mufaḍḍal writes to a certain Abū Saʿīd informing him that he has planned to perform pilgrimage (ḥajj) “this year”. For this reason Abū Muḥammad sent to Abū Saʿīd twenty dinār[s 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 Saʿīd 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. لا يِبِيِ محمد من أبي سعيد سلم [مـ[ليك فائي أحمد [الله]]
3. (vac.)
4. اما بعد عافاك الله ورحماك [كتبـ[ت البـ[ك و[انا بحال]
5. عافيع وله محمد و[قد كنت البـ[ك و[عشب البـ[ك]
6. عشرتين دينارا فكتارا لى [الله] حان شا [الله فقد]
7. ارذر ذلك [vac.] و[انا قدام عـ[لك قبل الهـلاـل] ان شا الله تـ[رك لي وعماري وسوار (؟) مـ]
8. ان شا الله تـ[رك لي وعماري وسوار (؟) مـ]
9. [لي وله ] [ما] وسفرة رائبة في [إ]الطريق مع [ـ] فان رايت]
10. ان يكون ذلك معك في رفعتك فافعل ان شا الله
11. ان يكون معك والان فكتارا مع [صحة]
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. [  

Side B:

[To Abū Muḥammad 'Abd] Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Mufaḥ al from (vac.) Abū Saʿīd

Commentary

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 yāʾ of Abī bends backwards to fill in the space left at the beginning of the line. Also the yāʾ of alladhī is written thus in line 3.
3. The hamdala is reconstructed on the basis of parallels. The lām of 'alayka is chipped off. A long empty space has been left after the hamdala as usual.
4. Ammā ba’du ‘āfāka Allāh wa-raḥimaka. An exact parallel for this formula can be found in P.GrohmannWirtsch. 7.4-5, 3rd-9th.

4-5. The expression katabtu ilayka wa-[anā bi-ḥāl] ‘āfiya wa-llāh maḥmūd is restored on the basis of many attestations of this very common expression. See in this corpus 24.5-6 and the examples given in the commentary.

5. Wa-qad katabtu ilayka wa-[ba’athtu ilayka]. A short space has been left blank between the wellbeing section and the confirmation section. Of wa-ba’athtu only the wāw and bā’ are still visible.

6. ‘Ishrīn dināran fa-takārā lī li-l-ḥajj in shā’a Allāh. Dināran 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 kadḥā or li-mustahall (istihlāl) kadḥā. In the papyri these expressions are well attested; cf. wa-istahalla ‘alaynā li-hilāl laylat al-aḥad bi-l-fuṣṭāt (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’a 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-ṭarāq 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.RāġibPlusAncienneLetter, 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. Raḏiya 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 in unspecified.
38.

Reporting on the situation in Fustāṭ:
A Muslim writes to a Copt

P.Cam.Michaelides A Q 22 29.5 x 15 2nd/8th
Provenance: Probably Fustāṭ Plate 59-60

Light-brown papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in black ink in 12 lines across the fibers. The papyrus is destroyed in the middle resulting in some loss of text. The original cutting lines have partially been preserved on all sides. Margins of 3 cm have been left blank on the top and at both sides. Side B contains one line of the address. The papyrus has been folded 9 times horizontally and 10 times vertically. There are very few diacritical dots.

The script is characterized by the way in which final alif extends below the connecting stroke (l. 4 mā̄; l. 8 shā’a). Sin and shin normally have teeth (l. 1 bi-sm; l. 2 salām; l. 3 al-fustāṭ; l. 8 shā’a). Medial kāf is just a vertical stroke resembling lām (ll. 3, 9 katabtu). The tail of the final mīm is very short (l. 1 bi-sm; l. 4 lakum). The tail of the final yāʾ bends backwards (l. 2 ilā; l. 12 ḥattā). Some letters have been elongated horizontally and short vacant spaces have been left blank between sections.

