This fragment of parchment was found in kôm 1 of the northern necropolis on August 16, 1982. It preserves a small portion of chapter 26 of the Gospel of Matthew, written in a new variety of Early Bohairic. The book probably belonged to the library of Kollouthos’ sanctuary, from which come the fragments of manuscripts, mainly biblical, found at the site.¹

While there are many lacunas, the writing itself is extremely clear and legible. It can be characterized as a mixed form of the biblical majuscule (A, E and N for example) and the alexandrian majuscule (A and M for example). Pasquale Orsini proposes to date the script from the sixth century, preferably the first half².

The paleography can be described as follows. The baseline is not consistently level. Vertical lines are thick, while horizontal lines are thin. Curved letters (e, o, c, ο) are round and distinct, with the middle stroke of the e sometimes but not always extending past the others. Some letters, notably A and M, connect horizontally to the following letter at the baseline, while most others maintain a visible separation from preceding and succeeding letters. Letters with a long vertical stroke (t, p, υ, φ, Ϙ) often dip somewhat below the base-line, while letters that ascend above the height of the other letters are rare. Some letters, e.g., A, K, and X, have slight serifs. Letters with an incomplete circular or cup-like shape, e.g., Ω, ω, and θ, tend to curve slightly inward at the upper left. The lobe of the A is often quite angular, and is never very rounded. The upper lobe of Ω is considerably smaller than the lower one, and is somewhat angular. A sometimes ascends slightly, and has a serif at the top of the diagonal stem. It resembles Π but is larger and the baseline does not curve upwards into the stem as occurs in the A. N has three strokes, with the headstroke extending to the right and the left, occasionally touching the surrounding letters. The lobe of Π is high, small, and round. Χ is tilted several degrees to the left, X slightly less. The left-right stroke of the X tends to be as thick as the vertical strokes of other letters, while the right-left stroke tends to be thinner. The ‘triangle’ formed tends to be scalene, with the smallest angle at the left side of the base. The tail of Ω extends

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¹ The general introduction and the edition were made by the two authors. The linguistic analysis was written by E. Grossman.


² We warmly thank P. Orsini for his comments on the characterization and the date of the script.

below the preceding letter, except when it meets the tail of a preceding ξ. The tail of ω curves to the right, and then sharply to the left, but does not go under the letter to the left. The ζ is of the type described by Husselman, *made like a large round figure 2°*, although the font used here does not do justice to this description. The upsilon is also distinctive, as it resembles a iota with curving horns.

The supralineation and diacritics in this text are of considerable interest. It is striking that this fragment does not employ supralinear strokes or dots (djinkim) at all, except for in the nomen sacrum inc. In this it is similar to the other Early Bohairic texts. On the other hand, the trema does occur regularly above ı, including in environments where it would not be expected in later Bohairic (φα, ἡλι, μμοι, οὐγιαμ, μεγι, κεοντ, ἀντ). In all of these cases, it marks a syllable coda following a vowel or a glide, although the examples are possibly too sparse to produce a useful generalization. Iota with a single point, found in P. Bodmer III, does not occur in the text described here. One should keep in mind, however, Kasser’s observation that «... dans la plupart des copies coptes anciennes, quel que soit leur idiomé (à l’exception de B “classique”), le tréma est placé systématiquement, en tout cas sur tout graphème iota au contact d’un autre graphème vocalique à l’intérieur du même mot, ce iota se trouvant soit au début, soit à la fin de la syllabe à laquelle il appartient, marquant alors, par là même, l’une des limites de cette syllabe; le tréma fonctionne ainsi ... comme un signe syllabique, un adjuvant permettant, sinon d’apercevoir aussitôt les limites de chaque syllabe, du moins d’effectuer cette observation dans certaines d’entre elles» 4.

The reconstruction of the text shows that the page had 28 lines of ca. 24-29 letters on recto (flesh side) and ca. 23-25 on verso (hair side). The restitutions are based on Horner’s text of Matthew 5.

