

# UNPUBLISHED COPTIC AUTHORIZING PAYMENT LETTER IN THE COPTIC MUSEUM

By

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## ABSTRACT

[AR]

خطاب تفويض بالدفع في المتحف القبطي

تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى نشر ودراسة أوستراكون قبطي غير منشور حُفظ أولاً في المتحف المصري برقم JE 54959 وحاليًا محفوظ في المتحف القبطي في مصر القديمة برقم O Coptic Museum 4555 الأوستراكون ضمن مجموعة الأوستراكا المكتشفة بواسطة عالم المصريات الأمريكي هيربيرت وينلوك في مكب نافيل لصالح بعثة حفائر متحف المتروبوليتان بالدير البحري بديسبوليس ماجنا - طيبة الغربية عام 1929. ترجع أهمية هذا الأوستراكون أنه من بقايا مكب إدوارد نافيل الذي اغفل عنه الكثيرين ولم يحظ بأى اهتمام علمي فيما قبل. الأوستراكون عبارة عن قطعة من الحجر الجيري كتبت على وجه واحد باللحجة الصعيدية في 11 سطراً بالحبر الأسود. الأوستراكون في حالة جيدة، بها الكثير من الفجوات على الجانب الأيسر والجزء العلوي من النص مقطوع، الحبر باهت في كثير من الأماكن. نص الأوستراكون عبارة عن خطاب من مالك أرض يفوض شخص آخر لزراعتها على أن يتقاسم إنتاجها بينهما مناصفةً. نص الأوستراكون يُعد بمثابة نموذج للخطابات القانونية في الفترة المعروفة بفترة القانون القبطي. تباغًا لذلك وطبقًا للمقارنات اللغوية تبين أن خطابات التفويض اخذت عدة أنماط من حيث الصيغ الإفتتاحية والختامية والمتن. تنوعت الصيغ ما بين القبطية واليونانية من قبل الكاتب الذي كان مدرّبًا على الكتابة بكلا اللغتين لكي يتمكن من صياغة العقد المُقدم الي محكمة أرمنت مركز الإجراءات القضائية آنذاك. تباغًا لذلك ووفقًا للدراسة الخطية، الصيغ النصية، المحتوي والنصوص المقارنة فإن هذا الأوستراكون يؤرخ في الفترة ما بين القرنين السابع والثامن الميلادي.

[EN] This paper aims to publish an unpublished Coptic *ostrakon* that is currently kept in the Coptic Museum in Cairo, Nr<sup>o</sup>. O. Coptic Museum 4555. The *ostrakon* was originally conserved in the Egyptian Museum, Nr<sup>o</sup>. JE54959. This *ostrakon* is part of a group of *ostraca* that was found in Naville's dump by American Egyptologist Herbert Winlock during the 1929 excavation mission of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Dair al-Bahari in Despolis Magna - Western Thebes. Because it is one of the remnants of Naville's dump, which was previously ignored by many and did not receive any scientific attention, this *ostrakon* is significant. The *ostrakon* is a limestone slab with 11 lines of black ink written on one side in Sahidic dialect. Although the *ostrakon* is in good condition, there are many gaps on the left side. Also, the upper portion of the text is missing, and the ink has faded in many places. The *ostrakon* is a letter written by a landowner granting authorization for someone else to sow, on the condition that they divide the harvest equally between them. During the so-called Coptic Law period, legal discourses were modeled after the *ostrakon* text. Linguistic comparisons reveal that the writer, who was trained to write in both languages so that he could draft the contract submitted to the Armant Court– then the center of judicial procedures at the time– used a variety of styles for the opening, closing and body formulas of the authorization letters. Based on the paleography, formula, and content, the *ostraca* can be dated to the 7th–8th centuries AD.

**KEYWORDS:** Authorizing, Dair al-Bahari, Neville's dump, O. Coptic Museum 4555, payment Letter, Winlock.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The *ostrakon* from Naville's dump is published in this paper. Before its transfer to the Coptic Museum in Cairo, the *ostrakon* was assigned the Inv. Nr<sup>o</sup>.JE 54959 while it was stored in the Egyptian Museum. Because this *ostrakon* came from Naville's dump, I decided to publish it this for the first time for two very essential reasons: First, there has been some confusion as to its provenance. Second, It has received little scholarly attention of any kind to date.

