11. The Church at Syene and Elephantine

The Patermouthis Archive

To the same lot of Coptic manuscripts, among which was the manuscript containing the Life of Aaron, and which were acquired by De Rustafjaell in 1907, belonged ‘a dozen Greek papyri with fragments’ which came from the island of Elephantine. De Rustafjaell passed them on to the papyrologist Sir Harold Idris Bell (1879-1967). In August of the same year an equally large group of papyri was shown to the German excavators at Elephantine, who acquired the texts only after a year and subsequently sent them to Munich.

The British and German teams started to publish both halves of what is now known as ‘the Patermouthis archive’: the Munich half was published in 1914 and the London half in 1917. Although some preliminary articles were published, and both teams shared descriptions of the papyri, the separate publication of both halves has left its mark on the archive. Nonetheless, since 1917 several useful studies have appeared, paying attention to more formal aspects of the documents such as the subscription of the documents by notaries and the use of imperial titulature. The archive has also been used as a source for Late Antique society, including its use of status designations and evidence for the late Roman army.

Recently, it has been suggested that several fragments of papyri published separately belong together. These joins have important consequences for the chronology, and hence the interpretation, of the papyri. Subsequently, an issue of a journal was dedicated to four different points of interest emanating from the archive: the legal and financial disputes in the archive, the sale of houses containing detailed descriptions of the houses and topography of Syene, evidence for the army stationed there and, finally, the evidence for Christianity in the papyri. The first two documents in the archive (dating to 493) have already been discussed above and showed that, compared with other fourth and fifth-century papyri from Elephantine, Christian names had become a significant part of Syenian nomenclature by the end of the fifth century.

Reading through the sixth and seventh-century documents in the archive, this phenomenon needs no further explanation. Formulas in the archive are also of a demonstrably Christian character, including typical invocations of Christ and swearing by Christian relics (κειμαλία), chapels (εὐκτηρία) and, even, a monastic habit (σχημα). On the other hand, in one case the traditional swearing by the imperial fortune (τύχη) is maintained. Since the archive also gives a picture of how the Church had become intertwined with daily life in the sixth century, a subject only briefly touched upon in the article mentioned, we will focus our attention on this aspect. There is all the more reason to do so, since a recent study of ecclesiastical

482 Rustafjaell, Light, 3.
488 P.M ünch. I 1.26; P.Lond. V 1728.9, 1729.25.
489 P.M ünch. I 12.47.
dignitaries in the papyri has greatly enhanced our knowledge on this subject and provides an excellent background for comparison. Finally, the papyri from the Patermouthis archive can be complemented by the ostraka from Elephantine published thus far.

The Patermouthis archive consists of thirty-three Greek and four Coptic papyri, ranging in date from 493 to 613. However, most of these texts fall in the period from 574 onwards, and only eight texts date to the period between 493 and 557 or 558. Among these are three loan contracts that were written in Thebes and some other documents that do not concern the family of Patermouthis, his wife Kako and his mother-in-law Tapia, the persons mentioned in almost all documents dated to after 574. It has therefore been presumed that the archive belonged to the family of Patermouthis, although the exact relation between the earlier and later texts has still to be satisfactorily clarified.

Patermouthis, son of Menas, is attested in documents from 578-582 until 613 and should not be confused with a Flavius Patermouthios, son of Dios, mentioned in an enrolment of a new recruit in the regiment of Elephantine, nor with Flavius Patermouthios, son of Menas, alias Benne, a soldier of the regiment of Syene whose sale of a boat has been recorded. Aurelius Patermouthis, son of Menas, is first mentioned in a sale of house shares, which is dated between 578 and 582. He was actually born in Syene, where he worked as a boatman. Later he became a soldier in the regiment of Elephantine and, probably for a brief intermediate period, in the regiment of Philae. Patermouthis received the status designation ‘Flavius’ upon becoming a soldier at Elephantine, for he is called Flavius Patermouthis for the first time as soldier of that regiment.

