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BILLS, LETTERS AND DEEDS

Arabic Papyri of the 7th to 11th Centuries

by Geoffrey Khan
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Foreword

In assembling the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art my intention has been not only to cover every aspect of the artistic production of the Islamic world but also to establish a body of material that could be used to illustrate a thorough history of the subject, whenever this was possible. It is in this context that the Collection came to include around 400 papyrus documents that were once in the collection of H.P. Kraus. The papyri may not have the aesthetic appeal of so many other products of Muslim scribes and calligraphers, but they are important as a source in tracing the early development of the Arabic script, and they are also a mine of information for various disciplines, especially social and economic history, topography, the study of the Arabic language, and diplomatics.

Nevertheless, the dedication of an entire volume in the general catalogue of the Collection to this papyrus material may seem unusual, especially as 36 of the most important items have been published by the same author in his Arabic Papyri. Selected Material from the Khalili Collection (London and Oxford, 1992). But the reasons for this exhaustive treatment are sound.

All previous publications of collections of Arabic papyri, including the Studies volume mentioned above, have tended to include well-preserved examples that could be read with ease or items whose decipherment presented some difficulties but whose contents were of great interest. In all such collections, however, there are many papyrus pieces that are unsuitable for this form of publication because they are too fragmentary or because they cannot be read with any certainty. To a large extent this second category is defined by the knowledge, ingenuity and resources of the editor, and the publication of such material in a comprehensive illustrated catalogue has the advantage of making it available to a wider circle of scholars who will be able to make their own contributions to the interpretation of its contents; indeed, a desire to make the material in the Khalili Collection more widely available is the moving spirit behind this series as a whole.

Given this approach, the interpretation of the documents offered in this catalogue cannot be exhaustive. In addition, the large quantity of material to be illustrated has placed a limit on the number of large colour plates that could be included: 108 pieces are reproduced in colour, while the remainder are illustrated in smaller black and white plates.

The preparation of this volume was undertaken by Dr Geoffrey Khan, who had already demonstrated his papyrological abilities in the Studies volume referred to above. I would like to thank him for his diligence and care, and I would also like to express my gratitude to those who assisted him in his task, namely, Nahla Nassar, the Assistant Curator of the Collection, Dr Julian Raby, the General Editor of the series, and Tim Stanley, who was responsible for editing this volume. Dr Khan’s scholarship has been complemented by the photographs of Christopher Phillips, the book design created by Anikat Associates, and the illustrations drawn by Diane O’Carroll. I am grateful to them, to my personal assistant, Mrs Sally Chancellor, and to the team at Azimuth Editions who oversaw the production process, including Lorna Raby, Benn Linfield and Alison Effeny.

Nasser D. Khalili
London 1993
Fig. 1 A natural papyrus grove
(after E纳入abock 1894).
Introduction

For 4,000 years the main type of writing material used in Egypt was papyrus. Usually referred to by the Arabs as qirās, which was derived from the Greek khartēs via the Aramaic qartus, papyrus was manufactured from a native plant, Cyperus papyrus L. (fig.1). It was easier to handle than the available alternatives, such as wood, skins and clay tablets, and could be made in a range of thicknesses and qualities, and these factors no doubt contributed to its success. It is deceptive to judge the physical nature of papyrus by the brittle remains that have been preserved down to modern times. When manufactured, papyrus was light-coloured, smooth, strong and flexible.

Papyrus was in use as early as 3000 BC and played a crucial role in the development of ancient Egyptian civilization; indeed, as if by way of an acknowledgement of its importance, the papyrus plant became the symbol of Lower Egypt as far back as the predynastic period, in the 4th millennium BC. From at least the 1st millennium BC papyrus had a rival in parchment, but, although parchment was widely used in other parts of the Classical world, papyrus retained its importance in Egypt throughout the Greek and Roman periods. The use of papyrus was taken over by the Arabs when they conquered Egypt in the 1st century AH (7th century AD), and it continued as the main writing material of the country until the 4th century AH (10th century AD). By this time it could no longer compete with paper, which was cheaper to produce.

Paper is traditionally supposed to have been introduced into the Islamic world from China in the 2nd century AH (8th century AD), and it first appeared in Egypt in the 3rd century AH. It became a serious rival to papyrus only in the 4th century AH, but by the middle of that century the manufacture of papyrus had almost completely ceased. This decline is indicated by the comments of contemporary authors, or rather the lack of them. Ibn Hawqal, who visited Egypt in AH 359 (Ad 969), mentions the papyrus plant but makes no reference to the use of papyrus as a writing material, and al-Muqaddasi, writing in AH 375 (AD 985–9), mentions paper as one of the products of Egypt but makes no reference to the manufacture of papyrus. On the other hand, we learn from al-Mas‘udi, who was writing in AH 345 (AD 956), that papyrus manufacture was not completely defunct in Egypt in the 10th century AD. And it appears that although papyrus was no longer a common writing material at this period it still had some marginal uses, such as for amulets and for medical treatment.

Although the cultivation of the papyrus plant was almost exclusive to Egypt, papyrus was used in other regions over the same period. We know from Ibn Hawqal that the Arabs of Sicily still employed it for chancery correspondence in the 4th century AH, for example, and the Khalili Collection contains an Arabic document on papyrus, cat.6 below, that was drawn up in a Nestorian monastery in northern Syria or Mesopotamia circa AH 240 (AD 853). According to Arabic literary sources, however, paper had assumed a predominant role in the eastern Islamic world by this date, for al-Jahiz, writing in the 3rd century AH (9th century AD), tells us that ‘the papyri of Egypt are for the West what the papers of Samarqand are for the East’.

During the long period of Egyptian history when papyrus was in use, the languages current in the country changed, so that the surviving material falls into the sphere of specialists in ancient Egyptian, Greek, Coptic and Arabic. By the time of the Arab conquest Egyptian had long been replaced by Greek and Coptic, which were soon replaced by Arabic in most contexts. Coptic continued to be used by the Egyptian Christians of the Monophysite rite, but Greek had fallen out of use by the 2nd century AH; one vestige of its former importance was the use of Greek numerals in early accounts in Arabic, many examples of which are found among the papyri of the Khalili Collection.

According to Grohmann there are approximately 16,000 Arabic papyri in various collections in Europe, North America and the Middle East, where they are concentrated in Cairo.
Introduction

The vast majority are documents of some sort, while the minority contain literary texts. The first category includes commercial documents such as accounts (cat. 9 below, for example) and orders for goods (cat. 107); notarial deeds such as quitances for debts (cat. 97), deeds of purchase (cat. 104) and lease (cat. 105); legal acknowledgements (cat. 105); and marriage contracts (cat. 107); official documents such as those drawn up in levying the land tax (cat. 7, 8, 10, 17, 22); and private letters. Some of the letters offer intimate glimpses of life in early Islamic Egypt, such as the problems the author of cat. 54 encountered in marrying a slave-girl, while others, such as cat. 62, were written by merchants as part of their commercial activities and tell us a great deal about trade in the early Islamic period. As well as providing evidence for social and economic history, many of these documents supply material for other areas of study: the hundreds of place names mentioned in the papyri, especially those concerned with agrarian matters, add considerably to our knowledge of the topography of Egypt at this period, and papyrus letters and legal deeds furnish abundant primary source material for Arabic diplomacy. In addition, both the literary and the documentary papyri are important sources for the study of Arabic palaeography and of the development of the Arabic language.

The literary papyri include the earliest known fragments of many works in Arabic, such as the biography of the Prophet Muhammad by Abu Hisham, the *Mawajid* of Malik ibn Anas, the tales of the *Arabian Nights* and Arabic poetry. They also include parts of other works that were previously thought to have been lost, such as the compilation of traditions about the Prophet Muhammad and King David attributed to Wahb ibn Munabbih and the collections of legal precedents of 'Abdallah ibn Wahb and 'Abdallah ibn Lahib. Many medieval European papyri have been preserved in church and papal archives, but no archives containing such material in Arabic have survived. As a result, the only Arabic papyri that are now extant have been recovered from the ground, either as the result of chance finds or of official archaeological excavations. Many of them have been found in the rubbish heaps on the edges of towns, where the residents have been discarding all sorts of waste, including papyri for which they no longer had any use since antiquity. Other papyri were found in the ruins of ancient buildings, often preserved in sealed jars. It was in a jar of this type that Egyptian peasants discovered two Arabic papyri at Saqqarah in 1824; the discipline of Arabic papyrology was founded by the publication of these documents by the French scholar Antoine Silvestre de Sacy in 1825 and 1831.

In the second half of the 19th century large numbers of Arabic papyri were found at various sites in the Fayyum, as well as at sites lying further south, including Bahnasa (Oxyrhynchus), al-Ushmunayn (Hermonpolis Magna), Kom Eshqaw (Aphrodito), Ikhmim (Panopolis), al-Gabalyan (Pathyris), Edfu (Apollinopolis), Dendera and Aswan. The size of some of these finds was prodigious — two cubic metres came out of Kom Eshqaw, for example. Lower Egypt has proved far less productive, no doubt because the soil conditions are less conducive to the preservation of organic material. Nevertheless, several thousand pieces have been found in the ruins of Fustat (Old Cairo).

Most of the major collections of Arabic papyri consist of material originating from the sites of Upper Egypt. This applies to the collections in the National Library in Cairo, the Oriental Institute in Chicago, the Staatliche Museen in Berlin, the Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek in Hamburg, the Institut für Papyrologie at Heidelberg University, the Louvre and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the British Library in London, the John Rylands University Library in Manchester, the Bodleian Library and Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, the former collection of the Archduke Rainer in Vienna, and the Wissely Collection in Prague. Only a few collections contain material that originated predominantly from Fustat. These include the collection of Arabic papyri in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, and the collection...
Introduction

Formerly in the possession of G. Michaelides of Cairo and now in Cambridge University Library. To this short list we may now add the Khalil Collection.

The publication of important pieces recovered from sites in Upper Egypt began at the end of the 19th century. Two Arabic papyri, one of which is now in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin (P. Berol. 3895) and the other in the Universitätsbibliothek in Leipzig, were published by Otto Loth in 1880, when they were still in the possession of the author. Correspondence about these two Arabic papyri had been published since the appearance of the documents from Saqqarah published by Silvestre de Sacy, and subsequently republished on a number of occasions, for the only other Arabic papyrus that had been published by that date were a few Arabic protocols, including one at the beginning of a scroll containing a bull of Pope John VIII issued in AD 876, which had been preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and three at the beginning of Coptic documents in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

The nascent discipline of Arabic papyrology was given a sound foundation by Josef von Karabacek's publications of papyri and paper documents from the collection of the Archduke Rainer in the 1880s and 1890s, and his work was continued by Adolf Groihmann, who published the Arabic and bilingual (Arabic and Greek) protocol texts from the collection in 1924 and a number of administrative documents in the 1930s. Groihmann, who came to dominate the field of Arabic papyrology, edited corpora of documents from other collections, including those in the National Library in Cairo, in Berlin and in Prague. A small corpus from Berlin had already been published by Ludwig Abel, and similar groups of miscellaneous documents from the Hamburg and Manchester collections were published by Albert Dietrich and D.S. Margoliouth. Dietrich and more recently Werner Diem have devoted volumes to Arabic papyrus letters from the Hamburg and Heidelberg collections.

In 1901 a cache of papyri and documents issued in the name of Qurrah ibn Sharik, the Umayyad governor of Egypt from AH 90 to 96 (AD 709–14), was discovered at the site known as Aphrodisio in Greek sources, now the village of Kom Es'haw in Upper Egypt, 7 km southwest of Timah. They subsequently found their way into various papyrus collections, including those in Heidelberg, St Petersburg, Chicago, Cairo and the Sorbonne in Paris, and have formed the basis of a series of papyrological publications. Some of the documents in Arabic, some are in Greek, and some are bilingual, and they cast a good deal of light on the otherwise poorly documented Umayyad administration of Egypt.

Two articles by C.H. Becker on the Qurrah documents were the first publications to gather together papyri of the same type from different collections. The same approach was taken by Groihmann in his volume on protocol texts, by Karl Jahn in his study of the formulas used in Arabic letters, and by Yusuf Râfîb for his work on the letters and documents from the archives of a family of merchants, and all known papyri written in Judeo-Arabic (i.e., Arabic in Hebrew script) have been published together by Joshua Blau and Simon Hopkins.

The analysis of the documents in most of these publications has concentrated on details of their social and economic setting, the background of personal names, the identification of place names, and comparisons with other documents as regards certain words and phrases. The grammar of the Arabic papyri has now been examined systematically by Hopkins, and Diem has contributed to the study of both the grammar and the formulas employed.

Several Arabic papyri have been discovered at sites outside Egypt; two Arabic papyri from Damascus are now in the Oriental Institute, Chicago; a small number were unearthed at Samarrâ' by the German excavations of 1911–13; Arabic papyri from the period AH 52–70 (AD 672–89) were discovered at Awjila al-Hafir (NSSA), near Bâr al-Have, by the H. Duncombe Colt expedition of 1936–7; and a large number of papyri, most of which date from the first two centuries AH and nearly all of which are in a very fragmentary condition, were discovered from various sites in Syria and Palestine.
in Khirbat al-Mird in the Judaean desert in the 1930s. In this context the importance of cat. 6 below, the monastic account from northern Syria or Mesopotamia, becomes clear. This papyrus is unique, for, as far as I am aware, no other Arabic papyri from localities to the north of Samarra have yet been identified.

Many of the documents in the Khalili Collection mention the city of Fustat, while some refer to localities in Fustat, such as the district of Ghafaq (cat. 101), the Suq Barbar and the Suqfat Jawad (cat. 54). It is therefore likely that the bulk of the collection was originally unearthed in Fustat. References in some documents to the Delta (asfal al-'ard) and to villages in that region (cat. 34 and 55, for example) also point to Lower rather than Upper Egypt as their source, and, since very few Arabic papyri have survived in the Delta due to the climate and the condition of the ground, it is likely that these documents, too, were found in the ruins of Fustat. As virtually all the Arabic papyri published previously originated from sites in Upper Egypt, the publication of material from Fustat is of some significance. A few of the papyri in the Collection do refer to places in Upper Egypt: cat. 1 is concerned with the district of Dalas and the villages of Ahnas, while cat. 2 is a list of villages in the district of Bahnasa. It is therefore possible that some of the papyri were originally found in Upper Egypt.

The papyri in the Khalili Collection are documentary in character and are datable to the first four centuries of the Islamic era (7th–10th centuries AD), with those written in the 3rd century AH constituting the bulk of the papyri. This material is being published in two ways.

The first is the method employed in previous editions of such texts: items that are in a good state of preservation and whose contents do not present problems of decipherment, or fragments whose contents are important and can be deciphered with a reasonable degree of completeness, are published in full, that is, in a critical edition accompanied by a translation, commentary and analysis of the script. A group of 36 papyri in the Collection have been published on this basis as Arabic Papyri. Selected Material from the Khalili Collection (London and Oxford, 1992).

The second method is the basis of the present volume and involves the publication of the Khalili papyri in the general catalogue of the Collection. Each item is illustrated, either in colour or in black and white, and is described briefly in the accompanying entries, which have no pretensions to being exhaustive. In this way the papyri in the Collection have been made generally available for future scholarly investigation, for it is often the case that papyri that present problems of interpretation can be read with greater ease once more texts of the same type have been discovered. Likewise, texts that were deemed to be of lesser significance sometimes gain in importance as research progresses on documents from other sources.

The Papyrus Roll and its Manufacture

Evidence concerning the cultivation of papyrus in antiquity comes from accounts of Classical authors, who recorded that the plant was grown in plantations, many of which were located in the swampy areas of the Delta. Moreover, two extant Greek papyri from the early Roman period—one of 15–14 BC and the other of 5 BC—contain leases of papyrus plantations. It is presumed that this type of cultivation in plantations was continued during the first few centuries after the Arab conquest of Egypt in AD 640, although we have no direct evidence for this. We also know from Classical sources that papyrus grew in Mesopotamia, along the Euphrates, and this was apparently still the case in the early Arab period. Papyrus plants were also cultivated in Sicily well into the Middle Ages, but according to Ibn Hawqal most of the papyrus grown there was used to make cordage for ships, and the small amount of the writing material that was produced was for the exclusive use of the sultan.

Arabic sources, such as Abu Salih and al-Ya‘qubi, mention numerous papyrus mills that
Fig. 2 Fragment of a protocol (cat. 127 verso)

were active in Egypt in the early Islamic period, as well as one in Samarra', which was established by the caliph al-Ma'āmun in AD 856. Egyptian papyrus mills were also mentioned in the Arabic protocols placed at the beginning of papyrus rolls.

A systematic description of the manufacture of papyrus in Classical antiquity was given by Pliny the Elder, who reported that the strips were laid on a board moistened with water from the Nile, whose mud content served as the binder. Modern analysis of ancient papyri has revealed that the strips were held together by the natural gummy substance contained in the cell sap of the papyrus pith and released when the plant cells were crushed, and the Nile water appears to have had no agglutinative function at all. The papyrus was dried and then rubbed smooth with a piece of ivory or a shell, and, as the final stage in the process, a mallet was used to beat flat any remaining puckers, ridges or similar imperfections in the surface.

The only description of the manufacture of papyrus in the Arabic sources was by Abu'l-' Abbas al-Nabati, who died in AH 637 (AD 1239) and therefore lived in a period long after papyrus had ceased to be produced. According to al-Nabati the Egyptians of former times
split the stalk of the papyrus into two halves and cut the pith vertically into strips. The strips were laid out side by side on a smooth piece of wood, and a second row of strips was laid over them at right angles. Unlike Pliny, al-Nabati referred explicitly to the use of an artificial adhesive (hazîyâb): he recorded that the two layers of papyrus were pressed together and stuck with an agglutinative substance produced by dissolving seeds of the blue lotus (Nymphaea coerulescens Sav.) in water. When dry, the sheet was beaten with a wooden beetle until all roughness was removed from it.

The size of papyrus sheets varied considerably in the Arab period: Grohmann has found that they ranged in width from 12.7 cm to 37 cm, and in height from 30 cm to 58 cm. Similar variations were found in the width and height of papyri in antiquity. In the Arab period, as in the Classical period, different qualities of papyrus were produced. The Romans had terms for these — charta emporitica (‘commercial paper’) for rough sheets not suitable for writing and used for wrapping merchandise, and Augusta and Liviana for extremely thin varieties. An inferior type of papyrus, corresponding to charta emporitica, appears to have been used in the Arab period, for there are a number of references in Arabic papyri to the use of papyrus sheets for wrapping items such as jewels, medicine and garments. A letter in the Khalili Collection, cat. 74 below, mentions papyrus sheets used for wrapping jujube seeds. On the other hand, some of the official documents in the Collection, such as cat. 1 and 2, were written on particularly fine papyrus.

Papyrus did not leave the mill in the form of separate sheets; instead, the sheets were pasted end to end to form a roll (see fig. 3c). The papyrus roll had acquired a sophisticated structure at an early date. The sheets overlapped, with the right edge of one covering the left edge of the next, and the size of this overlap varied, although 2 cm was usual in both the Greek and Arab periods. Any roughness was smoothed away, with the result that the joins were barely visible and offered no resistance to the pen. On the inner surface of the roll the papyrus fibres ran parallel to the length of the roll. This arrangement meant that the vertical fibres on the outer face were bent away from each other: if they had been on the inner face, they would have pushed against one another and sprung loose. At the same time, if the horizontal fibres had been on the outside, the joins would have been subjected to strain when the roll was rolled up, and the ends of the fibres would have been liable to fray.

In both the Greek and Arab periods the first sheet of the roll was preceded by a preliminary sheet (pròtokollon), which was attached back to front, as it were: the side with vertical fibres was on the inside rather than the outside of the roll, so that the fibres on both sides of the pre-

the inside of the roll is shown by the fact that the joins of sheets that occur in the extant documents are almost always parallel with the lines of writing, as in the case of cat. 2; in this respect cat. 100, in which the script on the recto is written parallel to the fibres and across a vertical join, is an unusual exception.

The practice of writing the text at right angles to the fibres had been current since antiquity, when lengthy documents had taken the form of rotuli, rolls that are unrolled vertically. Literary texts, on the other hand, had usually been written on the roll in columns, with the lines running parallel to the fibres and perpendicular to the joins of the sheets; this type of roll was read horizontally. In the Byzantine period the codex was increasingly used for literary texts, and most of the papyri that contain Arabic literary texts are leaves from codices. However, the papyrus roll in Heidelberg containing the collection of traditions assembled by 'Abdallah ibn Lahi'ah is written in the form of a rotulus. 58

The text may have been written across the fibres for the sake of economy, for if the scribe wrote a short document along the fibres and cut it from the roll he would have been likely to leave an awkward shape at the end of the roll. 59

**The Papyrus Document**

Most Arabic papyri were written with a split reed pen (qalam). This had the same form as the Roman calamus, from which it derived its name. In some papyri the split reed has left a double line in the strokes of the letters, as on the verso of cat. 23. Occasionally the papyrus bear an exceedingly thick script which must have been written with another type of instrument, possibly a bulrush cut on a slant or a brush as in cat. 127 (see fig. 2). The ink was usually made from soot and is black in colour, but one sometimes finds a rusty-brown ink, which was presumably made from gall-nuts, again as in cat. 127. 57

Papyrus was relatively expensive: a roll could cost as much as one and a half dinars in the 3rd century AH, a time when one dinar was the annual rent of a faddār of arable land or of a shop, for example. As a result, most people took pains to use papyrus economically, and the blank verso of a sheet was frequently used to write another text. Sometimes this second text had no relationship to the text on the recto, but on occasion the addressee of a letter used the blank verso to write his reply, although this was considered to be impolite. When the caliph al-Mu'tasim received a letter from the Byzantine emperor, for example, he had his reply written on the reverse, clearly with the intention of expressing his contempt for the emperor. The authors of replies written on the verso of the original letter often felt obliged to apologize, and in doing so
Introduction

they usually employed the formula *i’dhiri fi al-qirās* (‘Forgive me concerning the papyrus’),
as on the verso of cat. 92. The excuse is sometimes made that no clean papyrus sheets are available.
Papyrus documents were either rolled or folded in a number of different ways (see fig. 4). After this had been done they were secured by a strip of papyrus or a string and then sealed. A letter in the Khalili Collection, cat. 34 below, contains the remains of the string and seal.

The Script of the Papyrus Documents

The vast majority of the papyrus documents in the Khalili Collection are undated. Where dates occur, they range between AH 104 (AD 723), when the legal document cat. 97 was drawn up, and Jumada’-l-Akhirah AH 285 (June–July AD 898), when the receipt on the verso of cat. 102 was issued, both dates being well within the timespan in which we know that papyrus was used as a writing material in Islamic Egypt, namely, in the 1st–4th centuries AH (7th–10th centuries AD). During this ‘papyrus period’ the script used underwent a considerable degree of change, and the modifications were systematic enough to allow us to assign undated papyri to the earlier or latter half of this period on the basis of the script.

In general, it can be said that the script of the papyrus documents written in the first two centuries of the Islamic era bear a certain resemblance to the contemporary monumental styles found in inscriptions, on coins and in Qur’ān manuscripts, especially those in the ‘Hijazi’ scripts. The characteristic features of this earlier type of script include the following:

1. Independent ‘alif bends to the right at the base.
2. ‘Alif rises above the other letters with similar vertical elements.
3. Dāl and dahl have an upward or rightward bend at the top of the letter.
4. The letters sād and dād are elongated horizontally by extending the parallel strokes that form the top and bottom of the body.
5. The horizontal stroke at the base of initial and independent sīn and ghān extends to the right.
6. The head of medial and final sīn and ghān consists of two oblique strokes that are not joined by a horizontal stroke.
7. The tail of final and independent qāf falls vertically before bending to the left.
8. Initial and medial kāf are elongated horizontally, with the upper stroke parallel to the base line.
9. Final and independent kāf have an upward or rightward bend at the top of the upper stroke.
10. The tail of final and independent yā’ extends markedly to the right in a horizontal straight line.
11. There is frequent extension of connecting strokes between letters.
12. There is excessive separation of the letters of a word.59

These features also occur sporadically in later documents. Consequently, they must be seen as predominant tendencies rather than absolute criteria for dating. Furthermore, the older, more angular type of script was retained longer for certain types of composition on papyrus, such as literary texts and official documents. It should also be noted that these characteristics are formal features of script that was carefully executed. One may identify such features as relating to the standard or ‘ideal’ forms of the letters. These were the forms that the scribe aimed to write, rather than those he actually did write. Such ideal forms as were realized or approximated by careful execution may be said to constitute his script ‘competence’, and the actual result of his writing may be termed his script ‘performance’.70
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The script current in documents of the 3rd and 4th centuries AH can be distinguished from earlier examples not only by the loss of the features listed above but also by two other traits which operated quite separately to alter the script. One was a formal development in which the shapes of the letters became more rounded, even in examples executed with the greatest care; it can therefore be classed as a change in script competence.71 The second, which may be seen as marking a general decline in script performance, was the increased frequency with which a number of cursive tendencies occurred. These may be identified as follows:

1. The transformation of angles into curves.
2. The transformation of curves into straight strokes.
3. The elimination of the necessity to remove the pen from the surface of the papyrus.
4. The reduction of the distance covered by the pen.

At least one of these factors played a part in the formation of cursive letter forms, and sometimes more than one were in operation simultaneously. Again their appearance cannot be treated as an absolute criterion for dating, as they also occurred spasmodically in examples of the earlier type of script. Equally, the intensification of cursive tendencies should not be equated uniquely with the historical development of the script, for the degree to which the script of a document was cursive was conditioned by many factors in addition to that of date: the type of composition and the speed at which the script was written, for instance.

One of the preoccupations of students of early forms of the Arabic script has been to relate them to the many names for different types of script given in contemporary literary sources.72 According to the bibliographer Ibn al-Nadim, who wrote in the 4th century AH, the first person to make a systematic classification of the various hands current in his day was Qubab (d. AH 1454),73 but most of the early classifications and lists of names come from the 3rd century AH.74 The very large number of scripts to which they refer reflects the increasing lack of restraint in the scribal schools, which was only contained when Ibn Muqlah (d. AH 328) introduced the principles of his ‘proportioned script’ (al-khāṣṣ al-mansūḥ).

It seems that for the early writers on the Arabic script the factors that distinguished one style from another and justified assigning a special name to a particular hand could be no more than a slight vertical slant or an extended horizontal stroke. Unfortunately, the majority of the names quoted give us no clue as to what these distinguishing factors might have been.75 In the few cases where the name itself is descriptive or some specific description of the script is given — màlāl, mashaq or Meccan-Medinan, for example — it has been possible to identify the style with examples found in extant manuscripts.76 The only other names which can be linked to characteristic formal features are those that survived into later centuries and for which we have descriptions by writers such as al-Qalqashandi, who died in AH 821 (AD 1418–19), and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Rahman, who died in AH 932 (AD 1525–6).77 These include rasīkhi, tawqīt, tawqa, ghabār and possibly musūli.78

It is difficult to identify the script of the Arabic papyri, most of which come from the first three Islamic centuries, with the names of script styles appearing in contemporary sources.79 This is not only because of the lack of specific descriptive details in the literary sources but also because the script of most of the papyri (especially private and commercial correspondence and accounts) was not carefully and consistently executed according to a specific standard (muḥāqqaq) but was a poorly executed, unofficial script which was current for popular purposes (muṣallag).80 Moreover, mixing of styles was a feature of carelessly written script. Al-Suli, for instance, states that a script is good when it does not mix styles (jami
takhtalif 'ajnasuhu). The well-written scripts conforming to the standard styles were no doubt used only in Qur’an literacy texts of high standing and documents of state. Yet even in these texts there is evidence that a scribe’s performance sometimes fell short of the style at which he aimed. The increase in cursive features in the script of the papyri after the 2nd century AH may perhaps be associated with the general lack of restraint that was prevalent in the scribal schools at this period and which brought about the reforms of Ibn Muqlah. One may also note that the form of the ‘alif in some of the early papyri is comparable with the ‘alif of the Meccan-Medina script as described by Ibn al-Nadim. However, the identification of the script of a document as a whole with one of the scripts named in the early literary sources would be unwise.

A number of scholars have called the script of the papyri naskhi. Silvestre de Sacy, for instance, used this term to describe the script of passports written on papyrus in the 2nd century AH; R. G. Khouri gave the same name to the papyrus script that developed after the 2nd century AH; and a number of scholars have used it to describe the script of the earliest Arabic papyri, those of the 1st century AH. In all these cases naskhi is used loosely to designate a script with rounded features and to contrast it with the more angular monumental scripts. It may be useful to use the term in such an inclusive way for the sake of general classification, but it should be remembered that no positive description of naskhi appears in the literary sources before al-Qalqashandī, although a script with this or a similar name seems to have been in existence as early as the 2nd century AH. We can infer a few general features of naskhi from al-Qalqashandī’s comparison of this style with ghubar and riqā’, viz., it was small, rounded, with open loops and without tarqu (‘barbed heads’). This characterization is still only very general, and it is clear that naskhi was closely related in appearance to the script types with which al-Qalqashandī compares it, ghubar and riqā’. We must conclude that any application of the term to the rounded mutālaq scripts of the papyri of the first three centuries AH is undesirable.

In accordance with the foregoing remarks, the script of the papyri in this catalogue is described in terms of individual letter forms, and no attempt has been made to identify the scripts as a whole with one of the styles named in the early sources. In the descriptions a number of letters that display the most significant variations have been selected, an approach that is in line with the one adopted by François Déroche for the early Qur’an material in the Khalili Collection.

1. Fraenkel 1886, p. 245. As a writing material papyrus was occasionally referred to as wawq al-bārūd or wawq al-qūshūl (Sellheim 1986).
8. Ibn Hawqal, p. 86.
10. Al-Ma‘zūdi, p. 146.
13. Quoted by ‘Abd al-Thal‘ibī (p. 97) and al-Suyūtī (p. 28).
14. Grohmann 1952, p. 3. This figure apparently refers only to moderately well-preserved documents. The total number of extant papyri fragments containing Arabic writing is far higher; see Hopkins 1984, p. 111, no. 3.
15. For these and other works see Abbott 1949 and 1957–72.
17. Bresslau 1931, pp. 479–92. Many of the papyri documents in the European archives have been reproduced in the series published by Bruckner & Marichal (1954–).
19. The papyri are now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (MS. Arabes 4633–4).
20. For more details of these discoveries, see Grohmann 1952, pp. 214–17; 1954, pp. 2–35.
24. Including Silvestre 1836, pl. 2, pp. 190–22; Silvestre 1850, pl. xxix, pp. 84 ff; and Wright 1873–83, pl. 15.
25. Champollion-Figeac 1835, pl. 1.
Introduction

Revilhac 1871, p.l. ff., 184; Revilhac 1876, 1. 92, 94; 27. Karakaçak 1883; 1886-7; 1887; 1894, nos. 530-916; 1896. A full edition of 350 of the documents was to have appeared as a volume in the series Corpus Papyrorum Raineri, but Karakaçak never completed this work; see Grohmann 1954, p.57.
28. Grohmann 1932, 1933, 1935b, 1935-40, 1938, also Grohmann 1930. The author had intended to publish these documents and others in a monograph but was prevented from doing so by the economic depression.
31. Dietrich 1937; Margoliouth 1933.
33. Becker 1906, 1907, 1911; Jernstedt 1927, pp.92-3; Abbott 1936b; Grohmann 1934-7, 111, nos. 146-63; Rägib 1988.
34. See Morimoto 1981, for example.
36. Blau & Hopkins 1887.
37. Hopkins 1884.
40. Herzfeld 1914, pl.xxxviii.
41. Kraemer 1938.
42. A selection was published in Grohmann 1935.
44. Theophrastus, iv, 3; Strabo, xvi, 4; Pliny, xiii, 71.
45. Angytische Urkunden aus... Berlin 1912, nos. 1213, 1180.
46. Pliny, xiii, 73. The papyrius plant seems to have been introduced into Mesopotamia by the Seleucids in the 3rd century bc, probably because of the interruptions in the supply from Pontic Egypt; see Lewis 1974, p.11.
47. Ibn Hawqal, p.86.
50. Grohmann 1924, nos 216, 240, 162, 204.
51. Pliny xiii, 74-82.
52. Pliny xiii, 77.
54. Pliny xiii, 81.
55. The description was included by al-Nabati's pupil Ibn Baytar in his Jaymin (1, p.87).
56. Grohmann 1924, pp.47-1.
57. Pliny xii, 18; Lewis 1974, p.36.
58. Pliny xiii, 74, 76. Hecatore of Seville (vi, 20) reports slightly different names for these grades of papyrus: emportetica, Angustea and Libyana.
60. Grohmann 1914, p.42.
63. Pliny xiii, 77.
64. Grohmann 1954, pp.43-4.
66. For these details concerning papyrius rolls, see Turner 1978.
68. Karakaçak 1941; nos. 142; The Khalili papyri have been flattened during the restoration and mounting process, so that it is usually difficult to trace the manner in which they were folded.
69. For a more detailed discussion of these features, see Khan 1992, pp.27-39.
70. These terms have been borrowed from linguistic theory; cf. Chomskey 1966. François Déroche used a similar notion to explain variation in script in volume 1 of his catalogue (Déroche 1992, p.16).
71. The extent to which script performance brought about the historical change in the basic forms of the letters, thereby altering the script competence of scribes, is a subject that requires further research.
74. Abbott 1941b, p.88.
75. Abbott 1941b, p.76.
77. On Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman, see Robertson 1920.
78. Cf. Abbott 1941b, p.98.
79. The same conclusion has been reached by Francois Déroche in his discussion of the scripts of contemporary Qur'ân manuscripts (Déroche 1992, p.13).
80. For this distinction, see al-Qalqashandi, 111, p.26. See, too, the discussion above concerning the distinction between script competence and script performance.
81. Al-Muhil, p.42.
83. Nevertheless, a few attempts to do this have been made. On the basis of the form of the 'alif Karakaçak calls the script of the Qur'ân papyri Meccan (1931, pp.32-3). This was also accepted by Becker (1906, p.5). Abbott connects the mequal script with that of several 3rd-century Arabic protocols (1914, pp.58). Grohmann identifies the large script in some fragments from Khobar al-Mird with jahli (1965, pp.97 ff.), and elsewhere suggests identifications of other script types (cf. 1932, pp.81 ff.). Dietrich (1955, pp.46, 67) identifies some of the cursive scripts of the papyrius and early paper documents with Qarmatjah, following Karakaçak (1887, p.92); cf. also Abbott 1934a, no.1, which is described as being in Qarmatjah script.
84. Silvestre de Sacy 1825, pp.483, 486, 1837, pp.177 ff., 1831, pp.67, 73. This identification was also adopted by Sachau (1878, p.115) and Lepsius (1882, pp.80, 92).
85. Khoury 1982. Cf. also Abbott 1941a, p.61; Dietrich 1955, pp.46, 111; and several publications by Grohmann where he describes the script of a document as nabide (e.g. 1934-74, nos. 123, 128, 139, 144, 246; 1938-43, nos. 49-50, p.161).
86. For example, Silvestre de Sacy 1831, p.88; Amir 1906-7; Moritz 1905, p.281; Zayn al-Din 1968, pp.31-7, and Safadi 1978, 1979.
88. Al-Qalqashandi, 111, p.132.
Accounts
Accounts

1

Aggregate account of
tax receipts

Late 1st century AD

Published Khan 1992, no. 2

Recto This document is one of the many types produced in the course of the annual assessment of taxes. The earliest detailed account of this process was given by al-Makhzumi, who wrote circa AH 170 (AD 1175) but whose information appears to reflect administrative practices that were in place from the end of the 2nd century AD.1

Every September as official called the daffl ('record') estimated the number of irrigated faddams that could be cultivated in the coming agricultural year and recorded the results in a document known as a 'canon' (qanim). At the same time he determined the crops to be grown. In November, following sowing, he recorded the actual extent of cultivation in a 'canon of sowing' (qanim al-zinha). Subsequently the daffl composed the registers of disposition (iquilla al-sahib), which contained tax assessments based on the 'canon of sowing', arranged according to the names of the cultivators. These registers listed the cultivators' villages, the method of taxation, the tax rate, and the method of payment for each village. In the spring a survey (mishah) was carried out by the surveyor (mazab), who recorded the results in the survey log (qanaza al-mishah). He then composed a document known as the 'difference' (za'ud), in which he reorganized the survey log by the names of cultivators, compared the actual assessments with the estimated assessments recorded in the registers of disposition, and calculated the difference between the two. This difference was called the 'survey increase' (za'ud al-mishah). The surveyor then drew up the 'supplement' (mishahzah), which was the post-survey equivalent of the registers of disposition. It repeated the information in the registers of disposition and assessed the additional taxes to be levied from each cultivator.