### 1- The Archaeological Discovery [FIGURES 1-2]

In the late nineteenth century, Edouard Naville worked at Dair al-Bahari for the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF) in London, the predecessor of the Egyptian Exploration Society. During his excavations, he dismantled various Coptic structures, including the monastery of Saint Phoibammon, which were located next to Queen Hatshepsut's terrace temple. Unfortunately, he did not document this work. The only items he preserved were the Coptic *ostraca* discovered during the excavation. These were collected and eventually divided according to partage, between the Egyptian Antiquities Service and the EEF. The collections ended up in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, and the British Museum in London<sup>1</sup>. Naville's dump was re-excavated by Herbert Winlock in 1926-1929<sup>2</sup>. Following the EEF 's surrender of its concession for Dair al-Bahari, excavations were overseen by Winlock at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA) in New York. During the 1927-1928 campaign, when he ordered the clearing of the waste dump from the EEF excavation, Coptic *ostraca* were discovered. Although over a thousand inscriptions were discovered, they were not nearly as intact as the fragments that Naville managed to recover. This lead Winlock to believe that Naville had also discovered them, but had thrown them aside due to their bad condition<sup>3</sup>. In 1929, Winlock coordinated with the Egyptian Antiquities Service to send all the *ostraca* collected from Naville's dump to CRUM in England. This was done so CRUM could record vocabulary for his dictionary project<sup>4</sup>. Harry Burton, the expedition's photographer, photographed the *ostraca* discovered from the dump before they left Egypt, and a series of prints was delivered to CRUM. Because he was working on his Coptic dictionary, he had asked his colleagues to forward him any texts in the language that they might come across. For his own reasons, CRUM had removed the *ostraca* from the dump, but did not duplicate them for publication<sup>5</sup>. Burton's photographs would prove invaluable to later scholars' attempts to identify these *ostraca* and to establish provenance<sup>6</sup>. In April 1930, five boxes of unknown size and containing Coptic *ostraca*

<sup>1</sup> KRAUSE 2010: 63.

<sup>2</sup> Winlock noted that the team's initial task for the season was to finish clearing away the remaining debris from Naville's work and to explore the rest of the quarry. WINLOCK 1929: 3.

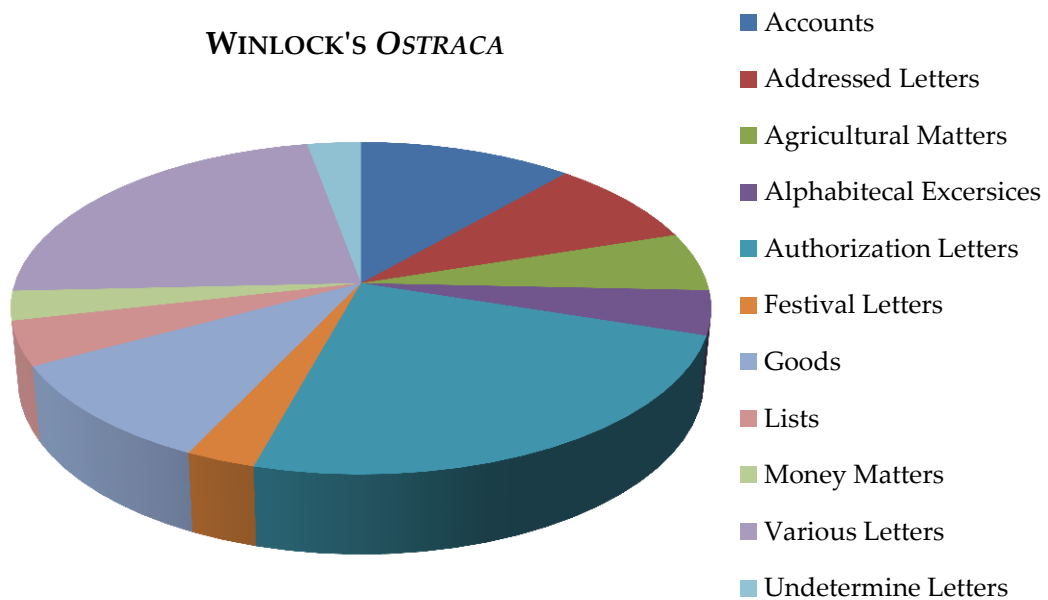
<sup>3</sup> The team's efforts were rewarded by the discovery of an important lot of Coptic *ostraca*. O'CONNELL 2006: 123; KRAUSE 2010: 64.

