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Anne Boud'hors

**THE COPTIC OSTRACA
OF THE THEBAN HERMITAGE MMA 1152
3. EXERCISES (O. GURNA GÓRECKI 97–161)**

The publication of the Coptic documentation found by Tomasz Górecki in the hermitage MMA 1152 (Western Thebes) is progressing. After the letters and the legal and economic texts,¹ a third category is offered here,² namely the ostraca gathered under the term 'Exercises'. An elusive category indeed, including many different activities, which probably can be labelled under the general term 'educational'.³ In this context, any classification is problematic, the boundaries being blurry and many ostraca witnessing several kinds of exercises. Nevertheless, I tried to distinguish three categories: first, the ostraca containing quotations of Psalms, then other texts apparently copied for a 'pious' reason (a very heterogeneous group, full of doubts about the content and function of the texts), and finally the writing exercises (alphabets, pen trials, and other kinds of training).⁴

The indications concerning the dimensions, the material, and in a few cases the circumstances of the discovery of the ostraca, are from Tomasz Górecki.⁵

97–106. OSTRACA WITH PSALM VERSES

The Psalms are the most widely used biblical text in Coptic documentary texts. What we group under the term 'ostraca with Psalm verses' includes different kinds of uses: extracts from Psalms copied for the purpose of memorization and meditation, or as writing practice; compositions of Psalm verses, made up of verses from several Psalms and based on different principles of choice (keywords, themes, etc.) that are not always identified; and, finally, magic texts.⁶ A recent census of all these ostraca shows that they are numerous (almost two hundred), especially coming from

¹ A. Boud'hors, 'The Coptic ostraca of the Theban hermitage MMA 1152. 1. Letters (*O. Gurna Górecki* 1–68)', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 47 (2017), pp. 45–100; eadem, 'The Coptic ostraca of the Theban hermitage MMA 1152. 2. Legal and economic documents (*O. Gurna Górecki* 69–96)', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 48 (2018), pp. 53–102.

² Actually, the last category. In an article in preparation for the next issue of the *JJP*, I will include some addenda to the previous series, describe some unidentified texts, and above all try to provide a synthesis.

³ To have an idea of the variety of the texts involved, see *P. Unterricht. kopt.*

⁴ I am indebted to Alain Delattre for suggestions and comments on a first draft of this article, and, above all, for the brilliant identification of 108, a new attestation of the reply of Jesus to the king Abgar, for which I am especially grateful.

⁵ Thanks to a table he sent me a few months before his death. I am grateful to Julia Górecka, who was kind enough to explain me the details written in Polish.

⁶ See A. Delattre, 'Ostraca des Musées de Berlin portant des extraits des Psaumes en copte', [in:] V. Lepper (ed.), *Forschung in der Papyrussammlung: Eine Festgabe für das Neue Museum*, Berlin 2012, pp. 387–398.

the Theban region, but often without their place of discovery being known.⁷ The pieces found in the hermitage MMA 1152 have the advantage of benefiting from an archaeological context. Their number is surprisingly large, in comparison with those found in the hermitage of the monk Frange (the single truly ‘psalmic’ ostrakon is *O. Frange* 33, in Greek), but more in accordance with the ten ostraca of this kind coming from the monastery of Epiphanius monastery (*P. Mon. Epiph.* 10–16, 18–20). Here we have quotations of Psalms (97–102) as well as compositions of Psalm verses (103–106), the identification of the latter two remaining somewhat uncertain.⁸

97. Psalm 1:1

Inv. no. C.O. 169

6.7 × 7.3 cm

Limestone

Careful bilinear writing, slightly sloping to the right, with letters well separated. The μ has three strokes, the horizontal bar of the τ has vertical appendices at each end. The superlinear stroke is used sporadically. The ostrakon probably contained all of verse 1, but nothing more.

ΝΑΙΑΤϚ ΜΠΡΩ-
 ΜΕ ΕΤΕ ΜΠΕϚΒΩΚ
 ΖΜ.ΠΩΟΧΝΕ ΝΝ⊠-
 4 ΔΣΕΒΗΣ ΜΠΕϚΔΖΕ-
 ΡΑΤϚ ΖΙ ΤΕΖΙΗ ΝΝΡΕϚ-
 [ρ] ΝΟΒΕ ΜΠΕϚΖΜΟ-
 [ΟΣ ΖΙ Τ]ΚΔΘΕ[ΔΡΑ]
 [ΝΝΛΟΙΜΟΣ]

3 & 6. ΜΠΕϚ: ΕΜΠΕϚ Budge

Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, (and) has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of evil men.

98. Psalm 1:1a and exercises

Inv. no. C.O. 172

11.2 × 10.4 cm

Limestone

The text of the Psalm stops before the end of verse 1 and is followed by the beginning of an alphabet, perhaps by the same hand. The writing is of the same kind as that of 97, a little more straight. Another hand traced some letters on the left side (in italics in the edition). On the other side, there is a series of crosses of type † (which is usually found at the head of documents), followed by the end of the alphabet (letters of Egyptian origin), then a line of Θ, and a few letters.⁹

Recto

⁷ See A. Delattre, ‘Between education and religion: Quotations and compositions of Psalms verses in the Theban area’, [in:] A. Maravela & Á. T. Mihálykó (eds.), *New Perspectives on Religion, Education, and Culture at Christian Western Thebes (VI–VIII)*, Oslo forthcoming.

⁸ Translations are taken from <<http://epelorient.free.fr>> (version of 2004), using the old forms of the second person.

⁹ Psalm quotations followed by alphabets or writing exercises are not unusual: see G. Schenke, ‘Zwei Schultexte der Bodleian Library in Oxford: Das Gebet eines frommen Sünders, ein Psalmenvers und Fragen zur Reihenfolge des koptischen Alphabets’, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 56 (2010), pp. 290–293, esp. 292.

ναια[τϣ μπρω-]
 με ετ[ε μπεϑβωκ]
 [ε]μ. πψο[χνε νν-]
 4 [αεε]βης μ[πεϑ-]
 [αε]ερατϣ ει [τεζηη]
 νηρεϑρ. ν[οβε]
 ΜΝ α β γ δ ε ☒ [?]
 8 Νροω

Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners ...

2. For the order of the Egyptian letters of the alphabet, see the introduction to the alphabets (138–148) below.

Verso

[?] ϣ ϣ ϣ ϣ.
 [ψ] ϣ ε β χ [?]
 [?] θ θ [?]
 4 [?] . . . [?]
 [?] . αβ [?]
 [?] . [?]

99. Psalm 1:1–2

Inv. no. C.O. 178

6.5 × 5 cm

Limestone

Inscribed on both sides. The writing, not very skilful, always with the typical three strokes-μ, recalls that of 104 and 108. On the back, there are traces of two lines, in a large straight writing.¹⁰

Recto

 [---] μπϑαζε-
 [ρατϣ] ει τεζηη ν-
 [ηρεϑρ ν]οβε μπεϑ-
 4 [εμοος ει] τκαετρα
 [ννλοιμοσ ² α]λλα ερε☒?
 [πεϑογωψ (ψοοπ) εμ πν]ομοσ μ-
 [πχοεις αγω ϣ]ηαμε
 8 [λετα μπεϑνομ]οσ
 [μπεζοο]γ.
 [μν τεγψ]η. †

[Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, (and)] has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of evil men. ² But his pleasure is in the law of the Lord, and he will meditate in his law day and night.

¹⁰ I have no image of the backside, but I saw the ostrakon in November 2010.

6. This line is too long and its reading very uncertain; the ostrakon does not seem broken on the right, judging by the central bar of the € (l. 7), which extends as in the end of a line; it may be necessary to assume a variant of the Budge text, with the omission of $\Psi\text{O}\text{O}\Pi$, which does not change the meaning.
9–10. The reconstruction of the text is uncertain.

Verso

 ΝΕ[-----]
 ΞΩΝ[---]

100. Psalm 65:10–15 (extracts)

Inv. no. C.O. 292

8.3 × 15.7 cm

Pottery: 'X'¹¹

The writing is regular and slightly sloping; the shape of the μ is close to the minuscule (with the extension of the left leg below the line).¹² The ink has faded a lot. In the upper left part are circled letters. To the right of this circle, the space is empty, except for the traces of a line whose deciphering is hazardous.

