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Greek and Latin Documents from 'Abu Sha'ar, 1990–1991

ROGER S. BAGNALL and JENNIFER A. SHERIDAN

The excavations at 'Abu Sha'ar reported on by Steven Sidebotham in the preceding article yielded a wide variety of textual material in Greek and Latin, on stone, papyrus, ostrakon, whole jar, and sea shell. In this article we report on only the most important of the documents found in these two seasons of excavation. The more fragmentary items will be published in the final report on the documents from the full course of the excavation. The present report has been prepared largely from photographs and drawings made in the field. In particular, we have not had the opportunity to examine the original documents found in 1990, but Sheridan has seen the original of the Greek papyrus found in 1991.¹

1. Latin Inscriptions

A considerable number of fragments of one or more Latin inscriptions was found inside and just outside the west gatehouse. Since one piece was found just inside the limits of the excavated area, it is entirely possible that more pieces remain in the ground. Rather than attempt any overall reconstruction, therefore, we shall describe the fragments and the circumstances of their finding, making such connections as the excavators found in the field and indicating the major open questions. Even so, many points of interest emerge from these frag-

mentary texts. The inscriptions were cut in local white gypsum with their letters painted red. They are collectively inventoried as AS-90-8-3.

The first group of fragments was found in an area labelled 011, in the NE quadrant of the area inside the gatehouse. A first group was found together on 6–9 June 1990 (labelled below 011-1), a further piece on 9 June (011-2), and two more on 16 June (011-3). The altitude of 011-2 was 7.01 m.a.s.l. (meters above sea level), that of 011-3 6.85 and 6.96 m. Three of the four pieces in 011-1 (A,C,D) and 011-2-A can be assembled to create the elements of the upper left corner of a single inscription with imperial titulature (figs. 1–2):

*Im[p. Ca]esar G[alerius Valerius Maximianus P.F.
invictus Aug. et Imp. Caesar]
[Val. Lic]inianus Lic[inius P.F. inv. Aug. et Imp.
Caesar Gal. Val. Maximinus P.F. Aug. et]
Fl. Val. Constantinus flil. Augg.
indefe[. . .] . . . [*

It should be stressed that a different placement of fr. 011-1-C and 011-1-D, further to the right, would be possible, although it would not affect the restoration. There are otherwise many uncertainties about what was abbreviated and what not, and whether the usage for the different emperors was consistent. This restoration gives 59 letters in line 1, and 62 in line 2. These emperors are restored on the basis of the presence of Licinius I and Constantine I, preceded by at least one additional emperor with a name beginning in G, thus presumably Galerius. The time when these three ruled together was between 11.x.308 (Licinius' accession) and Galerius' death in late April/early May 311 (so Barnes 1982: 6), with Maximinus as the fourth emperor. One may allow therefore a date between early 309 and summer 311, allowing time for news to travel. A good parallel to the titulature restored

¹ The excavation and Sheridan's travel were funded by the University of Delaware and Dumbarton Oaks; further funding was provided by the faculty development fund of St. Joseph's University and the Dunning Fund of the Department of History, Columbia University. Sheridan's work in 'Abu Sha'ar, Hurghada, and Denderah benefited from the assistance of Sami Ahmed Fahmy and Nagah Hussein, inspectors at 'Abu Sha'ar, and the staff of the Qena inspectorate. We are indebted to Klaas Worp for several helpful suggestions and comments.

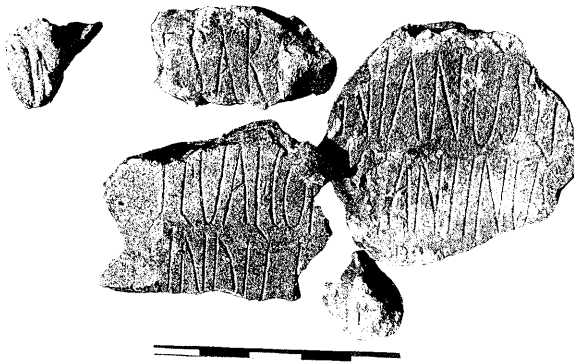


Fig. 1. Latin inscription, 011-1 and 011-2-A, photograph.