<sup>4</sup> According to the letter from Crum to Winlock dated March 13, 1928, MMA Egyptian Department Archive, and the letter from Crum to Winlock dated August 7, 1929, MMA Egyptian Department Archive. The abbreviation «Win» is used in the dictionary to identify *ostraca* from Winlock's excavation 1927-1928 in the Cairo Museum. CRUM 1939: 378, 384, 799; O'CONNELL 2006: 124, N<sup>o</sup>.50.

<sup>5</sup> KRAUSE 2010: 64.

<sup>6</sup> O'CONNELL 2006: 124.

arrived in New York. The Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA) has no documentation confirming that the texts contained in those five boxes are the same as those excavated at Dair al-Bahri, but the following circumstantial evidence suggests that at least three boxes contained texts from the dump. Firstly, Schiller wrote to CRUM in a letter dated October 7, 1930 to ask whether he should bother to read the contents of the three crates of ostraca that Winlock had brought back from the «rubbish mound». Secondly, in 1957 Krause Becker published fourteen figured ostraca from the MMA’s collection<sup>7</sup>. Her article gives a brief account of their excavation from Naville's dump at Dair al-Bahari and of their appearance in the Burton photographs<sup>8</sup>. In 1930, some of these ostraca went to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, and some to the MMA in New York. Seventy-seven of the *ostraca* from Naville's dump were eventually transferred from the Egyptian Museum to the Coptic Museum in Cairo, where they were assigned Nr<sup>o</sup>.4552-4629<sup>9</sup>. One may refer to the classification chart of Winlock's ostraca in Coptic Museum[CHART 1].

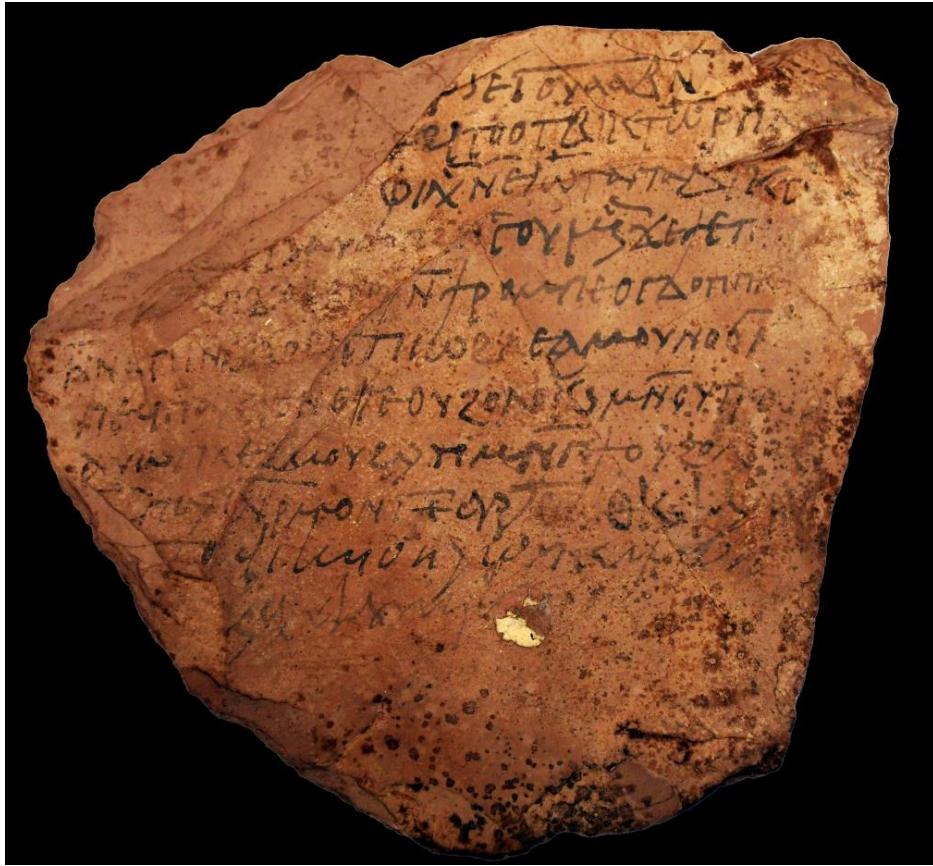


[CHART 1]: Winlock's *Ostraca* in the Coptic Museum in Cairo © Done by the researcher