Top left, in a circle:

[---]ρωτ.

Perhaps ΝΕζ]ρωτ, 'the wine-presses', as in the title of Ps. 8:80 and 83?

In the upper space:

..... α. ϣΟϞΕΞΕΤΞ

	[ακπισε μ]μοι.ΝΘΕ ΕΨΔΥΠΙΣΕ ΜΠΖΑΤ ΔΚΝΤ ΕΒΟΛ	65:10b + 12b
	[ΖΙΤΝ ΟΥΚΩΖ]Τ ΜΝ.ΟΥΜΟΟΥ. ΔΚΝΤΝ.ΕΒΟΛ ΕΥΜΑ	
	[ΝΜΤΟΝ ΨΝΔΒ]ΩΚ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΠΕΚΗΙ.ΨΝΔΨ ΝΑΚ ΝΞΝΑ-	65:13a* + 13b
4	[ΕΡΗΤ ΨΝΑΤΑ]ΛΟ.ΝΑΚ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΝΖΕΝΚΛΙΛ †	65:15a
	[ακπισε μμοι] ΝΘΕ ΕΨΔΥΠΙΣΕ ΜΠΖΑΤ ΔΚΝΤ	65:10b + 12b
	[ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΝ ΟΥΚ]ΩΖΤ.ΜΝ.ΟΥΜΟΟΥ ΔΥΩ ΔΚΖΙ	
	[ca. 17–18] ΜΝ.ΟΥ. [---]	

1. μ]μοι:μμον Budge | ακντ: ανει Budge || 2. ακντν: ακντ Budge || 4. κλιλ: βλιλ Budge || 5. ακντ: ανει Budge

^{10b} *You have tried me with fire as silver is tried.* ^{12b} *You brought me through the fire and water, you brought us into a place of refreshment.* ¹³ *I will go into your house (with whole burnt-offerings), I will pay you my vow.* ¹⁵ *I will offer to you whole-burnt sacrifices.*

^{10b} *You have tried me with fire as silver is tried.* ^{12b} *You brought me through the fire and water, and you took ...*

¹¹ I have not been able to decipher this abbreviation. In his description, Górecki added: 'creamish yellow slip, body diam. 31 cm'. According to him, inv. nos. C.O. 287, 288, and 289 are from the same the fabric, if not the same container. However, their texts could not be identified. In Górecki's table, nos. 271–294 are all from the same 'locus' 31.

¹² This hand is close to that of inv. no. C.O. 290a, a fragment of a letter to be published in the *addenda* of the last article.

6–7. ἀγω ἀκχι does not match anything in this Psalm; given the remains of the next line, could one assume a gloss of verse 12b: ἀγω ἀκχι | [ΤΝ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΙΤΝ ΟΥΚΩΖΤ] ΜΝ.ΟΥΜ[ΟΟΥ]?

101. Psalm 83:3 (end) – 6 (beginning)

Inv. no. C.O. 007

4 × 7.2 cm

Pottery: Aswan, with bitumen

Bilinear and slightly sloping hand. There seems to be a vertical line on the left.

[---] | ΝΖΗΤ⁴ ΝΕΚΘΥΣ[ΙΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΝΝΒΟΜ ΠΑΡΡΟ ΑΓΩ]
[---] | ΠΑΝΟΥΤΕ⁵ ΝΑΙΔΤΟΥ [ΝΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ ΕΤΟΥΗΖ]
[--- | ΖΜ Π]ΕΚΗΙ..ΣΕΝΑ[ΣΜΟΥ ΕΡΟΚ ΨΔ ΕΝΕΖ ΝΕΝΕΖ]
4 [--- | ΔΙΑΨΑΛΜΑ] †⁶ Ν[ΔΙΑΤΥ ΜΠΡΩΜΕ ...]

2. ΝΑΙΔΤΟΥ CORR. EX ΝΑΤΟΥ

[³ Yea, the sparrow has found himself a home, and the turtle-dove a nest for herself], where [she may lay her young, ⁴ even] your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. ⁵ Blessed are they that dwell in your house: they will praise you ever more. Diapsalma †⁶ B[lessed is the man whose help is ...]

102. Ps. 87:2–3a and pen trials

Inv. no. C.O. 306

7.3 × 16.1 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Slightly careless bilinear writing. The drawing of the μ, which is quite fast (three strokes), seems to have caught the attention of the scribe, who has disseminated it in all the available spaces.

† ΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΠΑΟΥ-
ΧΑΙ..ΔΙΩΨ ΕΖΡΑΙ..ΜΠΕΚΜ-
ΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ ΜΠΕΖΟΥ ΜΝ.ΤΕΥ-
4 ΨΗ³ ΜΑΡΕΠΑΨΛΗΛ ΕΙ ΕΖΟ<Υ>Ν
ΜΠΕΚΜ ☒ ΤΟ ΕΒΟΛ ·

3. ερολ ostr.

² O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried by day and in the night before you. ³ Let my prayer come in before you ...

103. Extracts of Psalms 118 & 104

Inv. no. C.O. 232

13.7 × 14.3 cm

Imported amphora

This very well-preserved ostrakon was one of the previously known pieces coming from the site.¹⁴ The writing is quite skilful, but a bit constrained: the scribe seems to have been trained in writing administrative or legal documents, and if he strives for bilinearity and to separate letters well, he sometimes betrays himself by ligatures, especially for ει (also note the quick writing of μεεγε at the end of l. 17). This hesitation is also visible in the two forms of μ (with three or four strokes, and even close to the majuscule in βμβομ in l. 16), as well as in the almost minuscule form of π of μπειρακτ (l. 11). Conversely, note the epigraphic form of α at the beginning of line 12. Superlinear strokes are rare: some occurrences on monosyllabic vowels, some others as separators at the end of a word (νιμ in l. 15, χοεις in l. 16), whereas its occurrence on ακ (l. 2) and κα (l. 5) is less easy to explain. A *paragraphos* in the form of the letter *zeta* is used at the beginning of line 8, between verses 155 and 156 of Ps. 118, even though there is no jump in the text, as well as in the middle of line 13, to mark the passage from Ps. 118 to Ps. 104.¹⁵

	† ΔΙΕΙΜΕ ΕΒΟΛ ΖΝ ΝΕΚΜΝΤΜΝ-	118:152
	τρε ξε ντοκ ακμν εντε μμοου	
	ψα ενεε μπρεωπ εροι ννεκентολη	118:19b
4	αναυ επαθββιο νγναεμετ κρινε	118:153a + 154
	μπαεαπ νγωτε μμοι..μ̄τανεοι..κᾱ-	
	τα νεκεαπ† ξε πογχαι ουνη ννερεφρ-	118:155
	νοβε ξε μπουψινε νσα νεκδικαι(ωμα)	
8	ζ ναψε νεκμντψανετηε εματε	118:156
	πχοεις ματανεοι.κατα πεκψαχε	
	ναψε νετπнт νσωι..εθλιβε μμοι	118:157
	μπειρακτ εβολ ννεκμнтμнтρε	
12	αιναυ ναθнт айωλ εβολ ξε μπουεα-	118:158
	ρεε ενεκψαχε ζ χω εροφ ψαλει εροφ	104:2a
	χι ταειο εμ πεφραν ετογαав μαρεп-	104:3
	εнт εγφρανε νογον νιμ.ετψινε	
16	νσα πχοεις.ψινε νσα πχοεις.νтетнβμβομ	104:4
	[ψινε νσα πεεεο] νογοειψ νιμ айр[ι] πμεεγε	104:5
	[ννεεψπнρε ca. 8] нтачаау аγω	
	[νεαп нтеεтапро песпер]μα να[βραεαμ]	104:6a
	[νεεεμεαλ -----]	

1. ΔΙΕΙΜΕ: χιν νψορη ΔΙΕΙΜΕ Budge || 6. ΝΕΚΕΑΠ: πεπ^{sic}ψαχε Budge (l. πεκψαχε) | ξε om. Budge || 13. ψαλει: νтетнψαλλει Budge || 14. χι: νтетнχι Budge || 15. ΝΟΓΟΝ ΝΙΜ ΕΤΨΙΝΕ: ννετψινε Budge || 17. айр corr. ex айр: айр Budge || 18. ννεεψπнρε νтеε^{sic}ααυ νεεεβнге аγω Budge

^{118:152} *I have known (of old) concerning your testimonies, that you have founded them for ever.* ^{118:19b} *Hide not your commandments from me.* ^{118:153a} *Look upon my affliction, and rescue me.* ^{118:154} *Plead my cause, and ransom me: quicken me according to your judgments.* ^{118:155} *Salvation is far from sinners, for*

¹³ These pieces of information do not come from Górecki's table, but from the caption of the picture in his report in *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 19 (see next note).

