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P. Vindob. Barbara inv. 266: a chronological note

This recently published papyrus from a private collection dealing with a sale of wine on delivery ⁽¹⁾ raises a question as regards its date. Its provenance is the Hermopolite Nome. Lines 1-2 are presented by the editors as follows:

[† ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου καὶ δεσπότου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν † μετὰ τὴν ὑπατίειαν] || [τοῦ δεσπότου ἡμῶν Φλ(αουίου) Μανρικίου Τιβερίου τ]δ ζ|| Παχ[ών ς θ ἰνδικτίονος]

In an elaborate note to these lines the editors seek to demonstrate why their extensive restorations are virtually inescapable and why the papyrus should be dated to l.v.590 A.D. Their principal argument is their reading of τ]δ ζ|| (line 2), which they wish to relate to the indication of a (post-) consular date. Since they read in lines 7-8 the clause concerning the repayment of the wine as:

---- ἐν τῷ Μεσορῇ μῆ[νι] κ[α]ι τοῦ τῆς καρπ()
τῆς σὺν Θ(εῷ) εἰσιούσης θεκ[άτης] ἰνδ[ικτίονος]-----

they argue correctly that the document was written in a year preceding the 10th indiction and combining this with the numeral 7 found in line 2 they arrive at the year A.D. 590, which was the 7th year of the post-consulate of the emperor Mauricius and — after Pachon 1 — the start of the 9th indiction in Upper-Egypt. They point out that the post-consular dating formula has been found so far only in documents from the Heracleopolite Nome, and they state that given the size of the lacuna before τ]δ ζ|| one should restore an invocation of the « simply Jesus Christ » type in order to make up for the extensive size of the lacunas at the top of the papyrus. This in its turn presents us with the novelty that the

(1) H. HARRAUER - P. J. SIJPESTEIJN, *Verkauf von Wein gegen Vorauszahlung*, *CdE* 57 (1982) 296-302. I thank Prof. Sijpesteijn for allowing me to see his publication in advance and Dr. Harrauer for making an exceptionally sharp photograph of the papyrus available to me. Prof. Sijpesteijn, moreover, gave me the benefit of his discussing various problems in this text with me. Of course neither he nor Dr. Harrauer should be held responsible for any of the views expressed here by me.

earliest instance of an invocation in a papyrus from the Hermopolite Nome would be considerably earlier than other invocations on papyri from the region published to date ⁽¹⁾.

On the face of it one might be willing to accept the editors' argumentation as being inescapable, though it seems methodologically dubious to restore an invocation at the start of a papyrus « dated » earlier than any other securely dated text with one, and though it seems remarkable to find a post-consular dating formula largely restored in a papyrus from the Hermopolite Nome, when such dating formulas are not normally found in papyri from Upper Egypt after the reign of Justinus II. ⁽²⁾ One might feel uneasy, furthermore, when one realizes that the post-consular dating formula would be phrased slightly differently from other comparable formulas in that the numeral for the iteration of the post-consular year is supposedly given simply as $\tau\omicron\zeta$ rather than $\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma\zeta$.

These phenomena, if taken separately, might perhaps seem acceptable: if taken together they constitute a formidable obstacle against one's accepting the editors' argumentation.

On the basis of a photo kindly provided by Dr. Harrauer I make the following observations:

a. The reading of $\tau\omicron\zeta$ seems open to doubt. The zeta does not closely resemble the only other zeta in line 9, $\delta\zeta\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu[\omicron\varsigma]$, in that the diagonal stroke in the latter zeta is much more prolonged to the bottom than the letter in question. I would prefer to read a lambda crossed by two diagonal

(1) The editors compare the earliest instance of an invocation in *P. Erl.* 67 (Heracléopolite Nome, 17.ix.591), but this document comes from Lower Egypt. The earliest instance of an invocation in a papyrus from Upper Egypt is *P. Stras.* 190 (Hermopolite Nome, 27.vii.592). If one accepted the date of *P. Vindob.* Barbara inv. 266 to 1.v.590, it would mean that the *terminus post quem* for the use of invocations would shift by at least 1 1/3 years.

