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THREE GREEK OSTRACA IN THE RIJKSMUSEUM VAN OUDHEDEN AT LEIDEN*

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I. GRANARY RECEIPT

Inv. F 1986/4.3. Thebes; June 18, A.D. 176. Plate 1.1

Light reddish-brown potsherd with a white bloom on the convex side and the edges. H. × W. = 11.7 × 10.1 cm; thickness 0.8 cm. Complete on all sides. There are 6 lines of Greek on the convex side. The ink is pale black; the writing is in a fine pen in a clear but cursive handwriting. Under the writing here and there inkstains can be seen. The concave side is ribbed.

This ostrakon is one of many receipts issued by the public granaries for the tax in kind levied over the crops. See in general Wallace 1938, 11-19 and 31-46.

Our text is a receipt for wheat paid in Payni, the harvest month, by two different taxpayers to the granary of the Theban metropolis; compare Calderini 1924, 37-38. As usual the payment is defined by the mention of a city-quarter, in this case ὑπ(έρ) Ἀγ(ορῶν), the "Market-quarter" (see O. Wilck. I, p. 713).

The receipt is formulated according to the most common Theban type (see O. Wilck. I, pp. 113-115, type 4 e).

The issuing *sitologus* Amonius is known from numerous receipts of about A.D. 162-185; compare e.g. the plates of O. Ont. Mus. I 39, 46-49, of O. Ont. Mus. II 185 and 191 and of O. Leid. 229, 234 and 237 for other receipts of Amonius' hand.

Μέ(τρημα) θησ(αυροῦ) μη(τροπόλεως) γενή(ματος) ις
(ἔτους) Αὐρηλίου

Ἀντωνίνου Καίσαρος τοῦ κυρίου
Παῦ(νι) κδ̄ ὑπ(έρ) Ἀγ(ορῶν) ὄνό(ματος) Ποριεύθου
Φαήριος(ς)

Ἡρακλείδου (πυροῦ ἀρτάβης) ἕκτο(ν) (γίνεται) (πυροῦ
ἀρτάβης) (ἕκτον) καὶ ὄνό(ματος)

5 Πετο() Κούθιος(ς) Φμοίτος (πυροῦ ἀρτάβης) ὄγδο(ον)
(γίνεται) (πυροῦ ἀρτάβης) (ὄγδοον).
Ἀμώ(νιος) σεση(μείωμαι).

"Payment to the granary of the metropolis from produce of the 16th year of Aurelius Antonius Caesar the lord, Payni 24, for Agorae in the name of Porieuthes son of Phaeris, grandson of Heracleides one sixth art. of wheat, totals art. wh. 1/6 and in the name of Petosiris (?) son of Kouthis, grandson of Phmois one eighth art. wh., totals art. wh. 1/8. I, Amonius, have signed."

3 ὄνό(ματος): v corrected.

3-4 Ποριεύθου Φαήριος(ς) Ἡρακλείδου: this Porieuthes is probably identical with Π[ορι]εύθου Φαήριος(ς) Ἡρακ(λᾶ-τος) of O. Bodl. II 1491 (A.D. 169-176), signed by the same Amonius. In this case, Ἡρακ(λᾶτος) should be changed into Ἡρακ(λείδου). However, in that ostrakon tax is paid ὑπ(έρ) Χά(ρακος).

Another Porieuthes, son of Phaeris, grandson of Heracleides, occurs in the Theban decania-list O. Bodl. II 1922 (dated to the second or third century A.D.).

5 Πετο() Κούθιος(ς): probably Πετο(σίριος) Κούθιος(ς). In only some of his other receipts Amonius gives the grandfather's name, but then also without preceding τοῦ. [The possibility to read only one name, the further unattested Πετοκουθιος(ς), is excluded since we expect three names here as in lines 3-4].

For the name Κούθιος there is only one parallel in P. Mich. V 301, 5 (Tebtynis, first century A.D.).

II. RECEIPT FOR TAX ON WEAVERS

Inv. F 1986/4.2. Thebes; August 23, A.D. 189. Plate 1.2

Light reddish-brown potsherd with slightly darker surface. H. × W. = 8.5 × 12.7 cm; thickness 0.6-0.9 cm. Complete on all sides. There are 4 lines of Greek on the convex side, of which the surface is uneven in places. The ink is black; a thick pen was used, which caused the blurring of many letters. The concave side is ribbed.

This ostrakon is a receipt for τέλος γερδίων, a tax assessed on the trade of weavers. Receipts of this kind are well-known, especially from Thebes, which has yielded us about 80 of these ostraca (mainly published in O. Wilck. II, O. Theb., O. Stras., O. Bodl. I and II, O. Ont. Mus. I and II, and O. Leid.).

