

A Qurra Letter between London and Princeton

P.Lond. IV 1365 preserves the lower right-hand part of a letter of Qurra b. Sharīk to Basileios about the prompt despatch of taxes, dated 18 September 710.¹ The lower left-hand part, unknown until very recently, is kept at Princeton University Library, inv. GD 7888C.² The new fragment largely confirms the text as originally edited but also offers useful correctives. An edition of the combined fragments is offered below. It is entirely possible that the missing upper part, or a portion of it, is still to identify among fragments of letters of Qurra published previously or lurks somewhere else.

Princeton was not a known repository of papyri from the archive of the *dioikesis* of Aphrodito until the recent publication of GD 7889E = *P.Bagnall* 28, a register of requisitions. This item too is part of the ‘Garrett Deposit’, a collection acquired by Robert Garrett through H. I. Bell between 1924 and 1930. GD 7888C and 7889E are certainly part of the same acquisition.³ It remains to be seen whether there are any other Garrett papyri of the same origin and date.

The text is written across the fibres and the back is blank.

traces of one line

. [λ]οιπὸν δεχόμενος τὰ παρόντα γρ[άμματα]
εὐθέω[ς καὶ μετὰ πάσης] συντομίας τὸ τοιοῦτο χρυσίον
ἀνύων ἀπό[σ]τ[ειλον κ]ατ[ὰ π]ρόσβασιν, ὅπως σοῦ καταλαμβάνοντος
5 τὰ πρὸς ἡμᾶς μετὰ τῆς συμπληρώσεως τῶν χρυσικῶν
δημοσίων κελεύσει Θεοῦ μὴ εὔρεθῆ ἑτι’ λοιπαζόμενον διὰ σοῦ.
ἐγρ(άφη) Θω(θ) κα ἰ(ν)δ(ικτίωνος) θ.

4 *l.* καταλαμβάνοντος

‘... Therefore on receiving the present letter immediately and with all speed collect the said money and send it willingly, so that when you arrive to us with the balance of the public gold taxes by God’s command nothing may be found in arrears from you. Written on Thoth 21, indiction 9.’⁴

- 1 The traces were not reported in the first edition.
- 2 **λ]οιπὸν δεχόμενος.** Also at *P.Lond.* IV 1350.7 (29.i.710), written by the same hand as 1365, and *P.Ross.Georg.* IV 2.6 (17.vi.710). More frequent is δεχόμενος οὖν.
- 3 **μετὰ πάσης] συντομίας.** συντομία, ‘brevity’, is used in a temporal sense, and I have retained Bell’s translation. For the phrase, common in this period, see F. MORELLI, *CPR* XXX 14.7 n.

¹ Image: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Papyrus_1363/.

² Image: <https://dpul.princeton.edu/papyri/catalog/hh63t136x/>. GD 7888C is housed in the same frame as two Coptic documents but has no separate catalogue entry. GD 7888A is a letter sent by Basileios, the Aphrodito administrator or a namesake.

³ I take the opportunity to correct my statement in the edition of *P.Bagnall* 28 that this would be ‘one of the very few stray items of the archive’. Although the bulk arrived in London in 1903, a small number of texts reached other collections too; the British Museum bought related fragments as late as the 1920s.

⁴ Translation adapted from H. I. BELL, ‘Translations of the Greek Aphrodito Papyri in the British Museum (Continued)’, *Der Islam* 2 (1911) 373f.

- 4–6 **ἀπό[σ]τ[ειλον ... δημοσίων**. The concept is found already in an administrative letter of the Persian period, *P.Oxy.* LI 3637.14–16 (623) λοιπὸν καὶ αὐτὴ σπουδάση | [δι]ὰ συντομίας τὴν συμπλήρωσιν τῆς | [π]ρώτης καταβολῆς πέμψαι ἡμῖν.
- 4 **ἀπό[σ]τ[ειλον κ]ατ[ὰ π]ρόσβασιν** : πέμψον κατὰ πρ]όσβασιν *ed. pr.* In the papyri, the phrase κατὰ πρόσβασιν is attested only in letters from Qurra. BELL, *P.Lond.* IV 1365.3 n., renders it ‘readily’, with good reason.
- 6 **κελεύσει Θεοῦ** : τῆς διοικήσεώς] σου *ed. pr.*
λοιπαζόμενον διὰ σοῦ. *P.Lond.* IV 1348.8, 1370.15, and 1404.18 have διὰ τῆς διοικήσεώς σου in this place.

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ABSTRACT

A new edition of *P.Lond.* IV 1365 with an additional fragment from Princeton.