In this letter, the sender al-Muṣʿab b. ʿUbayḥ writes to a certain Jurayj reporting on his arrival at Fustāṭ and the situation there. Al-Muṣʿab 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-Muṣʿab 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 ʿalayka.319 The letter is written as one block but also uses linea dilatans to highlight words and gabs to indicate the onset of sections.

Text

Side A:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

1. من المصعب بن صبيح الى جريج الابخر بن فين (؟) سلم انت

2. اما بعد كتبت اليك حيـ

3. رحمن قد ادخلنا بافساط وقد ادخنا ما لكم ولم يكن [خ]ب ابراهيم انه

4. ارادوا يبعثوا اليكم وهم في ضرب الرسول الذي

5. قيلكم وبو خبر ابي الفضل في البقية ثم اخروا ذلك ولم يكن شيا [بعد] قد اصاب الله لكم حين رجعتم

6. وارجوا لكم تعالى ان شا الله ولو كان [ن]

7. حدث خبر كتبته الابيك لدعلم ذلك (vac.) [و] انظر لجام

8. ابراهيم والحكمة (؟) ان [ ] يباك الله [ ] به حين لم

319 See chapter one, formulary.
Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, th[e Mer]ciful.
2. From al-Muṣʿab b. Ṣūbāyḥ 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 comple[tion 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-Muṣ'ab b. Ṣubayḥ ilā Jurayj ....... For the name al-Muṣ'ab in the papyri, see CPR XXI 2 [= P.World, 116].2, dated 176/792; P.DiemFrüheUrkunden 7.2, dated 168/784. As for the name Ṣubayḥ, see al-Dhahābī, 312. Ilā is written with a very long space between the alif and lām as it is written in the exterior address. Jurayj is the Arabic diminutive form of the name George which corresponds to different Coptic forms. The name is well attested in the papyri; cf. P.Heid.Arab. II 31.3, 3rd/9th; P.David-WeillLouvre 10.6, 3rd/9th. Owing to the fact that the letter is addressed to a non-Muslim, the hamdala is omitted altogether and the familiar salām greeting “salām ʿalayka” is replaced by the archaic formula “silμun 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-Fustāt is shortened. The nūn of ḥīna and the qāf and dāl of qadīmnā are missing in the lacuna. The scribe left out one tooth of the sīn of Fustāt.

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. Aradī yab athū. 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 qibalān/kum or qibalī/aka, see chapter two, women of the house. Wa-yuʾakhir 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 fāsila 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-ʿāfīya are missing in the lacuna. The post vocalic hamza is not written in shāʿa (Hopkins § 20.c).

9. For ljām (the bridle), see Dozy, 525.

10. 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.

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39.

Letter reporting on business affairs

P.Cam.Michaelides A 390 23.5 x 15 2nd/8th
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 ʿalif extends below the connecting stroke (l. 1 Hishām; l. 10 kullihā). The teeth of sin 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 ʿafānā). Initial kāf is hairpin-shaped (l. 5 kitābuka). Final yāʾ bends backwards in a straight line (l. 2 ilā).

In this letter, the sender Hishām b. Mahdī writes to a certain Salām b. Ṣuhayb about some business transactions and asks him to help someone, anonymous to us. Due to the fragmentary state of the bottom of the papyrus only few sentences can be restored but not enough to extract a continuous sense from it. The letter is to be delivered in Alexandria as stated in the exterior address.

The letter is well composed and structured in paragraphs. The writer makes mistakes in grammar and spelling.

Text

Side A:

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. من هشام بن مهدي إلى سلام بن صهيب سلم عليك واليك الله
3. الذي لا إله إلا هو (vac.)
4. أما بعد د عافتك الله ويااك باحسن عافيتة في الدنيا والاخرة
5. وجعل مصيرنا ويااك الجنة برحمته بلغني كتابك وفهمت الذي كتب في مقتراصلاس (؟) ولا تقدم أبا عبد الله وقد فرغنا من
6. إلى به من خبرك وسلمتك وعافتك الله يااك فحمدت على ذلك حمدا جميلا
7. بلغني ابقرصلاس (؟) ولا تقدم أنا عبد الله وقد فرغنا من
8. والبيض فاكتب إلى عافاك الله بالكتابة
9. ومنا حبيب الى مسرتكم ورضاك كليها فين لا اعتلن ماك
10. لما قد اوجه الله من حق [س عليك] فان من [لله]
11. الله ان يعين [لله]
12. فاعنه يرحمك [لله]
13. [لله]
14. [لله]
15. [لله]
Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
2. From Hishām b. Mahdī to Salām b. Ṣuhayb. Peace be upon you. 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 hamdala is restored on the basis of parallels. A long space has been left empty after the hamdala 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-jaʿala] maṣīranā wa-iyyāka 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 ḥafiẓaka Allāh wa-fahimtu mā katabta bihi ilayya min (P.Marchands V/I 18.4, 3rd-9th). Balaghanī is written in exactly the same form in line 7.

6. For the expression min khabarika wa-salāmatika wa-ʿāfiyat Allāh 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 ʿāfāka Allāh bi-[kitāb]. For other attestations of al-bayḍ in the papyri, see in this corpus 4.12 and the commentary. Of bi-kitāb only the bā’ and traces of kāf are visible.

9. Minhā ḥabīb ilā masarratika wa-ridāka. 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-usāriʿu ilā masarratika (P.Marchands II 30.5, 3rd/9th); fa-inna fihā masarratuka (P.Horak 85.10, 2nd/8th and the commentary).

10-20. These ten lines are for the most part illegible due to the fragmentary state of the bottom of the papyrus. The reading is tentative.

Side B:

Only the kunya of the addressee is given in addition to the place of delivery. For the name al-Ṭabarānī, see al-Dhahabī, Mushtabih, 321. The writer mistakenly added the preposition min intending to write his name, but he changed his mind and followed the name of the addressee by the place of delivery. The name following manzil is difficult to decipher, because the ink is totally effaced. Bi-l-iskandariyya. Alexandria appears also in this corpus in 10.10; 11.14.
Letter giving instructions

P.Cam.Michaelides A 130
Provenance: Unknown

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.

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 irdabb, 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 irdabb by two irdabb. 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 Faliḥ 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 Faliḥ and Umm al-Qāsim.

Text

[با السلام ] بلغ
[وقد فهمت] الذي ذكرت من اشتراكي لنا الميتي اردب [قمح/شعير]
[فلا] تقف عنها حتى تحرزها في بيت من بيب داد (4)
[عليه ويطبع ثم لا تخرج منه إلا اردبين اردبين] لا يغتاـلـه صاحب الاشعيرية أو اجراوه (vac.)
[أو امر ابي محمد منك على بال وقل ابي اسمعيل] وليكن
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 Ismāʿīl [ ]
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 Fālīḥ to order Umm al-Qāsim to receive from him [ ]
10. and to send to Abū Ismāʿīl 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-ṣaqad fahimtu alladhī dhakarta min ishtirāʾika lanā miʿatay irdabb. The spelling miyatay instead of miʿatay is frequent in Arabic papyri. For various forms of the numeral two hundred in the papyri, see Hopkins § 101.b. For the weight of one irdabb in medieval Egypt, see Grohmann (1954), 156; Hinz, Gewichte, 39; J. Burton-Page “Mawazin,” E.I.2, vol. 6, 117–22. A commodity of may be wheat or barley qualifying irdabbs is to be expected at the end of this line. In the 2nd/8th century, the price of barley seems to have fluctuated between ten to fifteen irdabbs per dinār and barley costed about half of this price, see A. Grohmann, “Weizenpreis im arabischen Ägypten,” Bulletin de l’institut français d’archéologie orientale du Caire 30 (1930), 541–3.

