O.Berenike 4. Ostraka from the Port of Berenike

Rodney Ast, Roger S. Bagnall, with a contribution by Loreleï
Vanderheyden

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§1   The volume of Greek and Latin texts published in 2016 as O.Berenike 3 comprised all ostraka (but not jar inscriptions) discovered at the Egyptian Red Sea port of Berenike during the 2009 to 2013 excavation seasons. Subsequent campaigns, in 2014–2015 and 2018–2020, turned up several dozen additional Greek ostraka and jar inscriptions, as well as one Latin and one Coptic text.[1]

§2   This article publishes most of these ostraka and a few jar inscriptions. It omits very poorly preserved fragments and those that contain only scattered letters. The editions, which continue the numbering of O.Berenike 3, are arranged by text types and within these categories by trenches (see the plan of the trenches in Fig. 1). The best represented text types are private letters and customs documents known as "orders to let pass," examples of which have been published in all three volumes of Berenike ostraka (O.Berenike 1 1–92; 2 145–188; 3 481–491). The five new ones edited here come from the Sarapion son of Kasios dossier and were found in 2018 in a single trench (Trench 48).[2] Four are addressed to Andouros, identified as a *quintanensis* in previously published ostraka (⧉ O.Berenike 1 50, 51, 53, 55–58, 61, 64, 66, 67, 86), and one to Pakoibis, perhaps also a *quintanensis*. The *quintanensis* was apparently a farmer of a tax levied on transporters.[3] These orders concern the transport of wine *keramia* and of *marsippoi* (commodity unknown).
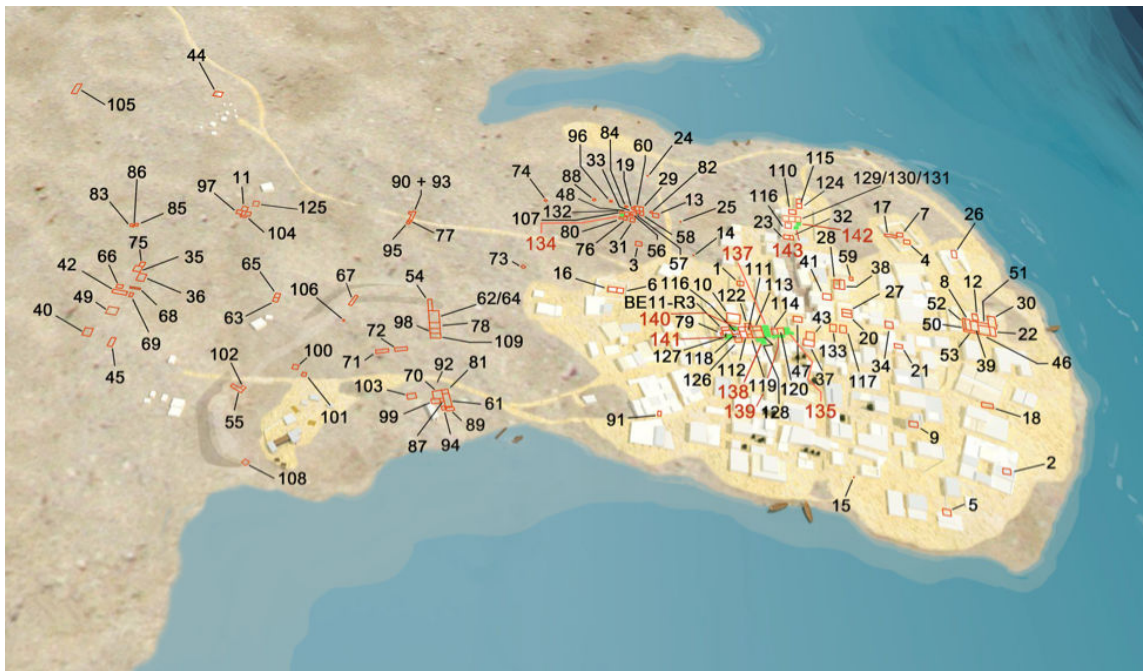

Fig. 1: Plan of trenches excavated in years 1994-2020. Drawing by Martin Hense.

§3   The private letters, also five in number, are all fragmentary. Two of them preserve references to a couple of Eastern imports: resins (bdellium and myrrh) and peppercorns. The fact that the writer explicitly requests bdellium in one letter (**512**) shows that some goods were traded at the harbor. This is in line with other evidence from the port suggesting that imported wares were assessed and stored there. Notable in this regard are two inscriptional bases found in 2015 in the courtyard of the Isis

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2   For description of the dossier, see O.Berenike 2, pp. 62–64; cf. O.Berenike 1, pp. 6–7.

3   For this official, see O.Berenike 2, pp. 5–7; ⧉ Cuvigny (2021): 375–377.

temple, which relate to the office of a tax receiver called the παραλήμπτης. One of them was set up by the secretary of the aromatics storehouse (γραμματεὺς ἀποθήκης ἀρωματικῆς).[4] Taken together, this evidence indicates that there was infrastructure in place for storing and assessing goods, and for distributing some of them.

§4   In addition to the "orders to let pass" and the letters, the texts here include one certain and one possibe water receipt (**522**, **523**?), a genre well represented in O.Berenike 3 (see p. 71 and **274**–**455**); one fragmentary Latin ostrakon (**527**); a Coptic ostrakon (**528**), the only documentary text in this language found to date;[5] a late ostrakon bearing a rho-cross (**525**); a possible writing exercise (**526**); and a few miscellaneous texts (**529**–**538**), mainly jar inscriptions.

§5   The archeological context of the ostraka is varied. Most come from the early Roman dump, especially trenches 48 and 96, which has been explored in recent years because of the animal cemetery that was uncovered in and around it.[6] The dump was the source of the "orders to let pass" (**517**–**521**), the water receipts (**522**, **523**?), most of the letters (**512**–**515**),[7] an account (**524**), the Latin ostrakon (**527**) and a couple of jar inscriptions (**529**–**530**). All of these were found in trenches 48 and 96 except for the account (**524**), which came from trench 134, a context datable to the second half of the first or the second century.

§6   The ostraka **534**–**537** originated in trench 122, just in front of the entrance leading into the courtyard of the Isis temple on the north side of the courtyard wall. This trench contained a mix of both early and late objects, such as a piece of a Middle Kingdom stela that has been known about since the 19th century, a fragment of the only known Ptolemaic Greek inscription from the port (I.Pan 70) and amphora sherds with dipinti dating to the fifth or sixth century (**536**, **537**).[8] The remaining ostraka are from areas throughout the site. Worth highlighting are **526**, a possible writing exercise of the late third or fourth century from the so-called Northern Complex, which was home to several late-period shrines, a couple of them built by the Blemmyes;[9] **533**, a jar inscription of the fourth or fifth century bearing the name Kalliopios, which was found near one of the large column bases that formed part of a late antique tetrakionion marking the intersection of two major north-south and east-west roads.[10]

§7   Although no single document is dated precisely, **524** likely originated during or around the reign of Nero, as suggested by some of the personal names in it. Pieces from the Sarapion dossier (**517**–**521**) most likely date to the third quarter of the first century.[11] And the letters **512**–**515**, water receipts **522**–**523**(?) and texts **524**, **527**, **529**–**530** all probably date to the second half of the first century, given the shared archeological context within the Roman dump. Texts not found in the dump are dated on the basis of paleography, ceramic fabric and the overall archeological context in which they were found. All dates are AD unless otherwise indicated.

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4   Ast and Bagnall 2015: 171–185.
5   O.Berenike 2 260, a lamp with a Coptic inscription, is the only other example of Coptic known from the port.
6   For recent treatment of the cemetery, see Osypinska, Skibniewski and Osypinski 2020: 1–15.
7   The letter **516** was a surface find.
8   Hense, Kaper and Geerts 2015: 585–602; Ast 2020: 108–110. For general discussion of trench 122, see Sidebotham et al. 2020: 18 and Popławski, Kraśniewska, Mi and Oleksiak 2022.
9   Ast and Rądkowska 2020:147–158; for the second shrine, still unpublished, see preliminary remarks in Sidebotham et al. 2022: 15–16.
10   See Sidebotham et al. 2020: 15–16.
11   For the dating of this dossier, see O.Berenike 2, p. 4.

Letters

512. Request to buy bdellium

BE-18 48.102.104 (Inv. 48134)
5.5 (w) x 5.8 (h) x 0.7 (th)
2nd half of 1st c.

§8   The ostrakon is broken on top, preserving remains of what appear to be the last five lines. In them, the writer requests the purchase of two mnas (approximately two Roman pounds) of bdellium. Bdellium was a resin used in aromatics and medicines.[12] The *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, a mid-first-century treatise on sailing around the Red Sea and beyond, reports that it shipped out of two places in Northwest India, Barbarikon and Barygaza, and grew along the Makran coast.[13] But it was also associated with Bactria, which Pliny says produced the most 'praiseworthy' (*laudatissimum*) kind, and with Arabia, Media and Babylon.[14] Mention of it is found in a medical treatise from the end of the first or beginning of the second century that deals with eye disease, and in price declarations from fourth-century Oxyrhynchus.[15]

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12   Dioscurides (1.67) describes its medicinal properties and uses. He uses the diminutive from which the Latin (and English) term derives, βδέλλιον, but the feminine form found here is used in most of the documentary and quasi-documentary texts.

13   For the date of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (Peripl.M.Rubr.), see ⬀ Casson 1989: 6–7. Bdellium is mentioned in several chapters of the Peripl.M.Rubr.: 37, 39, 48, 49. See ⬀ Casson 1989: 185 for general remarks.

14   Plin.Nat. 12.35–36.

15   ⬀ BKT 10 21.15 (75–125) contains the medical treatise, while the price declarations are in ⬀ P.Oxy. 54 3731.17 (310–311); ⬀ 3733.16 (312); ⬀ 3765.36 (c. 327); ⬀ 3766.92 (329).
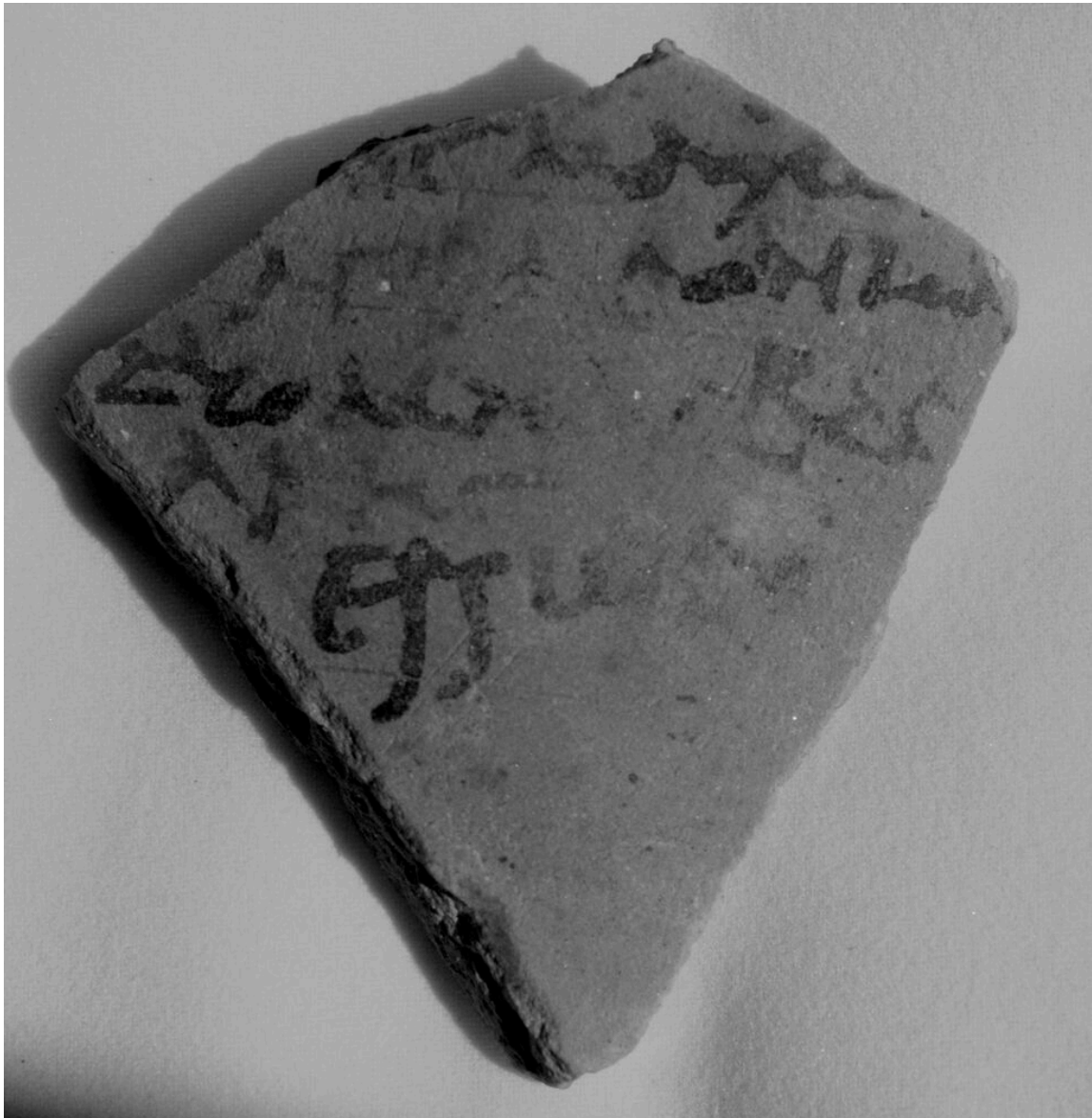
Fig. 2: **512**. Photo by R. Ast.

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> [-ca.?-] ̣ [-ca.?-]
> [-ca.?-] ̣ ̣ σματω ̣ [-ca.?-]
> [-ca.?-] ἀγόρασον καὶ
> δύο μνᾶς βδέ-
> 5   λης.
> ἔρρωσο.

... also buy two mnas of bdellium. Farewell.

§9   **2**If correctly deciphered, this should be a word in -σμα. A vertical stroke before σ suggests -ισμα and directly before that is another vertical line, which is in keeping with the right side of pi (gamma and tau seem less likely given the close proximity of the two strokes, and rho would have a shorter tail).

Thus, a word such as διάπισμα (l. διάπεισμα), a voluntary extra payment found in various contexts, might be a possibility; for this term, see ☑ SB 28 16838r.23, with comm. in ☑ Reiter 2003.

§10   3It may be that nothing is missing to the left of ἀγόρασον.

513. Letter mentioning myrrh and pepper

BE-14 96.013.009 (Inv. 96007)
Measurements not recorded
2nd half of 1st c.

§11   This fragmentary letter is broken off on top, at left and possibly on bottom. It preserves the endings of 13 lines, but the writing is poorly visible in the central part of the text.

§12   The first line contains references to myrrh and pepper. The peppercorns surely came from India, but the myrrh could have originated in a number of places, e.g., southern Arabia, East Africa, or the land of the Trogodytes.[16] The Trogodytic variety, which was associated with tribes of the Eastern Desert and Red Sea littoral, was of quite high value and considered better than Minaean, a place in the northeastern part of Yemen. We know this from ☑ W.Chr. 273.7–10 (2nd–early 3rd c.; Oxyrhynchus), a list of tariffs in which the Minaean variety is valued lower than the Trogodytic,[17] and from a statement of Pliny about the superiority of Trogodytic myrrh over Minaean (☑ Plin. Nat. 12.69–70; cf. ☑ Casson 1989:155).[18]

§13   Ostraka from other places in the Eastern Desert show that there was a market for goods coming into the port of Berenike. Pepper, in particular, was in demand, as evidenced by letters from Didymoi that include requests for the spice. For example, a soldier named Albucius stationed at Phoinikon asks for pepper on a couple of occasions (☑ O.Did. 327, ☑ 328; last quarter of 1st c.), as does a man called Mokotralis who was possibly stationed in Krokodilo (☑ O.Did. 399; before 120–125).