When the taxes were collected the keeper of the grain store (hizban) drew up a ledger of receipts in kind, and a cashier (jahabbi) composed a statement of cash receipts. The accountant (zawad) maintained an annual ledger or review (zawad), which consisted of balance sheets that included estimated taxes, tax instalments received, additions, arrears, and a number of other items. Finally, at the end of the year the same person prepared the annual statement or aggregate (jama'ah) in which were recorded the gross receipts ('tajfa') of the government from each district (nahiyah). The present document is an example of this last type.

The text begins with the hahchal and the heading. Record of the aggregate account of the gross receipts from the survey of the district of Dalas and the villages of Alhas in respect of the sown land, vineyards, gardens etc. (situated) in them?2 There follow two lists in roughly the same format for the two administrative areas, and a line for the total increase:

1. In the district of Dalas there are 8,239 faddams. Of this, the land (recorded in) the registers is 8,237 faddams. The increase over (the amount recorded in) the registers is 234 faddams. The sown land of the amir - May God preserve him - is 60 [...] faddans. The estate of 'Abd [...] And in respect of (the same), the villages of Alhas are 3,146 faddams. Of this, the land (recorded in) the registers is 3,144 faddans. The increase over (the amount recorded in) the registers is 2, faddans.

2. The total of the increase of the district of Dalas and the villages of Alhas over the registers [...] The reference to 'the increase over (the amount recorded in) the registers' are an indication that this document was drawn up when the system of annual surveys described by al-Makhzumi was in place, and this provides a terminus post quem of the late 2nd century AD.

2. 'Alt' extends below the connecting stroke when it is connected by a ligature to the preceding letter, and 'al' generally resembles the shape of 'a'.

The document contains the name of Sir, which has been severely reduced. Kaf has an upper section that is either u-shaped, as in the words kath in line 2 and kahab in line 3, or an oblique stroke, as in wah-l-kafawi in line 4 and kabab in lines 9 and 14. In the final position, the upper stroke is perpendicular, as in dahabu (lines 4, 6, 12). Independent ya' bends to the left at the bottom, while the tail of final ya' bends both to the left, as in 'al in lines 7 and 13, and to the right, as in the same word in line 11. In memorials the conjunction wa- is sometimes ligatured to the preceding word.

Verso "Tin face of the papyrus bears a note reading..." and Dwayat and the villages of Alhas' in a different hand.

List of alms paid

Early 2nd century CE/8th century AD

2.8 x 11.1 cm, with 25 lines of script on the recto

Accesion no. PP968
Published Khan 1991, no. 1

Recto: The text consists of a list of villages in the Bahauna region to which alms had been distributed ‘for the needy and for the poor’. It is reasonable to suppose that these grants were made from the proceeds of the zakāt tax, for the expression ‘the needy and the poor’ recalls the verse from the Qur‘an (10, 60) upon which zakāt distribution was based.

The text begins with the basmalah. This is followed by eight entries consisting of the name of the village in both Arabic and Greek, the phrase tawṣīm šahā bi-l-maškurta wa-l-fuqara’... (‘There have been allotted to it for the needy and for the poor...’) and a sum of money written out in Arabic, with the exception of the fifth village, Safiṣiyah (in Greek, Spainia), for which no sum is given. Two and one-sixth dirhams were allocated to the village of Faqra (Fakra), one dinar to Idhumshayf (Myrnayzaus), a quarter-dinar to Annym (Armenian), two warsaq dirhams to the village called Istiu Kato in Greek (the Arabic name has been lost), ‘two dinars and a quarter and a qirat’ to Mush-Dal (Mouchanta), and four dinars to Thilth al-Kabha (Tholthis Megale). Only the number ‘eight’ survives of the sum allocated to the eighth village, Sumusta (Sephola).

The Arabic name of each village is accompanied by the corresponding Greek name, with the result that some of the villages—Fakra, Istiu Kato, Spainia, Mouchanta, Tholthis and Sephola—can be identified with settlements known to have existed in the Osroene and Hacilopolis names in the pre-Islamic period. All the Greek words are preceded by a checking mark in the form of a cross. In the case of Myrnayzaus (line 4) there is also a cross in the top right corner.

The script is datable to the first two centuries CE. Alif is perpendicular and is often quite high in proportion to the other letters. It occasionally has a slight bend to the right at the bottom. When connected by a ligature to the preceding letter, it extends below the connecting stroke. The oblique upper section of alif forms an acute angle with the lower horizonal section. There is a diacritical dot over the alif in the word ‘Jahmashhaf’ (line 3). Sin has teeth. Sdd has an elongated form. The tail of independent qaf extends vertically downwards before bending to the left. Kaf is hairpin-shaped, with horizontal extension and a very short vertical section. The connecting strokes between the letters have sometimes been extended.

Verso: Blank.

1. The warsaq dirham contained a substantial alloy of copper. Dirhams of pure silver were known as nargab (Ashoor 1969, pp. 221–3, 240, 276, 333, 337).
3. Cf. Cambridge, University Library, Michaelides Papyri, c1771, c422.
Two accounts; 2nd century A.D./8th century A.D.

The stroke of a was long, whereas the stroke of a bi in nāṣā or pl. ʿalās (with a bi in the word) was short.
Accounts

3 Two accounts 2nd century AD/8th century AD 15.3 x 19 cm, with 10 lines of script on the recto and 10 lines on the verso; the lines on the verso are upside down relative to the recto, text is missing from the top of the recto and the bottom of the verso, and there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. 1978.18

Recto: The first account the numbers are expressed in words, and the amounts are given in dinārs, qirāt and the copper coins called fals (plural, ' Alf).

The stroke of alif bends upwards at the top and adāf has been extended horizontally, two features characteristic of hands of the first two centuries AD.

Verso: The second account is a statement of various amounts of money that had accrued to the credit of certain people (the phrase used is satra laba khadār wa-khadār). The sums are expressed in dinārs, qirāt and fals.

The top of alif and alif in some words bends upwards slightly, and there is scriptio defectiva of long ā in the word danātā in lines 3 and 4.

4 Bill of lading 2nd century AD/8th century AD 22 x 18 cm, with 6 lines of script on the recto
Accession no. 1978.15

Recto: This bill of lading names three ships, those of Matthew the Sailor (line 1), George the Sailor (line 2) and Mino the Sailor (line 3), and lists the goods loaded and the merchant for whom they were destined. In the case of the first ship the reference to the goods has been lost, but the name of the consignee, Yassus the Christian, has survived at the end of the line. The ship of George the Sailor was charged with two loads of corob, one of which weighed 20 qirāt, and 45 jars of wine for Mina the Christian, for whom the ship was also carrying 45 jars of wine.

Alif is perpendicular, with a slight bend to the left at the base in the independent form. In the final form it extends below the connecting stroke. The tail of final ya' extends backwards in a straight horizontal line, sometimes for a considerable distance, while adāf has been extended horizontally in the word 'asyān in line 6; these two features are characteristic of papyri of the first two centuries AD.

Verso: Blank.

5 Two accounts AN 1353/AD 753 12 x 20 cm, with 4 lines of script on the recto and 8 lines on the verso; text is missing from the left side of the recto and from the bottom left and right corners of the verso
Accession no. 1978.15.1

Recto: The first account mentions Fustat (line 2) and fodder for pack animals (line 3).

Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, while medial 'alif is hairpin-shaped. The horizontal stroke of initial 'ayn extends to the right, a feature characteristic of script in the first two centuries AD.

Verso: The second account is in the same hand as the first and records payments relating to agricultural products, including trefoil (qarq) and barley (sha'ir), and also to pack animals (dawwāb).

Amounts are expressed in Greek numerals. On line 5 there is a reference to sūket al-qarq ('coinage of the palace' or 'fortress').

After the hāshālah the account opens, 'Statement of what has been paid to us ... and trefoil over ten months. (Written in the year 135, after thirteen nights of Shawwal the noble have passed'. The date is equivalent to 21 April AD 753.
Account of expenditure
Northern Syria or Mesopotamia,
circa AD 430/AD 835

18 + 2.5 cm; there are 8 lines of script on the recto, while the text on the verso is arranged in two columns of 14 and 16 lines; text is missing from the top and bottom of the sheet

Accesion no. PP5350
Published in Khan, 1951, 206.

Several details of this document suggest that it emanated from a Christian community in northern Syria or Mesopotamia, rather than from a community of this type in Egypt: on the verso there is a reference to a place called mel, which may well be the town of Malata, now in southeast Turkey; some of the names in the document are of Syriac origin and, in particular, the phrase sdbâ' al-shabîh (verso, left column, line 7) is an Arabization form of the Syriac phrase šabot di al-shabîh, which designated the seven days following Wednesday.

The name Qusâ (verso, right column, line 1) is of Syriac origin, being derived from the Syriac word qasîn, meaning ‘potter’, while Shbâ Иshû (verso, right column, line 9, left column, line 11) combines what may be the Syriac shârûn, literally ‘boy’, with šbâ, the Syriac for ‘Jesus’ – the usual Arabic form is ‘Ish’ (compare ca. 4 above). In addition, al-shabštâr (verso, left column, line 9) corresponds to Syriac shabštârâ, ‘priest who intercedes on their behalf’.

It is relevant to point out that many of these Syriac words were used by Nestorian Christians in the eastern part of the Fertile Crescent, but not by the Jacobites to the west. The form šbâ is Nestorian: western Syriac used the form šbâkhîw. The expression šbâ' al-shabîh is also Nestorian, and šbâkhîw in the meaning it has here, is part of the Nestorian ecclesiastical nomenclature. What is more, the Arabization form of the Syriac šbâkhî or šbâkhîw is characteristic of texts of Nestorian origin.

The fact that most of the expenditure mentioned in the document, including the substantial sums referred to on the recto, were reckoned in silver dirhams and not gold dinar is also evidence that the document came originally from Iraq or northern Syria. In the 3rd century AD the areas of the Islamic empire that were formerly in Sassanian territory still used a largely silver-based currency.

Finally, the word sdbâ' (verso, left column, line 8) is also of significance. It would be possible to interpret this as meaning ‘to be permitted’, which one of its senses in Classical Arabic. In the context, however, a more appropriate word would have been sûra, which was used frequently in other papyrus accounts. Given the provenance of our document, the form sdbâ’ could well be a dialect form of the Classical sûra, for the pronunciation of sû as ghâyb is characteristic of some forms of Mesopotamian Arabic. We know from Judaeo-Arabic texts that this feature existed in the Middle Ages. The pronunciation of sûd as sû is also found in some dialects of Mesopotamian Arabic.

In the style of script used to write this document, ‘a’n extends below the connecting stroke, and in most cases ‘a’n has the same shape as ‘a’; final ‘a’n has the same shape as final ‘a’. ‘A’ and ‘A’ are generally written with two bars, but also occur without them, and the last ‘a’ ‘a’ slant to the right. Initial kaf is harpin-shaped, while medial kaf is an oblique stroke slanting to the left. Independent and final ‘a’n have a straight, oblique upper section and a bend to the left at the bottom, so that they also resemble the shape of ‘a’. The script employs sporadic consonantal diacritics.

Recto: The text here consists of a list of four disbursements, arranged according to the date that they were made and with spaces left between the entries.

The first and last entries are very fragmentary: ‘...and [of] 30 the warrag, 1 dirham, and of gold, 850 mithqâl. Of that the warrag which was disbursed on Tuesday 28 Rabi’ al-Awwal, (namely) 20,369½ dirhams. And of that the warrag which was disbursed on Saturday 26 Rabi’ al-Awwal, (namely) 6,460 dirhams. And of that what was disbursed on the last day of ...’

In a year in which 28 Rabi’ al-Awwal falls on a Tuesday, 26 Rabi’ al-Akhir should also fall on a Tuesday, so the accountant has made an error, or these months occurred in two different years.

Verso: This is again a list of disbursements, with the entries specifying the purpose of the expenditure and the amount of money spent in dirhams. The list mentions the year 38 (AD 823–2). The text in the right column reads: ‘To Ibn Qusâ, disbursed in counted pieces for the hire of the bakers – 6 dirhams. Paid for the tayylâšât (for the month of Dhu’l-Hijjah) – 1 dirham. Paid for the Easter lamps – 5½ dirhams. For blocking a door in the church – ½ dirham. Paid as an offering for the monastery at Shurâbat – 3 dirhams. Paid (as) the wages of Ishû, the doorkeeper for the month of Dhu’l-Hijjah – 1 dirham. Paid to Shbâ’t Ishû, for his hire, reckoned in counted pieces – 10 dirhams. Paid as wages which are counted out in coin to the guards; it is paid in counted pieces – 1½ dirhams. Paid ...’


Paid, the expenses for the Seven Weeks of the Apostles, all of it going on the offering, together with the wages of the priest – 35 dirhams. Paid, that which was disbursed to Zakarya the shabštâr for his hire for the year 38 – They reckoned it [...]’. Paid, that which was reckoned for Shbâ’t Ishû for his hire for the monastery of Malaya?; it was paid in counted pieces – 12 dirhams. [Paid, for the tayylâšât (for the month of) Muharram – 1 dirham. [...] as his hire [...] 3½ [...]’.

1. Shbâ't means ‘period of seven weeks’, and shabštâr, ‘apostle’.
2. The tayylâšât was a liturgical vestment; see Graf 1954, p.71.
7 Tax assessment

3rd century AD/5th century AD

24 x 15 cm, with 12 lines of script on the recto and 9 lines on the verso; text is missing from all four sides on the recto and from the top, bottom, left and bottom right on the verso

Accession no. PP395

Recto The first account was drawn up in the course of levying the land tax (kharāb). Each entry is preceded by a checking mark in the form of a cross and contains the name of the cultivator, the crop to be grown, the area of the plot where it was to be sown, measured in *faddāmu*, and the tax on the plot in *dhūrās* - the amounts are expressed in both words and Greek numerals. The crops mentioned include trefoil (qarī) in lines 1, 2 and 6 and wheat (qanāb) in line 8. The verb *yazaʿ*, which occurs in each entry, refers to action in the future (*he will cultivate*). One entry states that the cultivator can sow whatever crop he wishes (*yazaʿ maʿ ʿabāha*, line 4).

This account is probably to be identified as an example of the 'canon' (qamān) which was compiled each September by an official known as the *recorder* (al-dalīl). The canon contains an estimate of the number of *faddāmu* to be irrigated in the coming agricultural year and determined the crops which would be grown.

Final *dalīl* does not extend below the connecting stroke, and extended connecting strokes have been used when writing the names of people.

Verso This account is a continuation of the text on the recto. Two entries (lines 1, 2) state that the cultivator can sow whatever he wishes (*yazaʿ maʿ ʿabāha*). Three entries (lines 5, 7, 9) state that wheat (qanāb) is to be cultivated.

Final *dalīl* does not extend below the connecting stroke, and the stroke of *dalīl* approximates to a straight line. A later hand has used a thicker pen to add a note to the middle of the document, and this is upside down relative to the original text.

1. See cat. 1.

8 An account and a letter

Circa 255 AD/AD 868-9

24 x 15.5 cm, with 12 lines of script on the recto and 6 lines on the verso; text is missing from all four sides on the recto and from the top, bottom left and bottom right on the verso

Accession no. PP396

Recto The account, in which numbers are expressed in Greek numerals, concerns a leased estate and the types of tax paid: there is a reference to 'cultivators' (*al-maṣāwarān*) in line 4 and to 'categories of tax on this estate' (*'abrat al-mal bi-badānhi al-dayʾah* in line 6. In line 8 'the year 53' is mentioned, and this was presumably AD 733 (868-9).

Final *dalīl* extends below the connecting stroke, the stroke of *dal* sometimes approximates to a straight line, and *aṭ* sometimes has no teeth.

Verso The text on this face of the papyrus is the remnant of a letter. It is in a hand in which final *dalīl* does not extend below the connecting stroke.
Two accounts
3rd century A.D./9th century A.D.

8.1 x 14.2 cm, with 7 lines of script on the recto and 6 lines on the verso, text is missing from the top, bottom and left side of the sheet, and the text on the verso is upside down relative to that on the recto.

Accesion no. 799993
Published Khan 1992, no. 3

Recto: The first account is concerned with rent from a number of urban properties, 'the house of the rain', 'the house of Umm Makki', 'a ruined dwelling', 'the house of a darner and a cobbler', 'the shops of the spindle-maker' and 'the house of al-Samannudh'. Each entry begins with the phrase mashagkh ḫirā ('the amount of rent from'). There follows the name of the property and the amount due expressed in words, and the entry ends with the phrase qahdhāt min dhakīka ('of that I have received') and a second figure expressed in words.

Ruins of buildings were frequently rented or purchased in medieval Egypt, either for renovation or for use as storage, without renovation.1

ʿAlif curves slightly to the left at its base, while the strokes of ḥāl and ḥāʾ approximate to a straight line. Initial ʿlāf is an almost-straight line that slants to the left, and the medial form of the letter is hairpin-shaped.

Verso: In the second account there are references to Girib and Fustat, the quantities are expressed in dinars and dirhams, and the amounts are given in words.

Accounts

3rd century AD/9th century AD

This account relates to the leasing of agricultural land. It is arranged in a series of columns, with the amounts expressed by Greek numerals. Other accounts and leases of agricultural land indicate that the rent for one faddan was fixed at the rate of 1 dinar until the last two decades of the 2nd century AD, when rents increased. This would give a terminus post quem for our account, since in most cases the rent indicated is more than 1 dinar per faddan.

The first column indicates the rate at which the rent was payable for each faddan of land, expressed by the expression min (here 'st') and a Greek numeral. The second shows the crops grown, either wheat (qumh), cucurbitaceous fruits (maqaleh), trefoil (qor), flax (kanum) or barley (sha'ar). The third specifies the category of land on which the crops were grown, either harsb, ëqâ, karibâyyah or buqmahâb. These terms were described by al-Makhzumi:

"Al-šarṣb is land that had a previous crop of cucurbitaceous fruits, sesame or cotton. It is the best land, with the highest value and tax rate. It is followed (in value) by al-ëqâ, land which had a crop of cotton and legumes in the previous year. It is next to al-harsb in excellence in that it is suitable for growing wheat and flax..."

"Al-šaribâyyah is land that had a crop of wheat and barley in the previous year. When wheat is grown immediately after a previous crop of wheat, or barley immediately after a previous crop of barley, or wheat after barley, or barley after wheat, the crop does not attain the excellence which it does on ëqâ land, and its price is always lower than the price of ëqâ. It is customary to sow such land with trefoil, legumes and cucurbitaceous fruits in order for the land to rest and become ëqâ in the next year."

"Al-buqmahâb is land that had a crop of ëqâ in the previous year. When wheat is sown on it, it does not grow well but produces fine black seeds. Sowing it (i.e. wheat) after it (i.e. ëqâ) is avoided, and only countenanced in the case of necessity."  

In most cases in the present document the crops are grown on the categories of land one would expect: flax on ëqâ (recto, line 1, 6, 8, 11, verso, lines 2, 5, 6, 8) or harsb (verso, line 4), wheat on ëqâ (recto, line 1; verso, line 6), barley on ëqâ (recto, line 8), trefoil on karibâyyah (recto, lines 3, 7, 10; verso, line 9). In certain cases two grass crops are combined: wheat and flax (verso, line 6), and barley and flax (recto, line 8).

In line 9 of the recto and line 3 of the verso it is indicated that flax and cucurbitaceous fruits were combined. In these cases the crops must have been grown consecutively in the same year, rather than simultaneously, since flax was a winter crop, and cucurbitaceous fruits were summer crops. Presumably the category of land was not specified in these instances since the earlier crop of cucurbitaceous fruits would have rendered the ground harsb.

In line 1 on the verso it is stated that wheat was grown on buqmahâb, while in line 4 on the recto it is stated that wheat was grown on karibâyyah. Although this practice was not recommended, al-Makhzumi informs us that in the south of Egypt wheat was sometimes grown after wheat (karibâyyah) or after flax (buqmahâb) due to the rich alluvial soil.

The tax rates for the various plots show that flax grown on ëqâ land was rated higher - at 1 or 2 dinars per faddan (recto, lines 5, 11; verso, lines 2, 5, 6) - than wheat grown on ëqâ land in the same category, which was rated at 7/8 dinars (recto, line 1; verso, line 6). In line 9 on the recto the payment of the higher rate of 2 dinars per faddan for flax may be connected with the superior quality of the land, which would be harsb due to the earlier crop of cucurbitaceous fruits. One should note, however, that wheat growing on land categories inferior to ëqâ (verso, line 1: buqmahâb; recto, line 4: karibâyyah) has the same rate as wheat on ëqâ, that is, 7/8 dinars.

The fifth and sixth columns record the payment of two instalments of rent. Other accounts in the same format record higher numbers of instalments (three, six and seven), while the literary sources mention the payment of ëqaraj in two, three or eight instalments. The evidence from Greek papyri from the Islamic period suggests that there were two official payments each year, though each of these could be paid in smaller instalments.

The style of the script is such that 'ālif is perpendicular and is quite high in proportion to the other letters; in the final form it sometimes extends slightly below the line. Initial kaf is hairpin-shaped, and final nas is reduced to an oblique stroke in the cipher for the word min at the beginning of each entry. Independent jî' 'sends' to the right. One connecting stroke between letters is regularly extended in each entry. Two words are sometimes connected by a ligature, as in qumh ëqâ in line 6 (note the final form of the ëqâ) and qumh karibâyyah in line 9 on the verso.

1. The rent due on the land leased by the government was equivalent to the ëqaraj ('land tax'). Cf. Van Berchem 1886, pp. 30 f.; Becker 1904, pp. 301 ff.; Becker 1914, pp. 83 ff.
An account and a letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
15 x 16 cm, with 5 lines of script on the recto and 7 lines on the verso; text is missing from the left side of the recto and from the top and right of the verso
Accession no. PP150

Recto This account refers to the taxes known as the 'adwāh and the jawa'il in two administrative districts, one of which is Ikhrim; the name of the second administrative district has not been preserved.

The hastae of the letters are tall, and there is a scriptio defectiva of the long ā in the word dinār (line 3).

Verso: The letter contains a reference to Fustat in line 1. It was written in a hand in which final 'alif usually extends below the connecting stroke, and šin and šiš have no teeth. There are sporadic consonantal diacritics, and when pairs of dots are used they are written on an oblique plane.

Two accounts
3rd century AD/9th century AD
22.5 x 7.5 cm, with 24 lines of script on the recto and 15 lines on the verso
Accession no. PP158

Recto: The first account consists of Arabic names followed by Greek numerals. Final 'alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.

Verso: Four lines of the text on this side of the sheet are a continuation of the account on the recto; they, too, consist of a list of personal names and amounts in Greek numerals. This text begins at the opposite end of the papyrus from the text on the recto and was written in a style in which final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke.

In order to write the second account the strip of papyrus was turned over on the horizontal axis. This text occupies 11 lines and contains amounts expressed in words. It was written in a larger hand in which final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke. Line 6 is a baṣmalah, and lines 7–11 appear to be no more than pen trials.
Two accounts
3rd century AH/9th century AD
23.5 x 17 cm, with 16 lines of script on the recto
and 15 lines on the verso; there are lacunae within
the text on the recto, and text is missing from
the bottom and right sides of the verso.

Accession no. PPS 14.1

Recto: The first account consists of two main
entries, which are divided by lines ruled across the
sheet. Each entry indicates what remains to the
debit of a certain Nu'man ibn 'Uwayf (ad-hay'ala
Nu'man ibn 'Uwayf...). Barley and trefoil are
mentioned: the quantities are expressed in
'irdahb, and the sums of money in dinars and
dirhams, with the numbers noted in Arabic words.
Dal is similar in shape to ra', and ite and shi have

Verso: The second account lists various quantities
expressed in 'irdahb, while the numerals are
expressed in words.

The strokes of dal approximate to straight lines.

Two accounts
3rd century AH/9th century AD
10.5 x 17 cm, with 9 lines of script on the recto
and 4 lines on the verso; text is missing from
the top and bottom of the recto.

Accession no. PPS 14.2

Recto: The first account lists a number of dif-
ferent items of clothing, including isbah and
kinsa. The prices of the items are given, and the
account indicates that they have been paid for in
full and delivered.

Dal is a short, straight stroke, ite has teeth,
and there is scriptio defectiva of long a in dinar
(passim). 'Alif maghribi is written with 'alif
instead of ya' in 'aṣufā.

Verso: The second account, which was written
by the same hand as the first, lists names and
amounts expressed in words. The four lines of text
are arranged in two pairs, and each pair has been
circumscribed by a pen stroke.
The script on the recto and verso is lacunae within. The cursive script is missing from the sides of the verso.

Two sets of two main lines ruled across the sheet remain to the top. 'Uwayf (al-ba'^at al-hay) and trefol are expressed in hayin in dharir and noted in Arabic words, 'r', and 's' and 'sh' are used to express various quantities. The numerals are written on the verso to straight lines.

In the fixed name of good, the name of the king, and the name of the month, the name of the day is mentioned, which was written with the fixed names and the first and second names of the king.
15

Account
3rd century AD
23.5 x 15.5 cm., with 14 lines of script on the recto and 15 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top half of the document due to disturbance of the fibres and soiling
Accession no. PPR117

Recto This account consists of a list of expenses concerned with building, wages and materials. A 'vassal' (al-najada) is mentioned in lines 9 and 10, and a 'builder's line' (al-mimur) in line 10. The expenses are expressed in dirhams, and the final total is in dinars and qirats.

The script was carefully executed; the loops are often open, and dal is clearly distinguished from ra'.

Verso Blank.


16

An account and a letter
3rd century AD
23.5 x 15.5 cm., with 14 lines of script on the recto and 15 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and from the bottom right of the recto and from the top and the bottom left of the verso; the bottom of the text on the recto is soiled
Accession no. PPR117

Recto The account is arranged in seven columns, with a checking mark in the form of a cross on the left side. Each entry is arranged horizontally across the page and begins with the name of the tenant of a plot of land. The names include Yoqub Loea (lines 1, 3, 6), Kayl Mina Hea (lines 2, 5, 9) and Belones al-Attar (lines 4, 7). To the left of the name, the nature of the crop grown - the word qamah ("wheat") can be read in lines 1, 2 and 5, and the word jil ("beats") in lines 7 and 9 - and the category of land - bay can be read in line 2, and bashibaysh in line 7 - are given. The amounts given in Greek numerals on the left probably represent installments of land tax that have been paid.

Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and initial kaf consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left and has no surrounding oblique stroke.

Verso Throughout the letter the writer uses second person plural suffixes to refer to the addressee(s). The script is characterized by the way in which final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and the strokes of dal and dhal approximate to a straight line.
Two accounts
3rd century AD

14 x 23 cm, with 10 lines of script on the recto; on the verso there are 6 lines written upside down relative to the text on the recto, and a single line in the right margin; text is missing from the top, bottom and middle of the sheet

Accession no. 299512
Recto published Khalil 1991, no. 4

Recto The first account was drawn up in the course of levying the land tax. It is arranged by cultivator. The entries are preceded by checking marks in the form of crosses. They give the name of a cultivator and those of his landlords, the type of crop, and a series of six Greek numerals, now very fragmentary. The numerals probably refer to the area of the plots concerned, which were presumably measured in *faddām*. Seven entries survive in a relatively complete form, while lines 1 and 10 contain only numerals. Five of the entries (lines 2, 4, 5–6–7-9) begin with a note of land left fallow (*har*). This is followed by the details of the tenants who were Kamil ibn Ziyad (line 2), Muhammad ibn Yahya and Ahmad ibn Isma'il (line 4), Jabir ibn Ziyad (line 5), 'Amr ibn 'Abdallah (line 6) and 'Ali ibn Zakkar (line 8). Kamil ibn Ziyad, 'Arr ibn 'Abdallah and 'Ali ibn Zakkar are described as tenants of Jabir and Muhammad (sū-banā Jābīr wa-Muhammad), and lines 3 and 9 contain the note, *su-laba* ("cultivated by the same"). The last piece of information given before the numerals is the crop grown, which is uniformly wheat (*qarnab*).

*'Alif* extends below the connecting stroke; *dīn* has teeth; initial *kaf* is hairpin-shaped; and final *yā* extends vertically downwards from the previous letter and bends to the left.

Verso This is a list of various commodities, together with their monetary value. There are circular sigla. *'Alif* extends below the connecting stroke, and the loop of initial *miṣn* is open.

1. This interpretation of *su-laba* is based on Grohmann 1932–43, nos 20, 21; see Khalil 1991, p. 79.
19
Two accounts
3rd century AD
22 x 22 cm, with 14 lines of script on the recto and 15 lines on the verso; text is missing on the left side of the recto and the right side of the verso
Accession no. 795139
Recto The first account lists the areas of a series of plots of cultivated land, with the measurements in fuddūm, together with the crops grown on them, either wheat or trefoil. Some entries refer to numbers of 'mea' (lines 5 and 7), and amounts are expressed in words and Greek numerals.
Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.
Verso The entries in this account, which lists amounts of agricultural products in Greek numerals, begin with a personal name preceded by 'lid ('to'). One entry opens with the phrase 'to the warehouse' ('lid al-khāsinah, line 15). The products named include beans (fūl), lupins (tarmas) and trefoil (qurt).
Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.

20
Ledger of a merchant
3rd century AD
15.5 x 4.6 cm, with 5 lines of script on the recto
Accession no. 795192
Published Khan 1992, no.8
Recto In this ledger, the quantities are expressed in 'bales' ('alif). The text opens with the basmalah and continues:
What is reckoned to the credit of Sa'dun ibn al-Jamī', from the sale of merchandise - two bales.
Together with what was reckoned in copper, an eighth of which was owed to his partners - one bale.
For lbn Sharīk
For Yussuf ibn Zāban.
'The tail of final and independent 'alif extends to the right, while final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.
Verso Blank.
21
Account reused for pen exercises
3rd century A.D./9th century AD
27 × 13 cm, with 19 lines of script on the recto and 13 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and right side of the recto
Accession no. PP14(0)

Recto The account consists of a list of 'emblems', each entry being introduced by the phrase 'al-stamaham' ('their emblems'). One of the 'emblems' consists of the phrase al-damah wa-banakah ... ('Good health and blessing', line 4); another is risq min Allah ('Sustenance from God', line 11); and a third is a circle followed by the word al-tamar ('the dates', line 7). In at least two cases the word 'al-stamaham is preceded by a word that can be read as ghadal ('coats of mail'). It appears that the 'emblems' were a form of badge that was used to adorn garments.

The sums of money are expressed in dinars and qurits, and the quality of the dinars is specified by the phrase makhraj jiyad ('of standard weight and excellent alloy'), a formula used in medieval legal documents drawn up in Fustat.

Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and initial 'ayn consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left, without a surmounting oblique stroke. There is scriptio defectiva of long 'a in the word dinar.

Verso This side of the papyrus has been used for writing pen exercises.

22
Two accounts
3rd century A.D./9th century AD
26 × 14 cm, with 16 lines of script on the recto and 18 lines on the verso; there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. PP15(0)

Recto The first account lists personal names and instalments of land tax on various cultivated plots. In most entries the crop is stated to be wheat. The amounts are expressed in Greek numerals.

The entries open with the word min (here 'at') written in the form of a cipher, and this is followed by a number. This phrase expresses the amount for which each faxdah of land in the plot was rented.

Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.

Verso The second text is a continuation of the account on the recto. It records the payment by cultivators of instalments of land tax on various types of crops, including wheat, trefoil and onions. The amounts are expressed in Greek numerals.

The land category is sometimes mentioned, e.g. bukh in line 3. As on the recto, the entries are introduced by a phrase indicating the rent per faxdah of the plot.

Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.
23
An account and an order
3rd century AD / 9th century AD
15 x 11.5 cm, with 8 lines of script on the recto and 6 lines on the verso; text is missing from the left and bottom of the recto
Accession no. PP9220

Recto: This account contains amounts expressed in words and mentions the 'owners of estates' ('arshab al-‘asarat, line 1). The Arabic word for estate, ‘asarat (plural ‘asarat) is derived from the Greek oasos. It is still used in modern spoken Egyptian in the form wasiyab, with the sense of 'large estate'.
Final 'al' extends below the connecting stroke.

Verso: This document is an order instructing the payment of 'two installments' (qitaym, line 3) to a servant boy on Tuesday, 17 or 18 Dhu’l-Hijjah.
The phrase used for the date was 'with twelve days of Dhu’l-Hijjah remaining', but we cannot tell from the context whether it was a leap year.

The document was written in a style in which the loops of fāʿ, qaf and gayn are open. Note the extension of the connecting bar between the last two letters of the word qitaym, done in order to fill out the line.

24
Account
4th century AD / 10th century AD
Paper, 26 x 16 cm, with 13 lines of script on the recto and 18 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top of the sheet on both sides, and there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. PP9219

Recto: In this account of wages with the amounts expressed in Greek numerals there are references to officials of the Ikhshidid period, with the epithet al-‘ikshihid occurring twice (lines 6, 13). The entries mention the court cavalry (al-furqan al-khāṣṣah, line 12), and two men, one called Ahmad ibn Sinna, who is described as the companion of Shadhi or Shawar al-Ikhshid (line 13), and the other called Kafur (line 8). This Kafur is almost certainly to be identified with the Kafur al-Ikhshid who ruled Egypt in the 355–7 (A.D. 966–8).

The document was written in a hand in which final ‘al’ does not extend below the connecting stroke, sin and sin have teeth, and the loops of fāʿ and qaf are closed. Some of the connecting strokes have been elongated.

Verso: The text is in the same hand as the recto and may be a continuation of the same account. It, too, contains amounts expressed in Greek numerals, and there is a reference to a shahid or shahid (al-‘asarat) in line 12.
In the year AD

The script on the recto

As amounts expressed

"Owners of estates"

The Arabic word for

(f) is derived from the

In modern spoken

Arabic, with the sense of

the connecting stroke.

Order instructing the

"Asr" (prayer, line 1) to

be observed on the 10th or 11th Dhu'l-Hijjah.

This was "with twelve days

between them," but we cannot tell

if it was a leap year.

To be written in a style in which

the bars are open. Note the

bar between the last

line, done in order to

match the amount expressed

with the amounts

in the rest of the table.

There are references

in the epitaphs

of Ibn al-Ashur, Ibn al-Salam, and Ibn al-Ashur.

It is the name of a

vassal of the Caliph of the

Abbasids, who ruled

in the region known as the A在过渡期。 and

the amount of f12

is in a hand in which

the loops of f2 are

not connected.

In the same account, it is also

in Greek numerals,

"200,000 drachms (ad-dhikār)"
Letters

Letters constitute the largest group among the papyrus documents in the Khalili Collection. They include petitions as well as letters relating to business and private matters. The majority are datable to the 3rd century AH (9th century AD), but a few were written in the late 1st century AH or the 2nd. Only rarely do the letters mention the year in which they were written, and the dating must therefore be based largely on the character of the script, the formal structure of the letter and the standard formulas employed. The chronological development of the script used in Arabic papyri has been discussed above, pp.19-21; here we shall concentrate on the development of epistolary formulas.

As a general rule letters began with the expression bi-suṣrAllah al-rāhīm al-rāhīm ("In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate"), known as the basmalah. In letters written in the first two centuries AH the basmalah was usually followed immediately by an address consisting of the names of the addressee and the writer preceded by the prepositions li ("to") and maṣ ("from") and often concluding with the phrase salam 'alayka ("Peace be upon you"). In most cases—cat.26 recto, 27 recto, 30 recto, 34 and 35, for example—the addressee was mentioned first, but when the writer was of superior rank to the addressee the writer's name was put first, as in cat.26 verso, 28 recto and 30 verso. The address was repeated on the reverse so that it would be visible when the letter was folded or rolled up.