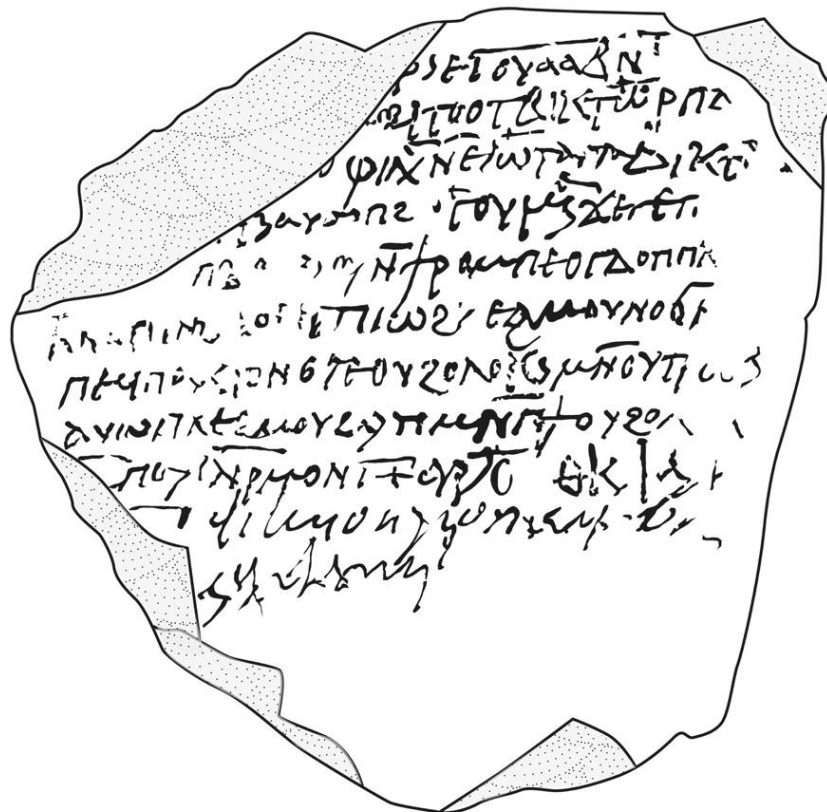
<sup>7</sup> KRAUSE-BECKER 1957: 357-358.

<sup>8</sup> KRAUSE 2010: 64.

<sup>9</sup> KRAUSE 2010: 65.



[FIGURE 1]: A. O. Coptic Museum 4555; B.  
© The Coptic Museum in Cairo



[FIGURE 2]: Facsimile of O. Coptic Museum 4555 © Done by the researcher

## 2- The Authorizing Contracts

The authorizing contracts are a type of legal document in Coptic law. Most of these contracts date between the 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Schiller refers to this period from the year 641 AD until the tenth century AD as the Coptic Law Period<sup>10</sup>. The legal documents that have been preserved for us show that the overall formulation of the Coptic legal documents was influenced by their Greek counterparts. This applies not only to the terms but also to the formulas and structures of these documents<sup>11</sup>. Naturally, all legal terms used in Coptic documents, whether written in Greek or Coptic, underwent some modifications and changes after the Copts borrowed them<sup>12</sup>. Because these contracts are classified under private law, MACCAULL argues that the clerk was present during the contract writing process. According to the texts, the employers paid the contract registrar to write them; occasionally, the employers wrote the texts themselves, and at other times, a priest would (compared with KRU 67,106). The contract's division also included the witnesses in its concluding section<sup>13</sup>].

## II. TEXT

<b>INV.Nr°. O. Coptic Museum 4555</b>	<b>Provenance: Dair al Bahri (Luxor)</b>
<b>Material: White Limestone</b>	<b>Dimensions: 13.5.3 ×14.1 cm</b>
<b>Date: 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> cent</b>	<b>Dialect: Sahidic</b>
<b>Condition: Good</b>	<b>Catalogue: PL.1, FIG.1.</b>

The text is an authorization payment letter dated between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, based on division dates. The text is written on one side. The script is skilled and slanted; the size of the letters is somewhat irregular; note the ligature ⲉⲣ, ⲣⲓ in ⲉⲣⲓ (L.6); the scribe used diacritical signs (circumflex, abbreviation, and apostrophe). The top left portion of the text is broken off.<sup>14</sup> The text can be restored completely and almost all letters are ligatured. The ⲙ has two shapes. The script of the last two lines looks different from the main script, and have could be done by another hand. The difficult construction in the last two lines (L1.10-11) makes it somewhat unclear, but I tried to reconstruct it by comparing similar texts.

