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A New Edition of Ostraka from Akoris

In a recently published report on Japanese excavations at Akoris1 some Greek and Coptic ostraka found at this site are presented. Their provenance gives these texts some special interest, as they come from a part of Egypt where ostraka are rare2. As we feel that the transcripts are not satisfactory, we present our own (new) transcripts of the Greek ostraka made on the basis of the plates accompanying the ed. princ.3. Given the numerous divergences between our own texts and the ed. princ. it would be tedious to indicate these systematically; therefore, we refrain from doing so. Judging by palaeographical criteria these ostraka all date from the late Byzantine or early Arab period4.

1. A Receipt for Poll-Tax and Another Tax (?)
(p. 52, first text, pl. 18, 9)

1）Σδι<ε> οιός Ἕναχ Ἀνουρθίου (ὑπέρ) ἀνδρισμοῦ η ἰνδ(ικτίων) η
2）κερ(άτια) δεκαπέντε, γ(ινεται) κ(εράτια) ιε μό(να).
3）δ(μοίως) (ὑπέρ) τετρακ(ερατίου) κερ(άτια) δόο ʰμις,υ,
4）γ(ινεται) κ(εράτια) βλ μό(να). ἐγρ(άφη) Παοῦ(vi) ἱνδ(ικτίωνος) ἄριχ(ή)
5）ινδ(ικτίωνος) η.

Ἰωάν(νης) βοη(θός) στοι(χε) ἦ.

2. ἦ Οστρ. 5. ἰωαν(νης) στοι(χε) Οστρ.
“Soi(s), son of Henoch, the son of Anouphios, (has paid) for andromos of the 8th indiction fifteen carats, i.e. 15 c. in total. Likewise, for tetrakeration two and a half carats, i.e. 2.5 c. in total. This (receipt) was written in Pauni at the start of the 8th indiction. I, John, assistant, am satisfied.”

1. One may prefer to regard Σός as an undeclined Egyptian name, i.e. as a nominative without an ending on -ς; for this question and the problems involved cf. P. J. Sijpesteijn, ZPE 64 (1986) 119–120; cf. also infra text 3, 2 n.

Henoch, son of Anouphios, also occurs in the following text.

2. For the tax called ἄνθρωπος (the poll-tax in the early Arab period) cf. Wilcken, Grundzüge, pp. 235–236.

3. J. Gascou points out to us that a payment for τετράκερατον (a tax) refers to a supplementary tax of 4 carats to the solidus, making a supplementary payment of 2.5 carats to the 15 carats mentioned in line 2. He identifies the same tax in O.Edfou I 211, 1–2 (cf. the new edition of O.Edfou III 322 by B. Palme, ZPE 64 [1986] 92 f., note to l. 2; ed. pr.: τετράκερατον (ήμικόν)] and compares the supplementary tax of 6 carats to the solidus occurring in some late Byzantine texts, cf. R. Rémondon, CdE 40 (1965) 425–426 (add to the attestations cited there: P.Laur. III 112, 6; 113, 8; 116, 10; 122, 9; P.Strasb. 660, 3). For the word τετράκερατον cf. also the inscription from Caesarea (Palaestina) published by B. Lifshitz, REG 70 (1957) 119–132, esp. 120, ii 7 and 124–125 (not entered into the SEG; reference courtesy of J. Gascou).

4. It is remarkable that the scribe would have omitted the numeral for the day in Pauni. Did he commit some form of haplography, and was Pauni 10 intended? Likewise, the repetition of the (abbreviated) word ἰσογκίσώνος is remarkable. For indictions starting Pauni cf. R. S. Bagnall, K. A. Worp, Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt, Appendix A, 1, pp. 56–57 and ZPE 56 (1984) 135–136.

5. The assistant John occurs also in the following text.

2. A Receipt for Some Money Payment

(p. 52, second text, pl. 19, upper)

1. Ἐνάχ Ανουφίου (ήπέρ) [ ]

2. δ(τά) λό(γου) Θεόδώ(ρου) Ἀνουφίου(ιου) κερ(άτια) τεσ[τερα-, γ(ίνεται) κ(εράτια) — μό(να).]

3. ἔγρ(άφη) Μεσ <ορ> ἐγδ(όη). Ἰωά(ννης) βοη(θός) σ[τοίχ(ετ)]. †

“Henoch, son of Anouphios, (has paid) for -- through the account of Theodoros, son of Anouphios, four + ? (or: forty + ?) carats, i.e. -- carats in total. This (receipt) was written on Mesore the eighth. I, John, assistant, am satisfied.”