3-4. Ḥattā tuhrizahā fī bayt min buyūt ....... (?) wa-ṭaṭbaʿ wa-lā tukhrij minhu illā irdabbayn irdabbayn. The practice of sealing goods is well attested in the papyri. Cf. thumma itbaʿ mā qabaṭta min dhālika bi-l-tābīʿ ... fa-dāʿāhā ilayhi baʿd an taṭbaʿāhā (Sijpesteijn (2013) 8.19, 22, 2nd/8th and the commentary). Sealing animals by the owner’s seal in order to be easily identified is also attested in the papyri, see wa-ʿalayhā tābiʿuka fa-ṣiḥtu ʿalā ʿUbayd Ḥattā ijtamaʿaʿ alayya al-nās wa-ʿaraṣfī al-nās tābiʿaka al-lā ṣadhānīhā (P.Jahn 17.19, 3rd/9th). At the end of this line a wāw and traces of a hook can be detected.

5. Sāhib al-ashʿariyya aw ujarāʿuḥu. Al-ashʿariyya is the place where the barley was to be sold. The term ujarāʿ (sing. ajīr) journeymen occurs frequently in the papyri. Cf. P.Cair.Arab. IV 224-225.4; P.Cair.Arab. VI 378.9, 12; P.Cair.Arab. VI 415.10, all 2nd-3rd/8th-9th. A long vacant space has been left at the end of this line, indicating the end of this paragraph.

6. The yāʿ of ʿalā extends vertically directly from the bottom of the lām which is an archaic spelling (Hopkins § 55.i). Ismāʿīl is written with scriptio defectiva of medial ā (Hopkins § 10.b.i). Written also thus in line 10. Traces of a backward bending yāʿ can be detected at the end of this line. Wa-qul li-Abī Ismāʿīl. 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 fāʿ or qāf can be detected at the end of this line.

9. For the name Faliḥ and other possible readings such as Fulayḥ and Qalīf, see al-Dhahabī, Mushtatibih, 408.

10. For the name Zurāra, see Ibn Maʿkūl, Ḯmāl, vol. 1, 89.

11. Min al-ṣalāh wa-ḥusn \al-ḥāl/ wa-dafʿ al-makrūh. The writer added the word al-ḥāl as an afterthought above the line. For similar expressions, see asʿalu Allāh an yuhsina ʿawnaka wa-l-ʿafīya wa-ṣalāh (Sijpesteijn (2013) 24.10-11, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary).

12. Wa-anā astahlif. Astakhliṣf (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 radiya Allāh ʿannā wa-ʿanka, 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 19 x 19 2nd/8th
Provenance: Probably Fusṭāṭ Plate 64-65

Middle-brown papyrus written with a medium-thick pen in black ink in 15 lines across the fibers. The original margins have been preserved on all sides. There are some lacunae at the top and the middle of the papyrus which have caused some damage to the text. The papyrus sheet has been folded 10 times horizontally and 6 times vertically. There are very few diacritical dots. Side B contains the address in two lines.

The script is characterized by the way in which final alif extends very long below the base line. Words are split across line endings and continued in the next line (ll. 9-10 awajihā). The text is written in a fast and cursive handwriting with ligatures resembling the 3rd century script, see Grob (2010a), 161-172.

This letter has been sent to a certain Abū Sulaymān Ismāʿīl b. Ayyūb from a certain Ḥamādūn, Khālid 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. لابی سلم-{ب}-من اس-محیط {ب}-ین ایوب {م}-من عیب {م}-ین جیان {م}-خادم محمد {م}-ین عیب
2. سلم علیکم {فدا} {ب}-ین محمد {م}-ین الله {م}-ین الله {م}-ین اله الا هو (vac.)
3. اما بعد حفظکم {ل}-ین افافک و ایبک و ایبک {ب}-ین النعمه {ب}-ین الله
4. والاخرة علیکم افافک الله {ل}-ین بعثت الدواب و ایانا قادمین
5. ان شا الله {ب}-ین بیجهن {م}-ین (‡) و ایانا اخفل حمدون
6. عند واران {ب}-ین شا الله {م}-ین بقضیه {م}-ین {بهوتکه}
7. ارسلت حمدون {ی}-ین لله {م}-ین حال بقی فرج وما ایبا
8. منه شیا {م}-ین اخدنا الكتیب حفظکم الله و ایانا {م}-ین
9. جها الیکم {ب}-ین شا الله {م}-ین فاستوصی باهل البيت
10. وبالعالی خیرا {م}-ین هم ایلک مع ائل مستوصی
11. ان شا الله {ب}-ین فرخی السلم وعلى ابرهیم و فقیه
12. وعلى من {م}-ین ائلیت السلم و السلم علیک
13. ورحبت الله حمدون {ب}-یرفیک السلم و مازن
14. وفرج فیروزک السلم {ین}-یرفیک السلم
15. وسلم {م}-ین و سلم {م}-ین و سلم {م}-ین و سلم
Side B:

لابي سليمان ابقاه <<الله>> من عبيد (vac. بن جنان يدفع بمصر
في المكارين (؟) ان شا (vac. اللـه)

Diacritical dots

(5) هامدن (6) حمدون (8) مسندى

Translation

Side A:

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
3. Peace be upon you. I praise for your sake God, other than Who[m,] there is no god. (vac.)
4. As for what follows, may God protect you and grant you health and prolong your life and extend His benevolence upon you in this world and the hereafter. I inform you, may God prolong your life, that I sent the animals and that we are coming,
5. if God wills. The .......... (?) will come to me and I will leave Ḥamdūn
6. with him. And se[nd,] if God wills, to me in order to receive it. I already sent Ḥamdūn to Khālid in case Faraj remains. He did not leave
7. anything from it. We received the letters, may God protect you, and I will send them to you, if God wills. Take care of the household
8. and the children as they are your family and you are the best caretaker,
9. if God wills. Send to yourself greetings. And (send also greetings) to Ibrāhīm and Fāʾiq
10. and all those you wish to greet. Peace be upon you and God’s mercy. Ḥamdūn sends to you greetings. Māzin
11. 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 is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10.b.ii). Also written thus in the exterior address. Of Isma‘īl only the alif and sīn are visible. For the name Jinān and other possible readings such as Ḥībbān, Ḥubbān, Ḥayyān and Jayyān, see al-Dhahabi, Mushtabiḥ, 82, 84-86. For other attestations of khādim in the papyri; cf. CPR XVI 19.20, 3rd/9th; P.Heid.Arab. II 26.12, 2nd-3rd/8th-9th; P.Khurasan 30.3, dated 160/777. See also in this corpus 23, 26 and 34.

4-5. Ammā baʿdu ḥafīzaka Allāh wa-ʿāfaka wa-abqāha wa-ḥafizaka wa-ʿāfaka wa-al-niʿma wa-l-ākhira. Writing extensive blessings for the addressee after the transitional element is very uncommon in early letters. The verb abqā is written with an alif mamdūda, whereas classical Arabic requires an alif maqṣūra (Hopkins § 12.c). It is also written thus in line 8. For other attestations of the shift from iya to ā as in abqā, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 28.12, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary.

5. Wa-innā qādimīn. The casus oblique 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 Hāmdūn (Hopkins § 8). The post-vocalic hamza is not written in shāʾa (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. Khālid is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10.b.i).

9. The orthography shayyan for shayʾan 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 ʿāḥbatba al-salām. For this expression, see CPR XVI 12.10, 3rd/9th and the commentary.

15. The name Faraj is written as one ligature.

Side B:

Li-Abī Sulaymān abqāhu <Allāh> min ʿUbayd (vac.) b. Jinān yudfaʿ bi-miṣr fi al-kārayn (?) in shāʾa (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\textsuperscript{nd}/8\textsuperscript{th}
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 kāf is horizontally elongated (l. 7 iyākum; 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). Šīn and shīn are written consistently with teeth (l. 13 qiyās; l. 8 shādīd).

