

**A Coptic Donation Contract in the Egyptian Museum  
(Deed of Gift) SR 4/ 570 (A) + (B)**

عقد هبة قبطي من المتحف المصري برقم ٤/٥٧٠ (أ) + (ب)

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**Abstract**

This paper aims to study the Coptic papyrus SR 4/570, which is currently preserved in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The papyrus contains a Coptic text written as one part, but it was preserved in two parts; the first part (A) has 30 lines, and the second part (B) has 29 lines. The text is a donation contract to dedicate a child to the service of the Monastery of St. Phoibammon in Dispolis Magna-Thebes (currently Luxor). The papyrus is in good condition, complete, with ligatures in both parts and some gaps in the first part. The Papyrus has been written by a skilled writer. The formulas, paleography, and historical background of the text made it clear to us that the papyrus dates to the eighth century AD.

**Keywords:** Contract, Coptic, Donation, Deed of Gift, St. Phoibammon Monastery, The Egyptian Museum SR 4/570.

**المخلص**

تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية لدراسة البردية القبطية رقم SR 4/570 المحفوظة حالياً بالمتحف المصري بالقاهرة، البردية تحوى نصاً قبطياً كتب كجزء واحد لكن تم حفظه في جزئين؛ الجزء الأول A (٣٠) سطرًا، الجزء الثاني B (٢٩) سطرًا. نص البردية يتضمن عقد هبة لتكريس أحد الأطفال في خدمة دير الراهب فيبامون في ديسبوليس ماجنا- طيبة (الأقصر حالياً). البردية بحالة جيدة، كاملة بها بعض الفجوات في الجزء الأول. كاتب البردية كاتب متمرس، طريقة الكتابة بها العديد من التشابك، الصيغ وطريقة الكتابة والخلفية التاريخية للنص أوضحت لنا أن البردية تؤرخ بالقرن الثامن الميلادي.

**الكلمات الدالة:** قبطي، عقد، تبرع، صك هبة، دير فويبامون، المتحف المصري رقم SR 4/570.

## I. Introduction\*

The text is a donation contract from John the son of Zacharias to the monastery of St. Phoibammon to donate his son Shenute as a servant of the monastery<sup>1</sup>. The text is one of the documentary evidence of legal documents from the eighth century relating to donations to St. Phoibammon, the patron saint of the monastery, who achieved the miracle of healing for the child<sup>2</sup>.

The text was referred to among the textual sources in *Jême* by Eugene Revillout (P.Revillout.Copt.5 Boulaq) made a first transcribe of the text but the Facsimile of the text is bad and incomplete anyway. Walter Crum (P.KRU.93) also transcribed the Coptic text but he inadvertently left out the last line in the first part of the text. The translation was done by Walter Till<sup>3</sup> but he was not very accurate in some lines, as well as in the translation of Greek titles and terms. The last Greek line was translated by Friedrich Preisigke (SB I, 5603). These previous gaps, in addition to the importance of the text, which highlights an important practice that took place in Thebes, are what made me decide to study papyrus.

## II. Description (TM 23223)<sup>4</sup>

**Provenance:** Dispolis Magna  
(Thebes) St. Phoibammon  
Monastery.

**Dimensions:** 79 × 24 cm<sup>5</sup>.

**Dialect:** Sahidic.

**Inventory:** Egyptian Museum SR  
4/570 (A) + (B), JE 35316 (E), CGC  
8732.

**Date:** 770-780 (8<sup>th</sup> Century AD).

**Condition:** complete. **Pl.1-2, Fig. 1-2**

The Papyrus shows three points of interest. The first one is the Monastery of St. Phoibammon, which ensures the Theban provenance of the papyrus. Second, the Papyrus mentions a donation of children, thus evidence for this practice in Thebes. Third, the text provides attestation of the word  $\Delta\Omega\text{P}\epsilon\Lambda\text{C}\tau\text{I}\kappa\omega\text{N}$  'deed of gift'. The text is written as one part, but it was preserved in two parts in 59 ligatures spelling lines into two parts; the first part (A) has 30 lines, while the second part (B) has 29 lines, the text is almost complete in black ink, except for the gap on the left side (l.4) in the first part of papyrus. The handwriting is a skilled sloping majuscule, looks quite skilled, although irregular and loose, and could be assigned to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The  $\kappa$  has two shapes, and some letters are bigger ( $\kappa$ ,  $\sigma$ ,  $\chi$ );  $\eta$  has the shape of a 'h'. Besides the usual use place of the superliner stroke, the scribe put such a stroke on the final consonant of some words. The script of the last lines (ll.52-58) looks different from the main script because it written by the witnesses. The structure of text according to Horwitz's classification of the donation contracts<sup>6</sup> is (A) introduction (lines 1-6). (B) The body of the contract (lines 7-49). (C) The final declaration of the donor and his signature (50-54). (D) The testimony (lines 55-59).

### III. Text and Translation

(A)



