## 25. A receipt or acknowledgement of delivery as part of a larger document

Vincent Walter (Leipzig)

| P.Heid. Inv. Kopt. 238 | 23,2 x 13,4 cm | Hermopolite nome |
|---|---|---|
| 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> century | | plate XXVII |

P.Heid. Inv. Kopt. 238 — 23,2 x 13,4 cm — Hermopolite nome

7th–8th century — plate XXVII

The document is written on a piece of papyrus of a light brownish colour. Traces of ink on the upper and lower margins indicate that there was text before as well as after the preserved fragment. The width seems to be pretty much complete in the lines with the greatest extent, but on most lines the left side is lacunose. There are also smaller lacunae throughout the preserved text. The script is in a classic documentary style and points to a date in the (later) 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century, cf. V. Stegemann, Koptische Paläographie (1936) pls. 9, 11, 12, 13. The language of the text points to the region of Ashmunein (but many of the features can also be found in documentary texts from other regions), e.g. ⲙ for ⲙⲙ (l. x+2 ⲙⲟⲕ; cf. P.E. Kahle, Bala'izah (London 1954) 100f.), ⲃ for ϥ (l. x+4 ⲃⲧⲟⲟⲩ, l. x+8 ⲡⲉⲛϣⲁⲃⲓ, l. x+9 ⲉⲃⲉⲧⲓ; cf. Kahle, loc.cit. 136ff.), ⲉ for ⲛ (l. x+5 ⲙⲉⲧⲁⲛ; cf. Kahle, loc.cit. 113f.), ø for ⲉ (l. x+7 ⲃⲟⲗ; cf. Kahle, loc.cit. 65f.), ⲉ for (l. x+5 ⲧⲉⲛϩ[ⲟ]ⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅ<sup>ⲟⲩ</sup>; cf. Kahle, loc.cit. 52ff.), ϥ for ⲃ (l. x+5 ϩⲱϥ; cf. Kahle, loc.cit. 93f.), ⲟ for ⲱ (l. x+1 ⲧⲟϣ, l. x+8 ⲉⲡⲟⲛ, ϩⲁⲡⲗⲟⲥ; cf. Kahle, loc.cit. 90), ⲛ for ⲙ (l. x+1 ⲛⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ, cf. Kahle, loc.cit. 98ff.).

The legal transaction recorded in the preserved part of this document is a delivery of garments (both unspecified and 'small' ones), possibly based on an earlier delivery contract.

On the back of the papyrus (→) an Arabic endorsement has been written that reads *barawāt al-šarāʾik* ("quittances of the business partners"). The *raison d'être* of this line is not clear, but might suggest that at least one of the parties mentioned in the Coptic text was an Arab (communication by Naïm Vanthieghem).

Front (↓)

```
        [    ±5    ] ⲗⲟⲓⲡⲟⲛ ϩⲙ ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲛⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧᵉ ⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧᵉ ⲧⲟϣ ⲛ-
        [     ±7     ]ᵉ ⲛ̅ⲧⲉⲟⲩϩⲉ ⲁⲛ[ⲟⲛ] ⲁⲛⲡⲁⲣⲁⲕⲁⲗⲉ ⲙⲟⲕ ⲁⲛⲧⲁⲁ-
        ⲩ ⲛⲉⲕ̣ ⲛⲧⲉⲟⲩϩⲉ ⲁⲕⲧⲓ ⲛⲉⲛ ϩⲟⲓⲧᵉ ⲛ . ⲛⲧⲉⲟⲩϩⲉ ⲉⲟⲩⲡⲗⲏⲣⲟⲩ
        ⲡⲟⲟⲩ ⲛϩⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲥⲟⲩ ⲃⲧⲟⲟⲩ ⲛϩⲁⲑⲱⲣ ⲡⲉ ⲡⲣⲟⲥ ⲑⲉ ⲧⲁⲛϣⲉⲣⲡⲥϩⲁⲓ
5       ⲗⲉⲡⲟⲛ ⲧⲉⲛϩ[ⲟ]ⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅ^ᵒⲩ ϫⲉ ⲙⲉⲧⲁⲛ ϩⲱϥ ⲛⲉⲙⲁⲕ ⲉ̣[ⲛ]ⲉ̣ϩ
        [ϩⲁⲣ]ⲟ̣ⲟⲩ [±5 ⲁ]ⲕⲧ̣ⲓ ⲛⲉⲛ ⲕⲟⲩ ⲛϩⲟⲓⲧ^[ᵉ] ⲛ̣[.] ⲛⲧⲉⲟⲩϩ[ⲉ] ⲉ̣[ⲟ]ⲩ-
        [ⲡⲗⲏⲣⲟⲩ ⲧⲉ]ⲛⲛⲏϣⲉⲓ ⲃⲟⲗ ⲉⲣⲟⲕ ⲉⲛⲉϩ ϩⲁⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲓⲇⲉ
        [ⲁⲛⲟⲛ ⲉⲓⲇⲉ] ⲣⲱⲙᵉ ⲉⲡⲟⲛ ⲡᵉ ϩⲁⲡⲗⲟⲥ ⲡⲉⲛϣⲁⲃⲓ ⲉⲃ-
        [ⲟⲗ ⲉⲣⲟ]ⲕ ⲉⲛⲉϩ ϩⲁⲣⲟⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲉⲧⲓ ϣⲏⲧ ⲛϩⲟⲗⲟⲕ(ⲟⲧⲧⲓⲛⲟⲥ) ⲭⲣⲩ(ⲥⲟⲩ)
```

