

Alia HANAFI

TWO PRIVATE LETTERS FROM THE COLLECTION OF COPENHAGEN

P.Haun. inv. Arab. 5
13 x 13.7 cm

Provenance Al-Fayyum
III A.H. (IX AD)

The papyrus is of moderate quality, torn off irregularly at the bottom and left-hand-side. There are also a number of small holes in the middle. It has been folded six times.

Two private letters from the Tulunid period were written on the recto and on the verso by two different hands. Clearly the letter written on the recto is from a father to his son. The language of the letter and the orders that have been directed to the receiver (cf. Ll. 2; 4; 5) prove this. Besides, the letter on the verso is a reply from that son to his father (cf. L.3).

On the recto, the letter was written in 8 lines, in black ink. At the top, there is a margin of 3.8 cm. The handwriting is of skilled scribe. Diacritical points occur rarely.

The suggested provenance and date that is before 270 A.H. depend on the appearance of the hair of Ishaq b. Kamil, also called 'Allan = علاّن (cf. L.1) in *APEL*, IV, 235, 15, 16 (dated in 270 A.H.).

On the verso, there is a margin at the right-hand-side of 1.8 cm.

The handwriting is large, clear, points to 3rd c. AD (cf. *APEL*, vol., V, 296, pl. VII). The document is a letter from a son to his father (cf. L.3). It was written in 9 lines, in black ink. In this letter, the son explains to his father that he got from his uncle what he had demanded from the wheat and he sent it to him (cf. Ll. 2, 7).

1- A Letter from a Father to his Son

- 1- [وأتم نعمته عليك وصلت إلى جبارة كتبك ، مع علان ، وبعتت بكتب]
- 2- [سأل]ه عن سلامتك وسلامة أخوتك فسر في الله وأكثرث
- 3- [. شر جار في الدنيا - يقولون لابراهميم النحاس]
- 4- [وأخذ من]ه رهن ، وملك اخراج إليه وخذ حقه منه]
- 5- [. وألح إن تخرجوا مع بر مصر تكونوا]
- 6- [وقال]ه عيد الرحمن أبو الحسن يعث الدين]
- 7- [ولكني أ [د] أنه ألف لا غير يرقد فيه]
- 8- [و [س] لا [م]ه]

TRANSLATION:

1- and may He fulfill His loving kindness] unto you. Your letters have been delivered to Gubara by 'Allan and I sent letters

2-I asked] him? about your safety and the safety of your brothers. Go on depending on Allah, and pay attention to

3-] an evil moves in the world (= in the present time) - They say to Ibrahim, the coppersmith

4-and he got?] from him a security. Damn you. Go ahead to him, and take your right from him.

5-] . and I insist if you go out along with the land of Misr, you will be

6-..... and?] Abder-Rahman Abu al-Hassan, [said to him?] to send the debt

7-] and I gave him on credit one thousand not more but he sleeps on it (i.e. he did not pay it).

8-] and his safety?

Commentary:

L.1 - **عليك** [وَأْتَمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ]: Clearly this line is the first line in the letter. It bears the salutation formula or the opening formula of the letter. See Al-Qalqashandi, *Subhi El -'A sha*, vol. VIII, p.160, ff.

أَبْقَاكَ اللَّهُ وَحَفِظَكَ وَأَتَمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ (= may Allah preserve you and may he protect unto you) or **أَطَالَ اللَّهُ بِكَ وَأَدَامَ عَزَّكَ وَكَرَامَتَكَ وَتَأَيَّدَكَ وَسَعَادَتَكَ وَأَتَمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ** (= may Allah prolong your life and may cause your might honour, strength and happiness to continue and complete his favors towards you) or similar formula could be restored. See *BACPS*, VI, P. *Haun.* 10, note 4; and cf. *APEL*, V, 309, 2-3).

جبارة : the name is dotted. **جبارة** or **جبارة** could be vocalized according to AD-DAHABI, *Moshtabih*, p. 83. We met a person named **جبارة** in *APEL*, V, 291, 13 dated in IVth A.H. It seems that he is not the same person of our document since we met the hair of Ishaq b. Kamil also called 'Allan in *APEL*, IV, 234, r., 15; 16 dated in 270 A.H.

علائ : The name **علائ** is superscribed. In *APEL*, IV, 234, r., ll.15; 16 (270 A.H.), we met the heirs of Ishaq b. Kamil, also called 'Allan.