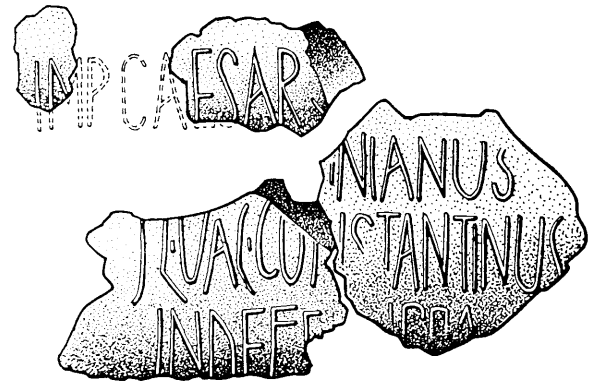


Fig. 2. Latin inscription, 011-1 and 011-2-A, drawing.

here may be found in *AE* 1986, 656. In line 4, the three letters after the lacuna are the rounded tops of letters; the most likely reading seems to us *PRO*, but it is not certain. We have considered dividing *inde fel*, supposing that some form like *fecerunt* was abbreviated during the lacuna, perhaps then followed by *et*; the traces after the lacuna are not compatible with *unt*. But it is also possible that a different word division altogether should be read.

This group of fragments displays internal consistency in letter sizes, which are 13–14 cm. in height, with interlinear space of about 1.8–2.3 cm. The other fragment from the first group, 011-1-B, is unreadable on the photograph. The drawing seems to suggest the letters *UE* in small letters, 2.3–2.8 cm. in height, but we are not confident that these traces are complete letters or significant. We have therefore left them out of account.

The other two pieces in the first group join each other to form the following text (figs. 3–4):

traces
Janis limitibus apta in lito
curante Aurel. Max[imino v.p. duce Aegypti Thebai-
dos utrarumque Libyarum (abbreviated?)

They are carved in somewhat smaller letters, on average 2–3 cm. smaller than their counterparts on the previous cluster, and with a 2 cm. interlinear space. It is nonetheless reasonable to assume that they are part of the same inscription, since there would be nothing surprising in having slightly larger letters for the imperial titulature at the top of the inscription

than for the body lower down. It appears that the bottom of the inscription is preserved here.

The official whose name appears with *curante* is always a senior figure, not the local commander. In this case, Aur. Max[is readily restorable as Aurelius Maximinus (v.p.), who is known as *dux Aegypti Thebaidos utrarumque Libyarum* from the four inscriptions on the second tetrastylon at the camp of Luxor, published in *ASAE* 34 (1934) 22–23 and included in the recent *Le camp romain de Louqsor* (M. El-Saghir et al. 1986: 121); one of these dedications is made to each of the four emperors enumerated above. *PLRE* I s.v. Maximinus (10) gives 308–310 as a date, but Barnes (1982: 211) dates it to early 309, presumably on the assumption that such a dedication comes most naturally early in the new joint reign. The authors of *Le camp romain* assign it to the end of 308 or start of 309; the former seems to us too early to allow the news to have reached.

Only a few other notes are needed here. *Janis* is probably the termination of a toponymic adjective modifying *limitibus*; on that term, see Isaac 1988, who has shown that in the early empire *limes* had two primary meanings, “road” and “boundary.” In the fourth century, the latter meaning had evolved to mean “border district” or “border area,” and was equated to the Greek *eschatia*. There are some instances when it comes to mean something like the desert. (Isaac does not note the fact that *eschatia* can refer to any remote desert spot chosen for a monastic hermitage, cf. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*.) There is no evidence for the commonly assumed mean-



Fig. 3. Latin inscription, 011-3-A/B, photograph.

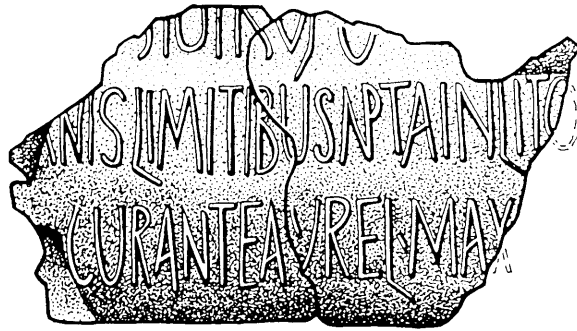


Fig. 4. Latin inscription, 011-3-A/B, drawing.

ing of a fortified line, or for constructing a *limes*. The traditional definition had led Mariano Malvolta, in the article on *limes* in the *Dizionario epigrafico* (IV 1376/5–16) to limit consideration of a *limes* in Egypt to the eastern and southern boundaries, dismissing the eastern desert as follows (1376/7): “ma nulla fa pensare che essa sia servita da struttura di base per la costituzione di una vero e proprio l(imes), e anzi la mancanza di notizie per le epoche successive induce a ritenere che non sia stata più usata regolarmente dopo la fine del II sec., e tanto meno in età tarda, allorché l’unico porto attivo sembra essere quello di Clysma nel Golfo di Suez.” In fact, of course, the 1st–2nd century eastern desert was exactly the kind of thing *limes* could describe properly in the later terminology, and this inscription now demonstrates that the Romans themselves considered *limites* an appropriate term for the region in the fourth century. What the adjective can be, we have not been able to discover, cf. *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* s.v. *limes* 1415.32ff. for the use of such adjectives.