¹⁴ The ostrakon is reproduced in T. Górecki, 'Sheikh Abd el-Gurna Hermitage in Tomb 1152 and Chapel in Tomb 1151', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 19 (2010), fig. 4, at p. 300.

¹⁵ A similar phenomenon was noted by Alain Delattre in O. Brooklyn inv. 37.1866 E, where a *zeta* follows a Psalm quotation (see A. Delattre, 'Bemerkungen zu Papyri, no. 518', *Tyche* 19 [2004], pp. 250–260).

they have not searched out your ordinances. ^{118:156} Your mercies, O Lord, are many; quicken me according to your word. ^{118:157} Many are they that persecute me and oppress me, but I have not declined from your testimonies. I beheld men acting foolishly, and I pined away; for they kept not your oracles.

^{104:2a} Sing to him, sing praises to him! ^{104:3} Glory in his holy name! Let the heart of them that seek the Lord rejoice. ^{104:4} Seek the Lord, and be strengthened; seek his face continually. ^{104:5} Remember [his wonders ...] that he has done, and the judgments of his mouth, ^{104:6} seed of A[braham, his servants ...]

6. The cross above the π of εαπ may indicate the textual error.

18. Here the ostracon had a reading different from that of Budge: perhaps [ννεϕϖπηρε νεϕεβηϕε] ΝΤαϕααϕ.

104. Psalm 144:20–21, title of Psalm 145, Psalm 145:9–10

Inv. no. C.O. 158

16 × 11.5 cm

Limestone¹⁶

Inscribed on both sides. Small bilinear writing.¹⁷ It is impossible to know which side is front and which is back: because of erosion, side (b), which was fully inscribed, has retained traces of only a few lines, the contents of which I cannot identify. The upper edge is also inscribed: it may contain the end of the last verse of Ps. 146, then the first verse of the same Psalm. As for the front, it is worth noting that the two extracts begin with ΠΧΘΕΙΣ ΝΑΖΑΡΕΞ.

Side (a)

Μ. [. .] . . [---]
^{144:20} [π]χθεϊς ναζαρεξ εογο[ν νιμ ε-]
 τμε μμοϕ αγ<ω> ϕναϕωτ[ε εβολ]
 4 νρρεϕρ νοβε τηροϕ ²¹ τ[αταπρο]
 ναχω μπεςμοϕ μπχοεις μαρ[εσα-]
 ρξ νιμ σμοϕ επεϕραν ετοϕαα[β]
 ψα ενεξ αγω ψα ενεξ ενενεξ
 8 [αλλ]ηλοϕια πα<α>γγαιος με ζαχαριας title of 145
 ς-----ς-----ς-----ς-----ς-----ς-----ς⊠
^{145:9} [πχοεις] ναζαρεξ επιρωσχηλϕ-
 [τοσ αγ]ω.ϕ `ν´αψωωπ εροϕ μ⊠πορ-
 [ϕανο]ς μν.τεχηρα ϕνατακο
 12 [ντεξι]η νρρεϕρ νοβε ¹⁰ πχο-
 [εις ν]αρ<ρ>ρο ψα ενεξ εψ . .
 [2/3 ε]νεξ νενεξ πεν-
 [νοϕ]τε νσιων ψα οϕ-
 16 [χω]μ μν.οϕχωμ.
 [α]λληλοϕια πα<α>γ- title of 145 or 147
 γαιωσ με σα-
 [χ]αριας
 20 ϕ.-----ϕ.
 . [. .] . [.] ος

¹⁶ From Gorecki's table: '21.03.2005; tomb, flooring level'.

¹⁷ Which evokes that of inv. no. C.O. 305 (still unpublished).

3. ἀγ<ω> φναφωτε: ἀγω ναφωτε Budge || 4. νρηεφρ νοβε: νρηεφρ νοβε Budge || 8. με: μν. Budge || 9. ναζαρεε: ζαρεε Budge | επιρωσληγτοε: ενεπροσληγτοε Budge || 10. ἀγω om. Budge | ψωωπ: ψωπ Budge | μπορ σοττ. εκ μμοκ? || 11. φνατακο: νφτακο Budge || 13-14 ψα. ενεεε εψ. . [2/3 ε]νεεε νενεεε: ψα ενεεε Budge || 14-15. πεν[νογ]τε κωων ψα: πογνογτε κωων ν^{sic}ψα Budge || 17-19. πα<α>γγαιωε με σα[χ]αριαε: παγγαιωε μν ζαχαριαε Budge

^{144:20} *The Lord will preserve all that love him: but all sinners he will utterly destroy.* ^{144:21} *My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.* ¹⁴⁵ *Alleluia, (a Psalm) of Aggaeus and Zacharias.* ^{145:9} *The Lord will preserve the strangers, he will relieve the orphan and widow, but will utterly remove the way of sinners.* ^{145:10} *The Lord shall reign forever, our God of Sion, to all generations.* ¹⁴⁵ or ¹⁴⁷ *Alleluia, (a Psalm) of Aggaeus and Zacharias.*

1. This line could contain an invocation: μαρια ψλ[ηλ] εχ[ων]?

14-15. The text seems to be wrong here: somehow, the possessive πογ- (feminine possessor) sometimes written πε- in Thebes, may have been misinterpreted.

Upper edge:

ΝΕΤΖΕΛΠΙΖΕ [ΕΠΕΦΝΑ] ΔΛ-
ΛΟΥΙΑ ΣΜΟΥ. ΕΠΣΟΕΙΣ ΧΕ. ΝΑΝΟΥ
ΨΑΛΜΟΣ

105. Psalm 103:12-14

Inv. no. C.O. 293

11.1 × 11 cm

Pottery: 'X'¹⁸

Fragment of pottery, the upper part of which was streaked and left empty. The hand is quite experienced, and a lot of diacritical marks are used, including a kind of cross on the ο or the ω twice (l. 4 and 6); μ is wide.

At least Ps. 103:12-14 (ll. 1-3) is identifiable; if the verses were complete, the ostrakon was large. What follows is more difficult: perhaps Ps. 64:10 (a-c); the last line could be Ps. 71:15 (with ΝΟ]ΥΒ ΝΤ[αραβια]); as the traces of line 6 do not correspond to the beginning of this verse, lines 5-6 must form another quotation, which ends at the cross of line 6, but I could not identify it.

[^{103:12} ψαγογωε εχωωγ νβι νεα]λατε.ν[α]τπε.ψαγτ ντ[εγσμη ντμητε νμπετρα ¹³
πετσο νν-]

[τογειν εβολ εν νεφπετσοε πκ]αε ναμογε εβολ εν κκαρ[ποε ννεεεεβηγε ¹⁴ πεττ ογω
νοχορτοε]

[νντβνοογε ογογτογετ ντμητεμεα]λ ννηρωμε † ^{64:10} ακβ[μ ψωινε μπκαε ακτρεεεε]
4 [ακ ταψε ααφ νρημαο] απειρω.† πνογτε.μ[ογε μμοογ ---]
[---] vac. εσνεεκλω ν[---]
[---] πτε.ο† † . [---]
[---] γβ ντ[---]
8 [---] . . [---]

^{103:12} *By them shall the birds of the sky lodge; they shall utter a voice out of the midst of the rocks.* ¹³ *He waters the mountains from his chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of your works.* ¹⁴ *He makes grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men.* ^{64:10} *You have visited the earth,*

¹⁸ I have not been able to decipher this abbreviation. Górecki added: 'Light red slip; body diam. 28 cm'.

and saturated it; you have abundantly enriched it. The river of God is filled with water [--- 71:15? And he shall live, and there shall be given him of the] gold of A[rabia ---]

i. Traces of correction or from a previous text.