1. † ΑΝΟΚ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΠΩΠΠΜΑΚ(ΑΡΙΟΣ) ΖΑΧΑΡΙΑΣ ΠΡΜ ΠΧΩΡΙΟΝ ΝΑΠΟΤΕΙ
2. ΖΜ ΠΤΟΦ ΝΕΡΜΟΝΤ † ΕΤΣΖΑΙ ΜΠΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ
3. ΜΠΑΘΛΟΦΟΡΟΣ ΑΥΩ ΠΕΣΤΡΑΝΛΑΤΗΣ ΠΖΑΓΙΟΣ ΑΒΒΑ ΦΟΙΒΑΜΩΝ
4. [ΜΠΤΟΟΥ ΠΚΑΣΤΡΟΝ] ΝΧΗΜΕ ΖΙΤΟΟΤΚ ΠΕΥΛΑΒΕΣΤΑΤΟΣ ΣΟΥΡΟΥΣ
5. ΠΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΣ ΑΥΩ ΠΕΠΡΟΕΣΤΟΣ ΜΠΕΙΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΑΥΖΙΤΗ ΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ
6. ΕΦΝΑΠΡΟΖΙΣΤΑ ΜΗΝΣΩΚ ΦΑ ΕΝΕΖ ΧΑΙΡΕΙΝ ΕΠΕΙΔΗ ΝΗΜΟΣ
7. ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΚΕΛΕΥΕ ΑΥΩ ΕΠΡΟΤΡΕΠΕ ΝΟΥΟΝ ΝΙΜ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΤΜΝ
8. ΤΡΕΦΡ ΠΕΤΝΑΝΟΥΦ ΜΗ ΛΑΛΥ ΝΕΖΟΥΣΙΑ ΚΩΛΥ ΠΛΑΛΥ ΝΡΩΜΕ
9. ΟΝ ΕΕΡ ΠΕΤΕΖΝΑΦ ΖΜ ΠΕΤΕΠΩΦΠΕ ΕΠΕΙΔΗ ΖΜ ΠΤΡΕΥΧΠΕ
10. ΦΕΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΑΜΕΡΙΤ ΝΦΗΡΕ ΑΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΚΕΛΕΥΕ ΑΦΖΕ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΑΥΦΩΠΕ
11. ΝΣΩΜΑΤΙΚΟΝ ΖΩΣΤΕ ΠΤΝΟΠΦΜΠΡΩΦΕ ΝΣΟΝ ΧΕ ΑΦΜΟΥ
12. ΛΟΠΟΝ ΑΙΕΡΗΤ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΜΠΖΑΓΙΟΣ ΦΟΙΒΑΜΜΩΝ ΧΕ ΕΦΩΠ
13. ΧΑΡΙΖΕ ΝΑΦ ΜΠΤΑΛΒΟ ΦΑΙΤΑΛΦ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΠΕΙΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΤΟΥ
14. ΛΑΒ ΖΩΣ ΒΑΥΟΝ ΦΑ ΕΝΕΖ ΝΦΩΠΠΕ ΖΑ ΤΖΥΠΟΤΑΓΗ ΜΠΜΑ
15. ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ ΛΟΠΟΝ ΑΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΧΑΡΙΖΕ ΝΑΦ ΜΠΤΑΛΒΙ ΖΜ ΠΤΡΕΦΩΝ
16. ΠΕΦΖΗΤ ΑΦΠΩΤ ΝΑΦ ΝΧΙΟΥΕ ΑΦΒΩΚ ΝΤΟΦ ΤΑΝΖΗΤ ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑ
17. ΦΑΝΤΦΠΩΣ ΕΑΒΥΛΩΝ ΜΠΕΙΩΝ ΠΕΦΩΠΠΕ ΝΖΑΣ ΝΡΟΜΠΕ
18. ΑΝΟΥΕΖΜ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕΙ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΧΕ ΕΦΩΑΝΚΤΟΦ ΕΧΩΝ ΤΙΝ
19. ΧΩΚ ΠΑΕΡΗΤ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΠΜΑ ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ ΜΗΝΣΩΣ ΑΠΝΟΥΤΕ
20. ΚΤΟΦ ΖΙ ΤΚΕΛΕΥΣΙΣ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΕΙΣΖΗΤΕ ΔΙΑΠΟΤΑΣΣΕΝ ΦΕΝΟΥΤΕ
21. ΠΑΜΕΡΙΤ ΝΦΗΡΕ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΠΑΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ ΝΑΠΑ ΦΟΙΒΑΜΩΝ
22. ΜΠΤΟΟΥ{ΜΠΤΟΟΥ} ΜΠΚΑΣΤΡΟΝ ΝΧΗΜΕ ΜΗ ΦΗΡΕ ΝΙΜ ΕΦΝΑ
23. ΧΠΟΦ ΤΑΡΕΦΩΠΠΕ ΝΑΦ ΝΒΑΥΟΝ ΦΑ ΕΝΕΖ ΕΠΩΡΧΟΥΝ ΜΠΜΑ
24. ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ ΛΙΣΜΗ ΠΕΙΔΦΡΕΑΣΤΙΚΩΝ) ΠΑΙΝΤΑΙ† ΠΛΟΥΟΙ ΕΡΟΦ ΕΙΟΥΦΦ
25. ΑΥΩ ΕΙΠΘΕ ΧΩΡΙΣ ΛΑΛΥ ΝΚΡΟΦ ΖΙ ΖΟΤΕ ΧΙ ΝΒΟΝΣ ΖΙ ΑΠΑΤΗ
26. ΖΙ ΣΥΝΑΡΠΑΓΗ ΜΗ ΛΑΛΥ ΠΑΝΑΓΚΗ ΦΟΟΠ ΝΑΙ ΛΑΛΑ ΖΗ ΤΑΠΡΟ-
27. ΖΑΙΡΕΣΙΣ ΜΜΙΝ ΜΜΟΙ ΕΙΦΡΚ ΜΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ΜΗ ΠΟΥ
28. ΧΔΙΝΝΕΝΧΙΣΟΟΥΕ ΕΤΑΜΑΖΤΕ ΕΙΣΟΜΟΛΟΓΕΙ ΕΙΔΦΡΙΖΕ ΝΦΕΝΟΥΤΕ
29. ΠΑΜΕΡΙΤ ΝΦΗΡΕ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΕΠΑΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ ΦΑ ΕΝΕΖ ΜΗ
30. ΦΗΡΕ ΝΙΜ ΕΦΝΑΧΠΟ ΖΩΣΤΕ ΕΡΟΦ ΝΤΟΦΠΜΑ ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ ΕΤΜΜΑΥ

(B)



31. ΝΦΑΜΑΖΤΕ ΑΥΩ ΝΦΡ ΠΧΟΕΙΣ ΝΦΕΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΑΦΗΡΕ ΦΑ ΕΝΕΖ
32. ΝΦΧΠΟΦ ΝΑΦ ΝΦΟΥΕΖΜ ΧΠΟΦ ΝΦΔΙΟΚΕ ΜΜΟΦ ΝΦΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΕΙ
33. ΜΜΟΦ ΝΦΣΟΖΡ ΝΦΠΟΧΚ ΜΗ ΤΔΙΟΚΗ(ΣΙΣ) ΜΠΜΟΟΥ ΝΝΛΟΥΤΗΡΙΝ