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. [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 Dašā; in the worst city that God created. Its soil is distasteful and sickening.
10. The local official and the people of the city departed to the amīr.
11. We dwell in nothing, waiting for their arrival.
12. Nothing of what we want is ready so far. We finished measuring
13. the city in the best possible way, God be praised. We found in it
14. much surplus, which we had sent to the amīr. I am sick since
15. I left you from the boil that I showed you
16. between my backside and my penis. It ruins me so that I cannot sleep
17. nor can I sit down. While I am writing to you, I am very sick
18. [ ] 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 ʿāfānā Allāh wa-ʾiyyākum ʿāfiya yudkhilunā wa-ʾiyyākum bihā al-janna bi-raḥmatihi wa-yunajīnā wa-ʾiyyākum min shukhtihi wa-ʾān min al-nār bi-raḥmatihi knows no parallel. But see in this corpus 7.5-6; 36.4-5 and the commentaries.


10. For asharr, see Hopkins § 90.b.

11. The title ʿāmil (pl. ʿummāl) occurs frequently in the papyri. From the early Abbasid period onwards the ʿummāl appear as the officials issuing tax receipts and safe conducts, but in earlier times ʿummāl function in the fiscal administration and their responsibilities are less well defined, see Sijpesteijn (2013) 14.22, 2nd/8th and the commentary; CPR XXI, 118. Wa-qad sār al-ʿāmil 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 muqīmin fī ghayr shayʿ, see fa-innī muqīmin mundhu fāraqtanī fī ghayr shayʿ (P.Rāġib Lettres 13.16, 3rd/9th).

13. The orthography shayyan for shayʾan is frequent in Arabic papyri (Hopkins § 19). Mimīn is written for mīn mā (Hopkins § 51.b).

13-15. Wa-qad faraghnā min qiyāsat al-madīna ʿalā aḥsan ḥal wa-l-ḥamdu li-llāh wajadnā fīhā faḍl kathīr qad baʿathnā 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 (ṣijālāt al-taḥdīr) 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-taʿrīf), 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'īd al-misāḥa). For more extensive
discussion, see P.Khalili I, 61-67 and the sources cited there. The two dots of the yāʾ of
qiyyāsat 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, Bardiyāyī Qurra Ibn Sharīk al-ʿAbsī (Riyadh: Markaz al-Malik Fayṣal
li-l-Buhūth wa-l-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyya, 2004), 94.

15-16. Wa-anā marīḍ mundhu fāraqtukum. For expressions using the verb fāraqa, see
Sijpesteijn (2013) 36.5, 2nd/8th and the examples given in the commentary. The word Mundhu
(since) is well attested in the papyri (Hopkins § 131).

16. Min dhālika al-dummal alladhī kuntu araytukah. The singular form used here contrasts
with the plural used in the rest of the letter. For al-dummal (pl. damāmil and damāmīl), see
Ibn Manẓūr, 1425.

17. Bayna maqʿādatī wa-madhākirī. For the unusual plural form madhākir, see Ibn Manẓūr,
1509.

19. Of fa-ʾasʾal Allāh only the upper half of letters is visible.

20-21. The formula uḥību 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.
Measuring vineyards of indigenous Egyptians and a translator

P.CTYBR.inv. 2718  21.3 x 10.7  2nd/8th
Provenance: Unknown  Plate 68-69

Dark-brown papyrus written in a regular hand in black ink with a medium-thick pen across the fibers. The top and the right hand side are missing with a considerable loss of text. Likewise, the left hand side is damaged. The original margins remain only at the bottom. There are few diacritical dots. Side B bears traces of two line of the address written parallel to the fibers. The papyrus sheet has been folded 13 times horizontally and 7 times vertically.

The script is characterized by the way in which sin is written consistently with teeth (l. 15 laysa). The tail of the final ya’ returns backwards (l. 11 ‘alā).

This letter deals with approximately the same topic as the previous one (42). It deals with measuring vineyards belong to native Egyptians and recording tax assessments (kharāj). This is why a translator was very much needed to ease the communication. The text shows that two measurements were conducted by two different persons and that different categories for fields and vineyards were made afterwards. The sender, ‘Amr b. Mālik, ends his letter with greetings and the final salām greeting as usual. Unfortunately, because of the fragmentary state of the papyrus we don’t learn much on the modalities of measuring nor the records that were made.

