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WAGE RECEIPT FROM HERAKLEOPOLIS (?)  
(P.VINDOB. G 26628; FIFTH/SIXTH CENTURY)

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*Abstract.* — Edition of P.Vindob. G 26628, a receipt for the payment of 4 gold *solidi* as an instalment of the wages for irrigation work in the vegetable-garden of the landowner, probably from Herakleopolis, fifth/sixth century CE.

*Keywords:* Herakleopolis, Byzantine period, receipt, wages, agricultural labor

P.Vindob. G 26628<sup>1</sup>      H × W = 8.5 × 25.0 cm      Herakleopolis (?),  
second half fifth/first half sixth century CE

Fragment of a receipt for the payment of four gold *solidi* for an instalment (καταβολή) for the month of Pharmouthi (March/April) of an unknown year. The date of the document (4 Payni = 29 May, l. 6) shows that it was written more than a month after the instalment was due. Since Pharmouthi is said to fall in the same indiction year as Payni (ll. 4–5: τῆς παρούσης | [(number) ἰνδ(ικτιόνοϛ)], we must be dealing with an indiction starting in Thoth, which may point to an origin in the Oxyrhynchite or Herakleopolite nome.<sup>2</sup> In this case, it is probably the Herakleopolite nome, because of the reading -οπο]λ[ίτου] νομοῦ in line 2 and because of the Herakleopolite writing style for which see below.

The words “irrigation” and “vegetable-garden belonging to the landowner” (l. 3: ἀρδεΐας, γεουχικῆς κηπολαχανΐδας) suggest that the payment

<sup>1</sup> The papyrus published here belongs to the Papyrussammlung of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna. It was acquired in 1896 according to the handwritten inventory book. See further H. Loebenstein, “Vom ‘Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer’ zur Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. 100 Jahre Sammeln, Bewahren, Edieren,” in *P.Rain.Cent.*, pp. 3–39. We would like to thank Guus van Loon, MA, for the images of the papyrus and for the information he provided, and Prof. Dr. Bernhard Palme of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek for his permission to publish the papyrus. This edition was initially drafted by Eric Boot during and after the 2021 spring seminar *Palaeography of the Greek Papyri and Edition Technique of Papyrus Documents* at Leiden University, taught by Francisca Hoogendijk. We are grateful to the anonymous peer reviewers for their useful suggestions after reading an earlier version of this edition.

<sup>2</sup> See R.S. Bagnall and K.A. Worp, *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt* (Leiden – Boston 2004<sup>2</sup>) 20–21, 29–30.

concerned wages for agricultural work.<sup>3</sup> The payment of an instalment of 4 *solidi* for just irrigating a garden may seem rather high, but more fields may have been mentioned in the lacuna in line 4, and the amount would be more or less in line with the advance payment (προχρεία) of 4 *solidi* for working with watering machines in the *SB* 22.15367 (receipt, 535, Oxyrhynchus), of 8 *solidi* for the irrigation of orchards and gardens in *P.Oxy.* 16.1913.68 (expenditure on estates, ca. 555, Oxyrhynchus), of 3 *solidi* for watering a plot in *SB* 6.9284.10 (receipt, 553, Hermopolis), and of 4 *solidi* for watering a vineyard in *P.Lond.* 3.1037.9–10 (receipt, VI, Hermopolite nome). See also the later receipt for an advance payment of one *solidus* for irrigation work, *SB* 6.9459 (VII, Pseuenaphris, Arsinoite nome).<sup>4</sup> Since the irrigation of vegetable gardens took place between the month of Mecheir (January/February) and the harvest in the month of Payni (May/June), an instalment to be paid in Pharmouthi would nicely fit the agricultural calendar.<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, the word κηπολαχανία is only attested in two other papyri from or referring to the Herakleopolite nome (see note to l. 3).