34. ΜΝ ΠΡΟΥΩ ΜΠΞΕΒΣ ΜΠΕΘΥΣΙΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΜΝ Τ.Δ.ΙΟΙΚΗΣΙΣ Μ  
 35. ΠΟΕΙΚ ΝΝΦΜΜΟΙ ΕΤΝΑΠΑΡΑΓΕ ΜΝ ΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ ΝΧΡΕΙΑ ΕΠΑ ΠΜΟ-  
 36. ΝΑΣΗΡΙΟΝ ΖΙΖΟΥΝ ΑΥΩ ΖΙΒΟΛ ΕΙΤΕ ΖΜ ΠΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΙΤΕ  
 37. ΝΒΟΛ ΖΙ ΚΗΜΕ ΕΙΤΕ ΖΝ ΖΩΒ ΝΙΜ ΕΡΕΠΕΠΡΟΕΣΤΟΣ ΝΑΚΕΛΕΥΕ  
 38. ΜΜΟΦ ΝΑΦ ΑΥΩ ΟΥΚΕΖΕΣΤΙ ΝΑΙ ΟΥΔΕ ΝΑ ΤΑΣΖΙΜΕ ΟΥΔΕ ΝΑ ΛΑΛΥ  
 39. ΝΦΗΡΕ ΕΠΩΙ ΠΕ ΖΙ ΚΛΗΡΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΕΠΩΙ ΠΕ ΕΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΠΑΜΟΝΑΣΤΗ-  
 40. ΡΙΟΝ ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ ΦΑ ΕΝΕΖ ΖΑ ΦΕΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΑΜΕΡΙΤ ΝΦΗΡΕ ΟΥΔΕ  
 41. ΕΣΜΝ ΛΑΛΥ ΜΠΡΟΣΕΛΕΥΣΙΣ ΚΑΤΑΡΟΦ ΖΑΣΤΗΝ ΛΑΛΥ ΝΑΡΧΗ  
 42. ΖΙ ΕΖΟΥΣΙΑ ΚΟΥΙ ΖΙ ΝΟΒΠ ΕΤΝΑΟΥΦΩ ΕΕΙ ΕΒΟΛ ΕΠΤΟΠΟΣ  
 43. ΕΤΟΛΑΒ ΖΑΡΟΦ ΕΦΝΑΣΩΚ ΕΖΡΑΙ ΖΑ ΠΕΚΡΙΜΑ ΜΠΑΕΡΗΤ ΖΙ  
 44. ΠΒΗΜΑ ΕΤΣΑΖΟΤΕ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ ΝΤΑΧΙ ΖΑΠ ΝΜΜΑΦ ΧΕ ΝΤΑΦΟΥ-  
 45. ΦΩ ΕΤΑΚΟ ΤΑΠΡΟΣΦΟΡΑ ΜΝ ΠΑΕΡΗΤ ΜΠΠΟΥΤΕ ΜΝΝΣΩΣ  
 46. ΝΤΕΤΕΖΟΥΣΙΑ ΕΤΑΡΧΕΙ ΜΠΕΟΥΘΕΙΩ ΕΤΜΜΑΥ ΤΙ ΑΝΑΓΚΗ ΕΡΟΦ  
 47. ΝΦΕΙ ΕΖΟΥΝ ΝΦΖΩΝ ΕΤΣΟΜ ΤΗΡΣ ΜΠΕΙΔΩΡΙΑΣΤΙΚΩ(Ν) ΠΑΙ ΝΤΑΙ-  
 48. ΣΜΝΤΦ ΕΥΦΡΧΜΠΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΙΟΝ ΕΤΟΥΛΑΒ ΦΟΡΧΦΩΜΣΟΜ  
 49. ΖΜ ΜΑ ΝΙΜ ΕΥΝΑΕΜΦΑΝΙΖΕ ΜΜΟΦ ΝΖΗΤΦ ΑΥΟΦΦ ΕΡΟΙ  
 50. ΑΝΟΚ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΠΕΦΕΙΩΤ ΛΑΡΑΝΑ ΔΙΣΤΟΙΧΕΙ ΕΡΟΦ ΛΙΝΗΧ  
 51. ΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΣ ΕΡΟΦ ΔΙΚΑΛΑ ΕΒΟΛ †  
 52. † ΑΝΟΚ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΠΦΝ ΠΜΑΚ(ΑΡΙΟΣ) ΖΑΧΑΡ(ΙΑΣ) †ΣΤΟΙΧ(ΕΙ) ΕΠΕΙΔΩΡΙΑΣΤΙΚΟΝ  
 53. ΠΡΟΣ ΘΕ ΕΤΨΧΗΖ ΜΜΟΣ ΠΑΡΧΗ ΖΑΧΑΡ(ΙΑΣ) ΖΝ ΕΡΜΟΝΤ ΛΦΑΙΤΕ ΜΜΟΙ  
 54. ΔΙΣΖΑΙ ΖΑΡΟΦ ΧΕ ΜΑΦΝΟΙ ΑΥΩ †Ο ΜΝΗΤΡΕ †  
 55. † ΑΝΟΚ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ ΠΩ ΝΠ ΜΑΚ(ΑΡΙΟΣ) ΚΟΣΜ(Α) ΖΝ ΕΡΜΟΝΤ ΤΙΟ ΜΝΗΤΡΕ †  
 56. † ΑΝΟΚ ΠΕΤΡΟΣ ΠΩ ΝΠΜΑΚ(ΑΡΙΟΣ) ΠΡΩΤΟΓΕΝΗΣ ΝΕΡΜΟΝΤ ΤΙΟ ΜΝΗΤΡΕ †  
 57. † ΑΝΟΚ ΩΡΙΓΕΝΗ ΝΠΜΑΚ(ΑΡΙΟΣ) ΘΕΧ(ΡΙΣΤΟΣ) ΖΝ ΝΕΡΜΟΝΤ ΤΙΟ ΜΝΗΤΡΕ †  
 58. † ΑΝΟΚ ΣΤ(Ε)ΦΛ(ΝΟΣ) ΠΩ ΝΣΕΝΟΥΘ(Ε) ΖΝ ΕΡΜΟΝΤ ΤΙΟ ΜΝΗΤΡΕ †  
 59. † δι̅ ἐμοῦ Παπα̅ς υἱο(ῦ) Κληωνίκω(νος) διακώ(νου) ἐκοινητω †

I, John the son of Zacharias the man of the district in the province of Ermont, write to the holy Monastery of the *Athlophoros* and *Stratilis* St. Phoibamon on the mountain of the fortress of Jême (represented) by you Souros (5) The deacon and head of the monastery and by all who will ever preside after you greetings, since the laws of God determine and to encourage that no authority to prevents anyone do charity with their property doing what they want, when we born (10) my dear son Shenute, at god's command he fell into a physical illness So that we often believed that he had died. Then, I vowed to the god of St. Phoibamon, that if he grants him recovery I will give him to this holy monastery as a servant forever, he is said to come under the rule of the holy

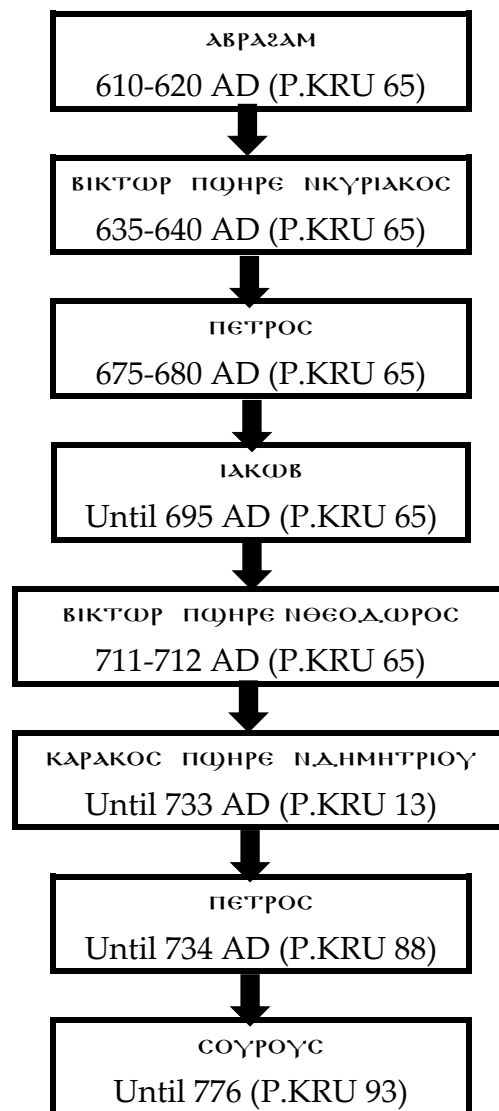
place. (15) Then god gives him recovery. When he recovered, he secretly ran away. He went north from place to place until he came from Babylon. I had no news of him for many years. We repeatedly pleaded with god, that if he returned to us; I would repeat my vow to the holy place (the Monastery). The god (20) led him back by god's command. Now, I have given Shenute My dear son to the monastery of St. Phoibammon on the mount of the fortress of Jême, and every child that will father will become his (the monastery's) servant forever. For the safety of the holy place (the monastery), I issued this deed of gift. Which I wish voluntarily (25) and without cunning, fear, violence or deception Without any compulsion weighing on me, but on my Decision, I swear by god almighty and the salvation of our lords who reign, I confess I donate shenute my dear son to the holy monastery forever and (30) every child he will have; he shall donate to the holy place there and become master of my son shenute forever, every child he will have repeatedly acquired him, manage him. He is to sweep, Spray, and organize the basin with water and have care for the lams of the altar, and organize (35) the bread for those passing by strangers and all the work necessary for the Monastery, inside and outside in the monastery or outside in Egypt or (in general) all the work that the head will assign to him, and it's not lawful for me, not even a wife of mine, a child of mine or an heir of mine each against the (40) holy monastery because of my dear son Shenute or to bring a complaint against it to begin to do authority or power, small or large whoever because of him (because of Shenute) goes against the holy Monastery will precede, condemnation will come my decision vow at the terrible judgment seat of god because of my vow, and I will argue with him because he wanted (45) to destroy my sacrifice and my vow to god. Then the authority in the monastery at the time should force him to come here and recognize the full validity of this deed of donation. Which I have signed as a guarantee for the holy monastery issued it is fixed (and) applies in all places they will exhibit him, they were read to him (50) I, John (the boy's) father, I am blessed to write (deed), I agreed with Witness and handed him over. I, John son of Zacharias, agree to this deed of gift, as it is written the archpriest Zacharias from Ermont, wrote for him at his request, since he cannot (write) and am a witness. (55) I, John son of Kosma from Ermont, am a witness. I, Petros from Ermont, am a witness. I, Urigen from Ermont, am a witness. I, Stephanos from Ermont, am a witness. It was created by me, the deacon Papas, gift of a child to a monastery.