The formulas used in our receipt are common, as well as the amount of the tax. The "supervisor" Porieuthes was already known from another receipt (see note to line 1).

Literature on the weavers' tax can be found in O. Wilck. I, pp. 172-173, O. Theb., p. 106 and Wallace 1938, 193-202.

* The ostraca here published formerly belonged to a private collection and have been donated to the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in 1986.

I wish to thank Dr. W. Clarysse for his remarks on an earlier draft of this article, and also Drs. Nienke Raven-Steenkamp for correcting my English.

Ποριεύθης καὶ μέτοχοι ἐπιτηρηταὶ τέλ(ου)ς γερδ(ίων)
Ἀμενρῶσι Σενθηοῦ. . υ. Ἐσχ(ομεν) ὑπ(έρ) Ἐ-
πειφ καὶ Μεσορῆ τὸ τέλ(ου)ς (δραχμῶν) ζ (τριωβόλου).
(Ἔτους) κθ// Μεσορῆ λ̄.

"Porieuthes and his colleagues, supervisors of the weavers' tax to Amenrosis son of Senth-. We have received for Epeiph and Mesore the tax of 7 dr., 3 ob. Year 29, Mesore 30."

1 Ποριεύθης καὶ μέτοχοι ἐπιτηρηταὶ τέλ(ου)ς γερδ(ίων): already known from O. Theb. 59, which is dated Hathyr 13 of year 30 = November 9, 189. Earlier in the same year 189, but in the fore-going administrative year, Pasemis (cf. O. Ont. Mus. II 154, Introduction) occupied this function in Thebes: see O. Wilck. II 660 of 20 Pharmouthi of year 29 = April 15, 189.

Because of the distance in time, I do not think it is likely to identify our Porieuthes with the τελώνης γερδ(ιακοῦ) τέλ(ου)ς in O. Theb. 58 (A.D. 167), nor with the collector of bath-tax of A.D. 151 and 155 (see O. Ont. Mus. I 26 with note to line 1, and O. Leid. 135), or with the taxcollectors of this name in O. Tait II 782-783 and 790.

2 Ἀμενρῶσι Σενθηοῦ. . υ: this person has, to my knowledge, not occurred in another text¹.

The reading Σενθήος (1. Σενθέως) is not excluded, but renders the reading of the following word(s) even more problematic: χαί(ρειν) is an unlikely reading and moreover not expected; ἀπέσχ(ομεν) can just not be read.

3 τὸ τέλ(ου)ς (δραχμῶν) ζ (τριωβόλου): the position of τὸ τέλ(ου)ς here in the text is paralleled in O. Wilck. II 660; it would rather mean that 7 drachmas 3 obols is the rate of the tax for only one month, and that for the two months twice the amount was received in reality. Compare for this O. Wilck. I, p. 172. The tax-rate differed from one person to another, compare O. Theb., p. 106 and Wallace 1938, 195-198.

4 (ἔτους) κθ//: year 29 must apply to Commodus, who added the years of Marcus Aurelius to his own regnal years. During the regnal period of Marcus Aurelius and Verus it had become common use in Thebes to omit the name of the emperor in the date (cf. Bogaert 1980, 286). Μεσορῆ λ̄: the date agrees with the fact that most monthly (or two-monthly) receipts for weavers' tax are dated at the end of the (last) month, or in the beginning of the next².

The month Mesore shows that Wallace's conclusion (1938, 197) that there are no weavers' tax-receipts from this last month of the year, was only due to the chance of papyrological finds; see also O. Leid. 146 of the same month.

1. The original of O. Leid. 402 (list of names, dated to the third century A.D.) shows that in line 5: Ἀμενρῶσι(ος) Σεν. .[. the sign following v cannot be easily interpreted as θ.

2. According to this use, it is not likely that O. Ont. Mus. II 144, a receipt for weavers' tax for the month of Thoth, is dated Θῶθ ᾗ: the reading Θῶθ λ̄ is to be preferred, as is confirmed by the plate.

III. LOAN OF DATES

Inv. F 1986/4.4. Provenance unknown; Plate 1.3
fifth century A.D.

Large red potsherd. H. × W. = 18.3 × 19.1 cm; thickness 0.5-0.8 cm. The upper right part of the ostrakon is broken off, as well as the left and right sides of the bottom. Its curve (horizontal, not visible on the photograph) is almost one third of the total circumference of the pot to which it once belonged; the broad horizontal incision underneath the text will have been part of the top rim of the pot; at the left, one of the holes remains, through which a string could be passed to hang or carry the pot from.