The custom of placing the address at the beginning of the text of the letter is a feature of ancient Near Eastern epistolary style, and the Arabic formula is no doubt a continuation of this. The immediate model was probably Byzantine Greek letters which exhibited this feature, for Greek was used in the administration of Egypt in the early Arab period, when a Greek text was often accompanied by an Arabic version on the same sheet of papyrus. This opening is also found in letters attributed to the Prophet Muhammad and in correspondence reputedly sent to him; in the early sources the letters of the Prophet were presented as furnishing the Muslim community with a model for epistolary style.1

Another distinctive feature of many letters from the first two centuries AH, including cat.25, 26 recto, 27 recto, 28, 30 recto and verso, and 33-5, is the use of the opening blessing fa'iram "āhmad 'alayka Allāh allāhī la 'labī 'illa huwa ("For your sake I praise God—there is no God but He"); in a few cases the word 'ilayka ("for your sake") was omitted. The blessing was placed after the address and before the phrase ḍummah ba'd ("as for what follows"), which introduced the main text of the letter. The use of this blessing was not specifically Egyptian, for it occurs in a letter of circa AH 100 that was discovered in Central Asia.2

In some letters from this period, however, the author omitted the blessing. An example is the letter on the verso of cat.26.3 In this a certain Umm Muhammad displayed her superior rank over her addressee by placing her own name first in the address ("From Umm Muhammad to [...]—Peace be upon you") and then moving straight to business, without offering the blessing.

The latest datable original document that begins with the basmalah, the address and the formula 'For your sake I praise God' is a decree issued by the head of the Egyptian provincial treasury during the governorship of 'Abdallāh ibn al-Musayyab (AH 176-8).4 By the beginning of the 3rd century AH the address was generally placed above the basmalah or was omitted from the side of the sheet bearing the text of the letter, in which case the address was written on the reverse. When the address was written above the basmalah, as in cat.68 verso, the top of the sheet could be folded back so that the address was on the outside when the letter was folded or rolled up. On petitions of the 3rd century AH the appearance of the supplicant's name above the basmalah was a conventional feature (see cat.47 verso, 42 and 44, for example), and it continued to be so into the Fatimid period and later.

The small number of letters datable to the 3rd century AH in which the sender and the recipient were indicated immediately after the basmalah are items of high-level official
correspondence or petitions to dignitaries. Such official letters frequently had the function of dispositive documents, and many were issued in response to a petition. They included decrees and documents authorizing the lease of government land and other property. The opening of such documents usually contains a phrase referring to the document itself, such as ḥādhā kitāb min fulān ibn fulān li-fulān ibn fulān ("This is a document from so-and-so son of so-and-so to so-and-so son of so-and-so"), a formula which is said to have been used by the Prophet Muhammad in his letters (ḥādhā kitāb min Muḥammad rasūl Allāh ...). The old epistolary formulas continued to be used in high-level chancery documents as late as the Fatimid period, and official letters and decrees issued by the Fatimid caliphs frequently placed the address immediately after the basmalah. Several such documents are extant, and a considerable number are reproduced in the literary sources. Many of these also included the old blessing in the form 'an mā waʻlam yahdī mālayka Allāh alladhi la ilā ilāh bawwa ("For your sake the commander of the faithful praises God — there is no god but He!").

In letters from the early period the standard blessing and the phrase 'an nāba'd were often followed by a further blessing with an optative perfect verb form, such as ʻaslāhakā Allāh ("May God cause you to prosper!") or ʻafākā Allāh ("May GOC grant you health!") or bašākā Allāh ("May God preserve you!"). In some instances these blessings were more elaborate: in cat. 34, for example, the formula is ʻaslāhakā wa-bašākā wa-ʻatamma ʻalayka ʻfi al-ʻumār kullīhi ni`matābu ("May He cause you to prosper, may He preserve you, and may He award you a full measure of His bounty in all things!"). Letters written in the 3rd century A.D. and later generally open directly with such series of optative formulas. A common opening was ʻaslāl Allāh baqūrakā wa-ʻadāma ʻizākā wa-karāmataku wa-se-yādakā wa-ʻatamma ni`matābu ʻalayka wa-žāda ʻfi ʻišārinahu ʻalayka wa-ʻindakā ("May God prolong your life! May He cause your power, honour and strength to endure! And may He grant you a full measure of His bounty and increase His goodness to you and to those around you!"). There were many variants of this formula in which certain components were omitted; more rarely, the sequence was extended by the phrase ʻfi al-dunyā wa-l-ʻakhirah ("in this world and the hereafter"); as in cat. 65 and 93. Among the other formulas found in letters in the Khalili Collection are madda Allāh laka ʻfi al-ʻumur ("May God extend your life!"); cat. 177 recto, ʻan ʻama Allāh yābāhaka ("May God make your morning pleasant!"); cat. 86, and saḥbaḥaka Allāh bi-ʻāsfiyatihi wa-massākha bi-karāmatahi ("May God grant you good health in the morning and show you kindness in the evening"); cat. 31 recto, 220 verso). In many letters these blessings are followed by a wish that the writer be sacrificed to protect the addressee from evil: wa-jaʻalati min kull si‘ wa-makrīb fidākā ("And may He make me your ransom from all evil and adversity!"). For example, or simply ju'ūlūn fidākā ("May I be made your ransom").

Sometimes the opening blessings do not stand on their own but are embedded in a standard phrase which states that the writer was in good health and often says where he or she was writing from. This phrase usually takes the forms kitāb min ... 'an salāmah ("My letter is from ... (and is being written while I am in good health)") or kastāba min ... 'an salāmah ("I am writing from ... in good health"). In cat. 217 recto the blessings are embedded in the phrase ʻlam ʻan ("Know that ... ").

Letters conclude with the conveyance of greetings to the addressee, usually from the writer alone but sometimes, too, from other people who were in the same place as the writer. These greetings were commonly expressed by the phrase al-salām ʻalayka ("Peace be upon you!"), but other formulas were used, including a number containing the phrase khhusṣuṣṣa nafsaka ("take for yourself"): khhusṣuṣṣa nafsaka bi-l-salām ("Receive greetings!"); or khhusṣuṣṣa nafsaka minn bi-ʻafdal al-salām ("Receive from me the kindest greetings!"); for example. The conveyance of greetings involving people other than the writer or the addressee are usually
expressed in one of three formulas: *fulān yaqra* *fulān al-salām or fulān yaqra* ‘alā fulān al-salām’ (So-and-so extends greetings to so-and-so) or *fulān yaqra* (Greetings to so-and-so); the first two sometimes concluded with the adverb *kabārīn* (in abundance).

From the 3rd century AD onwards letters that open with blessings in the form of a chain of optative perfect verbs often contain anepithet of these blessings at the end. In some letters a blessing on the Prophet (asīfīyab) and the bastād Allah (bāstīn Allah wā-nī ma al-wālī, ‘Our sufficiency is God, what a fine keeper is He!’) were also included among the closing formulas. And the end of the letter was sometimes signalled by the passive verb *kutība* (‘It has been written’), as in cat. 33 and 217 recto, or more rarely by the phrase *kataba* (‘I have written’), as in cat. 37 recto.

The text in the body of the letter is to a large extent a free composition. Nevertheless, several phrases recur, and many of these express a request by the writer. Two are found frequently in the letters in the Khalīli Collection. The first, which occurs in cat. 71, 133 recto, 143 recto, 139 recto and 186 recto, for example, is a formula used to elicit a reply from the addressee: *fa-khi* *ʿāliyya bi-khawārīka wa-halīka fa-ʿinni asār bi-dhālika* (‘Write to me (to tell me) your news and how you are, for I shall be pleased by that’). This is sometimes expanded with additional elements after *halīka* such as *wa-jamiʿ bawāṭīyik* (‘and all your needs’) or *ʿamrīka wa-nabīyika* (‘your order and your prohibition’). The second formula is used to express a more specific request. Its basic form consists of the protasis-apodosis construction *in raʿayta* *an tafʿal kadīb wa-kadīb faʿal or fa-l-ṣafʿal* (‘If you should resolve to do such-and-such a thing, do so’). This formula was also used in petitions to amirs and high-ranking dignitaries, though in this case the verbs are usually in the third person (‘in raʿa al-ʿamir amun ... fa-l-ṣafʿal’).

Many variants of the second formula are attested. In some, adverbs qualify the verb in the apodosis: *faʿal maʾwaṣṣafqan* (‘do so with success’), * faʿal muṭṭafidliʿan* (‘do so with kindness’) or * faʿal muṭṭabān* (‘do so and be rewarded’). In others the verb is omitted in the apodosis: *faʿin raʿa al-ʿamir* (‘and your wish’) faʿin muṣṭafidliʿan bi-dhālika maʾwaṣṣafqan (‘If the amir should resolve to take this course, he will be rewarded and recompensed for it’).

The apodosis is occasionally omitted altogether: *wa-in raʿayta an taʿmīr ʿāliyya ... (If you should resolve to command ‘Isa to be patient’ ...’). A different verb is sometimes used in the protasis, as in cat. 133 recto: * faʿin baʿwīta ... faʿalīta* (‘If you wish to ... then do so’). The apodosis may contain a verb that is more specific than *faʿal*, as in cat. 70 recto: * faʿin kawā min raʿyikī an tāʿīlī ... faʿiqaṣib ilāfihi* (‘If it is your resolution to come to ... then come to him’). The protasis may even be replaced by a direct request: *aṣʿifīkā an suṭṭafidliʿ alayyik bi-mā tāḥayyiyiʿa laika ... faʿalīta muṭṭafidliʿan* (‘I request you to be so kind as to give me what you can ... do so with kindness’). In such a construction the apodosis has no syntactic connection with what precedes it.

A related formula uses the phrase *raʿayka* *fi instead of in raʿayta an to express the request: faʿraʿayka ... fi ʿīlam suṣṣal dhālika ... muʾwaṣṣafqan in šaʿa Allah* (Be so kind as to announce the arrival of this ... and be granted success, if God wills’; cat. 39). The formula *raʿayka* is evidently a brachylog for the imperative phrase *raʿayka* (‘Make your resolution’). The phrase *raʿayka* is also used to elicit the opinion of the addressee about something: *faʿraʿayka* *fi dhālika* (‘Express your view about that’; cat. 61, 251 verso and 218 recto).

The protasis-apodosis construction *in raʿa ... or in raʿayta ... was still used in the Fatimid period in the request component of petitions addressed to people below the rank of vizier: in petitions addressed to the caliph or a vizier one finds the concluding formula *li-mawālāna al-rāʿy al-ʿalīfi bi-dhālika* (‘To our lord belongs the lofty resolution concerning that’), probably a stylized vestige of the earlier request formulas that contained a form of the root rʾy. In the Ayyubid period the form of legal and official documents changed due to the introduction of
new formulas from the Eastern Islamic world, from where the Ayyubid dynasty originated. By this period the formula at the end of petitions had been attenuated to such phrases as *wa-l-ra'y a'lā* ("The resolution is most high"), and by the Mamluk period such phrases were regularly omitted in petitions.

1. See Jahn 1937.
2. Krachkovskaya & Krachkovsky 1934.
3. On the reuse of papyri, see p. 18 above.
5. See Jahn 1937.
6. Khan 1993, no. 135, for example.
7. See the documents in Magnel 1934.
8. Karabacek 1894, no. 768.
10. Cambridge, University Library, Michaelides Papyri, no. 443.
11. Michaelides Papyri, no. 4894.
12. Cf. also cat. 49 recto.
Letter
1st or 2nd century AD
21 × 35 cm, with 11 lines of script on the recto;
text is missing on the right side, and there are
lacunae in the bottom half of the sheet
Accession no. PP 964

Recto The surviving text of the letter opens with
the formula “For your sake I praise God—there
is no god but He!” The text makes reference to
payments, but because of a lacuna in line 2 it is
not clear what the payments were for. The author
then requests the addressee to send their news
and expresses a wish—in the form “I request God
that . . .”—that a woman be compensated for a loss
of some kind.

The opening formula is characteristic of letters
of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, and this early
dating is confirmed by features of the script: in
some cases the top of the letters dal and dhaal curve
back on themselves, to the right; the final ‘ain in
the word tafa’il (or yafa’il or maafa’il) has no loop
but two splayed strokes; the final form of the letter
yaa’ has a retroflex tail that extends horizontally to
the right; and the writer has sometimes left spaces
between the letters of a word in order to fill out
the line.

Verso An address may have been written at the
top of the sheet but is now lost.
Letters

26
A letter and a reply
1st or 2nd century AD/7th or 8th century AD
10 x 21 cm, with 7 lines of script on the recto and 10 lines on the verso; text is missing from the right side and bottom on the recto and from the top, bottom and right side on the verso
Accession no. PP35244

Recto The address of the first letter follows the hasmalah, and the author has employed the opening formula "For your sake I praise God – there is no god but He!", two typical features of letters of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The opening formula is followed by various blessings on the addressee, to whom the writer has sent a fisherman (sammak) named Ishaq (line 5).

The script also exhibits some early features: the tops of the letters dal and dalif sometimes bend to the right; the horizontal stroke of initial 'ayn has been extended to the right; and there is a conspicuous horizontal extension of initial kaf and of the retroflex tail of final ya'. The loops of the letters are open.

Verso Originally this face of the papyrus contained only an address, 'To Umm Muhammad from 'Abdallah', which appears not to correspond to the address on the recto. The verso was subsequently used for a second letter, so that the earlier address now sits in the middle of the second text, apparently upside down. The address of the second letter, 'From Umm Muhammad to [...] – Peace be upon you!' and the phrase 'As for what follows' have been placed after, but on the same line as, the hasmalah. It is therefore clear that the letter never contained the opening blessing that is usual in correspondence of this period (see p. 65 above). The hand of Umm Muhammad or her amanuensis was characterized by an independent dalif with a curve to the right at the base, a dalif with an upwards turn at the top and a medial 'ayn in which two oblique strokes were combined to form a v, all early features.

27
Two fragments of a letter reused for two accounts
1st or 2nd century AD/7th or 8th century AD
8 x 22 cm, with 4 lines of script on the recto (the tops of the letters in the sixth line are also visible) and 4 lines on the verso
Accession no. PP566

9.5 x 22 cm, with 6 lines of script on the recto and 3 lines on the verso
Accession no. PP567

Recto The letter of which these two fragments formed a part was addressed by Abu Sa'ud to Abu Salamah. Their names occur at the top of the first fragment (PP566), after the hasmalah and before the formula 'For your sake I praise God – there is no god but He!'. The text resumes on the second fragment, which contains blessings on Abu Salamah. As these blessings are not those of a standard closing formula, we may presume that they occurred in the middle of the letter.

The structure of the letter suggests that it dates from before AH 200 (see p. 65 above), and the script, too, has a number of features that can be associated with the first two centuries AH. The base of the independent form of 'alif bends to the right, for instance, and in some instances the top of dal bends to the right. The dalif in the word 'alad in line 4 has been elongated along its horizontal axis, and this is also a trait of sad, as in the word safain in line 3 of the first fragment, and of the initial kaf in the second fragment. Other early features are the horizontal extension of the base stroke of initial 'ayn and of the retroflex tail of final ya'. The loops employed in the script are open.

Verso In the case of PP566, this bears the address for the letter on the recto, 'to Abu Salamah', which is followed by part of an account that probably dates from the 1st or 2nd century AH. The three surviving lines of the account contain a list of Greek numerals giving the amounts of a series of unspecified items.

The verso of PP567 also bears the beginning of an account, but this is probably a separate document, for the first line contains the hasmalah, and the text appears to have been written by a different hand. The account refers to wheat (qarn) and to sadaf, 'transaction', or more specifically 'the purchase of a commodity in advance'. The style of script employed, in which the base of independent 'alif bends to the right, and the final ya' in ft (line 2) has been extended horizontally to the right, can be attributed to the 1st or 2nd century AH.
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
Letter
1st or 2nd century AD
17 x 15 cm, with 16 lines of script on the recto; text is missing on the left and right sides of the sheet
Acquisition no. 993590

Recto: The letter was addressed by al-Nu‘man ibn Shu‘ayb and another person to several people, including two women, Umm Nu‘aym bint Nu‘aym and Umm ‘Uthman, and two men, Hammad and Ya‘qub b. ‘Uthman. Within the letter the references in the first and second person fluctuate between singular and plural, which may be a reflection of careless style or of an unsatisfactory transcription by an amanuensis of what the senders, or one of the senders, had dictated.

The names of the writers and the addressees occur at the beginning of the text, after the hamzalah. The opening section includes the formula: “For your sake I praise God—there is no god but He!”, while the body of the letter contains a request for a reply, in line 8, and a reference to the city of Alexandria (al-Masā’il) in line 14. The opening formula and the style of script employed suggests an early date. The tops of the letters dal and daal sometimes bend to the right, and the initial and medial, and sometimes the final, forms of kaf have been extended along the horizontal axis. The retroflex tail of final qa‘ has also been extended horizontally. The loops employed in the script are open.

Verso: Part of the address survives; it is written in the same hand as the letter.
29

Letter reused for an account
2nd or 3rd century AD/8th or 9th century AD
9.5 x 17 cm, with 6 lines of script on the recto and 3 lines on the verso; text is missing from the right side, left side and bottom of the recto and from the left and right sides of the verso
Accession no. PP5543

Recto The surviving text of the letter opens with the phrase [kašida] 'salayka wa-ta amma fi 'l-kifub wa-l-bahli lillah' 'alā dhikrika ukhtaran (I write to you while in good health – Praise be to God for that, in abundance!) and refers to sums of money expressed in dinars and qirāt (a qirāt was one twenty-fourth of a dinar of standard weight).

The script is characterized by the way in which ṣad was composed of straight, horizontal upper and lower strokes, the body of initial and medial kaf was sometimes extended horizontally in the form of a hairpin, and the base of initial 'ayn was extended horizontally to the right. Consonantal diacritics were sometimes supplied, and the dia-
critics of final yā' have been written above the letter. There is scriptio defectiva of long ḍ in the word dinar.

Verso This face of the sheet originally bore only the address of the letter on the recto (line 2), but at a later date, probably in the 3rd century AD, it was reused for an account in which the amounts were expressed in Greek numerals (lines 1 and 2). The account was written with a finer pen than the address, in a hand in which final 'aḏ extends below the connecting stroke. In line 2, the retro-
flex tail of final yā' forms a long, horizontal line.

29 recto

29 verso
Two letters
2nd century 85/87 CE
15 x 20 cm, with 15 lines and 6 lines on the reverse
Published Khan 1992
Accesion no. P9563

Recto: The first letter (line 1), the address (* from Nūyaym ibn Shārajah), and the formula 'For... is no god but He!' (he gets a date before or p. 65 above). The rest is divided into two complete sections and one with too many lines (lines 11-12). The piece as follows:

As for what follows of health, which will please you
praised! We ask of God a full measure of His munificence; sustain Him; and success. We
God to grant us enjoyment of this enjoyment
suffering through writing it well as long as God permits writing to you as you
Peace be upon you and upon your family.

In this letter the beginning is not clear. The text was written as a down
section of 8 more lines, upper section of 14 more lines, plane at the base, which
horizontally.

Another early feature of the text has been arranged across line ending
end of line 5 and the

Verso: The first line of the papyrus may have been
on the recto. The second line of the text, the same sequence of
and the formula 'For there is no god but He!' letter appears to have
Nūyaym ibn Shārajah, called 'Ali ibn
someone called 'Ali ibn and
in a different hand, which
indeed from the same
2 texts were dictated.

The content of the second more
very similar to the first.
Letters

30
Two letters
2nd century AD/6th century AD
15 x 30 cm, with 13 lines of script on the recto and 6 lines on the verso; there are lacunae in the text on the recto, and the text is missing altogether from the bottom of the verso.
Accession no. P1965
Published Khan 1993, no. 15
Recto The first letter begins with the hamzalah (line 1), the address ("To Quasim ibn Muhammad from Nu‘aym ibn Shajarah — Peace be upon you!") and the formula "For your sake I praise God — there is no god but He!" (lines 2–3). This sequence suggests a date before 10 AH 200 for the letter (see p.6 above). The rest of the text may be divided into two complete sections (lines 4–10 and line 11) and one with too many lacunae to be made sense of (lines 11–13). The jist of the surviving text is as follows:
"As for what follows, we are well and in good health, which will please you — our Lord be praised! We ask of God that He grants us and you a full measure of bounty and increase in His munificence. We are well and content. We ask God to grant us enjoyment through you and not suffering through wrongdoers, for we are always well so long as God preserves you for us. I am writing to you as you wished. Good health and... Peace be upon you and mercy!"

In this letter the base of independent 'alif sometimes bends slightly to the right, and final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke; dal was written as a downward stroke with a vertical upper section that curves on to the horizontal plane at the base, while initial kaf was extended horizontally.
Another early feature of this letter is the way the text has been arranged on the page, with words split across line endings, as in uwa-'alejka at the end of line 1 and the beginning of line 2.

Verso The first line of text on this face of the papyrus may have been the address of the letter on the recto. The second letter begins below, with the same sequence of the hamzalah, the address and the formula "For your sake I praise God — there is no god but He!" as the first. The second letter appears to have been from the same person, Nu‘aym ibn Shajarah, but it was addressed to someone called 'Ali ibn Muslim. It was written in a different hand, which indicates that, if it was indeed from the same person as the first letter, the two texts were dictated to different scribes.

The content of the second letter seems to have been very similar to the first, but much less of it survives.

31 An account reused for a letter
2nd century AD/6th century AD
24 x 17 cm, with 13 lines of script on the recto and 13 lines on the verso; text is missing from the left side of the verso
Accession no. P1964
Recto In the top left corner there is a word written by the same hand that wrote the account on the verso. This suggests that the account was the earlier text and was originally written on both sides of the papyrus; if this is so, the papyrus must have been cut down when it was re-used for the letter that now occupies the surviving portion of the recto.
The letter is introduced by the hamzalah and the formula sahabakha Allah bi-‘flyazishi uwa-massaka bi-karnamahi ("May God give you health in the morning and show you kindness in the evening!"). The writer was concerned with a family matter: "I am writing to let you know — May I be made your ransom! — that a letter has come to me from the daughter of your uncle. She says that Abu'l-Khayy has recently left. I was afflicted by this news whilst I was in the village. You know that I have nobody except God. I have sent a letter to you. When you receive it, indicate to me whether in your view I should send you to the journey stage tomorrow or whether I should refrain from this. Or do you think that they should pay a deposit in installments, although he would disapprove of this and claim that I was spending excessively? He does not fear God. God be praised that throughout my life people have always thought that I was ill-fated! I have been waiting for you to come to me so that I can relate my predicament to you. I ask God to preserve you... May God prolong your life, give you strength and show you kindness!"

Some features of the script are characteristic of documents written before 10 AH 200. For example, the upper and lower sections of the loop of 'alif in uwa-massaka (line 13) have been extended horizontally as two straight parallel lines; final kaf has the same basic shape as the initial and medial forms. Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke.
Verso This face of the papyrus bears a list of names, also of the and century AD.
Petition
3rd century AD/9th CE
30.5 x 11 cm, with 9 lines of text is missing from the top
Accession no. 79157

Recto: The petition opens with the blessings wa-a'salaka wa-akhr
mi'matru wala'dayka wa-
wa-fy-indaha! (May God
bless you, may He bestow upon you the blessings and may He increase those about you!)

This is followed by the European diplomatic petioner described his very beginning can be:
huquluka 'amri raji'el ("prollog your life") the surviving text concludes:
Allah naqal 'aka 'an tan (prolong your life)

Four features of the extention of final 'aif/i, the slight tilt to the right of 'a', the 'haipin' shah rap horizontal extension of

Verso: Blank.

Two draft letters
2nd century AD/6th CE
25.5 x 18.5 cm, with 11 lines of text are missing from the top
Accession no. 79157

Recto: The first text ends ('it has been written'), it is followed by the second letter which is juxtaposed on the same page making it likely that they are

The text of the first letter by Zayd who was the first called Harith.

In the second letter the hifz, and the formula hala in letter 'For your sake I praise
but He!

Final 'aif extends from the initial 'a' has the shape
khamis in line 4, and at the
end is the word 'kills' -
32

Petition

3rd century AH/9th century AD

32.5 x 21 cm, with 9 lines of script on the recto; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet

Revo The petition opens with the hawalalah, followed by the blessing 'atada Allah baq'aka wa-l'aza'aka wa-l'qramaka wa-l'amma ni'matuka selayka wa-saladu llibratawa selayka wa-'indaka' ('May God prolong your life, may He fortify you, may He honour you, may He bestow upon you the full measure of His bounty, and may He increase His goodness to you and to those about you').

This is followed by the section known in European diplomatics as the narratio, in which the petitioner described his grievance, but only the very beginning can be read: 'Vellus' atada Allah baq'aka 'amrah rajul ('Know ye that May God prolong your life -- that I am a man ... '). The surviving text concludes with an entreaty, atada Allah baq'aka 'amrah rajul 'amert ('... -- May God prolong your life -- that you look into my affairs').

Four features of the script deserve mention: the extension of final 'dha' below the connecting stroke, the slight tilt to the right in the hasta (vertical stroke) of 'ay', the 'hairpin' shape of initial 'ayn, and the horizontal extension of the retroflex tail of final 'ayn'.

Verso Blank.

33

Two draft letters

2nd century AH/8th century AD

32.5 x 18.5 cm, with 21 lines of script on the recto; the first three lines are in a larger hand, and text is missing from the top and left side of the sheet

Accession no. 771397

Revo The first text ends on line 13 with wa-l-kafta ('it has been written'), a common closing formula in letters. It is followed immediately by the hawalalah with which the second letter begins. As the two letters are juxtaposed on the same page in this way, it is likely that they are drafts or exercises.

The text of the first letter mentions a man called Ziyad who was the freedman (marad) of someone called Harih.

In the second letter the address is placed after the hawalalah, and there then follows the opening formula usual in letters of the first two centuries AD, 'For your sake I praise God -- there is no god but He!'

Final 'dha' extends below the connecting stroke; initial 'ayn has the shape of a hairpin in the word kuma in line 1; and 'ayn has been extended horizontally in the word sadun in line 1.

Verso Blank.
Letter with the remnants of the seal and string used to secure it still attached

18 x 29.1 cm, with 16 lines of script on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet, and there are lacunae within the text.

Accension no. 11485
Published: Khan 1992, pp.14

Recto: The letter begins with the bism Allah (line 1) and the address, ‘To Abu Ya’fur – May God grant him good health!’ from Mikis ibn Saman (line 2), which is followed by the formula ‘For your sake I praise God – for there is no god but He!’ (lines 2–3). This opening was typical of letters of the 1st and 2nd centuries AH, and the placing of the addressee’s name before that of the writer indicates that the writer was of lower rank. This is borne out by the body of the text, from which it is clear that this was a letter from a servant to his master.

The beginning of the main text (line 4) is marked by the phrase ‘amma bu’d (‘As for what follows’) and the blessing ‘May He ensure your well-being, may He preserve you, and may He grant you a full measure of His bounty in all matters!’ The writer then made some general comments about his master’s affairs and previous correspondence, all well-larded with blessings (lines 5–8): ‘I am writing to you – May God grant your good health! – while your estate here is as you would wish – God be praised! Your letter – May God prolong your life! – reached me, and I was pleased to hear that you are in good health. I ask God, the merciful and compassionate, to send down rain to you and to ensure that we see you in good health and never see you in a state that displeases us, for your life is our life.’

In line 9 Mikis comes to the point, explaining why he had been delayed in carrying out his duties: ‘You wrote to me that you do not know what prevented me from sending the goods which you had commissioned me with. As soon as I reached the village (of Bu Kabir), Ziyad – al-Aziz – went to the head of Bu Kabir, and he imposed a fine and a prison sentence on me … ‘The lacunae in line 12 make it impossible to follow the next section of this tale of woe in full: Mikis was thrown into the hands of Sahl son of al-Busani, and the word dinar is mentioned.

The tale resumes at the end of line 12: ‘I sold for it – by which Mikis presumably meant ‘in order to pay the fine’ – ‘everything that I and my family own. Then none of this prevented me addressing anything you had commissioned me with, except that I wanted to pursue the journey with our large water-skins, since they are more retentive than the others’ (lines 12–15). Line 16 is the last to survive, but the text is riddled with lacunae.

The village of Bu Kabir, or Abu Kabir, in which these events took place is situated in the Nile Delta, in what is now the province of al-Shunayrah.

The head of the village is here called the wali, whose post corresponded to that of the strategos of the Greek papyri: he was in charge of civil administration and served as the executive arm of the law. It is possible that when Mikis ibn Saman, the Christian agent of the landowner Abu Ya’fur, reached Bu Kabir, where his master had an estate, a man called Ziyad, possibly the local tax-collector, went to the wali with a case against Mikis, perhaps for the non-payment of tax. In clearing up this dispute, Mikis was delayed in performing Abu Ya’fur’s errand.

The script of the letter confirms the early dating suggested by the formal structure. The connecting strokes between the letters are often extended, particularly in the opening formulas, and the relative shortness and perpendicularity of the vertical strokes was characteristic of the Kufic manuscript hand. However, the leftward bend at the base of the otherwise perpendicular independent form of ‘alif seen in the words ‘alif kin in line 2 and ‘alif in line 3, for example, is a feature found in the more cursive hands of later papyri, and for this reason the letter may be dated to the latter part of the early period, namely the 2nd century AH.

Other letter forms are of the type found in the earlier papyri: dal has an upward curve at the top that clearly distinguishes it from ra’s, most examples of asd and ad had a horizontally extended form in which two straight parallel strokes were joined by a curve on the right and by a straight vertical stroke on the left; the horizontal stroke of initial and independent forms of ‘azw and ‘ayn extend to the right, beyond the end of the curved head; a single diacritical dot appears over the ‘alif in the word ‘alif in line 8; and the final form of ‘ayn either turns to the right, in which it has a retroflex tail in the form of a straight line, or to the left, as in ‘alif in line 10.

Verso: The address, in the same form as in line 2 on the recto, was written near the top of the sheet, with a gap in the middle to allow for the string to be wrapped round the folded letter; the remains of the seal and string used to tie the letter can still be seen below the address, on the right.

Letter

1st or 2nd century AD

10 x 8.5 cm, with 6 lines on the verso; text is in black ink on the sheet.

Accession no. P11587

Recto: The first line contains the name 'Uthman, followed by the address and greeting. The text reads:

الله اله ملك الامراء

The letter proper opens with the name of the addressee.

Allah wa-talâhu wa-kullahu ('May God grant peace and give you a full measure'). Yahannan, a letter from 'Abd al-'Uzza, pleased to hear that the letter formulary employed in some initial and final letters has been extended along the lines of the versed tail of the letter, and the connection have also been extended.

Verse: This has been understood as 'Abd al-'Uzza, who was known as 'Abd al-'Uzza. The reading of the text is tentative.
Letters

35
Letter
1st or 2nd century AD/7th or 8th century AD
22 x 14 cm, with 7 lines on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom of the letter.
Accession no. PPS 197

Recto: The first line contains the phrase "dhuwallahu, which is followed by a verse: 'Ya hammad, May God grant you health!' -- from Yuhannan ibn Ha. Peace be upon you!' This is followed by the formula "For your sake I praise God there is no god but He!, and the beginning of the body of the text is marked by the phrase "lau'da bi'd (As for what follows)."
The letter proper opens with blessings, "albihak Allah wa-'a'datha wa-'a'tamme 'alayka fi al-'ammar ha'dh (May God grant you health and well-being and give you a full treasure of His bounty) in all matters!" Yuhannan then confirmed the receipt of a letter from Abu'l-'Ulam and stated that he was pleased to hear that Abu'l-'Ulam was well.
The date of the letter can be presumed from the formulary employed and from the script, in which some initial and final forms of the letter "y" have been extended along the horizontal axis, for example. The retroflex tail of final "y" exhibits the same feature, and the connecting strokes between the letters have also been extended in some cases.

Verso: This has been used to write the address, "Abu'l-'Ulam (7) 'a'datha Allah (To my lord Abu'l-'Ulem, May God grant him health!)."

36
A letter and a delivery note
3rd century AD/9th century AD
22 x 14 cm, with 8 lines of script on the recto and 6 lines on the verso; text is missing at the bottom and top left corner of the sheet.
Accession no. PPS 197

Recto: The letter contains references to payments expressed in dinars and dirhams. The author uses the opening formula "'atatha Allah wa-'a'datha wa-'a'tamme 'alayka fi al-'ammar ha'dh (May God grant you health and well-being and give you a full treasure of His bounty) in all matters!" Yuhannan then confirmed the receipt of a letter from Abu'l-'Ulam and stated that he was pleased to hear that Abu'l-'Ulam was well.
The date of the letter can be presumed from the formulary employed and from the script, in which some initial and final forms of the letter "y" have been extended along the horizontal axis, for example. The retroflex tail of final "y" exhibits the same feature, and the connecting strokes between the letters have also been extended in some cases.

Verso: This note is an instruction to deliver "this bundle" (hadithiy al-'a'datha) of documents or books to the house of Abu 'Uthman Muhammad ibn Bakr ibn Muhammad al-Basri, in the Suq Barbary district of Fustat, in the vicinity of the mosque of Abu 'Uqaqiy, as yet unidentified.
The script is in a style in which final "y" extends below the connecting stroke, and the hash of "'" slant slightly. There is scirptio defective of long "a" in the word "Uthman.

37
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
22 x 14 cm, with 8 lines of script on the recto and 14 lines on the verso; text is missing from the left side of both letters.
Accession no. PPS 197

Recto: The first letter opens and closes with the formula "'a'datha Allah wa-'a'datha wa-'a'tamme 'alayka (May God grant you health and keep you safe!)." The author appears to be referring to previous correspondence: the letter and text, he mentions a "note (ra'a sab)," and in line 4 he states that he sent something to the addressee (zuha 'abra ba-hak; ...), the object of the verb may have been "fatih" (letter).
The five first lines of text were arranged so as to leave wide spaces between lines 1 and 2 and between lines 4 and 5. Final "s" sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.

Verso: The second letter opens with the blessing "'a'datha Allah (May God grant you health!)" and closes with the formula "wa-kata'ara (I have written!)." In the text the writer refers to the case the addressee has been referred to someone called Sa'id; he expresses the hope that he would receive a note (ra'a sab) from someone, and he conveys his good wishes to Muhammad and Sa'id.
The phrase "ra'a Sab 'a'datha ibn al-Dahhab (the note of Sa'id ibn al-Dahhab)" has been inscribed in the top left-hand corner of the document, above the formulary. Headings referring to the writer, known as the taryamah, were placed in this position in petitions, but there is nothing in the text below that suggests that it was intended as a petition. If the letter written below is the note referred to in this heading, it may also be the ra'a sab referred to on the recto.
The text of the second letter is in a well-executed hand in which az and alif were written with teeth dent and dental have a similar shape to ra', and the loop of mim is sometimes open.

1. The post-Fatimid period the word "ra'a sab came to mean 'petition', see cat. 44 below.
38

Letter

2nd century AD.

The letter is a present from the second century AD. The author is a man named Abdullah ibn Muhammad, and the recipient is a woman named Aminah bint Asad. Then follows the opening formula 'salam alayki wa-rahammatuh 'amma bu dina 'afikun Allah was-ahubbi. (Peace be upon you and His mercy. As for what follows, may God grant you health and preserve you ...). The formula 'as-salam alayki Allah yassalil la ilah illa huwa (For your sake I praise God -- there is no god but He'), which is commonly found at the beginning of letters of the first two centuries AD, has been omitted.

The body of the text reads: 'You have sent me four lengths of thick flax and 100 unqual dirhams' -- that is, silver dirhams with a substantial alloy of copper. 'If I am delayed by the conveyance of the sheep, buy some flax for me from what remains.

The writer cannot continue weaving in eight-cubit lengths (but only in lengths) of three and a half cubits. If you like, I shall give them to you. If not, write to me with your considered view and make a point of looking into the matter. God was my support, and I persuaded him to weave double. If the large textiles arrive with him, send them. Give my best wishes to Pashkhan and to Abu Hasan and Abu Qilil and his family.'