## Apparatus

1.μακάριος||1.Χωρίον||2.Μοναστήριον||3.ἀθλοφόρος||3.Στρατηλάτης||3.ἅγιος||4.κάστρον||  
4.εὐλαβέστατος||5.Διάκονος||5.Προεστώς||5.Μοναστήριον||6.Προιστάναι||6.Χαίρειν||6.ἐπ  
ειδή||6.νόμος||7.Κελεύειν||7.Προτρέπειν||8.ἐξουσία||8.Κωλύειν||9.ἐπειδή||10.Κελεύειν||11.  
σωματικός||11.ὥστε||11.Λοιπόν||12.ἅγιος||13.χαρίζειν||13.Μοναστήριον||14.ὡς||14.ὑποταγ  
ή||15.Λοιπόν||15.χαρίζειν||16.Κατά||18.παρακαλεῖν||20.Κέλευσις||20.ἀποτάσσειν||22.Κάστ  
ρον||23.οὖν||23.Δωρεαστικόν||25.πειθεῖν||25.χωρίς||25.ἀπάτη||26.Συναρπαγή||26.ἀνάγκη||  
26.ἀλλά||27.προαίρησις||27.παντοκράτωρ||28.ὁμολογεῖν||28.δωρίζειν||29.μοναστήριον||31  
.διοικεῖν||31.οἰκονομεῖν||32.Λουτήριον||33.Θυσιαστήριον||33.Διοίκησις||34.Παράγειν||34.  
χρεῖ||35.εἶτε||36.Προεστώς||36.Κελεύειν||37.οὐκ||37.ἕξεστι||37.οὐδέ||38.Κληρονόμος||39.  
Μοναστήριον||39.οὐδέ||40.Προσέλευσις||40.ἀρχή||41.ἐξουσία||41.Τόπος||42.κρίμα||43.  
βῆμα||44.Προσφορ||45.ἄρχειν||45.ἀνάγκη||46.δωρεαστικόν||48.ἐμφανίζειν||49.στοιχεῖν||50  
.Μάρτυρος||51.στοιχεῖν||52.πρός||52.ἀρχιπρεσβύτερος||52.αἰτεῖν||53.νοεῖν||58.Παπαῖ||58.  
Κλεονίκω(νος)||58.διακό(νου)||58. ἐγένετο

## IV. Commentary

- (Line 1)** ΠΩΝ 'the son of', is almost always an introductory term for an introduction the father's name, as is typical in Coptic naming patterns, in the construction [name] ΠΩΝ [father's name]<sup>7</sup>.
- (Line 3)** ἀθλοφόρος 'Prizewinner' is a district martyr's epithet, common in all kinds of texts where martyrs are mentioned or commemorated. It is only sporadically attested in funerary epigraphy where it may have been applied somewhat more loosely, as an agonistic image, underlining the deceased's exemplary spiritual zeal, but not incessantly implying real martyrdom<sup>8</sup>.
- (Line 3)** ΠΕΣΤΡΑΗΛΑΤΗΣ 'Commander in Chief' (General)<sup>9</sup> is a Greek title translated in Abd El-Noor's dictionary<sup>10</sup>. It may be a title taken by saints who were soldiers in the army; I think that is not a general title for all saints.
- (Line 3)** ἅγιος is a monastic title, as a standard in Coptic texts. The use of ῶ before the vowel in the Greek adjectives occurs in Coptic as genderless common nouns without case agreements (hence the nominative ending oc) the feature is also found in the invocation in the writing of ἅγιος which is correctly declined in the invocation (ἁγιο) but occurs through the rest of the documents ἅγιος as is standard in Coptic texts<sup>11</sup>. (LSJ 9b; Preisigke 1:7)
- (Line 4)** ΠΕΥΛΑΒΕΣΤΑΤΟΣ 'most Pious' (Honorific attribute): is a common Greek epithet of lower and higher clergy in the late antique and early Medieval Greek and Coptic documents<sup>12</sup>. (Lampe 567b; LSJ 720 a; Preisigke 1:615)
- (Line 4)** σοῦροϥ 'Sourous': one of the abbots of the monastery of St. Phoibammon until the year 776 (8<sup>th</sup> century) AD, the following table<sup>13</sup> shows the abbots of the monastery of Phoibammon documented by dates and texts.



[Table 1: The abbots of the Monastery of St.Phoibammon in the 8<sup>th</sup> century]

- (Line 5) ΠΕΠΡΟΕΣΤΟΣ 'headman of a monastery', is the Greek title that may denote novices or other persons holding a rank between laymen and monks<sup>14</sup>.
- (Line 6) ΠΡΟΖΙΣΤΑ 'to preside', 'be headman' this Greek intransitive verb and the related formula 'he who will be appointed as manager' etc. is so far attested in Coptic child donation contracts from later eight century since the institution attested here is so close to the Waqf, the 8<sup>th</sup> century may be the terminus donation documents<sup>15</sup>.
- (Line 8) ΚΩΛΥ 'the hinder' self-control and fight against sit perhaps the supplementation of the verb ΚΩΛΥ 'to hinder' with a synonym was necessary here because of the perceived abs unity of ΚΩΛΥ<sup>16</sup>.
- (Line 10) ΚΕΛΕΥΕ 'to command' is one of the Greek lexemes of κελεύω types that were not borrowed as such. Rather, they represent a Coptic internal development. The relationship between finale ε / ι variants ΚΕΛΕΥΕ / ΚΕΛΕΥΙ remains to be investigated, but the evidence seems to indicate that ι variants precede ε variants. However, it is certain that as far as early literary Coptic goes ε variants



are attested only in some linguistic stages i.e. are contingent on the loss of  $\eta$ <sup>17</sup>. (LSJ 936b; Preisigke 1:784).

- (Line 24)** ΔΩΡΕΑΣΤΙΚΩΝ 'donation document' (deed of gift) is a Greek basic term for expression donation in the donation documents. (LSJ 464b, Preisigke 1:405)
- (Line 26)** ΣΥΝΑΡΠΑΓΗ 'fraud' is a description used in the free will formula (Compare with P.KRU 7, 50 and P.KRU 76, 57).
- (Line 27)** ΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ 'almighty', 'all-powerful' is usual in this kind of document at the beginning and in an oath. The highly characteristic use of 'autofocus' in first-person performative statements such as oaths and the like would appear to be less easily accountable<sup>18</sup>.
- (Line 28)** ΔΩΡΙΖΕ 'to donate': is the Greek deponent verb δωρομαι 'grant; give as a gift, is entirely replaced by ΔΩΡΙΖΕ which is not attested in genuine Greek texts<sup>19</sup>. The act of the gift is described through an often and asyndetically juxtaposed. The following mention of the done religious institution is for the obvious sake of legitimacy, the only really man datum element of these texts. Sometimes the eponymous saint or angel of the done institution is invoked to intercede (ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΕ) before god on behalf of the donor; the order of the elements may vary significantly<sup>20</sup>.
- (Line 43)** ΚΡΙΜΑ 'Responsibility/decision/judgment' is a Greek word used in the formula to indicate that declarants are responsible for the proper performance of the obligations of the person for whom they are guarantors<sup>21</sup>. (LSJ 995b, Preisigke 1:838)
- (Line 44)** ΠΒΗΜΑ 'God's seat' is a higher moral authority, namely the judgment seat of god ΠΒΗΜΑ ΜΗΝΟΤΕ and by implication a higher standard of justice, legal affairs that could over than the decision of a corrupt bishop<sup>22</sup>. (LSJ 314 a; Preisigke 1:265).
- (Line 53-54)** ΑΓΙΛΓΕ ΜΜΟΙ ΔΙΣΔΑΙ ΖΑΡΟΓ 'I wrote for him at his request', this is a closing formula of many contracts, especially in legal contracts that require witnesses<sup>23</sup>.