What follows, *apta*, probably modifies some noun describing the installation, perhaps *castra* (cf. Caesar, *Bell. civ.* 2.37.5, cited by *Oxford Latin Dictionary* s.v. *aptus* 8b). One may presumably restore *in lito[re]*, which is well suited to the location of 'Abu Sha'ar.

These fragments, if they are in fact all part of one text, are readily recognizable as belonging to a class of imperial inscriptions on public works. These are most commonly cast with the emperor(s) in the nominative, the object of

the work in the accusative, various justificatory phrases, a verb in the perfect, and an ablative absolute phrase listing the official responsible for carrying out this work in the emperors' name. Examples with varying degrees of conformity to this pattern are *ILS* 395, 617, 702, 724, 752, 770, and 771.

The second cluster was found in area 018, also inside the gatehouse but at and just south of the center point of the square, thus SW of area 011. It consists of three groups, found on 20 June (018-1, 6.59 and 6.61 m.) and 23 June (018-2 [6.47 and 6.51 m.] and 018-3 [6.33, 6.40, and 6.45 m.]), each group consisting of more than one fragment. Most of these fragments are small and their surfaces poorly preserved. Such letters as are fully preserved exhibit a considerable range of heights, from 10.8 to 14.7 cm., or more or less the full spectrum of height exhibited within area 011. It is therefore not excluded that they could be part of the same inscription, with some letters belonging at the top (imperial titlature), others at the bottom.

018-1-A: Two lines, broken on all sides; surface badly effaced. We can make out with confidence only *.UM.LI.* in line 1; the third letter is apparently either U or O.

018-1-B: One line, reading *]MIANU]*, and four traces of the tops of several letters of a second line. The letters are 12.5–13 cm. high, which is a bit small for this to be part of the imperial titlature with 011-1-A, though *Maxi]mianu]* is a natural restoration.

018-2-A and 0-18-2-B: Joining fragments. Most of the surface of A is lost. The full height of one line is preserved, with *UM* preceded by traces of two or three letters. Above, descenders from an *S* and two other letters; below, the tops of perhaps two or three letters. The surviving letters are about 14 cm. high, but we cannot see any way that these can be part of the imperial titulature.

018-2-C: No photograph. From the drawing, *U* followed by part of a letter.

018-2-D: A portion of the right-hand edge of the inscription. Of an upper line only a part of a letter is preserved. Of line 2, *JNUS ET* in 14.7 cm. tall letters. Of line 3, only upper traces of 3–4 letters. It is *possible* that this fragment joins 027-2-A, but no connection was made in the field and we cannot verify the suggestion. Moreover, the letter heights are apparently 2–3 cm. lower in 027-2-A, which speaks against the idea.

018-3-A: A badly pitted piece with parts of two or three lines.

018-3-B and 018-3-C: The field notes indicate that these join together, but we cannot verify this from the drawings, and there is no photograph of 018-3-B. 018-3-C reads clearly *JTUENDI* in letters 11–12 cm. high. Above this are remains of another four or five letters. A restoration of *resti|tuendi* suggests itself as a part of the clauses detailing the work carried out under the orders of the official in charge. (On the vocabulary of repair and reconstruction in Latin inscriptions, see Chastagnol 1988: 57–60.) On 018-3-B, the drawing suggests *J.UNA.*

018-3-D through 0-18-3-G: Small fragments of which no photographs are available, only drawings. Fragment 018-3-G seems to read *MO*.

Cluster 027 comes from an area somewhat to the W and lower than 018. 027-1 (2 July, 6.18 and 6.20 m.) included two fragments found just inside the gate and right in the doorway. 027-2 (2 and 9 July, 6.11 and 6.15 m.) included two fragments found just outside the doorway. 027-3 (9 July, 6.04 m.) is a single fragment found more or less directly under 027-2-A just outside the doorway.

027-1-A: A group of pieces, apparently (there is no photograph), with disjointed traces of letters.