Clearly **كَبِكَ** mentions more than one letter. If it is one letter only, and the alif of **كَابِكَ** is omitted as usual, the verb will be **وصلت** not **وصل**.

L.2 - *سأله عن سلامتك وسلامة أخوتك فسر في الله وأكثر* : According to IBN AL-ATHYIR, *Al-Kamil fi Al-Tarikh*, vol. VI, p. 51 ff., in the year 270 A.H., there was big troubles because of the death of Ahmed b. Tulun. So, perhaps the sender of the letter asked 'Allan about the safety of the receiver and his brothers.

فسر في الله : it is a local expression. The sender advises the receiver to go out with the blessing of Allah. Usually the expression is *فسر على بركة* (= go on the benediction of Allah, see Abou Daoud, *Al- Jihad*, 112 in *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane*, organisés et commencés par A. J. Wensinck et alii, vol. III, Istanbul, 1988, p. 46).

واكثر : It means *واهتم* (= take care or pay attention). The sender advises his son also to pay himself attention. Usually the word comes in negative form such as

ما أكثر له meaning *ما أبالي*, but here the word is affirmative and this is rare (see Ibn MANZOUR, *Lisan Al-Arab*, vol. V, p. 3848).

L.3- *شرح جار في الدنيا* = an evil moves in the world (= in the present time). This sentence may mention to some troubles in Egypt in that time or because of the security on a debt (cf. note L.2, and L.4).

ابر <اهيم النحاس : The proper name *ابر <اهيم* was written according to the local not to classical language. He has not been identified. *النحاس* is either a surname or a profession (= coppersmith).

L.4- *كأخذ من له رهن* : may be restored since the sender of the letter exhorts the receiver to go and to take his rights from someone. Clearly the

security is movable. It could be jewels and alike. ويلك (= damn you) : this expression indicates that the sender of the letter is in higher position than the receiver such as a father or someone from his relatives such as his uncle.

L.5- وألح: there are two variant readings for this word; either وألح (= and I insist) or وألح (= and he insists). The first reading is preferable in the context.

تكرزنا إن : إن تخرجوا مع بر مصر تكونوا is a conditional particle here because is an apodosis (جواب الشرط) of the conditional sentence (see W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, vol. II, p. 14 ff.). The verb تخرجوا (protasis = فعل الشرط) is a transitive verb. It should be followed by the preposition إلى not مع , or to omit the preposition according to classical Arabic syntax. This verb is from الخروج (=going out). It is opposite of الدخول (=entrance). It is said: دخلت البيت (=I entered the house). The correcting sentence is دخلت إلى البيت (=I entered to the house). The preposition إلى is omitted (see Ibn MANZOUR, *Lisan Al-'Arab*, vol. 2, p. 1341). And so forth verb خرج. The preposition مع (= with, along with) indicates association and connection in time or place, as the Arab grammarian's remark (see W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, vol. II, p. 164). One of the usage's of إلى indicates also to association (see W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, vol. II, p. 145, c. So, It seems to me that there is an

interchanging here between them. Using the preposition مع in this sentence is a vulgar language.

من قولهم : البحر (= the sea) is contrary of البر (= the land or the desert)

خرج فلان برا إذا خرج إلى الصحراء (see Ibn MANZOUR, *Lisan Al-'Arab*, vol. 1, p. 254). This is another advice from the sender of the letter. He insists to push the receiver of the letter and his brothers to go out of their residence.

L.7- يرقد فيه ؟ : (L. يرقد عليه , literally: sleeps on it). It is a colloquial expression means that the borrower has delayed the payment for a long time. The expression is still used to date.

L.8- For the restoration cf. L.2.