Text

Side A:

1. [لا يعدة]

2. [باب النصر أمير الترجمان وراس (؟) [مصر]

3. [لا [لها التكشف ساير (؟) من أمورهم]

4. [لا واعلمته بقرب [قد كتب عليك بالمر]

5. [لا [ان الكتب اتءت بالفقية

6. [قد أفرق في القياسة كلها ولم يبقا [من القطر وبعث الهم بابي رشد بن [با والعناب بأمر الكتاب بخبرك و[حالك وحاولك

7. [الفسم وعمري لا أعيبني منه [قيقح لي ان أقيم على [وحمح بالرجل ان يقم على رزق [حتى وخرج معه حبيب في قياسة [ما خبر وقد أفرق في قياسة كرومات [رجلك ليس يفرض كتابة الخراج [من احد احق برفع ما عندنا من [ولو كنت لا أملك شيئا ما افتت [من كتابة الرسائل وعاد الرجل [
THE TEXTS

241

19. منه شيا فذلك ما كنا نرجوا [ ]
20. اتته لي الا مكرما حافظا [ ]
21. وبريدة وسهيل وابرهيم [ ]
22. والسلم عليكم ورحمة الله [ ]

Side B:

[ منن عمرو بن مالك السمنانى ]
[ به ان شا الله ]

Diacritical dots

(3) يحب 6 (اتت 10) اعحبتي: منه 11 (لي: اقيم 17) سيا

Translation

Side A:

1. far away [
2. Abū al-Nāṣr 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 Rushd 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 authorized 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:

[ ]

2. The profession al-Turjumān (the translator) is not attested in Arabic papyri, at the best of my knowledge.

3. The verb yuḥibbu was added as an afterthought above the line. The two words following yuḥibbu are not clear to me. The reading is tentative.

7. Qad afraqa fi al-qiyāsa kullihā. The same expression appears also in line 14. Lam yabqā. Yabqā is written with an alif mamdūda instead of an alif maqṣūra (Hopkins § 12.c) and the long vowel is maintained in the jussive where classical Arabic requires a short vowel (Hopkins § 81.d).

8. For other attestations of al-qibṭ in the papyri; cf. P.SijpesteijnArchivalMind 1.3, 2nd/8th and the commentary; P.Berl.Arab. II 78.3, 3rd/9th. See also the expression min shuhūr al-qibṭ (CPR XXVI 20.5; 23.6; Diem 2006, 3.5; P.Cair.Arab. II 143.3); 'adad al-qibṭ (P.Cair.Arab. II 101[= Chrest.Khoury II 28].4, dated 273/889; PERF 837[= Chrest.Khoury II 63].6, 3rd/9th). For more references, see P.Cair.Arab. II, 185; Grohmann (1954), 220, 230-232. The native Egyptians were also described in the papyri as ahl al-dhimma, see P.World, 132-134.

9. The formula al-kitāb bi-khabarika wa-[ḥālika wa-ḥawa'ijika is restored on the basis of countless parallels, see in this corpus 5.9-10; 36.7 and the examples in the commentaries.

10. For the expression wa-l'-amrī (by my life), see Lane, vol. 5, 2155. This form of oaths is unattested in the papyri, at the best of my knowledge.


14. Al-kurāmāt (the vineyards). For more extensive discussion on measuring vineyards, see P.Khalili I 2, 2nd/8th and the commentary.

17. For the orthography shayaan instead of shay'an, see Hopkins §15.d. It is written also thus in line 19.

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

21. The proper names Suhayl and Ibrāhīm are very common in the papyri. Ibrāhīm is written with scriptio defectiva of long ā (Hopkins § 10.b.i). I was not able to trace the name Burayda in the onamastica but the reading is certain.

Side B:

In order to write the address the scribe turned the papyrus sheet around the horizontal axis, i.e. the way one would turn over a playing card lying on a table. Only half of the address is preserved on the back. For the nisba al-Samnānī, see al-Sam'ānī, al-Ansāb, vol. 3, 306.