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16   ☑ Casson 1989: 154–156; Pliny lists some of the many kinds (*genera complura*) at Plin. Nat. 12.69.

17   Trogodytic myrrh is referred to also in a fourth-century ostrakon from Thebes, ☑ O.Bodl. 2 2153.

18   Minaean myrrh might not have been from Minaea itself, but from areas with which Minaeans traded; see, with further references, ☑ Casson 1989: 156.
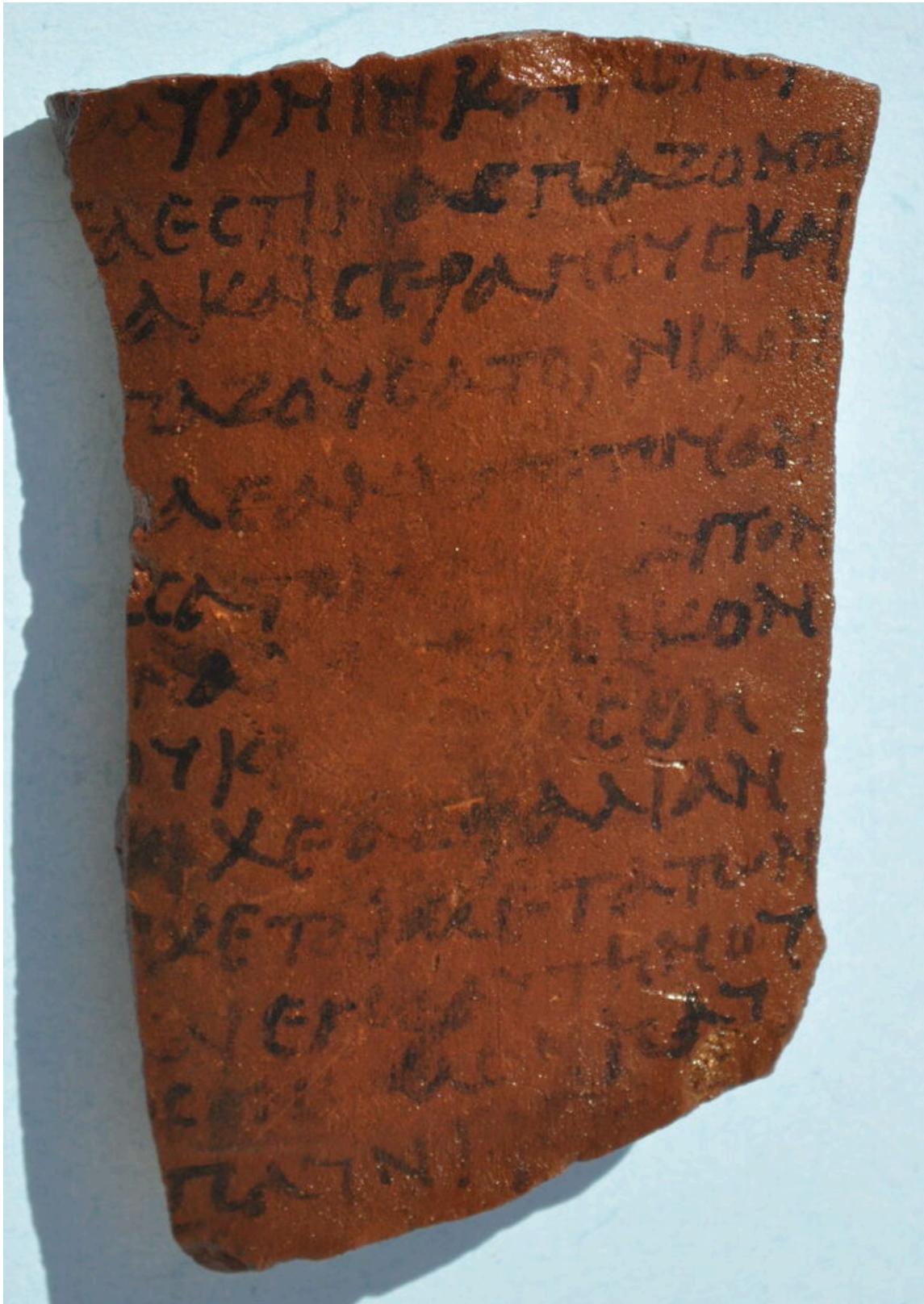
Fig. 3: **513**. Photo by S.E. Sidebotham.

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[-ca.?-] σμύρνιν καὶ πέπερ[ι]

[-ca.?-]εα ἐστίν. ἀσπάζονται

[-ca.?-]α καὶ Σεραποῦς καὶ

[-ca.?- ἀσ]πάζου Σατορνῖλον

5 [-ca.?-]α ἐὰν . . . . . του ἀν-

[-ca.?-] . σατο . . . . . αὐτὸν

[-ca.?-]ν αλ . . . . ικον

[-ca.?-]ουκ . [. .] . . . σθη . .

[-ca.?-] . . χε ἀσφάλιαν

10 [-ca.?-] . χεται μετὰ τῶν

[-ca.?-] . καὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὴν ου

[-ca.?-] . σ . νωμενη αὐ-

[-ca.?-] Παῦνι κ‾ .

[-ca.?-] . . [-ca.?-]

-- -- -- -- --(?)

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1 *l.* σμύρνην 4 *l.* Σατορνεῖλον 9 *l.* ἀσφάλειαν

… myrrh and pepper … Greetings from … and Serapous and … . Greet Satorneilos … . … security … . Pauni 20-29 … .

§14 1The first letter of the first word might easily have been ζ rather than σ.

§15 2ἐπεὶ χρ]έα (l. χρεία) vel sim.?

§16 3–4There is a Serapous in ⌇ O.Berenike 2 199 and a Satorneilos in ⌇ O.Berenike 2 193, ⌇ 195, and possibly ⌇ 196.

§17 5–6The traces in this line would fit ἐὰν κ̣α̣τ̣ὰ̣ τοῦ. After that, one might supplement ἀν‖[τιδίκου] and take]εσατο in l. 6 as a compound of καλέω, which would be consistent with language related to legal proceedings.

§18 7It is tempting to read]ν ὅλ̣ο̣ν̣ τ̣ὸ̣ν̣ ο̣ἶ̣κον in this line, but the second letter looks more like alpha than omicron, which casts doubt on ὅλον.

§19 9The beginning of the line preserves the end of a word in -χε. The ink is smeared, so it is hard to tell if the letter before chi is rho or iota. Before that, there seems to be an eta. The reading]ηρχε (for ὑπ]ῆρχε?) is a possibility, but it is hard to connect this with the following accusative. It is not impossible to read ει instead of ηρ, but the epsilon must have been small, having been squeezed between two vertical strokes. While εἶχε gives better syntax than ὑπ]ῆρχε, it is inferior in terms of paleography.

§20 10]σχεται,]ρχεται and]εχεται are all possibilities, suggesting the verbs ἄρχω, ἔρχομαι, or ἔχω.

§21 **12**We presume that the string νωμεγη is a participial ending and not the particle μέν followed by the article ἡ. Which verb the participle belongs to is unclear.

514. End of a letter

BE-14 96.016.025 (Inv. 96002)
12 (w) x 6.1 (h) x 1 (th)
2nd half of 1st c.

§22 The ostrakon is broken on top. It preserves the lower part of a letter in which the sender requests a receipt and, in a postscript, refers to a man named Petosiris and to four keramia of an unknown commodity.
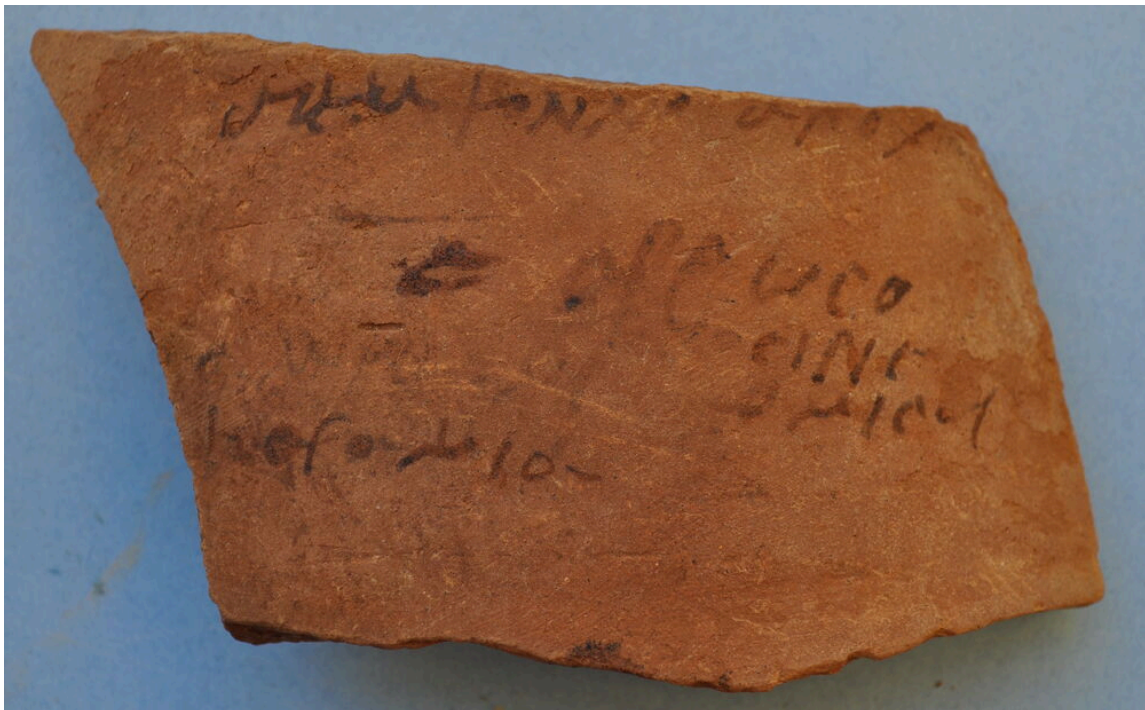

Fig. 4: **514**. Photo by S.E. Sidebotham.

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πέμψον μοι ἀποχὴ[ν]
[-ca.?-] δ̄ ἔρρωσο
vac.(?) Πετοσῖρις
-ca.9- [̣ ̣] κομίσαι
5 κεράμια δ

… Send me the receipt … the 4th. Greetings. Petosiris … to take four keramia.

§23 **2**The number four in this line refers to a day, which might have been the day on which something was to happen (e.g., the receipt was to be sent) or the date of the letter.

§24 **3**The left side of the ostrakon is so worn that it is extremely difficult to tell if the name Petosiris has been indented or the beginning of the line has been effaced. We indent the name, because traces of ink

to the left of it seem to go with the subsequent line, but indentation of this sort, even in a postscript, seems unusual.

515. Letter referring to camel transport and a *lekythos*

BE-14 96.013.020 (Inv. 96005)
Measurements not recorded
2nd half of 1st c.

§25 The ostrakon is broken on top and at left. It is poorly preserved, with only the very ends of 9 lines surviving. Little can be said about what kind of text it is, except that its overall appearance suggests a letter. In line 6 there is the abbreviated word καμηλ/, which can refer either to camels or to cameldrivers; in line 7, the word ὀβολός is also abbreviated. The reference to obols is interesting because of the large number recorded, 25. The phenomenon of numbers of obols larger than the equivalent of a drachma is best attested in the poll-tax receipts, where the prosdiagraphomena on 20 drachmas was 10 obols. But a much better parallel to our text is ☑ O.Claud. 2 294 (ca. 142–143), where the writer tells the addressee to collect 3 (7-obol) drachmas from a soldier for a lamp support, but if he haggles, to give him a two-obol discount and collect nineteen obols from him. Thus $(7 \times 3) - 2 = 19$.

§26 The last line mentions an oil flask (λήκυθος), although the kind of oil it contained is not specified in what remains of the text. In other ostraka from the Eastern Desert *lekythoi* are associated with rose oil (☑ O.Claud. 1 171), olive oil (☑ O.Did. 441.2–3, before 120–125; ☑ O.Krok. 2 292.8–10, Trajan) and myrrh (☑ O.Krok. 2 288.12–13, Trajan).

§27 The hand resembles that of **518** from the Sarapion dossier, especially the squarish, oversized epsilon.

Fig. 5: **515**. Photo by R. Ast.

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[-ca.?-] ̣ [-ca.?-]

[-ca.?-] ̣ δ ̣ [-ca.?-]

[-ca.?-] ̣ να ἐξο

[-ca.?-] σοι ἀδ ̣ ̣ ̣ ̣ ̣ ̣ ̣

5　[-ca.?-] ̣ αι καὶ ὀβολ(οὺς) κδ ̣

[-ca.?-] ̣ τοῦ καμηλ

[-ca.?-] καὶ ὀβολ(οὺς) κε

[-ca.?-] ̣ ιλ τὴν λήκυθ(ον)

§28　3The letters να might represent the number 51, while εξο could be the beginning of a single word or the participle ἐκ followed by omicron.

§29　4The last letter of the line looks like epsilon; two letters before is perhaps a lambda. There is nothing in the traces after delta and before the putative epsilon to prohibit reading epsilon and phi, respectively. Thus, ἄδελφε seems very possible.

§30　5The reading of οβολ is tentative, though made more plausible by the clear occurrence of the word in line 7. What is indisputable is the raised lambda. Traces of the two omicrons are minimal, but the two vertical tips under lambda would fit beta. An alternative such as καμηλ is possible, but seems less likely.

§31　Twenty-four obols is four short of a tetradrachm based on a 7-obol drachma, such as that observed in ⧉ O.Claud. 2 294, discussed above in the introduction to this text.

§32　7The epsilon in κε is quite round, similar to that in line 3. For the high number of obols, see previous note and introduction above.

516. Letter of Sigillios

BE-20 999 (Inv. 99030)
5.6 (w) x 5.3 (h) x 1.1 (th)
2nd/3rd c.

§33　This ostrakon was a surface find made by Laure Pantalacci in late January 2020. It is broken at right and on the bottom. The fabric is a red clay covered with a white slip.