027-1-B: Only a small drawing is available (no scale drawing or photograph). One line

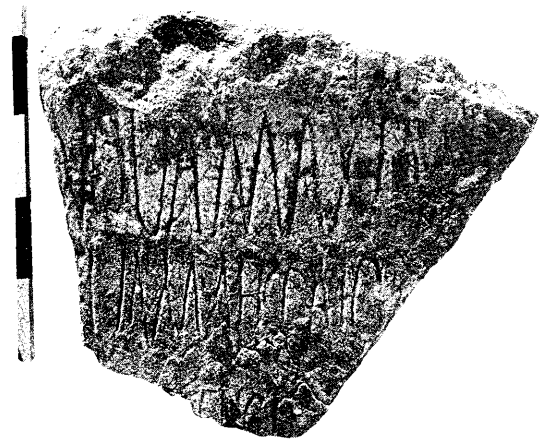


Fig. 5. Latin inscription, 027-2-B.

and part of a second. Line 1 appears to read *J..ICIU.*

027-2-A: Two lines preserved to more-or-less full height, as follows:

JUS. . IMIU.

J. . MAXIMIN.

We have not been able to find any way of fitting this with other preserved parts or probable restorations. As noted above, 018-2-D might join this at the right, but the low letter heights in 27-2-A (mostly ca 11 cm.) speak against that and suggest that this does not come from the imperial titulature in 011-1.

027-2-B: It appears that part of the original upper margin of an inscription is preserved above the first line of this piece, on which two lines and the top of a third remain. The text is as follows (fig. 5):

Jnova Maximi

Jum mercator

J. . . .

Letter heights range from about 12 to 14+ cm. Their unevenness and range would accord ill with the heights in the imperial titulature. Since it is extremely likely that the imperial titles, in the nominative, constitute the beginning of an inscription, it seems highly probable that this fragment, which comes also from the first line of an inscription, comes from a different text than that of 011.

Nova Maximi[ana] gives the appearance of being the name of a military unit. No such unit is attested elsewhere, but the evidence of the *Notitia*

Dignitatum is sufficient to suggest that it once existed. It records such *nova* units with adjectives of this sort only for *alae*. Of those it records a *Nova Diocletiana* (in Phoenicia, *Or.* 32.34), a *I Nova Diocletiana* (Osrhoene, *Or.* 35.31), and a *Nova Herculia* (Syria, *Or.* 33.30). (There is also an *Ala II Nova Aegyptiorum* in *Or.* 36.32, Mesopotamia. *Nova* with cohorts occurs only in the Balkans and the West, and always with geographical or ethnic terms.) As is well known, Diocletian identified himself with Jove and Maximian with Hercules, and it seems likely enough that symmetry's demand for a *Nova Maximiana* and a *Nova Iovia* were at one time met. Our unit seems thus to fit precisely into this definable gap as an *Ala Nova Maximiana*, perhaps with a numeral as well.

Line 2 might be restored as *ad usum mercatorum*, but other locutions serving a similar purpose are also possible.

027-3-A: Only a drawing available, showing one fragmentary line with a half-dozen broken letters.

It is difficult to determine how many inscriptions existed and which fragments belonged to each. Horizontal location of the finds does not seem a certain guide, as the areas of 018 and 027 overlap, each covering a continuum in a given direction. Even 011 is very close to 018. The vertical locations also cover a range of about .75 m. and do not form two discrete units, or even three. All the same, the wide spread of fragments through the square (and perhaps outside it; only future excavations can tell) may point to more than one text. Equally indecisive are letter-heights. They are useful for some comparisons, but we have no basis for assuming that they were constant throughout a given inscription.

What is decisive is that 027-2-B is clearly part of the first line of an inscription, and it is very likely that 011's upper inscription is also the beginning of one; and the two cannot belong to the same text. It appears, therefore, that there were at least two inscriptions, one a dedication in the name of the four emperors of 309–311, to which probably belongs the other part of 011 with the name of the responsible official; and a dedication in which the military unit involved, with slightly smaller letters, recorded its role.

The information which emerges from the totality of the fragments is as follows: The fort was

built or rebuilt around 309–310 by Aurelius Maximinus, the *dux* responsible for part of the construction in the camp at Luxor as well, and dedicated by him in the name of the four emperors Galerius, Licinius, Maximinus, and Constantine. The unit of which part was stationed at 'Abu Sha'ar, and which may well have carried the construction, was probably the *Ala Nova Maximiana*, a cavalry unit created within the recent past. The area it was to protect is in a border zone of desert, and a major purpose is the protection of merchants. The inscription thus confirms the assessment of the fort's purpose in Sidebotham 1986: 51: "[I]t is doubtful that the military would place a fort and station a garrison in such a distant location in the Tetrarchic period unless it was intended to protect continued commercial activities."