The present receipt seems to start with the addressee and sender of the document fully described in the heading, so it was probably styled in the form of a contract, the so-called “Vertragsschema,” which was also used for receipts.<sup>6</sup> One of the parties originated from a city (π[ό]λεω[ς], l. 1), probably Herakleopolis, the other party from a village in the Herakleopolite nome

<sup>3</sup> On wage employment in the Byzantine period see J. Banaji, “Agrarian History and the Labour Organisation of Byzantine Large Estates,” in A.K. Bowman and E. Rogan (eds.), *Agriculture in Egypt from Pharaonic to Modern Times* (Proceedings of the British Academy 96; Oxford 1999) 193–216; J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity: Gold, Labour, and Aristocratic Dominance* (Oxford 2001) 180–212; P. Sarris, “The Early Byzantine Economy in Context: Aristocratic Property and Economic Growth Reconsidered,” *Early Medieval Europe* 19 (2011) 255–284, with 269–270 for gardens forming part of directly managed estate land; T.M. Hickey, *Wine, Wealth, and the State in Late Antique Egypt. The House of Apion at Oxyrhynchus* (Ann Arbor 2012) 62–89: “Labor in the vineyard.”

<sup>4</sup> For irrigation workers receiving wages in gold see Banaji (n. 3, *Agrarian Change*) 76 with n. 228. On the wage level in general see table 6 in *op. cit.*, 227–229 with on p. 229 annual wages or allowances of between 1.92 and 12 *solidi*, and tables 11a–b (pp. 235–237) with similar annual wages in money and kind for various benchmark jobs. D. Bonneau, *Le régime administratif de l’eau du Nil dans l’Égypte grecque, romaine et byzantine* (Leiden 1993) 218, shows that from the fifth century onwards, the task of irrigator started to include the supervision and organization of the irrigation; the higher level of responsibility may have led to a raise in salary.

<sup>5</sup> See the calendar in H.-J. Drexhage, “Λάχανον und Λαχανοπώλαι im römischen Ägypten (1.–3. Jh. n. Chr.),” *MBAH* 9.2 (1990) 88–117, at 101–102.

<sup>6</sup> See the many different possibilities listed by S. Tost in *Stud.Pal.* 3(2).1: “Urkundenschemata und Formulartypen” (pp. LIX–LXVII, with table on 239–246). For receipts in ‘contract-style’ see pp. LIX–LX including some examples from the Herakleopolite nome (texts 64, 66 and 67).

(l. 2), where also the vegetable-garden was located (τῆς αὐτῆς κ]ώμης, l. 4). Logically, the senders of the receipt (plural because of πεποιήμεθα in l. 6), would have lived in the village, while the payer of the money, who may have been a landowner or his representative (cf. γεουκιῆς, l. 3), lived in the city.<sup>7</sup>

Many similar Byzantine receipts of varying format and formulary were recently republished in *Stud.Pal.* 3(2).1–3. A close parallel to the present text, but differently styled, is *Stud.Pal.* 3(2).2.86, in which a farmer confirms the receipt of “another gold *solidus*” for wages for irrigation work in a vineyard (593, Herakleopolis). Like that text, the present papyrus will have ended with the indiction number and a notary’s signature in a last, seventh line of writing.

The text is written against the fibers (*transversa charta*) on a middle-brown papyrus of good quality, with a few wormholes. The papyrus is broken off along its bottom and on the left side, where about 25–33 characters may be missing in each line.<sup>8</sup> Most of the first two lines is also lost. Parts of the top edge seem to be preserved, with a top margin of ca. 0.8 cm. In line 4, an ink spot partly obscures the word τῆς. The experienced, rather irregular handwriting is comparable with the Herakleopolite writing style<sup>9</sup> of, e.g., *Stud.Pal.* 20.127 (463), *P.Rain.Cent.* 106 (475), *Stud.Pal.* 8.772 (468 or 483) or the above-mentioned *Stud.Pal.* 3(2).1.86 (593). The exact same abbreviation for π(αρά) (l. 5) is found in, e.g., *Stud.Pal.* 3(2).2.206 + 354.3 (VI–VII, Herakleopolite nome). Although the handwriting could point to the second half of the fifth century, the text may also be from a

<sup>7</sup> If, however, the supplement τῶ θαν]μασι[ω]τά[τω would be accepted (see note to l. 2), this must have been the title of the addressee, with the receivers of the money living in the city and the payer in the village.

<sup>8</sup> The missing part on the left could not have been much more than ca. 5 cm wide, when based on the average width of 30 cm (being the original height of the papyrus roll); see J.-L. Fournet, “Esquisse d’une anatomie de la lettre antique tardive d’après les papyrus,” in R. Delmaire, J. Desmulliez, and P.-L. Gatier (eds.), *Correspondances: Documents pour l’histoire de l’antiquité tardive. Actes du colloque international Université Charles-de-Gaulle-Lille 3, 22–22 novembre 2003* (Lyon 2009) 31. This would not easily allow for the clearly needed supplement in line 5.