§34　The sherd contains part of a letter sent by a man named Sigillios to a certain Firmus. It apparently concerns items of clothing. The sender's name is not otherwise recorded in Egypt, but is attested in Syria, ⧉ P.Euphr. 14 (241), and Dacia, ⧉ CIL 3 1063 (215), in texts from the third century. While the Berenike ostrakon might also date to the third century, there is nothing in the generic hand to exclude a second century date.
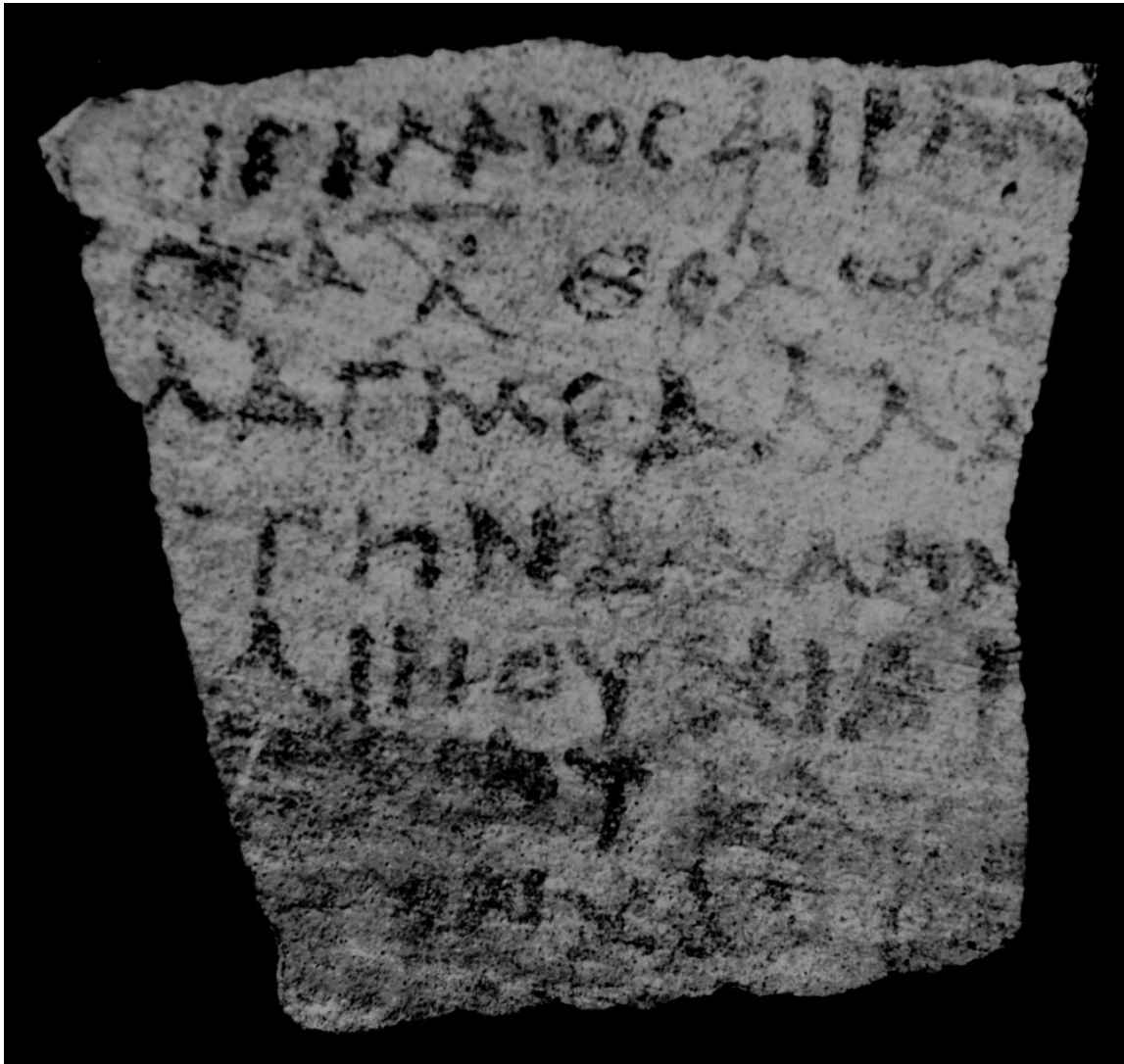
Fig. 6: **516**. Photo by R. Ast.

Σιγίλλιος Φίρμ[ῳ -ca.?- πλεῖ]-
στα χ(αίρειν). θέλω σε [γινώσκειν -ca.?-]-
λαγμε ἀλλὰ [-ca.?-]
τὴν ἄλλην [-ca.?-]
5   λινουδι   ι[-ca.?-]
ἐρίου κατ   [-ca.?-]
τὸν χαλ   [-ca.?-]
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Sigillios to Firmus, many greetings. I want you to know ... of linen ... of wool ....

§35   1A soldier named Firmus is attested in ☐ O.Berenike 3 379 and ☐ 419, but those ostraka are likely significantly earlier than this one.

§36 3A possible restoration is ἤλ|λαγμε (l. ἤλλαγμαι) or ἀπήλ|λαγμε (l. ἀπήλλαγμαι). For the former, see ⟶ P.Mich. 3 203.8–9 (114–116, Nubia), γεινώσκιν σε θέλω ὅτι εἰδοὺ τρεῖς μῆνες ἀφ᾽ ὅτε ἤλαγμαι εἰ[ς] Ψέλκιν, "I want you to know that it's been three months since I went to Pselkis"; for the latter, ⟶ P.Mich. 8 512.5 (early 3rd c., Alexandria?), πάλαι ἂν ἀπηλλαγμένοι ἦσμεν, "we would have been free to depart long ago."

§37 5λίνου might be the genitive of λίνον. We have considered the possibility of a form of χιθών for χιτών after it, but the stroke after theta seems to be an iota. An alternative is to see a form of λινούδιον, "linen shirt," but the traces are not entirely consistent with that, either.

§38 6The ink in the first part of the line is smeared, and if εριου is correct, then -ιο- could well conceal a correction. Either κατα or κατω is possible in the second half of the line.

§39 7χαλκόν readily suggests itself, although the vertical stroke after lambda might be too far to the right to be the left side of kappa.

Orders to let pass

517. Sarapion to Andouros

BE-18 48.104.106 (Inv. 48133)
11 (w) x 9 (h) x 0.7 (th)
50–75

§40 The ostrakon is complete, but the fabric is dark and the writing is very faint. It and the following four ostraka (**518**–**521**) are all from the Sarapion dossier (see introduction above). Line 2 mentions a Kronios son of Harpochration, which is the name of a cameldriver attested in two receipts from the water archive published in O.Berenike 3 (⟶ 3 342.2 and ⟶ 438.4).

§41 Here and in two other ostraka published below (**518** and **520**), the word κεράμια is modified by an adjective that appears to be abbreviated πολ/, although not a single instance of the word is clearly visible. This abbreviation is observed in other ostraka from the Sarapion dossier. It might have been intended for πτολ(εμαικά), a designation found in ostraka published in volume 3, but the consistency with which the word is written without tau makes us hesitate to assume πτολ(εμαικά) was intended. See O.Berenike 2 pp. 8–9 and O.Berenike 3 p. 30 fn. 38.

§42 The hand of this text is the same as that observed in nearly all of the Sarapion ostraka. In a few cases, the script is too poorly preserved to say for sure if it is the same. Where we do see two clearly different hands is in ⟶ O.Berenike 1 86 and ⟶ 87, neither of which contains the patronymic Kasios.[19] These might, therefore, not even belong to the Sarapion son of Kasios dossier.

§43 In many of the Sarapion ostraka, a date is recorded at or near the end of the text (as here in line 4). In the editions of some of these, the hand that wrote the date is distinguished from the main hand (e.g., ⟶ Berenike 2 173.4, ⟶ 177.4, ⟶ 182.4, ⟶ 3 488.4). This "hand 2" is visibly the same in all instances. We are thus now inclined to think that the hand labeled "hand 2" is actually the main hand writing in a more cursive style.

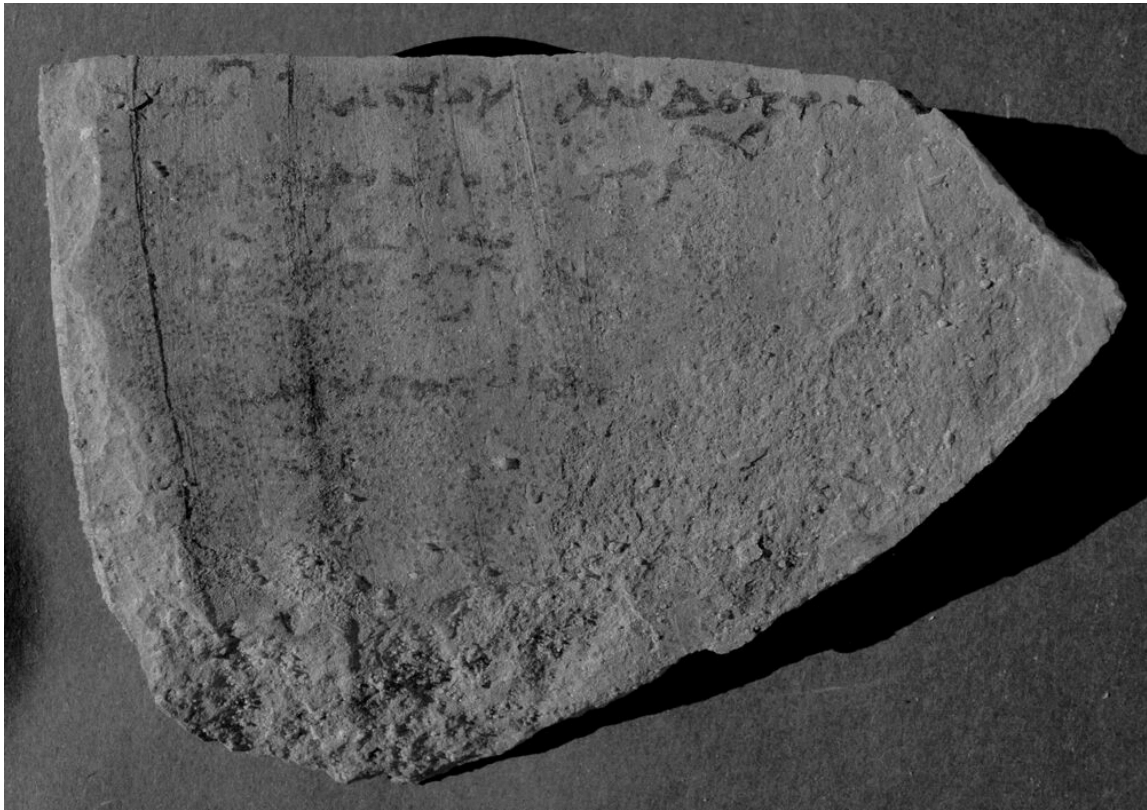19   The fragmentary ⟶ O.Berenike 1 88 appears to be in the same hand as ⟶ 86.

Fig. 7: **517**. Photo by R. Ast.

Σαραπ(ίων) Κασίου Ἀνδουρῳ χ[(αίρειν)·]

δι(απόστειλον) Κρονίου Ἀρπ[ο]χ(ρατίωνος)

οἴν(ου) πολ κεράμ(ια) ιε

μηνὸς ….. [-ca.?-]

5   -ca.?-(?)

2   *l.* Κρονίῳ

Sarapion son of Kasios to Andouros, greetings. Dispatch for Kronios son of Harpochration 15 pol( ) jars of wine … in the month of … .

§44   3The number of keramia could also be λε.

§45   4Traces after μηνός are inconclusive; they would fit either Epeiph or Sebastos.

§46   5There may be faint traces of letters here, perhaps of the signature.

518. Sarapion to Andouros

BE-18 48.107.112 (Inv. 48144)
7 (w) x 6 (h) x 0.8 (th)
50–75

§47 The fabric of the ostrakon is dark and the writing faint, but the text is complete. Amphiomis son of Harmiusis is not otherwise attested.
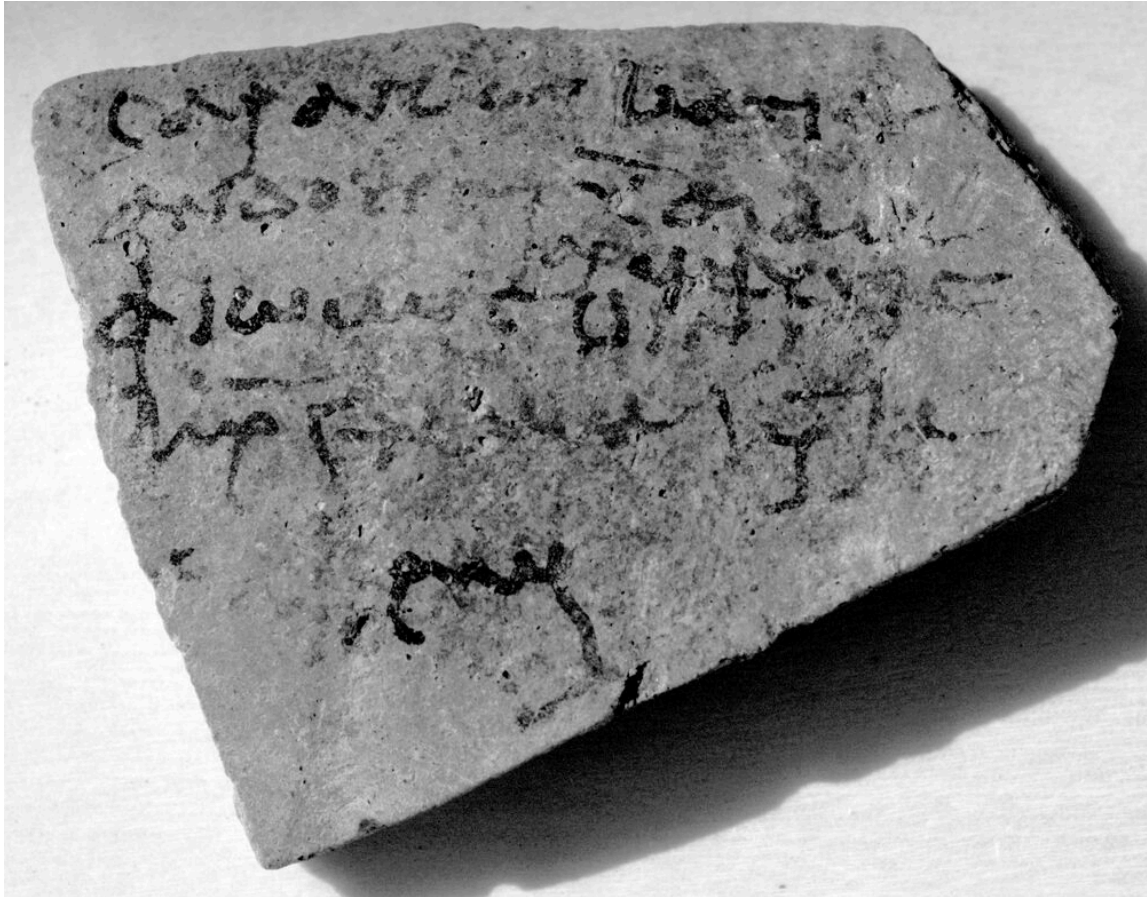
§48 On the hand, see **517**.

Fig. 8: **518**. Photo by R. Ast.

Σαραπίων Κασίου
Ἀνδουρωι χ(αίρειν)· δι(απόστειλον) Ἀμ-
φιῶμις ⸍Ἁρμιῦσις⸍ οἴν(ου) πολ
⸌⸍⸍⸍
κερ(άμια) ἕνδεκα (γίνεται) κερ(άμια) ια
5   σεση(μείωμαι)

_____

2-3 *l.* φιῶμει   **3** *l.* Ἁρμιύσεως

Sarapion son of Kasios to Andouros, greetings. Dispatch for Amphiomis son of Harmiusis eleven pol( ) jars of wine, 11 jars. I have signed.

§49 **3** For discussion of πολ( ), see **517** intro.

519. Sarapion to Andouros

BE-18 48.999.005 (Inv. 48139)
10.4 (w) x 8.2 (h) x .5 (th)
50–75

§50 The ceramic fabric is dark and the writing faint. However, the text is complete even if not fully legible. Psenosiris son of Paeris is otherwise unknown.

§51 On the hand, see **517**.

Fig. 9: **519**. Photo by R. Ast.

Σαραπίων Κασί[ο]υ Ἀνδουρωι χ(αίρειν)·

δι(απόστειλον) Ψενοσίρι Παήρεως

οἴν(ου) ἰταλικ(ὰ) κερ(άμια) δύο καὶ [-ca.?-]

Πακοίβι λαδικ(ηνὰ) κερ(άμια)   [-ca.?-]

5   (γίνεται) λαδ(ικηνὰ)   [-ca.?-]

Sarapion son of Kasios to Andouros, greetings. Dispatch for Psenosiris son of Paeris two jars of Italian wine and for Pakoibis … jars of Laodicean wine, totals … Laodicean wine.

§52 3In this and the following line it is unclear if any letters are lost at line end.

520. Sarapion to Andouros

BE-18 48.999.006 (Inv. 48146)
9.5 (w) x 5.8 (h) x 0.6 (th)
50–75, Sept. 20 or 21

§53 The fabric of the ostrakon is dark and the writing faint; nevertheless, the text is complete.