The authors of *Le camp romain de Louqsor* argued that the second tetrastylon was not evidence of finishing the camp after eight years or so of construction, but of some other suitable occasion. Now that we see Aurelius Maximinus specified as the person in charge also of the construction of 'Abu Sha'ar, one begins to ask if it and whatever the tetrastylon commemorated in Thebes were part of a comprehensive effort around 309 for strengthening the defenses of Upper Egypt. It is even tempting to wonder if Maximinus Daia visited Egypt at some time in this period; nothing is known of his whereabouts in 309, according to Barnes' list (Barnes 1982: 66).

2. Greek Inscription

The one Greek inscription from these seasons (field number AS90D-SEX [007] PB#8), found in the apsed building, is complete but shallowly inscribed on a surface of friable stone. The very rough hand can only approximately be dated fourth–sixth century. A preliminary transcription is as follows (fig. 6):

† κ(ύρι)ε Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστ)ῆ
 σῶσον κ(αὶ)
 ἑλθῆσο-
 ν τῶν δοῦ-
 λόν σου Σα-
 [λ]αμανις
 [...] ου †



Fig. 6. Greek inscription.

3 read ἐλέησο | v 4 read τὸν

Translation: "Lord Jesus Christ, save and have mercy on your servant Salamanis."

In line 1 one could also read Ἰε(σοῦ) from the photograph. The type of inscription is in general well known, although imperatives of βοηθέω are commoner than those of other verbs. For parallels with one of the verbs used here, cf. *SEG* 30.1701 (Sinai, 5c: ἐλέϊσον τὸν δοῦλόν σου); 31.1389 (Hawwa, Syria, 545?: κύριη σῶσον τὸν δοῦλόν σου Πέτρον). The verbs are joined, e.g., on a stone vessel from Novidunum in Moesia (*SEG* 31.390, 4th–6th cent.): Χρ(ιστέ), σ(ῶσον), ἐ(λέησον). The point intended is made explicit in (e.g.) *SEG* 31.1413 (Mampsis, no date): κ(ύρι)ε, σῶσον τὸν δοῦλόν σου Νῖλον τὸν κτίσαντα τὰ ὄδε κ(α)ὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ: The donor is commemorated.

The name Salamanos (or -es) or Selamanos occurs in *SEG* 31.1443 (Sobata, Provincia Arabia,

679) and 1428 (646, with citation of the name from *P.Ness.* 45.13, Σαλαμωνος, rendered Salaman); 34.1510 (area of Mt. Nebo, 6c); 35.1334 (Beersheba, 6c). The index of Arabic names to *P.Ness.* (p. 354), which cites further examples, describes it as "a particularly Syrian name, in all spellings," citing Σαλαμανης, of which we take the version here to be an itacistic variant. The prevalence of examples from Syria and Palestine given above for the formula joins with the name in suggesting that the dedicant came from that region, perhaps by sea via a Sinai port.

3. Greek Papyrus

One almost completely preserved papyrus letter (figs. 7–8) was found in the principia/church during the 1991 season (AS91-15-3). Its hand probably belongs to the fifth century, a date which would suit the phraseology well. The papyrus needs conservation work, particularly cleaning, which was not able to be given under field conditions; it is particularly encrusted with dirt in many places. Under these circumstances we must emphasize the provisional nature of the text given below.

Apollonios writes to Abba John and his daughter Sarah; that "daughter" is to be taken literally is made clear by the explication "daughter of the aforesaid John and your wife Slamo." Most of the letter is occupied with the usual greetings and inquiries after health, but in the midst of these is the remarkable statement that "The Lord testifies for me that I was deeply grieved about the capture of your city, and again we heard that the Lord God had saved you and all your dependents." It does not seem possible to establish what that city was. The Semitic name of John's wife may point to a location in Sinai, Arabia, or further north. In that case, however, it is not obvious how the letter came to be in Egypt; it could have been brought by the recipient on a trip, or never sent. Or, perhaps more interestingly, John and family could have been in 'Abu Sha'ar at the time their city was captured and escaped harm in this fashion.

The vocabulary and phraseology of the letter are typical of the Christian letters in the papyri, particularly those of the fifth and sixth centuries; our notes give a few very cursory explanations and parallels.