1. For Henoch, son of Anouphios, cf. the preceding text. The man occurring in l. 2, Theodore, son of Anouphios, may have been his brother.

3. An Order for Oil

(p. 52, third text, pl. 18, 7)

1. Ἄγενή Ἐλαίουργη(ῆς) παράσχ(ου) Παυλῆ

2. (και) Μοῦ(ν) ἔλ(έρπ) βο(ειλ) ἐλ(άιου) ξ(έςτας) δ, (γίνονται) τέσσαρας.

3. ὁχέω // ζ ἰνδ(ικτίώνος) α.

1. Ἀγενή 2. μου Οstr. τέσσαρες

“To Agenes, oil-manufacturer. Deliver to Paule and Moui(s) for ox-drivers 4 sextarii of oil, i.e. four. Choiak 7 of the 1st indiction.”
1. The same oil-manufacturer Agenes occurs in the following text 4. The name Agenes occurs also in a number of Christian inscriptions from Tehneh/Akoris, cf. Lef. 118 and 164 as well as BIFAO 3 (1903) 92–93, nos. 43 and 45. But its use is not restricted to Middle Egypt (as was supposed by W. E. Crum, P.Ryl. copt. p. 90 n. 4), cf. O.Mich. I 269, I and BGU VII 1587, 7 (both from the Fayum); furthermore, there may be a connection with comparable names like ‘Ayéνος/’Ayéνες, which are attested in the Arsinoite and Oxyrhynchite Nomies (BGU VII 1630, B, 31; P.Fl.or. I 65). For other Coptic occurrences of this name cf. G. Heuser, Prosopographie von Ägypten, IV: Die Kopten, Heidelberg 1938 (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums und des Mittelalters, Reihe C: Hilfsbücher, 2), 15, s. n.

We consider Παύλη as a variant form of the well-known name Παύλος (Παύλη), cf. F. Preisigke, Namenbuch, s. n. Though a female variant of this name, sc. Παύλη, is listed there, we do not think that we are dealing here with a female person. Apparently one is dealing in this text with an undecorated form of the name, as one needs a dative form. We assume that this man is not the same person as the yeast-maker Paule occurring in text 4, 3, cf. our note ad loc. and below, our note to 1. 2. Again, Lef. 164 provides us with a direct parallel from Akoris for the name Παύλη.

2. For the undecorated form of the name Μούς (gen. Μούτας) cf. supra, text I, 1 n. If the name were declined, a dative form Μούτας would be needed here.

With the resolution of the word βοελ( ) as βοελ(ατένην), there is no indication of how many ox-drivers were to be the recipients of these 4 sextarii. One may also consider a resolution of the abbreviation as βοελ(οικίας), i.e. in that case Paul and Mouis would be the two ox-drivers concerned. Daily allowances could vary considerably, cf. J. Gascou, K. A. Worp, Un dossier d’ostraca du Vᵉ siècle; les archives des huillers d’Aphrodite (in La Charta Borgiana. Miscellanea Papyrologica per il bicentenario dell’edizione di Niels Schow, ed. R. Pintaudi, Firenze 1990, 217–244 [Papyrologica Florentina 19]).

3. There are some ink traces at the start of this line which we have not been able to read. One might think of, e.g., some form of ἐγρ(άψη), but we cannot read this and in the following text 4, also addressed to Agenes, it is also lacking.

4. An Order for Oil

(p. 53, first text, pl. 19, lower)

1 † 'Αγενη ἐλαιουργή(.RemoveAt).
2 παράσχ(ου) Κυρ(ίος)
3 Παύλη (και) Φοι(βάμμουντ) ζυμ(ουργοίς)
4 ἐλ(αίου) ξέ(έστασ) γ, τρεῖς.
5 Τούβι // κζ(τιτιόνος) α.
6 † † †

"To Agenes, oil-manufacturer. Deliver to Messrs. Paule and Phoibammon the yeast-makers (?) 3 sextarii of oil, i.e. three. Tubi 27 of the 1st (?) indiction."

1. The oil-manufacturer Agenes occurs also in the preceding text 3.

2. There is in the center part of this line a certain amount of ink which we cannot read/interpret with confidence. This may be only a rather long diagonal stroke sloping downwards from to the right hand upper part of the χ and indicating the abbreviation.

3. Probably not the same Paule as in the preceding text 3, 1, since he is labelled here κόρς (cf. B. Rom, H. Harrauer, ZPE 63 [1983] 111–115); cf. also above, text 3, 2 n.