Fortunately, the parallel receipt mentioned above, *Stud.Pal.* 3(2).1.86, uses a similar format and has a width of 34.1 cm. The text preserved on the present papyrus, with a varying margin on the right, takes up ca. 19 cm in width. Assuming a total width of ca. 34 cm, ca. 15 cm of (the top layer of the) papyrus would have broken off. With 44, 42, and 34 characters (ll. 4–6, varying in size and spacing) on a width of 19 cm, the lacuna on the left could have held, allowing for a narrow margin as in *Stud.Pal.* 3(2).1.86, between 25 and 33 characters.

<sup>9</sup> See B. Rom and H. Harrauer, “Drei byzantinische Papyri,” *ZPE* 54 (1984) 95–96 or H. Harrauer, *Handbuch der griechischen Paläographie, Textband* (Stuttgart 2010) 77–78.

later date, since many of the cited parallels are from the first half of the sixth century or even later. The *verso* is empty.<sup>10</sup>

- ↓ [ *N.N.* ca. 25–33 ] . εἰς . [ . ] . [ ca. 17–25 ἀφ’  
 Ἡρακλέους (?) π]όλεω[ς]  
 [ *N.N.* καὶ *N.N.* ca. 22–30 ]μασι[ . ]τα[ — ἀπὸ κόμης — τοῦ  
 Ἡρακλεοπο]λ[ίτου] νομοῦ.  
 [Ἔσχαμεν (?) ca. 18–26 ] ἀρδείας τῶν [ ca. 29–37 ] τῆς  
 γεουχικῆς κηπολαχανί(ας)  
 [καὶ (?) — — — τῆς αὐτῆς κ]ώμης (ὕπερ) τῆς καταβολῆς τοῦ  
 Φαρμουθι μηνὸς τῆς παρούσης  
 5 [(*number*) ἰνδ(ικτιόνος) χρυσοῦ νομισμάτια] τέσσαρα παρὰ  
 κεράτια εἴκοσι τέσσαρα (γίνονται) χρ(υσοῦ) νο(μισμάτια) δ  
 π(αρὰ) κερ(άτια) κδ  
 [ ca. 25–33 ] πεποιήμεθα τὴν ἀπόδε[ι]ξιν γραφ(εῖσαν)  
 μη(νὶ) Παῦνι δ  
 [ *x* ἰνδ(ικτιόνος) (*notary’s signature*) — — — ]

3 κηπολαχανί 4 ϗ pap. 5 (γίνονται): / pap. χρ pap. ὁ pap. π pap. κερ pap.  
 6 γραφ pap. φ corr. from μ μη pap.

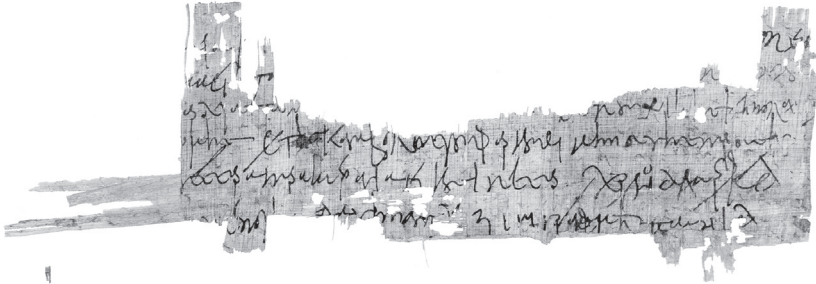


Fig. 1: P.Vindob. G 26628  
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“[To *N.N.* from the] city [of Herakleopolis (?) ... *N.N.* and *N.N.* ... from the village of ... of the ... Herakleopolite] nome. [We have received from you for the wages for (?)] irrigation of the [*x arouras*(?)] of the vegetable-garden belonging to the landowner [ and ... of the same] village, for the instalment of the month Pharmouthi of the current [*x*th indiction, gold *solidi*] four minus twenty-four *siliquae*, equals 4 gold *solidi* minus

<sup>10</sup> See also the information and digital image at <http://data.onb.ac.at/rec/RZ00010809>.