106. Psalm 100:2 (?) & 60:8

Inv. no. C.O. 008

4 × 3.6 cm

Pottery: Aswan, with bitumen?

This fragment is quite similar to 101, but the writing is smaller and less careful. It contains the remains of two Psalm quotations, the first being uncertain (see commentary). The large stroke between lines 3 and 4 could mark the separation between the two quotations. As for the link between them, it is perhaps the expression ἵνα ψαλλεῖ, which is found at the head of Ps. 100:2 and in Ps. 60:8.

 [?] . . [---]
 [?] π̄χ(οει)ς . [---]
 [?] ΝΕΙΜΟ[---]
 4 ται τ[ε̄ θε̄ εἵνα ψαλλεῖ ἐπεκραν̄ π̄νουτε̄ ψα] 60:8
 ε̄νεε̄ [νε̄νεε̄ ---]

2. π̄χ̄ostr.

2-3. The most plausible restitution for line 3 is ΝΕΙΜΟ[ο̄ψε, 'I walked', of which there are three occurrences in the Psalms: 37:7, 100:2, 118:45; the mention of π̄χ̄ (l. 2) is found in 100:2 in what precedes ΝΕΙΜΟο̄ψε, namely: χε̄ ερε̄ π̄χοεις̄ π̄νουτε̄ νη̄ῡ ψαροῑ τ̄ναῡ, 'When will the Lord God come to me?'; however, the letter that follows π̄χ̄ in the ostrakon does not look like a π.

For the abbreviation π̄χ̄ in ostraca containing Psalms, see, for example, C. Heurtel, 'Extracts of Psalms in four ostraca from IFAO', *Chronique d'Égypte* 92 (2017), pp. 181-190, no. 4.

5-6. 'So will I sing to your name, God, for ever and ever'.

107-137. 'PIOUS' TEXTS AND EXERCISES

107. Biblical quotations and exercise of cryptography

This ostrakon, made up of three glued pieces (Inv. nos. C.O. 029+077+078), and published in exemplary fashion in 2012 by Tomasz Górecki and Adam Łajtar,¹⁹ is not published again here. The publication is indeed exemplary in many respects (careful editing and interpretation, detailed description of the medium, the writing and the archaeological context, discussion of the function of such an object), which demonstrates the benefit of collaboration between specialists.

The presence of disparate texts on the same ostrakon (quotations in Greek borrowed from the Bible – including several from the Psalms – and from other sources, a cryptographic alphabet and its application in a Coptic example), all in a practiced writing close to that of the Psalter *P. Mon. Epiph.* 578 (known as 'U' in the editions of the Greek Psalter), invites us to recognize an 'educational' activity in the hermitage, which should be better understood in the light of the other exercises of

¹⁹ T. Górecki & A. Łajtar, 'An ostrakon from the Christian hermitage in MMA 1152', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 42 (2012), pp. 135-164.

all kinds published here. Moreover, this ostracon illustrates well the artificial aspect of the distinctions made in this article for practical reasons, but which are probably not so clear in an educational perspective.

108. End of the letter of Jesus to Abgar

Inv. no. C.O. 310

6.1 × 11.5 cm

Limestone

The writing is straight, quite clumsy, using a thick reed. The identification of the text is due to Alain Delattre: it is the end of the answer of Jesus to the king Abgar, a text very famous in the Christian East and of which many occurrences are known in Coptic, especially as amulet on sheets of papyrus or wooden tablets.²⁰ The text is quite similar to the P. Mich. inv. 6213 published in Kevin Sullivan and Terry Wilfong.²¹ For another ostracon containing at least the beginning of the letter, see *O. Saint-Marc* 398. Its abbreviated version is found in *O. Mon. Epiph.* 50.

[ΑΝΟΚ ΠΕ ΙϚΑΝΟΚ ΠΕΝΤΑϞΣΖΑΙ ΝΤΙ-]
ΕΠΙ[Ϛ]Τ[ΟΛΗ] ΞΝ. [ΤΑΒΙΧ]
ΠΜΑ ΒΕ ΕΤΟΥΝΑΤ[ΩΒΕ ΕΒΟΛ]
ΝΞΗΤϞ ΝΤ[ΕΙ]ΒΙΧ ΝΣΖ[ΑΙ ΝΝΕΛΑΑΥ]
4 ΝΤΥΝΑΜ[ΙϚ] ΝΤΕ ΠΑΝΤ[ΙΚΕΙΜΕΝΟΣ ΟΥΔΕ]
ΛΑΑΥ. ΝΞΝΕΡΓΙΑ ΜΠ[ΝᾹΝΑΚΑΘΑΡ-]
ΤΟΝ ΕΥϞΜ. Β[ΟΜ ΕΞΟΥΝ ΕΠΜΑ]
ΕΤΜΜ[ΔΥ ---]

It is I Jesus, who have written this letter (ἐπιστολή) with my hand. As for the place where one will affix this manuscript, no (4) power (δύναμις) of the Adversary (ἀντικείμενος), nor any activity (ἐνεργεία) of unclean (ἀκάθαρτον) spirit (πνεῦμα) will be able to come near that place [---]

109–118. Extracts from literary texts?

Among the texts published below, all very fragmentary, the same hand (also close to that of 106) seems to have copied several ostraca (109–116), whose images, taken at different scales, did not permit confirming joins. Pottery is in each case of the Aswan type. The writing is sloping and more or less regular; note the shape of the κ, whose lower bar starts at half of the upper one, and that of the μ, in three strokes, and often appearing as ‘suspended’.

109. Homiletic or wisdom text?

²⁰ See the detail of the attestations in M. Geerard, *Clavis apocryphorum Novi Testamenti*, Turnhout 1992, pp. 67–68. For an updated bibliography on the subject, see R. Bélanger Sarrazin, ‘Les appels au «Jésus guérisseur» dans les formules iatromagiques coptes’, [in:] A. Boud’hors, E. Garel, C. Louis, & N. Vanthieghem (eds.), *Études coptes XVI. Dix-huitième journée d’études (Bruxelles, 22–24 juin 2017)*, Paris forthcoming.

²¹ K. P. Sullivan & T. G. Wilfong, ‘The Reply of Jesus to King Abgar: A Coptic New Testament apocryphon reconsidered (P. Mich. inv. 6213)’, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 42 (2005), pp. 107–123.

Inv. no. C.O. 031

7.4 × 8 cm

Pottery: Aswan, with bitumen

The repeated occurrence of the vetitive μηρ- points to the homiletic or wisdom genre. Separation signs between lines 8 and 9?

[] Ν. [---]
[] ωκ. [---]
[---] Ν. [.] . c. vac. ☒ [---]
4 [---] τηρογ [. . .] † [---]
[---] εογκπ. [. . .] πζωβ. [---]
[---] βετκ π. . ε εει [---]
[---] καν. . ε μηρζνηκ. . . [---]
8 [---] ολκ εροκ μπς. . . [---]
[---] εροι μηρει ρκ. [---]
[---] μηρπωτ νσα [---]
[---] ψη. . ε. [---]

7. μηρζνηκ: 'Do not move yourself.'

9. μηρει ρκ☒: 'Do not ... yourself?'

10. μηρπωτ νσα: 'Do not run after'.

110. Homiletic text?

Inv. no. C.O. 033

6.7 × 6.8 cm

Pottery: Aswan, with bitumen

The writing offers similarities with that of 109. The reading remains hazardous, not allowing much beyond the identification of the verb 'to approach' (l. 2), and the expression, typically homiletic, 'Why, o man?' (l. 7).

[---] . . . ε. [---]
[---] ζωη εζογ[η ---]
[---] χωλε μνη [---]
4 [---] κ εμραψε. [---]
[---] ζε. . . αγω ερε [---]
[---] βε. [---]
[---] αζροκ ω πρω [με ---]
8 [---] . . [---]

111. Homiletic texts?

Inv. no. C.O. 106

12.6 × 10.1 cm

Pottery: 'X'²²

²² I have not been able to decipher this abbreviation.