The text belongs to the *epitropê* documents. According to the *epitropê formula*, the issuer/owner authorizes somebody to sow a plot of his estate. The *epitropê formula* is a legal formula for land-leasing, which is attested in the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries from the Hermonthis provenance, a major source of legal documents<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> SCHILLER 1931: 2.

<sup>11</sup> COCKLE 1984: 113ff; ZEIHUER 2000: 2.

<sup>12</sup> STENFANSKI 1952: 2.

<sup>13</sup> MACCOULL 1991: 1428.

<sup>14</sup> BROWN 2009: 216.

<sup>15</sup> RICHTER 2018: 206.

- 1 [ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΜΟΝΑΣΤΗ]Ρ(ΙΟΝ)ῃ ΕΤΟΥΓΛΑΒ Ν[ΑΠΑ ΦΟΙΒΑΜΜΩΝ]
- 2 [ΛΧΕΙ ΕΤΟΟ]Τ ΖΙΓΟΟΤ ΒΙΚΤΩΡ ΠΛ[ΑΜΠΡ(ΩΤΑΤΟΣ)]
- 3 [ΝΑΣΡΝ ΠΤΙΜΙΩΤ(ΑΤΟΣ) ΠΑ]ΦΙΛ(ΕΣΤΑΤΟΣ) ΗΕΙΩΤ ΑΠΑ  
ΒΙΚΤ[ΩΡ]
- 4 [ΠΡΕΣ]Β(ΥΤΕΡΟΣ) ΑΥΩ ΠΖΗΓΟΥΜ(ΕΝΟΣ) ΧΕ †ΕΠΙ[ΤΡΕΠΕ]
- 5 [ΝΑΚ ΖΜ] ΠΧΟ ΕΖΡΑΙ Ν†ΡΟΜΠΕ ΟΓ.Δ.Ο(ΑΣ) ΠΠΚ[ΑΡΠΟΣ]
- 6 ΠΝΑ ΠΙΝΑΠΟΧΩΡΙΖΕ ΕΠΙΩΣ ΕΤΖΙ ΨΙΝΕΜΟΥΝ ΠΑΣΙ
- 7 ΠΕΧΠΑΚΤΟΝ ΕΙΤΕ ΕΟΥΖΟΛΟΚ(ΟΤΤΙΝΟΣ) ΜΗ ΟΥΤΡΙΜ(ΗΣΙΟΝ)
- 8 ΑΥΩ ΠΛΕΖΜΟΥ ΩΠ Μ ΝΓ† ΟΥΖΟΛΟΚ(ΟΤΤΙΝΟΣ)
- 9 ΝΤΠΟΛ(ΙC), ΝΡΜΟΝΤ † ΕΥCΤ(ΛΘΙΟ)C ΚΘ ΙΝΔ.(ΙΚΤΙΝΟΣ)
- 10 ρι... ΜΜΟ... ΑΥΩ ...
- 11 ΑΥΩ ...

1 μοναστήριον||2-3λαμπρότατος||3 τιμώτατος||3 φιλέστατος||4  
 πρεσβύτερος||4 ἡγούμενος||4 ἐπιτροπή||  
 5 ὄγδοάς||5 καρπός||6 πνεῦμα||6 ἀποχομωρίζω||6 ψενομοῦς||7 πάκτον||7  
 ὀλοκόττινος||7 τριμήσιον||  
 9 πολίς ||9 Ἀύσταθιος ||9ινδικτών||10αίτέω  
 6 ΑΠΟΧΩΡΙΖΕ CORR. ΧΩΩ|| 6 ΠΑΣΙ CORR. ΣΙ|| 6 ΨΙΝΕΜΟΥΝ CORR. ΜΟΥΝ  
 || 7 ΕΙΤΕ CORR. ΕΤΕ||  
 8 ΩΠ CORR. ΩΠ|| 9 ΚΘ CORR. ΘΚ||

Inside the holy monastery of Saint Phoibammon, from my hand to the hand of *the Lamprotatos* Victor, in front of my beloved father *the Timiutatos* and the superior governor Victor, I authorize to you (5) to sow my part of the field in Psinemoun for this year until the 8<sup>th</sup> crop belonging to our division, pay me its rent 1 *Holokottinos* and 1 *Trimsion*, I accepted amount of the *Holokottinos*, in the city of Armont † *Austathius* on the 29<sup>th</sup> of...? indiction ...? (10) He asked me to sign and write it for him.