The documents in the Patermouthis archive consist mainly of legal transactions performed for the family of Patermouthis, such as sales, loans, settlements of disputes and a will. Together they provide insight into the legal matters that occupied Patermouthis and his family at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century. At this point, it is important to realise that, although deposited on Elephantine, the documents were mainly written in Syene, which is why they are sometimes referred to as ‘the Syene papyri’. Thus, over the shoulder of the legal issues concerning the Patermouthis family (and other people), we occasionally catch a glimpse of daily life in this town.

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491 Schmelz, Kirchliche Amtsträger.
494 P.Münch. I 2.2, 23 = D 31 (May-6 October 578).
496 P.Lond. V 1724.6-7 = D 32 (578-82).
The Church at Syene

Two institutions seem to have been deeply integrated into the society of Late Antique Syene: the Army and the Church. This is already manifest from the topographical indications mentioned in the papyri. For example, in a sale dated to the end of the fifth century, a building is situated ‘in the southern part of the fortress (φροιφίνον) and in the quarter (λαύρα) called (quarter) of the camp, namely (quarter) of the cobbler (παρεμβολής ήτοι σκυτέων),’ a name it retained for at least another century. Apparently, the military camp of Syene lent its name to the quarter it was situated in. Another point of reference in sixth-century Syene was ‘the camel yard of the transport (service) from Philae (τού καμιλλόνος (read καμιλλόνος) ἡ βασταγγί τῶν Φιλέων),’ lying in the same quarter of the camp, which later even gave its name to a separate quarter.

Christian buildings also became points of reference in the town. The same southern part of the fortress contained ‘the quarter of the shrine of the holy and triumphant Viktor (ἡ λαύρα τοῦ εὐκτήριον τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ ἀθλοφόρου Βίκτωρος),’ apparently named after ‘the holy topos of the martyr Apa Viktor (ὁ ἁγίος τόπος απά Βίκτωρος μάρτυρος),’ lying in this quarter. All three these quarters were situated in the ‘southern part of the fortress’ (περὶ τὸ νότιν μέρος τοῦ φροιφίνον), perhaps a general term for the fortified town of Syene. It has even been proposed that there is evidence for a monastery within the town walls. In the description of the boundaries of a courtyard, it is said that it borders on ‘the public wall of the monastery’ (τὸ δημοσίου τείχους τοῦ ὀρούς). However, the term ὀροῦ also means ‘desert’ or ‘mountain’, and it is more likely that the town wall stretching towards the desert is meant, for otherwise the name of the monastery would have been mentioned.

Another manifestation of Church and Army in the documents from Syene is through the persons involved in these texts. In almost all cases where witnesses...
subscribed, they were either soldiers of the regiment of Syene or clergymen: of the 126 witnesses, ninety-three are soldiers and nineteen clergymen.\textsuperscript{511} What kind of titles do the latter bear? Some have the titles priest or deacon without further specification, some have the specification 'of Syene' and some have the specification 'of the church of Syene'.\textsuperscript{512} With 'the church of Syene', perhaps the main church, that is, the episcopal church is meant. In general the term used for it is η καθολική εκκλησία or ή όχια του Θεού εκκλησία.\textsuperscript{513} This last term is exactly what we find at another place in the archive, where a 'Ioannes, son of Abraamios, most humble priest of God's holy church of Syene' signs on behalf of the sellers of a house-share, because they are illiterate.\textsuperscript{514} However, in the papyri it seems that with the term εκκλησία a concrete building is always meant. Because there were certainly several churches in Syene at this time, the most important of these buildings may be meant, that is, the episcopal church.\textsuperscript{515} These examples illustrate the difficulty in identifying specific churches from papyri.\textsuperscript{516}

The signing of documents for private persons seems to have been left to the lower clergy: there is only one higher ecclesiastical dignitary mentioned as a witness, 'Isakos son of Taeion, archdeacon of (the church of) Saint Mary of Syene.'\textsuperscript{517} The title archdeacon (ἀρχιδιάκονος) is not uncommon in the papyri and designates the leader of the deacons of a church.\textsuperscript{518} The title implies that a larger number of clergy were involved in the church in question, and hence that it denotes a larger church. As is supported by our text, these churches need not always have been episcopal churches. On the basis of a single wall painting, it has been proposed that this church of St Mary was the converted temple of Isis.\textsuperscript{519} However, it seems hard to base all this on one, fragmentary wall painting. Moreover, Mary is depicted in many churches which are not dedicated to her.\textsuperscript{520} We should therefore be hesitant in identifying the church mentioned in the papyri with the converted temple of Isis.