The word ζυμουργός has not yet occurred in Byzantine papyri or ostraka, but ζυμ is found in some Byzantine documents. Cf. E. Battaglia, ‘ARTOS’. Il lessico della panificazione nei papiri greci, Milano 1989, 185.
5. A Receipt for 30 Dipla of Some Commodity
(p. 54, first text, pl. 22, lower)

1. † Φαμ. (ενά) θ’ δ’ ιδ’ ![ν]δ’ (ικτίωνος):

2. ἀγία Μαρία μ’ (?) δ’ (τιλά) ι φορ(άδος) δεν[τέ-]

3. πας. † Σευήρος στοιχεί. †

2. μδ Οστ.

"Phamenoth 4 of the 14th indiction. The Holy Mary (church/ monastery?), 30 dipla of (or: for?) the 2nd instalment. I, Severus, am satisfied."

2. This line is problematical. The words ἀγία Μαρία suggest to us that one is dealing with a monastery or a church dedicated to the Holy Mary; we do not expect a living woman Maria to be labelled ἡ ἄγια, and for that reason an interpretation of μ’ (?) as μ(οναξοῦσα) or sim. is excluded. On the other hand, we do not expect the Greek to read ἀγία Μαρία μ(ουαστήριον); we would rather expect μουαστήριον τῆς ἄγιας Μαρίας or at least ἡ ἄγια Μαρία (cf. P.Bad. IV 95, 169, 171 and 180: εἰς τὴν ἄγιαν Μαριάν, but, as J. Gascou kindly points out to us, there are no Greek papyrus documents referring to a μουαστήριον τῆς ἄγιας Μαρίας in the Hermopolite Nome; this name is found only in connection with a church in Hermopolis itself. For a religious establishment dedicated to the Holy Virgin in this Northern part of the Hermopolite Nome see S. Timm, Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit, Wiesbaden 1984, II 817 – 823 s. n. Der al-‘Adra; it is also known as Der al-‘Adra (10 kilometers to the north of Akoris); cf. also M. Martin, La province d’Ashmûnayn: historique de sa configuration religieuse, Annales Islamologiques 23 (1987) 1 – 29, esp. 10.

The rest of this line yields problems as well. We reckon with the possibility that μ’ (?) should be taken as an abbreviation of a product packed in διπλά; though we can devise expansions of the abbreviation like μ(ελατος) = "honey" or μ(οῦστον) (or, of course) = "must", we have not found any instance of these products packed in or measured by διπλά and if the produce were salt, the lack of the noun οὐνόμα would be disturbing, as in other documents the adjective μουστου is not found without it. In all cases, moreover, one must assume that the name of the product in question has been abbreviated very radically and this may form an argument against this line of thinking.

We have also considered the possibility that μδοστον is not found without it. In all cases, moreover, one must assume that the name of the product in question has been abbreviated very radically and this may form an argument against this line of thinking.

6. A Receipt
(p. 54, second text, pl. 22, upper)

1. † Ἐρμίνη Πιματοί

2. Φαώφις ζ τευδέρας


6 Usually one finds διπλά used for packing meat, wine or fish, cf. R. Fleischer, Measures and Containers in Greek and Roman Egypt, Diss. New York 1956, 12.
3  ἵνα δι(ικτίωνος) τεκαδής,  
4  (γινεται) ζ( ) ἵβ μό(να) †.

2. δευτέρας 3. ἵνα/ Ostr., δεκαδόο.

“Hermine the soldier. Phaophi 6 of the second indiction. He (delivered / received) 
twelve − −, i. e. 12 in total.”

1. This line is in Coptic. The errors in the following lines (for interchange of τ/δ cf. F. T. Gignac, Grammar 
I 80 ff.) show that the scribe was not very fluent in Greek.

4. We are not quite certain about our reading of a zeta written in ligature with a preceding diagonal, 
representing an abbreviated (γινεται) / (γινονται). If our reading is correct, one may solve the abbreviation as, 
e. g., ζ(εγη); this would mean that 12 pairs of some commodity (e. g. loaves of bread?) could be involved. It 
would seem more likely, then, that the soldier Herminos received these, than that he delivered these. One would 
expect the commodity to have been mentioned already earlier on in this text, i. e. in 1. 3 before τεκαδής, but 
apparently the scribe omitted this.

7. A Fragment
(p. 53, middle, pl. 18, 8)  

[Δόδωρος]  
The editor restores the name as Θε]δο[δωρος, but in itself there is no objection against 
another name ending on -δωρος, e. g. Διονυσ]δωρος.

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