### III. COMMENTARY

(1.1) The beginning of the line is missing, but I tried to reconstruct it: ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝῃ ΕΤΟΥΓΛΑΒ ΝΑΠΑ ΦΟΙΒΑΜΜΩΝ may be a plausible recreation depending on the *ostrakon*'s district.

(1.2) ΛΧΕΙ ΕΤΟΟΤ may be a plausible reconstruction for the beginning of the line. This formula is borrowed, as indicated in the opening clauses of the tax contract

(Compare with O. CRUM ST 78-82<sup>16</sup>, O. CRUM 409-419<sup>17</sup>). There are two people called ΒΙΚΤΩΡ in the text: ΒΙΚΤΩΡ the judge (l.2), and ΒΙΚΤΩΡ the governor of the town (l.3).

**(II.2-4)** The Eponymous date, which Horwitz identified as one of the Symbolic styles employed during the timeframe of the Coptic texts<sup>18</sup> is a type of historical identification; in certain texts pertaining to contracts, it is stated that the agreement was reached prior to the ruler or the distinguished individual so –and-so. (Compare with P.KRU Nr<sup>os</sup>.35 (5-10), 38 (5-10)<sup>19</sup>.

**(I.5)** ΠΠΚ|ΑΡΠΟΣ can be proposed for the ending but it remains uncertain whether or not there was something else.

**(I.6)** ΠΠΛ: The term borrowed from the Greek πνεῦμα here refers to fellowship, company, or belonging. On its meaning see (LSJ 1424a; Preisigke 2:325)<sup>20</sup>. ΨΙΝΕΜΟΥΝ (Salāmūn): is a village in Upper Egypt, <sup>21</sup>and is part of the Djeme area<sup>22</sup>. In a Coptic document from Djeme, a contract is established for cultivating the fields in Psinemoun (O. CRUM VC 28, 5). Accordingly, there is a place called Psinemoun in the district of Koptos/ Qift or Hermonthis / Armont.

**(I.7)** ΠΑΚΤΟΝ: The term here refers to rent on leased land<sup>23</sup>. On its meaning see: MORELLI's introduction to CPR 22.33, PP.176-178<sup>24</sup>.

**(I.8)** ΠΛΕΞΜΟΥ: The term here relates to pecuniary matters (hire, wage), see: CD 150a<sup>25</sup>.

**(I.9)** ΕΥΣΤ(ΛΘΙΟ)C (Ἀύσταθιος) is a Greek personal name<sup>26</sup>, and it appears he assumed the Judge's position in Hermonthis, as is attested in some authorization contracts where he is mentioned as a deacon<sup>27</sup>. (Compare with O. Vind. Copt. 42, 16<sup>28</sup>, O. CRUM ST 37, 1<sup>29</sup>).

**(LI. 10-11)** these sentences pose two difficulties; first the scribe was in hurry, and second, the ink has faded. I tried to reconstruct texts based on the traces of letters in comparanda: ΛΧΙΑΓΓΕ ΜΜΟΙ ΛΥΩ ΛΙCΜΝΙΤC ΛΥΩ ΛΙCΞΑΙ ΞΑΡΟϢ † «He asked me to sign and write it for him».

<sup>16</sup> CRUM 1912: 77.

<sup>17</sup> CRUM 1902: 70-71

<sup>18</sup> HORWITZ 1940: 20-21.

<sup>19</sup> CRUM & STEINDORF 1912: 117, 131.

<sup>20</sup> PREISIGKE 1925-31: 325, LIDDLE 1968:1424.

<sup>21</sup> RAMZI 1953-68: 2[338]; SAUNERON 1964: 39-40; SAUNERON 1983: 66-68, PEUST 2010: 79.