She and they have no teeth, while initial alif is sometimes hairpin-shaped.

The letter concludes: 'From Ibn Muhammad to Aminah bint Asad.'

39

A letter reused for a herbal recipe and pen exercises

19th century AD.

The letter begins with the basmalah and the formula, 'May I be saved from your ruin, (my father, and may God grant you full measure) of His bounty!' The text continues, 'I am writing to you from the village', but the information that follows is lost. The surviving text resumes at the end of line 3 with a za'idiyyah, 'May God give abundant blessings to Muhammad, his family (and all his companions)', and then proceeds to business.

The address, who we know from the address on the verso was called Abu Ja’far, had been paid some dinars which he had agreed to pay to someone called Faqih, and the writer thanks him for undertaking the task and urges him not to delay.

A number of suggestions as to how to expedite the matter follow: 'Say you have a place to stay in Fustat for a day ... so that you do not postpone an agreement until he comes to you at ... if he has not received anything from you, send his letter quickly for he ...'

There follows another reference to Fustat and references to two men, one called Muhammad ibn Manur and the other called ‘Abbas ibn Thabit. The writer concludes: 'If you need anything write to me, for you would give me pleasure by doing so. Peace be upon him ...'

The letter is written in a hand in which the base of final alif usually extends below the connecting stroke.

The letter contains a three-line recipe on the next line of text. The first is a three-line address for the letter on the recto: 'To Abu Ja’far - May God show him kindness ...! - from ‘Abdallah ibn ... Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Hamid ... with the help of God, God willing.'

The other two are three lines of text that appear to be a herbal recipe and three lines of pen exercises. The script of the recipe is very faint, and the pen exercises are upside down in relation to it.
Letter
3rd century AD
21.7 x 9.8 cm, with 33 lines of script on the recto
Accession no. PPR381
Published Khan 1992, no. 34

Recto: The letter requests the payment of a debt:
"In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. May God defend you and cause you to see health, for I have learnt that you are ill, and I should like you — May God give enjoyment through your — to pay me what is due. For a need has reminded me of my work (for you). I have toiled for you, and I have a claim on you. May God cause you to see health and defend you! Best wishes to you, and His mercy and blessings!"
Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and alif and shwa are sometimes written without teeth.
Verso: Blank.

Letter
2nd century AD
21.7 x 9.7 cm, with 12 lines of script on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; there are lacunae within the text, especially on the right side
Accession no. PP377

Recto: The address of the letter begins on the same line as the bismillah and is followed by the bestowal of blessings upon the addressee. The text mentions a weak maid-servant (nursab za'fah) (line 8). The word za'fah is spelt with a za', whereas in classical Arabic it is written with a daal (da'fah).
Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and initial kaf is harpin-shaped. There are sporadic consonantal diacritics, and they include sets of two dots set on an oblique plane. The word 'bismillah is split between lines 2 and 3; the initial 'alif is written at the end of line 1, and the rest of the word at the beginning of line 3. The practice of splitting words is characteristic of documents datable to the first two centuries AD.
Verso: This contains the address of the letter on the recto.
لا يمكن قراءة النص العربي على الصفحة من خلال الصورة المقدمة.
Letters

42 Petition to an amir
3rd century AD
20 × 24 cm, with 12 lines of script on the recto; there are lacunae in the middle of most lines, and text is also missing in the top left corner
Accession no. 28369
Published Khan 1992, no. 16
Recto The remaining of the tarjama containing the name of the petitioner can be seen at the top of the text, on the left. In the main text the petitioner states that he has been detained in prison and was therefore unable to cultivate his land and to harvest his crops. The amir is requested to look into his case and give him assistance.

The body of the text begins, 'In the name of God the merciful (and compassionate). May God grant well-being to the amir and prolong his life! The amir – May God preserve him! – is aware of what has befallen us this year with respect to ...' (lines 1–2). The words in the middle of line 5 cannot be reconstructed, but the text resumes at the end of the line: '... disease and distress this year. We have been detained in prison and prevented from cultivating (the land). The amir knows that around this time we bring our baskets and carry off our crops. But this year our crops have gone to waste. The amir knows that we have not taken anything from him until paying the land tax in full. We have been afflicted this year by our confinement in this place, and our crops have gone to waste. (Please communicate to us) your view of our case – May God preserve you! We are in distress and misfortune, unable to find food. Look into our case, and may God look upon you (with favour)! May God preserve you and embellish you!'

In the Arabic of the papyrus the title amir was used to designate not only the governor of Egypt but also officials of lower rank, such as district prefects (‘amils). Because of this it is not possible to be more specific about the identity of the person to whom this petition was addressed.

The script in which the petition was copied has final ‘alif can extends below the connecting stroke, sin and shin with teeth, final ya that bends to the left (as in ‘al in line 4) or extends to the right (as in fim in line 3), and sporadic consonantal diacritics.
Verso Blank.

43 Two letters
3rd century AD
24 × 33 cm, with 15 lines of script on the recto and 19 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top, left and right sides on both sides of the sheet, and there are lacunae
Accession no. 28375
Recto The surviving portion of the first letter contains a request from the author that his correspondent does not delay in replying with his news (lines 1–4): la tuhi ‘anna khabaruka (‘Do not detain your news from us’). It concludes with the conveyance of greetings to the addressee from various people.

The script is in a style in which medial ‘alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.
Verso The second letter is in a different hand. The middle section appears to have been obliterated by rubbing, but this may not have been deliberate. The letter must have been addressed to a woman, for the author uses the phrase ya ‘abdihi (‘my sister!’) on lines 4 and 8. Towards the end of the text the writer sends greetings from various people and requests that the addressee does not delay sending her news, employing the same expression as was used in the letter on the recto.

The letter closes with the blessings ja’ala fidaki wa-‘ajzaila Allab haq’uki wa-‘adma ‘izzaki wa-karam midaki wa-‘a’ama midaki wa-‘alayki wa-‘alika fi l’abidu ‘alayki? (‘May I be your ransom! May God prolong your life, may He ensure that your strength and your honour endure, may He grant you a full measure of His bounty, and may He make an increase in His goodness towards you!’). The opening formula, of which only the word karam midaki (‘your honour’) survives, may be presumed to have had a similar structure, and this suggests that the letter was composed in the 3rd century AD. The script is in a style in which final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke; the initial, medial and even the final forms of ‘ayf sometimes have the shape of a hairpin; and final ya usually has a retroflex tail.

93
Petition to an amīr, 13th century

12.9 x 19 cm, with 6 lines on the verso and 2 lines on the recto. Accession no. 1927.80

Recto: The petition opens with a blessing on the amīr and a formula that is common in Islamic texts:

Allāh baqā‘a’ka ‘aynī lā qu‘aynī lā, wa-’llāhī wa-ha-rimātakū lā ma‘tah, ‘alayka wa-‘aynī lā
īna-dakū ‘(May God keep you safe, may God protect you, and may God keep your safety for you)
May God ensure that you and your family are protected and have a good life.

The petitioner appears to be a person named Mālik ibn al-Dahrī, who was a scribe and a member of the amīr’s staff. He requests a favor or a favor for someone else:

우리 이야세 이들, 와 아미예의 아들, 완란과 아미예의 아들.

Verso: The address, written in a different hand, is from Yūnus ibn Sa‘īd.
Petition to an amir

30th century AD

12.5 x 19 cm, with 6 lines of script on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet

Accesion no. PP586

Recru: The petition speaks with the baumadah and a blessing on the amir to whom it was written—we know from the address on the verso that his name was 'Uthman ibn Sa'd. The blessing consists of a formula that is common in private letters, 'asala Allah baq'ika 'asywahu al-`amir wa-'adduna wa-wardhuma al-muangina al-salakh wa-wad ilaiha fi 'abdihi li-sayyaka wa-'asala al-Sayyaka wa-wad ilaiha fi 'abdihi li-sayyaka (May God prolong your life, O amir! May He ensure that your strength, your honour and your period of office endure! May He grant you a full measure of His bounty! May He make an increase in His goodness to you and to those about you!).

The petitioner appears to have been aggrieved at events that occurred at his home during his absence, but the document breaks off in the middle of the exposition of his grievance.

At the top, on the same level as the baumadah but to the left, a note has been written in right angle to the rest of the text. It reads qissat Yaman ibn Muzay'ah (the petition of Yaman ibn Muzay'ah). This is one of the earliest attestations of the use of the term qissah in the sense of 'petition'; before the Matnakah period the usual term was ruyah.

The script is marked by the extension of final dal below the connecting stroke, the 'hairpin' shape of initial kaf, the retroflex tail of final yaa' and the weaving of 'alif maqsurah with an 'alif in the word jatii.

Verso: The address, which reads 'To 'Uthman ibn Sa'd from Yaman ibn Muzay'ah,' was written in his same hand.

For more information on this formula, see Khan 1990b, pp. 16–18.

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Two letters

30th century AD

19.5 x 13 cm, with 12 lines of script on the recto and 11 lines on the verso; text is missing at the top, right and left sides on both sides

Accesion no. PP5205

Recru: The writer of the first letter mentioned the sale of half of a house (wa-qad ba'akuna al-mishr min al-din) and requested the addressee to issue instructions regarding some matter by using the formula ra'ayaka 'asala Allahu al-'amir bi-... (Resolve ye—May God give you strength—to instruct...). The letter closes with the formula 'asala Allah baq'ika al-salakh... bi-wad Smayyaka (May God prolong your life, your... your well-being, your health and His protection of you!).

The main distinguishing feature of the script is that kaf was written as a single curved stroke.

Verso: The second text is the end of a letter and mentions a certain Ishaaq ibn Faraj, who was presumably the same person as the Ishaaq ibn Faraj mentioned on the verso. The letter closes with the phrase wa-'ala fisoka wa-wad al-muqarrama (May He be made your ransom! And may God prolong your life, forfend you and bestow honour upon you!).

Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and initial kaf is shaped like a hairpin.

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Two letters

30th century AD

35 x 25 cm, with 13 lines of script on the recto, including 3 lines in the right margin, and 7 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top of the sheet on both the recto and verso

Accesion no. PP5121

Recru: The first letter concerns the payment of land tax owed by various persons, including a man called Ishaq ibn Faraj. A landed estate (dayyab) is referred to in line 3. The letter closes with the conveyance of good wishes from other people.

Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and initial kaf is shaped like a hairpin.

Verso: The second text is the end of a letter and mentions a certain Ishaq ibn al-Faraj, or Ishaq Nu Faraj, who was presumably the same person as the Ishaq ibn Faraj mentioned on the verso. The letter closes with the phrase mansuq al-isaq was-sawa al-muqarrama (May He be made your ransom! And may God prolong your life, forfend you and bestow honour upon you!).

Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and the upper stroke of dal approximates to a straight line.
Part of a letter reused to record a tax payment

Circa 28/29 CE, 570–71
12.4 x 14.5 cm, with 4 lines of script on the recto and 5 lines on the verso; the papyrus has split
Accession no. 779994

Recto This bears only a small part of the original text, probably because the copyist of the document on the verso cut the sheet up before reusing it. The four lines of text that do survive come from the end of a letter; part of the standard closing formula 'Please give me your opinion – May God prolong your life – of what I have written to you here' can be read in lines 3 and 4, with a lacuna between the words fa‘in and fa‘ahla.

The text was written with final 'alif sometimes extending below the connecting stroke and sometimes not. Initial kaf also occurs in two forms, either as a stroke that curves round to the left or as one that is straight and almost vertical, in neither case does the letter have a surmounting oblique stroke.

Verso This document is a quittance for an instalment of land tax (khazna) for the year 28/29 CE (AD 570–71). The land in question was in the province of Fayyum (al-Fayyum), and the amount due, one and a half dinars, is recorded in Greek numerals at the bottom.

The person who copied out the document used a final 'alif that extends below the connecting stroke and a form of dal and taw whose upper stroke approximates to a straight line. He wrote the word dhnar without an 'alif, in scripta defectiva.

See Khan 1992, p. 50.
used to record

script on the recto

e papyrus has split

all part of the original
copyist of the document
up before reusing
so that survive from
the added closing
surrounding – May God
be near to you
5 and 6, with a lacuna
[al-yida].

48

A letter reused for a second
letter and an account

3rd century AD

7.255 cm, with 6 lines of script on the recto
and 11 lines on the verso, including 2 lines in the
right margin and 5 lines in a different hand in the
upper margin; text is missing from the top and
middle of the recto

Ass. no. 1917200

Recto: The subject of the first letter is difficult
to judge, but there is a reference to a surveyor
(al-qusul, literally ‘the bearer of the canestalk’) in
line 3, and a man called Abu Muhammad
al-Khwanih as also mentioned in line 5. References
to surveyors are common in Arabic papyri, for
these officials were involved in the annual survey
of cultivated land that was required for the assess-
ment of the land tax (khimar); see cat. 1 above.

Dall is sometimes written with a straight upper
stroke which tends towards the vertical plane.

Verso: The second letter consists of four faint lines
running across the sheet and two bolder lines in
the margin; the five lines of the account were written
upside-down in the upper margin. The letter was
written in a thick script which is probably the same
as that on the recto. In this hand final ‘alif
conundrums below the connecting stroke.

The account contains amounts shown in Greek
numerals. It is in a finer hand than the letter, with
kuf shaped like a harpoon. There is a checking mark
in the form of a cross at the end of the first entry
of the account. Such checking marks occur on
several Arabic accounts written on papyrus, but
their precise significance is not clear.

A letter and a legal document
3rd century AD/9th century AD

Recto: The author of the letter asks the addressee to acquit himself of certain debts: the sums of one-third of a dinar and one qirat, and of one-sixth of a dinar are mentioned, and the addressee is to credit the money due to Qulqut and Faraz.

Line 6 contains a request formula that opens, 'In asā'iqta wa-lhāb fīdāka 'ayn sawaffijubta wa...'. ('If you May I be made your ransom! - should resolve to accommodate it, and...').

Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, it has no teeth and is surmounted by a bar, and initial 'alif curves round to the left and has no surmounting oblique stroke.

Verso: This document records an undertaking by Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Khaliq to stand surety for the ro dinārs owed as land tax by Ahmad ibn al-Maa'een.

Final 'dal and 'dhal have an upper stroke that is straight and almost vertical, while the final 'ba' in the word 'laba' in line 1 has an open loop.

Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD

Recto: The letter opens with a blessing, 'atad Allah baq'ak aya wa-yadalan min kullu fīdāka tsa'adima ta'shuka wa-harāmasaka wa-ta'shada maka.' (May God prolong your life and make me your ransom from all evil! And may He ensure that your strength, honour and happiness endure!).

A gap was left between this blessing and the body of the letter, which opens with a plea, 'wa-Latad Allah baq'akaka 'a'a'dhukha ba'ajib al-riqa'b min... be sawaffijubta wa-'urfka wa-ma yajizhuwa al-jarutz.' (1 - May God prolong your life! - request something from you, trusting... in your magnanimity and kindness, something that deserves reward'). The specific nature of the request is not clear, but it concerns land tax (khartaj), which is mentioned in line 1.

Final 'alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, and the upper stroke of 'dal sometimes approximates to a straight line.

Verso: Blank.
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD

45 × 22.5 cm, with 22 lines of script on the recto; text is missing from the left and right sides of the sheet; there is a detached fragment, 7 × 17.5 cm, with 3 line of script
Accession no. PPM 3061

Recto: The letter opens with the phrase 'ṣīdla Allāh būqā'aka' (May God prolong your life!). Crops (al-zar') are mentioned in line 10, and the words mawaṣṣalān 'in shā'Allāh occur in line 16. These last are the end of the request formula 'If you resolve to do such and such, do so, and be granted success if God wills it!'

The letter is in a hand in which final 'aḍl' does not extend below the connecting stroke, and the strokes of 'aḍl and 'aḍal approximate to a straight line.

Verso: The address, 'to Abu'l-'Ula', occurs on a detached fragment.

Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD

70 × 24 cm, with 31 lines of script on the recto and 5 lines on the verso; text is missing in the right half of the sheet
Accession no. PPM 29244B

Recto: The letter opens with the formula 'ṣabracaynna Allāh yā 'abdulluwa 'alayka wa-sa'mma na'matahu 'alayka wa-nidakhi fi al-dunya wa-l-muḥarr khi-rafi mutāshī (May God honour you, my brother! And may He preserve you and grant you a full measure of His bounty in this world and in the next, through His mercy!). The body of the letter begins, khitāb 'alayka yā 'abdurnau Dīnayni yā'and bi-hal dīyāh ... ('My letter to you, my brother, is from Damietta. I am in good health'). The writer goes on to mention Fustat and the Faiyum and closes with greetings.

Verso: The text consists of a two-line address for the letter on the recto and a three-line postscript to it, written upside down relative to the address.

Final 'aḍl extends below the connecting stroke, and the haste of 'a' slants to the right.
AD 514

The script on the recto; and right sides of the fragment, 7 = 7.5 cm.

which the phrase 'ala Allah (long your life'). Crops line 10, and the words l. 16. These occur in line 15. The text formula 'If you relate your life, and be granted success to be which final 'ulf does not the stroke, and approximate to a yl-'Ula', occurs on a

AD 514

The script on the recto is missing in the

the formula 'ala-
a-tamam

Nin 'May God honour

' and 'I am

goes on to mention

a two-line address for

the connecting stroke, to the right.
A letter reused
3rd century A.D./9th c.
10.5 × 2.5 cm, with 2 lines
and 4 lines on the verso
are at right angles to
perpendicular to the
Accession no. PP 971
Recto: Only the last two
and they contain the
maha Allah wa-'abqi-
we and the maha 'indek
may He preserve you;
He has shown you, as
in it for you!

In this short fragment,
below the connecting
sentence only a single
left and lacks the sura

Verso: A later date to
account of various pas-
the hasnah. The in
the verb shara'ah, "was
amounts expended an
and from. One of the ext
Egyptian clove (for)
In this hand medial
writing stroke.
A letter reused for an account
3rd century AD
10.5 x 15 cm, with 2 lines of script on the recto and 4 lines on the verso; the lines on the verso are at right angles to the papyrus fibres, and so perpendicular to the script on the recto
Accession no. 1975.97

Recto Only the last two lines of the letter survive, and they contain the concluding formula 'akramaka Addhā u= Abyakha u= Addam m= mataka u= adda i= hālā = Mataka = May God honour you, may He preserve you, may He prolong the favour He has shown you, and may He make an increase in it for you!'.

In this short fragment, final 'self' does not extend below the connecting stroke, while initial 'self' continues only of a single stroke curving round to the left and lacks the surmounting oblique stroke.

Verso A shorter sheet was reused for an account of various payments. This is headed by the baismahāc. The individual entries open with the verb bhrasāja (was disbursed), and the amounts expended are expressed in qinātā and dinārēn. One of the entries concerns the crop plant Egyptian clover (horston).

In this hand medial 'self' extends below the connecting stroke.

An account and a letter
3rd century AD
40 x 32.1 cm, with 24 lines of script on the recto and 11 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top of the recto and the top left of the verso
Accession no. 1975.11

Recto The account is a list of various sums owed. The numbers were expressed in words, and the currency quantities in dinārēn, dirhams and qinātā.

Final 'self' sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while the upper stroke of 'ālā approximates to a straight line.

Verso The writer of the letter had been the amanuensis of Takkhiš ibn Balkard, an official of Ahmad ibn Tulun. Takkhiš ibn Balkard is mentioned by al-Kindī in connection with events in the years 217-64 (AD 837-78), and Ahmad ibn Tulun appointed him as governor of Tarsus in AH 264 (AD 877-8) or 265 (878-9).

The letter begins with the baismahāc and a hadith (tradition of the Prophet), but, as the last third of lines 1-5 is lost, only fragments of this hadith have survived. The rest of the text is more or less complete; it is notable for its vivid autobiographical details, from which it appears that the writer applied himself to commerce after the death of Takkhiš, and that he owned property in Fustat, in the districts of Sāq Barbur and Sāpīr Jawād, and also from shops etc. I live there, near to the house of Mu'ammar and (the house) of Abd al-Hakam.

In addition, I look after the estates of the heirs of Takkhiš - God have mercy upon him! I visit them and their children as a token of loyalty to Takkhiš - May God bless him! - and to his heirs.

I never married, nor do I have children. I have no offspring or dependent relations - Praise be to God in abundance! - and also sound revenue, some of it from houses near to you, some (from houses) in the Sāq Barbur and Sāpīr Jawād, and also from shops etc. I live there, near to the house of Mu'ammar and (the house) of Abd al-Hakam.

I wanted children, the offspring of the servant-girl. By God, by God, by God, it is the greatest price I have ever paid.

Although I accepted that I should be related by marriage to a slave-girl who is talked about in the whole town, and even though I was given the dowry when she was brought to me, I would have preferred her to wait for the required period, so that they would have known that I had acted honourably.

What incited me to seek this place was the quest for virtue and valour and what was described to me with regard to its good ways. If it were not for the fact that I do not like to mention one of the freedmen who may have been hoping that I would marry into his family for many years, lest he hears of this from people who know him and know about the affair, I would mention him. However, I think it best that you do not ask about him.

I pray to God for bounty for you and me, and I request Him to grant us full protection and well-being. I ask Him if I have previously done (any good) to reward you and me for this in the fine way in which He has done so already, with His fair gifts to us and His abundant favours. (I also ask Him) to grant us good help and support. He has control over this and has the power to do it. I await (your) answer. Let me know your view so that I may become familiar with it, God willing.

The most characteristic feature of the script is the number of variants of the initial and medial forms of the letter 'āl. These usually consist of a lower section that curves to the left and an upper stroke which is straight and slants to the right. But in some cases, such as the word akramaka in line 6, 8 and 11, the upper stroke is omitted, while the lower section is a straight oblique in al-kitābah in line 9, and a short, near vertical stroke in the words sakallama in line 8 and kātib in line 9, in kitāb (line 7), hānī (line 8) and kitāb (line 18) initial 'āl' has the shape of a hairpin with an upward curve at its tip. Cosmetological diacritics are sometimes employed, and many of the ligatures are unconventional.

1. Al-Kindī, pp. 215, 217, 219
Three letters
3rd century A.D./4th century AD

15.7 x 11.8 cm, with 11 lines of script on the recto and 8 lines on the verso; text is missing at the top and bottom of the recto and at the top of the verso

Accession no. PPV 69
Published Khan 1993, no. 28

Recto This side of the papyrus contains parts of two letters. The three lines in a fainter hand that start half-way across the fragment are from the first letter to be written on the sheet and consist mostly of the opening formula, 'May God prolong your life... and your happiness and your well-being...'. The eight lines in a bolder hand are part of the third letter, which was written in reply to the letter on the verso.

The first line of the third letter is too fragmentary to be made sense of, but it is clear from line 2 on that the writer was answering the request for the remission of a debt made by the writer of the letter on the verso. As for your words, “if you are not in a position to remit my debt, return the documents to him”, you – May God give you strength! – know the expenditure I have undertaken. His companions have become idle. They have let me down. I replied to him. If he – May God give him strength! – has patience to wait until I go to the village, I will take receipt of them and do what is required with regard to them...

Verso This letter, the second in date, contains references to the years 3 and 4. As the hundreds are sometimes omitted from dates cited in the Arabic papyri, and as the script of the letter points to a date of composition in the 3rd century A.D., the years referred to may be AD 303 and 304 or 304 and 305. The letter also contains the expression 'asfil al-'ard', a reference to the Nile Delta region that may be translated literally as 'the Lower Land' or, in this context, 'the North'. The surviving text reads:

'[Remit my debt of] 18 until after year 4. if this is not possible, remit my debt of 6 baskets until after year 3. He mentioned that you promised to send him its (the year's) revenue quickly, for he needs to go to the North and requires maintenance. If you – May God give you strength! – are in a position to remit my debt until after that, you will be rewarded for this. If you are not in a position (to do this), return the documents to him so that he may act as he thinks best with regard to them, God willing. – (May He protect you) from harm and misfortune!'

In most cases final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, dal and dhal were written with straight oblique strokes, and sin and shin have no teeth.

1. In Khan 1993, no. 28, the recto and verso were reversed in error.
Letter
3rd century CE/9th century AD
20 x 9 cm, with 12 lines of script on the recto
Accession no. 797539
Published: Khan 1991, no.23
Recto: The text begins with the baṣmālah and the blessing bāṣīfakā Allah wa-'līfakā wa-tammama ni'amahu 'alayka (May God preserve you, may He grant you health, and may He bestow upon you a full measure of His bounties!). It continues:

I have sent you three garments which the Christians had. I have indicated to you what has acceded to you – the total of this being 28 1/2 dinars – in a note which I sent you yesterday. May God preserve you, may He give you health, and may He grant you protection and a goodly defense!

The end of the letter is marked by the word kawthā (It has been written).

The letter was written in a style of script in which final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and initial ‘alif is either hairpin-shaped or consists of a single stroke that curves to the left, with or without a surmounting oblique stroke.

Verso: Blank.

Two letters
3rd century CE/9th century AD
20.5 x 14.5 cm, with 18 lines of script on the recto and 12 lines on the verso; material is missing from the top of the recto, whose text has also been obliterated in places by rubbing, and there are small lacunae in the text on the verso
Accession no. 797535
Recto: In this letter various weights, measurements and values are mentioned; they are expressed in qirṣāt, dirhams and dirāhms.

Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke, and ‘alif is sometimes written without teeth.

Verso: The first line is the address of the letter on the recto, and this is followed by another letter in the same hand, whose text opens on the same line as the baṣmālah.
لا يمكنني قراءة النص العربي على النصا. 

يرجى التحقق من صحة النص أو تقديم النص العربي بشكل صحيح.

المؤسسة: العربية الدولية لل(---

ال Państة: المساهمون من---
58
Letter
3rd century AD
21.5 x 32 cm, with 6 lines of script on the recto
Accession no. PP123
Published Khan 1992, no. 22
Recto The letter is addressed to a weaver and concerns the delivery of some cloth. It was the normal procedure for a weaver to receive advance payment with an order for cloth, and this seems to have been the case here.

The letter opens with the blessing یکةلیث یکةلیث یکةلیث یکةلیث یکةلیث یکةلیث (May God prolong your life!) and closes with a baṣmalah that reads baṣmalah Allah u-a-rīm "Maṣʿūd al-Maṣʿūdī (Our sufficiency is God, and He is a fine support to those who trust in Him)."

The body of the text reads:

'Give to Hosam the attendant the cloth you owe to the customer, that is four (lengths) and a small piece, so that they may be returned to their owner, God willing. Tomorrow deliver (it) to the owner of the cloth, who has conveyed its price to you.'

The hand in which the letter was written is remarkable for the loss of graphic clarity, especially in such phrases as the baṣmalah and the baṣmalah: many letters are not fully formed, and there are numerous unconventional ligatures. In most cases final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, while shīn and sīn were written without teeth, i.e., being surmounted by a bar.

Verso Blank.

59
Letter
3rd century AD
25 x 22 cm, with 9 lines of script on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing from the left side of the sheet
Accession no. PP130
Recto The letter opens with the blessing 'May God prolong your life, and may I be made your hostage'. The body of the letter, in which the names Ibn Ahmad and Abu Ishaq are mentioned, ends with the request formula 6اَरَّة* a'azza Allah fi 'ablum waasladih batin... (Please be so kind - May God give you strength! - to inform me of the arrival of this... and be granted success, God willing). It is not clear from the surviving text what had arrived.

The most notable characteristics of the script are that final 'alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, and that final 'ayn has an extended retroflex tail. Consonants were sometimes marked by diacritics.

Verso This bears the address for the letter on the recto, 'From Muhammad ibn Mansur al-Maṣʿūdī, the freedman of Abu al-Sirri'.
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
7.5 x 25 cm, with 5 lines of script on the recto and 12 lines on the verso; the lines on the verso are at right angles to the papyrus fibres, and so perpendicular to the text on the recto; text is missing at the top of the recto
Accession no. 794403

Recto: This papyrus consists of a strip that has been cut from the bottom of the first letter. As a result, all that survives of this is a closing formula which includes the tasliyah and a postscript which conveys greetings to various people. The closing formula reads, 'tasliyah wa-'sall Allah 'alai Muhammad wa-
'a'li 'anratuhu al-tahirin wa-sallama tasliman
('May I be made your ransom! And may God prolong your life...! May God bless Muhammad and his pure kin and grant them salvation!').
Final 'salf' extends below the connecting stroke.

Verso: The text of the second letter begins with the formula 'alqafa Allah wa-'lamma'a bika
('May God spare you and grant enjoyment through you!') and closes with 'alqafa Allah wa-irfa'a bika ('May God spare you and keep you safe!'). In the body of the text the writer requests payment of one-third of a dirham, and there is a postscript in which he asks that this sum be paid as a single coin ('qat'ab wa'dihadhah).
The final 'ya' in the word 'saf' in line 5 has a retroflex tail, and the initial 'salf' in this word has been separated from the other letters as a way of filling out the line; this is also the case in the words 'al-qam'idh in line 7 and 'Allah in line 11. The loops of the letters are closed.

Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
20 x 19 cm, with 21 lines of script on the recto, including 4 lines in the upper margin and 2 lines in the right margin
Accession no. 794168

Recto: The letter mentions the purchase of various items from the market ('al-ruqay') and the dispatch of wheat ('qamid'). It also notes the arrival of some sailors, i.e. 'lama al-na'adiyyah wa'd-'atarn ('for the sailors have come', line 11). The letter closes with the formula ra' 'yaka fi ikhtilaf ('give me your opinion concerning that').
In most cases independent 'dil' and 'dibil are distinguished from 'r' by a distinct curve. 'Sa' is written without teeth.

Verso: There are the faint remains of the address at the top.
62

A letter and a reply

3rd century AD

17.3 x 11 cm, with 12 lines of script on the recto and 6 lines on the verso; there are lacunae within the text on the recto, and text is missing from the bottom of the verso

Accession no. P79433

Published Khapr 1990, no. 36

Recto: The first letter begins with the hamzah and a blessing and continues with a request that the addressee dispatch some money and a reference to trade in skins: 'In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. May God preserve you and protect you! (I am writing to) let you know that you should send (the three) dinars, for I have commitments with the sewers of skins concerning the price of skins. Even if they are all pieces (qita'), send them, for I have good-quality dinars...'. The qita referred to were small pieces of coin clipped off a dinar or akkin. Although they were not regarded as valid currency by the judges, the papyri show that this prohibition was not always observed in practice.

After the lacunae in lines 6 and 7, the text resumes: '... so that I know that they have been remitted [by you] for the price of the wheat. So pay us today in full. When the pilgrim comes, you will be recompensed; God willing. May God preserve you and protect you!'

Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and initial kaf is hairpin-shaped.

Verso: The reply reads, 'In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. May God preserve you and protect you! The three dinars have been entered (in the account) for you, and dried and fresh clover have been sent to you. [May God preserve you and protect you]...'.

63

The draft of a letter and a pen exercise

3rd century AD

19 x 25 cm, with 9 lines of script on the recto and 4 lines on the verso; text is missing at the top and bottom of the recto

Accession no. P79530

Recto: The change of pen in lines 2 and 3 of the text, and the repetition of phrases in lines 1-4, suggest that this was the initial draft of a letter. The author acknowledges the receipt of a letter from the addressee.

Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and the strokes of dal and dhal approximate to straight lines. Initial kaf consists of a single stroke that curves to the left, without a surrounding oblique stroke.

Verso: The text on this face of the papyrus was probably a pen exercise. It comprises the opening formula of a letter preceded by a hamzah written upside down relative to the rest of the text. The formula reads, 'atāla Allāh baṇḍa 'a wa-'aṣṣaka wa-'as-samāla 'a wa-'as-samma ma'nahu a'lā yaka ('May God prolong your life, strengthen and honour you and grant you a full measure of His bounty'), with the word 'atāla written twice at the beginning.

Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and initial kaf lacks a surrounding oblique stroke.
Letters

64
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
15.5 × 24 cm, with 10 lines of script on the recto and 8 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top of the sheet on both sides
Accession no. PP1561
Recto: In the first letter the writer requests his respondent to express his views on an unspecified matter. The text ends with the formula ja'lla fisilka wa-'atid Allah baq'aka wa-sidama 'izzatuka wa-harimatuka wa-'atimu bi'matuka 'alayka wa-'madinaa ('May I be your ransom! May God prolong your life, may He ensure that your strength and your honour endure, and may He grant you and those about you a full measure of His bounty!') and a tasliyah in the form assal Allah 'alad al-nabi Muhammad ('May God bless the Prophet Muhammad').
Verso: The second letter mentions land tax (kharij) and contains the prayer 'as'ul Allah 'an yaraddakum 'ilayna fi 'alifyah ('I ask God that He sends you back to us in good health'). It closes with the conveyance of greetings from various people, including a man called Abu-Al-Awla, and the formula 'atid Allah baq'aka wa-sidama 'izzatuka wa-'atimu bi'matuka 'alayka wa-'madinaa ('May God prolong your life, may He ensure that your strength endures, may He grant you a full measure of His bounties, and may He make an increase in His goodness towards you').
The letter was written in a hand in which final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and the initial kaf in line 6 is shaped like a hairpin. Two lines in a different hand have been written in the margin, but they are illegible.

65
Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
17.2 × 13.8 cm, with 10 lines of script on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing on the left side of the sheet, and there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. PP1568
Published Khan 1992, no. 33
Recto: The letter concerns family matters:
'T is the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. May God prolong your life, preserve your strength and nobility, grant you a full measure of His bounty and increase His goodness to you in this world and the next, with mercy! (I am writing so that you know that I have not read a letter of yours for days and ... worried me, and I pray to God that He will bring us together in good health. He has the power to do that.

As for what follows — May God show you kindness— I ceased writing to you due to my many preoccupations. I pray to God that (I shall) return in good health. I should like you to write to me (and tell me) your news, the news of Rasheh — May God preserve him! — and the news of your mother. Give me also news of Amin and Abbas — May God preserve them!

'Have brought a kharif for you. I acquired only one. Write to me (to tell me) your news and how you are, for I shall be given pleasure by that, God willing. I shall only be away from you for a month, that is (to) the end of TuBiSah. I pray to God) that He will bring us together in health.

'God willing, your garment will have arrived safely. Give my best wishes to Rasheh — May God preserve him! — and my very best wishes to your mother, your sister and Abbas. Write to me (and tell me) the news of the Jewish landlord.'

Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and the kaf sometimes have no teeth. Initial and medial kaf have a hairpin-shaped base surmounted by a straight oblique stroke.
Verso: The two lines of script form the address of the letter on the recto. This address is relatively long, and the lacunae make it difficult to interpret, but it includes the phrase, 'to Abu Khayr from Bajan the Sailor'.

125
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
66

A note and a letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD

12 x 11 cm, with 10 lines of script on the recto, including 3 lines in the upper margin, and 13 lines on the verso, including 3 lines in the upper margin and 1 line in the right margin; text is missing on the left side and in the top right corner of the recto and from the bottom and top left corner of the verso; accession no. 789530

Recto In the note the writer requests the addressee, a woman, to send various items, including 1 bundle ( חדרה) of something, probably documents or books. The script is in a style in which final "al" does not extend below the connecting stroke.

Verso The letter opens with the formula "الله الحاكم الرازي السادة صابر" (May God prolong your life and cause your strength to endure!). The author proceeds to mention the messenger who conveyed the letter (الرازي), and to inform his correspondent of someone's imminent arrival. The letter "dal" approximates to a straight stroke, and "sin", written without teeth, is surrounded by a bar.

67

Letter reused for an account
3rd century AD/9th century AD

8 x 66 cm, with 5 lines of script on the recto, including 1 line in the right margin, and 1 lines on the verso; text is missing at the top and bottom of the recto and from the top of the verso; accession no. 789535

Recto The author of this letter suggests that the addressee should "buy me with the price of that a short length of cloth and a woman's shāhk" (عسى شاهك خبرة شفيعات), a shāhk was a type of garment. The term "shāhk" probably relates to the phrase "بشهب", which is found at the beginning of some documents of receipts. Final "al" extends below the connecting stroke.