§54 The patronymic recorded in line 2, Chambekis, is noteworthy. There is a Chambekis in the water archive in O.Berenike 3, also in the spelling Chenbekis and Kembekis/Kembechis (☐ 363, ☐ 366, ☐ 371, ☐ 396). We proposed there that these were variant spellings of the same Egyptian phoneme, Pȝ-šr-n "the son of." But here the name written before Chambekis presents problems for our reading. Πεταμῖνις (or Πετεμῖνις) seems to make best sense of most of the traces, but it leaves us with additional ink before Χαμβήκ(ιος). On the basis of the paleography, we could perhaps accept Πεχαμβήκιος, but this would be difficult to explain in terms of onomastics.

§55 The ostrakon is dated to the 23rd of the month of Sebastos (= Thoth). Five other passes from the Sarapion dossier were thought to have been written one day later, on Sebastos 24 (see ☐ O.Berenike 2 161.4n.), but only three actually preserve the day number. Of these, two clearly indicate the 24th (☐ 173 and ☐ 182), while the third was written on the 23rd (☐ 177), the same day on which this one was written. The five texts dated to the month of Sebastos in O.Berenike 2 are all passes for marsippoi. This one, however, is for wine.
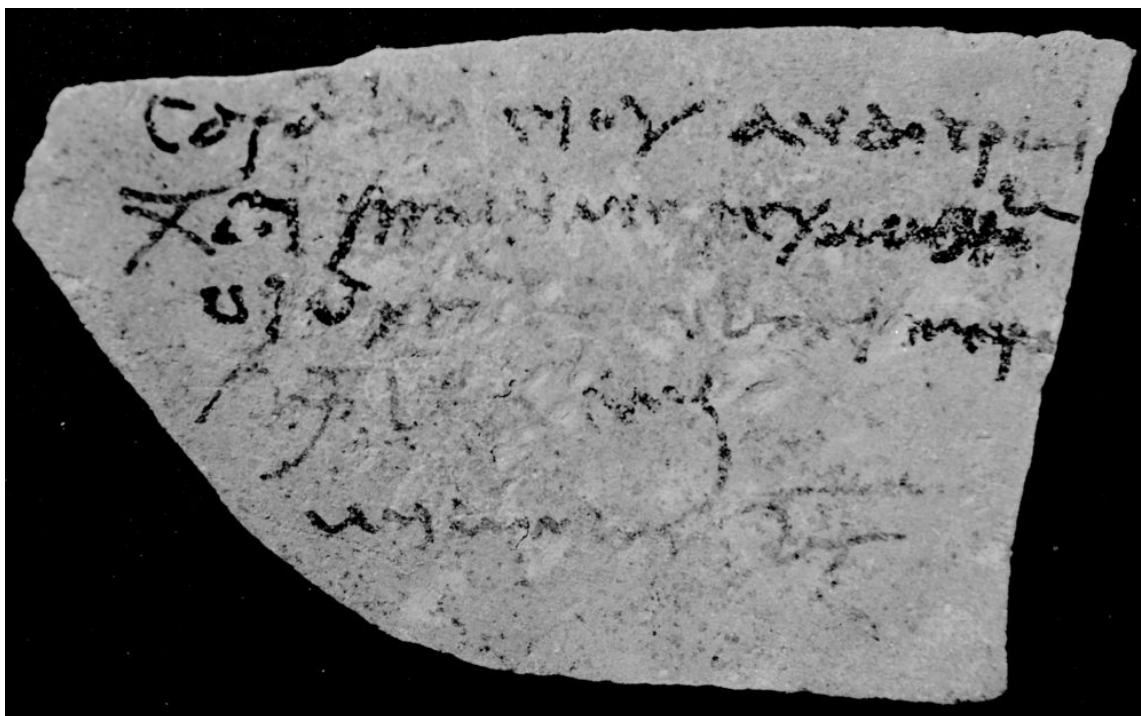
§56 On the hand, see **517**.

Fig. 10: **520**. Photo by R. Ast.

Σαραπ(ίων) Κασίου Ἀνδουρωι

χ(αίρειν)· δι(απόστειλον) Πετ . . μινι . . . . Χαμβήκ(ιος)

οἴν(ου) πολ κε[ρ(άμια)] εἴκοσι τέσσερα

(γίνεται) κερ(άμια) κ̄δ̄ σεση(μείωμαι)

5   μηνὸς Σεβαστ(οῦ) κ̄γ̄

Sarapion son of Kasios to Andouros, greetings. Dispatch for Pet- son of Chambekis twenty-four pol( ) jars of wine, totals 24 jars. I have signed in the month of Sebastos, 23.

§57   2Πετεασμῆφις Χαμβήκ(ιος) cannot be entirely discounted as a possibility.

§58   3For discussion of πολ( ), see **517** intro.

§59   5See **517** also for discussion of the hand responsible for writing the date.

521. Sarapion to Pakoibis

BE-18 48.104.107 (Inv. 48136)
9.2 (w) x 5.8 (h) x 1 (th)
50–75

§60   The ostrakon is complete and the text is very legible. It records the dispatch of 23 marsippoi for Kronios son of Pisais (l. 2). This is probably the same person as in ☞ O.Berenike 2 165, where Κρονίου should be read instead of Ἀρονγ[(l. 1), and in ☞ O.Berenike 1 35, where Kronios' patronymic is spelled Pisois instead of Pisais.

§61   We follow H. Cuvigny in resolving μαρσι- to μάρσιπποι ("bags") rather than μαρσίππια ("purses").[20]

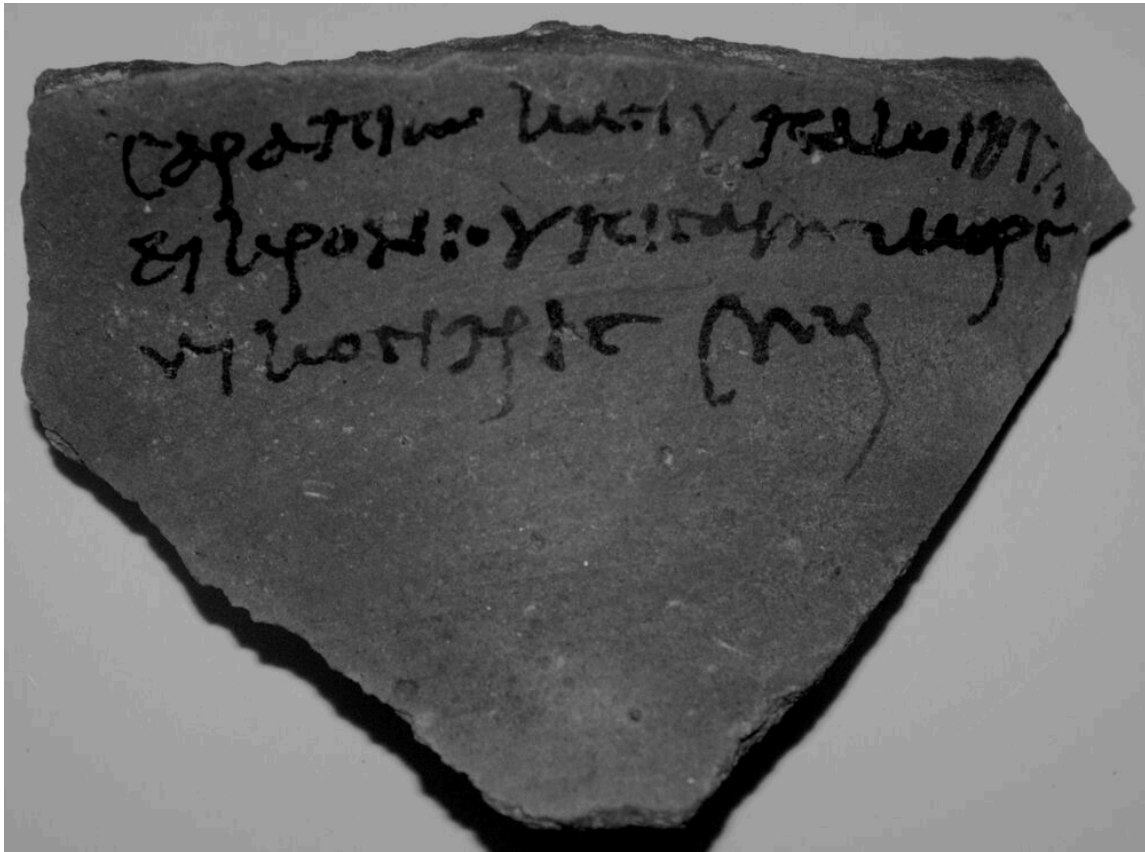§62   On the hand, see **517**.

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20   ☞ Cuvigny 2021: 368–371.

Fig. 11: **521**. Photo by R. Ast.

Σαραπίων Κασίου Πακοίβι χ(αίρειν)·

δι(απόστειλον) Κρονίου Πισάιτος μαρσί(ππους)

εἴκοσι τρῖς σεση(μείωμαι)

---

2 *l.* Κρονίῳ

Sarapion son of Kasios to Andouros, greetings. Dispatch for Kronios son of Pisais twenty-three marsippoi. I have signed.

Water receipts

522. Receipt mentioning the century of Bassus

BE-20 134.005.034 (Inv. 134001)
6.5 (w) x 7.5 (h)
2nd half of 1st c.?

§63   The ostrakon is broken on the right, preserving the beginnings of all of its six lines. It looks very much like the water receipts published in O.Berenike 3. Because of this similarity, we assign it to the second half of the first century, the date of that archive.

§64　The cameldriver is named Pisais (cf. ☖ O.Berenike 3 452), and the name Nemonius in line 3 is reminiscent of the homonymous cavalryman in ☖ O.Berenike 3.381.4 and ☖ 415.7. Moreover, the century of Bassus (l. 4), which is associated with the 2nd Ituraean cohort in ☖ O.Berenike 3 264, is well known from receipts in O.Berenike 3 (see there pp. 21–22). The ostrakon distinguishes itself from most other water receipts in a couple of ways. First, if Nemonius is the known cavalryman, then the text refers to deliveries to both a turma and a century. We find the same type of double delivery in ☖ 3 415. Secondly, the ostrakon is unique among these receipts in referring to a legion, quite possibly Legio III Cyrenaica, which was stationed in the Thebaid in the first century.[21] The reference to it occurs in the part of the receipt where we normally get the name of the soldier responsible for accepting the delivery. Thus, it is unclear whom the word relates to, whether to the century of Bassus or to a soldier whose name is now lost in the lacuna.

21　☖ Cuvigny 2021: 131.

Fig. 12: **522**. Photo by S.E. Sidebotham.

δεκανί[ας -ca.?-]

Πίσαις Ψ[-ca.?-]

Νεμων[ι- -ca.?-]

(ἑκατονταρχίας) Βάσσ[ου -ca.?-]

5   λεγιῶ[νος -ca.?-]

πτο[λεμαικὰ(?) -ca.?-]

Of the dekania of … Pisais son of Ps- … Nemoni- … in the century of Bassus … of the legion of … ptolemaica … .

§65 1–2Pisais, the cameldriver in ⌖ O.Berenike 3 452, belongs to the dekania of Paeris. Only the first letter of his patronymic, which we represented in the edition with a dot, survives there; it could easily be a psi. Thus, we are inclined to see the same person in both texts. This invites the restoration of Παήριος in the lacuna of line 1 here.

§66 4The reading of the name Βάσσ[ου is tentative, although the beta and alpha seem secure, and the double sigma plausible. An alternative could be Βαιβ[. Cf. Baibios in ⌖ O.Berenike 3 466.

523. List of names or water receipt?

BE-14 96.006.14 (Inv. 96004)
Measurements not recorded
2nd half of 1st c.?

§67 The ceramic's fabric is orange in color and the surface is quite damaged. There are parts of 5 lines of text visible. In line 5, letters were canceled, with others inserted above the deletion. The first line may attest a known dekanos (see comm.).

§68 The mention of a dekanos in line 1 suggests this could be a water receipt. However, the text lacks some of the telltale signs of such receipts (e.g., references to a military unit and to a number of jars). And the large number of Egyptian names could point to a list of names instead (cf. the dekania lists ⌖ O.Berenike 3 436, ⌖ 438).
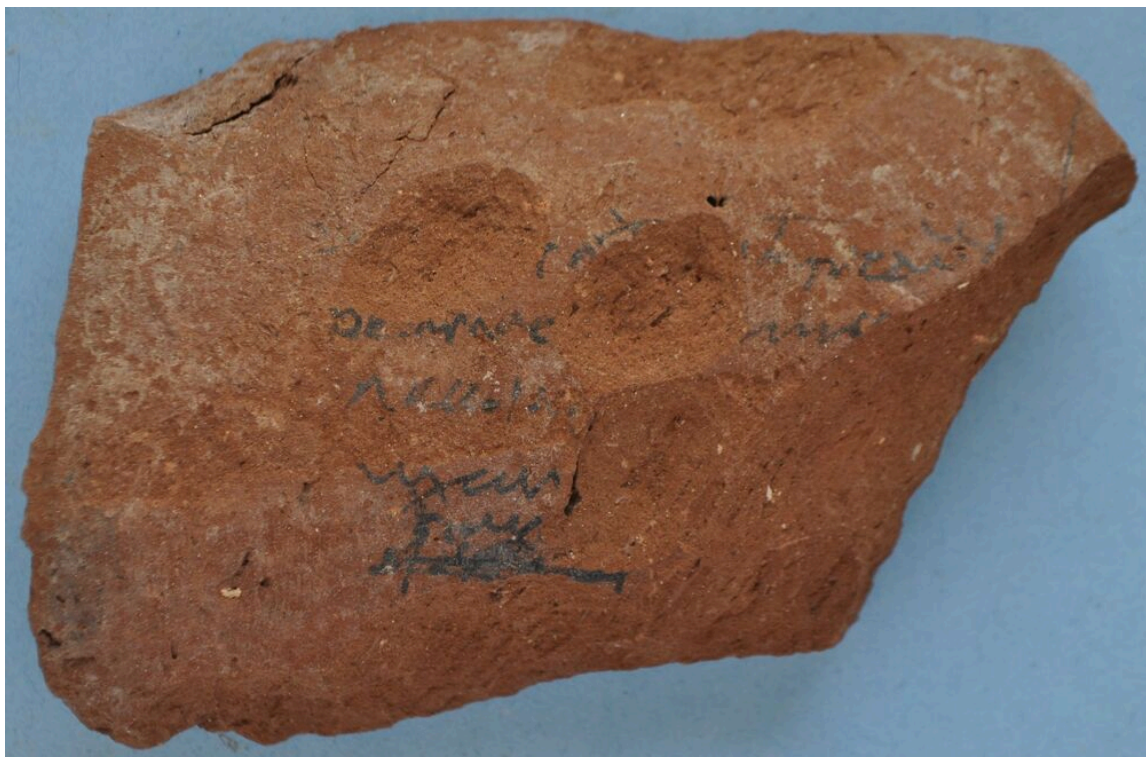

Fig. 13: **523**. Photo by S.E. Sidebotham.

. [. . . .]ρπ[ο]χ [.] . . τ τοῦ δεκ(ανοῦ) . [-ca.?-]

[-ca.?-]   Πετεασ[μήφιος] μ̣[-ca.?-]

[-ca.?-] Πακοιβι[-ca.?-]

[-ca.?-] ̣εχω̣ [-ca.?-]

5   ⟦δια ̣ ̣ ̣ ⟧\παχ/

§69 1The sequence]ρπ[ο]χ( ) [.̣.̣].̣τ( ) is suggestive of Petarphochrates (Πεταρποχ) son of Psentphous (Ψενͭ), who is known from ⬈ O.Berenike 2 146.2–3, ⬈ 167.2–3 and ⬈ 3.276.2, where his patronymic is rendered Ψενφωστος.

§70 4It is tempting to read Πε]τεχῶν [here, which seems better than, e.g., ἀπέχω.

Miscellaneous ostraka and jar inscriptions

524. Account

BE-18 48.103.103 (Inv. 48138)
10 (w) x 6.5 (h) x 1 (th)
Ca. 60?