Two different texts separated by a horizontal line; they are probably from the same hand, but the writing of the second is smaller. The hand resembles that of 109 and 110.²³

[---] . [---]
 [---]ΧΩΚ ΕΒΟΛ ΜΝ ΤΕΚΠ[---]
 [---]ΝΤΕ ΝΑΓΓΑΙΛΟΣ Μ[---]
 4 [---]ΤΑΡΕΚΡΕΚΡΑΨΕ [---]
 [---]ΩΝΤ.ΝΝΕΝΕΡΗΤ Ν[---]
 [---]ΚΕ ΤΕΚΨΓΧΗ ΟΝ ΕΔ[---]
 [---]ΘΕ ΕΒΝ ΔΡΙΚΕ Ψ ΣΟ ΒΕ Ε[---]
 8 [---]Β ΜΗΠΩΣ ΝΓΕΠΙΘΥΜ[ΕΙ ---]
 [---]ΔΔΚ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΕΤΚΝΔΥ [---]

 [---]ΠΞΩΒ ΜΟΟΨΕ ΤΑΧΥ ΑΓΩ [---]
 [---]ΟΒΕ ΖΜ.ΠΙΣΩΜΕ ΝΖΟΓΟ ΕΨ [---]
 12 [---] . ΚΛΗΡΟΣ Ο. ΝΕΚΛΗΡΟΣ ΝΝ[---]
 [---] . ΝΕΥΕΡΗΤ ΕΓΟΓΩΨ Ε. . ΙΜΕ[---]
 [---] . ΟΥΝΝΕΙ ΟΥΔΕ ΠΕ . . ΕΙ. [---]
 traces of 2 lines

4. Τ corr. ex κ?

[---] *achieve(ment) with your* [---] *the angels* (ἄγγελος) *of* [--- (4) ---] *so that you turn joy* [---] *of our*
vows [---] *your soul* (ψυχή) *again* [---] *to find fault. Thus, refrain of* [--- (8) ---] *lest you desire*
(ἐπιθυμείν) [---] *according to* (κατά) *what you see* [---]
 [---] *the matter goes quickly* (ταχύ) *and* [---] *in the book, all the more if (?)* [--- (12) ---] *clergy/lot* [---]
clergy/lot of [---] *their vows, wanting* [---] *and not* (οὐδέ) [---]

112. Homiletic or wisdom fragment?

Inv. no. C.O. 052

3 × 3,5 cm

Pottery: Aswan, with bitumen

Remains of 4 lines. The writing and pottery are of the same kind as 109 and 110, and the vetitive μπρ- is readable in line 2, as well as the adjective 'small' just before.

[---] . ΔΨΒΔΜ[---]
 [---]ΚΟΥΙ.ΜΠΡ [---]
 [---] . Τ ΕΧΝ. Π [---]
 4 [---] . . ΕΠ. [---]

113. Fragment of a literary text?

Inv. no. C.O. 219

3 × 4,5 cm

Pottery: Aswan

The writing is the same as the previous texts.

²³ But also that of *O. Gurna Górecki* 29, which is a letter.

[-----]. [---]
 [---]. . ζΝ_ΝΕΚ. [---]
 [---]. ΕΑΓΜΟΥ ΧΕ [---]
 4 [---]ΩΒΕΤΚϚ[---]
 [---]. [. .]Β. [---]

114. Fragment of a literary text?

Inv. no. C.O. 084

2.9 × 2.3 cm

Pottery: Aswan

The writing is slightly different, more regular; a horizontal stroke divides lines 3 and 4.

. [---]
 εροκ [---]
 ΝΙΜ [---]
 4 κα. [---]
 [.] [---]

115. Fragment of a literary text?

Inv. no. C.O. 235

2.6 x 3.7 cm

Pottery: ?²⁴

The writing is similar to the previous texts. On line 4 there is perhaps the end of the abbreviation of the name Israel (πι)ηλ̄τεϚ[: this juxtaposition is found in Ps. 77:71]. Horizontal line of separation between lines 2 and 3? Traces of correction on lines 2 and 3.

 [---]. [---]
 [---]ε. . [---]
 [---]λογ̄ ζι πε. . [---]
 4 [--- πι]ηλ̄τεϚ[---]
 [---]. τ. [---]

116. Fragment of a literary text?

Inv. no. C.O. 278

6.7 × 6 cm

Pottery: Aswan, with bitumen

The writing is still the same type, but the text is very difficult to decipher, and it seems that there are several layers of text. On line 4, the Greek adjective δίκαιος, 'righteous', can be read.

 [---]. παγ. . . [---]

²⁴ No indication in Górecki's table.

[---]Κ ΝΓΟ *traces* [---]
 [---]ΤΟΝ ΕΦ. . . [---]
 4 [---]. ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ [---]
 [---]. [---]
 [---]. . . . [---]

117. Greek fragment

Inv. no. C.O. 056

6.4 × 7.5 cm

Pottery: pharaonic vessel²⁵

The text is in Greek, at least for lines 3–5. The writing is somewhat reminiscent of 109 and 110. Its size varies, as does the spacing between the lines.

 [-----]τεαμ[---]
 [---]καὶ[?]ωρεεπαμε[---]
 [---][?]αυτος ήπήρ ήμῶν [?][---]
 4 [---][?]ουλης έβουλήθ[---]
 [---][?]λικον[---]
 [---][?][---]

3. I. ὑπέρ ήμῶν

118. Fragment of a literary text?

Inv. no. C.O. 038 + C.O. 057

7.7 × 13.6 cm

Pottery: frying pan²⁶

5.8 × 11.7 cm

The two parts are connected by a point. The text is written on the inside; only the ends of lines survive. It is about seeds or sowing (l. 2 and 7) and, if the last three lines are complete, one can understand ‘from/for the one who sowed it’, but it is not a biblical text.

 [---]χω
 [---]θροθ
 [---]οογ
 4 [---]ΝΕΝΕ.
 [---]αψαλ.
 [---]. γχων
 [---]γθροθ
 8 [---]πεγ
 [---]. α
 [---]εαπε.
 [---]. ες. γα

junction between 57 and 38

²⁵ In his table, Górecki indicates ‘faraon. MT’: faraon. = farański, ‘pharaonic’; MT remains obscure.

²⁶ In his table, Górecki indicates ‘gosp. NT’: gosp.= gospodarcze, ‘facility (room)’; NT remains obscure.

- 12 [---]. ογω
 [?]μπεν
 [?]ταφχο
 [?] vac. φ.

119. Prayer?

Inv. no. C.O. 005 + C.O. 006

9.5 × 9.9 cm
 9.7 × 12.3 cm

Pottery: ?²⁷

End of a text with an ornamental cross at the bottom, perhaps a prayer or a doxology (see the last line, as well as l. 5: ‘... has overcome, Jesus has ...’). This potsherd with slip and streaks is the same as that of inv. no. C.O. 059 (edition number?), but the writing of the latter is different and its text could not be identified.

- [---]. ε.
 [---]. ΤΕΝΚ[---]
 [---]μ. . . traces? [---]
 4 [---]ε. . . . [. . .]αφε[---]
 [-----]. . ☒ . . ☒χρο ιϛ αφ. [---]
 [-----]. πωφ πε π[---]

6. Perhaps πωφ πε π[εοογ μν παμαζε], ‘To Him glory and power!’

120. Kind of prayer or pious exhortation

Inv. no. C.O. 334 (i)

7.4 × 6.3 cm

Pottery: ‘X’²⁸

The writing is bilinear and quite skilled.

- Ϡ ε[---]
 αγω . [---]
 Ν ΤΗΡΦ . [---]
 4 ΗΥ ΑΓΩ ΟΝ ΝΦΡ ΟΥ-
 ΝΑ ΜΝ.ΤΕΝΨΥΧΗ
 ΝΤΑΛΗΠΟΡΟΣ ΖΗ
 ΠΚΕΜΑ’ ΕΒΟΛ ΧΕ
 8 ΟΥΝΔΗΤ ΠΕ
 ΔΝΟΝ ΖΩΝ ΝΕΡΕΦ-
 Ρ.ΝΟΒΕ ΝΕΙΛΑ
 [.] [?]

10. ειλα (χιστος): ἐλάχιστος?

²⁷ In his table, Górecki indicates ‘gosp. NT’: gosp.= gospodarcze, ‘facility (room)!’; NT remains obscure.

²⁸ I have not been able to decipher this abbreviation.