<sup>22</sup> PREISIGKE 1925-31: 3/340; TIMM 1984-92: 2043; CALDERINI 2007: 5[165].

<sup>23</sup> PREISIGKE 1925-31: 223, LIDDLE 1968: 1289.

<sup>24</sup> MORELLI 2001: 176-178.

<sup>25</sup> CRUM 1939: 150a.

<sup>26</sup> BRÜNSCH 1984: 125; HASITZKA 2007: 79

<sup>27</sup> CRUM 1921: 13; TILL 1960: 13.

<sup>28</sup> TILL 1960: 13.

<sup>29</sup> CRUM 1921: 12.

The lines represent the closing formula of the contract. (Compare with O. Vind. Copt.42<sup>30</sup>, 18-19; ST, 37, 18-19)<sup>31</sup>.

#### IV. GENERAL DISCUSSION

The text is a model used for Coptic authorization payment letters, reflecting general formulation and terminology from the 6th to the 8th centuries. The text shows three points of interest. The first one is that the contract is written in letter form (*Cheirographon*). Second, the text is a type of labor document (*Paramoni*). Third, the text provides a new attestation of *epitropê* documents from the monastery of Saint Phoibammon. A legal document or contract written in the form of a letter is referred to as a *Cheirographon* (*Χειρογραφον*) in Greek<sup>32</sup>. This kind of contract developed from the personal letter. Such a contract opens with the customary salutation used at the start of letters<sup>33</sup>. First person pronouns are used to refer to the sender's name, and second person pronouns are used to refer to the addressee's name. The form may end with standard greetings<sup>34</sup>. It is irrelevant that the first party wrote and signed this kind of document without the assistance of a notary public or witness testimony. If the sender was illiterate, someone else would write the letter on his behalf, whose name would be included near the conclusion, frequently as a closing formula and date. Otherwise, one might remember the date but forget the name<sup>35</sup>.

The text is included in the *Paramoni* labor documents<sup>36</sup>. Steinwentre describes the system of work that the Copts have with one another. The employer concluded these contracts by having the employee explain the services he will be providing and the hire he will receive. These contracts contain basic provisions, the most significant of which is the length of the contract. Putting the contract into formal effect ensures that the employee keeps his end of the bargain, and the employer makes clear what is expected of him<sup>37</sup>.

The dating of the *ostrakon* primarily relies on its classification as an authorizing legal letter from the monastery of Saint Phoibammon. Second, the paleography is identical with other 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries letters, depending on the comparison texts. Third, the formulas: the eponymous date, the *epitropê* formula, the abbreviated currencies. In this regard, certain communities had a close relationship between with their superior, who served as the primary representative of the monastery when it came to legal deeds<sup>38</sup>. The most notable example is Saint Phoibammon monastery in Western Thebes, where the majority of legal documents were made under the monastery's name (as it appears from the context) and were carried out by its head as in the *ἐπιτροπέ* (*epitropê*)

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<sup>30</sup> TILL 1960: 13.

<sup>31</sup> CRUM 1921: 13.

<sup>32</sup> SEIDL 1962: 61.

<sup>33</sup> JÖRDENS 2014: 422.

<sup>34</sup> RICHTER 2010: 123.

<sup>35</sup> YIFATCH-FIRANKO 2013: 23.

<sup>36</sup> *Παραμονή*: is a Greek term that refers to literal contracts, which are employment contracts that include an individual contract in the field of handcrafts. WESTERMAN 1948: 9; ABD AL-BAQĪ 1985: 4.

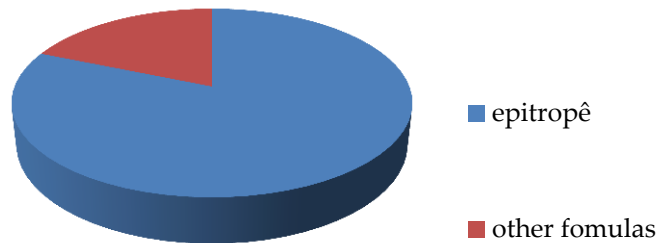
<sup>37</sup> STEINWENTRE 1955: 39-42.

<sup>38</sup> WOJTCZAK 2021: 141.



documents (that grant the Permission to farm)<sup>39</sup>. The Greek verb ἐπιτροπή (ChLGC 61, LSJ 667b, Preisigke 1:582)<sup>40</sup> is an intransitive verb that means «to commission». Based on the Coptic texts that has been published so far, it serves as the fundamental verb in the majority of authorization texts<sup>41</sup>. See the authorizing letter formulas in Coptic texts[CHART 2].