§71 This is a complete account written with a fine-tipped pen. It was found alongside the ostraka from the Sarapion dossier (**517**–**521**). The text consists of four lines, the first of which wraps around the right side of the sherd. The writing in the first two lines is fairly legible while in the last two, especially line 4, it is much effaced.

§72 The account is arranged as continuous text, not in columns, and it is difficult to say what is being accounted for. The totals range from as many as 500 units in line 1 to as few as 74 in line 3. These may be for payments in drachmas, but payments in kind (keramia of wine? marsippoi?) cannot be excluded. The latter might even be preferable, if we are right in reading εἰς πλ(οῖον), "for the boat" (l. 1), since it seems more likely that a commodity rather than money would be assigned to a boat.

§73 The language of the account is also ambiguous. In most entries, the payment is prefaced by the preposition ἀπό + personal name. However, one expects personal names to be preceded by παρά, "from NN;" ἀπό is typically used with places and inanimate things. We are thus inclined to think that the personal name in the genitive depends on an omitted prepositional object, e.g., from the storehouse or account of NN (the latter perhaps ἀπὸ τοῦ λόγου NN).

§74 Names of a couple of the "account holders" are of interest. Someone called Ision features prominently in the text, being mentioned on three occasions (ll. 1–3). In a receipt from the Nikanor archive dated between 18 BC and AD 69, an Ision son of Machatas acknowledges a delivery to Berenike (⬈ O.Petr. Mus. 189). That Ision is likely an agent, perhaps a slave, working at the port. It is impossible, however, to say if the Ision here is the same person.

§75 We might have a better chance of identifying the Ζῆθος recorded at the end of line 1. Both ⬈ O.Petr. Mus. 186 and ⬈ O.Berenike 1 106 (with BL 13.269) attest a man named Zethos, slave of Gratus, slave of Caesar. Those ostraka are receipts for deliveries of goods to Berenike dated to the reign of Nero, ⬈ O.Berenike 1 106 probably to 20 Sept. 61. Given that the name Zethos is unusual (TM People cites 9 instances of it between the 3rd century BC and the fourth century AD), we might be dealing with a single person in these three ostraka. This Zethos could have been a slave representing the interests of traders operating out of Berenike.

§76 The two other names attested in the ostrakon, Claudius and Kronios, give us little to go on. Kronios is very common (see O.Berenike 3 passim), and Claudius is also generic. Several men with the latter name are recorded in texts from Berenike (cf., e.g., customs passes issued by Claudius Philetos: O.Berenike 2 89–91; the person of Tib. Claudius Dorion: 2 50–66; the person of Claudius Theodoros: 2 145).
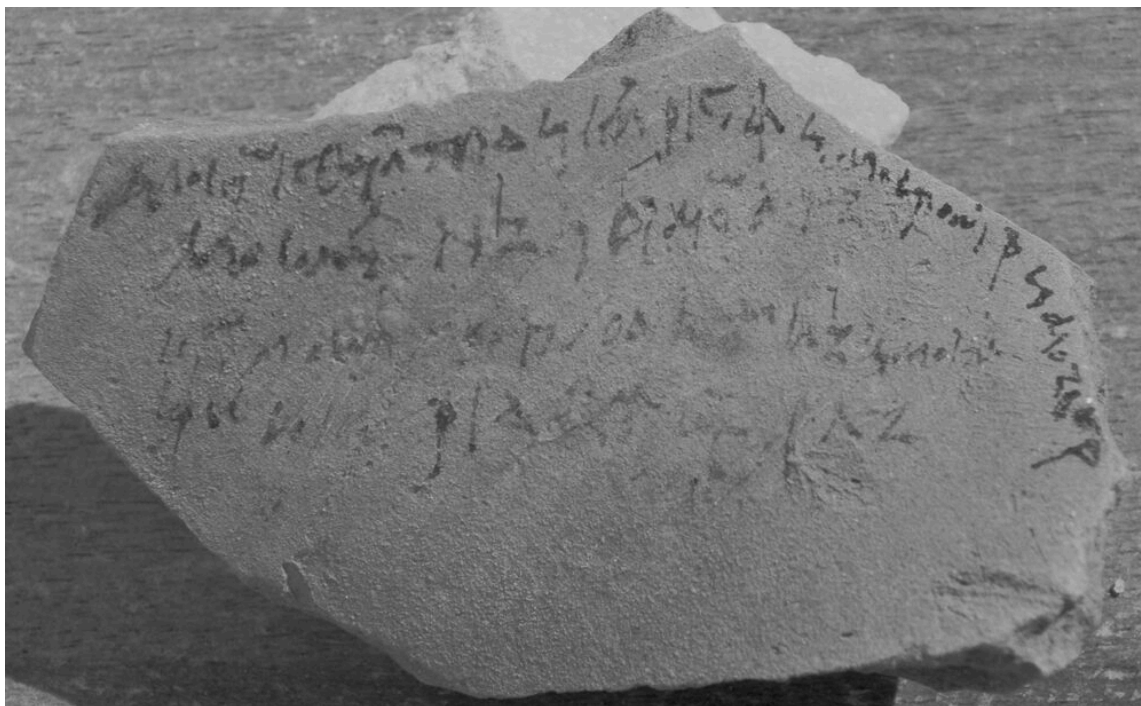

Fig. 14: **524**. Photo by R. Ast.

ἀπὸ Ἰσίω(νος) ἰς θαραπ τπδ καὶ ἰς πλ(οῖ-) ριϛ (γίνεται) φ καὶ ἀπὸ Κρονίο(υ) ρ καὶ
  ἀπὸ Ζήθ(ου) ρ̣

ἀπὸ Κλαυδ(ίου) νζ καὶ διὰ Ἰσίω(νος) λ πζ

Ἰσίω(ν-) . . . . καὶ [. .] . . ιζ (γίνεται) οδ καὶ ὁμ(οίως) κζ καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰταλ

καὶ ε . . ο . . . (γίνεται) ριδ καὶ ὁμ(οίως) κγ (γίνεται) ρ̣λζ

---

1 *l.* εἰς   *l.* θεραπ   *l.* εἰς

From that of Ision for assistance, 384, and for the boat 116, totals 500. And from Kronios 100 and from Zethos 100, from Claudius 57 and through Ision 30 (totals) 87 … Ision … [57?] and … 17, totals 74 and similarly 27 and from … totals 114 and similarly 23 totals 137.

§77 1The abbreviation can be expanded either as θαραπ(ευτήν), "assistant," or θαραπ(είαν), "assistance." The reference in the same line to a boat (πλοῖον) suggests "assistance" in a nautical context, rather than, for example, in a temple one; cf. the possible (the reading is uncertain) assistant shipbuilder, θερα]πευτὴς ναυπηγός, in � I.Portes 67.14. The interchange of α and ε in θεραπεία is unsurprising; see ⌖ Gignac, Gram. I: 283.

§78 There is a short tick after 116 for (γίνεται). No total is recorded at the end of the line after Ζήθ(ου) ρ, and the payments of Kronios and Zethos do not seem to be factored in the total at the end of line

2 (there is no sign of σ between λ and πζ). They therefore might have been added later, which would explain their appearance in the margin.

§79 **2**The raised delta in Κλαυδ- resembles lambda as well, but there is a faint trace of part of a horizontal stroke at the bottom of the right diagonal which favors delta. The rest of that stroke must have been worn away.

§80 **3**The preposition ἀπό was not written at the beginning of the line, only Ισιω, with raised omega. Thus, it is perhaps best to understand the dative Ἰσίω(νι). What follows this name is uncertain. To reach the total of 74 (οδ) recorded in the middle of the line, 57 (νζ) units need to have been accounted for.

§81 At the end of the line, ιτα is clear and there seem to be traces of a letter above the alpha, thus Ἰταλ( ). Whether this is the personal name Ἰταλ(οῦ), the place name Ἰταλ(ίας) or the adjective ἰταλ(ικοῦ) is impossible to say.

§82 **4**The first couple of letters in the line appear at first glance to be κρ, but the word καί is written this way elsewhere (see especially line 1, before ἰς πλ(οῖ-)). Before the first (γίνεται), the arithmetic requires πζ and the traces do not prohibit it. After ὁμ(οίως) the kappa is quite clear on the infrared photo and gamma is not inconsistent with the traces.

525. Late text with cross

BE-19 116.032.005 (Inv. 116001)
6.5 (w) x 8.2 (h) x 0.9 (th)
5th c.?

§83 The ostrakon is broken at right and on the bottom. It came from an amphora that contained a dipinto in red ink, part of which is still visible in the left margin. The sherd was found in a section of the so-called Northern Complex, which comprised multiple shrines dating to the late period of the port, that is, the late fourth and fifth century. The trench (116) in which the ostrakon was discovered produced a large amount of statuary, at least one piece from the Ptolemaic period.[22] It is possible that many of the small finds originated in other places of the site, such as the Isis temple, and were moved to the Northern Complex later. This would explain their chronological and typological diversity. The trench has been dated to the 5th c. on the basis of the pottery, but we cannot exclude a later date for this piece.

§84 Little of the Greek text is preserved. The first line begins with a rho-cross followed by a couple of letters; the following two lines, each of which is in eisthesis in relation to the preceding line, are equally ambiguous. It is impossible to say what the text is about, but the cross suggests a Christian context. It is worth noting that part of an oil lamp with the chi-rho symbol was found in the same room.[23]

§85 Red ink from a dipinto on the original vessel is still visible in the left margin. The long vertical line with a loop at the bottom is the b-shaped symbol for 1/4, rendered in the text below with the letter "d," which was part of the entry recording the container weight, or tare.[24]

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22 ☐ Sidebotham et al. 2020: 14–15.

23 ☐ Sidebotham et al. 2019: 11.

24 For discussion of the paleography of this kind of symbol for 1/4, see ☐ Fournet 2012: 257.

Fig. 15: **525**. Photo by K. Braulinska.

† ἀρ[-ca.?-]

εσ ̣ ̣ [-ca.?-]

ρ[-ca.?-]

-- -- -- -- --

Left margin: [-ca.?-] ̣d

§86 **1**At first glance the second letter looks like beta, but the long vertical stroke on the left side suggests that it is rather rho. If this is correct, then we have to assume that this letter was written slightly lower than the preceding alpha.

§87 **2**Or ετ̣[

526. Writing exercise?

BE-15 110.003.057 (Inv. 110001)

11.9 (w) x 9.1 (h) x 0.8 (th)
late 3rd–4th c.?

§88   The ostrakon was found in a room of the Northern Complex in the vicinity of a shrine dating to the
reign of the Blemmye king Isemne in the late fourth or early fifth century.[25] The locus was mixed with
much early Roman pottery, including first-century material plus mid-second-century and later costrels.
It seems to have been deposited in the second half of the fourth century.[26] The ostrakon is complete
but the dark fabric blends in with the ink making it very difficult to read the text with the bare eyes
or on a color image. Fortunately, the image taken with an infrared camera shows substantially more
contrast, which allows for a nearly complete transcription. Only part of line 4 and 5 have not been
deciphered.

§89   The precise import of the text is unclear, though some of the language resembles a writing exercise.
It begins with a date in a third year (with ἔτους represented by the L-symbol) followed by two month
names, Thoth and Phaophi. The word Θώθ is written to the right and slightly above the year entry, but
the consistency of the ink looks similar to that of the year and to the rest of the main text, suggesting
that it was not a later addition despite its placement somewhat above the line. Φαῶφι, which is written
directly below Θώθ, might have been the later addition. A day is recorded after Thoth (the 1st), while
no day is given after Phaophi. It therefore seems most likely that the writer first had Θώθ α, but then
changed the month to Phaophi, having initially forgotten that the month had changed.

§90   Line 2 begins with the second person singular imperative form of the verb δίδωμι: δός ("give")
followed by imperative forms of related compound verbs, ἀνάδος ("send up," "deliver") and κατάδος
("bestow"). The first of the compounds, ἀνάδος, was corrected from δος with the letter α squeezed
in before δ, and να written above the line. While the sequence of imperative forms is suggestive of
an exercise, the next part, πληγὰς δέ ("and blows"), does not obviously belong to an exercise. What
it could refer to is unclear, although it is not totally out of place with words for giving (δίδωμι).
An alternative suggestion made to us by Demokritos Kaltsas is to read πληγὰς δέκα and understand
a reference to the ten plagues of Egypt. The text becomes impossible to interpret towards the end
because the script is reduced to little more than scribbles.

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25   For more about the shrine, see ⧉ Ast and Rądkowska 2020.

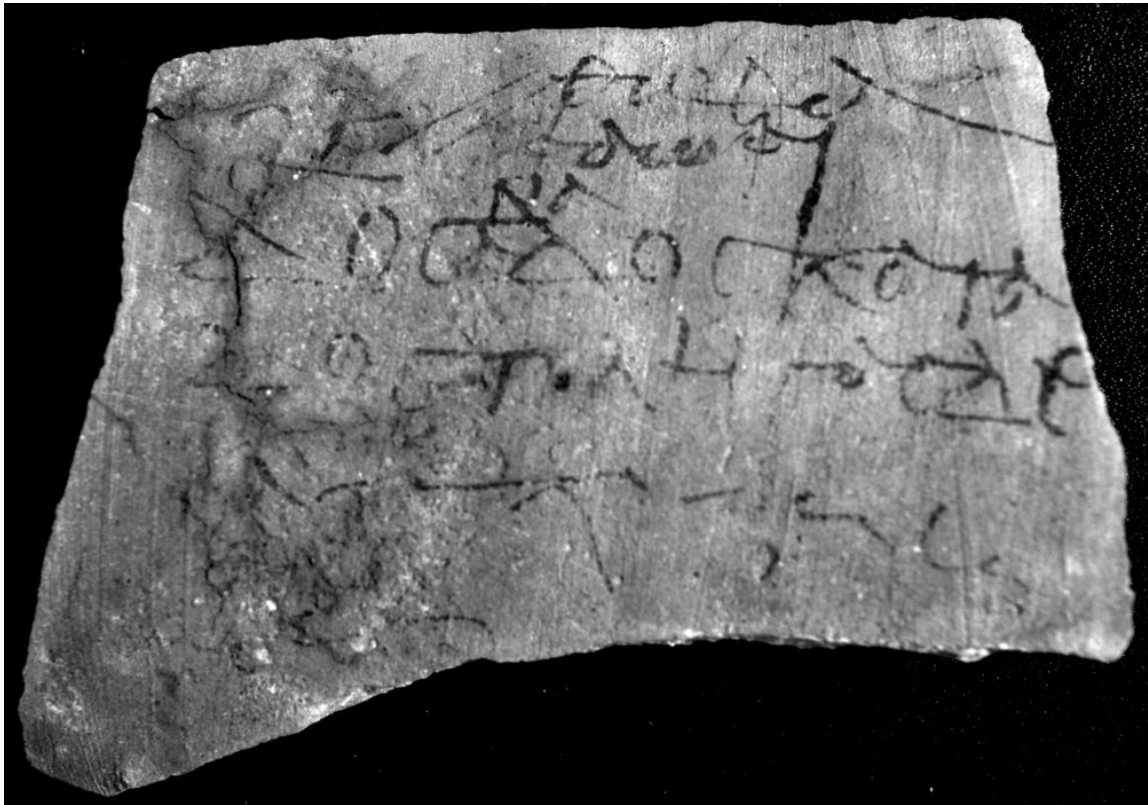26   We are indebted to Roberta Tomber for information about the archeological context.

Fig. 16: **526**. Photo by R. Ast.

(ἔτους) γ // Θὼθ \Φαῶφι/ α

δὸς ἀ\νά/δος κατά-

δος πληγὰς δὲ

κατα ̣ ̣ ̣ ̣ ̣ ̣ ̣

5 ̣ ̣ ̣ς̣

Year 3. Thoth /Phaophi\ 1. Give, deliver, bestow; and blows … .

§91 1 The L-symbol for ἔτους has a handle on top of the vertical.

§92 4 καταλαβει ̣ would fit the scribbled traces in this line, but ν, for καταλαβεῖν, is hard to reconcile with the ink following the apparent ι.