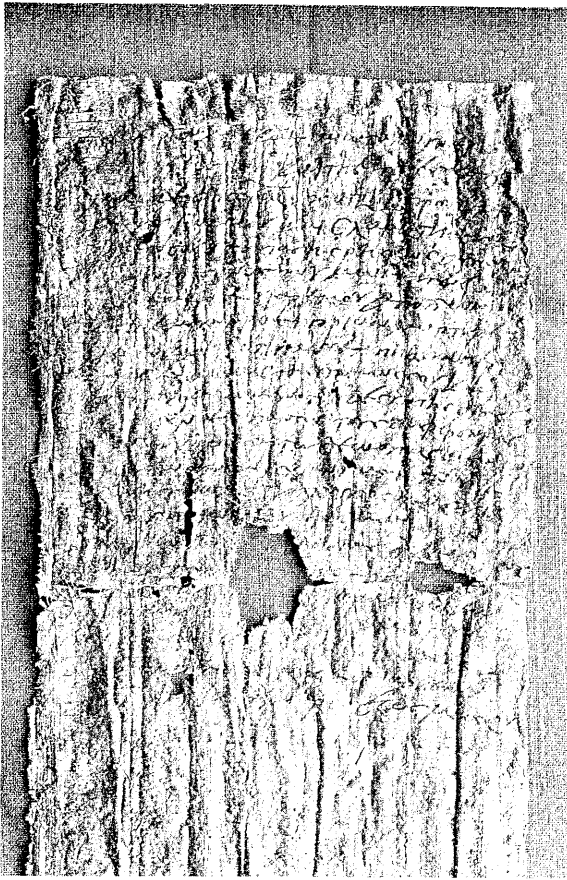


Fig. 7. Greek papyrus, upper part

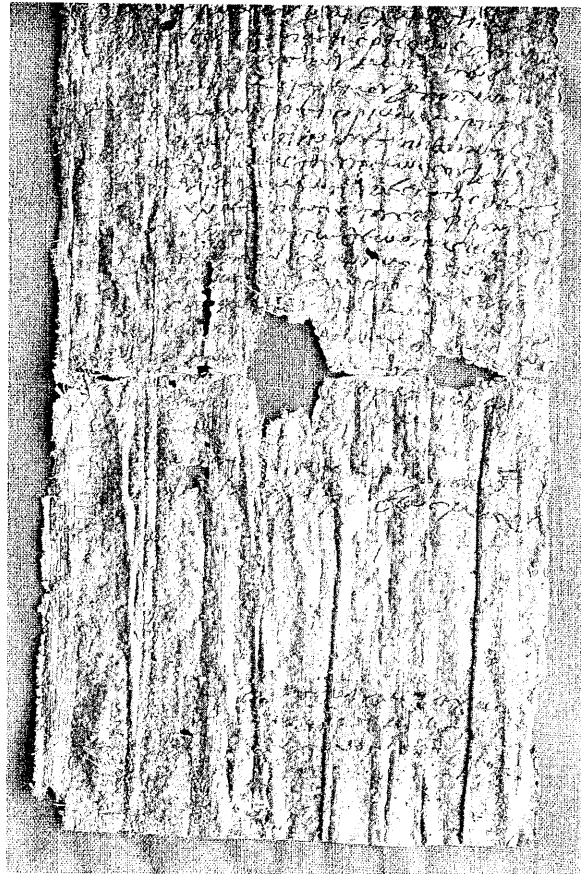


Fig. 8. Greek papyrus, lower part

τῷ κυρίῳ μου καὶ τιμιωτάτῳ πατρὶ
 ἄββα Ἰωάννη καὶ τῇ εὐγενεστάτῃ
 μου ἀδελφῇ Σαρρα θυγατρὶ τοῦ προγεγραμ-
 4 μένου Ἰωάννου καὶ Σλαμῶ τῆς συμ-
 βίως σου. πρὸ πάσης ῥήσεως ἀσπάζω
 καὶ προσκυνῶ τὴν ὑμῶν εὐγένειαν
 ἵνα λάβητε παρ' ἐμοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου
 8 τὴν ἐμὴν προσηγορίαν. μαρτυρεῖ
 μοι ὁ κύριος ὅτι πάνυ ἐλυπήθην περὶ
 τῆς ἀλώσεως τῆς πόλεώς σου καὶ
 πάλιν ἠκούσαμεν ὅτι ὁ δεσπότης θεὸς
 12 ἔσωσέν σε καὶ πάντας τοὺς διαφέροντάς
 σου. εὐχομαι παρ(ὰ) τῷ θεῷ ὅπως καταξιω-
 θῶ τὴν σὴν συντυχίαν πάλιν ἵνα περι-
 χαρῆ ποιῶ ὅτι πολλὰ προσαγορεύει
 16 ὑμᾶς ἢ γύνῃ σου. θαυμάζω τὴν σὴν
 πατρικὴν διά[θεσιν] ὅτι πῶς οὐκ ηρ[.]ω
 θην τὴν . . . [. . .] . ροση . . [. . .] . μετὰ
 . ο.ς. . χρᾶ[. . .] . παρακαλῶ καὶ

20 προσκυνῶ . . [γρ]άψον μοὶ τι περὶ τῆς
 ὑγιείας σου καὶ τῆς οἰκίας σου. ἀσ-
 πάζω πάντας τοὺς ἐν τῷ ἀφθόνῳ
 σου οἴκῳ ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου.
 VACAT

24 † ἐρρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχομαι
 ὑγιέγοντας ἐπὶ μήκιστον
 βίον χρόνον. ὁ κ(ύριος) δια-
 φυλάξῃ ὑμᾶς.