To return to the subscribers it appears that soldiers and clergymen were important persons in the daily life of the town for they were frequently asked to sign documents for private persons. In doing this, ecclesiastical dignitaries were not acting on their own behalf as private persons but as clergymen. On the other hand, this position was not based on their ecclesiastical prerogatives but on the trust and respect

\textsuperscript{511} In two cases, the soldiers are from Philae: P.Münch. I 16.49 = D 21 (Flavius Paenos, son of Iakob, ordinarius of Philae) and P.Münch. I 13.80 = D 47 (Flavius Psan, son of Aron, soldier of the regiment of Philae).

\textsuperscript{512} Priest/deacon: 6; priest/deacon of Syene: 2; priest/deacon of the church of Syene: 9.

\textsuperscript{513} Wipszycka, Études, 157-75 (‘Кафоликý и les autres épithètes qualifiant le nom εκκλησία: contribution à l'étude de l'ordre hiérarchique des églises dans l'Égypte byzantine', 1994); Papaconstantinou, Culte des saints, 271; Schmelz, Kirchliche Amtsträger, 35.

\textsuperscript{514} P.Lond. 1724.79-80 = D 32.

\textsuperscript{515} Mohrmann, Études 4, 215.

\textsuperscript{516} Personal communication from G. Schmelz. Cf. Wipszycka, Études, 163: ‘En ce qui concerne les actes officiels, le nom εκκλησία porte toujours une épithète (...), sauf dans les signatures des témoins, où les épithètes sont parfois omises’. On the terminology for Christian places of worship see Wipszycka, Études, 157-75, and Papaconstantinou, Culte des saints, 267-81.

\textsuperscript{517} P.Lond. V 1731.45 = D 42 (20 September 585), P.Münch. I 11.77 = D 45 (7 October 586). The edito princes of the Munich text reads Ταειωνος, but this reading was corrected to Ταειωνος by H.I. Bell, in BL I, p. 310 (I owe this reference to K.A. Worp). Apart from these papyri, one of the fragments belonging to the archive, P.Lond. V 1850, mentions a πρεσβύτερος της Αγίας Μαρίας. Cf. Richter, Christianisierung Nubiens, 138, who seems to equate the episcopal church with the church of St Mary, but this cannot be true, cf. Timm, Christlich-koptische Ägypten 1, 223; Husson, ‘Houses’, 131-2.

\textsuperscript{518} Wipszycka, Études, 195-224 at 222-3 (‘Fonctionnement de l'église égyptienne aux IV-VIII siècles (sur quelques aspects)', 1992); Schmelz, Kirchliche Amtsträger, 37. In n. 238 Schmelz overlooks the attestation P.Lond. V 1731 = D 42.

\textsuperscript{519} Husson, ‘Houses’, 132: ‘The church of Holy Mary must be the Ptolemaic temple of Isis’, followed by Porten, Elephantine Papyri, 525 (n. 16); Richter, Christianisierung Nubiens, 138.

\textsuperscript{520} Papaconstantinou, ‘Sanctuaires de la Vierge’, 90.
they had among the people. In this way, the authority of the clergy reached into the public sphere, where they acted as protectors, judges, guarantors in private matters, and local politicians.\footnote{E. Wipszycka, Les ressources et les activités économiques des églises en Égypte du IVe au VIIIe siècle (Brussels, 1972) 154-73; Schmelz, Kirchliche Amtsträger, 255-6.} Two such functions of the clergy in the public sphere return in the Patermouthis archive: clergymen as private notaries and clergymen as judges.