x+1 λοιπόν x+2 παρακαλεῖν x+3 πληροῦν x+4 πρός x+5 λοιπόν, ὁμολογεῖν x+6 read ⲕⲟⲩⲓ x+7 εἴτε x+8 ἁπλῶς x+9 ϩⲟⲗⲟⲕ/ ⲭⲣ^ⲩ/

"Furthermore (λοιπόν), God willing: God has determined/provided/ordained(?) […] duly (lit.: 'in their fashion'). We have asked (παρακαλεῖν) you, (and) we have given them to you duly.

You have given us garments duly, being paid in full (πληροῦν) (on) this day today—which is the fourth day of (the month) Hathôr—according to (πρός) the manner in which we have written (in a document) before.

Furthermore (λοιπόν): we assent (ὁμολογεῖν) that we (will) have no affair with you ever [over] them. […] You have given us small garments duly, being [paid in full]. We will not be able to ever file a lawsuit against you over them—be it (εἴτε) [us, be it] (another] man in our stead (lit.: 'who is of ours'). In short (ἁπλῶς): he who will ever file a lawsuit against you over them shall give 200 gold-dinars."

**1** The formula ϩⲙ ⲡⲟⲩⲱϣ ⲛ̄ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧ︦ᵉ as the Coptic rendering of Arabic *in šā' Allāh* points to a date after the Arab conquest of Egypt—which is in accord with the paleography of the text. The function of the formula ⲁⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲧⲟϣ ⲛ[…] in this context is unclear. Maybe it is to be connected to the formula ⲉ(ⲣϣⲁⲛ)ⲡⲛⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲧⲱϣ "if God ordain" as found in at least two acknowledgements of debt from Elephantine (SB Kopt. I 25 and 29). According to the editor of the texts, Fritz Hintze, it is common in repayment clauses, though the other texts he refers to are actually private letters, cf. F. Hintze, "Berliner koptische Ostraka aus Elephantine", ZÄS 104 (1977) 100.

**2** For the translation "duly" for ⲛⲧⲉⲟⲩϩⲉ in this text, cf. Walter Ewing Crum's note to P.Lond. IV 1508,21: "perhaps not an error, but intended distributively: 'each sum (or coin) in its (proper) fashion', *i.e.* duly."

**3** What follows after ϩⲟⲓⲧⲉ here (as also in l. x+6) is not clear to me. A demonstrative ⲛⲁⲓ would seem plausible, but this does not fit the preserved traces of ink.

**5** Note the strange spelling ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅᵒᵞ for the Greek verb ὁμολογεῖν. H. Förster, Wörterbuch, 577 lists 24 orthographic variants for this loanword in Coptic documentary texts, none of which is even remotely close to the present spelling. Possible explanations would be a confusion with either the usual loaned form of Greek verbs ending in –όω (cf. l. x+3 ⲡⲗⲏⲣⲟⲩ for πληροῦν) or with the Greek 1.pl. pres.ind.act. (in this case ὁμολογοῦμεν). For the formula ⲙⲛⲧⲁ⸗…ⲙⲛ-/ⲛⲙⲙⲁ⸗…ϩⲁ-/ϩⲁⲣⲟ⸗ as distance clause in Coptic receipts, cf. T.S. Richter, Rechtssemantik und forensische Rhetorik (2nd revised edition, Philippika 20, Wiesbaden 2008) 218f. with further examples.

**8** For the reconstruction cf. CPR IV 211:6 ⲉⲓⲇⲉ ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲉⲓⲇⲉ ⲟ[ⲩ]ⲣⲱ[ⲙⲉ] and CPR IV 28:16 ⲉⲓⲧⲉ ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲉⲡⲱⲓ ⲡⲉ.

**9** Due to the proposed date of the document, a translation of ϩⲟⲗⲟⲕⲟⲧⲧⲓⲛⲟⲥ as the Arabic coin "dinar"—rather than the Byzantine "solidus"—seems more likely, cf. T.S. Richter, "Arabische Lehnworte und Formeln in koptischen Rechtsurkunden", JJP 31 (2001) 77f. The sum of 200 gold-dinars as a contractual penalty is exceptionally high. In the corpus of legal documents from Djême, for example, the highest amount to be found is 60 *solidi* (P.KRU 99; donation of 2 children), with the second highest being 36 in a number of house sales (P.KRU 4; 11; 14; 15; 47; 52) and donations of children (P.KRU 92) or livestock (P.KRU 112).