## V. Discussion

### 1. Who is Phoibammon mentioned in the donation documents?

Phoibammon (Bifam)<sup>24</sup> is a young soldier in his 30s. His responsibility was to burn innocence to the gods during these rites. There, he declared his disapproval of the Emperor as a god and defied the command. Subsequently, he took off his military belt and threw it in the face of the Emperor's envoy. The chief in command ordered his soldiers to imprison him. According to mythology, while he was incarcerated, Archangel Michael came to him, saying, "You brave one, the Martyr of Jesus Christ, you have a garland prepared for you up in heaven". Next day, the soldier disobeyed instruction once more when it came time to present offerings to the gods. After that, he was brought in chains by soldiers via boat to Antinoe, where he was



taken by the Roman Emperor Maximian (the governor of Upper Egypt at the time). However, they proceeded towards Asūit after learning that the governor was there. The governor attempted to convince the monk to present the offerings to the gods upon his arrival at the Emperor's court. However, after failing to find a solution, he subjected him to torture before the soldiers finally took him outside the town to have him killed. He saw the Archangel Michael again before he was beheaded, saying, "*Halleluia. Brave soldier of God, martyr of Jesus Christ, you have three garlands prepared for you up in heaven waiting for you*". The Archangel told him that a magnificent monastery would be erected in his honor on the site of his decapitation, and that anybody who came to receive healing would receive it as a result of him. After the persecution, his body was relocated and interred in a magnificent Monastery. On such a spot, numerous healing miracles were reported to have transpired since then<sup>25</sup>.

## 2. The Healing Shrines of St. Phoibammon Monastery

There has been a lot of debate about a set of 8<sup>th</sup> century Coptic child donation documents addressed to the monastery of St. Phoibammon on the mountain of Jême in Upper Egypt. The parents' offerings of their only male children have always been recognized as gifts to the monastery, where they were meant to remain lifetime slaves rather than become monks. The donations were justified by the miraculous healings that the monastery's patron St. Phoibammon, had performed at his local healing shrine. Such offerings of healed former patients are a regular characteristic, particularly at shrines dedicated to healing saints, as evidenced by the fact that these donations were frequently described in miraculous accounts that were widely circulated in the early Arab period. Juxtaposing phrases used in these Coptic legal texts with those from miracle stories of famous Egyptian healing saints, such as *Coluthus*, *Menas*, and *Phoibammon*, can demonstrate the impact hagiography had on daily experience and vice versa. Thus, the documentary evidence from Jême fills in the gap between hagiography and actuality by highlighting the realities of donating living witnesses to a saint's amazing healing abilities. A written contract could only have been drafted with the saint's legal representative in this case, the abbot of Jême monastery, which oversaw the healing shrine of St. Phoibammon, where the donated children would serve in order to legitimize such donations<sup>26</sup>.

The children's miraculous recoveries at the saint's sanctuary, which served as a community healing shrine, were cited as the motivation for these child gifts. It is said that after receiving healing, patients would wash with holy water from basins placed near to the altar. Many of these court filings' descriptions give a glimpse into the family history by explaining the occurrence of a disease that the patient or its parents hold themselves responsible for. Parents often believe that their child's deadly sickness is a punishment for their general bad behavior, an unmet vow, or a false pledge taken before a saint. These parents then decide to bring their child to the sanctuary (τόπος) of the saint to invoke his help in the matter, and when successful, they resolve that their child should remain and live at the saint's holy

*topos* as his servant in return for the healing. The documents pertaining to child and self-donation, according to Schenke, were not dedicated to the monastery per se, but rather to the St. Phoibammon healing shrine that the monastery managed as living examples of the saint's supernatural abilities, the donated individuals were therefore meant to serve the saint and his shrine rather than the monastery<sup>27</sup>.

After a successful recovery, these formal donation forms are prepared as legal documents and addressed to the monastery's deacon and/or current superior. They are approved by the donor, written by a qualified scribe, read aloud by a notary, and signed by many witnesses. They serve as the penultimate link in a series of cult activities designed to guarantee a miraculous healing carried out in the saint's sanctuary and are meant to guarantee its long-term impact. These donation documents also make it clear that the youngsters (male) are being given to the saint to serve as his attendants at his holy place (*topos*) rather than to become monks. However, it appears that the primary purpose of this event was religious or cult-related in nature. The word "servant" meant to refer to a general state of spiritual rather than as physical belonging<sup>28</sup>. The addressee of the legal contracts is the monastery, whose abbot acts as the saint's legal representative; yet, the donations are not actually received by the monastery. The documents from the monastery on the mountain of Jême served as both written and live witnesses to the happening of a miracle as well as evidence of a donation that was legally unquestionable. Lastly, children donated as servants to their healing saint do not appear to be left without parents arranging for their dietary needs<sup>29</sup>.

### 3. The Donation Children Contracts Archive

P.KRU archive documents are a complete model of children donation contracts were kept in the library of the monastery of St. Phoibammon from eighth century Thebes is concerned entirely with children: the twenty-five child donation documents (79-103) concerning the monastery of St. Phoibammon at Deir el-Bahri. In those texts that include a background narrative to the donation, we see that conception is accredited to God, that there was a genuine fear for child mortality and that God was also the source of child illness, most often as a punishment for the sins of the parents<sup>30</sup>:

The good God, by those hand everybody exists, cast a serve illness upon our beloved son Panias, because of the extent of our sins	<b>P.KRU 85, 10-12</b>
My dear son Shenute, at god's command he fell into a physical illness So that we often believed that he had died. Then, I vowed to the god of St. Phoibammon.	<b>P.KRU 93, 10-12</b>
When the mercy of god commanded and my son was born to me, I considered my sins and decided that, should be live, I will donate him to the monastery of St. Phoibammon.	<b>P.KRU 96, 17-22</b>

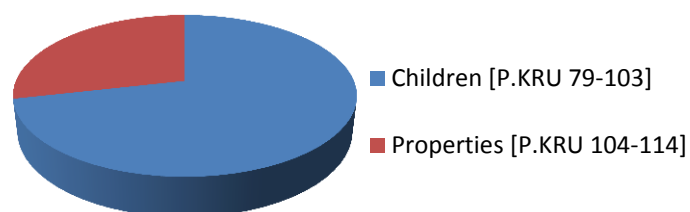
[Table 2: the identical between P.KRU documents] © Done by author

## VI. The Results

This study is a republication of the Papyrus and the only comprehensive study of all the details of the papyrus; Transcribe, Translation, Commentary, and the Original Photograph, Facsimile...etc. Accordingly, I concluded some results as follows:

- 1- The main goal of the donation contracts (deed of gift) is a gift to the saint, not the monastery itself, as a form of gratitude by the families of the children whom the saint healed. This is clear linguistically through the description of the task as a servant forever. The terms used are the Greek verb λειτουργέω as well as the Coptic ⲛⲉⲗⲁⲮⲟⲛ or ⲛⲉⲙⲉⲗⲁ, meaning “to be a servant” or “to serve,” fully interchangeable with the Greek verb διακονέω “to serve,” which likewise appears when the boys’ future position is stated in some of the hagiographical examples<sup>31</sup>.
- 2- The previous studies similar to this study, it is almost rare because most of these texts have been transcribed by Crum in P.KRU (79-103). The issue of the healing shrines of the monastery of St. Phoibammon has been mentioned by Schenke as I mentioned previously. In addition to Papaconstantiou who took up the issue of Hagiography in The Archives, Miracles and the sacred economy of the monasteries in the 8<sup>th</sup> century<sup>32</sup>.
- 3- The date of the papyrus stated in the Egyptian Museum database as dated in 364-476 AD between the 4<sup>th</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> century AD is incorrect because the papyrus certainly dates to the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. The formulas, paleography, and historical background of the text made it clear to us that the papyrus dates to the eighth century AD.
- 4- Most of the donation contracts in the Corpus of P.KRU texts are children donation contracts, and they are certainly the majority with 71.4% compared to the other few donation properties contracts. See the approximate percentage between donation texts in P.KRU.