[---] and [---] the whole [---] (4) ... and also may he have mercy on our miserable (ταλαίπωρος) soul (ψυχή) in the other world, because he is merciful. As for us, very humble sinners ...

8. The formula ΟΥΝΑΗΤ ΠΕ can come from the Psalms.

121. Pious exhortation

Inv. no. C.O. 334 (2)

17.5 × 12 cm

Pottery: ?²⁹

Inscribed on the inner side? Bilinear script slightly sloping with well separated letters. The text is freely inspired by chapters 10 and 11 of Deuteronomy and Matt. 22:37–39. It resembles the kind of teaching that can be found in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* or similar monastic literature.³⁰ Note the southern form ΖΑΤΕ in line 3 (for standard Sahidic ΖΟΤΕ). The reading of line 2 remains very uncertain.

Ⲡ ΠΕΨΟΜΤ ΝΖΩΒ
ΝΝΗ. ΕΤΡ. ΑΓΑΘΟΝ.
ΝΕ ΔΡΙ ΖΑΤΕ ΖΗ-
4 ΤϢ ΜΠΚΖΗΤ· ΝΓ-
ΤΩΒĒ ΜΜΟϢ ΝΓ-
ρ ΠΕΤΝΑΝΟϢ
ΜΠΕΤΙ.
8 ΤΟΥΩΚ ΠΕΧ. .
ΝΓ.
ΨΝ. . ΙΟ. . . .
traces of 2 lines

5. 1. ΠΕΤΝΑΝΟΥϢ

† *The three things for those doing good are: Fear (4) Him with your heart and pray to Him, and do good to your (8) neighbour [---]*

122. Prayer?

Inv. no. C.O. 307

9.5 × 7 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Straight and unskilled writing. Recognizable are the adverb ΕΖΟΥΝ on lines 1 and 5 (with a southern form ΑΖΟΥΝ), perhaps 'holy father' (l. 2), 'God' (l. 3), 'pray you' (l. 4?), and the Greek verb βοηθεῖν (l. 6).

[---] ΑΖΟΥΝ.
[---] ΩΤ ΕΤΟΥΔΒ
[---] ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΤΑΒ
4 [---] ΣΩΠΣ ΜΟΚ

²⁹ No indication in Górecki's table.

³⁰ I thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

[---] . εΙ.ΔΖΟΥΝ.
[---] ΒΩΗΘΗ
[---] . . ε

123. Visitor's note?

Inv. no. C.O. 043

5.1 × 6.3 cm

Pottery: kitchen vessel (bottom)³¹

The text, written with a clumsy hand, seems to be complete. What is the purpose of this note? Is this a message left by a visitor? To whom is it addressed? Is it simply a personal reminder? Finally, in line 3, should we read ΝΔΙ or correct Ν<Τ>ΔΙ?

† ΔΙΡ ΖΟΥΤ
ΚΑΥΒΕ ΝΖΟ-
ΟΥ ΝΔΙ ΖΙΝ
4 ΧΙΑΧ

I spent twenty-seven days here (or: for myself) since Khoiak.

124. Pious exercise?

Inv. no. C.O. 027

4.2 × 6 cm

Limestone

Side (a): large round writing in the first three lines, smaller in the fourth; lines 3–4 are reminiscent of the Psalms.

[---] . ΜΟCΙ.
[---] ΝΤΥΘ
[---] ΠΖΟΕΙC
4 [---] ΠΔΝΟΥΤΕ

Side (b) contains three superimposed letters: a large φ, the vertical bar of which crosses the central part of the ω which is below, while a Δ is perhaps added in the middle: should we recognize the abbreviated name of the month of Phaophi, or the upper part of the word φωC (cf. *O. Frange* 758), the Δ having been added afterwards to make a counterpart to ω?

125. Exercise with names of prophets?

Inv. no. C.O. 080

10 × 9 cm (6.5 × 9.5 cm)

Pottery: frying pan (bottom)³²

³¹ In his table, Górecki indicates 'gosp. NT': gosp.= gospodarcze, 'facility (room)'; NT remains obscure.

³² In his table, Górecki indicates 'gosp. NT': gosp.= gospodarcze, 'facility (room)'; NT remains obscure.

Inscribed on the internal side; same kind of container and clumsy writing as 123; we read at least the two names of Zechariah and Malachi, two of the minor Prophets. The last line may have contained the Egyptian letters of the Coptic alphabet.

ΘΝΙΕΜ
 ΖΑΧΑΡΙΑΣ
 ΜΑΛΑΧΙΑΣ
 4 . .
 ϛϣϣ[---]

126. Maxim?

Inv. no. C.O. 179

3.7 × 5.9 cm

Limestone

† ΠΕΝΘΕ : ☒[---]
 ΟΥΠΕΘΟ[ΟΥ ---]
 ΟΥΠΕΘΟΟ[Υ ---]
 4 [Π]ΠΕΝΘΕ

Can we imagine a redoubled maxim with a chiasm: ΠΕΝΘΕ ΟΥΠΕΘΟΟΥ ΠΕ, ΟΥΠΕΘΟΟΥ ΠΕ ΠΕΝΘΕ, 'Sadness is an evil, it is an evil sadness'?

127. Pious exercise in Greek

Inv. no. C.O. 105

4.1 × 11.3 cm

Pottery: pharaonic vessel³³

Large, slightly sloping and regular writing; exercise with 'the Lord' and 'the heaven'; the right part is separated from the rest by a line.

τὸν κ(ύριον)
 [τὸν] κ(ύριον) τὸν οὐρα-
 νον τὸν κ(ύριον)
 4 ????αγο?

1, 2, 3. κ(ύριον) ostr.

128. Request for prayer?

Inv. no. C.O. 251

7 × 6.2 cm

Pottery LRA 7, with bitumen

Traces of two incised lines. There was probably an extra line above, the whole constituting a formula like ΔΝΟΚ ΠΡΕ|ϣρ ΝΟΒΕ | ΑΒΡΑΔΑΜ, 'I am Abraham the sinner', as is often found in graffiti. It cannot be excluded that the text continued with ΨΛΗΛ ΕΧΩΙ, 'pray for me', as in the following

³³ In his table, Górecki indicates 'faraon. MT': faraon. = faraónski, 'pharaonic'; MT remains obscure. Same pottery as 117, which is also Greek.

ostrakon. The name Abraham is attested twice in the documentation of the hermitage (*O. Gurna Górecki* 47 and 90), but it is a common name.

ϣρ ΝΟΒΕ
ΑΒΡΑΖΑΜ

129. Request for prayer

Inv. no. C.O. 190

6 × 8.4 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

One incised line: 'Pray for me!'

[?] ΨΛΗΛ ΕΧΩΙ

130. Pious note?

Inv. no. C.O. 265

3.1 × 4.5 cm

Pottery: LRA 7

Small fragment inscribed on both sides: 'All saints'.

Face a ΝΕΤΟΥΔΔΒ
Face b ΤΗΡΟΥ

131. Invocation or decoration exercise?

Inv. no. C.O. 137

6 × 9.4 cm

Limestone

The name of God, ΠΝΟΥΤΕ, is written in a kind of cartouche. The edges of the letters touch the horizontal lines of the cartouche, much like in a *protokollon*.

132. Exercise with monograms?

Inv. no. C.O. 304

4 × 6.7 cm

Pottery: 'X?'³⁴

Parallel to the light streaks of the pottery, from bottom to top, it is possible to recognize:

1) what seems to be the monogram χϛ, with a small ω written between the branches of χ, which also allows us to see, with a little imagination, the combination ΔΩ;

2) a cross Ϟ 'pattée', with probably οϛ at the end of the right arm, which may evoke the Greek word (ϛ)Τ(ΔΥ)ΡΟϛ, 'cross';

3) a drawing that is not very legible, which could also contain a monogram.

Perpendicular to the streaks, and with a finer *kalamos*: Ϟ ΕΕϞ κ. . [---].

³⁴ I have not been able to decipher this abbreviation.

