

# **A New Light on Coptic Cryptography**

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Coptic cryptography is one of the most important aspects of the Coptic script, for it can reveal its secrets, shed light on its history as well as the lives of the Egyptian monks who used it for different aims and purposes. Only about thirty examples of Coptic cryptography have been recorded so far which were scattered in religious books, the walls and the doorposts of churches and the monasteries, as well the cliffs of the Egyptian deserts.

The aim of this essay is to publish two unique Coptic ostraca from the Western desert of Egypt which contains some forms of the Coptic cryptography; the first one is from the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC) under the number 408; the second one came from the excavations at Deir El-Bahari in 1926, and is now in the Coptic Museum in Cairo under the number 4563.

The two potsherds bear unique Coptic Talismanic writings, the importance of which lies in shedding more light on Coptic Talismanic writing systems, and the lives of the monks of Egypt who lived in the Egyptian deserts during Coptic period in ancient Egypt.