**Edition**

PSI inv. Ant. 349

16 × 3,9 cm First half of VIth century (?)

recto

[επιχείρησεν θεῷ ἐταφεὶ τενὶ ἐβολὰ μφρυὰς ἀρχὴ]  
[τενῆν ὧδα οὐκονὶ μεν ὰλλῳς μεν]  
[ἐπικορότα ἐμοὶ δὲ]  
[μῆλον Ἰωάν ἐν δέκα πέντε]  
[ἐπὶ ἐφ′ ἐπὶ]  
[εἰρέται]  

verso

5

[ιοῦσιν]  
[ἐν χρισμῷ]  
[καὶ τὸ]  
[ντὸς ὁ]  
[ἐπὶ]  
[ἐπὶ]  
[ἐν]  


[πος οο][υντ ερον.] 5ο[ετρος] δε ναχμο-
[οι νε] νι νει νι νου’[ει ια] τ[αυ] ιατε
[ναρη] ερεγυσ. ινω λ[αφε εδουν] ναχιωμ-
[ει νι νεμ νι] σπηρετες [εναγε επιξωκ.]
15 [5ο] ναρηερ[ες] δε νεμ π[ιμα ν] δι νι ιπν-
[ναεκω] τε νε ουμ[ετμερε ονουξ]
[δε ινα νι νσιδοτε] να. 5ο[ιυο ηοιπι]
[μ] ελυ] δε νε λε [μεοφε ονουξ ]?
[?] Με]νσε ντι Νε ιε [ινι νχε β.]
[ει νοι] ια εχομ [μι ε[ει ιερει]
[ντε φ] ε[εοι.] ηνω ντακτι[ν] δεν ι ιν-
[ξου. 5ο] λω λ[τα δι νχε] [νερηερεγυ]
[νεκι ι] ηε ηε [κι ουμ]?]
25 [νσι iε νε οι] πετε νι ιε [μεοφε]
[μμοι ηαροκ. 5ι] ιν νε νπηκω [ιμι ιε.]
[ηεηε περηερεγυ] δε νιε. ηε [ταρκο-]
[μμοι Μι] ετοευ. ινι ητεκσον ντ[α. ηε]

8. ινο: omissit Horn.  
9. ινομ: αυσοι Ηορ.  
10. [μι] εναρε νε[εάδ] Νεμ νπερεσβυτε-[علي]
[πος οο][υντ ερον.] 5ο[ετρος] δε ναχμο-
[οι νε] νι νει νι νου’[ει ια] τ[αυ] ιατε
[ναρη] ερεγυσ. ινω λ[αφε εδουν] ναχιωμ-
[ει νι νεμ νι] σπηρετες [εναγε επιξωκ.]
16. m[μεοφε ονουξ ]؟ ] : ουμηνι μμοφε ννουξ Ηορ. After m[μεοφε ονουξ, one might restore an expression translating the Greek πολλόν.
20. φα] [؟ ] : η φα ηο Ηορ. Ηον. One could restore φα [ιν ηομο], but the line would still be too short.
24. ηαροκ : omissit Ηορ.  
η[κι ουμ]?] The restoration seems to be too short. Perhaps another expression was used.
27. [ηεηε περηερεγυ] δε νιε : ουος ηεηε περηερεγυ νιε Ηορ.

verso
[νοοκ ηε ηοκ πινιε μι] ετοευ. 64 νε-
[ιε ηε ηεη. νοοκ πετακσος. πιιν] 
[؟ ] [؟ ]
[ερετενα]γ επιθι[μι μεμπι]
5 [εεεει ια ρνυ]ια[μ] ντ[αχο διυ] 
[εινη]γ εξεν [ιεηηπι τεμ.]
[64] τοτε πι]ερεγυ[ει α νιφο ηοινε]
[ινο] ηομ. ηε [ινι νε νλ] 
[ντενερ κιδ ιε νοιμε εοει.]

A NEW EARLY BOHAIRIC TEXT FROM ANTINOE 637
The main witness for Earliest Paleo-Hebrew is a manuscript containing most of the Gospel of John and the beginning of Genesis.