II- A Letter from a Son to his Father

- ↓ -١- [.....]
- ٢- من العم بما أريد أن أصيب من [لمح؟]
- ٣- يابه جعلت فداك بالدعاء كثيرا لله عسى [والله على]
- ٤- كل شيء قدير وأ [ن] أترك بدعا > ث < ك و .. [وخرجنا كما؟]
- ٥- ذكرت بر مصر وجبسه مس . [
- ٦- لا أصل إلى حاء ... ال [أنه ؟]
- ٧- حمل قمح إليك وأرجو أن [
- ٨- عدوا ولكن لا تكذب ال [

[

٩ - إليك تـ [] . . []

Translation:

- 1- [].....[]
- 2-] from uncle, as I want, to obtain from the [wheat ?]
- 3-] O father, may I be made your ransom, to pray so much for Allah
perhaps [] and Allah has]
- 4- the power to do all that He will, and I seek the blessing of your
prays and.[] and we went out as]
- 5- you mentioned along the land (or desert) of Misr, and he
imprisoned him]
- 6- I do not reach to[]
- 7- an amount of wheat for you, and I hope to[]
- 8- an enemy, but do not write to? []
- 9- to you[]

Commentary:

L.2- الغم : The word is not dotted. It is either الغم (= the uncle) or الغم (= the grieve). I prefer the first the word since it is followed by بما أريد (= as I want), and the wanting here is perhaps wheat (cf. L.7).

أَصِيب : There is one dot under the word أَصِيب. It is written between the letter yaa and the letter baa. It should be under the yaa because أَصِيب is an infinitive after verb أُرِيد (= I want) See W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, vol. I, p. 26.

من [] : is possible restoration (cf. L.7).

ياأبت is a vulgar language. The classical Arabic language is ياأبت L.3- or ياأبت. It becomes in pause ياأبة (see W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, vol. II, pp. 87; 88; and Ibn MANZOUR, *Lisan Al-'Arab*, vol. 1, p. 18 “وقال: ياأبه وبأبه لغتان”).

Al-Qalqashandi in his book *Subhi El-'Asha*, vol. VIII, p.161, says that this expression is a part the opening letter in that time (cf. also *APEL*, V, 326, 2; 332,1; 2; 358, 2; 360, 2).

بالدعاء : the *hamza* is omitted. It is a usual phenomenon in that period.

Ll.3/4- كل شيء قدير والله على: For the restoration see *surah* البقرة (the *caw*), II, 285. This *surah* is used in praying by Muslims when they are in trouble, and obviously, the sender of the letter was in trouble (cf. the recto Ll. 2-5; and the verso Ll. 5,7).

بدعا <نك> (بدعاك). It is a colloquial expression. For *hamza* at the end of a word see W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, vol. I, p. 17.

Ll.4/5- [ذكرت بر مصر : خرجنا كما ؟] إن For the restoration see L.5, r. “إنخرجوا مع بر مصر” This line affirms that this letter is the replay of the letter written on the recto. Here, it is clear that there is no preposition before بر مصر (= the land of Misr).

حبسه (= and he imprisoned him). Who is imprisoned here? It is not clear. Perhaps he is one of the brothers of the sender of the letter. So this could be the reason behind the advising of their father to leave their place

and to go out along with the land of Misr (cf. L. 5,r.). Ibn IJAS (in his book وكان (أحمد بن طولون) كريم اليد " vol. I, 1, p. 168) says " غير أنه كان شديد الغضب حتى قيل مات في "حبسه ثمانية ألف