**P.KRU Donation Contracts**



**[Chart 1: P.KRU Donation Contracts] © By author**

## VII. Abbreviations

- Abd El-Noor** Abdel Noor, M., *Qāmos Al-Luġha Al-qibtiya: Qibty-Araby [English title: The Dictionary of Coptic Language: Coptic-Arabic]*. Cairo, 1999
- CGC** Crum, W., *Catalogue General des Antiques Egyptiennes du Musée du Caire, Coptic Monuments, Nos 8001-8741, Service des Antiquites de L'Egypte, Le Caire, 1902*
- Lampe** Lampe, G., *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1978.
- LSJ** Liddle, H., and Scott, R., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, A Clarendon Press Publication, Oxford, 1996.
- Preisigke** Preisigke, F., *Worterbuch der Griechischen Papyrusurkunden mit Einschluß der griechischen Inschriften, Aufschriften, Ostraca, Mumienbilder usw aus Agypten*, Berlin, Selbstverlag der Erben, 1925-1931.
- P.KRU** Crum, W., and Steindorff, G., *Koptische Rechtsurkunden des achten Jahrhunderts aus Djême (Theben), Band.1, Texte Und Indices*, Leipzig, 1912.
- SB Kopt** Preisigke, F., *Sammelbuch Griechischer Urkunden aus Agypten, Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft in Staßburg*, Staßburg, 1915.
- P.Revillout.Copt.5 Boulaq** Revillout, E., *Papyrus Coptes Actes et Contrast des Musees Egyptiens de Boulaq, et du Louvre, Textes et Facsimile*, Paris, 1876.

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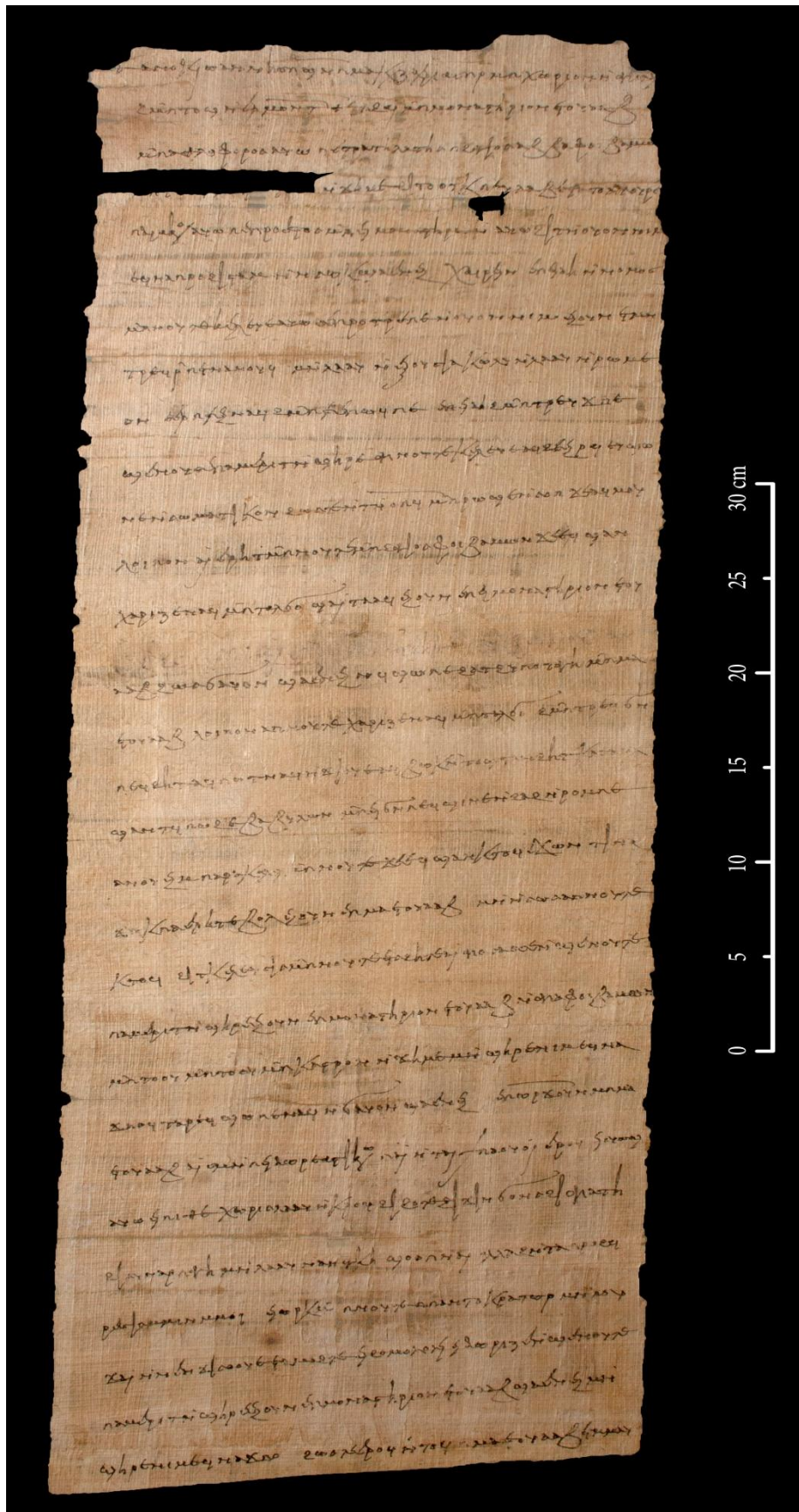
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IX. The Figures



Pl.1 © the Egyptian Museum SR 4/570 (A)