Edition princeps in ²°. Œ.


Additional studies by Œasser see note 7.
10. [αμπε τον άλτετεν] [κατεμεν] ε[ν ονδα.]

96. ούχ χε υετετε [νιμεν] ίρον. [ντιουν δε]
[λέμ ωυ ων πεξωυο.] χε χεμπνι[λα μμομογ.]
[97. τοτε αγι αμ] ε[νουν εν[εκο. όυω]
[αμ] [κοπ ουλ.] [ντιουν δε] [παν [εποι ίρον.]

15. [ιας χυω χμ] [ος] χε δι προφητευν χαν]
[πνε χε ηι] [με πεταζιο] [ει ίρον. 98. πετ-]
[πος δε ηι] [λαμεμε δι] [ολ έν] [θεν] [δαλ] [αλ]
[λα] [κει] [ερ] [ν] [ει ωυ] [εκει εκγ]
[μμος. χε ηι] [οκ ξικ] [αξι] [ηι] [ηι]

20. [πνε] [ολ έν] [α] [χυω εβολ]
[μμομ] [οι] [νον] [πο] [βεν εχω χομο]
[χε ηι] [κε] [εμι] [λι] [χε] [ερ]
[εχω μμος] [χε] [ου]
[τι άυει] [δε] [εβολ] [εν [ομ] [ακα] [εροι]
[πνε] [κει] [ουι] [αυω] [πεξαοι [ηι] [εμ]

25. [μι] [βε] [φαι] [ηι] [μαχι] [ηι]
[πρ] [εμ] [ναζαπε] [τ. 72] [παλιν έν] [αχω]
[εβο] [θεν] [ου] [αυω] [χε] [ηι] [ος] [ομων] [αν] [μ-
[πι] [ριμι. 73] [με] [κε] [ου] [αι] [α] [δι] [αυ]

3. [? ?] [? ?]: χω μμομα ηετεμ. χε ιαχεν τμον Ηαμε
9. ουνα [εορε]: ηαιμεμε Ηαμε.
13. ενουν επ[εκο]: ενουν δεν πειον Ηαμε.
14. ντιουν δε [παν] [εποι άυει] [κοι δι ουρε άυει]
17. The line is too long: maybe the text had λαμεμε and no ρε.
20. [α] [καχω]: [καχω].
25. [μι] [βε]: [βε] Ηαμε. The line is too short; there was probably a variant (one might restore etων instead of ετεη λ. 24; but it would add only one letter). 
25. φαι: ηοον Ηαμε. 
26. [πρ] [εμ] [ναζαπε]: [παζαπειον Ηαμε].

**Linguistic analysis**

This fragment of the Gospel of Matthew is a new witness for Early Bohairic. It is not identical to any of the varieties already attested, differing primarily in having άυω rather than ουοε.

The main witnesses for Early Bohairic are:

1. *P.Bodmer III*, a papyrus codex containing most of the Gospel of John and the beginning of Genesis.*

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2. P.Vat. Inv. Copto 9, a papyrus codex containing the Twelve Minor Prophets7.
5. P.Mich. Inv. 4162, a very fragmentary text dated no later than the sixth century on paleographical grounds10.

Only the first two are of any significant length. The other four are very short, which reduces their utility for linguistic study, if not their interest for the history of the Bohairic dialect. One should also take into account the following texts:
7. P.Mich. Inv. 5421, considered to embody a subdialect of Bohairic (B71), or a distinct dialect (K)12.
8. P.Bal. 19, a papyrus with Phil. 3:19-4:913. The language has been considered a variety of K, and has been given its own siglum K71. If one follows Kasser, then this too should be considered to be in the Bohairic ‘domain’.

Also relevant is the corpus of pre-Conquest inscriptions from Kellia, whose language and its interest for the history of Bohairic have been studied in a preliminary fashion by Kasser and Bosson14.