Address (back):

ἐπιδ(ος) τῷ προσφιλεστάτῳ καὶ πατρὶ
 Ἰωάννη π(αρά) Ἀπολλωνίου.
vacat σωκωτο.

4–5 τῇ συμβίῳ 14 ἵνα pap. 25 ὑγαίνοντας
 26 βίου; κ̅ pap.

To my lord and most honored father Abba
 John and my most noble sister Sarah, daughter

of the aforementioned John and Slamo your wife. Before all speech I greet you and kiss your Nobility, that you may receive my greeting from me, Apollonios. The Lord testifies for me that I was deeply grieved about the capture of your city, and again we heard that the Lord God had saved you and all your dependents. I pray before God that I may be deemed worthy to make your conversation exceeding glad again because your wife greets you many times. I am amazed at your fatherly kindness how . . . I ask and kiss . . . Write me something about about your health and concerning your house. I greet all those in your hospitable household, from small to large. I pray that you may be well for the longest span of life. May the Lord protect you.

(Address) Deliver to the dearest and . . . father John from Apollonios.

4 Neither Σλαμω nor Σαλαμω has occurred previously in the papyri, but related masculine forms like Σαλαμων have. Cf. the notes on the Greek inscription above on these names.

5 Cf. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch* I 226 for the active use of ἀσπάζω, much less common than the middle. Good first-person examples are *P.Iand.* VI 117.10, *P.Laur.* I 20.5,8, *P.Oxy.* XXXIII 2682.18,21, etc.

17 For πατρική διάθεσις see *P.Cair.Masp.* I 67064.12 and *P.Berl.Zill.* 13.1 (πατρική restored), both sixth century. διάθεσις, “disposition,” still largely neutral in fourth-century texts, gradually acquires the meaning of “kindliness” in such honorific usage. For “recitative” ὅτι πῶς see *P.Nag.Hamm.* 69.18 and (with references) *P.Hamb.* III 229.9.

22–23 On the phrase τῷ ἀφθόνῳ σου οἶκῳ see Preisigke, *Wörterbuch* I 246.

23 ἀπό μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου (sometimes μεγάλων), though found in Egyptian papyri only from the fourth century and later [see Preisigke, *Wörterbuch* II 105 s.v. μικρός, 2], is partly restored in *P.Dura* 32.9, from A.D. 254 (on Youtie’s suggestion), but in quite a different context. Here it means (as normally in greetings) “from young to old.”

25–26 For the idiom ἐπὶ μήκιστον χρόνον there are a number of examples, all from the fourth century or later, none inserting βίου before χρόνον. For ὁ κύριος διαφυλάξῃ ὑμᾶς cf.

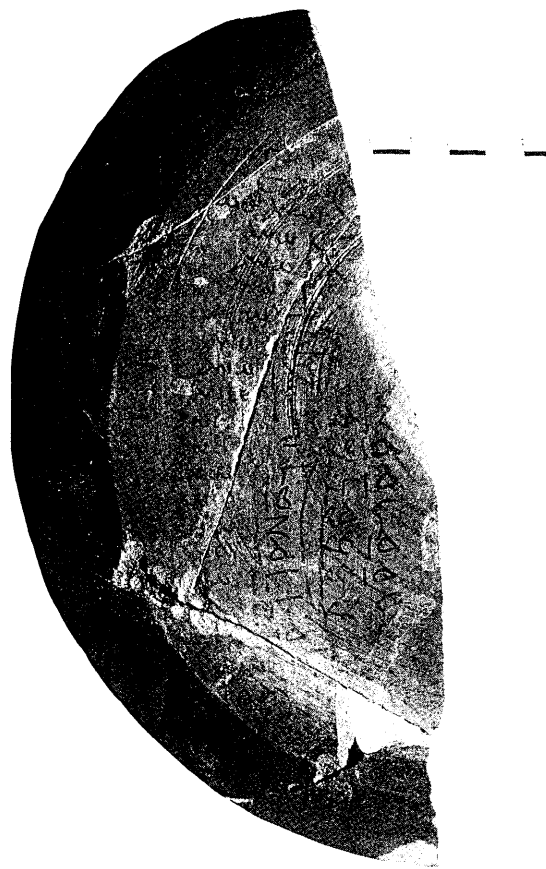


Fig. 9. Greek ostrakon.