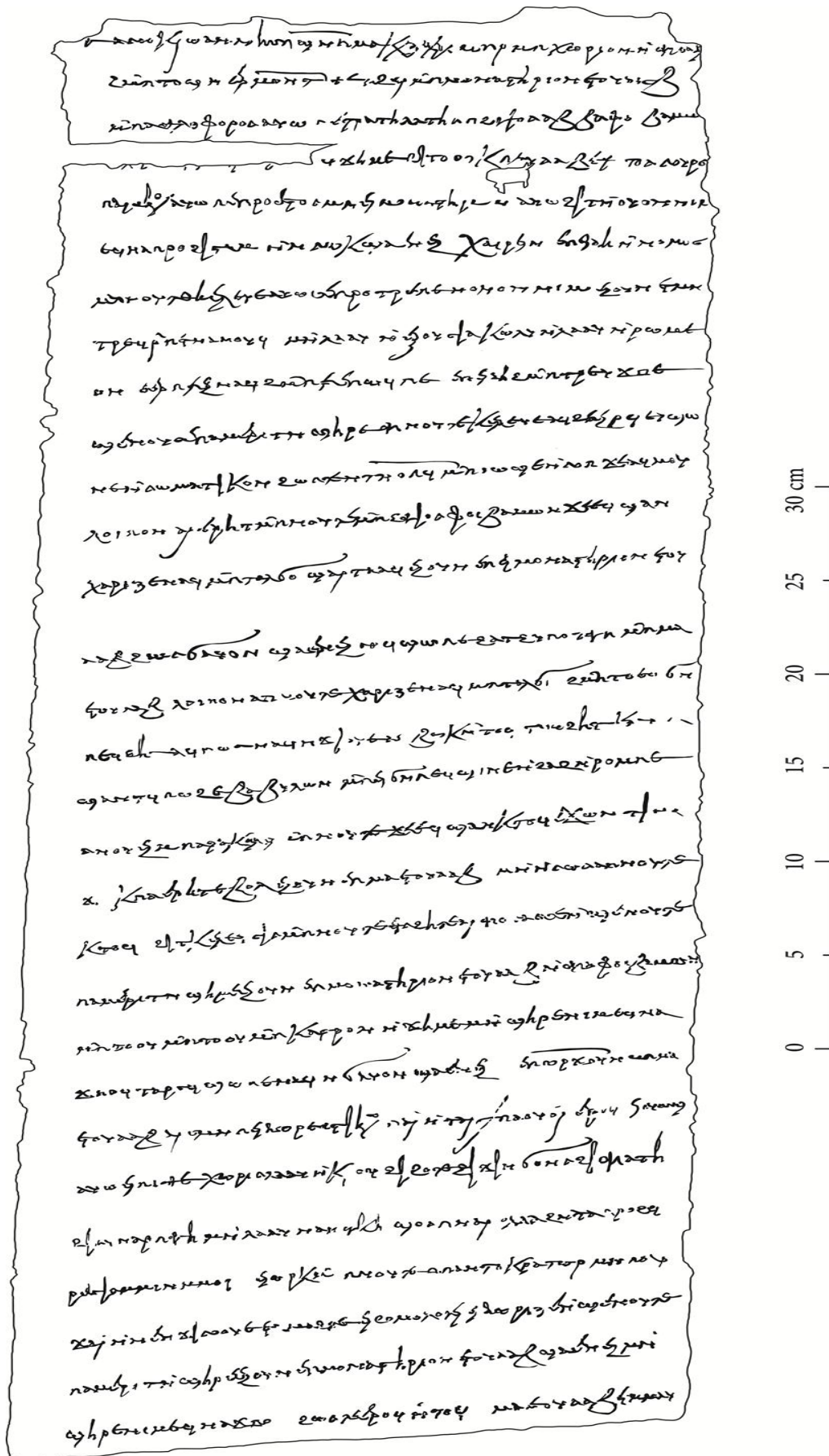
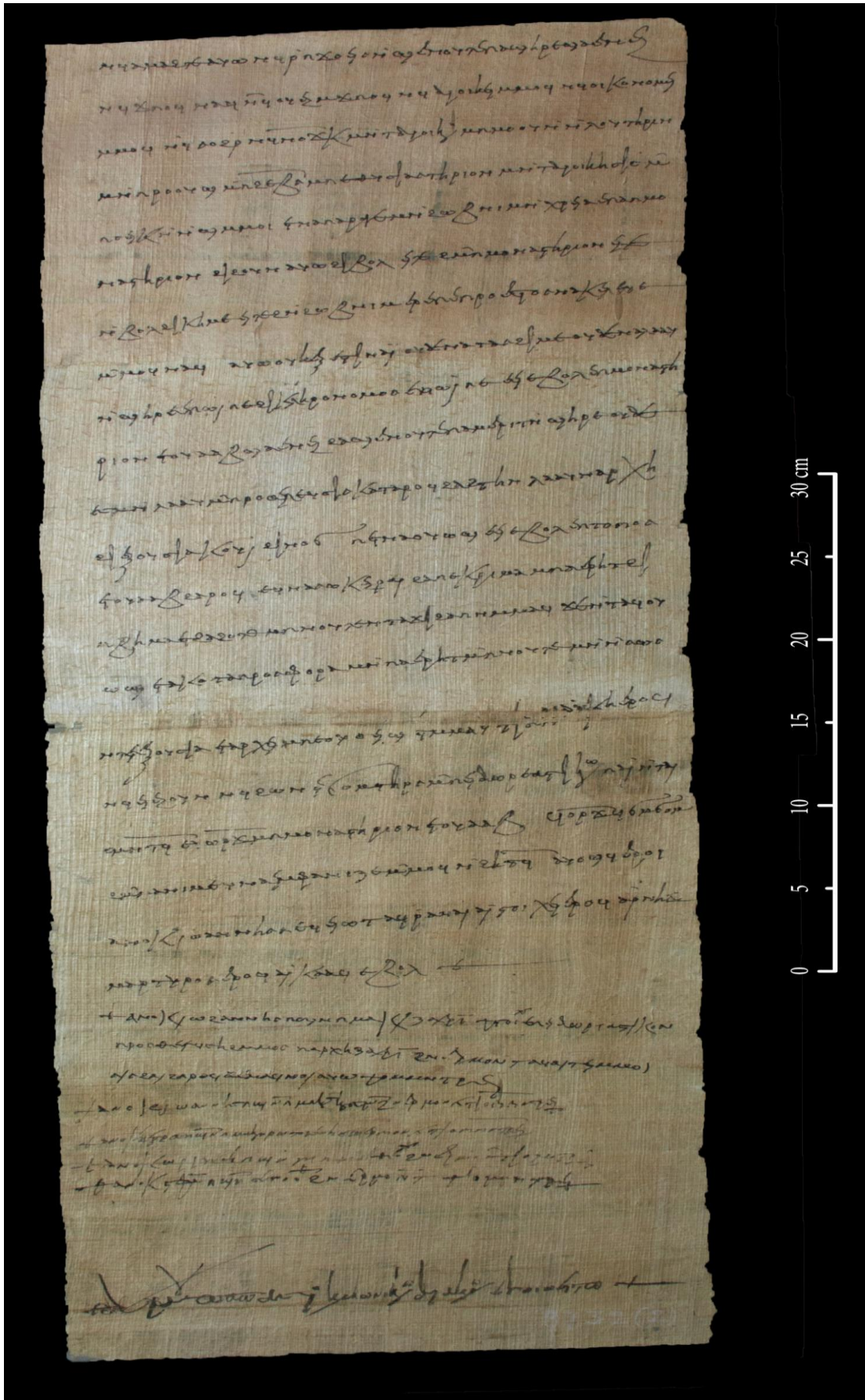


Fig. 1 Facsimile of SR 4/570 (A) © by author





Pl. 2 © the Egyptian Museum SR 4/570 (B)