§93 5 The third letter has a long horizontal extension that fits the top of sigma.

527. Latin ostrakon

 BE-18 48.103.102 (Inv. 48135)
 4.5 (w) x 6.3 (h) x .8 (th)
 2nd half of 1st c.

§94 This is the only Latin ostrakon in the batch of texts published here. It is broken at left and on the bottom, and preserves traces of approximately seven lines of writing. The archeological context

suggests a date in the second half of the first century, which is consistent with the Old Roman Cursive script in which it was written. Very little text is discernible.
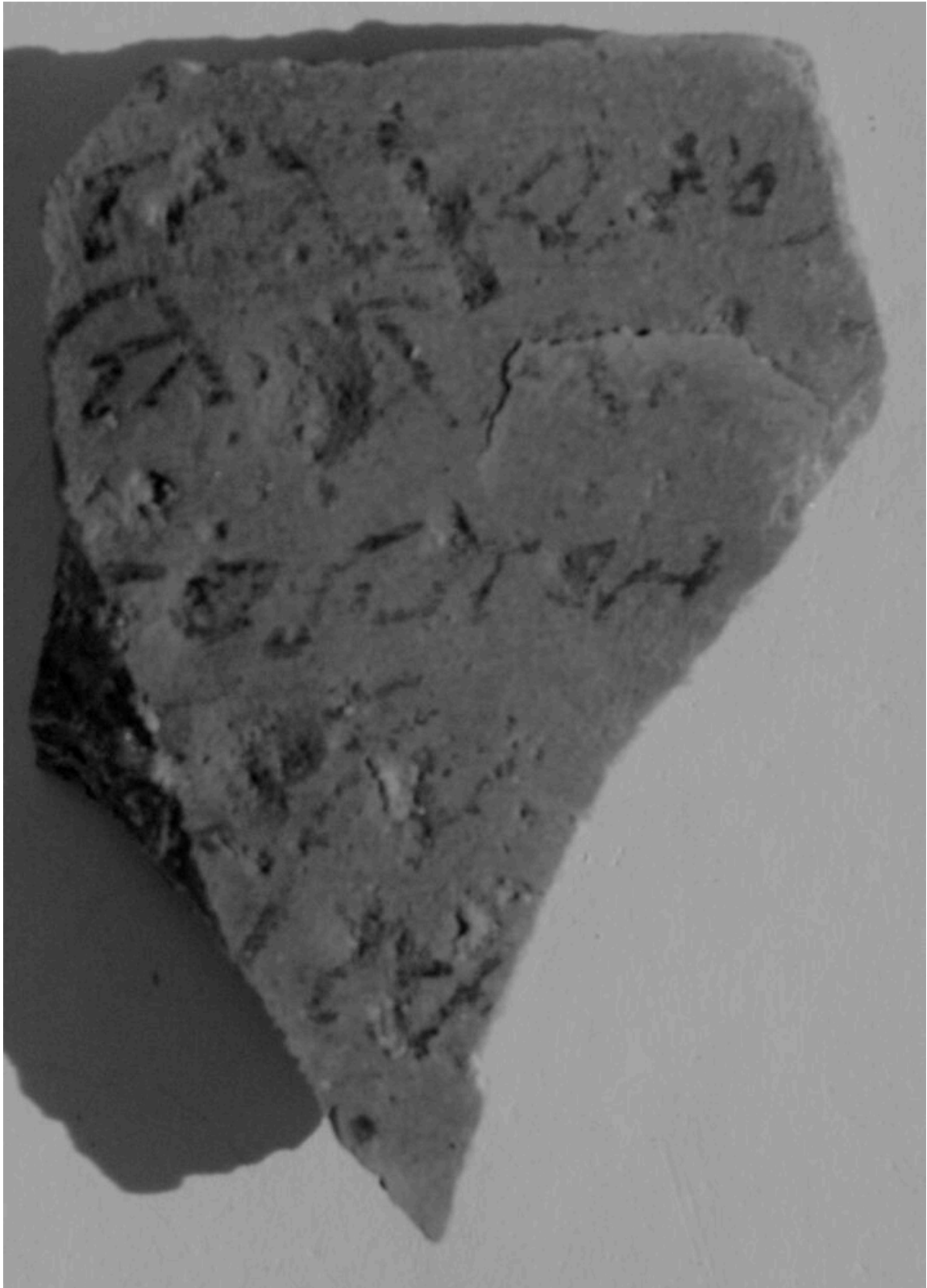

Fig. 17: **527**. Photo by R. Ast.

[-ca.?-]t ̣ ab xl po ̣ [̣ (?)]

[-ca.?-]stas afri ̣ [̣ (?)]
        ̣ ̣ ̣ ̣

[-ca.?-]cosutun
        ̣ ̣ ̣

[-ca.?-] ̣ s ̣ u
        ̣ ̣ ̣ ̣

5 [-ca.?-] ̣ ccx
        ̣

[-ca.?-] ̣ [-ca.?-]
        ̣

-- -- -- -- --

§95 2 Augu]staṣ is a possible supplement for the beginning of this line.

§96 3 Cf. *imboluclum* (l. *involucrum*) *concosu[tu]m*, "a bag sewn together," in ☞ P.Mich. 8 468.9.

528. Coptic ostrakon

BE-20 140.007.003 (Inv. 140001)
8.4 (w) x 5 (h) x 0.6 (th)
5th–7th c.?

§97 The convex side of the sherd is ribbed and it is broken on all sides. It was found in disturbed layers of the Isis temple.

§98 The ostrakon is important because it represents the sole Coptic document discovered at the site so far. The general phrasing is reminiscent of guarantees, contracts or a recognition of debt, but the text is very fragmentary (line 3 is particularly abraded) and its content is thus very elusive. This all makes it difficult to date the document. The paleography is not very helpful, as it could fall anywhere within a period of several centuries. The apparent legal language might suggest a later date, e.g., in the sixth or seventh century, when Coptic began to be used for non-epistolary purposes.[27] However, the content is too uncertain to establish a date, and we assign the wide time span of the fifth to seventh century.

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27 The earliest known Coptic tax receipt is CPR 4 9 from the Hermopolite nome, which Till dated on the basis of the script to the seventh century. See ☞ Fournet 2020: 19–25.
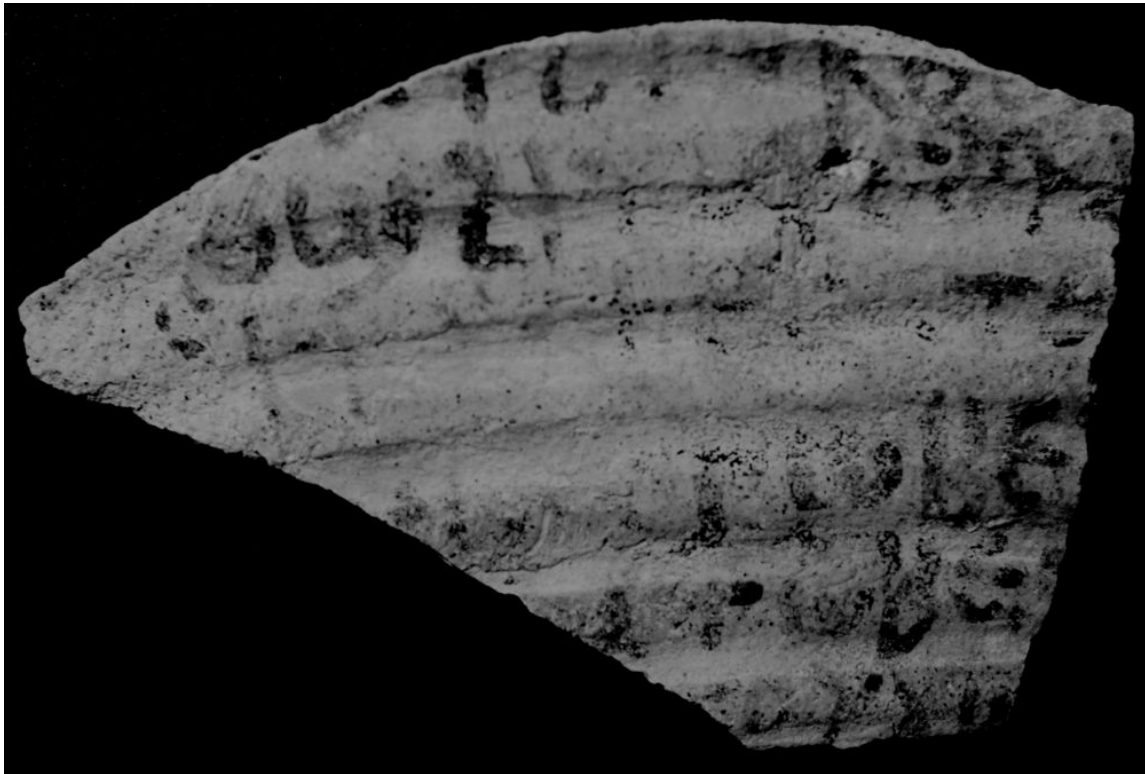
Fig. 18: **528**. Photo by R. Ast.

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[-ca.?- ⲚⲦⲀⲤⲘ(?)]ⲚⲦⲤ ⲚⲀⲔ ⲞⲤ [-ca.?-]

[-ca.?- ⲠⲈ(?)]ⲔⲞⲰ ⲌⲒⲦⲞⲞⲦ ⲞⲨⲀ[-ca.?-]

[-ca.?-] Ⲉ†ⲢⲚⲀⲒ ⲦⲈ[-ca.?-]

[-ca.?-] ⲞⲨⲀ ⲦⲰⲂⲈ [Ⲛ number ⲒⲚⲆⲒⲔⲦⲒⲞⲚⲞⲤ(?)]

5 [ⲰⲀ number] ⲚⲦⲰⲂⲈ [Ⲛ number ⲒⲚⲆⲒⲔⲦⲒⲞⲚⲞⲤ(?)]

[-ca.?-] ⲤⲞⲨ Ⲭ Ⲛ[-ca.?-]

-- -- -- -- --

[… that I have established (?)] for you? … [Pe(?)]kosh represented by me … for me […] first? Tybi [of the x indiction (?)] [to x] Tybi [of the x indiction (?)] [… if] I am [asked… .

§99 1There are traces of ink next to the right edge of the ostrakon, which could be the long stroke of a lambda or an abbreviation mark.

§100 2Ink traces on the left edge of the ostrakon could be the remains of the bottom part of a kappa or a lambda. Perhaps one could read the well-attested name ⲠⲈϬⲰϢ in a variant spelling (see NB Copt. p. 75).

§101 4–5The repetition of ⲦⲰⲂⲈ in these two lines suggests that we are dealing with the month of Tybi (and not the various options related to ⲦⲰⲰⲂⲈ "brick," ⲦⲰⲰⲂⲈ "seal" or even ⲦⲰⲰⲂⲈ "repay;" see Crum, Dict. 398–399a). It could indicate a certain period, perhaps from the first of Tybi (note the absence of ⲛ̄ before ⲦⲰⲂⲈ) or another day later in the same month, or even a twelve-month period beginning and ending in Tybi; see, e.g., ☑ CPR 4 132 (house rent receipt; 7th c.).

§102 6It would be hazardous to restore the legal formula ⲛⲥⲟⲩⲭⲛⲟⲩⲓ ⲧⲁϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲉⲓ "if I am asked, I shall agree," which is attested only in extensive contracts on papyrus (see, e.g., ☑ P.KRU 27.62 or ☑ 95.33), even though the surviving traces suggest such a reading. Alternatively, we might read ⲟⲩⲭⲁⲓ in this line, for the epistolary formula ⲟⲩⲭⲁⲓ ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲭⲟⲉⲓⲥ. However, no other epistolary formula is readily recognizable (and the reading of ⲁⲓ or ⲉⲓ on the right edge of the ostrakon seems impossible), and so this suggestion seems unlikely. Rather than reconstruct a formula that is unusual in ostraka contracts, the last option would be to read an unrecognized name, providing the common subscription formula "Name + ⲧⲟ ⲙⲙⲛⲧⲣⲉ ✝" (see, e. g., perhaps ⲛⲟⲩⲭⲉⲓ as in BKU 1 66.9) or "Name + ✝ⲥⲧⲟⲓⲭⲉⲓ ✝" (see, e.g., ☑ CPR 2 211.7-11).

529. Jar inscription

BE-18 48.999.007 (Inv. 48147)
7.0 (w) x 5.2 (h)
1st–2nd c.?

§103 This small fragment contains a jar inscription specifying where the vessel was to be sent. It is made of marl clay with a yellowish slip and was found in the early Roman dump. The inscription is interesting for the manner in which the word ἀπόδος is abbreviated. The pi is written around the omicron and delta is placed above it; for parallels, see ἀπόδος in ☑ P.Gron. 15v,a (2nd c.) and ☑ O.Did. 243 (ca. 250–270[28]), although the latter omits the raised delta. The - ποδ- assemblage also resembles the symbol for πόδες in the first-century geometrical papyrus published as ☑ MPER NS 1 1 (see passim and p. 47).
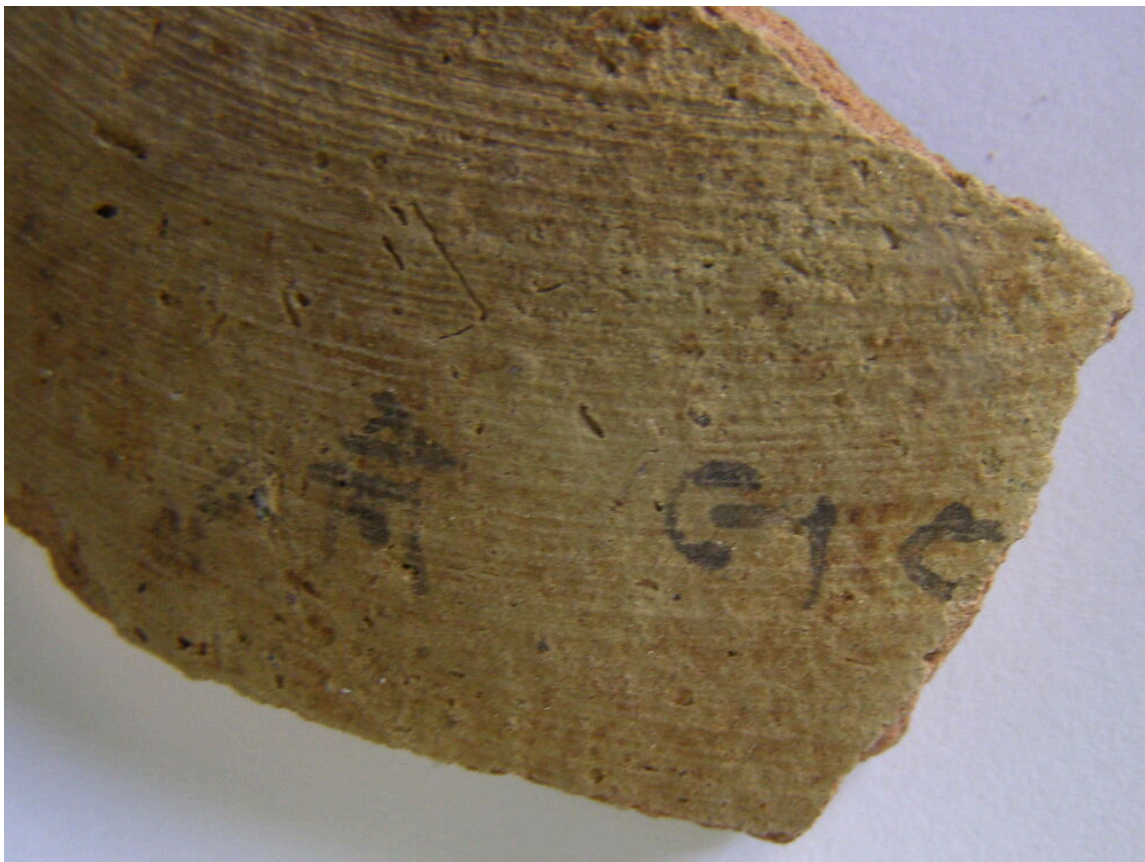

Fig. 19: **529**. Photo by K. Braulinska.