The convex side contains 11 lines of Greek in black ink. The writing is difficult to read: the ink has faded or even disappeared in places and the ostrakon is full of inkspots and other stains on this side. The handwriting can be dated to the fifth century A.D., compare e.g. P. Wisc. I 10, Plate IV (A.D. 468).

The concave side is only slightly ribbed and coated with a brown glaze.

This ostrakon of extensive size contains a contract of a loan of three artabas of dates. What remains of the text is, in places, barely legible.

Ostraca, cheaper writing material than papyrus, are seldom used as bearers of contracts. But of course a contract of loan is in fact almost identical with a receipt, for which an ostrakon as text-bearer is most usual. Another ostrakon containing a loan is e.g. O. Bodl. II 1978 (A.D. 25/26).

The formulas in our loan seem to be rather short and to the point as compared to most fifth-century loans, but the overall purport is the same. Literature on loans can be found in Pestman 1971, 7 note 1.

The length of the lacuna to the right (there is more room than the photograph shows!) cannot be established with certainty; the supplement of line 5 may well have been longer.

traces

δ...απο.[

Ἐμολο(γῶ) δι(ἀ?) .πιμ...[

φοινικίων ἀρτάβας τρεῖς

5 (γίνεται) ἀρτά(βας) γ ἄς σοὶ ἀποδώσω μηνὶ

Φαῶφι τῆς αὐτῆς?

τρεῖςκαὶδεκάτης Ἰνδ(ικτίονος). Εἰ δὲ μὴ τελέσ[ω

παρασχέιν σοὶ λόγῳ τόκο ὕ δὲ τῶν φοιν[ικίων

καὶ ἀπὸ το(ῦ) νομισμά[τια [x -- ἀνυπερ-]

θέτως [καὶ] χωρὶς τινοῦ ἀντιλογ[ίας

10 traces

traces

"[Date (?). A to B greetings.] I acknowledge -- [to have received from you] three artabas of dates -- totals art. 3, which I shall give you back in the month of Phaophi [of the same] thirteenth indiction. If I do not pay -- [I acknowledge?] to provide you as interest on the dates -- and -- of the -- x solidi, without delay and without any dispute ----."

1-2 In these lines we expect the names of the contracting parties, probably preceded by a date. Perhaps ἀπό (?) is part of the description of the origin of one of the persons.

3 δι(ά?): if rightly read, something like ταύτης μου τῆς ἀσφαλείας should follow, but I cannot read it in the remains of this line; neither do I recognize one of the common formulas ἐσχηκέναι καὶ μεμετρηῆσθαι, ὀφείλειν καὶ χρεωστεῖν, etc.

4 At the end, probably supply σὺν ἡμολίᾳ].

5 Φαῶφι[ι: September/October; the date at which to pay back a loan in kind mostly coincides with the harvest month. Phaophi is known as one of the harvest months for dates, cf. Schnebel 1925, 298.

6 δέ is unexpected; perhaps αὐτῶν has to be read.

6-9 The penalty clause for non-payment; compare Berger 1911 and Packman 1983. A penalty clause, especially with the penalty specified in money, is unusual in a contract of a commodity loan in this period.

At the end of line 6 there is not enough room for ἐν τῷ ὀρισμένῳ χρόνῳ vel sim., nor for e.g. τοῦ ὑπερπεσόντος χρόνου; perhaps supply ὁμολογῶ or παραχρήμα.

The text is too much mutilated to recognize one of the well-known formulas here.

10-11 Probably a πράξις- and a κυρία-clausula are to be looked for in these lines.