(2) In fact, I know of only 1 example which *might* come from Upper Egypt, i.e. *P. Lond.* V 1897 (cf. *BASP* 18 [1981] 36 and R. S. Bagnall - K. A. Worp, *Regnal Formulas in Byzantine Egypt* [= *RFBE*], 63 form. 8). All other post-Justinianus post-consular datings (Justinus II: cf. *RFBE* 51, form. 5, 6; Tiberius II: *RFBE* form. 5, 8 [only *P. Oxy.* I 144, cf. below n. 4]; Mauricius: cf. *RFBE* 63 form. 10 [add *P. Köln* III 158, Herakleopolis, 16.x.599, ΑΥΡΟCΤΟΝ instead of ΤΙΒΕΡΙΟΝ]) come from Lower Egypt.

(3) A check of the documents listed in *RFBE* (cf. above, n. 3) for the period A.D. 565-641 shows that among the documents dated by — *inter alia* — a (post-) consular phrase there are hardly any documents which use a $\tau\omicron\alpha$ phrase rather than an $\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma\alpha$ phrase. There seems only 1 example of the former phrase, i.e. *P. Oxy.* I 144 (*RFBE*

strokes; this makes me think of an abbreviated word (¹). As one is at the very start of the document (the addressee of the text is given in line 3, the sender in line 4) one might think of a heading in which it is indicated in which place the document was written and one might think of restoring ἐν Ἐρμού π[όλ(ε)ι]. The editors' dots below the following Παχ[ών] indicate already that the remains of the letters are not readable with certainty (in fact, the reading seems to be based upon the verso where Παχ[ών] is read) and one wonders whether one is dealing with the phrasing ἐν Ἐρμού πόλει τῆς Θηβαίδος. (²) The first letter, to be sure, can be read as tau very easily, but the second letter is apparently omega rather than eta (the editors' pi followed by alpha seems a lectio difficilior, in fact), and I cannot find a convincing explanation for these letters (it will not do to assume another mistake of the not particularly apt writer).

Given the state of uncertainty as to the true explanation of what was written in the first actually preserved line of the papyrus it would seem wiser not to regard this as the earliest example of an invocation (though restored), or the first instance of a post-consular dating formula after the emperor Mauricius outside of the Heracleopolite Nome (though restored). The handwriting, to be sure, certainly does not militate against a date late in the vith or early in the viith century A.D., but that seems as far as one can go with confidence.

* * *

I use the occasion to present a few other readings of mine which are different from the editio princeps.

2: see above

3: † τῷ ἐ[ὶ] λαβησάτω (l. εὐλαβεσάτω) [ἀββᾶ] Ἀπολλῶτος (l. Ἀπολλῶτι) [ἀ]ρ[χιμ]ανθ[ρίτη] τό[πον] etc.: τῷ ἐ[ὶ] λαβεσάτω [ἀββᾶ] --- ἀρχιμανθρίτη] τοῦ [ἀγίου] μ[ονα]στήριου edd.

56 form. 8) from A.D. 580; this papyrus is already an aberration if compared with normal dating formulas in use in Oxyrhynchus under Tiberius II. The phrasing found in Oxyrhynchite papyri under Justinus II, a regnal formula followed by ὑπατείας τῆς αὐτῶν γαληνότητος τὸ β (cf. *RFBE* 50 form. 4), is different, of course, in that here reference is made to Justinus' 2nd consulate in A.D. 568, not to a second year in a consular (or post-consular, for that matter) era. There is, therefore, no good reason to follow Harrauer and Sijpesteijn when they propose to restore τό rather than ἔτους in *P. Stras.* 318.3 (cf. *BASP* 16 [1979] 239f.).

(1) Compare for the combination of -ολ- in this text, line 7, ὁμολογῶ; cf. also the lambda of *Αὐρηλίου*, line 4. For the use of double diagonal strokes in order to indicate an abbreviation see e.g. lines 8 and 9, *ινδ[ι]*.

(2) Cf. A. CALDERINI-S. DARIS, *Dizionario geografico*, II 168.

