



Fatma E. Hamouda

Philosophy Faculty

Communication and the Circulation of Letters in Roman Egypt

My dissertation continues work started on the project in the first phase of SFB 933 (SFB 933 TPA02, "Ancient Letters as a Communication Medium"). During that round, TP A02 looked mainly at the materiality of ancient Greek letters preserved in papyri and ostraka from the Ptolemaic to Late Roman period with particular focus on the format and layout of the ancient letter.

The second phase of the project will turn attention to some of the social and cultural parameters surrounding the acts of writing, delivering, and receiving letters. Concentrating, as the first phase did, mainly on the Roman period, it will approach the subject of ancient letter writing from a text-anthropological perspective, placing particular emphasis on the act of letter exchange and the networks engaged in epistolary communication.

The dissertation will look at some of the following issues: reasons for writing letters, such as maintenance of relationships, business transactions, personal promotion; considerations dictating use of certain materials for letters; persons involved in handling and delivering of letters; and circumstances surrounding letter exchange, such as obstacles that hampered successful delivery of letters.

Keywords: Communication, Ancient Letter(s), Letter(s) Exchange.