The dominant approach to the significant variation one finds across these texts is that

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they reflect different (sub)dialects, possibly with interference from other dialects, whether Sahidic or one of the Middle Egyptian or Fayumic varieties. For Kasser, Early Bohairic is considered to comprise several sub-varieties (B4, B71, B74, B74!). These sub-dialectal distinctions are generally made on the basis of orthographical and lexical criteria, e.g., the use of οὐοὐζε rather than οὐοὐζ ‘and,’ μμαξ rather than μμαξ ‘there,’ the use or non-use of the grapheme ｅ, and a few others.

Another view holds that Early Bohairic texts reflect a stage of development in which the standardization of the dialect was not yet complete. It is impossible at this stage to say whether this emerging standardization embodies different local norms, since we do not know much about where these texts were produced. However, on linguistic grounds, it has been suggested that Early Bohairic is to be located south of the Delta15, and some of the texts seem to have been found in the Fayum, e.g., P.Mich. Inv. 4162, found in Karanis. The present text was found in Antinoe, even farther to the south, although this course does not necessarily mean anything regarding its place of origin16. Texts with Bohairic affinities, such as P.Bal. 19, have been found as far south as Bala’izah.

Linguistic, palaeographical, and codicological aspects of these texts have been described in the various text editions. Additional studies have been published, notably by Kasser17, Černý18, and Shisha-Halevy19. A description of the language of P.Vat. Inv. Copto 9 is to be published, along with the edition of the text20.

Primary distinctive features and orthography

The primary distinctive feature of this variety is the form of the coordinating conjunction, which is ιειυο rather than ουουζ (r8, r13, r22, v24). With respect to this feature,
it differs both from other Early Bohairic varieties, on the one hand, and from later Bohairic, on the other. It is shared with K71 (P.Bal. 19, see above).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B4/B74</th>
<th>B5</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>K71</th>
<th>Sahidic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ογοςε</td>
<td>ογος</td>
<td>άγω</td>
<td>άγω</td>
<td>άγω</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A spelling typical of Early Bohairic is ΜΜΑ rather than ΜΜΑΥ ‘there.’ This is attested in v25, although the initial Μ is missing.

The orthographic representation of aspiration is sporadic. Of the sites in which aspiration could be expected, one finds the following distribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realized</th>
<th>Not realized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>φΔι (r20, v25)</td>
<td>ΝΟΥΕΙ (r12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ΝΗ (r26), ΝΗ [h] (v19)</td>
<td>ΝΤΟΟΥ (v14), ΒΟΤΒ (r17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This text maintains a distinction between Β [x] and Ζ [h], like Bohairic varieties in general, and in opposition to K/K71, although P.Vat. Inv. Copto 9 has ΖΩΤΕΒ rather than ΒΟΤΕΒ. The distribution of the two is generally accurate.

Another distinctive feature, which is shared with other Early Bohairic texts, primarily the ‘first hand’ of P.Bodmer III (= B), is the existence of ΜΟ- (r21), a close-juncture variant of ΜΜΟΕ21.

In all other respects, the orthography is not different from other Bohairic texts, and one may conclude that it reflects the same underlying phonology. There are no examples of Ε in the text, which would suggest a link with Kasser’s subdialect B74, a scribal norm characterizing P.Vat. Inv. Copto 9 and part of P.Bodmer III. However, this is not significant, since no lexemes that would have Ε are attested in the text.

**Conjugation system**

In such a small text, one cannot hope to find too many verbal forms attested. Nonetheless, an exhaustive list is provided.