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28   For the date, see ☑ Brun 2018 §§ 27–31.

ἀπόδ(ος) εἰς [-ca.?-]

Deliver to … .

530. Jar inscription

BE-14 96.015.023 (Inv. 96001)
12.8 (w) x 6.5 (h) x 1 (th)
Late 1st–2nd c.?

§104 This is part of a one-line jar inscription found in the early Roman dump. It preserves the hitherto unattested name Harsonoeris (Ἁρσονοῆρις). The sherd is broken on the right in the middle of a word or name written in a highly cursive script. The name Harsonoeris is difficult to interpret. Har-represents "Horos," and -οηρις likely stands for *wr*, "great" (as in Har-oeris, Es-oeris or Mes-oeris), but what the element -σον- designates is unclear.[29]
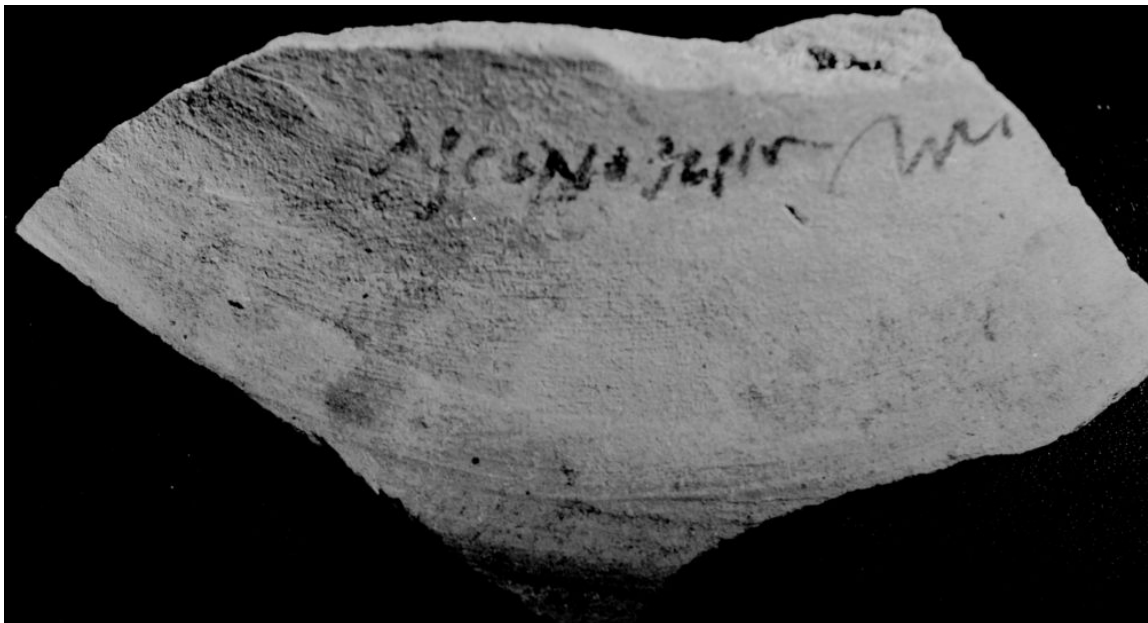

Fig. 20: **530**. Photo by R. Ast.

Ἁρσονοῆρις π   [-ca.?-]

Harsonoeris … .

531. Receipt for delivery

BE 15 109.017.81 (Inv. 109004)
7.7 (w) x 5.4 (h) x 1.6 (th)
1st–early 2nd c.

§105 This ostrakon is broken at left and probably on top, as the text seems to begin *in medias res*. There may be no writing missing on the bottom. It was found in the early Roman harbor, the archeological

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29   We thank Willy Clarysse for advising us on the name (per litt., 12 Nov. 2021).

context of which suggests a date in the first or early second century, and this is consistent with the paleography. The excavators associated the trench with activities surrounding ship repair.[30]

§106 The verb in the first line, ἐπηκ(ολούθηκα) "I have checked or verified," is expected at the end of a document, as observed in ostraka from the Nikanor archive related to deliveries to Berenike; see, for example, ⬀ O.Petr. Mus. 150, ⬀ 151, ⬀ 161, ⬀ 164, ⬀ 191. It must have been preceded by the name of the person who certified the delivery, but what that individual's name is here is unclear because of the state of the ostrakon. The best possibility seems to be Γάιο(ς), although the position of gamma below the line, which is entailed by this reading, is not entirely satisfactory. A man named Gaius Julius certifies two of the ostraka from the Nikanor archive noted above (⬀ O.Petr. Mus. 150 and ⬀ 151, both dated to 23.10.6 BC), but his writing style differs from this person's, so it is unlikely to be the same individual. There is a further Gaius attested, in ⬀ O.Petr. Mus. 161 from year 19 of Tiberius (33), but the online image of the ostrakon is of poor quality and we can hardly see the name.

§107 The rest of the document apparently dealt with the delivery of freight associated with a man named Publius Aelius Nikaios. What that freight consisted of is not revealed by the preserved fragment.
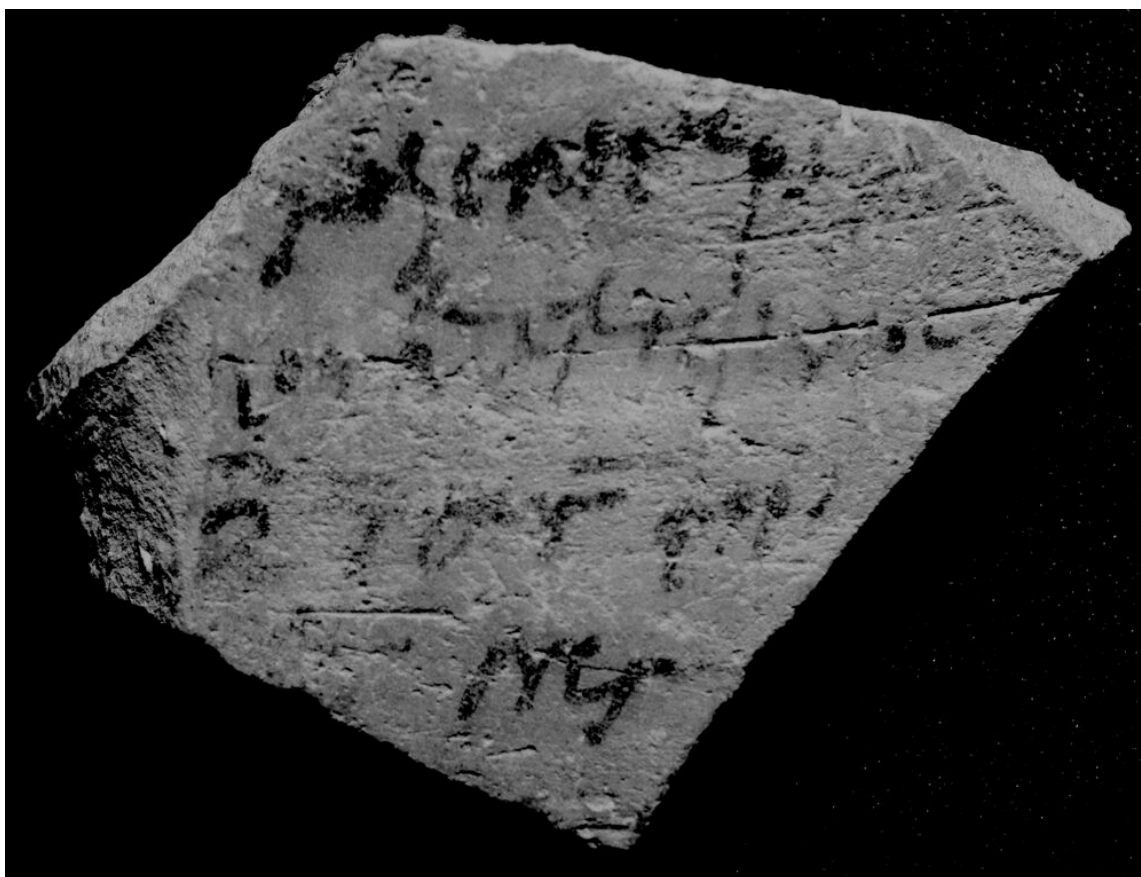

Fig. 21: **531**. Photo by R. Ast.

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[-ca.?-] Γάιο(ς) ἐπηκ(ολούθηκα) ρα ̣ ̣ [-1-2-]
[-ca.?-] Πουπλ(ίου) Αἰλ(ίου) Νικαίου
[-ca.?-]ζ̄ γόμ(ους) γ̄ φορτ(ί-)

30 ⬀ Sidebotham and Zych 2016: 4–5.

[-ca.?-] . . . ἀνγ(ει-)
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4 *l.* ἀγγ(ει-)

I, Gaius, checked … of Publius Aelius Nikaios … 7, loads 3 … freight … .

§108 1After the abbreviated verb one can perhaps read ραβδ[, which is suggestive of a form of ραβδίον, "stick" or "brush." But other interpretations of the traces are possible, such as that ρα constitutes a number (101).

§109 3The number ζ̄ at the very beginning of the line should go with something lost in the lacuna to the left. The mu in γόμ(-) is raised, sitting atop the omicron and impinging on the following γ̄. At the very end of the line is a vertical stroke consistent with the lower part of a raised tau, hence the reading φορτ(ί-), which seems superior to φορᾶ(ς). Both terms are attested for "deliveries" in the Berenike receipts in the Nikanor archive; for the former term, see ⌐ O.Petr. Mus. 161.5 and ⌐ 164.5, and for the latter, ⌐ 164.4, ⌐ 171.5, ⌐ 181.4, ⌐ 182.4.

§110 4At the tip of the gamma we see a faint diagonal stroke that we take as an abbreviation mark.

532. Chit or label

BE-15 109.002.016. (Inv. 109001)
4.7 (w) x 4.4 (h) x 0.9 (th)
1st–early 2nd c.

§111 This chit or label was also found in the early Roman harbor. It consists of one line and is broken on the right. Ink smudges are visible, but they do not seem to have anything to do with the main text. After the number ρπε (185) the phrase διὰ πύλης, "through the gate," i.e. the entrance to the port, might have been noted. If correctly interpreted, this is the language of customs passes and ought to have referred to a delivery of 185 units of something through the customs station at Berenike.
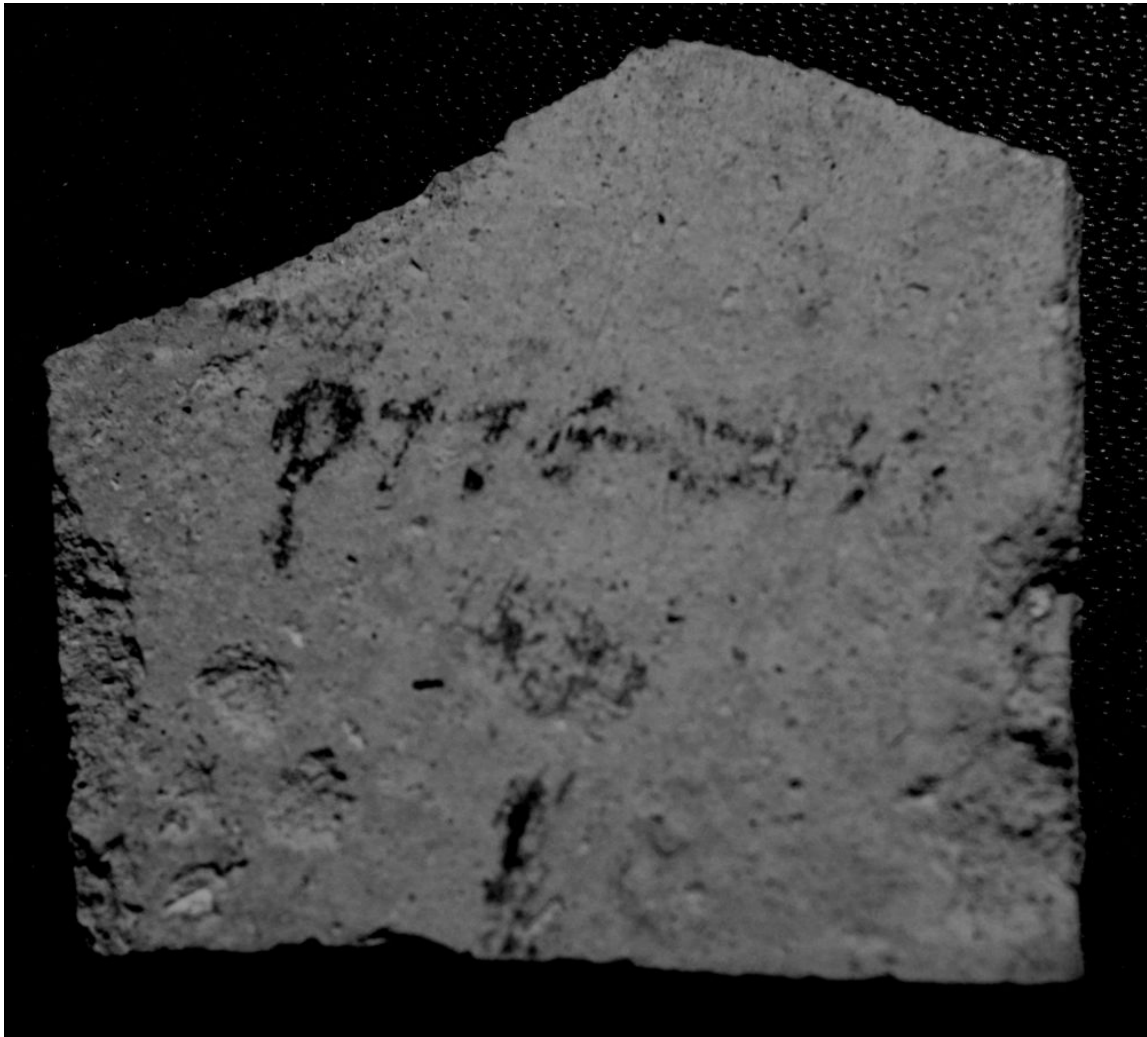
Fig. 22: **532**. Photo by R. Ast.

ρπε διὰ π̣ .̣.̣ [-ca.?-]

185 through (the gate?)

533. Dipinto

BE-19 117. 017.005 (Inv. 117001)
12 (w) x 9.5 (h) x 0.7 (th)
4th–5th c.?

§112 This Late Roman (A1) dipinto is written in an ornate style in red ink. The sherd, which is broken at right, was found near the late antique tetrakionion (see introduction above) in the street leading from the sea to the Isis temple. It preserves the name Kalliop(e)ios, which is otherwise attested in ☞ P.Laur. 3 85.3 (4th c.; prov. unknown); ☞ P.Monts. Roca 4 95.7 (4th–5th c.; Syria?); ☞ P.Stras. 1 35.14 (4th–5th c.; prov. unknown). ☞ PLRE I 174–5 reports five people with the name: a governor of Bithynia 356/7; a *consularis Macedoniae* 362; a *magister epistularum* (East) 388; a rhetor; an editor of Terence. Apparently the first four are distinguished through Libanius' correspondence. ☞ PLRE II 251–252 cites a further seven, including a possible provincial governor of Egypt (no. 2). The remaining five (nos. 3–7) are thought by B. Croke to be the same person, who was, among other things, *Comes*

Orientis at Antioch (⧉ Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity 1 284). In light of all the attestations, one might guess that the name is Antiochene.

Fig. 23: **533**. Photo by K. Braulinska.

Καλλιοπίου ξ̣[-ca.?-]

Of Kalliopios … .

§113 1The letter ξ could be the number 60 or the beginning of a word such as ξέστης.

534. Delivery order?

BE-19 122.011.024 (Inv. 122001)
5.1 (w) x 3.6 (h) x 0.5 (th)
3rd c.?