133. Exercise with letters and Greek Christian words

Inv. no. C.O. 238

24.8 × 19.4 cm

Limestone

The limestone³⁵ is very heavy; it is indeed like a student slate. Traces of erased letters show that the plate was used several times. The hand is careful and rather straight, with large and well separated letters; note that the μ has three strokes. It seems that there is only one hand, except in two places: the name of ΙΩΧΗΦ , written at the bottom of the ostrakon after a *vacat*, could be in a different hand, as well as the sequence of μ (?) located between lines 7 and 8. Górecki thought that ΙΩΧΗΦ could be the teacher's signature.³⁶ However, the hand could also be the same (the η is quite similar) and Joseph would be the student's name, or the name ΙΩΧΗΦ could even be part of the exercise.³⁷

The ostrakon involves several kinds of training: drawing round letters (ϵ , ς , \omicron) in the first two lines, then between the lines everywhere in the text; tracing ξ (ll. 3–4), a notoriously difficult letter (see *O. Frange* 482 and 483): two parallel horizontal lines have been drawn, to contain the letter in bilinearity; writing words and expressions from the Christian vocabulary: ΙϚ̄.ΠΕΧϚ̄ , ΑΡΧΗ , ΣΩΜΑ , ΑΡΧΩΝ (repeated with a mistake: ΑΡΚΩΝ), as well as the proper name ΖΕΜΕΩΝ (Simeon, l. 9).

	Ε	Σ	Ε	
	Π	Ε	Ε	
	Ξ	Ξ	Α	Σ
4	Ξ		Ξ	Ξ
	ΙϚ̄.ΠΕΧϚ̄		ΑΡΧΗ	
	ΙϚ̄.ΠΕΧϚ̄		ΣΩΜΑ	
	ΙϚ̄.ΠΕΧϚ̄		ΤΟΥΦΙ	
8	ΑΡΧΩΝ	ΑΡΚΩΝ	ΛΑ	ΖΕ
	ΖΕΜΕΩΝ			
	<i>vacat</i>			
	ΙΩΧΗΦ			

134–136. *Epistolary exercises related to the epistles of Paul*

It is well known that Christian epistolography is partly inspired by the formulae of Paul's epistles. The following three ostraca confirm this, more or less directly.

134. Epistolary exercise

Inv. no. C.O. 188

7.6 × 20.6 cm

Limestone

Inscribed on both sides; unfinished letter on one side; pen trials with the name of 'Paul the apostle' on the other one.

³⁵ Reproduced in Górecki, 'Sheikh Abd el-Gurna hermitage' (cit. n. 14), p. 300, fig. 4. I was not able to obtain the original image.

³⁶ Personal communication on the site in December 2010.

³⁷ One may remember that a certain Joseph probably was living in the hermitage at the time of the monk Frange (1st half of the 8th century: see *O. Gurna Górecki* 11), but this is a common name.

Side a

traces ΤΗΣΖΑΙ ΤΗΣΙΝΕ ΕΠΕΝΣΟΝ ΕΤΤΑΕΙΝΥ
. Ν.ΠΑ. Ο`ΝΗΚ' . . . ΤΗΡῆ ΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΕΦΕΣΜΟΥ ΕΡΟΤΝ.

αρι ΠῚΑ.ΝΙΤΝΝΟΟΥ ΠΑΙΠ ΙΩΒ ΝΗΝ

4 traces . ΝΧΟΟΥῆ ΝΗΝ ΖΝ.ΟΥΓΕΠΗ

traces ΝΝ ΑΓΩ ΟΝ ϕ

traces ☒ . ΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΣΜΟΥ ΕΡΟΚ ΑΓΩ ΝΟ.

vacat

8 . ΑΓΩ ΧΟΟΣ

... We write (and) greet our precious brother ... the whole ... May the Lord bless you. Be so kind and send us my father/Father Job (4) ... and send him to us in a hurry ... and also ... the Lord bless you and ...

Side b

ΑΓΩ ΑΧΟΟΣ

ΠΑΓΛΟΣ ΠΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ

ΠΑΓ Α Α Α ΧΟ

3. π and α are not completely formed.

135. Exercise or quotation?

Inv. no. C.O. 127

4.5 × 11.9 cm

Limestone

Probably written on the edge of a piece of limestone. The hand is clumsy. If the last letter of line 3 is more of a μ, these lines could be the beginning of one of the epistles of Paul that begins with παγλος παποστολος μπεχς, 'Paul, the apostle of Christ' (2 Co., Eph., Col., 1 Tim.).

παγλος

παποστο-

λος Ν[. . .]

4 [. .] . [---]

136. Fragment with the name of Paul

Inv. no. C.O. 176

3.5 × 3.5 cm

Limestone

[---] Νϕ ☒ ου[?]

[--- π] αγλος [?]

[---] ☒ [---]

137. Pious or epistolary exercise?

Inv. no. C.O. 130

7.2 × 9.8 cm

Limestone

Beginning of a text; the ostrakon may have contained nothing more than these three lines.

† ΠΝΟΥΤΕ
ΣΟΟΥΝ ΜΜΟΚ .
...Ε.

† *God knows you ...* (perhaps: *God knows that you ...*).

138–161. WRITING EXERCISES

138–148. *Alphabets*

This series contains copies of the alphabet, alone or in association with other texts and exercises. They bring confirmation of Gesa Schenke's suggestion that among Egyptian letters, the common order had β before α, which is not the use nowadays.³⁸

138. Alphabets

Inv. no. C.O. 013+020

11.6 × 15.1 cm Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

Straight and unskilled writing. The exercise contains two consecutive alphabets; the second one, which can be guessed more than read, may have contained only the Greek letters. Before the alphabet and on the left side of the ostrakon are trials of round letters, especially c.

α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ
λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ
τ υ φ χ ψ ω ς Ϸ
4 β α γ δ ε ζ.
η ι κ λ μ ν ξ.
π ρ σ τ
ω.

139. Alphabet

Inv. no. C.O. 022b

8 × 9.5 cm

Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

This ostrakon is part of a large amphora which supplied several ostraca (Inv. no. C.O. 022b–d + 085; see *O. Gurna Górecki* 30, 90, & 91). The right part of lines 2–4 (line 3 has been added on the rib), contains an alphabet (Greek letters only), perhaps written on another text partly erased.

εω. [---]
TN *traces* α β γ δ ε ζ η
θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ
4 NI. ο π ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω
ΟΥΜΗΨΗ ΝΣΟΠ.

³⁸ See Schenke, 'Zwei Schultexte' (cit. n. 9), p. 292.

. . . . NΘΕ ΝΕΙ
traces
8 traces

5. 'Many times'.

140. Alphabet

Inv. no. C.O. 030+048 5.5 × 10.6 cm Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

Remains of an alphabet. Straight and careful letters, especially large on line 3.

[α β γ] Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ
[ι κ] λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ
[ς] τ υ φ χ ψ ω
4 ϣ ϕ ρ β ρ

4. Stain or correction between ρ and β.

141. Alphabet(s)

Inv. no. C.O. 032 12.5 × 12.7 cm LRA 7, with bitumen

Alphabet and scattered letters. Straight and clumsy writing. Lines 3–4 seem to indicate that the alphabet was not in the right order, unless the ostrakon was very wide and contained two consecutive alphabets, the first of which having only Greek letters. The lack of an image³⁹ does not allow me to be completely sure that the last sign is the letter j, and not a cross.

[---] π ρ θ ι ς ι ς
[---] μ ς ς ς
[---] φ χ ψ ω ς ς
4 [---] μ ν ξ ο π ρ ς
[---] ϣ ϕ ρ β ρ j

142. Alphabet and drawings

Inv. no. C.O. 074 14.7 × 16.3 cm Limestone⁴⁰

Palimpsest (traces of an earlier alphabet between the lines of the most recent text); on the front side are an alphabet, a few scattered letters, and drawings (a cross in a large orb on the left, a small cross 'pattée' above, a wheel with eight spokes below); scattered letters on the back. Fairly careful

³⁹ I transcribed the ostrakon in Luxor in December 2010.

⁴⁰ The front side of this ostrakon was reproduced in I. Antoniak, 'Preliminary remarks on the Coptic ostraca from seasons 2003 and 2004', *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 16 (2005), pp. 244–247, fig. 2. I was not able to obtain the original picture, but I saw the ostrakon in December 2010 in Luxor.

straight letters (μ with three strokes). Note that the letter j is present among the Egyptian letters, which does not seem to be systematic.