- Tripartite: Sentence Conjugations
  - Unconverted affirmative past: ΑΡ[ε]- (v22), Χ[ι]- (r13, v20) ΛΥ- (r8, r9)
  - Affirmative relative past: ΕΤΗΛ- (v16)
- Tripartite: Clause Conjugations
  - Conjunctive: ΝΤΛ- (r22), ΝΤΕΚ- (r28), ΝΤΟΥ- (r6), ΝΕΕ- (r17)22

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- Imperative  ἀπι- (v15)
- Bipartite  
  Unconverted Affirmative  ἆ- (v12)
  Unconverted Negative  [v9], [v22]
  Relative Affirmative  prenom. ετε- (r25)
  Imperfect Affirmative  μακ- (v19), μαχ- (r26, [v17]), [μα]γ- (v14)
  Relative Affirmative Imperfect  prenom. επαγ- (r10),

Other sentence constructions found include the expression of inability οὗον-οἷξομ-μοι ‘I can,’ (r21) which is also the sole attestation of the statement of (non-)existence (οὗον- /μοι), and the finite ‘interjection’ Δῶ- η ‘what’s the matter with you?’ (r24). No nominal sentence patterns occur, other than the Cleft Sentence with interrogative focus (v16).

**Articles, quantifiers, and pronouns**

The singular indefinite article οὐγ- occurs, but the plural indefinite is unattested in this text.

The Bohairic opposition between ἀν- and ι- (…ι-) is attested, e.g., ποῦσιν vs. ποιμ[πι Μπρουμ]. Only masculine singular and plural determiners (π-, πι-, ι-) and demonstrative pronouns (φιλι, ηλι) occur, i.e., there are no feminine singular determiners or demonstrative pronouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>masc. sg.</th>
<th>fem.sg.</th>
<th>pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>π-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>see below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πι-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ι-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>φιλι/φιλι</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>ηλι</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a possibility that the Early Bohairic article ι- is attested in this text\(^22\), but it is based on lacunae, and so must remain speculative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ινεαδ</th>
<th></th>
<th>[ι]ηπηρετς</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[ι]ηπηρετς</td>
<td>m[Meopic]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 Nonetheless, the existence of ι- rather than π- before the lacuna makes it likely that we are dealing with the article ι-, since the article would have to be in direct contact with a following labial in order to be assimilated to ι-. It is well attested in Early Bohairic, and to a lesser extent (in terms of relative frequency) in later Bohairic.

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\(^{22}\) Note that as in other Early Bohairic corpora, both ποι- and ητογ- are attested for the 3pl conjunctive.

No complete possessive articles (e.g., πε-;) or pronouns (e.g., φομ) occur, although the former is likely in v13. Nor do demonstrative articles (e.g., τα-;) occur.

As for quantifiers, both κε- ‘another’ (v24) and postpositive τυ[τπη] (v21) are attested. The form of the latter is a matter of speculation, since τμμ and τμμ are also possible, albeit unlikely, reconstructions. Other pronominals include the indefinites ονον (v21) and ουτι (v24), as well as interrogative τμμ ‘who’ (v16). Independent personal pronouns attested are [μο]οκ (v19), νοομ (v20), τουπογ (v14). The personal suffix pronouns attested are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffix</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>τι</td>
<td>r21 (conjunctive Τ r22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>θο</td>
<td>v22 Χ[Χω]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>κο</td>
<td>r24, r28, v19 (bis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>γι</td>
<td>r8, r9, r11, r12, r17, r23 (bis), r24, r26, v16, v17, v18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>σι</td>
<td>r20, v8, v15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>τετεγ</td>
<td>v10, v11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>γυ</td>
<td>r6, r8, r9 (v14 ?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepositions and adverbs

There is nothing distinctive about the prepositions and adverbs, which are identical to those found in Bohairic (see lexicon below).

Particles and augmentia

Few particles occur in this text. Of the particles borrowed from Greek, only Λε occurs. As regards the augmentia, only ω occur.

Syntax

There is little that is surprising in terms of Bohairic syntax.

Lexicon

The lexicon is typically Bohairic, e.g., ΔΜΟΙ, ΖΙΜΙΟ. The spellings of lexemes common to the majority of the Coptic dialects are as in Bohairic (ιμπι, εμπι[ι], ςωτεμ, i, etc.). The lexical and grammatical items that occur in the text are given in the index (see below).