Verso The text on this side of the papyrus is an account, the last line of which reads "عـى ضاحك ساـحير والـاـنباز واـنـيلي" (he should confirm receipt of the seven and one-half dinars in a document of receipt (according what I am credited to him)). The term "shāhk" probably relates to the phrase "بشهب", which is found at the beginning of some documents of receipts. Final "al" extends below the connecting stroke.

Letter

Cyrus AD

of script on the recto, upper margin, and 15 lines
in the upper margin
ring text is missing on the
top right corner of the recto and
left corner of the verso

letter requests the addressee,
items, including a bundle
probably documents
in which final ‘alif does
connecting stroke.

with the formula ‘atla Allah
zaka... (“May God prolong
life to endure!”). The
reason the messenger who
(provided) and to inform his
son’s imminent arrival.

wares to a straight stroke,
and that, is surrounded by

For an account

Cyrus AD

of script on the recto, upper margin, and 3 lines on
at the top and bottom of
top of the verso

letter suggests that the
one with the price of that a
a woman’s shakkā’ (wad-
ma‘ṣṣhab mag‘ṣṣhab wa-
shakkā was a type of garment.
straight line, and six and
side of the papyrus is an
which reads ‘wāṣi‘a‘ bi-
‘wāṣi‘a‘ bi‘id al-wāṣi‘a‘ bi-
receipt of the seven and
receipt of receipt (record-
bahin). The term ṣāḥib
phrase ṣāḥib li-‘īn, which is
of some documents of
lands below the connect-

59
Letters

68
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
33.7 x 20.8 cm, with 17 lines of script on the recto and 24 lines on the verso, including 2 lines in the right margin; text is missing from the right side of the recto.
Accession no. P91542
Verso published Khan 1992, no. 19
Recto: The first letter opens, after the Yasalah, with the phrase: 'baggada Allah waj zal-shikha wa-umma bi-ka ('May God protect you and preserve you and grant me joy through you') and contains a request for a meeting with the addressee.
Final 'alf sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while medial 'ayn is either an oblique stroke slanting to the left or a near-vertical stroke.
Verso: The second letter is addressed to Abu Muhammad and opens with the Yasalah and the same formula as the first. It continues:
'You left us with the assurance that you will come to meet me on Friday, and we shall go out to the house of Nafi', so that we may finish our business with him. Abu Harun has come to me with (the money for the goods) he wants us to buy from you. He will stamp it; – the meaning of this last phrase is not at all clear – and will remit it from me until the produce is delivered to you. If the produce is not delivered to you, I shall return the money to Abu Harun. I hope you will deliver the produce to us and more. I am in easy circumstances, for (God) has made me comfortable and has not disgraced me; – May He cause me to obtain good! I should like you – May God grant me fulfillment of my wish – to come to me on Friday at the home of Nafi'. I hope that God will aid you in undertaking this favour for us, so that we may return the favour which we would (then) owe you. Go then with the money.'
In the margin the letter concludes: 'May God protect you, preserve you and defend you. Let me know your view about this so that we may act upon it; God willing. Show concern for our needs: – May God protect you!' Final 'alf extends below the connecting stroke.
1. In Khan 1992, no. 19, the recto and verso were reversed in error.

69
Letter reused for an account and a second letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
33 x 24 cm, with 18 lines of script on the recto, including 1 line in the margin, and 18 lines on the verso, including 2 lines in the right margin and 1 line in the left margin; text is missing at the top and bottom of the sheet on both sides.
Accession no. P91359
Recto: This business letter mentions al-qattab ('left' or 'land tax') in line 2 and the estates of an amir (hayya al-'amir) in line 9. The writer has sent money to the addressee and requests him to acknowledge its receipt (lines 13–15).
Dal was formed so as to approximate to a straight stroke.
Verso: Lines 1–4 form the end of an account in which the quantities are expressed in saleh碣 and 'irdah碣. These were measures of volume for dry commodities such as grain. The precise ratio of saleh碣 to an 'irdah碣 varied from place to place. In Fustat there were six, in the Fayyum nine. The account mentions Fustat and was dated Friday, 16 Ramadan.
The second text (lines 5–15) is a letter in which the addressee is requested to dispatch dinars. In line 10 the writer refers to the conveyance of some item by a certain Walih. The text of this letter extends into the left and right margins.
Final 'alf extends below the connecting stroke, and the strokes of dal and dhal usually approximate to a straight line. Initial 'ayn consists of a single stroke curving to the left, without a surmounting oblique stroke.
A letter reused for an account
3rd century AH/9th century AD
17.7 x 9.9 cm, with 10 lines of script on the recto and 3 lines on the verso, all written parallel to the papyrus fibres, so that the text on the verso is at right angles to that on the recto; text is missing from the top of the sheet on the recto
Accession no. PP43292

Recto The letter is addressed to a woman, and it contains the request fa' in kina min ra yikhi 'an ta'yi 'lal ... wa-lhawi bi-l masjid fa' za'afahu 'layhi ('If it be your resolution to come to ... while he is in the mosque, come to him'). The correspondent ends the letter by offering blessings for the Prophet.

Verso The account is preceded by the word sahaba ('it is correct') written in large letters, probably by another hand from the text of the account itself. Apart from this validation the text consists of two lines.
In the script, medial 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.

Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
11.3 x 24.5 cm, with 8 lines of script on the recto and 3 lines on the verso; there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. PP4521

Recto The author of the letter offers greetings to various people and requests a reply, using the formula wa-taktabu 'layya ... ma'a al-hizab bi-khawatikta wa-barad lija fa' limuka ta'arrarat bi-dhabika ('Write to me ... by letter, giving your news and your needs, and you will please me by that', lines 6-7). The letter also includes the prayer 'asal Allah yu'afarri amma wa la'arsu jamii' 'ummat Muhammad - salaa Allah tala alayhi wa-sallama ('I ask God that He release us and all the nation of Muhammad - May God bless him and save him!', lines 7-8).

The loops of mim are often open.

Verso The address reads 'To Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Sulayman ibn Yazid ('from Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Hassan').
For an account

In AD 10

A letter offers greetings

Dear [Recipient],

I write to you with the utmost respect and humble longing. May Allah grant you peace and guidance. My heart is heavy with concern for your well-being.

I recently heard from [Ticket] that you are experiencing difficulties in your work. I was so moved by this news that I immediately sat down to write you this letter. I hope that you will accept my prayers and well-wishes.

I am also informed that you are in need of [Foreign Aid]. I understand the challenges that come with such situations and know how difficult it is to find help. I have always been one to offer a helping hand, and I believe that it is my duty to do so.

I am currently [Employed]. I have been working hard to improve my skills and knowledge in [Field]. I hope that you will follow my example and pursue your dreams.

I am also excited to announce that I have been selected for [Opportunity]. I am eager to take advantage of this opportunity to further my career and contribute to [Society]. I believe that you will also be a great asset to [Society].

I am [Married]. I have been married to [Spouse] for [Years]. We are happy and content in our marriage. I hope that you will find love and happiness in your own life.

I am currently [Traveling]. I have been traveling around the world to learn more about different cultures and perspectives. I believe that it is important to be open-minded and to appreciate the diversity of the world.

I am also [Exercising]. I have been exercising regularly to stay healthy and to maintain my energy levels. I hope that you will also find time to engage in physical activity.

I am [Writing]. I have been writing stories and articles for various publications. I believe that writing is a powerful tool to express my thoughts and emotions. I hope that you will also find joy in writing.

I am [Reading]. I have been reading extensively to expand my knowledge and to explore new ideas. I believe that reading is essential for personal growth and development.

I am [Praying]. I have been praying regularly to seek guidance and to connect with my higher power. I hope that you will also find solace in prayer.

In conclusion, I wish you all the best in your endeavors. I am always here to support and encourage you. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you need help or guidance.

With love and regards,

[Your Name]
Letter
3rd century AD/9th century
20.5 x 11.8 cm, with 17
parallel to the papyri on
the bottom of the sheet
Accession no. 1792-294
Published Khan 1992.

Recto: The letter begins
blessing. 'May God grant
show you kindness that
the test it is difficult to
interpretation is that the
away and gone to stay.
'I have taken note of
said concerning Umm
my host supportive on
you had the opportuni
message. As for you
Sha'ib has gone to the
not mentioned it (pre-
about it until I received
me that she had gone to
of my sister. When she
her in the middle of the
your home.' She said (I
house until her daughter
mentioned to me until
mentioned ... nor any
Lines 12–15 are too few to
coherent sense, but in the
arrival of his brother
return from the coast.
Final 'ṣ' sometimes
necing stroke and some
instances initial 'ṣ' con-
curve to the left, with
stroke, while some exact
's' are hairpin shaped.

Verso: Blank.
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD

A letter and a reply
3rd century AH/9th century AD

Letters

"The young horses have done well, with God's permission. (This may mean that they fetched a good price when sold.) 'I have sent Pamukh and Danl to you with the baskets. They are four excellent, large baskets ... I only sent them) after Friday since the people are busy on the land.'

The next sentence, 'If the kids had been born I would have written to you,' seems to be a reply to a statement in the first letter. 'You did not mention to me whether the sheep have given birth or not.'

The letter concludes:

'I send best wishes to you and Ibn al-Hasan, his brother and sisters, Umm Ali, Sitt Mahir and the boys of Abdallah - May God give them strength! And (I hope you) are not flagging in the sowing, with God's help - He is powerful and exalted! I hope to come to you shortly, God willing. If I were to tell everything to you, Umm Ali and the boys, I would go on too long. May God not take (me) away from you! May He protect you from harm and humiliation!'

In some cases final 'alif' extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not; the upper stroke of 'dal' approximates to a straight line; and sin and shin are written without teeth and are surrounded by a bar.
Letters

74
Letter
3rd century AD
23 x 15.7 cm, with 14 lines of script on the recto; text is missing at the bottom right
Accession no. 3975294
Published Khani: 1992, f.17
Recto After the baumahal (the text reads):
'May I be made your ransom, my sister, and may God prolong your life and make you my ... from every evil? May I never be afflicted with the hearing of bad news from you, by His mercy! I am writing to you, my sister, while 1, Umm Ibnahsa and our community are very well. God be praised - He has no partner! And may God give many blessings to Muhammad the prophet and save him! I am letting you know, my sister, that Abu'1-Qaisir has come and informed me of your good health. That pleased me, and I gave much praise to God for that. I have received the basket of apples and four baskets of wheat. We measured them and found in them four 'indhab and three-wayhabs according to the large qafla.'

'By God, my sister, your being detained in the village distressed me. If you are being detained on account of the wheat, leave it in the house and hasten to us, for we have already sent you ... on account of your detention in the village.

'We have seen you five baskets and jujube seeds (wrapped) in five sheets of paperyus. You should know also that we did not send this letter to you by a servant boy because Zuyd - by God, my sister, we know no good of him! - went away and did not come back to me.

'Umm Ibnahsa sends you her very best wishes and says to you, "My lady, how great is my longing to see you, and I ask God ... your daughter before death. Then I know, my lady, that you do not like when you are away ... Come to me and do not stay away more than this." Give Umm Ahmad and Umm Sulayman our best wishes. Also best wishes to Sulhah. To Dabbah and Ghazal and all the boys, give our best wishes. Tho woman seive sends you her best wishes. ... best wishes to you and the mercy of God and his blessings. May God bless Muhammad the prophet and save (him)!

'Alif generally extends below the connecting stroke. Sin and shin usually have teeth, but sometimes sin has no teeth. The hantar of j' slant to the right. Initial and medial baf is hairpin-shaped and has a short upper oblique stroke.

Versus The address reads: 'From Rajhan, freedwoman of Abu Murahir, to Sandal the Eunuch (al-Kha‘batun), although the text was written to a woman ('my sister', 'my lady').

1. As the size of the 'indhab varied, the writer was trying to be more specific here by indicating that the 'indhab he used related to the large qafla.'
2. On the use of khaidun to mean 'eunuch', see Ayalon 1985.
A legal document reused for a letter

76

Circa 268/AD 883

12.5 x 20.5 cm, with 5 lines of script on the recto and 8 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and right side of the recto and the top and left side of the verso.

Accession no. PP355

Verso Published Khan 1992, no. 30

Recto The surviving text on this face of the papyrus consists of the witness clauses at the end of a legal document which was drawn up in the month of Shawwal 268, equivalent to late April and early May AD 883. In line 2 the date is written in Greek numerals, whereas in line 5 it is expressed in Arabic words.

Final 'adāf sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.

Verso The letter begins with the address, but only the patronymic of the first person named - ‘son of Yasir’ - can be read. Line 1 contains the basmalah, which is followed in line 3 by a blessing, ‘I commend you to God’s good protection and ask Him to grant you safety’. The following formula, probably one assuring the addressee that the writer was in good health, has been lost, but the text resumes in line 4: ‘I have received your letter. I was glad to hear that you are well, and I asked God to give you increase. I have sent all the wheat I have, God be praised for His help! I hope I shall be with you two or three days after writing this letter ... I commend you to God’s good protection. May God give abundant blessings to Muhammad and his family and save them.’

Final ‘adāf sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while sûd is usually written without teeth. In some instances the kāf consists of a curved stroke that bends round to the left, without a surrounding oblique stroke.

Two letters

77

3rd century AD/4th century AD

20.5 x 17.5 cm, with 12 lines of script on the recto and 11 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet on both sides, and there are lacunae within both texts.

Accession no. PP356

Recto In the first letter the author expressed a wish that God would ‘hasten our joy and raise Abu ‘Abdallah from ...’ ('an ya’ājl Allah fa’ahbati wa-yuhdallu 'Abdi ‘Abd Allah min ...') (line 7).

Note the use of the causus rectus form ‘Abi in a context in which classical Arabic would require the causus obliquus form ‘Ahi.

Final ‘adāf usually extends below the connecting stroke, and initial kāf is hairpin-shaped, while the letter sûd in yuḥaṣli (line 7) has been elongated along the horizontal axis.

Verso Lines 3–11 contain part of a second letter, but it is not clear whether the first two lines also belong to this text or form part of the address of the letter on the recto. Line 2 is written upside down relative to the rest of the text.

Final ‘adāf sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not. Sûd has no teeth and is sometimes surrounded by a bar.
A letter reused

3rd century AD/9th century AD

27.5 x 12 cm, with 88 lines on the verso and 81 lines on the recto, all sides.

Accession no. 1953.52

Recto: The correspondence begins with the phrase 'Abu Ishaq b. Bakka ('Abu Ishaq b. Bakka'), and mentions the diwān (diveān), the flower or sahā al-šaikh, and the tāj al-šaikh. The letter refers to someone called ‘Abd al-Malik, and mentions the use of the name ‘Abd al-Malik in the context of the letter.

Verso: The two-line account precedes an account of the letter's origin. The letter was a certain number of contexts and the name 'Abd al-Malik, and mentions the use of the name ‘Abd al-Malik in the context of the letter.

A letter and account

3rd century AD/9th century AD

9.5 - 12 cm, with 91 lines on the verso and 12 lines on the recto, all sides.

Accession no. 1953.56

Recto: The author of this letter, who is the addressee and his ancestor, is 'Abd al-Malik. The letter mentions the account 'Abd al-Malik, and mentions the use of the name ‘Abd al-Malik in the context of the letter.

Verso: The text on this page describes the accounting of the letter. It mentions the use of ‘Abd al-Malik, and mentions the use of the name ‘Abd al-Malik in the context of the letter.
78
A letter reused for an account
3rd century AD
27 x 12 cm, with 28 lines of script on the recto
and 25 lines on the verso; text is missing from
the bottom and top right of the recto and from
all sides of the verso except the top right
Accession no. 79553.2
Recto The correspondent began the letter with the
phrase kif al-fadda (‘May He make your ransom!’)
and mentioned the dispatch of khori (yellow gilly-
flower or viola alba), violet (al-banafas) and
white wax (al-shamm al-‘abpad, line 11). He also
referred to someone called Abu ‘l-Tahir (line 12)
and other messengers.
Initial and final kaf are sometimes hairpin-shaped.
Verso The two-line address for the letter on the
recto precedes an account arranged in 11 lines.
From the address we learn that the recipient of
the letter was a certain Abu ‘l-Fadhl. The account
mentions barley (sha‘ir), the monthly hire of a
cultivator (al-barrakh) and the area of plots of
land measured in saddams.

79
A letter and an account
3rd century AD
9.1 x 17 cm, with 9 lines of script on the recto
and 11 lines on the verso; text is missing from
the top and bottom of the recto and from the left
side of the verso
Accession no. 195536
Recto The author of the letter expressed his concern
for the addresser and eagerness to receive a letter
from him. ‘We shall be concerned until we see a
letter from you (la inni la mu‘iiz bi-hammum batta
nabi khitabe, line 1). The letter ends with greetings.
The strokes of alif and dhal usually approximate
1.5 straight lines, and initial kaf is generally hairpin-
shaped and extended along the horizontal axis.
Final kaf and the retroflex tail of final ya‘ have also
been extended horizontally at the end of lines.
There are sporadic consonantal diacritics, and ‘alif
masdarab was written using ‘alif instead of ya‘ in
the word wajid.
Verso The text on this face of the papyrus is an
account but arranged irregularly on 4 lines.
Amounts are expressed in dirhams and dinars,
which were worth one-sixth of a dinar. Greek
numerals are used in the account, and some of the
entries have been crossed through.
Letters

80

A letter and an account
3rd century AD

15.7 cm, with 10 lines of script on the recto and 9 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and left side of the recto and from the bottom and right sides of the verso

Accession no. PP454

Recto The letter mentions fish (al-samak, line 6) and the watering of camels (line 7).

Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and initial kaf consists of a single stroke that curves to the left, without a surrounding oblique stroke.

Verso This face of the papyrus contains a few words from an account which appears to be a list of credits. On line 4, for example, there is an entry which reads li- 'al'in... (To the credit of Abu...). Lines 7 and 8 have been written in a thicker hand than the rest of the text, and they may be a postscript to the letter on the recto.

81

Letter
3rd century AD

9 x 14.4 cm, with 8 lines of script on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and left side of the recto

Accession no. PP454

Recto The letter opens with the prayer 'adqamat Allah wa-baqi'akum wa-'amanna n'amta

'madakum (May God preserve you, protect you and grant you a full measure of His bounties').

The author went on to mention the receipt of a letter from the addressee, wa-'anada hitbatkum 'aleyya ya'amana fathuma wa-falima na's zuhoram fisih min zalamah ('Your letter has reached me. I have read it and understood what you have said in it regarding your good health'). The addressee is referred to by means of the prenominal suffixes -ataka, -akum and -atam. The interchange between the dual and the plural forms is due to careless style.

Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, the upper stroke of initial kaf bends to the right, and the upper strokes of dal and dhal approximate to a straight line.

Verso The script here is the address of the letter on the recto.
script on the recto is missing from the verso.

To the credit of Abu...written in a thicker ink, and they may be a verso...
82
Part of a letter reused for a legal document
3rd century AD/7th century AD
17 x 12 cm, with 3 lines of script on the recto and 7 lines on the verso; text is running from the bottom and left side on both sides of the sheet
Accession no. PP5343

Recto: The letter, of which only the right-hand corner has been preserved, begins with the formula "الله يертضى عليكم و عليكم" (May God prolong the life of you and yours, and bestow a full measure of His bounties upon them.)

Final 'a'fd does not extend below the connecting stroke.

Verso: The main text on this face of the papyrus occupies lines 1, 2, 3, and 6 and includes various details regarding landed property, including boundaries (buddad), roofs (zahāb), a portico (al-`wastmās), and orchards (jūrām). The text is not structured according to the usual formulae for a legal document.

Lines 3, 4, and 7, written in a different hand, contained the address of the letter on the recto.

The addressee is named as Abu Ali.

83
Two letters
3rd century AD/7th century AD
14 x 21.5 cm, with 6 lines of script on the recto and 9 lines on the verso; text is running from the top, bottom and left side of the recto and from the top, bottom and right side of the verso.
Accession no. PP5334

Recto: The first letter mentions various loads (balām, plural 'abūnā) of merchandise, including five loads from Kharasan (line 3).

Final 'a'fd extends below the connecting stroke.

Verso: The second letter mentions a shop (al-`abūnā) in line 4 and leather from Quraish (al-fīd min al-Quraysh) in line 7.

Final 'a'fd extends below the connecting stroke.
Initial hāf is s-shaped, and the retroflex tail of final yā' extends beneath the preceding letter.
script on the recto

the right-hand
began with the formula

only the right-hand

as it says 'al-azmah
namu ra's atmah 'alayhi
of the amir, cause his
glory and bestow a full
on him.'

below the connect-

face of the papyrus
and lists various details
including boundaries
ottic (ad-‘uttaruna)
text is not structured
ulary for a legal
in a different hand,
letter on the recto.
Abu ‘Ali.

script on the recto and
missing from the top,
recto and from the top,
the verso

various loads
erehandae, including
line 2).

the connecting stroke.

a shop (al-dhakān)
Qas (al-ṣād min al-Qaṣ)

the connecting stroke.

the retroflex tail of the
receding letter.
Letter
3rd century AD
16 x 16 cm, with 9 lines of script on the recto and 1 lines on the verso; text is missing from the right side of the sheet, and there are lacunae within the text

Accession no. 999349

Recto The letter opens with extensive blessings.

The extant text includes the formula "ta'amma ni'amahu 'alelyka wa-zaada fi 'ibatihi 'alelyka wa-imakah... wa-'at' Allah 'an padma' bajrai wa-baynasaka qade al marzat ('May He grant you a full measure of His bounties and make an increase in His goodness to you and to those about you... I pray that God will unite us before death'). The writer then states that he has sent something small to the addressee. The closing formula repeats phrases that occur in the opening formula, "ta'amma ni'amahu 'alelyka wa-zaada fi 'ibatihi 'alelyka wa-imakah.

Final "alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while the strokes of 'dal and 'dal' approximate to a straight line. Initial "kaf" sometimes has an upper stroke pointing to the right, as in the word "hasad" in line 7. The letter "al" has consonantal diacritics in the word "majjada" (line 6).

Verso This contains the beginning of the address of the letter on the recto.

Letter
3rd century AD
16 x 16.5 cm, with 3 lines of script on the recto and 3 line on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and left side of the sheet

Accession no. 999347

Recto The writer of the letter had received a letter from the addressee concerning a man called Abu Ahmad (lines 3-4). He began his letter with the phrase, "I commended you to God's protection" ('Sa'udul'ahwam Allah).

Final "alif extends below the connecting stroke, and initial "kaf" consists of a single stroke that curves to the left, without a surrounding oblique stroke. In the case of one word "al" has been given consonantal diacritics.

Verso This face of the papyrus bears the address, 'From al-'Abbas ibn 'Abdallah to 'uma'il ibn al-'Abbas".
86

Letter
3rd century AD
27 x 8.5 cm, with 17 lines of script on the recto; text is missing from the bottom left of the sheet
Accession no. PPA305
Published: Khan 1993, no. 23

Recto: The letter begins with the hamzalah and the formula 'an'ama Allah wa'iliheke ('May God make your morning pleasing'). It continues:

'I am writing to let you know — May God show you kindness — that we are frightened by this affair, which people have informed us of.

Write — May God show you kindness — a letter to the people (requesting them) to leave and send it quickly with the servant boy. If not, we shall track down somebody who can write until we get the best scribe. The name of the porter is Walid al-Hammāni, and he has eight ounces. The name of the other is Mādā' al-Hammāni, and he has four ounces. Write two copies for them, so that, if one precedes the other, each will have his letter, God willing. May God show you kindness!'

The upper stroke of dāl is sometimes straight, as in baddāh and 'aladih. In line 4, Sin and shin are sometimes written with no teeth, in which case shin occasionally has a superscribed oblique stroke. Initial kaf is sometimes hairpin-shaped, while in the word 'abramaka in lines 3 and 5 it consists of a single stroke that curves to the left, without a surrounding oblique stroke.

Verso: Blank.
Two letters

3rd century AD/4th century AD

11.5 x 8.5 cm, with 8 lines of script on the recto and 10 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and left side of the recto

Accesion no. 1995.84

Verso published Khan 1993, no. 35

Recto The text on this face of the papyrus consists of the opening lines of the first letter, which include the formula ‘atula Allâh bâqa’aka (“May God prolong your life!”) and a reference to Fustat.

Final ‘ālīf usually extends below the connecting stroke, and dâl approximates to a straight line.

Verso The writer of the second letter was aggrieved that the addressee had not kept him informed about a matter:

‘In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. May God prolong your life and give you strength, and may I be made your ransom! The youth has informed me – his deed was good, I commend him to God’s (protection) – and I took note of that. By God, you did not write to inform (me). I was about to come to you but was detained by the arrival of a group. I hope – May God give (you) strength! – that you will send me his news and (tell me) how he is. Four of our companions have betaken themselves to you. I have sent to you a letter from Bint Lamitias, your maid-servant, for you to read, God willing. May God prolong your life and give you strength, and may I be made your ransom?”

This text was written upside down relative to that on the recto. Final ‘ālīf sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while ‘ain and ‘âyn have no teeth.
A letter and a
3rd century A.D./7th c.
12.7 x 16.8 cm, with 3 and 4 lines on the verso
A. the surviving
to the top and right side of
of the verso
Jerusalem no. PP13951
Recto: The surviving
letter. A postscript has
been added in the box
in 'ajnab hyw-an
('If you find it to be
in your credit, inform
Final 'a has no
text, and 'in
Verse: This account is
a cavalry (farsa), with
words and in Greek.
Final 'a does no
ving stroke.
Letters

88

A letter and an account
3rd century AD/9th century AD
12.7 x 16.8 cm, with 7 lines of script on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the top and right side of the recto and from the top of the verso.

Acc No. 1736/115

Recto: The surviving text is from the end of the letter: A postscript written in a smaller hand has been added in the bottom left corner. It reads: ‘in shahadatu wa-bastaqra laka shari’a’ (If you find it to be correct and anything remains to your credit, inform me of this).

Final ‘alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while sin and shin have no teeth.

Verso: This account is a record of payments to savaj (servant), with the amounts expressed in gold and in Greek numerals.

Final ‘alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.

89

Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
22.4 x 14 cm, with 17 lines of script on the recto and 8 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom of the recto, and there are lacunae within the text.

Acc No. 194/101

Recto: After the ba‘malah the author began with the blessing: ‘alhiqumum Allah wa-ba‘thakum wa ‘aatamma n‘matahu ‘alaykum wa ‘aza’daka fi ‘i‘ratihati ‘alaykum wa ‘inadakum bi-nafsinati (‘May God preserve and sustain you and grant you a full measure of His bounties and make an increase in His goodness to you and to those about you, in His mercy’). He then went on to mention what (jannah).

The use of verbs with second person feminine singular endings in the main body of the text – for example, fa-‘anwi’ sul‘at tan‘ir bih tawbihah ‘an ta‘bihah ... (See that when you read this letter of mine, you take ...) in lines 7–8 – indicates that the addressee was a woman, and this suggests that the -wayn pronoun suffix in the opening blessing did not have a plural referent.

Final ‘alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while the upper strokes of dal and dhal approximate to a straight line.

Verso: The two lines at the top of the sheet are the address for the letter on the recto and the six lines at the bottom, written upside down, are a continuation of that letter. The letter closes with the conveyance of greetings to various people.

90

Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
24.4 x 15 cm, with 11 lines of script on the recto and 26 lines on the verso, including 1 line written upside down in the upper margin and 1 line in the right margin; text is missing from the bottom and left side of the recto and from the bottom of the verso.

Acc No. 194/108

Recto: The first letter opens with the blessing: ‘alhiqumum Allah wa-ba‘thakum wa ‘aatamma n‘matahu ‘alaykum (‘May God preserve and sustain you and grant you a full measure of His bounties’).

It proceeds to mention ‘the survey of your estate’ (misribat da‘aya’ika) (line 3); such surveys were conducted in order to assess the land for taxation (see cat. 1 above).

Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke, while initial ‘alif is hairpin-shaped.

Verso: The second letter mentions ibn al-sula‘a, ‘the son of the sula‘a’. In the paper, and also in later sources, the term sula‘a was often used to refer to the provincial governors.

Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke. In some instances this has teeth, while in others it was written without (teeth and was surmounted by a bar.

Letter

3rd century AD/9th century AD

15 x 15 cm, with 6 lines of script on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and right side of the sheet. An additional small fragment, 5 x 8 cm, containing two lines of text probably belongs to the bottom of this sheet of papyrus.

Accession no. 999394

Recto The blessing madda Allah f'irraka ('May God extend your life!') was used twice within this letter, and the author also suggested a term of two or three days for some uncertain action or event: 'la'ja'a' yuwnayn zubattab 'la' 'an yasidiya Allah 'an sib'a Allah ('for two or three days, whatever God decrees, God willing', line 4).

In the script, final 'ain extends below the connecting-stroke, initial kaf is hairpin-shaped, and final ya' has a retroflex tail in the words 'ain (lines 1 and 3) and 'la' (line 4, second occurrence). The conjunctive 'awza is allowed to stand independently at the end of line 3. This feature is characteristic of papyri from the first two centuries AD, though the script of the letter is more typical of the 3rd century.

Verso This bears the beginning of the address of the letter on the recto, 'To Abu Ja'far ...'.

162
A letter reused for a note
3rd century AD/9th century AD
24 x 16 cm, with 20 lines of script on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the top and right side of the recto, and there are lacunae in the first line on the verso
Accession no. 1911.574

Recto The sender of this letter mentions that 'cultivation preoccupied me' ('askabbalani al-zur', line 1).
Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, while initial kaf consists of a single stroke that curves to the left, without a surrounding oblique stroke. There are sporadic consonantal diacritics, and a diacritic dot is written below the 'ain in the words fa' i'ttaka in line 19 and wa-'afaka in line 20. There is scriptio defectiva of long 'a in the word al-'uḏum in line 20.

Verso This short note contains the phrase 'alā kardī fadad al-qādī': 'Forgive me for the papyrus', which was a common phrase used to apologize for writing on asher of papyrus that already had writing on it.
'The script is in a style in which final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke.'
Letter
3rd century AD
19 x 17.7 cm, with 17 lines of script on the recto and 4 lines on the verso; there are lacunae in the text
Accession no. 79.93.8
Published Khan 1991, no. 6

Recto In the letter the writer complained that the addressee had not replied to previous communications. In the first nine lines the text has been preserved almost in its entirety.

'In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. May God prolong your life! May He preserve your strength, your honour, your support and your happiness! May He bestow upon you a full measure of His bounty; and increase His goodness to you in this world and the next! God bless Muhammad the prophet and upon him be peace! (I am writing to) let you know — May God show you kindness! — that I have written to you innumerable letters, in which I told you about the affairs of Muhammad, my boy, and the afflictions which has befallen me. I have not seen any letter of yours, nor (have I heard) any news, and I am concerned about you. Now, I do not know whether my letter and the divers will arrive. I pray to God that He will not cause you to see anything unpleasant, afflict those whom I love. I should like you to know — May God give you strength! — that I am worried about you. If we hear no more news from you other than what you hasten to write in reply to this letter of mine I shall be pleased. It distresses me that you find this a burden. I pray to God that He does not cause me to see anything unpleasant concerning you.'

In lines 10–13 there are so many lacunae that the text is not intelligible, but the last four lines may be interpreted as follows:

'... tell me your news; and how you are, and your reply, [so that] I should have pleasure in that. The very best wishes from me to you, and also the very best wishes to every one who is with you. May God prolong your life, and may He preserve your strength, honour, support and happiness! God [bless] Muhammad the Prophet and save him! Our sufficiency is God, and in Him we like to trust.'

Final 'alf usually extends below the connecting stroke, it was generally written without teeth, and initial and medial kaf are hairpin-shaped.

Verso The four lines include the address of the letter on the recto, 'To Abi 'Uthman — May God preserve his strength and honour! — from Ahmad ibn al-'Aswad'. The rest of the text appears to be a postscript.

Letter
3rd century AD
19.2 x 16.6 cm, with 19 lines of script on the recto and 11 lines on the verso
Accession no. 79.93.7
Published Khan 1991, no. 17

Recto The text of this letter is often difficult to interpret because of the many lacunae, but it is clear that the writer was concerned with various business matters. The surviving text begins with a blessing, 'May God... may He preserve you, may He grant you a full measure of His bounty, may He increase His goodness to you, and may His fine gifts be yours!' (line 1). The writer states that he was in good health when he wrote and refers to correspondence between himself and the addressee (lines 2–3).

There follows a long account of a series of transactions involving various sums of money, the parties to the transactions being the writer, the addressee and at least five other named individuals: Nissak, 'Abd al-Malik, Abu Ayub, Maysad and Shumayr. Some of the dealings involved 'umal (daphne oleoides), a plant with an aromatic resin which was used both as a fuel and medicinally as a purgative and anaesthetic, and flax (lines 11, 12–14). Final 'alf extends below the connecting stroke; the stroke of dal is sometimes a straight line, as in lines 5, 9 and 15, and alif and wa are sometimes written without teeth; and in some cases initial kaf is hairpin-shaped.

Verso The main text is a continuation of the business letter on the recto. It contains references to a debt that the writer intended to 'reckon... in wheats' (line 4) and the delivery of seed and trefoil, quercus (Tresfloum alexandrinum); line 5). The letter concludes with good wishes to the father and mother of a third party (or of third parties) and a request for the addressee to send the writer 'a piece of papyrus so that I may write on it' (lines 8–9).

The remaining two lines, written upside down in relation to the text of the letter, contain the address. All the first line is a prayer for the addressee, 'May God show him kindness for his obedience!', while the second line contains a name, perhaps Muhammad ibn Yazy, which is presumably that of the writer.

95
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
27.7 x 14.5 cm, with 13 lines of script on the recto and 20 lines on the verso; text is missing from the right side of the recto and from the left side of the verso
Accession no. PF357
Verso published Khan 1992, no.31
Recto The first letter is very fragmentary. It was written in a style where final 'a'/'af does not extend below the connecting stroke, and sin and shin have no teeth.
Verso The second letter is concerned with the delivery of corn and other business matters. The opening blessing begins on the same line as the bukama:
'In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. May God prolong your life and cause your strength to endure! I have received your letter – May God give you strength! – concerning the transport of the provisions, (which came) with ... the merchant. I have transported the provisions to you, there being 12 loads. I conveyed five loads with Mahdi al-Fihri and seven loads with Hamid ibn Abdallah ibn Kamal.

As for what you said concerning the remaining property which 'Atmar mentioned to you, it is the well-known property which was left behind from what he earned. I instructed him to do this. What happened was that he came to me after evening prayers ...'

After a lacuna lasting half a line, the text resumes:
'May God give you strength! – and I was unable to write a letter at that time, and I instructed him to inform you about this remaining property. It is only a small inheritance. It only consists of about 80 loads.'

Lacunae have reduced much of the text that follows (lines 10–17) to a series of enigmatic statements, such as 'the great extent to which the nomads occupy you' (line 16) and 'for they prevent a man from eating food, which is not easy' (line 17). The writer concludes:
'May God treat you with clemency, give you success, save you and accept from you the fast of this ... food, and may He not make it (to) your last meeting with him! He is able to do this and has the power to do [it]. Best wishes to you, God's mercy and His blessings and also to the lady ...'

'Final 'a'/'af does not usually extend below the connecting stroke, while the upper stroke of some examples of 'af and 'adh approximates to a straight line. Sin and shin were occasionally written without teeth, in which case sin is surmounted by a bar. Initial and medial 'af sometimes consist of a single stroke that curves to the left, without a surmounting oblique stroke.'

96
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
26 x 15 cm, with 18 lines of script on the recto and 12 lines on the verso, including 1 line in the right margin and 1 line written upside down in the upper margin; text is missing from the top of the recto
Accession no. PF358
Recto The author of the first letter mentioned the sale of cloth (bay 'ashab) and closed his correspondence by offering a blessing, 'atada, Allah buq'ata wa adama 'izzata wa-karimataka ('May God prolong your life and ensure that your power and honour endure!'). At the end of the letter there is a postscript, which reads 'in tasjadatu qat'an 'ashab magar adh al-fashartha ('If you find a piece of good, short cloth, buy it!')

Final 'a'/'af extends below the connecting stroke, and the upper strokes of 'af and 'adh often approximate to a straight line. Sin and shin have no teeth, and the base of 'adh and 'af tilt to the right. Initial 'af either consists of a single, straight stroke, without a surmounting oblique stroke, or is in the shape of a hairpin.