§114 This and the next three texts (**535–537**) were all found just north of the courtyard of the Isis temple in a rubbish dump of highly mixed content, from a piece of a Middle Kingdom stele to late antique dipinti (see introduction above). The ostrakon preserves two lines that refer to a delivery destined for the Nile valley. It is hard to say if any text is lost on the right.
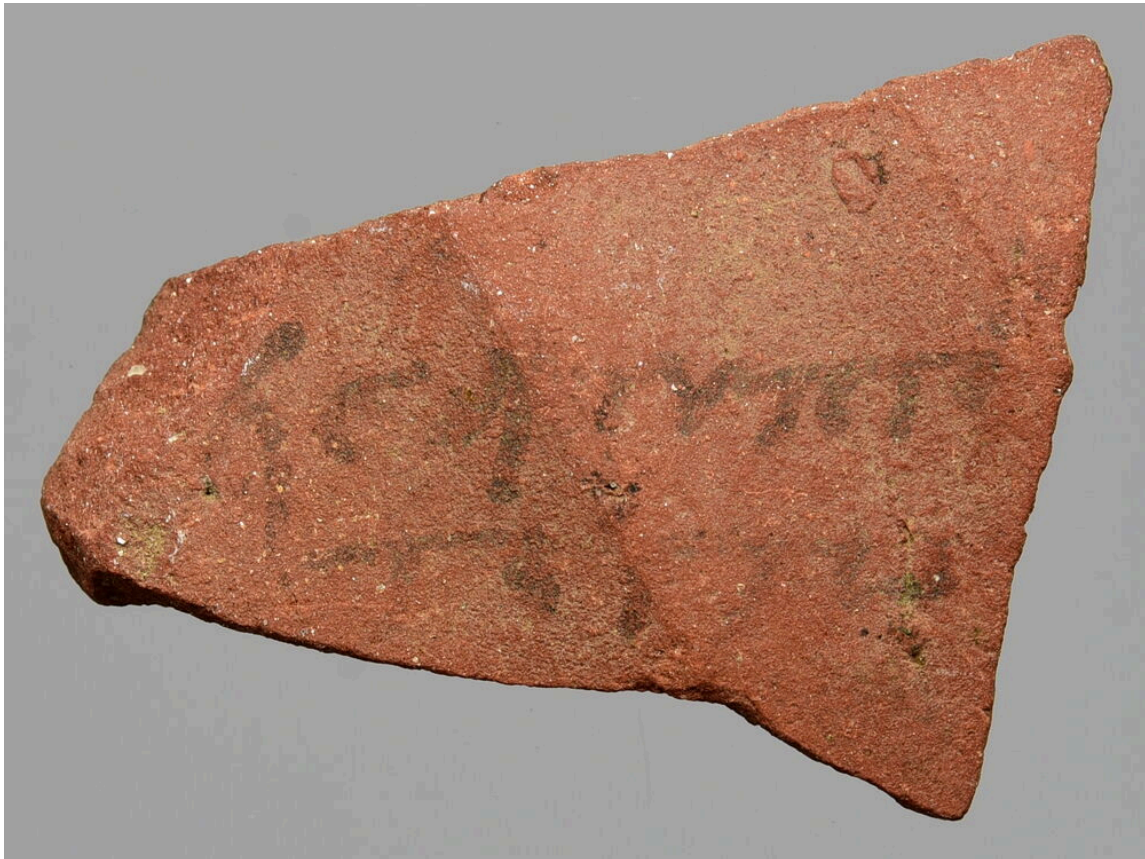
Fig. 24: **534**. Photo by K. Braulinska.

εἰς Αἴγυπτο\ν̣/ [-ca.?-(?)]
τοξ̣οτῶ\ν̣/ [-ca.?-(?)]

To Egypt (...) of the archers.

§115 **2**There is ink directly above omega at the end of this line, which we interpret as the bottom of a nu.

§116 It is very tempting to see here a reference to Palmyrene archers. This idea finds some support in the fact that a dedication for Emperor Caracalla (AD 215) found in Berenike in 1996 was set up by a Palmyrene archer named Marcus Aurelius Mokimos (SEG 48 1977 = ☑ TM 142358); cf. the bilingual Greek-Palmyrene inscription (SEG 49 2117 = ☑ TM 143263) also found at the port and dating to 180–212. Thus, Palmyrenes, and archers in particular, are well documented at the site.

535. Costrel with dipinto

BE-19 122.018.042 (Inv. 122003)
15 (w) x 20 (h)
mid-2nd–3rd c.?

§117 This is a well-preserved costrel with part of its original stopper intact. Roberta Tomber informs us (per. litt., 1 Nov. 2021) that it is likely of marl fabric (as opposed to Aswan) and possibly from Qena, and that the rim suggests a date from the mid-second through the third century. Such vessels, which were

good transport containers because of their small size, are useful for dating because they are unattested before the Antonine period.[31]

§118 For information about the trench in which the costrel was found (trench 122), see the introduction above.

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31 ⧉ Tomber 2006: 67–69; ⧉ Tomber 2018 §§10–12.

Fig. 25: **535**. Photo by S.E. Sidebotham.

.Ἥρων

Heron

§119 1There is a smudge of ink before the eta, of unclear significance.

536. Jar inscription

BE-19 122.008.014 (Inv. 122001)
5 (w) x 4.8 (h) x 0.5 (th)
5th–6th c.?

§120 The fragment preserves dipinti in red ink. The swooshing stroke in the upper right corner probably was part of the tare designation. The three lines were written in the center of the sherd below the vessel's handle, which is no longer intact here, upside-down in relation to the other elements of the dipinto. These three lines contained the name of the wine producer (Klematios), the amount of wine produced (31 units) and indecipherable scribbling that might be another number or is just a decorative element (l. 3), as suggested to us by J.-L. Fournet. The producer's name looks similar to one in a dipinto from Ballana reported by L.P. Kirwan.[32] Sometimes a toponym followed the name of the producer, but none is recorded in this example.[33]

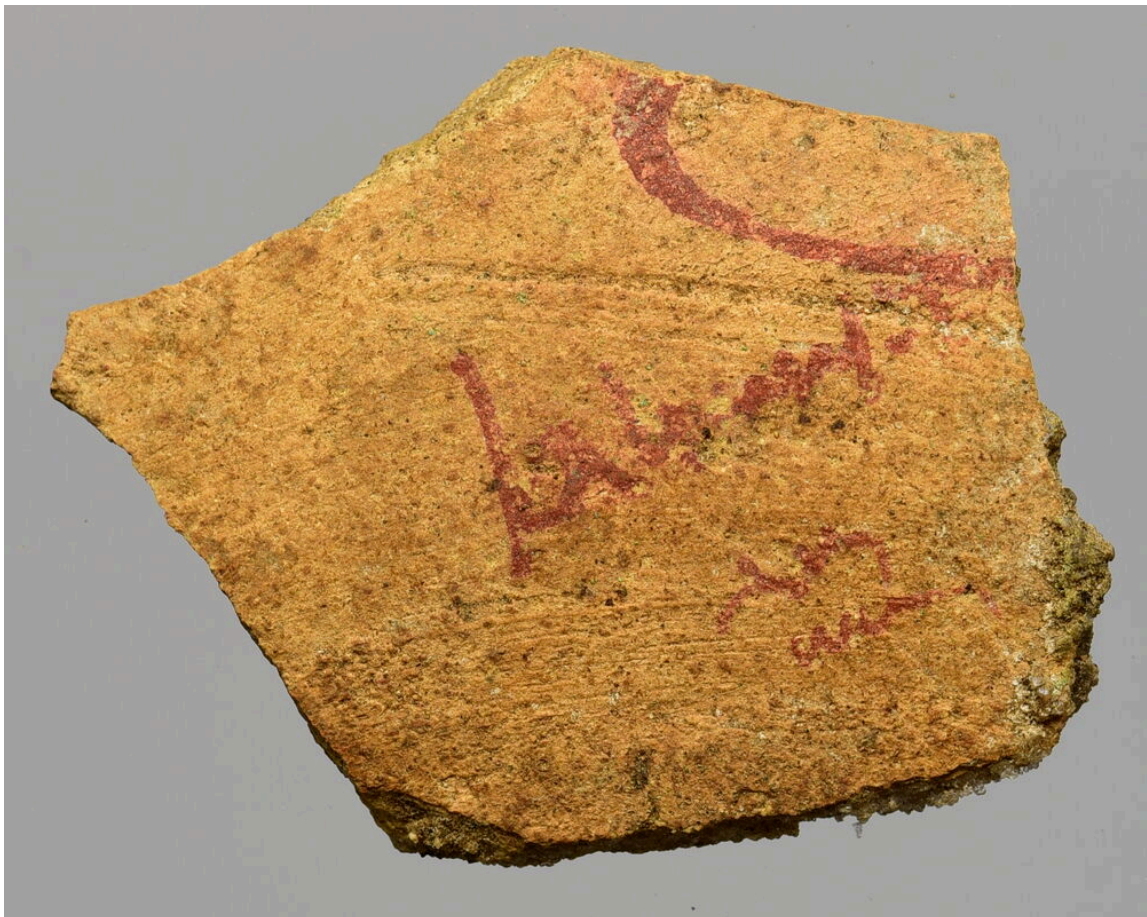§121 For information about the trench in which the piece was found (trench 122), see the introduction above.

Fig. 26: **536**. Photo by K. Braulinska.

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32   ⊡ Kirwan 1938: 405 no. 38, Pl. 118.
33   See ⊡ Fournet 2012: 249–258. Fournet's Type C (p. 254–255; Fig. 9) is similar to the dipinto published here. Cf. too ⊡ Fournet and Pieri 2008: 195–199 (again, Type C).

Κληματίου

λα

. . .

§122　2The α is very tentative and requires one to assume that it ended with an extended tail. Other possibilities are β and η.

537. Jar inscription with isopsephism

BE-19 122.008.031 (Inv. 122004)
11.6 (w) x 8.2 (h)
5th–6th c.

§123　This vessel preserves two lines of a dipinto drawn just below the rim. The first line appears to contain υπδ, an isopsephism for θεοῦ (= 484), which is found in dipinti from other places, e.g., Oxyrhynchus, and considered by Fournet to be one of the most commonly attested isopsephic formulas on late Roman amphorae.[34] The second line has the even more common Christian symbol: ΧΜΓ, which can be taken as an acrostic or as an isopsephistic unit valuing 643.[35] Christian formulas of this sort are a frequent feature in late jar dipinti, appearing alongside more mundane information such as vessel capacity and vineyard name and location.[36]

§124　For information about the trench in which the piece was found (trench 122), see the introduction above.

34　⎘ Grenfell and Hunt 1907: 10–11; ⎘ Fournet and Pieri 2008: 252.

35　The bibliography on this subject is very large; see, e.g., ⎘ Llewelyn 1998: 156–168; and, more recently, ⎘ Nongbri 2010; ⎘ Ast and Lougovaya 2015: 90.

36　For discussion of the Christian formulas, see ⎘ Fournet and Pieri 2008: 180–182, 184–187 and ⎘ Fournet 2012: 252–253. In both articles, Fournet classifies the formulas under Type A.

Fig. 27: **537**. Photo by K. Braulinska.

    υπδ
    · ·
    χμγ

484, chi mu gamma

§125 1The υ is uncertain. An alternative is to read σπδ, a well attested isopsephism corresponding to θεός and ἅγιος, among other words; see ☒ Ast and Lougovaya 2015: 83. For this interpretation to be viable, one needs to postulate that the top of the sigma has largely disappeared through abrasion.

538. Jar inscription

 BE-15 (Inv. 99031)
 12.5 (w) x 8.6 (h) x 0.9 (th)
 2nd–3rd c.?

§126 There is no record of where this sherd was found. It contains a jar inscription that is broken at right. The hand could date to the second or third century.
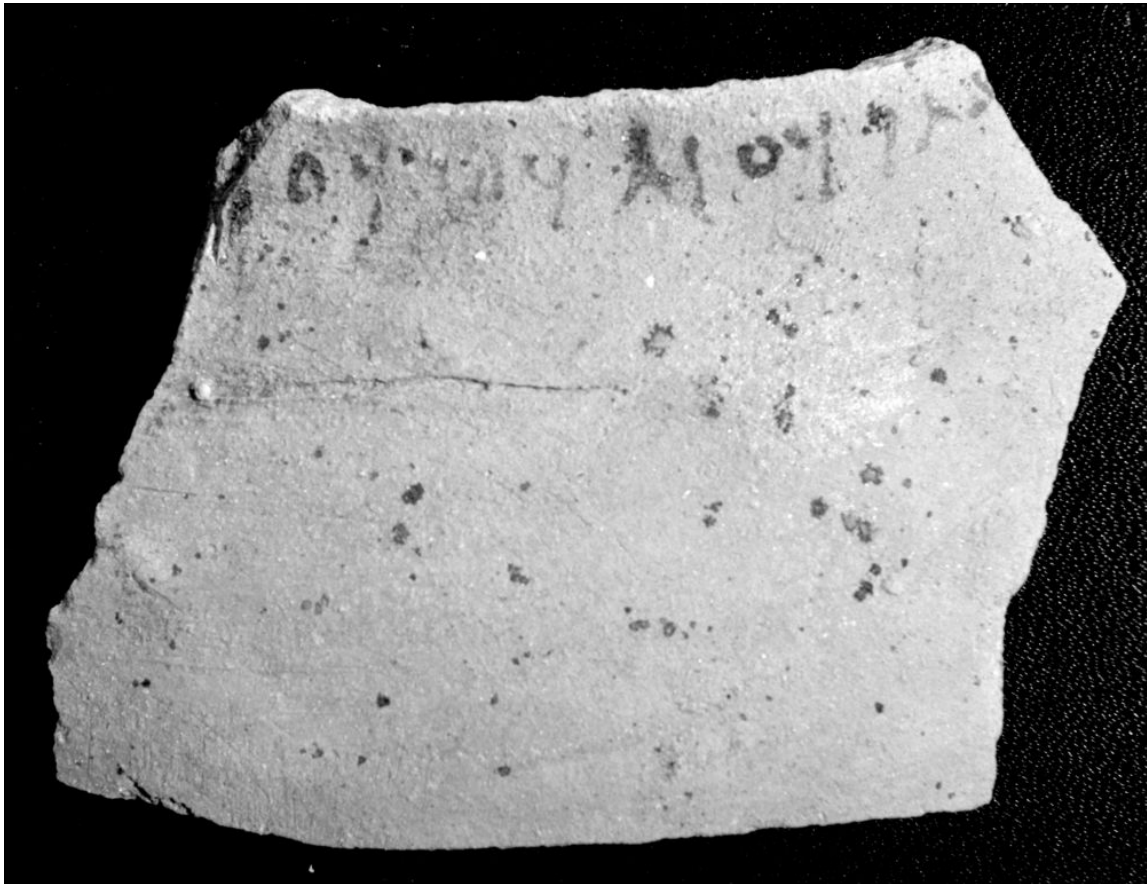
Fig. 28: **538**. Photo by R. Ast.

[Γα]ίου Ἰουλίου Ἱλα[-ca.?-]

§127 1Lambda seems to have been corrected from alpha or else redrawn. There is superfluous space on either side of -λι-. Ἵλαρος, a name found in papyri from the Augustan period until the fourth century, naturally suggests itself at line end.

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Ast, Rodney
GND: ☐ https://d-nb.info/gnd/1020326514
ORCID: ☐ https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1812-8067
Heidelberg University
ast@uni-heidelberg.de

Bagnall, Roger S.
GND: ☐ https://d-nb.info/gnd/124747213
ORCID: ☐ https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9817-3326
New York University
rsb331@nyu.edu

Vanderheyden, Loreleï
GND: ☐ https://d-nb.info/gnd/1215222327
ORCID: ☐ https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3902-5347
Heidelberg University
lorelei.vanderheyden@uni-heidelberg.de