The Greek-origin words that occur are those that are found in Horner’s text. The only Greek-origin verb is marked by έ- (αι-), as is consistently the case in Early Bohairic (and Bohairic in general).
Index for: A new Early Bohairic text from Antinoe

1. Egyptian-Coptic lexemes

ΔΜΟΝΗ ‘seize, take’ r5 (ΔΜΟΝΗ)
ΛΝ=g negation v9 (Λv), v22 (ΛΝ)
ΛΜΑΡ ‘oath’ v27 (ΛΜΑΡ))
ΛΧΙΟ ‘and’ r8 (ΛΧΙΟ), r13 (ΛΧΙΟ), r22 (ΛΧΙΟ), v24 (ΛΧΙΟ)
ΔΟΧ ‘exclamation’ r24 (ΔΟΧ)
ΒΑΧΕ ‘servant’ v18 (ΒΑΧΕ)
ε/-ΕΡΟ prep. r11 (ΕΡΟ), r21 (ε-), v4 (ε-), v10 (ε-), v11 (ΕΡΟ), v13 (ε-), v23 (ε-)
ΕΒΟΛ ‘out’ r23 (ΕΒΟΛ), v27 (ΕΒΟΛ)
ΕΜ ‘know’ v22 (ΕΜ)
ΕΜΠΙΟΔ ‘be worthy’ v12 (ΕΜΠΙΟΔ)
ΕΜΟ ‘presence’ v21 (ΕΜΟ)
ΕΡ ‘temple’ r4 (ΕΡ)
ΕΜΟΥΝ ‘inside’ v13 (ΕΜΟΥΝ)
ΕΞΕΝ ‘prep. r6 (ΕΞΕΝ)
Τ ‘come’ r18 (Τ), r6 (ΗΝΟΥ)
Π ‘make’ r25 (Π), v15 (ΠΠ[ΟΦΗΘΕΙΝ])
ΚΕ ‘other’ r24 (ΚΕ)
ΚΟΤ ‘build’ r22 (ΚΟΤ)
ΚΟΥ ‘pursue’ r16 (ΚΟΥ)
ΧΩ ‘put, leave’ r8 (ΧΩ), r26 (ΧΩ), v19 (ΧΩ)
ΜΑ ‘place’ r10 (ΜΑ)
ΜΠ ‘there’ v25 (ΜΠ)
ΜΙΝ ‘after’ r19 (ΜΙΝ), v28 (ΜΙΝ)
ΜΙΟΦΡ ‘witness’ v9 (ΜΙΟΦΡ)
ΜΕΤΜΕΟΦΡ ‘testimony’ r16 (ΜΕΤΜΕΟΦΡ)
ΜΕΥ ‘think’ v11 (ΜΕΥ)
Ν-ΝΜΟ ‘prep. r3 (ΜΜΟ), r5 (ΜΜΟ), r20 (ΜΜΟ), r21 (ΜΜΟ), v5 (Ν),
v8 (ΜΜΟ), v9 (Ν), v15 (ΜΜΟ), v21 (Ν)
Ν-ΝΑ ‘for’ r24 (ΝΑ), r27 (ΝΑ), r28 (ΝΑ)
ΝΙΕΝ ‘every’ r21 (ΝΙΕΝ)
ΝΕΜ ‘and’ r15 (ΝΕΜ)
ΝΗ ‘who’ v16 (ΝΗ)
ΝΑ ‘after’ r12 (ΝΑ), r16 (ΝΑ)
ΝΟΟ ‘pers. pron. r14 (ΝΟΟ), v19 (ΝΟΟ), v20 (ΝΟΟ)
ΝΑΥ ‘sea’ v4 (ΝΑΥ)
ΝΣΕ particle r18 (ΝΣΕ), r23 (ΝΣΕ), v18 (ΝΣΕ)
Ν(ι) (in close of Cleft Sentence) r25 (Ν), v16 (Ν)
Ν (in ΝΝ-...Ν) r12 (Ν), r16 (Ν)
ν- article r12 (ΝΟΟ), r18 (ΜΜΟ), v4 (ΜΗΡ)
ν- deictic article r4 (ν-), r10 (ν-), r15 (ν-), v23 (ν-)
ΦΑΙ demonstrative r19 (ΦΑΙ), r20 (ΦΑΙ), r25 (ΦΑΙ), v25 (ΦΑΙ)
ΝΑ ‘possessive r13 (ΝΑ)
ΡΩΜI ‘man’ r26 (ΡΩΜ), v28 (ΡΩΜ)
ΣΑΒΟΛ ‘outside’ r17 (ΣΑΒΟΛ)
ΣΩΤΕΜ ‘listen’ r10 (ΣΩΤΕΜ)
L'automne 21, les fouilles de l'Istituto Papirologico «E. Vitelli», dirigées par E. Pin-taud, ont été consacrées au dégagement d'une église, déjà partiellement fouillée par S. Donadoni en 19, dans la partie est de la ville. À la faveur de ces travaux, un ostracon copte a été découvert près de l'abside du sanctuaire. Le texte est écrit sur la face externe d'un fragment d'amphore Lutéoline 7, dont le bas est fortement côtelé. Le document est pratiquement complet, seuls les coins supérieurs du texte sont légèrement abîmés. Les treize lignes d'écriture sont parallèles au sens du tournage de la poterie. L'écriture est lente, appliquée, irrégulière; on n'y trouve aucun signe de cursivité et les lettres sont strictement bilinéaires; elle trahit un scribe peu expérimenté et il est par conséquent difficile de situer précisément la rédaction du document dans le temps. Comme l'église a été édifiée au Ve siècle et comme aucune caractéristique tardive ne se manifeste dans l'écriture, on pourrait proposer une datation aux VIe-VIIe siècles.