Verso In the second letter a tayyibah has been placed after the bukama, and the text proper opens with the blessing 'atada, Allah ('May God make you happy!). The author went on to mention a man called Takhihi, who can be identified with the Tulluri official Takhihi ibn Ballzard referred to in cat.52 since both letters were written in the same hand.

Final 'a'/'af sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.
Legal Documents

The Khalili Collection contains a variety of legal documents dating from as early as the beginning of the 2nd century AH. These include quitances (cat. 97, 98, 183 verso), deeds of purchase (cat. 104, 192), deeds of lease (cat. 103, 155 verso), an undertaking to stand surety (cat. 49 verso), an acknowledgement that a sum of money had been paid (cat. 105) and a marriage contract (cat. 147). In early Islamic law such written documents did not in themselves constitute evidence that a particular transaction had taken place: they could only serve as proof when they had been validated by an admissible form of evidence, namely, oral testimony, a formal acknowledgement or an oath. Nevertheless, legal documents written in Arabic were widely used from the beginning of the Islamic period, but the drawing up of a document had to be witnessed by at least two people for it to have legal force – that is, so that the transaction it recorded might be proven in any subsequent dispute. As the standing of the two witnesses could be challenged, and the document invalidated, a corps of professional witnesses ('udal, singular 'adl) was instituted: their standing was verified by a judge, and their testimony and depositions had the force of law. This institution was introduced into Egypt by the qadi Ibn Fudalah in AH 174 (AD 790), and by the beginning of the 5th century AH there were some 1,500 accredited witnesses in Cairo alone. The role of the 'udal was later extended to include the functions of a notary, so that, when a transaction took place, the parties used the services of the 'udal not only to witness the resulting document but to draught it correctly.

It was the custom for the witnesses to indicate their presence during a transaction by placing a written declaration at the foot of the document in their own hand. Not all witnesses were able to write, and so they had to instruct someone else to write the declaration for them: 
Shabida 'Ali ibn al-Sammak bi-jami' mā fihi wa-kutiba 'anhu bi-'amribi wa-maḥdaribī fi tārıkhibī. Shabida Bu al-Tayyib ibn 'Amir bi-jami' mā fihi wa-kutaba 'anhu Sulaymān ibn Idris bi-'amribi wa-maḥdaribī fi tārıkhibī. ([Witness] was borne by 'Ali ibn al-Sammak to all that is contained herein. (This) was written for him on his instruction and in his presence on the (same) date (as the document itself). Witness was borne by Bu'l-Tayyib ibn 'Amir to all that is contained herein. Sulayman ibn Idris wrote (this) for him on his instruction and in his presence on the same date). '
If the transaction was challenged at a later date the witnesses had to give oral testimony in court, for most schools of law did not accept the written declarations as having any probative value, even if they were in the witnesses' own hands. The Maliki school did accept them as proof if a secondary witness testified that the handwriting was genuine, but this school had little influence in Egypt. Nevertheless, most extant contracts in Arabic from medieval Egypt bear declarations by the witnesses, and the witness usually indicated that the declaration was "in his own hand" (bi-ḥattibih or bi-yaddih).

Autograph declarations were found on pre-Islamic documents in Aramaic and Demotic, and it may be that the declarations of witnesses in Arabic documents, which have no validity in Islamic law, are a direct continuation of this practice. It should be noted, however, that such autograph declarations have so far been found on Arabic legal documents from Egypt earlier than the last quarter of the 2nd century AH, and the practice may have become widespread only after the institution of professional witnesses was introduced by Ibn Fudalah in AH 174. In documents from the Umayyad period, such as cat. 97, a quitance dated AH 104, and quitances dated AH 88 and AH 123 in other collections, the witnesses are named at the end, but there are no references to autograph testimonies. The earliest reference known to me is a lease dated AH 180 in Cambridge University Library, at the end of which it is stated that one of the two witnesses wrote his testimony with his own hand (wa-kataha shabdahu bi-yaddibih). A fragmentary papyrus document dated AH 195 also refers to the writing of testimonies by various witnesses. Autograph declarations are found on documents from the 3rd century AH, such as cat. 99 (which is dated AH 210), 127 and 129.
The structure of Arabic legal documents changed over the course of time. Most types from the first three centuries AH do not survive in sufficient numbers to permit us to trace the development of the formulas in a systematic manner. Legal documents from the Fatimid period, datable to the late 4th century and later, survive in greater numbers, and we must therefore divide the available material into two broad categories—pre-Fatimid and Fatimid—for the purposes of historical comparison. By way of illustration we shall consider three types of document of which there are examples from the pre-Fatimid period in the Khalili Collection, viz. quittances, deeds of purchase and deeds of lease.

Some of the quittances from the pre-Fatimid period open with the phrase bāʾarāʾ bī fīlān ʿibn fīlān min kaḍāḥ wā-kāḍāḥ (‘A quittance for so-and-so son of so-and-so for such-and-such’). In this context the noun bāʾarāʾ refers to the document itself rather than the act of granting the quittance, implying that the quittance was constituted by the written document, i.e., it was a constitutive legal instrument. The remainder of the document often contains little more than the date and a statement that the quittance had been witnessed. In the Fatimid period, the record of a quittance granted by a private individual on the repayment of a debt was usually embedded in a document known as an ṣiqqār, that is, a formal acknowledgement. The creditor made an acknowledgement before witnesses that he had received the payment. The document recorded the fact that the legal act of acknowledgement had taken place and did not constitute the legal acknowledgement itself, i.e., the document had the function of a declarative instrument. It was far more elaborate and legally secure than the simple quittance.

The opening phrase of the document referred to the legal act of acknowledgement (ṣiqqār fīlān ʿibn fīlān ...). It was then recorded that the one who made the acknowledgement (al-muqirr) had received the debt from the beneficiary (al-muqrār lāhu) and that the muqirr had granted a quittance to the muqrār lāhu. A typical formula was ʿanabu qabda wa-tasal-lama wā-istawaf ṣīn fīlān ʿibn fīlān kaḍāḥ wā-kāḍāḥ wa-ʿabrāʾ ʿabu min jamiʿī bī wā-ram bāʾarāʾ bī ʿalā ʿalā Shay minsh bāʾarāʾan ʿabab bāʾarāʾ an ṣāttān bāʾarāʾ ʿalā bāʾarāʾ an ṣāttān bāʾarāʾ an ṣāttān (‘... that he received in full such-and-such from so-and-so son of so-and-so and he released him, his descendants and his heirs from all of it and from an oath upon it or upon any part of it, a valid release, a release in full’). In most cases the document was made more secure by the addition of formulas confirming the legal capacity of the muqirr and the acceptance of the acknowledgement by the muqrār lāhu. Documents of acknowledgement were already in use in the 3rd century AH, but it was only in the Fatimid period that they developed an elaborate formula that was far more secure than the simple quittances, rendering the latter obsolete.

Numerous deeds of purchase from Fatimid Egypt have been published. These come from various sites in Upper Egypt, including the Fayyum, al-Ushmunayn and Asyut, and also from Fustat. Most of these recorded the purchase of lauded property. The extant documents of this type datable to the 3rd and early 4th centuries AH have much less elaborate formularioes than those that are found in documents of the Fatimid period, whose formulas were expanded to make them legally watertight.

In the Fatimid documents, the purchase was said to have taken place ‘by one clapping of the hands and one contract’ (ṣiqqātān wāḥidatān ʿaw-sīdaq wāḥidatān). The property being purchased was referred to as the property that the seller had declared was in his possession. In other words, the seller’s ownership of the property was not presented as a presupposed fact but only as a claim by the seller. For, if the buyer were to give his acknowledgement (ṣiqqār) to a document that stated unequivocally that the property belonged to the seller, the document could be judged legally defective, and the seller’s obligations discharged in the event of a third party establishing its legitimate right to the property. A typical formula in a document...
recording the purchase of a house was غازم al-dār al-lātī dhakara hābdah al-bārifta 'annabah labu fi milkin ("All the house that this buyer declared was in his possession"). In the definition of the property the boundaries were said to 'extend to' (yanta'ah 'ilā) whatever was contiguous on four sides, the four sides being related to the four cardinal points of the compass. An adversative phrase confirmed the validity of the purchase (حشر al-sābiha). In the earlier documents, however, the adversative phrases بقية ubqiyah wasābdan and ibhrā al-sābiha were omitted, the property was described simply as belonging to the seller, and the boundaries were often expressed in verbless equative clauses: haddahub al-qiblī manzil Sawad ibn Baqwašis ... haddahub al-qibrī manzil Pilatos al-tāhtīb ("Its southern boundary is the dwelling of Sawad son of Baqwašis ... Its western boundary is the dwelling of Pilatos, the physician").

Most deeds of lease written on papyrus in Egypt in the 3rd century AH refer to the act of leasing by a form of the verbal root كرī. The opening phrase was usually حاشبه mā یکتارا fulan ibn fulan min fulan ibn fulatīb ("This is what so-and-so son of so-and-so rented from so-and-so son of so-and-so"). While deeds of lease from the Fatimid period refer to the lease by the root كرī. The opening phrase was usually حاشبه mā یستا'یکارا fulan ibn fulan min fulan ibn fulatīb. In other respects the formulary of deeds of lease was similar to that of deeds of purchase. Several expansions were inserted in the later deeds to make them legally more secure, but most of these were the same as the expansions made in the contemporary deeds of purchase.

A branch of jurisprudence relating to the profession of the notary (ibn al-shurbanī) emerged in the early Islamic period and reached its full development by the end of the 3rd century AH in the works of al-Tahawi (d. AH 321/AD 933), whose writings on legal formularies are among the earliest surviving texts of this genre. Al-Tahawi spent a number of years studying Hanafi law in Syria and Palestine and then returned to Egypt, where he appears to have remained until the end of his life. It is likely that many of the examples of formularies studied in order to render them more secure, which we find in documents after the 3rd century AH, were the result of the work of the shurbanī scholars. This is particularly clear with regard to deeds of purchase, for those recording the purchase of landed property in Fatimid Fustat have a formulary that was very close, and in many places identical, to that recommended by al-Tahawi, and there can be no doubt that it was largely based on his model formulary. In the case of documents of lease it is significant that al-Tahawi recommended the use of the root كرī rather than كرī on account of its presence in the Qur'ān and تحذيب. It is likely, therefore, that the disappearance of lease formularies with the root كرī by the Fatimid period in Egypt and their replacement by equivalent phrases containing the root كرī was also a result of the influence of the shurbanī scholars.

1. Al-Kindī, pp. 386, 611.
2. Grohmann 1914-74, no. 63; see also no. 63.
5. Grohmann 1914-74, nos. 51, 55.
6. Other documents from the 3rd century AH with autograph signatures of witnesses include Grohmann 1914-74, nos. 39, 41, 52, 56, 89, 93, 98, 100, 114, 121, 124, 126, 129, 142, 143.
11. Grohmann 1914-74, nos. 56, 57, 60, 61, 62 (Edfu, AH 239). See also Khan 1993, pp. 9-46.
12. Examples are cat. 155, verso; Grohmann 1914-74, nos. 81-82, 93; and Rāfiʿ 1990, p. 121.
13. In Arabic contracts from Spain the root كرī continued to appear as late as the 15th century AH; see González Palencia 1926-35, vol. preliminares, no. 35; 111, n. 119; González Palencia 1947, no. 110.
Two quitances

A.M. 1074/AD 723

21.5 x 17 cm, (PP370) and 19 x 8.1 cm, (PP385), with 12 lines of script on the recto (PP370) (left-hand portion), 9 lines on the recto (PP385) (right-hand portion). Published Khan 1993, no.9

Recto: The two quitances were granted to a certain ‘Abdallah ibn Hanan.’ The first is for the delivery of 13 milch ewes:

‘In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. (This is) a quittance for ‘Abdallah ibn Hanan for the 13 milch ewes of Sulayman ibn Kallal al-Ahwazi—they are the milch ewes that were bought by Jarir ibn Numayr from Sulayman ibn Atiyah.

‘Shahr ibn …, Muslim ibn Abu Ila and ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Abu Ila, his two agents, were witnesses, and it was written on Saturday in the year 104.’

The second is a receipt for the repayment of an eighth of a dinar. It seems that ‘Abdallah ibn Hanan had borrowed a half dinar from someone who had subsequently died, and one of the heirs, Salayman ibn Ahwaz al-Hadrami, had called in his quarter share of the money due. It appears that the other heir, Harth ibn Surayj al-Hadrami, had also died, and without heirs, so that ‘Abdallah could be acquitted of the rest of the debt:

‘In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. (This is) a quittance for ‘Abdallah ibn Hanan for one half dinar. Jusaym ibn Ahwaz al-Hadrami received (and acquitted him) of an eighth, and it was established that there were no heirs to Harth ibn Surayj al-Hadrami, and so he was acquitted of (the remainder). ‘Abdallah ibn Sulaym and Sulaym ibn Ahwaz witnessed the act in person, as did ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Ayub ibn ‘Abd al-Malik. And it was written on Saturday, when three days (remained) of Shawwal in the year 104.’

A word has been omitted after the words hi-taddi ‘ayyam (‘when three days …’) in the date of the second document, and it is not clear whether the three days are counted from the beginning or end of the month. The date could therefore be either 1 or 26 Shawwal AH 104 (16 March or 8 April 723).

In this style of script ‘alif is upright, occasionally bending to the right at the base, and when it is connected by a ligature to a preceding letter it sometimes extends below the connecting stroke. Sir and shin have teeth, and shad has straight horizontal strokes in stage (line 7), but shad in al-hadhrami (lines 8 and 9) has more rounded strokes. The horizontal stroke of initial ‘ayn is sometimes extended considerably to the right, as in the word ‘alad in lines 9 and 10. Medial and final ‘ayn are open, consisting of two oblique points without a connecting stroke, in hi-‘abid (line 7) and ‘arba (line 12).

Initial ‘af is hairpin-shaped. Diacritics are used sporadically in the script; the two dots of ‘ayn and ‘ayn are written obliquely. In hi-tadda (line 11), which is a vernacular reflex of the Classical Arabic h-sha‘alit, the two dots are written one on top of the other. The three diacritics of shin in shahada (line 9) are aligned horizontally.

Verso: Blank.

1. A similar document, a quittance dated AH 133, has been published by David-Weill and others, (1978, no.24).
Quittance

AR 194/AD 810

17.5 x 9 cm, with 10 lines of script on the recto; the papyrus has been folded at intervals of about 1 cm
Accession no. 27952
Published Khan 1992, no. 10

Recto The quittance was issued to record a payment of the land tax, kharaj:

In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. (This is) a quittance for Bishah ibn Yazid for 21 dinars and one half and one eighth and one half of one sixth (i.e. one twelfth) of the mishqal type. It is confirmed that he paid it (and acquitted) himself of it after he entered Fustat. This is what he owed as kharaj on his land, as assessed in the year 194. This was written in the month of Ramadan of the year 194.

Ramadan 194 ran from 8 June to 5 July AD 810.

At the bottom of the document the tax payment was summarized, using Greek numerals:

'21, 7/12, 1/8 mishqal dinars'.

Final 'ilf extends below the connecting stroke.

Verso Blank.

Part of a legal document

AR 210/AD 836

23.5 x 21.5 cm, with 17 lines of script on the recto; text is missing from the top of the sheet and from the middle of the right side
Accession no. 199187

Recto The surviving text consists mostly of clauses containing the names of the witnesses and a statement that each witness himself wrote the testimony with his own hand (bi-qirā'at). The last clause was drawn up when 'twelve nights remained of the month of Dhū'l-Qa'dah in the year 210', that is, on the 19 Dhū'l-Qa'dah 210, equivalent to 2 March AD 836. This was not the day on which all the other clauses were written, as it sometimes took several days for all the witnesses to testify to a document.

The script is of necessity in various hands, all of which were well executed. In these hands šīn and šīn have teeth, and the loop of wa was often open.

Verso Blank.
of script on the recto; the
intervals of about 2 cm

10

issued to record a payment

the merciful and compas-
sionate for Ridah b. Yazid
and one eighth and one
(twelfth) of the mahgall
be paid it (and acquitted)
per Fustat. This is
his land, as assessed in
written in the month of

from 8 June to 1 July AD 291,
compute the tax payment
Greek numerals:

the connecting stroke.

Document

lines of script on the recto;
crease of the sheet and from

consists mostly of clauses
the witnesses and a state-
ment of the scribe who wrote the testimony

wright remained of the
in the year 210 1/4, that is,
210, equivalent to
not have been the day
cases were written, as it
ays for all the witnesses

y in various hands, all of
In these hands six and
lop of usfu is often open.
100 Record of a testimony
AH 330/AD 843

22.5 x 10.5 cm, with 9 lines of script written parallel to the papyrus fibres; the papyrus has split vertically along the join between two sheets of a roll (see pp. 16, 17 above)
Accession no. PP1186
Published Khan 1992, no. 32

Recto The text reads: 'In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. I have borne witness in writing for Ya'qub ibn Ishaq ibn Isma'il al-Baghdadi against Harun, freedman of Ishaq ibn Isma'il al-Baghdadi, that he owed Ya'qub ibn Ishaq 90 dinars (whose payment) to Ya'qub is now due. He called me as a witness in Dhu'l-Qa'dah of the year 230. The month of Dhu'l-Qa'dah AH 330 was equivalent to 10 July–8 August AD 843. The style of script is such that final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, the stroke of dal sometimes approximates to a straight line, and initial kaf is hairpin-shaped.

Verso Blank.

101 Lease of a shop
AH 285-86/AD 893-902

Parchment, 22 x 16 cm, with 13 lines of script; text is missing from the bottom and from the left side of the sheet, and the bottom left of the sheet has shrunk
Accession no. PP1176
Published Khan 1992, no. 31

Recto Legal documents of this sort were often written on parchment to make them more durable. This example opens with the words, 'In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. This is what 'Amr ibn Harun al-Mu'min rented from Rim, the freedman of Abu Muhammad ...'. The shop leased by 'Amr was in the Qasr district of Fustat, 'in the vicinity of the guardhouse of Khawwaj ibn Huwayyi' (line 5).
There followed a description of the southern, northern, eastern and western limits of the property. This sequence was conventional in Muslim documents from Egypt, as it had been in Demotic, Greek and Coptic documents of this sort. The fact that the south was also the direction of the qiblah no doubt gave new force to this tradition.'

The sum of one third of one dinar, presumably the annual rent, is mentioned in line 11, which also contains the end of a date in the 893 AH, equivalent to the period AD 893-902.
In the script, final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke.

Verso Blank.

102
An account reused for a receipt

24.1 x 15 cm, with 5 lines of script on the recto and 7 lines on the verso; the script on the verso was written at right angles to the fibres and therefore at right angles, too, to the text on the recto; text is missing from the bottom of the recto

Accession no. 999136

Verse published: Khan 1992, no. 11

Recto: The surviving text consists of the beginning of a record of receipts and opens with the phrase 'allâhî nûhûda yâzûm al-'âshir'î 2 ("That which was received on Wednesday ... ").

The script is characterized by the way in which final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke and independent 'alif extends to the right in a horizontal straight line.

Verse: The second document confirms the receipt of 25 fractions of 1 Dirham:

In the name of God, the merciful and compassionate. I have received from Abu l-Hudhayl (the straw-dealer) five dinars less one sixth in cash, which were delivered by Abu l-Rafi' and Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-'Ali in Jumada l-Akhirah of the year 385. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Jabbar wrote it in his own hand.

The month of Jumada l-Akhirah AH 385 was equivalent to 15 June–13 July AD 496.

At the end of the document there is a rosette-like mark whose function was presumably to signal the end of the document and to prevent any attempt to add more words.

Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and initial kaf is hairpin-shaped.

103
A document and a letter

3rd century AD/9th century AD

16 x 17 cm, with 6 lines of script on the recto and 10 lines on the verso; text is missing from the right side of the recto and the left side of the verso, and there are small lacunae

Accession no. 1999136

Recto: The short document on this face of the papyrus relates to a payment of money and closes with a scribal mark in the form of a rosette. Similar marks are found at the end of other documents, such as cat. 102 and cat. 106.

The recto has also been used to write the address of the letter on the verso (lines 1–2). In the hand used for the document (lines 3–6) final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and the stroke of dâl approximates to a straight line.

Verse: The letter concerns wheat (qamh). It opens 'abramakumâ Allâh ... wâ-'ataamma ni'ama hu sâlaykum wâ-'indakumâ ("May God honour you ... and grant you and yours a full measure of His bounties!"). The writer used the second person singular, plural and dual pronoun suffixes interchangeably when referring to the addressee(s).

Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke.
104

A record of a purchase re-used for a pen exercise
3rd century AD

16 x 14 cm, with 8 lines of script on the recto
and 2 lines on the verso; the script on the verso
was written at right angles to the papyrus fibres
and therefore at right angles, too, to the text on the
recto; text is missing from the left side of the sheet
Accession no. 1974.502

Recto: The document on this face of the papyrus
opens with the phrase bādhiya mā ikhtīa’ Allu ibn
Ja’far... (This is what Allu ibn Ja’far bought...)
and recorded the purchase of an ass (ṣimārah).
It may be compared with cat. 192, which was written
by the same scribe and recorded the purchase of an
ass by the same ‘Ali ibn Ja’far.
Final ‘dīf sometimes extends below the connect-
ing stroke, while dīl is written as a straight stroke.

Verso: The pen exercise is in the form of a baumalih
followed by the epistolary formula bādhiya ‘Allu ‘dīf...a
‘Allu ‘dīf...a (May I be made your ransom!), which was
written twice.

In this hand the stroke of ‘alī approximates to a
straight line, while ‘dīl has no teeth.

105

Formula for a legal
acknowledgement
3rd century AD

8.5 x 21.5 cm, with 4 lines of script on the recto;
text is missing on the left side of the sheet
Accession no. 1974.502

Recto: The text consists of a formula for a legal
acknowledgement by a woman that a man has
paid a certain sum of money to her. Instead of
specific names the generic term fulān (so-and-so)
has been used: ‘ṣaraf tālīs al-wasal fulān ‘umma
fulān ‘um fulān ‘alī kafa ‘alayha... (So-and-so,
daughter of so-and-so, has acknowledged that so-
and-so, son of so-and-so, has paid her...).

In this hand ‘alī and ‘alā’ are similar in shape.

Verso: Blank.
script on the verso; 

the papyrus fibres 

too, to the text on the 
the left side of the sheet 

a face of the papyrus 

61:114 (in the posse purchased at the 

the purchase of an 

ends below the connect-
ten as a straight stroke. 

the form of a kamaqalab 

w/šlta fšlikšn 

which was 

I'dl approximates to a 

to teeth.

script on the recto; 

of the sheet 

formula for a legal 

man that a man has 

to her. Instead of 

fšltn ("co-and-so") 

fšltn fšltn fšltn'anna 

... ("So-and-so, 

acknowledged that so-

as paid her..."). 

ra' are similar in shape.
Chit for a wheat allowance of 4
3rd century A.D./9th c.
6.5 x 17.5 cm, with a lacuna in the middle
Verso Blank.

Order for delivery
3rd century A.D./9th c.
10 x 9 cm, with some text deleted
Accompanied by 100.

Rejo This document is
written on Friday, 12th day of Rajab, 115 AH. (ca. 734 AD)

Verbo Blank.
106

Chit for a wheat ration
3rd century AD
6.5 x 4.5 cm, with 4 lines of script on the recto; there is a lacuna in the middle of the text
Accession no. PP31499

Recto: This document recorded the payment of an allowance of wheat from the government granaries. It opens with the phrase 'ṣābiyya b-... (An allowance has been granted to ...) and closes with a scribes' mark in the form of a rosette. Similar marks occur at the end of cat. 102 and cat. 103 recto and in several documents in other collections. Their function may have been to ensure that the documents could not be falsified by the addition of more text.

Stela has no teeth and is surmounted by a bar.

Verso: Blank.

107

Order for delivery
3rd century AD
7.5 x 4.5 cm, with 7 lines of script on the recto; text has been deleted at the end of line 7
Accession no. PP44247

Recto: This document instructs the recipient to deliver to the master of the writer one ūnāq of honey (‘āray) and three badhūbs of Sinai cheese (junūn sumūt). It opens with the phrase ‘ṣafī’ ʿabramak Allāh ‘alā masla’ayya... (‘Pay – May God give you honour! – to my master ...’). It was 'written on Friday, when ten nights had passed of the month of Rajab' (wa-kāthā yāsam al-sumūt bi-ṣafī’ ašgar khulū’ayya min Rajab), that is, on the tenth day of the month. No year is specified.

The text closes with the Rashidun, Rashidun Allah su-nī’ma al-wulqūl (‘Our sufficiency is God. What a fine keeper is He!’)

Final ‘ṣafī’ extends below the connecting stroke, ūnāq is distinct from rā’, and sin and shin have teeth in some words.

Verso: Blank.

108

Legal receipt
3rd century AD
6.5 x 4.5 cm, with 16 lines of script written parallel to the papyrus fibres; text is missing from the top and left side of the sheet
Accession no. PP5160

Recto: This legal document acknowledges the receipt of five dinārs by Rushd, freedman of Ahmad ibn Muhammad, from Zakaryya ibn Yahya. The price formula in line 4 is khamsat damānīr ‘ayyad bāliqhiyya sī‘āzinah (‘five dinārs of good alloy, in fine condition and of full weight’).

The document was drawn up in the month of Jumādā l-‘āla in the year AH 273 (the decade has been obliterated). There are two witness clauses. The first reads, ḥabidah Muhammad ibn Ḥač[u.t]m al-ma‘āshdibīn ‘alā ‘ṣafī’ asrār Rushd mas‘ulā ‘Ahmad ibn Muhammad bi-jamī’ī ma [L] ḥačid al-kāḥ (‘Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, the museum, testified to the acknowledgement by Rushd, the freedman of Ahmad ibn Muhammad of all that is contained in this document’). The name of the other witness is incomplete.

The script is well-executed and is in a style in which final ‘ṣafī’ does not extend below the connecting stroke, dinār is distinct from rā’, and sin and shin have teeth in some words.

Verso: Blank.
Black and white plates

The remaining catalogue entries, which mostly relate to papyrus letters, have been arranged in approximate date order. Wherever possible, an indication of the conspectus of the piece has been included.

109

Letter

1st or 2nd century AD

15 x 11 cm, with 12 lines on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing on all sides of the sheet

Accession no. P71286

Recto: In this letter dale and dalal bend upwards at the top and have been extended horizontally, so that they are similar in shape to initial and medial kaf. Sin sometimes has no teeth, and the tail of final yad 'bends back on itself and extends horizontally to the right. There are sporadic consonantal diacritics, and pairs of diacritics are written either on an oblique or on a vertical plane.

Verso: The text on this face of the papyrus, which is very faint, was probably the address of the letter on the recto.

110

Letter

2nd century AD

16.5 x 19 cm, with 9 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top and bottom of the sheet

Accession no. P72196

Recto: Only a fragment of this letter survives. It was written in a style in which there was conspicuous horizontal extension of initial kaf, and sin and shin have teeth. Consonantal diacritics were sporadically employed.

Verso: Blank.
Two letters
2nd century AD/8th century AD

13 x 11.5 cm, with 11 lines on the recto and 12 lines on the verso; written upside down; text is missing from the right side on the recto, and disturbance of the papyrus fibres has obliterated the text in the middle of the verso
Accession no. PP5495

Recto In the first letter 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, dahl bends up at the top, and the horizontal stroke of initial 'ayn is extended to the right.

Verso The second letter opens with the formula fa-‘immad ‘alayha Allāh allâhdî la sallî illâ huwa (“For your sake I praise God – there is no god but He”). Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke, while the top of dahl in ‘alladî (line 1) bends back to the right. Final ya’ is extended back horizontally to form a straight line.

Letter
2nd century AD/8th century AD

12.4 x 6.5 cm, with 7 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top and left side of the sheet
Accession no. PP53249

Recto This letter mentions a payment expressed in dinars. The stroke of dahl bends back at the top; the bottom of initial ‘ayn was sometimes extended horizontally to the right, and initial kaf has also been extended horizontally. There are sporadic consonantal diacritics, and one pair of diacritics in the word ‘alayhî in line 1, was written on an oblique plane.

Verso Blank.

Letter
2nd or 3rd century AD

12 x 11.5 cm, with 7 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and the Accession no. PP3446

Recto The letter opens bi-rumâysh wa-salâma muharram bi-gala wa-rab for the rest. The writer formula to ask the addressee to be kind to all those with me are inquired of (the writer). The writer formula to ask the addressee to be kind to all those with me are inquired of (the writer). The writer formula to ask the addressee to be kind to all those with me are inquired of (the writer).

Verso There are traces on the side of the sheet. It is the device executed in ink.

Letter
2nd century AD/8th

16.5 x 15 cm, with 14 lines on the verso; there are large lacunae
Accession no. PP5385

Recto In this letter, a Da’ud, dal sometimes independent ‘alif bo’

‘Alif maqurah is specified in 5 and 6.

Verso Blank.
113
Letter
2nd or 3rd century AD
12 x 11.5 cm, with 7 lines on the recto and 3 lines on the verso; text is missing from the right side on the recto, and there are lacunas within the text
Accession no. PP146
Recto: The letter opens, ... ‘al-dawla ‘an-‘akhirah
by-nahmati [...]. ‘anu ‘an-na‘ man ghuttu ‘al-‘asfiyuh
wa-sa‘admah wa-rabbi radhumat [...] this world
and the world to come, by His mercy [...]. Let those with me are in good health, my Lord be praised’. The writer uses a common epistolary
formula to ask the addressee to reply: ta‘akkub ‘alayya
bi-kharrikta wa-balika (‘Write to me with your
news, and tell me how you are’). Final ‘alif
extends below the connecting stroke. Initial and
medial ‘alif are hairpin-shaped.
Verso: There are traces of an address on this
side of the sheet. It is followed by a curious
device executed in the same pale-coloured ink.

114
Letter
2nd century AD
16.5 x 19 cm, with 14 lines on the recto;
there are large lacunas in the text
Accession no. PP1289
Recto: In this letter, which mentions the name
Djwad, ‘alif sometimes bends back at the top, and
independent ‘alif tends to the right at the bottom.
‘Alif ‘aspiratah is split with ‘alif in بخت in lines
5 and 6.
Verso: Blank.
Letter
2nd century AD/8th century AD
15 x 14.5 cm, with 11 lines on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing on the right and left sides
Accession no. PP382

Recto: This letter, from a certain al-Nu'man ibn Muslim al-Hadrami to a certain Abu Hafsah, mentions the 'ash Shaf' (participants in the gathering). The writer has positioned the address after the buwadah, which suggests that the letter was written before AD 200. An early dating is also suggested by the style of script: the loops of the letters are open; alif and ain look backwards; the top of the saw is written without teeth; and there is a conspicuous horizontal extension of the backward-pointing tail of final ya'.

Verso: The remaining text represents the end of the address: 'al Abu Hafsah ('to Abu Hafsah').

Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
19 x 12 cm, with 14 lines on the verso; text is missing on the right and left sides
Accession no. PP544

Recto: In this letter it is haste in transporting in al-Ramlab (ru'ya) 'Abi Babl; line 4)! The Ja'far ibn Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Ja'far ibn al-Abbas (the Byzantine), line which is or self-cross stroke, and the stroke straight line.

Verso: The text on the verso is faint to be legible.

Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
27 x 12 cm, with 7 lines on the verso; text is mixed from the left side
Accession no. PP570

Recto: The first letter, the name Abu'l-Hakim below the connection no teeth, and it is surrounded by a bar and extended backwards to a horizontal straight line.

Verso: The second letter wa-a'dan Allah fa-yous and may God protect you and closes with a tashakhul below the connection and is surrounded by...
Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
19 x 12 cm, with 14 lines on the recto and 5 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top, bottom and right side of the recto and from the left side on the verso
Accession no: 199644

Recto: In this letter the addressee is asked to make haste in transporting an item to a certain Abu Bakr in al-Ramlah (‘Abd al-Ramlah ‘Abd al-Ramlah ‘Abd al-Mukhtar, line 4). The writer mentions a certain ‘Abd al-Mu‘alå Ibn al-Mahroud (line 9) and al-Ram (‘the Byzantines’, line 9). The script is in a style in which final ‘a’ extends below the connecting stroke, and the stroke of ‘a’ approximates to a straight line.

Verso: The text on this face of the papyrus is too faint to be legible.

Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
27 x 12 cm, with 7 lines on the recto and 10 lines on the verso; text is missing from all sides on the recto and from the left side on the verso
Accession no. 72970

Recto: The first letter mentions both Fustat and the name Abu’l-Hassan Yusuf. Final ‘a’ extends below the connecting stroke. Six sometimes has no teeth, and in one word (Yasuf, line 1) it is surrounded by a bar. The final ya’ in fi (line 6) is extended backwards for a considerable distance in a horizontal straight line.

Verso: The second letter opens tash’dalrabkha majzi yaa-yaa’dalabkha (‘May my soul ransom you and may God make me your ransom!’); it closes with a tash’da. Final ‘a’ does not extend below the connecting stroke, and six has no teeth and is surrounded by a bar.
118
A document and a letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
11 x 15 cm, with 10 lines on the recto and 14 lines on the verso, including 1 line in the right margin; text is missing from the top, bottom and left side of the sheet on both sides
Accession no. 199104
Recto: The legal document mentions the accountants or agents (‘ammal) of Abu’l-Hasan. Final ‘alsaf extends below the connecting stroke; dal and dhal approximate to a straight line; and sin, which sometimes has teeth, is surmounted by three dots written on a horizontal plane. The final line is in a finer hand.
Verso: In the letter final ‘alsaf extends below the connecting stroke, while dal approximates to a straight line.

119
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
11 x 12 cm, with 10 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top and left side of the sheet, and there are lacunae in the middle of the text
Accession no. 199104
Recto: This letter mentions messengers and closes with a ta’lif. Final ‘alsaf extends below the connecting stroke. Sin and shin have no teeth; shin has three superscribed dots arranged on a horizontal plane (taslaqa’ in-vasal, line 2), while shin has a superscribed bar (shaghalat, line 9).
Verso: Blank.

120
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
11 x 12 cm, with 5 lines from the bottom of the sheet within the text
Accession no. 199104
Recto: The letter opens with ‘Alam al-imam (“Ahmad the Imam”), and of land tax. I asked the accountants (‘amal) about the land tax of Samannud’. Final ‘alsaf has the connecting stroke and shin has no teeth.
Verso: Blank.

121
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
12 x 12 cm, with 1 line from the top and right corner.
Accession no. 199104
Recto: The surviving text begins: “alium al-hasu’ al-‘a’laqka wak al-hamad li-fakr tabliq al-Hamad Muhammad al-tas’i’i’l-bima (May He praise him)”. Final ‘alsaf has the connecting stroke of final ‘alsaf in-sl (line extended to aconsid
Letter

3rd century AM/9th century AD

11 x 8 cm, with 5 lines on the recto; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet, and there are lacunae within the text.

Accession no. PP5102

Recto: The letter opens, _al-nabī al-mu'āmin li-'Abdullāh 'Abd al-' Azīz_ ("This is a letter to 'Abdullāh Abd al-'Aziz," and it deals with the subject of land tax). I asked 'Abdullāh ibn Muhammad, the accountant ("munāqib") of Ahmad ibn Muhammad, about the land tax of our districts and of Basit and Sammūd. Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke and is itself no tooth.

Verso Blank.

Letter

3rd century AM/9th century AD

14 x 15 cm, with 3 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top and right side of the sheet.

Accession no. Y17579

Recto: The surviving text formed the bottom left corner of a letter and contains blessings on the addressee; _bismillāh wa-tutaddallu 'alayka wa-'rā'īd fi 'nāfi 'ālā' 'alayka al-nilāb li-l-lāh rabbī al- 'alamin wa-sīlā Allah 'alā Muhammad al-nabī wa-'alā ulla al-lāmama_ ("May (God) grant you a full measure of His bounties and increase His goodness to you! Praise be to God, Lord of the universe! God bless Muhammad the prophet and his family and save them"). Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and the reflexive tail of final ya in fi (line 2) and 'alā (line 3) has been extended to a considerable length.