**Clergymen as Private Notaries and Judges**

Documents were usually drafted by professional notaries but could also be given to ‘private notaries’. Private notaries were not officially trained for this task, but were sufficiently trained in legal matters to write down a document. Clergymen functioned both as professional and private notaries to draft documents.\footnote{Schmelz, Kirchliche Amtsträger, 250-4.}

In the papyri from the Patermouthis archive, only one professional scribe is mentioned with his title (συμβολαιογραφὸς), a Christophoros, son of Patermouthios.\footnote{P.Münch. I 14.111 = D 48.} Besides this official scribe, of the twenty-seven scribes in total, nine are military officials and four belong to the clergy. As was to be expected, people in Syene also went to the record keepers of the army (the adiutores), and other military officials, such as former vicarii, soldiers, a decurio and a former actuarius.\footnote{P.Münch. I 8.50 + P.Lond. V 1857 = D 23.50, P.Lond. V 1733.81 = D 49 (adiutores); P.Münch. I 2.22 = D 31 (ordinarius and adiutor); P.Lond. V 1727.73 = D 38, P.Münch. I 9.111 + P.Lond. V 1734 = D 40.111 (former vicarii); P.Lond. V 1722.60 = D 22 (centurio); P.Lond. V 1736.34 = D 51 (former actuarius); P.Lond. V 1723.29 = D 30, P.Münch. I 13.85 = D 47 (soldiers).} Among the clergymen writing down documents for people were Phosphorios, a priest (twice), Theophilos, a deacon, and Petros, a deacon.\footnote{P.Lond. V 1724.79-81 = D 32.} These numbers again show the important role of Army and Church in the society of sixth-century Syene, in which the function of military officials as notaries is particularly striking.\footnote{Diethart and Worp, Notarsunterschriften 1, 13: ‘Es fällt auf, daß öfters Offiziere der Garnison Syene als Notare auftreten’.}

Another function of Army and Church was to sign for people who were illiterate. Here the numbers are even more striking. Only four people could sign for themselves; in the cases where people could not sign, this was done by either clerghymen (four times) or military officials, most often soldiers (twenty-one times). One of the clergymen signing for illiterates we have already encountered was Ioannes, son of Abraamios, priest of the church of St Mary.\footnote{P.Münch. I 9.111 = D 38 (Patermouthios).} The other signers are the deacon Theophilos, son of Paelion, and the deacon Theophilos. In fact, the deacons may be one and the same person, and be identical with the private notary also called Theophilos the deacon.\footnote{P.Lond. V 1728.25-6 = D 39; P.Lond. V 1733.73-4 = D 49.} Apparently, military officials and ecclesiastical dignitaries had such standing that private persons asked them to write, subscribe and sign their documents.

A last public function the Army and Church performed in the Patermouthis archive was arbitration, a common means to avoid a trial in court.\footnote{Schmelz, Kirchliche Amtsträger, 272-88.} Both parties went to a person of standing, set out their case, the judge came to a verdict, and this verdict was sanctioned in an official document. For example, in the Patermouthis archive, a trained lawyer (σχολαστικὸς) arbitrated in a dispute over a legacy.\footnote{P.Lond. V 1849 + P.Münch. I 6.84 = D 35.4, 84. On σχολαστικὸς, see A. Claus, 'Ο σχολαστικὸς (Diss. Cologne, 1965); Gagos and Van Minnen, Settling a Dispute, 21; P.Aphrod.Lit., p. 688 (n. 98).} In another
dispute over a legacy, the parties invoke ‘the board of the devoted leaders of the regiment of Syene’ (τὸ κοινὸν τῶν καθοσιωμένων πρωτῶν ἀριθμοῦ Συήνης), that is, a military board, to resolve the issue.\(^5\)\(^3\) But it was apparently also quite normal to go to an ecclesiastical official to settle a dispute.