P.Abin. 6.26, *PSI* XIII 1345.17, *SB* VI 9397.7, and VIII 9746.34.

Back The middle of the first line here is very unclear; one expects another adjective or a possessive (e.g., ἡμῶν), but the traces are too faint for us to read it. What the second line concerns, we cannot say.

4. Greek Ostrakon

Only one ostrakon from the group found in these two seasons can be given in full here from the photograph (AS90D-SEX 016 PB18). It is written on the bottom of half of a plate. The undistinctive Roman hand appears to us to be no later than early fourth century (fig. 9).

<i>Column i</i>	<i>Column ii</i>
ἐπαγομέ(νων)	
ε ἄνω	ια
Θῶθ ἄ ἄνω	ια

4	β ἄνω	κγ		
	γ ἄνω	ια		
	δ ἄνω	..		
	ε ἄνω	..		
8	ς ἄνω	ιζ		
	ζ ἄνω	ιδ		
	η ἄνω	ι.		
	θ ἄνω	ιβ	κα	ιζ
12	ι ἄνω	ιε	κβ	ιδ
	ια ἄνω	ιγ		24
	ιβ ἄνω	ιβ	κγ	ιδ
	ιγ ἄνω	ιζ	κδ	ς
16	[ι]δ ἄνω	ιδ	κε	ιδ
	[ιε ἄνω]	ιγ	κς	ιδ
	[ις ἄνω]	ιγ	κζ	ς
	ιζ ἄνω[ω]	ιδ	κ[η .]	
20	ιη ἄνω	ιγ	traces	
	ιθ ἄνω	[ι]γ		
	κ ἄνω[ω]	[. .]		

The text belongs to a genre well-attested by *O.Amst.* 8, as reconstructed now by Clarysse and Sijpesteijn 1988. A further fragment is published by C. Gallazzi (1989). The method is straightforward. At the left of each column is given the number of the day, in a continuous series running from Epagomenai 5 through Thoth 28 (and probably to the end of that month), and the number of men is given at right, in a range from 6 to 23. In column i the scribe designates the men each day as ἄνω; with space probably running out, he omits this information in column ii, but we may suppose that it is equally applicable there. Elsewhere (Bagnall 1982) we have argued that this designation and its opposite number κάτω, which appears in *O.Amst.* 8, column i, refer to the staffing of guard posts on hills above the valley floor and at road level. In that text, one person was assigned each day to "upper" and one to "lower." Similar documents are *O.Amst.* 13 and *SB XVI* 12654.

On the basis of the first column's heading with οὐεσιγλαρίωνες, *vexillarii*, Clarysse and Sijpesteijn (1988: 84) described the method of *O.Amst.* 8 as follows: "The *vexillarii*, detached soldiers, were on guard-duty somewhere in or near the desert. They apparently returned to the main camp every other day. The guard-post consisted of a lower and an upper station. The

former was no doubt along the road, the latter on an elevation providing a good view of people arriving. . . . The guards reversed position every day in an elaborate pattern. . . . Seen from the point of view of the guards the pattern is very uniform. After serving in a guard post the man gets a day off and the next day he has to serve again in the other post."

A different hypothesis to explain these texts is offered by J. R. Rea (1990). He reads the key word as οὐεσιγλατίωνες, *vestigatōnes*, and sees the men not as guards but as trackers, patrols on the desert roads. For him, ἄνω refers to patrolling 'up,' that is, toward the coast, and κάτω toward the valley. (If, however, as Clarysse and Sijpesteijn think, the unit in question was in the Nile Valley, the terms might have their normal valley meanings of 'upriver' and 'downriver'.) He also suggests restoring the same term in column iv of the Amsterdam pot. It is a clever and interesting suggestion (the reading may be right), but it encounters some difficulties. First, the list headed with the word in question has only one man assigned to each post or direction each day. It seems to us extremely unlikely that the army would send out one-man patrols away from the base. Secondly, in the new 'Abu Sha'ar text, the men are all described as ἄνω. By Rea's hypothesis, however, there is nowhere to go ἄνω: The site is on the sea, as far from the Nile Valley as it is possible to go. One would expect that everyone went κάτω. One might argue on the basis of the definition in LSJ s.v. ἄνω II.1.f. that inland from the coast could be meant; the journey would also be uphill for some distance (this is true in all of LSJ's citations, rendering the simple sense of inland doubtful). But this would have the unhappy consequence that a single journey would be ἄνω for part of its way and then κάτω for the rest, a usage for which there is no evidence in the documents.

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