- 4: $\pi\alpha(\rho')$ or $\pi(\alpha\rho)\acute{\alpha}$: $\pi(\alpha\rho')$ edd.
 $\Theta\epsilon\chi\alpha\rho\acute{\iota}\eta\varsigma$ (pap.: $-\acute{\iota}$): $\Theta\epsilon\sigma\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\eta\varsigma$ edd.
- 6: $[\sigma\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\nu \nu\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\nu]$ edd., but the space in lacuna is hardly sufficient for the restoration of $\nu\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\nu$;
 $\acute{\alpha}\pi\acute{o}$: $\alpha\pi\bar{o}$; pap.
 $\tau\bar{\omega}(\nu) \xi\acute{\eta}\sigma\tau\omega\nu$ (l. $\xi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\omega\nu$) $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$: $\tau\bar{\omega} \xi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\omega$ (l. $\tau\omicron\bar{\upsilon} \xi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\omicron\nu$) $\xi\xi$ edd.
- 7: $\mu\epsilon|\tau\rho\omega''$ (l. $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\tau\rho\alpha$): $\mu\acute{\epsilon}|\tau\rho(\alpha)$ edd.
 $M\epsilon\sigma\sigma\theta(\eta)$: $M\epsilon\sigma\sigma\theta\eta$ edd.
- 8: $\tau\eta\varsigma \sigma\bar{\upsilon}[\nu] \theta(\epsilon\bar{\omega})$ $[\epsilon\bar{\iota}]\sigma\iota\omicron\upsilon\sigma\eta\varsigma$ (Pap., $[\epsilon\bar{\iota}]\sigma\iota\omicron\upsilon\sigma\eta\varsigma$ with diaeresis on top of first iota still visible): $\tau\eta\varsigma \sigma\bar{\upsilon}[\nu] \theta(\epsilon\bar{\omega}) \epsilon\bar{\iota}]\sigma\iota\omicron\upsilon\sigma\eta\varsigma$ edd.
 $\epsilon\bar{\upsilon}[a]\rho[\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\omega$: $\epsilon\bar{\upsilon}\alpha\sigma\acute{\epsilon}[\sigma\tau\omega$ edd.
 $\pi\acute{\iota}\tau\omicron\nu$: $\pi\acute{\iota}\tau\omicron\nu$ Pap.
- 9: $\mu\eta\nu[\acute{o}\varsigma$: $\mu\eta\nu[\acute{o}\varsigma$ Pap.
- 10: $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta\varsigma$: $\pi[\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta]\varsigma$ edd.
- 11: $\alpha\bar{\upsilon}\tau\eta$: $[\alpha\bar{\upsilon}\tau]\eta$ edd.
- 12: $\nu\omicron\mu\} \iota\sigma\mu\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon\iota\alpha$ (l. $\nu\omicron\mu\} \iota\sigma\mu\acute{\alpha}\tau\iota\alpha$) [ca. 4].. ς . $\tau\acute{o} \gamma\rho[a]\mu\mu(\acute{\alpha})\tau(\iota\omicron\nu) \kappa\omicron\sigma\acute{\iota}[\rho]-$
 $\iota\omicron\nu$ (l. $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\nu$): $\nu\omicron\mu\} \iota\sigma\mu\acute{\alpha}(\tau\alpha) \tau\epsilon[\sigma\sigma\alpha\rho]a$. $\tau\acute{o} \gamma\rho[\acute{\alpha}\mu\mu\alpha \kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\nu$ edd.

* * *

A METROLOGICAL NOTE TO LINE 6.

For *metra* consisting of 3 *sextarii* cf. H. Harrauer in *Miscellanea Papyrologica* 115, note to line 11. The writer means that each *metron* consists of 3 *sextarii* which are packed in the *trullae* of the monastery (for $\tau\acute{o}\pi\omicron\varsigma$ = monastery cf. *Aegyptus* 18 [1938] 43-44). It is worthy of note to combine this information with *P. Alex. Giss.* 46.14, in which it is stated that a *trulla* contained 3 *litrai*, as it is wellknown that a *sextarius* and a *litra* could be equivalent in wine measures (cf. L. Casson in *TAPA* 70 [1939] 10 ad n^o. 10). If this were the case in the present papyrus as well, the result would be that 1 *metron* = 3 *sextarii* = 1 *trulla*.

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