This appears from another settlement of a dispute over a legacy, this time involving Patermouthis and his brother-in-law, Ioannes.\(^5\)\(^3\)\(^2\) Ioannes felt himself hard done by the inheritance of his father. Initially, Ioannes had gone to the lawyer (γραμματεύς) Paeion to plea against his mother Tapia, and he had been accredited four solidi. This is where Patermouthis came in, for he prevented his mother-in-law from paying her son this amount. As a consequence, Ioannes again went to an arbitrator, this time to a vicarius of Hermontis, who fined Patermouthis seven solidi. After having quarrelled over this settlement for a while, both parties agreed to ask the priest Sereu of the holy church of Omoï, that is, the episcopal church, who happened to be in Syene, to arbitrate again. Sereu decided that Ioannes’ claim of the four solidi was still legitimate, but that Patermouthis had to be given back five solidi from the payment he had made for the previous settlement, leaving one solidus for Ioannes to pay to Patermouthis as a settlement of the dispute. This arbitration shows that clergymen, even when not in their own diocese, could exert judicial power in important cases, such as that between Ioannes and Patermouthis certainly was, as it had taken two previous settlements and was drawn up by a professional notary.

Finally, apart from these functions in public life, clergymen also acted as private persons. For example, in a document dated to 12 March 584, the priest Ioannes, son of Patechnoumios, donates all his possessions to Patermouthis after his death including as a security a share of a house which had come to Ioannes by a legacy from his sister Mary. Apparently, the ownership of the house was disputed.\(^5\)\(^3\)\(^3\) As can be seen from some erasures, at first the document was addressed to Patermouthis’ mother-in-law, Tapia, to whom Ioannes had sold shares of houses earlier. As a reason for his donation, Patechnoumios mentioned the continuous care from Patermouthis, a common motif in these acknowledgements to give the gift a bona fide character.

Another document is a settlement of a dispute between the nun Aurelia Tsone and her mother Tapia.\(^5\)\(^3\)\(^4\) Tsone’s parents divorced when she was small and her father Menas gave Tapia four solidi to raise their child. Tapia, however, never looked after Tsone, and the child was raised by her father. Now Tsone wants to claim back the four solidi, which her mother said was her dowry and was paid by Menas when they divorced. They settled the dispute by acknowledging that Tapia had to pay the four solidi to her daughter. The circumstance that Tsone is a nun is an interesting element in the story. Apparently, after her father died there was no guardian left and she sought refuge in a nunnery.

The Church at Elephantine

Glimpses of the daily life of the clergy at Elephantine in this period are given by the ostraka found there. Thirteen of these, written in Coptic, were found during the earlier German excavations of 1906-1911. They are now in Berlin and were published in the 1970s.\(^5\)\(^3\)\(^6\) They are all loans or acknowledgements of debts and on account of their

\(^{532}\) P.Lond. V 1729 = D 37.
\(^{533}\) P.Lond. V 1731 = D 42.
formulae are tentatively dated to either of the following indiction cycles: 597-611 or 612-626.\footnote{Porten, Elephantine Papyri, 572.} Four more ostraka are in other places (Bristol, Oxford, London and Cairo) and consist of an acknowledgment of debt, two orders (on one ostrakon), a contract and an account.\footnote{E 17-20.} These texts are undated, but are probably contemporary with the other documents mentioned here (that is, they date to the end of the sixth or the first quarter of the seventh century). The last-named account contains the name of Haronch(is) who was an archdeacon.\footnote{E 20.2.} Interesting is a fragmentary contract in which the priest Sarapamon orders a certain Ienhor to take his daughter in apprenticeship for two years, ‘so that you do not neglect [her] but teach her work... If you neglect her, this deed is dissolved’.\footnote{E 19.6-9.} Two of the Berlin ostraka were written by the deacons Papas and Daueid, son of Menas, who at the same time acted as witnesses, while Daueid may be the same person as the witness of this name in another ostrakon.\footnote{SB Kopt. I 24.13 = E 5; SB Kopt. I 26.8-9 = E 6; SB Kopt. I 30.18-21 = E 8.} Thus although in the papyri scribes and witnesses are usually not the same persons, these documents show that the public function of the clergy at Elephantine was not so different from that at Syene.