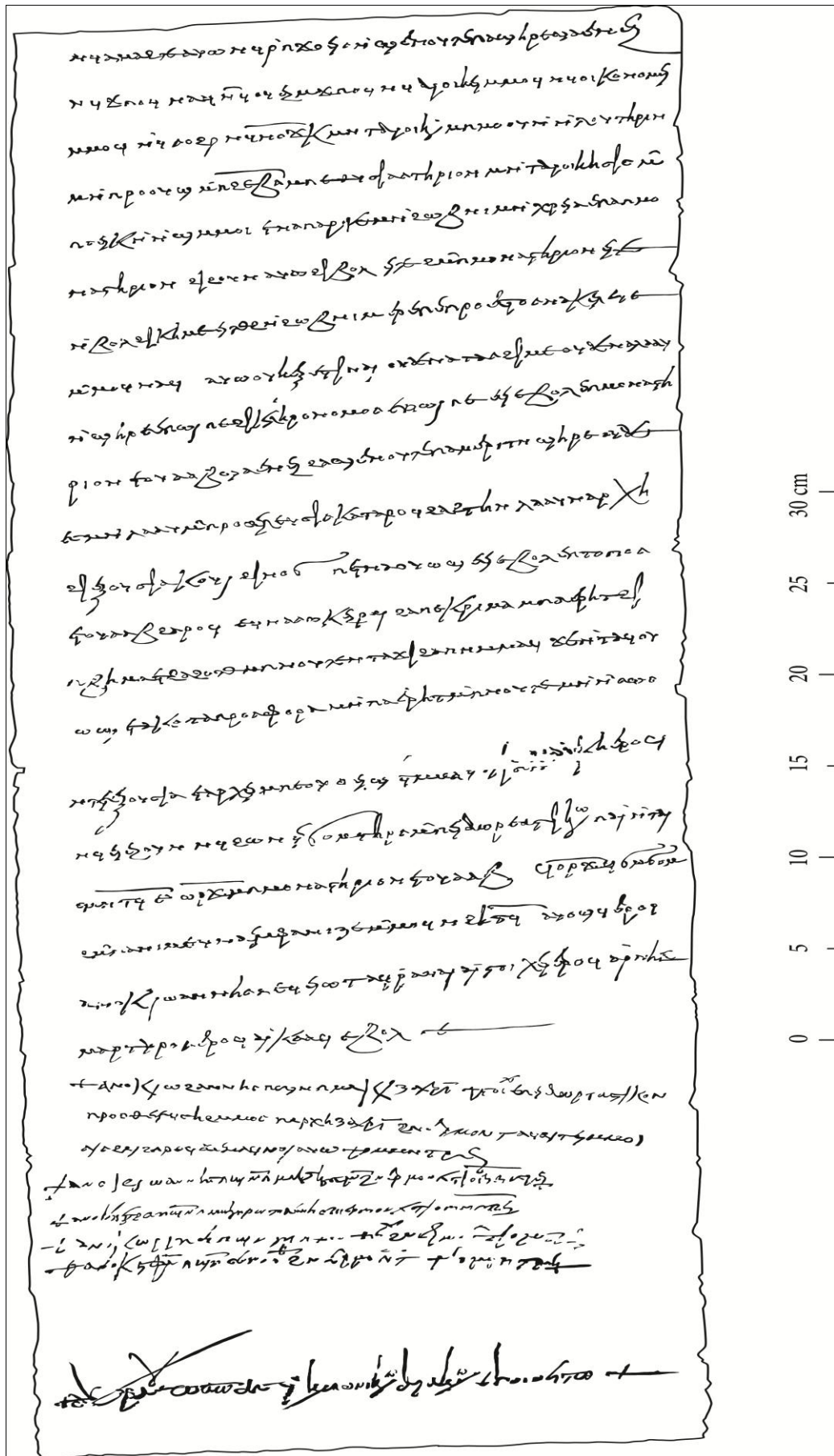


Fig. 2 Facsimile of SR 4/570 (B) © by author

## X. Endnotes

\*My sincere thanks to the Egyptian Museum staff members, for facilitating the procedures for me to obtain this papyrus.

<sup>1</sup> For the monastery, see Godlewski, W., «Dayr Apa Phoibammon», in *Coptic Encyclopedia III*, 1991, New York, 779b-781b.

<sup>2</sup> For Donation of Children, see Wipszycka, E., «Donation of Children», in *Coptic Encyclopedia III*, 1991, New York, 918a-919b; MacCoul, L., «Child Donations and Child Saints in Coptic Egypt», *East European Quarterly*, Vol.13/4, 409-515.

<sup>3</sup> Till, W., *Die Koptischen Rechtsurkunden Aus Theben*, Osterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch Historische Klasse Sitzungsberichte, 44, Band, 3, Abhandlung, Wien, 1964, 173-175.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.trismegistos.org/tm/detail.php?tm=23223>.

<sup>5</sup> In CGC the dimensions are 79× 24 cm but in the Egyptian Museum database, it was noticed that it was sent back from Paris in 1898 by Mr. Revillout see his correspondences dimensions of both parts together = 161× 24 cm.

<sup>6</sup> Horwitz, I., *The Structure of the Coptic Donation Contracts*, PhD Thesis, University of Chicago, 1940, 11-13.

<sup>7</sup> Cromwell, J., «One Week in January: a register of men from late antique Egypt», *JARCE* 51, 330-331.

<sup>8</sup> Lajtar, A., *Agonistic Terminology in Christian Nubia*, In *U. Schyikustarozynoschi, Studia Zrodtoz Nawcze*, 2021, 264.

<sup>9</sup> Girgis, W., «Greek Loan Words in Coptic», *BSAC* 19, 1970, 63; Ahmed, S., «Professions, Trades, Occupations and Titles in Coptic Alphabetically», *JCopts* 12, 2010, 199

<sup>10</sup> Abd El-Noor, M., *Qamos Al-Luġha Al-qībtīya: Qībty-Araby* [English title: *The Dictionary of Coptic Language: Coptic-Arabic*], Cairo, 1999, 286.

<sup>11</sup> Cromwell, J., and Grossman, E., «Greek or Coptic? Scribal Secessions in Eighth-Century Egypt Thebes», in *Scribal Repertories in Egypt from the New Kingdom to the Early Islamic Period*, Oxford, 2017, 258.

<sup>12</sup> Lajtar, A., and Van der Vilet, J., *Nubian Voices, Studies in Christian Nubian Cultural*, Warsaw, 2011, 93.

<sup>13</sup> See, Fathy, M., *Wills and Inheritance for the Copts through Coptic Texts*, Coptic Studies Center, Alexandria Bibliotheca, Alexandria, 2020, 18, 100; for  $\sigma\upsilon\pi\omicron\upsilon\gamma\epsilon$  see (TM 171863) <http://www.trismegistos.org/ref/171863>.

<sup>14</sup> Gareil, E., *Vouloir ou ne Par vouloir: Devenir moine a Thèbes au VIIe-VIIIe Siècles d'après les textes*, 2018, 250-253; Preisigke 2:370.

<sup>15</sup> Cromwell, J., and Blanke, L., «Staple for body and soul: working at and Visiting the Upper Egyptian Monastery Dier Anba Hadra», *Monastic Economies in Late Antiques Egypt and Palestine*, Cambridge, 2023, 324; Speransky, N., *Transitivity and Aspect in Sahidic Coptic*, *Lingua Aegyptia*, Studia Monographica, 26, Hamburg, 2022, 188.

<sup>16</sup> Miroschnikou, I., *Coptic in the Deuterocanonical Scripture*, Volume 2c, edited by Henze and Other, Brill, Lieden, Boston, 2020, 216.

<sup>17</sup> Grossman, E., *Grammatical Variation and language change the case of Greek verb Lexemes in Coptic*, In: *Lingua Aegyptia Studia Monographica*, Band, 17, 2017, 220.

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<sup>19</sup> Speransky, N., *Transitivity and Aspect in Sahidic Coptic*, 183, 148.

<sup>20</sup> Soldati, A., *The Structure and Formulary of the Coptic Colophons with a New Colophon from Dayr Anba Maqar*, *Comst Bulletin* 8/1, 2011, 80

<sup>21</sup> Fournet, J., «Sur les Premiers documents Juridiques Coptes (3): Les Archives d'Apa Abraham», *Etudes Coptes XV*, Paris, 2018, 214, note.81.

<sup>22</sup> See, Neveble, N., *Legal Authority and Monastic Institutions in late Antique Egypt*, Chicago, 2018, 166.

<sup>23</sup> Compare with P. KRU 71.

<sup>24</sup> Elias, M., 'asmaa 'al-aškhās al-qībtīya wa dalalatha fī mīšr b'd dkhōl āl-masīhiya [English title: *Coptic Names of People and their meaning in Egypt after the introduction of Christianity*], MA thesis, Ain Shams University, Cairo, 2016, 167-169.



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