Verso Blank.
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
26 × 23 cm, with 9 lines on the recto and 4 lines on the verso; text is missing from the left side on the recto and the right side on the verso
Accession no. 99993.
Recto: The first letter opens... Allah uwa-'akramaka wa-'atafuma ni'amah u'lakyah... ("May God... and may He grant you honour and bestow upon you a full measure of His bounties..."). Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke. Sin and shin usually have no teeth, and shin is surmounted by a bar and shin is surmounted by three horizontal dots.
Verso: The second text is the beginning of a letter... "azdama salamataka wa-nilafiyaka wa-tammama ni'amah u'alakyah... ("May [God] cause your good health to endure and bestow a full measure of His bounties upon you...")... those around you, and may He make me your ransom from evil). The writer states that he has written a letter to the addressee, which will be conveyed to him by a servant-boy (ghadali). Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and shin has no teeth and is surmounted by three dots written on a horizontal plane. Initial kaf consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left, sometimes with and sometimes without a surmounting oblique stroke.

Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
22.5 × 21 cm, with 7 lines on the recto; text is missing on the right side of the sheet
Accession no. 99998.
Recto: The letter opens with the blessing madda Allah lahu fi al-'amr ("May God extend your life!") and mentions professional witnesses (al-shahid). The script is well executed. Sin and shin have teeth; dhal is clearly distinguished from r; and the loops of fā, mim, waw and medial 'ayn are open.
Verso: Blank.

Account
9th century AD/13th century AD
13.5 × 25 cm, with 3 lines on the verso; text is missing on the right side of the sheet.
Accession no. 99999.
Recto: Nusr ibn Ishaq was... the month of Muharram 8 February–9 March. "Ishaq 'azdajuka al-jah... sanah arba' wu-thama... space has been left between the final 'alif extends below and sin has no teeth at the final letters have been left out the line.
Verso: The surviving text...
124
Account
A.D. 184/10 897
11.5 x 25 cm, with 3 lines on the recto, and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the top and bottom of the sheet on the recto.
Accr. no. 1997.1.46
Recto: The surviving part of this account reports that 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan al-Maddah al-Basri was paid his allowance for the month of Muharram (A.D. 184). The entry begins with the phrase 'May God prolong your life, my lord, and cause your power to endure'.
Verso: Blank.
125
Letter
10th century A.D. 95th century A.D.
12 x 23.5 cm, with 6 lines on the recto; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet.
Accr. no. 1997.1.456
Recto: Only the opening formulas of the letter survive. They begin 'At stat 'Allah huwa'sha 3a sayyidi wa-salama irzaka ('May God prolong your life, my lord, and cause your power to endure'). Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and dal approximates to a straight line.
Verso: Blank.
126
A papyrus reused for a letter
3rd century AD/7th century AD
7.5 x 4.1 cm, with 3 lines on the recto and 6 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and bottom of the recto and from the top and right side of the verso
Accession no. PP548

Recto: There is insufficient text to identify the nature of the text on this face of the papyrus. Diacritics occur sporadically on the consonants.

Verso: This text is the end part of a letter. It contains a reference to a servant boy (gabalab), and it closes with the blessing 'alqaba Allah wa-ba'faka ('May God preserve and sustain you'). Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke. dahl has no teeth in shokran (line 2), and 'alif maghribah is written with 'alif in batta (try in Classical Arabic).

127
Part of a protocol sheet reused for a letter
3rd century AD/7th century AD
17 x 21 cm, with 10 lines on the recto; text is missing from all sides of the sheet
Accession no. PP544

Recto: The author of the letter refers to 'my messenger' (basili) in line 9. Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke.

Verso: The fragment of a protocol that occupies this face of the papyrus was written using thick strokes. (Shown in colour on p. 15 above, fig. 2.)

128
Account
3rd century AD/7th century AD
15 x 11.3 cm, with 15 lines on the recto; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet
Accession no. PP539

Recto: The columns of Greek numerals on this document refer to instalments of land tax paid on crops of sugar cane (qatash sukhar).

Verso: Blank.

129
Account
3rd century AD/9th century AD
28 x 15 cm, with 15 lines on the recto; text is missing from the left side of the sheet
Accession no. PP593

Recto: This account lists a variety of disbursements, including the purchase of door leaves, together with the iron for them, and the payment of wages to workmen. Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and the stroke of dhal approximates to a straight line.

Verso: Blank.

130
List of names
3rd century AD/9th century AD
13.5 x 12.5 cm, with 7 lines written parallel to the papyrus fibres
Accession no. PP5144

Recto: This document lists the names of various tradesmen, including a cloth merchant (kazzab), a copper- smith (sabbat), a goldsmith (sulgh) and a druggist (sattar). The stroke of daf approximates to a straight line.

Verso: Blank.
131
Receipt
3rd century AD
18.5 x 7 cm, with 10 lines written parallel to the papyrus fibres; text is missing at the bottom right
Accession no. P.9143

Recto: A subjective format was used in this document (i.e. the two parties were referred to in the first and second person), and a blessing formula characteristic of letters was employed. Lines 2-4 read, ‘qad yabammad minha qa‘ Aba Bakr ‘al-lahadu bi-dawru Allah mu‘ammad’ (I have received from you, Abu Bakr. May God give you strength—one dinar’). The stroke of dal approximates to a straight line, and there is a slight defect in the right margin. Note the orthography of the name ‘Abd.

Verso: Blank.

132
Letter
3rd century AD
8.7 x 10 cm, with 9 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top, left, right, and bottom of the sheet
Accession no. P.9127

Recto: The letter mentions a payment of two dirhams in line 2 and closes by offering greetings to a number of people. The names Yathr ibn Ahmad and Muhammad ibn Yazid are mentioned.

Verso: Blank.

133
Part of a legal document
3rd century AD
25.5 x 8 cm, with 22 lines written parallel to the papyrus fibres; text is missing from the top and left side of the sheet
Accession no. P.9137

Recto: This fragment comes from the end of a legal document. It contains witness clauses, including the autographs of those witnesses able to write. Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke; dal and dhal sometimes approximate to a straight line; and initial kaf is either hairpin-shaped or consists of a near-straight stroke that bends round to the left, without a surmounting oblique stroke.

Verso: Blank.

134
Two accounts
3rd century AD
25.5 x 8.5 cm, with 11 lines on the recto and 12 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and left side on the recto and the top on the verso, and there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. P.9108

Recto: The first account closes with the epistolary formula ‘allahu ‘alayhis salam wa ‘alayhim ‘al-salam (‘May God preserve you, may He preserve you, may He give you strength to endure, and may He increase your kindness towards you’). Final dal forms a straight line, and the writing is written without teeth.

Verso: The second account has Greek numerals.

135
List of witnesses
3rd century AD
16.5 x 20 cm, with 16 lines on the recto, including 1 line in the right margin; text is missing from the top of the sheet
Accession no. P.9150

Recto: After giving the names of the witnesses to a legal transgression, this document states that each witness wrote his testimony with his own hand (batataha tabaddabaha bi-yaddithi or bi-khattatihi). Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke; dal sometimes approximates to a straight line; and initial kaf consists of a straight stroke without a surmounting oblique stroke. There is conspicuous omission of connecting strokes in some words.

Verso: Blank.
136
Account
CPFA AH 237/AD 831-2
24.5 x 15 cm., with 14 lines on the recto and 17 lines on the verso; text is missing from the left side on the recto and the right side on the verso
Accession no. PP5117
Recto The account contains a list of personal names. Some of the entries are preceded by the word usman (literally ‘weighing out of’, here ‘payment of’).
Verso The text here is a new section of the account on the recto, though line 4 is in a different hand. It begins with the hamdalah and the heading ‘y6-’idh al-warrakah li-sanat 237’ (‘Record of payment for the year 237’). The year is expressed in Greek numerals.

137
An account reused for a pen exercise
3rd century AH/9th century AD
15 x 22 cm., with 9 lines on the recto and 8 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom left of the recto and from the top and bottom on the verso, and there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. PP5133
Recto The account, prepared using Greek numerals, mentions the months Ramadan, Shawwal and Dhu’l-Qi’dah and the names of a number of administrative districts (kārābāh), including the Fayyūm.
Verso The first text inscribed on this face of the papyrus was a continuation of the account on the recto. In the bottom left there are the remains of a pen exercise in a thicker hand; it includes the word ‘al-sulīl written three times. In the second hand six has no teeth and is surmounted by a bar.
Two accounts
3rd century AD/9th century AD
26 x 32 cm, with 9 lines on the recto and 18 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and right side on the recto, and the top and left side on the verso
Accession no. PP9106
Recto The Greek numerals on this face of the papyrus originally formed part of an account.
Verso The list here, which gives the names of cultivators, would have been used for tax purposes. Against each name there is a checkmark in the form of a cross, and the cultivation of wheat and barley is mentioned. Sin and shen have teeth.

Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
17 x 19 cm, with 11 lines on the recto; text is missing from the right and bottom left of the sheet
Accession no. PP9429
Recto Towards the end of this letter, which concerns payments of money, there are fragments of a common epistolary formula, such as [...] wa-balaka wa-hurul yakeer ("Write to tell me..."
how you are and what you need") and [...] ba'alaka muwaffaqan 'in sha'a' Allah ("If you resolve to do such-and-such, do so and be granted success, God willing"). Sin and shen have teeth, while independent dal has a clear bend in it and is thus distinguished from 'ad.
Verso Blank.
140
Account
3rd century AD/9th century AD
13.5 x 8 cm, with 8 lines on the recto
Accession no. 79.5447
Recto: This account records the receipt of goods measured in rafi‘ on various days during the course of a week. The account closes with the total in the form fa-dhalika sab‘ah tas–shaddatin rafi‘ (And that is 37 rafis). Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke, and sin has no tail. There is an unconventional ligature of final ‘alif in the word ‘asrāl.
Verso: Blank.

141
An account and a letter
Circa AH 235/849-50 AD
21 x 23 cm, with 12 lines on the recto and 11 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top, bottom and right side on the recto and the top, bottom and left side on the verso, and there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. 79.5499
Recto: In this account, which relates to the land tax (kharāj), the amounts are expressed in words. The date AH 235 is mentioned in line 3. Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke, while initial kaf consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left without a surrounding oblique stroke.
Verso: The letter mentions the sale of goods. There is scriptio defectiva of long a in the word dinār.

142
A letter and an account
3rd century AD/9th century AD
19 x 23 cm, with 12 lines on the recto and 11 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and bottom of the sheet
Accession no. 79.5426
Recto: The letter mentions the port of Qalbūsim. Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke. Sin is written with teeth.
Verso: The account consists of a list of personal names followed by sums of money, arranged in two columns. The sums are expressed in dinār and ghīts.

143
Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
9.5 x 23 cm, with 6 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top and bottom of the sheet
Accession no. 79.5404
Recto: The letter makes mention of Bayt al-Maqdi‘ (Jerusalem). The writer requests a reply from the addressee with a common epistolary formula, 34 wayyáltā ta‘ayyallān min kustubikum wa-khuludikum wa-jālikum wa-anīlikum ("My lord, do not omit to send me your letters, your news, your state of health, your orders and your prohibitions").
Verso: Blank.
144

Note
3rd century AH/9th century AD
19 x 11.5 cm, with 5 lines on the recto; there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. PP9173

Recto This document is a note concerning military pay (al-jinâkhiyyah). Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke; it has no teeth and is surmounted by a bar; and initial kaf consists of a curved stroke that bends round to the left without a surmounting oblique stroke.

Verso Blank.

145

Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
12 x 32.4 cm, with 9 lines on the recto; including 3 lines on the right margin; text is missing from the top, bottom, and left side of the sheet
Accession no. PP9221

Recto The letter exhibits the orthography y'kby for y'a 'sibt. The loop of mim is sometimes open.

Verso Blank.

146

Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
13.4 x 24 cm, with 7 lines on the recto; there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. PP9155

Recto The text of this letter deals with a matter of '10 dirhams'. The text is faint in places. Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, while the stroke of dâl approximates to a straight line.

Verso Blank.

147

Marriage contract
3rd century AH/9th century AD
Parchment, 36 x 13 cm, with 30 lines of script; text is missing from all sides of the sheet
Accession no. PP9171

Recto Only a narrow strip from the centre of this marriage contract survives. The text in the first line reads, [...] sâdâqan hihi ta'zawwâjudhi [...] (a nuptial gift, with which he married her), and there are references to the name Umm Husayn and the sums of five and seven dinars. Fragments of the witness clauses survive at the bottom of the piece. Sin or alef usually have teeth, and the loops of fâr and qof are closed.

Verso Blank.
Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
14.5 × 8.5 cm, with 12 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top and left side of the sheet.
Accession no.: P94270
Recto: This is the bottom part of a letter that concluded with greetings to various people. Final alif and dhamma approximate to a straight line, and sin and shin were written without teeth.
Verso: Blank.

Report of a legal procedure
3rd century AD/9th century AD
21.5 × 14 cm, with 9 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top, the right side and bottom of the sheet.
Accession no.: P94189
Recto: This report of a legal procedure mentions a testimony (wa-shahidat baka ...), and a legal acknowledgement (wa-’iqara bit). Final ‘alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and sin and shin have no teeth and are surmounted by a bar.
Verso: Blank.

A letter and an account
Late 2nd or early 3rd century AD/8th or 9th century AD
20.5 × 18 cm, with 14 lines on the recto and 13 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and centre of the sheet.
Accession no.: P94230
Recto: This letter, which concerns trade, contains references to wheat (qamit) and chickpeas (tumamis) and reveals that these were to be conveyed to a certain Mina ibn Jarju. Final yaa’ extends backwards in a horizontal straight line, and a space has been left between the ‘alif and the ‘ain of kana in line 6 to fill out the line.
Verso: The face of the papyrus contains the witness clauses of a legal document. Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke, while retroflex final yaa’ extends horizontally in a straight line.
A document relating to an account and payment

circa AD 252/AD 866

22.5 x 23 cm, with 14 lines on the verso; the text on the verso is written in Greek numerals, and the script on the recto is written in black ink on papyrus fibres. A dot is drawn at the top of the papyrus fibres, and from the top one line is written over another. The document is made up of two fragments; one is of the document and the other is of the verso.

Accession no. PPS1395

Recto: This document is addressed to a person named ‘Dhali’.

Verso: This side of the papyrus contains a letter written in Greek numerals and the standard script.

Lines 1–5 (the numeral pen): Lines 6–9 (the pen used for writing the text)Black pen, and there is an extension of the text at the end of the document.
A document reused for an account and pen exercises

A document reused for an account and pen exercises

152

22.1 x 21 cm, with 14 lines on the recto and 9 lines
on the verso; the text on the verso is at right angles
to the papyrus fibres, and so at right angles, too, to
the script on the recto; text is missing from the
bottom and from the left side and right side on the
recto and from the top left of the verso

Accession no. PP3193

Keys
This document records various financial
matters, including amounts due and payments
made. It contains the date Shawwal 1212
(15 October –11 November AD 866). Sin and alif
have teeth, and dhamma dafa are sometimes similar
in shape to ra'. The word dina was abbreviated
to dir.

Verso
This side of the papyrus has been used to
write Greek numerals and also exhibits pen
exercises that contain the beginning of four qarnasabah.
Lines 1–5 (the numerals) were written with a fine
pen. Lines 6–9 (the exercises) were written with a
thicker pen, and there is conspicuous vertical
extension of ha'.

153

Letter

3rd century AD/9th century AD

26 x 15 cm, with 3 lines on the recto; text is missing
from the top and the bottom of the sheet

Accession no. PP3207

Recto
The first line of the letter refers to the
promise of the addressee to return to his home
(ma wa'adnabi min al-sa'dah 'id munsitika),
while lines 2–3 contain a request expressed using
the formula fa'in haratta ... fa'da ("If you wish
... do so"). This type of conditional request was
typically used when the addressee was of higher
social status than the writer. 1 The use of large
script and the wide spacing of the lines is also a
feature of a 'high-register' epistolary style.

Verso
Blank.


154

Two letters

3rd century AD/9th century AD

20 x 13.5 cm, with 7 lines on the recto,
including 1 line in the right margin, and 7 lines
on the verso; text is missing from the top, bottom
and left side on the verso and the bottom and right
side on the verso

Accession no. PP3222

Recto
In the first letter there are references to
apples (al-rasafa) and to Fustat. Dala is sometimes
a straight stroke, and dina was sometimes written
without teeth, in which case it has a bar over it.
The connecting stroke is extended at the begin-
ing of a thematic section: wa-qad masala 'alayya
al-bitali ('The account has reached me', line 4).

Verso
The second letter begins with an awknow-
ledgegment that a letter has been received from the
addressee: wata 'alayya hikabika [...]["Your
letter has reached me [...]]. Final 'alif does not
extend below the connecting stroke.
Two legal documents
3rd century CE/9th century AD
23 x 15.5 cm, with 12 lines on the recto and 10 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top, the bottom and right side on the recto and the top and left side on the verso, and there are many lacunae.
Accession no. 398326
Recto The first document refers to a quittance (wa-‘adra’al mitha, line 7) and to testimony (line 9). Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke, and medial kaf consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left without a surrounding oblique stroke.
Verso The surviving text on this face of the papyrus is the end part of a deed of lease in which the lessor is a woman and the lessee is a man. The lease mentions a number of names, including Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Mu’min, Sahl and Hebat Ayub. The loops of the script are mostly closed.

Letter
3rd century CE/9th century AD
20 x 21 cm, with 12 lines on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the centre of the sheet.
Accession no. PP5216
Recto The central section of the text of this letter has been obliterated by a break in the fibres.
Verso This bears the address to the letter on the recto.

A papyrus reused for a letter
3rd century CE/9th century AD
17 x 21 cm, with 3 lines on the recto and 9 lines on the verso; text is missing from the right side and bottom on the recto and from the top on the verso.
Accession no. PP5217
Recto In this document, which is too fragmentary to be identified, final ‘alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.
Verso This is a letter from a woman to a man requesting him to send money for the purchase of wheat and clothing. The request is expressed using the formula ‘as-al-shah ‘an tatashed’l-siyas bi-ma zabayna taka ... fa’ala wasfaddilin ‘in sha’u Allah (‘I request you kindly to send me what you can ... if you are agreeable’) kindly do so, if God wills’. The letter is in a large, carefully executed hand: final al’ is written as an open loop, sin and shin have teeth, and consonantal diacritics were supplied in many places. The two dots of qaf and ta’ were arranged vertically in the word al-naqd (line 2). Dammaha was written in ‘asid (line 2).
A letter

20 July AD

9

are missing from the right side and from the top on the verso which is too fragmentary if does not extend below

from a woman to a man

the request is expressed

the 'in tattafaddal 'aleyya

'fta Allah montuadda in

kindly do so, if

in a large, carefully ex-

written as an open loop, in

nominal diacritics were

The two dots of qaf and

in the word al-waqāt

written in 'ard (line 2).
Two letters
3rd century AD

158

Two letters
3rd century AD

159

Letter
3rd century AD

160

Two letters
3rd century AD
161
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
14 x 25.5 cm, with 8 lines on the recto and 30 lines on the verso, including 1 line in the right margin; the text on the verso was written at right angles to the papyrus fibres and so at right angles, too, to the script on the recto; text is missing from the top on the recto, and there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. P95232
Recto: The surviving text of the first letter was written in a large hand. The consonants are sporadically supplied with diacritics, and the two diacritics of final 'ayn are written above the letter. A space has been left between waw and lam in the word fatiha in line 4.
Verse: In the second letter final 'ain extends below the connecting stroke, and initial and medial kaf are S-shaped.

162
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
13.5 x 12.5 cm, with 11 lines on the recto and 13 lines on the verso written upside down; text is missing from the left side on both sides of the sheet, and there are lacunae
Accession no. P95239
Recto: The first letter occupies 10 of the lines on this side of the sheet, while the first line of script, in a thicker hand, is the address of the letter on the verso. Final 'ain extends below the connecting stroke.
Verse: This letter opens with the phrase 'alqāka Allāh ('May God preserve you!'), and the author subsequently offered greetings to various people. The retroflex tail of final 'ayn extends a good way to the right, and its and sabr were written with teeth.

163
Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
19.5 x 14 cm, with 15 lines on the recto; text is missing on all sides of the sheet
Accession no. P95246
Recto: The letter deals with commercial transactions, and at one point wheat (qarnāb) is mentioned. The author ends his letter by offering greetings to various people. Dāl approximates to a straight stroke.
Verse: Blank.
on the recto and 20 lines on the verso; text is written at right angles to the lines in the right margin; text is missing from the top and bottom of the sheet. The first letter was a final 'alif'; the consonants are written above the letter. "Ayyub" and "Durr" in the final line of the sheet. The final line of the sheet is written with the phrase "alabika nida" ("we greet you"), and the author is writing to various people. The letter "yâ" extends a good way to the right of the sheet and was written with a wheed.
164
Document
3rd century 5th/6th century AD
14.5 x 9.5 cm, with 6 lines written parallel to the papyrus fibres
Accession no. P7324

Recto This document contains descriptions of coins, which include the weight and the number of pieces (qinā) that make up one dinār (al-dinār al-fard). Figures were given as Greek numerals.
The script is very faint, and a circular sīrah divides the sections.
Verso Blank.

165
An unidentified text
3rd century 5th/6th century AD
16 x 8.5 cm, with 7 lines on the recto; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet
Accession no. P7325

Recto The script on this sheet forms the opening section of an unidentified text that contains formulaic blessings. After the bismillah it begins ṣallā ṣallā Allāh, Allāh al-ḥaqq ("There is no god but God, God the Truth"). Ra’s, dal, waw and final hu’ 'all approximate to a straight stroke and resemble one another in form.
Verso Blank.

166
Two accounts
3rd century 5th/6th century AD
14 x 7.5 cm, with 14 lines on the recto and 6 lines on the verso, including 1 faint line written upside down; text is missing from the bottom and right side of the recto and from the bottom of the verso
Accession no. P7326

Recto The account is expressed in dinārs and qinās. When a numeral ends in a tā’ marbūtah, the following word danā近视 ("dinar") takes the definite article: sālaqa‘at al-danā近视. When the numeral has no tā’ marbūtah, the definite article is omitted: ṣittah wa sāla‘at dinār. This apparently reflects a confusion of the final syllable of the numeral with the initial definite article of al-danā近视. Dal’ approximates to a straight stroke, and final hu and tā’ marbūtah were written as a single straight stroke.
Verso The account on this side of the papyrus is also expressed in dinārs and qinās. It was written by the same hand as the text on the recto.
A list of numbers
3rd century AD/9th cent.
18 x 15 cm, with 10 lines on the verso; text is missing on the left and right side of the recto; text is also missing on the left side of the verso.
Accession no. P.79219

Recto: The text on this side of a list of numbers except for the style of script in which the text has sometimes supplied.

Verso: The letter 'milti' written with a house. The text is
Sinn and shewa were written.

168 recto

168 verso

169 recto
168
A list of numbers and a letter
3rd century AD
18 × 15 cm, with 10 lines on the recto and 12 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top, bottom and right side of the recto and the top, bottom and left side of the verso
Accession no. 1994223
Recto The text on this face of the papyrus consists of a list of numbers expressed in words. In the style of script in which the list was written sīt has no teeth.
Verso The letter mentions timber in connection with a house. The text was written in a large hand. Sīt and šīn were written with teeth, and the writer has sometimes supplied diacritics for the consonants.

169
Letter
3rd century AD
12.5 × 22 cm, with 6 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top and bottom of the sheet
Accession no. 1994219
Recto The letter concerns the collection of taxes from estates (diya'). Sīw is written without teeth and with a bar over it.
Verso Blank.

170
Two letters
3rd century AD
14 × 22 cm, with 10 lines on the recto and 7 lines on the verso; text is missing from all sides on the recto and from the top, right side and left side on the verso
Accession no. 1994235
Recto The first letter contains a thematic section (line 2) which opens with the words qad kuntu (Τ) sa3yidī. Dāl approximates to a straight line.
Verso The second letter mentions 'the three dinī' (shadārū t al- dinā). Final 'lāf sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while šīn has no teeth and is surmounted by a bar. Initial 'āf consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left, without a surmounting oblique stroke.
171
A letter and an account
3rd century AD
18 x 23 cm, with 12 lines on the recto and 10 lines on the verso, including 1 line written upside down in the upper margin; there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. PP5214
Recto: The letter mentions qirāts and Meccan dīnār. Final ẓā' generally extends backwards in a straight horizontal line, and there is scriptio defectiva of long ā in dīnār.
Verso: There are at least two sets of the sheet: lines 2 and 3 are the address of the letter on the recto. The six lines at the bottom are an account that deals with the receipt of goods and in which final 'ālīf extends below the connecting stroke, and dāl and ḍhāl approximate to a straight line.

172
Letter
3rd century AD
16 x 21.5 cm, with 15 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top of the sheet
Accession no. PP5157
Recto: This letter mentions a shepherd and sheep, as well as sheets of papyrus (qaydā). The strokes of dāl and ḍhāl approximate to a straight line; final šāf is horizontally extended at the end of the line.
Verso: Blank.

173
Pen exercises and a letter
3rd century AD
19 x 14.5 cm, with 14 lines on the recto and 14 lines on the verso, including 1 line in the right margin; text is missing from the right side on the recto and the top on the verso
Accession no. PP5206
Recto: On this face of the papyrus the bašmāṭah and formulaic blessings characteristic of letters have been written as pen exercises. In these final 'ālīf does not extend below the connecting stroke, and she has no teeth.
Verso: In the letter, which deals with trade, 'lim, bā' and bā' were rendered as a single curved stroke, and 'ālīf maṣūraḥ was frequently written with 'ālīf where the standard orthography has ẓā'.
account

175 AD

On the recto and 10 lines
the line written upside down
are lacunae within

the papyrus and Meccan
very extends backwards in turn
and there is scriptio defectiva

Two texts on this side of the sheet.
The address of the letter on the bottom are an account
of goods and in which
the connecting stroke,
connect to a straight line.

175 AD

Recto on the recto; text
of the sheet
then as a shepherd and sheep,
the strokes
connect to a straight line; final
ended at the end of the line.

and a letter

175 AD

Recto on the recto and 14 lines
the line in the right margin,
right side on the recto and

at the papyrus the hastadah
characteristic of letters
exercises. In these final
two the connecting stroke,

which deals with trade, jin, bab
as a single curved stroke,

frequently written with
orthography has ya'.
174

Letter
3rd century AD
16 x 16 cm, with 10 lines on the recto and 10 lines on the verso, including 1 line in the right margin; text is missing from the top, bottom and left side of the recto and the top and bottom of the verso.
Accession no. PP3339

Recto In this letter final 'afāf extends below the connecting stroke, and initial kaf is s-shaped.

Verso This text is a continuation of the letter on the recto and contains mostly formulaic blessings, including wa yuqībū Allah lana baqū'um sawallan flah sallamah wa 'mdama karīmatahu wa-jā' alamī min al-sawt al-fadlihu ('In His mercy, may He grant him a long life for our sake and cause his honour to endure, and may He make (me) his ransom from evil'). Daf approximates to a straight stroke.

175

Letter
3rd century AD
20 x 10.5 cm, with 15 lines in the right margin; text is missing from the top and left side of the recto and top and bottom of the verso.
Accession no. PP3341

Recto This letter contains congratulatory formulae: jama'a 'a Allah baqīna ('May God unite us'), for example. In the last line Sin and shin were written as a Daf, the bar over it.

Verso Blank.
175
Letter
3rd century CE/9th century AD
10.5 x 15 cm, with 13 lines on the recto, including 1 line in the right margin; text is missing from the top and left side of the sheet
Accession no. PP345

Recto: This letter expresses various formulaic wishes and concerns greetings to a certain Abu 'l-Husayn, jauna 'Alihu bayyin wa-bayyina qabil al-marzut ("May God unite us before death", line 8), for example. In the last line it is stated that the letter was written on a Friday (kiswa 'asara ad-jum'ah). Stu and shiin were written without teeth, and shiin has a bar over it.

Verso: Blank.

176
Letter
3rd century CE/9th century AD
18.5 x 11 cm, with 17 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top, bottom and left side of the sheet
Accession no. PP344

Recto: The letter concerns various debts expressed in dirhams and dirhams. The writer has employed the forms lam yahdi and lam 'akun where classical Arabic would have employed the jussives (lam yahdhi, lam 'akun). Final yaf' extends backwards in a straight horizontal line.

Verso: Blank.

177
Letter
3rd century CE/9th century AD
25 x 16 cm, with 15 lines on the recto, including 1 line in the right margin and 2 lines written upside down in the upper margin
Accession no. PP344

Recto: Most of this text is in the form of blessings, including the opening formulas 'alaykum Allah ("May God preserve you!"). There is also a reference to wheat (qamish).

Verso: Blank.
Two letters
3rd century AH/9th century AD
22.5 x 13.5 cm, with 10 lines of script on the recto, including 1 line in the right margin, and 14 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top on the recto and the bottom on the verso
Accession no. PPS243
Recto: In the first letter final 'alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.
Verso: The second letter opens with the phrase, 'ahramaka Allah ("May God honour you!") and goes on to refer to a khaddim, which means 'slave' or, often, 'servant'. In this highly cursive script dal is written as a straight stroke, and initial and medial ha, ta, th, nuna and ya sometimes lose their graphic distinctness.

An account and a letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
22.5 x 13.5 cm, with 3 lines on the recto and 16 lines written upside down on the verso; text is missing from the right side on both the recto and the verso
Accession no. PPS240
Recto: In the account the numbers are expressed in words. Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and the hasta of ta slants to the right.
Verso: The letter includes an account of various transactions, which are expressed in the form 'illaabati ḫaf'a ... 'illaabati ṣawt 'ilayhi ("what he paid ... what accrues to his credit ... "). Dal approximates to a straight stroke.
لا تفوت قراءة النصوص النادرة على هذه الأوراق القديمة.
Two letters
3rd century AD
17 x 16.5 cm, with 11 lines on the recto and 10 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and right side on the recto and the top and left side on the verso, and there are lacunae.

Recto: The letter mentions 'the Christian sailor' (al-nawr al-masrī, line 3). Final 'dāl' does not extend below the connecting stroke; sin and shīn have no teeth and are surmounted by a bar.

Verso: After initial blessings, the writer began his correspondence with the reassurance 'your letter has arrived' (masala kitābaka). He ended the letter by offering greetings to various people, and in a postscript he wrote that the wheat in his locality was standing in abundance (al-ṣāmā bi-šāliẖ, line 5). Many of the loops of the letters are open, and there is scriprio deflexion of long ū in the word 'aybānā in line 8.

Letter
3rd century AD
20 x 14 cm, with 17 lines on the verso; text is missing from the right side of the sheet. Acc. no. 779214

Recto: In this letter dāl stroke.

Verso: Blank.

Two letters
3rd century AD
14 x 24 cm, with 9 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and bottom on the verso. Acc. no. 779214

Recto: The first letter refers to various commodities as in ātāb wa-ṣubūrī ("26 stones and 3 pieces of straight stroke, and..."

Verso: In the second letter, the connecting stroke.
181
Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
20 × 11 cm, with 17 lines written parallel to the papyrus fibres; text is missing from the top and right side of the sheet, and there are lacunae
Accession no. PP5548
Recto In this letter dal approximates to a straight stroke.
Verso Blank.
182
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
14 × 24 cm, with 9 lines on the recto and 12 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top on the recto and the bottom on the verso, and there are lacunae
Accession no. PP5254
Recto The first letter contains accounts that relate to various commodities, including "stones" (fījārah), "13 in "al-baṣir" wa-"aḥrin ḫajar wa-"addālLAT qaṭa" ("16 stones and 3 pieces"). Dāl approximates to a straight stroke, and it has teeth.
Verso In the second letter final "ālef extends below the connecting stroke.
183
An account and a quittance
3rd century AD/9th century AD
26 x 17.5 cm, with 10 lines on the recto and 6 lines on the verso; text is missing from the right side on the verso, and there are small lacunae
Accession no. PP3353
Recto In the account the amounts are expressed in Greek numerals. Final 'alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while initial kaf is hairpin-shaped.
Verso The quittance was granted to a certain Abdallah the Jafar.

184
Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
21 x 33 cm, with 8 lines written parallel to the papyrus fibres, and 1 line in the right margin; text is missing from the top and bottom of the sheet, and there are lacunae
Accession no. PP3313
Recto This is the final part of a letter. In it, the writer sends greetings to various people, including 'my sister Umm al-Hassan' and Abu'l-Hassan. The addressee is requested to reply. Dala' and dhal approximate to straight lines, and shin was written without teeth and with a bar above it.
Verso Blank.

185
A letter and a herbal prescription
3rd century AD/9th century AD
21.5 x 12.5 cm, with 11 lines on the recto and 9 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and right side on the recto
Accession no. PP3344
Recto This letter opens with the phrase [ ... ] wa-''altu bap'tika wa-'aladima 'izzaka wa-salawataku ('May He preserve you and cause your strength and health to endure'). Final 'alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.
Verso In the herbal prescription final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke.
Letter

3rd century 5th/9th c.

23.4 x 16 cm, with 14 lines on the verso; text is reversed on the sheet, and there are 15-16 lines on the recto.

Accession no. 799199

Recto This letter refers to the relevant (ghadha), i.e. eng.

[i]-hi,-[khabar]ka to-[\ldots]

(Write to me to let me know please me by doing this straight stroke.

Verso The beginning.
Letter
3rd century AD
13.5 x 16 cm, with 14 lines on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top right of the sheet, and there are lacunae
Accession no. 7751599

Recto: This letter refers to payments and to a servant (ghulam). It employs the formula wa-khufa bi-khurafika wa-‘unaka tasawwara bi-dhikrika (“Write to me (to let me know) your news. You will please me by doing that”). Dhal approximates to a straight stroke.

Verso: The beginning of the address survives.

A papyrus reused for a letter
3rd century AD
15 x 10 cm, with 4 lines on the recto and 11 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and bottom on the verso
Accession no. 7751597

Recto: The script on this face of the papyrus is very faint. Final ‘alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.

Verso: In this letter final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke, and final ya bends backwards.

Letter
3rd century AD
19 x 30.5 cm, with 12 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top of the sheet, and there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. 7751514

Recto: This text represents the end of a letter. It conveys greetings to various people, and closes by blessing, blessings on the addressee. Dhal and dhال in most cases approximate to straight lines, and سا and سا were written without teeth.

Verso: Blank.
189
A papyrus reused for an account
3rd century AD
15.5 x 16.5 cm, with 9 lines on the recto and 7
written upside down on the verso; text is missing
from the top, bottom and left side of the recto
Accession no. PP1279
Recto: The script written on this face of the papyrus
is too faint to permit any identification of the text.
Verso: The account details expenditures on various
comestibles and contains references to sums of
money calculated in qirnas, dirhams and dinars.
Dāl approximates to a straight line and there is
scritto deformato of long a in dinar.

190
Letter
3rd century AD
14.5 x 16 cm, with 5 lines on the recto and 9 lines
written upside down on the verso; text is missing
from the top and bottom of the recto and from the
middle of both sides
Accession no. PP1275
Recto: The surviving part of the first letter consists
of five widely spaced lines. Final 'ālif extends
below the connecting stroke, and sin has no teeth
and is surrounded by a bar.
Verso: The second letter, which deals with trade,
opens with the formula 'azīla Allāh baqa'aka
('May God preserve you!).

191
Letter
3rd century AD
26.5 x 15 cm, with 10 lines written parallel to the
papyrus fibres; there are some lacunae
Accession no. PP3277
Recto: The letter is concerned with trade and begins
with the formula ja'adam Allāh fidāka ('May God
make me your ransom'); it subsequently mentions
cloth (al cha'īd). Sin and alif were written without
teeth and are surrounded by a horizontal bar.
Verso: Blank.

192
Record of a purchase
3rd century AD
12.5 x 2.5 cm, with 12 lines written parallel to the
papyrus fibres
Accession no. PP1280
Recto: This document, which records the pur-
chase of an ass (himār) by a certain 'Ali ibn Ja'far,
begins with the phrase badhā mai idhārā ('This is
what was purchased by ...'). It may be compared
to cat.154, which was written by the same scribe
and records the purchase of an ass by the same 'Ali
ibn Ja'far. Dāl approximates to a straight line.
Verso: Blank.
193
Letter
3rd century AD

25.4 x 15.5 cm, with 18 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top, left side and centre of the sheet.