The last document from Berlin to be mentioned here has a peculiar character. It is an acknowledgement of debt by the ‘board of the leaders of Elephantine and the whole fort’, a military board which we already encountered in similar terms for Syene. They acknowledge that Paham, son of Abraham, had lent them one solidus, but that one third of this sum had been put forward as Paham’s share in an expenditure (\textit{anàalvma}) to the poor (\textit{àomoiros}). The last word has been interpreted as deriving from Greek \textit{êmoirow}, ‘poor’. Hence, later commentators remark: ‘This text is a significant witness to charitable activity at Elephantine’.\footnote{SB Kopt. I 26.8-9 = E 6; SB Kopt. I 30.18-21 = E 8.}

Recently, this view has been challenged.\footnote{P. van Minnen, ‘Prisoners of War and Hostages in Graeco-Roman Egypt’, \textit{JJP} 30 (2000) 155-63 at 159-60.} Firstly, it is suggested that Paham, son of Abraham, was a centurio and belonged to the board of officers himself. The debt of the board was therefore some sort of account to which all officers had to contribute and from which they could spend money. Moreover, the Coptic word \textit{àomoiros} is derived from Greek \textit{êmoirow}, ‘hostage’, a more plausible solution than the one proposed earlier. The deed for ransoming hostages is one in a long Christian tradition and is well imaginable in a frontier area. If the Berlin ostraka do indeed date to 597-611 or 612-626, which, admittedly, has yet to be proven, the dating of this ostrakon, the tenth indiction, would be either 25 May 607 or 622.\footnote{Cf. Van Minnen, ‘Prisoners of War’, 160-1.} In addition to the ostraka that the Germans found on Elephantine, a French expedition also found hundreds of ostraka which have mostly been stored in the Louvre. Recently, a study of the Greek papyri and ostraka from Elephantine, containing ninety-four ostraka dating to Late Antiquity, as well as a preliminary report on about sixty Coptic ostraka have appeared, which have greatly enhanced our view of Late Antique Elephantine.\footnote{O.Eleph.Wagner 127-65, 220-78, 313-35, 361-72; S. Bacot, C. Heurtel, ‘Ostraca coptes d’Éléphantine au Musée du Louvre’, in Bosson, \textit{Études coptes VII}, 17-45. Add a Coptic ostrakon now in Cairo which contains the name ‘Elephantine’ (\textit{ihb}), R. Engelbach, ‘A Coptic Ostrakon Mentioning Ieb (Elephantine)’, \textit{ASAE} 38 (1938) 47-51.} The Coptic ostraka were isolated from the large collection of the Louvre on several grounds: they contained the name ‘Elephantine’ (\textit{ihb}) or terms and formulae found in other Coptic ostraka from Elephantine, they contained palaeographical similarities to these other ostraka or were identified on the basis of the pottery characteristic for Elephantine. On similar grounds, it seems that these ostraka...
are contemporary with those of Berlin, that is to say, they date to the very end of the sixth or the early seventh century.

Just as in the Patermouthis archive, reference is made to military terms like ‘camp’ (καστρον) and ‘regiment’ (καταρχος), as well as to a military official, the actuarium. Two of the officials mentioned, a cornicularius and a stolarch, were originally military titles, but by Late Antiquity had also become administrative officials, the former being a scribe and the latter responsible for navigation. With the busy boat traffic on the Nile at Elephantine, the stolarch must have been an important official. Other military activities appear from ostraka containing numbers for the naulon (ναύλον), a military tax on boat transport, which is also mentioned in one of the ostraka in Berlin. These texts imply a similar heavy presence of the Army at Elephantine as appears from the Patermouthis archive for Syene.

There is also some evidence of the Church in the ostraka. For example, one ostrakon mentions a lector (ὁ εἰκονωτικός) Abraam, son of Iakobos, probably of the main church of Elephantine. In other Coptic ostraka, deacons, priests and a bishop are mentioned. A Greek testament written on a pot sherd contains the only reference found thus far to a church on Elephantine. Unfortunately, it breaks off after the phrase ‘priest of the holy...’ (πρεσβυτέρος ἀγίας Μαρίας), where the name of the church of a saint or of the episcopal church would have been mentioned. On the other Greek ostraka, deacons and priests are mentioned, several of them in a list of clergymen.

Recently, a fragmentary ostrakon has been published, which has been transcribed as being a Coptic ostrakon but must be a Greek one due to the name of Elephantine mentioned in the text (Ελεφαντίνη in stead of Ἱῆ). According to the transcription, the ostrakon bears the name of an Aurelius Papnouthis, son of Viktor, lector (ἀναγνώστης) of the church of Elephantine.