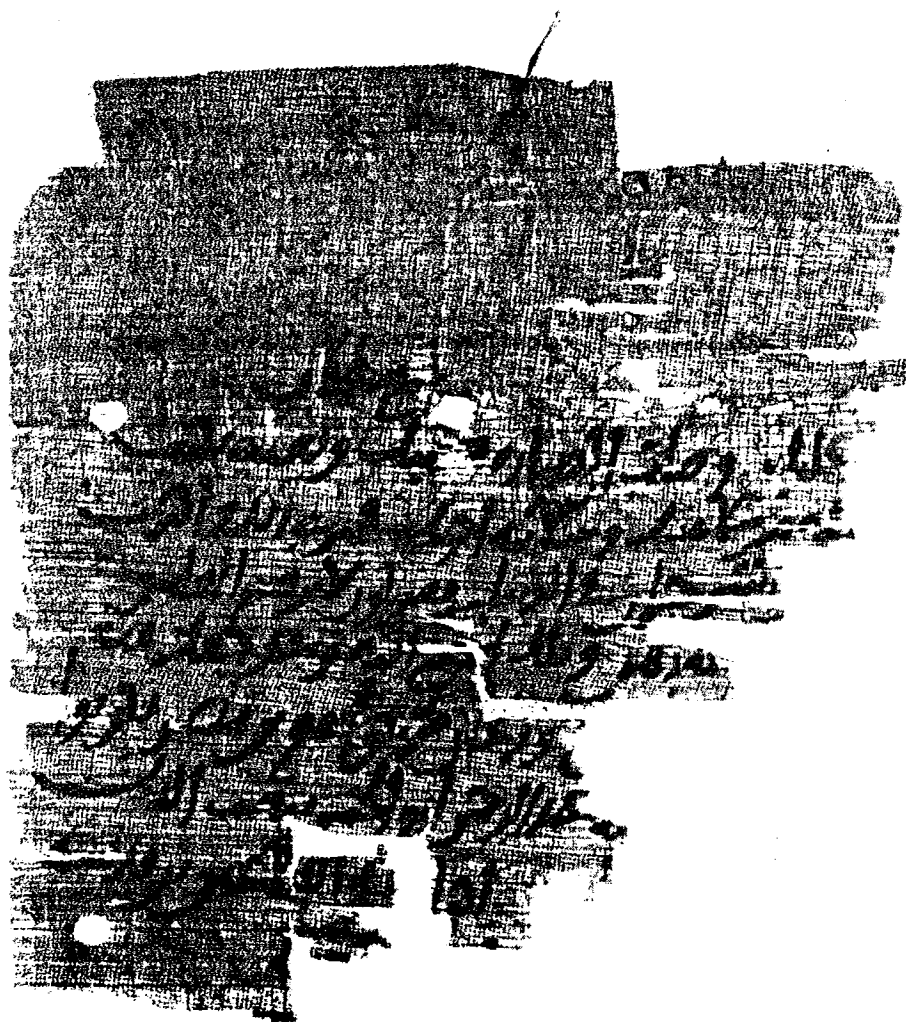
إنسان (= he (Ahmad ibn Tulun) was generousbut he was more severe in his angry as far as it is said that 18000 persons died in his prison.). Is there a relation between the imprisoned person here and what Ibn IJAS says in his book? We do not know.

L.7- حمل قمح إليك : The word حمل is either a verb حمل (= carried) or حمل (= an amount of wheat), see Ibn MANZOUR, *Lisan Al-'Arab*, vol., 2, p.1002 . ويقول "والحمل بالكسر: ما حمل على ظهر أو رأس" والحمل: ثمر الشجر، والكسر فيه لغة" " p.1002

I prefer the second because if حمل is a verb the word قمح should be accusative قمحا according to the classical Arabic grammar. (cf. L. 2 and its note, and see W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, vol. I, p. 236).

L.8- عدوا: the word is undotted. عدوا (= an enemy) or عدوا (= running) may be read. I prefer the first because it goes with the context (cf. Ll. 3; 4; 5, r. and L. 5, v.).