Le document est clairement articulé en deux parties, comme le montrent le vacat à la fin de la ligne 7 et la croix qui commence la ligne 11. La première moitié du document contient des salutations épistolaires (l. 1-7); divers expéditeurs et destinataires y sont mentionnés. La seconde est une citation, plutôt libre, de l'évangile selon Matthieu (Mt 2, 1; l. 1-13). Le contenu du texte et la main inexpérimentée permettent de l'identifier comme un exercice d'écriture. On trouve des compositions similaires dans P. Antichrist: opt. 143, oú on lit des noms, une citation de 2 Co 1, 1 et sans doute la formule initiale d'une lettre; dans P. Antichrist: opt. 149, où se mêlent des salutations épistolaires, un extrait de Ps. 2, 7, une invocation à la Trinité et des noms; ainsi que dans P. Antichrist: opt. 19, qui contient une citation de Ps. 1, 1-2 et le début d'une lettre.

L'ostracon présente enfin un grand nombre d'erreurs, de langue comme de copie. Le scribe commet ainsi fréquemment des haplographies ou des omissions (l. 2, 5, 7, 9 et 12) et il note parfois des séquences inintelligibles, apparemment sans lien avec le texte (l. 2, 4 et 12). Il ne faut pas pour autant imaginer qu'il copie maladroitement un modèle les erreurs phonétiques suggèrent plutôt qu'il compose son exercice de mémoire. Il confond en effet "et" lors de sa lecture (l. 9-11) pour "pour" (l. 12-13).

2. Greek Lexemes

άρχησαις r13 ([αρχησαις], r15 ([αρχησαις], r27 ([αρχησαις]), v7 ([αρχησαις]), Γαλλαίος v7 ([γαλλαίος]), δέ r15 (δέ), r18 (δέ), r19 (δέ), r26 (δέ), r27 (δέ), v14 (δέ), v20 (δέ), v23 (δέ), 

ίνα r17 ([ινα], r28 ([ινα]), προφητεύω v15 (προφητεύω), προφητής r7 (προφητής), υπηρέτης r14 (ὑπηρέτης),

3. Proper Names

ιης r9 ([ιης], r26 ([ιης]), 

ναζαρέτ v26 (ναζαρέτ), πέτρος r11 (πέτρος),