Probably, just as at Syene, the expression ‘the church of Elephantine’ denotes the most important church of the island, the episcopal church.

The last text mentioned here contains striking evidence for monasticism on the island, namely in connection with the matting industry. Several Greek and Coptic ostraka from Elephantine are tickets for the receipt of a certain number of bundles

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546 καστρον: inv. AF 12607. καταρχος: AF 12559, 12560. ακτογραφος: AF 12561. Cf. Dijkstra, 'Late Antique Inscriptions', 61-2 (no. 5), the mentioned Greek inscription of Dios, son of Pasmet, from the quay wall at Elephantine, probably contemporary with the latter ostrakon and abbreviated in the same way.

547 κορ(νικωλαριως): E 32583. στυλαρχος: AF 12555. Cornicularii are also known from two sixth-century Greek ostraka from Elephantine: O.Eleph.Wagner 315.1, 316.1. On these officials, see Bacot and Heurtel, 'Ostraca coptes', 30-4, and Mitthof, Annona militaris 1, 165.

548 SB Kopt. I 35.2 = E 10; AF 12605-6, 12608. See Farben, Elephantine Papyri, 588 (n. 7); Bacot and Heurtel, 'Ostraca coptes', 34-5.

549 AF 12594 (Fig. 3). On ecclesiastical lectors, see Wipszycka, Études, 225-55 at 238-48 ('Les ordres mineurs dans l'église d'Egypte du IV au VIIIe siècle', 1992); Schmelz, Kirchliche Amtsträger, 38-9. Ecclesiastical lectors are attested only from the end of the fifth century onwards, which provides a terminus post quem for the dating of our document. The claim of Bacot and Heurtel, 'Ostraca coptes', 42, that this is the only known lector of Elephantine ignores the evidence of the ostrakon discussed below, which must also date to after the end of the fifth century.


551 AF 12613. Cf. e.g. P.Lond. V 1850 (πρεσβυτέρος τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας); P.Münch. I 14.33 (πρεσβυτέρω τῆς ἁγίας ἐκκλησίας).


553 Personal communication from S. Schaten.

554 Jenkins, 'Two Christian Period Finds', 61.

of alfa (κέφι), the material used for mat (θάμνο) weaving. Mat-weaving is generally associated with the activities of monks. So it was at Elephantine, for one of the receipts reads as follows: ‘Psan, the priest, who writes to Psan, the oikonomos (οἰκονόμος): give him eight bundles of alfa and …’. The oikonomos arranged the financial affairs of a monastery and apparently Psan received the material which was to be worked by the monks. Besides being interesting for Egyptian monasticism in general, this text proves that Elephantine had a monastery in the sixth or seventh century, as a later Arabic source, Abû l-Makârim, reports that there was one, though in ruins, in the twelfth century. Although far scantier than the evidence from the papyri of the Patermouthis archive, the evidence from the ostraka seems to support the impression that the Church, and Monasticism, had become an integral part of society of the First Cataract region in the sixth century.

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556 Greek: O.Eleph.Wagner 150 (dated to the sixth century); 327-9 (fifth/sixth century). Coptic: E 17; AF 12562, 12619; E 32584-5, 32588. See on the matting industry at Elephantine Bacot and Heurtel, ‘Ostraca coptes’, 36-40.
557 E.g. Wipszycka, Études, 324-5.
558 E 32584, cf. 32585.
560 Undoubtedly, the ostraka to be published from Elephantine and Syene will teach us more about onomastics and the participation of the Church in daily life. One unpublished contract on a Greek ostrakon from Elephantine (O.DAIK inv. 3177) already gives a preview. In this contract an Appa Iosephios is mentioned who is bishop of Syene and lends money to Aurelius Eucharios Silvanos, probably from Elephantine. On palaeographical grounds, this ostrakon dates to the fifth or sixth century and provides us with the name of a previously unknown bishop of Syene (personal communication from R. Duttenhöfer). As this ostrakon has not been published yet, I have left Iosephios out of the list of bishops of Syene in App. 3.