α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ [λ]
 μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ τ υ
 φ χ ψ ω : ω ϣ
 4 ε β α j

143. Incomplete alphabet

Inv. no. C.O. 134

7.5 × 13.2 cm

Pottery: pink, with bitumen

Half of the alphabet arranged in a line at the top of the ostrakon. A few traces of ink are visible on the rest of the surface, but do not indicate whether or not the entire alphabet was arranged on one line. The writing is straight.

α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν, [---]

144. Alphabet

Inv. no. C.O. 135

11.6 × 6.2 cm

Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

Sketches of letters, among which an alphabet stands out. Straight and careful letters (μ with four strokes). The ostrakon has been used several times.

μ [---]
 Ϝ α β γ δ [ε ζ η ι κ λ]
 μ ν ξ [ο π ρ σ τ υ φ]
 4 χ ψ [ω ϣ ϥ Ϸ]
 β α [---]
 z [---]

145. Fragment of an alphabet

Inv. no. C.O. 261

2.9 × 5.9 cm

Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

[---] κ λ μ ν ξ ο, π, [---]

146. Fragment of an alphabet?

Inv. no. C.O. 303

3.2 × 3.1 cm

Pottery: 'X'⁴¹

Remains of two Egyptian letters from an alphabet arranged in columns?

⁴¹ I have not been able to decipher this abbreviation.

 [---] . [---]
 [---] Ϟ [---]
 [---] x [---]

147. Playing with the alphabet

Inv. no. C.O. 274

7 × 6.7 cm

Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

The exercise is arranged in six columns separated into two groups of three columns by a wavy vertical line. In the first set, the letters are associated in pairs combining the extremes of the Greek alphabet (α and ω), then β and ψ, and so on until μ and ν. In the second, the first letter of each third of the alphabet is associated with the fifth (α and ε, ι and ρ, ρ and φ), then the second to the sixth, the third to the seventh, the fourth to the eighth. Does this correspond to cryptographic practices?⁴² The writing is skilful, slightly sloping.

	α	ε.	ο.	α	Ϸ	
	ω	γ.	λ.	ε	χ	
		ζ	μ.	ι	γ	Υ
4		τ.	ν	ν	η	
	β	η	---	ν	λ	ω
	ψ	Ϸ		ρ	ο	---
	γ	θ		φ	τ	
8	χ	ρ.		β	ψ	
	Δ	ι		ζ	Δ	
	φ	π		κ	θ	
		κ		ξ	[μ]	
12		ξ.			[π]	

148. Remains of an alphabet (?)

Inv. no. C.O. 139

6.7 × 6 cm

Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

Looking at the ostrakon vertically, one can distinguish, in the apparent disorder, some alphabetic sequences: φ x ψ are aligned at the bottom of the ostrakon; the x is surmounted by a φ, itself surmounted by a ν which is before a ξ; above the lowest φ is a Ϟ itself topped by a x.

 . . . [---]
 [---]
 x ν ξ . [---]
 4 Ϟ . φ [---]
 φ x ψ [---]

⁴² For another exercise of cryptography, see 107, where the common system is used.

149. Names of towns

Inv. no. C.O. 035+060

10.5 × 8.6 cm

Pottery: import?⁴³

Inscribed on both sides. Perhaps a list of cities or regions of Eastern Christendom: it includes the names of the Pentapolis (l. 2), perhaps Africa (l. 3),⁴⁴ Syria (l. 4), Nazareth (l. 6), Rakote (= Alexandria; l. 7), and on side (b), that of Jerusalem (ll. 2 and 3). Clumsy writing.

Side a Ϡ πρεμθαρε.
 ΠΕΝΤΑΠΟΛΙΣ
 ΤΑΦΛΗΚΕ 4 ΤΣΙΡΙΑ . . . Λ . ΖΑΤΕ
 [?] ΝΑΖΑΡ`Ε΄Θ.
 [?] ΡΑΚΟΤΕ
traces of 2 or 3 lines

Side b
 [---] ΧΟΦΕ
 [---] ΘΙ(ΕΡΟΥΣΑ)ΛΗΜ
 [---] ΘΙ(ΕΡΟΥΣΑ)ΛΗΜ
 4 [.] Μ. Δ. ΛΕ
 . ΝΕΙΚΚΟΣ
 ΝΕ. ΩΡΤ
 ΝΕ. CN
traces of 2 lines

150. Greek words

Inv. no. C.O. 050

10.4 × 4 cm

Pottery: qadus⁴⁵

The shard is inscribed on both sides. On the external face a text (fragment of a letter or act) is written with a sloping and skillful hand.⁴⁶ The inner side seems to keep the remains of a list of Greek words: βλάβη, 'harm', λύπη, 'grief', ἡδονή, 'pleasure'.

traces of 4 lines
 [--- Β]ΛΑΒΗ
 [---] ΤΛΥΠΗ.
 [--- ΖΗ]ΔΟΝΗ

⁴³ In his table, Górecki indicates 'import? MT?'; MT remains obscure.

⁴⁴ According to an attractive suggestion by the anonymous reviewer.

⁴⁵ In his table, Górecki's indicates 'gosp. NT, gaddus'; gosp.= gospodarcze, 'facility (room)'; NT remains obscure.

⁴⁶ To be published in the last article on the material.

151. Epistolary exercise

Inv. no. C.O. 286

2.9 × 5.7 cm

Pottery: 'X'⁴⁷

Unskilled writing, with letters well separated. An epistolary formula is recognizable: 'I so-and-so, son [of so-and-so] I write to ...'.

[P] ΔΝΟΚ ΝΙΜ ΠΩΗ[ΡΕ Ν-]
[ΝΙΜ Ε]ΙΣΣΑΙ.Ν[---]

152. Fragment of an epistolary exercise?

Inv. no. C.O. 138

6 × 5.5 cm

Limestone

Large calligraphic letters.

[---] ΔΝΟΚ . [---]

153. Sequences of letters

Inv. no. C.O. 053

8 × 10 cm

Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

2 erased letters
Ο Μ Ο Μ Ο Μ
Μ Μ Μ.Μ.Μ
4 ΠΜΕΝ ΔΠΕ
ΠΜΕΝΔΠΕ
ΟΥΜΝΤ.

154. Writing exercise

Inv. no. C.O. 207

14.4 × 10.8 cm Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

At the bottom of an ostrakon where an unidentifiable text was written in straight letters, and after having turned it over, there is an exercise consisting of scattered letters: Δ, ΖΔ, Μ, Θ, Ω, Σ.

155. Writing exercise

Inv. no. C.O. 211

3.7 × 4.6 cm

Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

Traces of scattered letters on the outside and on the edge: Δ, Ε, Μ, Ζ, Η.

⁴⁷ I have not been able to identify this abbreviation.

156. Writing exercise

Inv. no. C.O. 216

13.1 × 9.6 cm

Pottery: Aswan

A φ, a χ, some ο's, a Ν, and perhaps the beginning of a name: ιω . [: Iob or Iohannes?

157. Writing exercise

Inv. no. C.O. 083

7.5 × 4 cm

Limestone

Inscribed on both sides with a fine tool. A series of letters, many of which are unintelligible.

Side (a) c ο υ φ κ

Side (b) ε

.....

158. Writing exercise

Inv. no. C.O. 248

6 × 6.9 cm

Pottery: qadus?⁴⁸

Two spaced ω are inscribed on the outer face, perpendicular to the ribs

159. Writing exercise?

Inv. no. C.O. 121

6 × 8.1 cm

Pottery: LRO, bottom with foot

Four lines of unintelligible signs, which could constitute an exercise.

160. Exercise or aide-memoire?

Inv. no. C.O. 185

2.5 × 3 cm

Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

If the ostrakon is complete, it is a feminine 'two' or the word 'foundation'. For another very short note, see 130.

CEN-
TE

⁴⁸ In Górecki's table, the material is described as 'MT, Kena, gaddus?' MT and Kena remain obscure (is Kena a toponym?)

161. Writing exercise?

Inv. no. C.O. 313

5 × 5.2 cm

Pottery: LRA 7, with bitumen

Lines 3-4 are written in Biblical majuscule and could come from an earlier text, the ostrakon having then been reused for exercise material.

α[---]
vacat
several ζ
αϥχΟ. [---]
4 ζHT [---]