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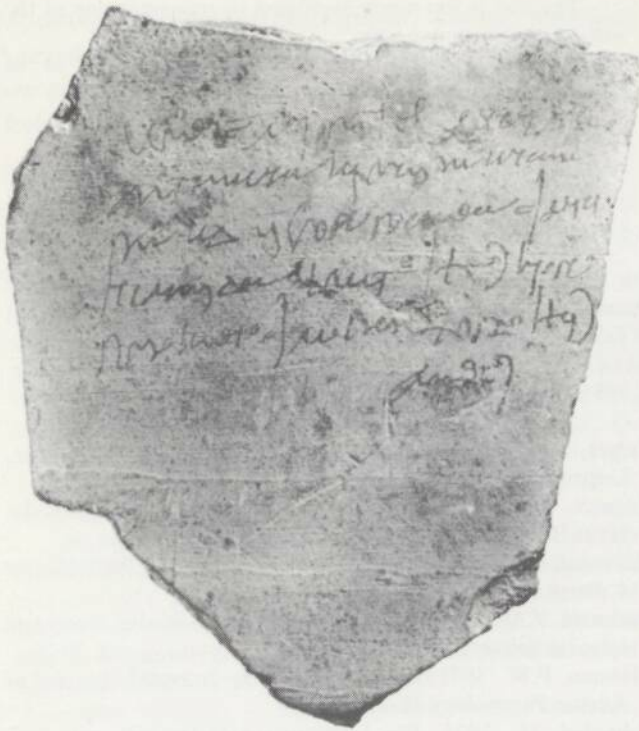
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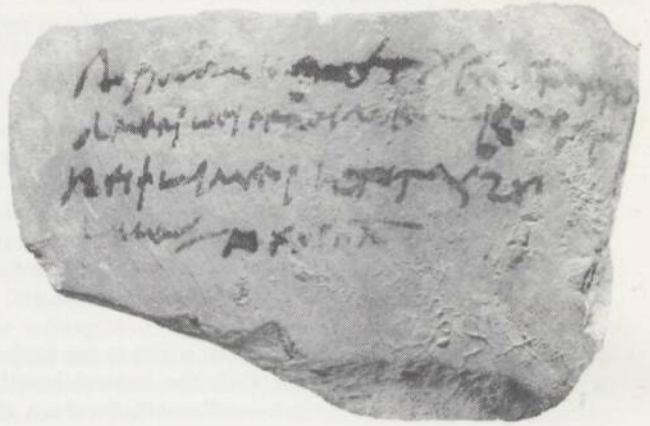
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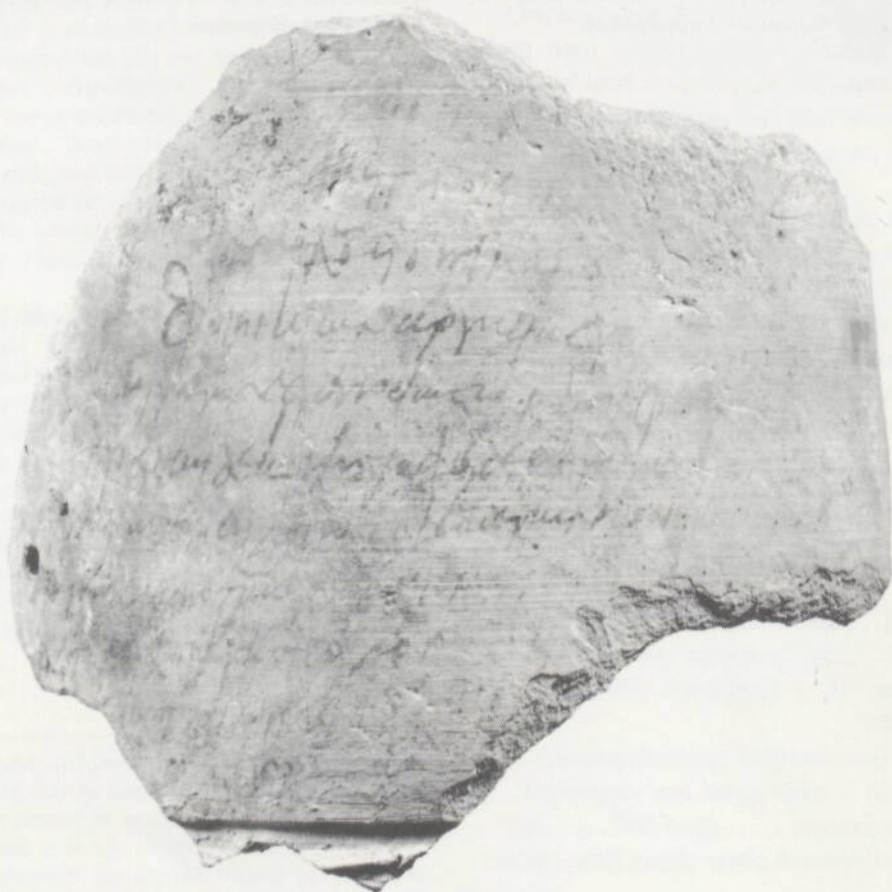
Fragment 1: A piece of ancient papyrus with several lines of handwritten text in a cursive script. The text is somewhat faded and difficult to decipher, but appears to be a list or account of items.

1



Fragment 2: A smaller fragment of papyrus with a few lines of handwritten text. The script is consistent with the other fragments.

2



Fragment 3: A large, irregular fragment of papyrus with multiple lines of handwritten text. The text is more legible than the other fragments and appears to be a detailed list or account.

3