Recto: The letter is commercial in content and mentions boats (qanib) owned by various people. Dal approximates to a straight stroke, and many of the loops employed in the script are closed.

Verso: Blank.

194
Letter
3rd century AD

10 x 12 cm, with 8 lines on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the left side of the sheet.

Recto: The letter begins with the phrase ba'rfaka Allah ("May God preserve you"). The loops of the letters are closed, and there is extension of the connecting strokes in the hamalas and in the first word of the text.

Verso: On this side of the sheet one faint line has been preserved.

195
Two letters
3rd century AD

24.7 x 12.1 cm, with 10 lines on the verso; text on the sheet, and there are Aecession no. 975271.

Recto: In the first letter (qanib), the vertical stroke of the horizontal stroke of the obliquely.

Verso: This text represents the letter. In it final 'alf' ex stroke, and initial ka'i.

196
Letter
3rd century AD

18 x 21 cm, with 12 lines missing from the top of the Aecession no. 975266.

Recto: The theme of 'the sheaf of wheat (qanib), 'Sa'id the 'the people of the villages men. The accusative phrase fa-shammari a line 4. The loops of the and al' approximates in the text.

Verso: Blank.
195

Two letters
3rd century AD
24.7 x 12.5 cm, with 10 lines on the recto and 7
lines on the verso; text is missing from the top of
the sheet, and there are many lacunae
Accession no. 1994671

Recto In the first letter, which mentions wheat
(qambo), the vertical strokes of xa and xa, and
the horizontal stroke of final xa', were written
obliquely.

Verso This text represents the end of a second
letter. In it final dalef extends below the connecting
stroke, and initial kaf is hairpin-shaped.

196

Letter
3rd century AD
18 x 13 cm, with 12 lines on the recto; text is
missing from the top of the sheet
Accession no. 1994668

Recto The theme of this letter is trade; it mentions
wheat (qambo), "Sy'd the servant" (Sy'd al-abd al-ghulam),
the people of the village "(ath al-qar'a)" and the
messengers. The accusative tanwin is missing in the
phrase Fe qahumand sihalka qabunni khaltd in
line 4. The loops of the letters are closed, and dal
and dhal approximate to a straight line.

Verso Blank.
197
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
13.5 x 24 cm, with 9 lines on the recto; text is missing on the left side of the sheet
Accession no. 1992272
Recto Part of the text of this letter mentions the messenger who bore it: wa-l-nasab yahdir yu-l-adab ('the messenger is leaving at this moment'). The papyrus is split along a horizontal plane in several places. Dal approximates to a straight line.
Verso Blank.

198
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
17.5 x 32.1 cm, with 7 lines on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet, and there are many lacunae
Accession no. 199356
Recto In this letter final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke.
Verso The text at the top is the beginning of the address of the letter on the recto. There are also traces of a line of script at the bottom of the sheet. This was written upside down relative to the letter on the recto, and it may be a continuation of that letter.
لا يمكنني قراءة النص العربي على الصورة.
Letter 3rd century AD

17 x 32 cm, with 6 lines on the recto; there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. PP9334

Recto This short letter mentions the servant (ghalid) who delivered it. The text begins immediately below the 'kamalah' with no greeting or blessing formulas. Dāl and dhāl approximate to straight lines.

Verso Blank.

Two letters and pen exercises 3rd century AD

11 x 16.5 cm, with 5 lines on the recto and 14 lines on the verso; the text on the verso was written at right angles to the papyrus fibres and so at right angles, too, to the script on the recto; text is missing from the top on the recto and from the top, bottom and left side on the verso.

Accession no. PP9352

Recto The second letter is concerned with payments of money. It mentions various areas of agricultural land measured in sūdān and the crop trefoil (qurt). The names Jirzah al-Nuri ("the Sailor") and Abu 'Abdallah occur in the text. The script is well executed, with no unconventional ligatures. Initial dāl has a distinct bend in it; dān has no teeth; and there is scriptio defectiva of long a in dīnār.

Verso Blank.

Letter 3rd century AD

21.5 x 29.5 cm, with 14 lines on the recto, including 3 lines in the right margin
Accession no. PP9356

Recto The letter opens with the phrase ja'llu jālah ("May I be made your ransome!"). It mentions Fustat and the personal name Ja'far ibn Muslim, Ja'far ibn Muhammad, Abu Muhammad and Abu Faṣil Ja'far. The strokes of dāl and dhāl approximate to straight lines, and dīn was written without teeth and with a bar over it.

Verso Blank.
The phrase 'ja'far ibn Muslim' is mentioned on the verso of the manuscript. It appears to be written without any illustrations or diagrams.
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
13 x 21.5 cm, with 12 lines on the recto, including 1 line in the right margin, and 16 lines on the verso; the text on the verso was written at right angles to the fibres and so at right angles, too, to the script on the recto; text is missing from the top on the recto, and there are lacunae within the text on both sides
Accession no. 8259503

Recto The first letter opens with the address ‘as-salaam ‘alaika Allah wa ‘ad-diyâkah (‘May God preserve you and prolong your life!’). Final ‘al’ sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not. The stroke of dal is straight in mufrad (line 3), while initial kâf consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left without a surmounting oblique stroke.

Verso The second letter opens with the phrase sâbhiyâhaika Allah (‘May God grant you a good morning!’). Final ‘al’ extends below the connecting stroke, while initial kâf consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left without a surmounting oblique stroke.

A letter and a p
3rd century AD/9th century AD
13.5 x 12 cm, with 9 lines on the verso; text is mid-way on the right side on the recto, left side on the verso
Accession no. 8259511

Recto The text is the beginning of a letter.

Verso The second line on recto; the five addin contain two hamzahs of a letter.

Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
9 x 3.5 cm, with 4 lines of text from the bottom of the page
Accession no. 8259528

Recto ‘Has is the initial with the phrase ‘astad’a ‘adaa bios preserve you?). Final ‘al’ extends, the connecting stroke, teeth and are surmounting

Verso Blank.
203
A letter and a pen exercise
3rd century AD/5th century AD
15.5 × 22 cm, with 9 lines on the recto and 6 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and right side on the recto and from the bottom and left side on the verso.
Accession no. PP5511
Recto: The text is the beginning of a letter.
Verso: The second line is the address of the letter on recto; the five additional lines in a larger hand contain two ba'alamah and the opening formula of a letter.

204
Letter
3rd century AD/5th century AD
9 × 34 cm, with 4 lines on the recto; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet.
Accession no. PP5392
Recto: This is the initial part of a letter; it opens with the phrase 'atikla Allah buq'aka ("May God preserve you"). Final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and 'ain and 'ayn have no teeth and are surrounded by a bar.
Verso: Blank.
205

Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
18 x 10 cm, with 16 lines on the recto and 15 lines on the verso, including 1 line in the right margin; text is missing from the top on both the recto and verso, and there are lacunae within the text.
Accession no. P95310

Recto The first letter mentions the names Sa'd and Ibn al-Rumi, and also the purchase of cloaks (ṣ authorize). The letter closes with the phrase 'ṣ authorize Allāh wa-ṣ authorize wa-ṣ authorize ("May God preserve you, protect you and honour you"). Final ṣ authorize extends below the connecting stroke, while ḏ authorize approximates to a straight line.

Verso The second letter mentions the delivery of goods with the phrase ṣ authorize ʿauthorize al-ṣ authorize ḍ authorize ʿauthorize al-ṣ authorize ("You ordered the servant to bring the goods"). Final ʿauthorize authorize extends below the connecting stroke, and ṭ authorize and ṭ authorize approximate to a straight line.

206

Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
8 x 24.5 cm, with 11 lines on the recto, including 3 lines in the right margin and 1 line in the left margin, and 4 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and bottom on the recto and the bottom on the verso, and there are lacunae within the text.
Accession no. P95316

Recto In the first letter final ʿauthorize extends below the connecting stroke.

Verso The second text is the beginning of a letter, which opens with the phrase ṣ authorize ʿauthorize ʿauthorize ya authorize ʿauthorize ya authorize ya authorize ya authorize ya authorize ya authorize ya authorize ("May I be made your ransom, O my master"). Final ʿauthorize ya authorize extends backwards in a conspicuous manner.

207

Two letters and a liturgical text
3rd century AD/9th century AD
9.5 x 12.5 cm, with 10 lines on the recto and 11 lines on the verso; there are lacunae within the text.
Accession no. P95335

Recto There are two different texts here; the second was written upside down between the lines of the first. The first is a letter written on five lines in black ink, while the second, also written on five lines but in brown ink, is a liturgical text that makes frequent use of the word Allāh. Final ʿauthorize does not extend below the connecting stroke.

Verso In the second letter, ḏ authorize and ḏ authorize usually approximate to a straight line.
208
Letter
3rd century BCE/1st century AD
25 × 16 cm, with 18 lines on the verso; text is missing from the right side of
the verso, there are large lacunae, and the right half
Accession no. PP39321
Retro: The text of the letter has been all but
obliterated.
Verso: Two of the texts on this face of the papyrus
are parts of the address of the letter on the recto:
the name of the sender was written at the top of
the sheet, and the rest was written upside-down at
the bottom. The two other texts, one of four lines
and one of three, were written vertically along the
left and right sides of the sheet. The first three lines
of the text on the left side end with circular sigils.

209
Letter
3rd century BCE/1st century AD
9 × 14.5 cm, with 6 lines on the recto; text is
missing from the bottom, right side and the top
left corner of the sheet
Accession no. PP39469
Retro: The letter was addressed to a physician, for
the phrase fa-ya ’akhkhal-takah ("my brother the
physician") occurs in line 2. Final 'alif sometimes
extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes
does not, while dal and dhal usually approximate
to a straight line.
Verso: Blank.

210
Two letters
3rd century BCE/1st century AD
25 × 16 cm, with 18 lines on the verso; text is
missing from the upper margin of the reverse, and
the text on both sides of the letter
Accession no. PP39309
Retro: The first letter is a receipt; it closes with the
phrase hazafaka wa-ju ilu, and your life, may I be
with you, and xaw were written under the
superscribed bar.
Verso: The second letter, which contains some
connecting stroke and...
Two letters

3rd century AH/9th century AD

25 × 16 cm, with 18 lines on the recto and 17 lines on the verso, including 2 lines written upside down in the upper margin; text is missing from the top on the recto, and there are lacunae within the text on both sides of the sheet

Accesoion no. 793509

Recto: The first letter mentions the place name Fustat; it closes with the formula 'ṣallā Allāh hawā'aka wa-ṣallā 'alās sakāka' ('May God prolong your life, and may I be made your ransom'). Sin and shadda were written without teeth and with a superscribed bar.

Verso: The second letter was written in a style in which final 'alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.
211
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
13.5 × 23.0 cm, with 13 lines on the recto and 12 lines on the verso, including 3 lines in the right margin; there are lacunae in the text
Accession no. P95345
Recto: The first letter opens with the formula 'sala Allah huwa 'alayka ('May God preserve you').
Final 'alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not; 'dal approximates to a straight line, and initial hajf consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left without a surrounding oblique stroke.
Verso: The second letter, which is commercial in content, opens with the formula 'abduka Allah ('May God preserve you') and subsequently mentions wheat (qanā). 'Dal and 'dhāl approximate to a straight line and are not distinct from 'āl; 'ain has teeth; and there is scriptio defectiva of long a in dhayr.

212
Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
16.5 × 20.5 cm, with 14 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top of the sheet
Accession no. P95337
Recto: After mention of payments and the city of Fustat, this letter closes with the phrase, wa-l-salam 'alayka wa-kustka ('and peace be upon you. It has been written'). Final 'dal approximates to a straight line, while the loop of initial 'ain and qaf is closed and considerably reduced in size.
Verso: Blank.
213

Letter

3rd century AD

17 × 10.5 cm, with 9 lines on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the left side of the sheet

Accession no. 1053946

Recto This letter, which opens with the phrase 'alha al-salam ('May God preserve you!'), is concerned with payment and with the arrival of someone at the home of the addressee. The addressee is requested to send a letter with his news. Dhal and dham approximate to a straight line, and the connecting strokes of the script have been extended in places.

Verso This is the end of the address of the letter on the recto.
214
A letter and a text with cryptic script
5th century AD
20 x 23.5 cm, with 15 lines on the recto and 4 lines written upside down on the verso; text is missing from the middle and bottom on the recto and from the middle on the verso, and there are many lacunae
Accession no. P7532

Recto The letter opens with the phrase 'abiqa Allah Allah ('May God preserve you!'). The strokes of dal and dhal approximate to a straight line.

Verso This bears part of the address of the letter on the verso, 'From Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn...', and one of the three lines below was written in a cryptic script consisting of lines, circles and dots.

215
Letter
5th century AD
24 x 21.5 cm, with 12 lines on the recto; there are large lacunae within the text
Accession no. P7534

Recto This letter makes mention of qaun (fuun). Dal and dhal approximate to a straight line, and final kaf and the retroflex tail of final ya' have been extended horizontally at the end of a line.

Verso Blank.

216
Two letters
5th century AD
11 x 12.5 cm, with 7 lines on the recto and 5 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom, right and left sides on the recto and the left and bottom on the verso
Accession no. P7536

Recto In this text, which represents the beginning of a letter, final 'alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.

Verso The second letter opens with the phrase 'abiqa Allah hayataka wa-`adama `asfylataka ("May God preserve your life and cause your health to endure?"). Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and dal approximates to a straight line.
The recto and 4 lines on the recto and from the recto and from are many lacunae.

The phrase 'ahabaka

The strokes of straight line.

On the recto there are circles and dots.

The recto and 4 lines on the bottom, and the left and

means the beginning extends below the lines does not.

with the phrase 'uma 'afyu'taka

and cause your extends below the approximates to a
Two letters
3rd century AD
10.3 x 11.5 cm, with 6 lines on the recto and 6 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and left side of the recto and the bottom of the verso
Accession no. PP5318
Recto: This is the first part of a letter, and it opens with the phrase 'ṣallā Allah ūdū' ('May God preserve you'). The beginning of lines 2, 3 and 5 appears to be a different text. The word 'ṣallā' is written either from a stroke that bends round to the left, without a surrounding oblique stroke, or in the shape of a hairpin.
Verso: This is the beginning of a second letter, which opens with 'ṣallā Allah ūdū' ('May God prolong your life, my brother, and may I be made your ransom'). Final 'ṣallā' sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.

Letter
3rd century AD
8.5 x 14 cm, with 6 lines on the recto; text is missing from the bottom and right side of the sheet
Accession no. PP5380
Recto: This letter mentions a sixth of a dinar. The author also asks the addressee to respond by using the formula fa-'ā'la 'in shā'a Allah fi dablīka' ('Express your opinion about that, God willing').
Final 'ṣallā' extends below the connecting stroke, and dāl and dālal usually approximate to a straight line.
Verso: Blank.
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th c.
10 x 26.4 cm, with 8 lines
1 line is the right margin of the text: on the verso to the fibres and so at
scrap on the recto; so at the
text. Bottom and from the
there are small lacunae.
Accession no. PP9405
Recto The first letter letter from the address ('Your letter has reached
below the connecting
sions of a curved stock
without a surmounting:
Verso The second let-
tic is the equivalent
Allah b. 'Asiyab ('Moc-
en].' Final 'allif'
ing stroke, while in

Letter
3rd century AD/9th c.
14 x 17 cm, with 7 lines
the verso; text is miss-
side of the sheet; and
Accession no. PP9333
Recto In this letter, w-
(qura, final 'alif' ex-
stroke, and medial 'al-
Verso The address of
written here.
Two letters
3rd century AD/4th century AD

220

The first letter mentions the receipt of a letter from the addressee, Mas'uda 'ulayyu kitābuka ('Your letter has reached me'). Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and initial kāf consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left without a surrounding oblique stroke.

Verso: The second letter opens with a blessing that is the equivalent of 'Good evening', Mas'ūda Allāh bi-'ṣalāhā ('May God grant you health this evening'). Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, while independent kāf is s-shaped.

Letter
3rd century AD/4th century AD

221

In this letter, which mentions papyrus (qurūbas), final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and medial kāf is hairpin-shaped.

Verso: The address of the letter on the recto was written here.
Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AH
23 x 13 cm, with 14 lines of text on the verso; text is written in two columns and right side on the recto, within the text.
Accession no. 29553.22

Recto: In the first letter, the sender asks Abi ‘Abid to send a basket (qafsh) filled with dates, twice the size of a hairpin shape.

Verso: The text here addresses Abi ‘Abid, requesting him to send a basket with dates, twice the size of a hairpin shape. A reference to Abu Muhammad is also included.
222
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
22 x 15 cm, with 14 lines on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and right side on the recto, and there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. 123512
Recto In the first letter, in which there is a reference to a basket (quffah), initial and medial kaf are sometimes hairpin-shaped and extended horizontally.
Verso The text here represents the beginning of an address: "Abu Muhammad 'Abd Allah Muhammad (to Abu Muhammad - May God give him honour!)."

223
Two letters
3rd century AH/9th century AD
27 x 16.2 cm, with 15 lines on the recto and 17 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top, left and right sides of the recto and the top and bottom of the verso, and there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. 123519
Recto In the first letter final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.
Verso The second letter mentions the names of Muhammad and Abu Tahir and asks the addressee to send a reply: "Dait and alba approximate to straight lines."

224
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
20 x 31 cm, with 6 lines on the recto; there are lacunae within the text
Accession no. 123512
Recto The letter mentions the sending of a note (ruq'ah). The tail of final 'ayn extends vertically downwards, sin and shin were written without teeth; shin has three diacritical dots arranged horizontally to a row; and shin, final 'ayn and final kaf have been extended horizontally.
Verso Blank.
225
Letter
3rd century AD
19.5 x 13 cm, with 17 lines on the recto and 3 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and left side of the sheet
Accesion no. PP93357
Recto The script of this letter is in a highly curvilinear style in which final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and the stroke of daleth approximates to a straight line.
Verso The text here may include the address of the letter on the recto.

226
Letter
3rd century AD
20.5 x 13 cm, with 13 lines on the recto and 4 lines on the verso; text is missing from the left and top right of the recto and from the top right of the verso
Accesion no. PP93355
Recto The letter was written in a style in which final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke and initial kaf consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left, without a surrounding oblique stroke. 'Alif maqra'ah is spelt with 'alif in the word beta.
Verso The first two lines may be a continuation of the letter on the recto or the address. A third line has been added half-way down the sheet; it seems to be in a different hand. The fourth line lies perpendicular to the other three.

227
Two letters
3rd century AD
12 x 10 cm, with 10 lines on the recto and 10 lines on the verso, including 2 lines in the right margin; text is missing from the top and right side on the recto and the top and left side on the verso
Accesion no. PP93358
Recto This letter mentions goods (matan) and the future arrival of somebody, and closes with the phrase wa-kutaha ('It has been written'). Dal and daleth sometimes approximate to a straight line, and final kaf, the retroflex tail of final 'ayn and the connecting strokes of the script have been extended horizontally at the end of the line.
Verso In the second letter dependent 'alif bends to the left at its base, and final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke.
Letter 3rd century AD
13.5 x 12 cm, with 1 line on the recto; text is missing from the top and right side of the verso and the top of the verso
Accession no. 299352
Verso: Blank.

Two letters 3rd century AD
13.5 x 12 cm, with 1 line on the recto; text is missing from the top and right side of the verso and the top of the verso
Accession no. 299352
Recto: This text is from the end of a letter. In it final ‘alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and the two have no teeth.
Verso: This text, too, is from the end of a letter. The writer asks the addressee to send the herb dill, 3aw ‘alabu wa-‘alabu bi-sh-shabha wa-ra‘ya ‘as ‘an wasi ‘alabu wa-‘alabu ‘in id‘a Allah (‘If you send the dill and determine that it should be credited to me, then do so, God willing’). Final ‘alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke; sab has teeth; and duba occasionally approximates to a straight line. There are sporadic consonantal diacritics.

Letter 3rd century AD
24.5 x 20 cm, with 20 lines on the recto and 8 lines written upside down on the verso; text is missing from the top on the recto, and there are lacunae within the text on both sides of the sheet
Accession no. 299358
Recto: In this letter final ‘alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, the hata of ‘al and ‘al slants to the right, and initial kaf has a variety of forms: it is t-shaped, or it was extended horizontally into the shape of a hairpin, or it consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left without a surrounding oblique stroke.
Verso: This is a continuation of the letter on the recto.
231
Two letters
3rd century AD
30 x 10 cm, with 16 lines on the recto and 16 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top, right and left sides on the recto and the left side on the verso
Accession no. 995494
Recto: In the first letter final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke.
Verso: After the bāma the second letter begins with the wish ja’alla fiddeka wa-‘adama Allāh ‘izzaka (‘May I be made your ransom! May God cause your strength to endure’). Final ‘alif does not extend below the connecting stroke, and the writer sporadically employs consonantal diacritics.

232
Letter
3rd century AD
12.5 x 11.5 cm, with 10 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top and left side of the sheet
Accession no. 995339
Recto: This text is a fragment of a letter in which ‘alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.
Verso: Blank.

233
Letter
3rd century AD
19 x 15 cm, with 14 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top, right and left sides of the sheet
Accession no. 995371
Recto: This text is the final part of a letter, in which greetings were conveyed to various people. Final ‘alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, and initial bāf is hairpin-shaped.
Verso: Blank.
234
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
13.5 x 10 cm, with 9 lines on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the left side of the sheet, and there are lacunae within the text.
Accession no. PP3378
Recto This author begins his letter on the same line as the hamadab with the phrase 'alāqada Allah ('May God preserve you!). Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and initial 'ayn is horizontally compressed in 'alimaka (line 2).
Verso This is the address of the letter on the recto.

235
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
20.5 x 22 cm, with 13 lines on the recto and 8 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom on the recto, and there are lacunae within the text.
Accession no. PP3536
Recto In this letter final 'alif does not generally extend below the connecting stroke, and the hantat of 'lā and 'lā slant to the right.
Verso This text is a continuation of the letter on the recto, together with the address of that letter.

236
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
34 x 24 cm, with 21 lines on the recto and 3 lines written upside down on the verso; the top left quarter of the sheet is missing.
Accession no. PP3536
Recto In this letter, which mentions a 'testator' or 'legatee' (al-wa'aw), final 'alif usually does not extend below the connecting stroke.
Verso The text here is a continuation of the letter on the recto.
Two letters
3rd century AD/6th century AD
13 x 14 cm, with 12 lines on the verso; text is on both sides of the verso.
Accession no. 77037

Recto: In this letter, the text extend below the colophon and
kaf consists of a straight line bending round to the oblique stroke, and a
bar is mounted by a bar.

Verso: The text appears to continue with a connecting stroke and...
237
Two letters
3rd century AH/9th century AD
13.5 x 14 cm, with 12 lines on the recto and 5 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top and right side on both sides of the sheet
Accession no. P9579.
Recto: In this letter final ʿalif usually does not extend below the connecting stroke; dāl usually approximates to a straight line; initial and medial kāf consist of a straight stroke or of a curved stroke bending round to the left without a surmounting oblique stroke; ʿayn has no teeth and is surmounted by a bar.
Verso: The text represents the end of a letter. In this hand final ʿalif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.

238
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
32 x 24 cm, with 22 lines on the recto, including 5 lines written upside down in the upper margin, and 19 lines on the verso; there are lacunae within the text on both sides of the sheet
Accession no. P95362.
Recto: This letter mentions Fustat. Final ʿalif usually extends below the connecting stroke; the hasta of ʿayn extends to the right; ʿain and ʾayn usually have no teeth and are surmounted by a bar; and dāl and dāl are approximate to a straight line.
Verso: The two lines at the top of the sheet are the address of the letter on the recto, 'To Abu'l-Fadl from Ja'far ibn Qasim'. Of the remaining text, the 12 lines written upside down are a continuation of the letter on the recto.

239
Letter
3rd century AH/9th century AD
12.5 x 23 cm, with 8 lines on the recto; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet
Accession no. PP1353.
Recto: The letter begins ʿabqara Allāhu wa-bi-fazaka ('May God preserve you and pronounce you'). Initial kāf is hairpin-shaped.
Verso: Blank.
2.40 Letter
3rd century A.D./9th
15 x 30 cm, with 12 lines; text is missing from the right side of the sheet.
Accession no. 115565

Recto: In this letter a red line is used to connect strokes, and the text is written in a left-to-right oblique stroke.

Verso: This is the address of the letter.

2.41 Letter
3rd century A.D./9th
18 x 23.5 cm, with 10 lines; text is missing from the left side of the sheet.
Accession no. 115333

Recto: This letter, written in Arabic script, begins with "May God give you peace..."

Verso: The script here continues to the verso.
240
Letter
3rd century AD
15 - 20 cm, with 14 lines on the recto, including 1 line in the right margin and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom, left and right sides of the sheet
Accession no. 795389
Reco This letter final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke, and initial kuf consists of a curved stroke bending to the left without a surmounting oblique stroke.
Verso This is the address of the letter on the recto; it refers to Fustat.

241
Letter
3rd century AD
18 - 25.5 cm, with 10 lines on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and left side of the sheet
Accession no. 795331
Reco This letter, which concerns a maid servant (jaryah), opens with the phrase 'akramaka Allah ('May God give you honour'). Final dal approximates to a straight line, and initial and medial kuf is sometimes hairpin-shaped.
Verso The script here is the address of the letter on the recto.
242

Two letters

3rd century AD/9th century AD

21 x 14.5 cm, with 8 lines on the recto and 30 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top, bottom and right side on the recto and the top of the verso, and there are small lacunae within the text; some of the script at the bottom of the verso has been obliterated by rubbing.

Accession no. PP1393

Recto: The text of the first letter was written in a style in which final 'alif does not extend below the connecting stroke.

Verso: The second letter opens with the phrase 'tallaka Allâh bâqâ'aka wa-'adâna 'izzâka wa-kurâmatâbi 'alâmâ fi dâbâka ('May God preserve you and cause your strength and honour to endure! May He make us your ransom!'); Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke.

243

Letter

3rd century AD/9th century AD

27 x 11 cm, with 14 lines on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing from the right side of the sheet.

Accession no. PP1396

Recto: In this letter final 'alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not.

Verso: This text is the beginning of the address of the letter on the recto; it reads, 'To Abu Ishaq...'.

244

Letter

3rd century AD/9th century AD

27.5 x 21 cm, with 12 lines on the recto; text is missing from the bottom and right side of the sheet, and there are a number of lacunae.

Accession no. PP1317

Recto: The surviving text consists of nine lines, widely spaced, with three additional lines written in faint brown ink between lines 1 and 2 of the main text. Dâl and alif appear approximate to straight lines, and the letters and connecting strokes in the script have frequently been extended horizontally. There are sporadic consonantal diacritics

Verso: Blank.
Letter

3rd century AD/9th century AD

9 x 15 cm, with 6 lines on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the bottom arc left side

Accesion no. 2745/38

Recto This letter opens with the blessing 'ubqatka Allahu akbar' ('The Lord of the Universe') and 'strama ni'amada indafha' ('May God preserve and sustain you and grant you a full measure of His bounties!). The last of 24 'ilas to the right, and the retroflex 'alif' of fit (line 3) has been extended horizontally.

Verso The text here is part of the address of the letter on the recto, 'From Umm Qasim'.
A letter and a note
3rd century AD/9th century AD
11.5 x 19.5 cm, with 4 lines on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and right side on the recto
Accession no. 793135
Recto The text here is the opening blessings of a letter.
Verso This is a note referring to the dispatch of a messenger. It was written with final 'alif extending below the connecting stroke and with sporadic consonantal diacritics; pairs of dots were written on an oblique or vertical plane, while shé has three superscribed dots written on a horizontal plane.

Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
11 x 9 cm, with 9 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top and right side of the sheet
Accession no. 793508
Recto This letter mentions the receipt of sums of money, including two dinars, as well as the land tax (qurūb). It closes with a blessing on the prophet (as-salāh), followed by the word wa-istada, literally 'It has been written'. The strokes of dāl and dhal sometimes approximate to a straight line.
Verso Blank.
An account and a letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
29 x 14 cm, with 15 lines on the recto and 14 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top right and centre of the recto and the top left and centre of the verso.
Accession no. PP3344

Recto: The account, which employs Greek numerals, relates to a press (μι'σαρα). The account begins with the phrase 'εκάστα Αλλάχ οργάτα' (May God preserve you!).
The author of the letter begins with the phrase 'εκάστα Αλλάχ οργάτα (May God preserve you) and adds the verse 'εκάστα Αλλάχ οργάτα (May God preserve you and cause your strength to endure!).

Verso: The text here may have been the address of the letter on the recto.

Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
35 x 23.5 cm, with 12 lines on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the left side of the sheet, and there is a large hole at the top.
Accession no. PP3364

Recto: In this letter 'αlf' extends below the connecting stroke, and the letter 'a' has no teeth and is sometimes surrounded by a bar.

Verso: The text extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while 'a' has no teeth and is sometimes surrounded by a bar.

Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
22.5 x 21.5 cm, with 10 lines on the recto and 1 line on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and right side of the recto and from the bottom and right side of the verso, and there are lacunae within the text.
Accession no. PP3357

Recto: In the first letter 'αlf' sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while 'a' has no teeth and is sometimes surrounded by a bar.

Verso: The second letter, which mentions a dwelling (μανζίλ), opens with the phrase 'εκάστα Αλλάχ οργάτα (May God preserve you) and the verse 'εκάστα Αλλάχ οργάτα (May God preserve you and cause your strength to endure!).

Final 'αlf' extends below the connecting stroke, 'dāl' approximates to a straight line, and the reflected tail of final 'a' has been extended horizontally in 3r (line 4). The writer has sporadically employed consonantal diacritics, and pairs of diacritical dots above a letter were written on an oblique or vertical plane.
Letter
3rd century AD
20 x 24 cm, with 12 lines on the recto and 2 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom and bottom right corner of the recto; there are lacunae within the text on the recto
Accession no. PP5374
Recto This letter closes with the request formula, "[Express] your view [concerning such and such a matter]", which is communicated by the phrase ta'yeeka. Final 'alif extends below the connecting stroke. The strokes of dal and dhal approximate to a straight line, while initial kaf consists of a curved stroke bending round to the left without a surmounting oblique stroke.
Verso This side of the papyrus has been used to write the address of the letter on the recto.

Two letters
3rd century AD
15.5 x 28.5 cm, with 11 lines on the recto and 14 lines on the verso; text is missing from the top, left and right sides on both the recto and the verso, and there are many lacunae within the text
Accession no. PP5334
Recto In the first letter final 'alif sometimes extends below the connecting stroke and sometimes does not, while sin has no tees and is sometimes surmounted by a bar.
Verso The second letter mentions a man known as al-Tarzyff, for whom a letter was enclosed (see also al-dary kitabu baddha kitabu 'ila al-Tarzyff). Dal and dhal often approximate to straight lines.
253
Letter
3rd century AD/9th century AD
30 × 23 cm, with 16 lines on the recto; text is missing from the top and left side of the sheet
Accession no. 773520
Recto In this letter the base of many of the letters incline to the right.
Verso Blank.

254
Two letters
3rd century AD/9th century AD
20.5 × 12 cm, with 10 lines on the recto and 15 lines on the verso
Accession no. 773526
Recto The first letter requests a reply from the addressee and closes with a prayer for the Prophet (naylab). Shu and shu were written without teeth.
Verso The second letter was written in very pale red-brown ink. Final ‘alif extends below the connecting stroke, and initial ‘af’/ is hairpin-shaped.
Account

256

107.5 x 7.9 cm

256 recto

256 verso

256

257 recto

257 verso

Account

This account, written on an unfolded sheet of parchment, records a transaction involving the sale of foodstuffs. The document is written in Arabic script, and the text includes references to dates and measurements, typical of such commercial records.

The heading "Account" is written at the top of the page, followed by a series of columns that likely represent different entries or transactions. The text is dense and requires careful reading to understand the details of the account.

Due to the age and condition of the parchment, some parts of the text may be difficult to decipher. However, the overall structure and format are typical of historical accounting documents.

Translation (partial):

- 256 recto: "الحساب...
- 256 verso: "الحساب...
- 257 recto: "الحساب...
- 257 verso: "الحساب...

The document is part of a larger collection of similar records, and understanding the context and history of these accounts is crucial for interpreting their significance.
Account

A 1176/AD 975-6

Parchment, two fragments which together measure 11.5 x 7.5 cm, with 8 lines on the recto and 1 line on the verso.

Accession no: 795/301

Recto: This account consists of a list of events for periods of months. The year AH 365, written out in words, is mentioned. There is a sporadic use of diacritics in this script, and ëa, ëa, and êkha are written with an angle on the right side. A notable element of the script is the šcripius plexa with 'alif in 'ajrat shubr.

Verso: The single line reads, 'The account of Hasan ibn 'Umar, the witness'.

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A letter reused for a pen exercise

5th or 6th century AH/11th or 12th century AD

Paper, 23 x 14 cm, with 19 lines on the recto, including 3 lines written upside down and diagonally in the upper margin, and 5 lines on the verso; text is missing from the bottom of the sheet and from the middle of the lower half of the document.

Accession no: 778/31

Recto: The letter concerns the arrangement of a marriage. There is a reference to a 'mukal' or 'representative'. The opening formula is: 'Allah ārūdha us-salāta razzaka wa-ta'yida lāhī ana ... ('Knowing - may God prolong your life and cause your strength and support to endure - that I...'). I was employed. The text is carefully executed: šim and šin have teeth, and the loops of fa', qa', wa, and midwaal are often open. Consonantal diacritics are supplied in many words.

Verso: This document seems to be a note requesting the dispatch of goods. However, the hamadlah is repeated at the end, and this suggests that the piece is no more than a draft or pen exercise.

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A note and a receipt

A 1178/AD 1134

Paper, 8 x 4.5 cm, with 5 lines on the recto and 11 lines on the verso.

Accession no: 779/34

Recto: The note indicates that the land tax office had received full payment up to the end of the month of Rabi' al-Awwal AH 528 (January AD 1134). The text reads: 'išāh wa-rūdha lā wālī Rabi' al-'awr al-sād al-dahāb al-samān al-šarīf. In this text, the top of 'āl' bends upwards, and šim has no teeth.

Verso: This is an official receipt for land tax. After preliminary notes relating to the registration of the receipt in government offices and the hamadlah, the body of the text opens with zilka li ... ('A valid receipt has been registered for ...'). The script was written in a highly cursive style, with many unconventional ligatures.
Concordances

PPP349 Cat.213 PPP347 Cat.85 PPP346 Cat.103 PPP349 Cat.240
PPP350 Cat.61 PPP348 Cat.85 PPP348 Cat.65 PPP350 Cat.251
PPP351 Cat.217 PPP349 Cat.85 PPP349 Cat.209 PPP351 Cat.96
PPP352 Cat.217 PPP351 Cat.217 PPP352 Cat.233 PPP352 Cat.204
PPP353 Cat.219 PPP352 Cat.219 PPP352 Cat.225 PPP353 Cat.242
PPP354 Cat.212 PPP353 Cat.221 PPP353 Cat.251 PPP354 Cat.91
PPP355 Cat.85 PPP354 Cat.85 PPP354 Cat.92 PPP355 Cat.88
PPP356 Cat.75 PPP355 Cat.226 PPP356 Cat.41 PPP356 Cat.245
PPP357 Cat.212 PPP356 Cat.235 PPP357 Cat.234 PPP357 Cat.33
PPP358 Cat.217 PPP357 Cat.95 PPP357 Cat.137 PPP358 Cat.89
PPP359 Cat.217 PPP358 Cat.230 PPP358 Cat.218 PPP359 Cat.221
PPP360 Cat.57 PPP359 Cat.57 PPP359 Cat.40 PPP360 Cat.231
PPP361 Cat.91 PPP361 Cat.198 PPP358 Cat.87 PPP358 Cat.220
PPP362 Cat.238 PPP362 Cat.238 PPP357 Cat.93 PPP361 Cat.90
PPP364 Cat.228 PPP364 Cat.228 PPP356 Cat.77 PPP361 Cat.199
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