**Authorizing letter Formulas**



[CHART 2]: The authorizing letter formulas in Coptic texts © Done by the researcher

The fundamental formula for authorizing is the *epitropê* formula; it accounted for 88% of all mandatory Coptic published texts until now [in accordance with chart 2]. The remaining 12% consists of other formulas represented in the texts published so far. Some of these formulas presented in the following table:

<b>O. Madin. Habu. Copt N<sup>o</sup>.81, 5<sup>42</sup></b>	<p>ⲛⲏⲧⲏ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉⲁ ⲙⲡⲟⲟⲩⲉ ⲉⲧ</p> <p>To you for the joint working of the earth.</p>
<b>O. CRUM N<sup>o</sup>.303<sup>43</sup></b>	<p>Ⲭⲉ ⲉⲣⲗⲁⲓ ⲉⲙⲡⲏⲟⲩⲉ</p> <p>As regards the field sowing.</p>

[TABLE 1]: Other Coptic authorization formulas ©Done by the researcher

The conclusion of the ⲉⲡⲏⲧⲣⲉⲡⲉ documents can take many different forms. If the person is literate, he writes and signs the document, while occasionally mentioning the date. If he is illiterate, another person acts on his behalf in the same way as above. The ⲉⲡⲏⲧⲣⲉⲡⲉ documents, which date to the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries, contain multiple sections referencing Coptic texts published in Thebes to date. Regarding this, the text is divided into the following parts:

<sup>39</sup> On the organization structure ⲉⲡⲏⲧⲣⲉⲡⲉ serves as major formula of authorizing in the labor documents.

WEGNER 2017: 242; GAREL 2020: 54-60, 78-80, 87-88.

<sup>40</sup> PREISIGKE 1925-1931: 1[582], LIDDLE 1968: 667b; CHERIX 2022: 61; SPERANSKY 2022: 184.

<sup>41</sup> Depending on the texts: LEIPOLDT 1904: N<sup>o</sup>.79 [BKU.I, 79] = HASITZKA 1993: N<sup>o</sup>.79 [SB Kopt I, 79]. STENFANSKI 1952: 16-17 [O. Medin. Habu. Copt.81].

CRUM 1902: 28-29, 39, 54-55, 92 [O. CRUM N<sup>os</sup>.138-140, 206, 303, 307, Ad.26]; TILL 1960: 13 [O. Vind. Copt. 42]; CRUM 1921: 12-13 [O. CRUM ST N<sup>os</sup>. 37-39]; FAIRMAN 1934: 78-79 [O.Buch.3].

<sup>42</sup> STENFANSKI 1952: 16, N<sup>o</sup>.81.

<sup>43</sup> CRUM 1902: 31, 54.

1. The usual greeting formula and the eponymous date were part of the opening formula (L1.1-4).
2. The authorizing *epitropê* was stated in the authorizing formula (L1.4-5).
3. The year until the 8<sup>th</sup> crop is the authorizing duration (1.5).
4. The authorizing conditions (1.6) pay the field's rent and share in its produce.
5. 1 *Holokottinos* and 1 *Trimision* is the authorizing value (L1.7-8).
6. An alternate person signature format was supplied in the closing formula (L1.9-11).

## V. CONCLUSION

The authorization contracts from Winlock's *ostraca* finds contained the most content. The owner of letter, based on the document's closing formula, is illiterate. Certain specifics, such as land measurements and the indicated year for authorization, are missing from the text. The fundamental formula for authorizing is the *epitropê* formula; it accounted for 88% of all mandatory Coptic published texts until now.

In compliance with the regulation stipulating that the authorizing contract clerks has knowledge of both Greek and Coptic<sup>44</sup>. The scribe of this text employed a variety of formulas, which aligns with Stenfanski's observation that all legal terminology found in Greek or Coptic contract agreements experienced alterations and revisions as the Copts adopted them<sup>45</sup>. According to the paleography, formulas, content, and the comparative texts; the *ostrakon* dates between the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

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<sup>44</sup> MASIHA 1968: 495.

<sup>45</sup> STENFANSKI 1952: 2.

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