TWO PRIVATE LETTERS



Recto

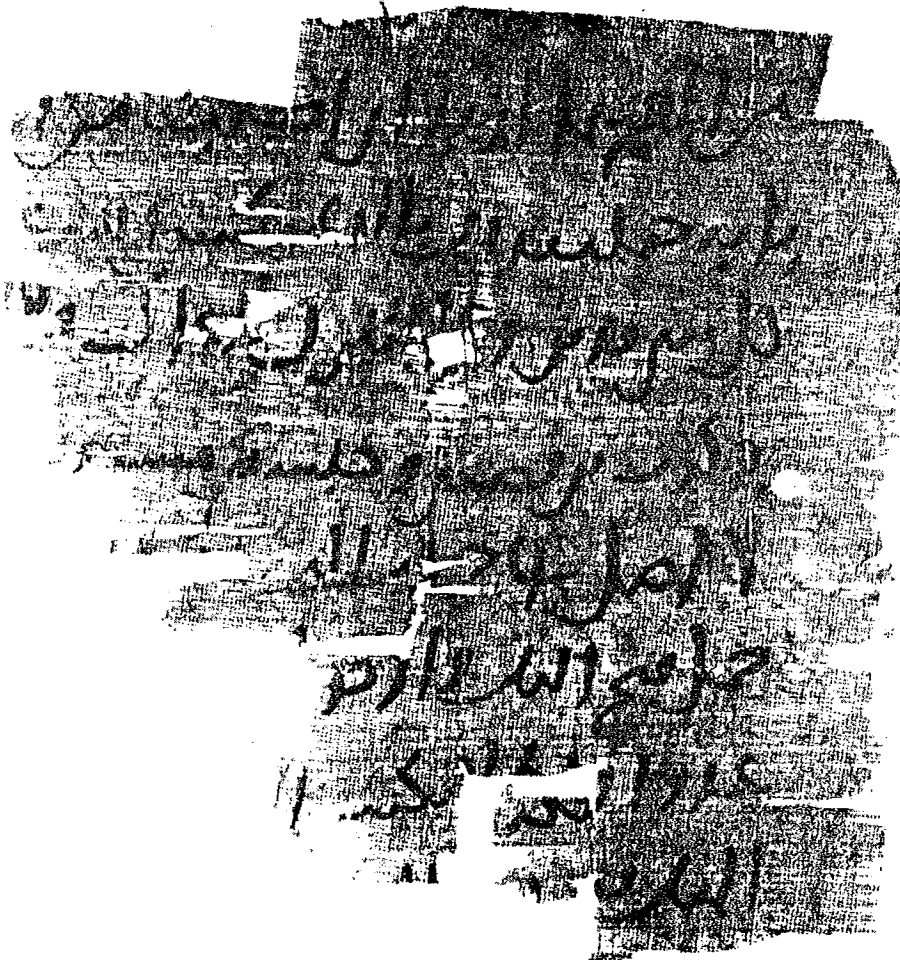
P. Haun. inv. Arab. 5

13 x 13.7 cm

Provenance al-Fayyūm

3rd c. AH / 9th c. AD

ALIA HANAFI



Verso

P. Haun, inv. Arab. 5

13 x 13.7 cm

Provenance al-Fayyūm

3rd c. AH / 9th c. AD

REVIEW

TEETER, Timothy M., *Columbia Papyri XI*
The American Society of Papyrologists
Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, 1998

Reviewed by Prof. Dr. Alia HANAFI
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Columbia Papyri XI is originally a dissertation of doctorate to Columbia University. It contains eleven unpublished papyrus documents. One of them did not appear in the dissertation. The title of the theses was *Ten Christian papyri in the Columbia collection*. The first four papyri are literary and liturgical text while the other seven are documentary. The writer used the standard "Leiden" system in editing this volume. He added beside the main work bibliographical references, indices for literary, liturgical, and documentary texts. A concordance and photos are given at the end of the book. It numbers 38 in series of *American studies in papyrology*.

With careful attention to details, with truly ability to restore the missing or ambiguous texts, and with a full and reliable translation of the texts TEETER, Timothy M. gave the reader a good standard of preparing this kind of studying. He has provided English translation, commentary, ad an introduction for each text to discuss several aspects relating to the texts especially the third one where he has treated the celebrating of the sermon of 6th of January with skill. TEETER, Timothy M. has chosen to maintain the original shape of the texts correcting them separately. Such a separation makes checking the translation and the critical apparatus an easy job. However, TEETER, Timothy M. did not give a full bibliography although he has used more than the list he has given shone. I would

suggest for p. 79 to be titled as *ABBREVIATED AND SHORT TITLES*, or to write a full bibliography of the whole research.

Yet, this book is valuable for classicists as well as to those who are interested in the history of the churches. The value of having a print in Scholars Press is definitely great.

Prof. Dr. Alia HANAFI

ABSTRACTS

LES TROUVAILLES DES PAPYRUS ARABES, DE HIRBET EL MIRD A PALESTINE

Par
Ahmed Fouad Sayed

En 1952, on a trouve en Palestine Près des villes Jérusalem, Ariha, et Bait Lahm, quelques trouvailles des Papyrus arabes. Ces trouvailles retournement aux trios premières siècles de l'Hégire, notamment a l'époque des Califes Rasitides, des Ommayedes et des Abbassides. Elles Concernent des officiels documents de Diwane de la Chancellerie et de Diwane de Juridique du Calife Musulmane au ville de Jérusalem, Arehat, Bait Lahm ; des Papyrus Littéraires de la Culture Islamique, a propos du Koran, la sounna, la Biographie de Prophète Mohammed, les Conquêtes de l'Islamique des Papyrus concernant les lettres prisées personnelles. Tous Ces Collections des documents arabes, prouvent la Justice de l'état Islamique, la propagation de la Culture arabe Islamique, la tolérance religieuse à legard les Zimmittes, les droits de la femme a l'islam.