24 *siliquae* [... and for your security] we have made the receipt that was written in the month of Payni on the 4th, of the [xth indiction. Through me, (notary)].”

1 ] . ξιϣυ . [: or ] . ϣιϣυ . [: the letter following υ could be a tall *iota* as the start of a new word. Probably part of the name(s) or title(s) of the addressee of the receipt.

2 [ *N.N.* και *N.N.* ]μασι[ . ]τα[: the remaining letters here should be part of the names of the receivers of the money, e.g. Κωμάσιος (TM Nam 10053); but other word divisions are possible. Although it seems very attractive to supplement τῷ θαυ]μασι[ω]τά[τω, this was rejected because it would necessarily lead to a situation in which the payer of the wages would live in the village; one expects him to live in the city, and the agricultural workers to live in the village near their work.

– [— ἀπὸ κόμης — τοῦ Ἡρακλεοπο]λ[ίτου] νομοῦ: there is space for ca. 9–17 letters for the restoration of the final part of the names of the receivers, perhaps also their function (γεωργοί?), and the name of the village. The word κόμη is supplemented because of τῆς αὐτῆς κ]ώμης in line 4; see note below.

3 [Ἔσχαμεν (?) ca. 18–26 ]: restore e.g. [Ἔσχαμεν παρὰ σοῦ ὑπὲρ μισθοῦ] ἀρδείας. If a longer supplement is preferred, one could insert καὶ ἐδέξαμεν or καὶ ἐπληρώθημεν; for the possible length of the lacuna see above footnote 8.

– ἀρδείας: ἀρδία is a common word for “watering,” “irrigation” in the Roman and Byzantine period; for the Herakleopolite nome the only attestation of ἀρδία is found in the above-mentioned parallel text *Stud.Pal.* 3(2).2.86.3 (593). On irrigation and the vocabulary used for it see D. Bonneau, *Le régime administratif de l’eau du Nil dans l’Égypte grecque, romaine et byzantine* (Leiden 1993) 209–220; esp. 214–215 on the meaning of ἀρδεύειν, which, contrary to ποτίζειν or ἀντλεῖν, both referring to artificial irrigation with the help of machines, covers all sorts of irrigation throughout the year, often related to public estates and well paid for.

– τῶν [ ca. 29–37 ] τῆς γεουχικῆς κηπολαχανί(ας): in the lacuna, perhaps supplement the number of *arouras*, cf. *SB* 6.9459.14 (VII, Pseuenaphris, Ars.) [τῆς ἀρδείας τῶν] πεντήκοντα πέντε ζυγῶν κτλ. Other possibilities are offered in the receipts *Stud.Pal.* 3(2).2.86.3: ἀρδείας

ῆς ποιούμαι τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν ὑμετέρ(αν) αἰδεσιμ(ότητα) ἀμπελικῶν χωρίων (593, Herakleopolite nome); *P.Lond.* 3.1037.3–4: τῆς ἀρδᾶς τοῦ ὑπ’ ἐμὲ ἢ γεωργουμένου ὑμετέρου χωρίου(ν) ἀμπελικοῦ (VI, Hermopolite nome). For γεουχικῆς, “belonging to the landowner,” see Sarris (n. 3) 265–268.

– τῆς: assuming that most of the *tau* is abraded.

– κηπολαχανί(ας): the word κηπολαχανία (translated as “kitchen-garden” in LSJ) must refer to an orchard with vegetables grown under and between the trees. The word κηπολαχανία is attested in only one other papyrus: three times a μικρὰ κηπολαχανία is mentioned in the account *P.Oxy.* 16.1917.55, 60, 117 (early VI or 616–617), where they are listed under the *epoikion* Nokle (l. 45; TM Geo 6035) and under the *epoikion* Ostrakinou (l. 62; TM Geo 6128), both in the Herakleopolite nome; although it seems that the garden of l. 117 was actually located outside the *epoikion* Sasou Kato of the Oxyrhynchite nome (TM Geo 7073) (with the correction ἔσωθεν τοῦ ἐποικ(ίου) by T.M. Hickey in *ZPE* 123 [1998] 163).

Κηπολάχανον, with the same meaning as κηπολαχανία, is found in *P.Lond.* 6.1917.13: ἐν τῷ ἢ κηπολαχάνῳ, a garden attached to a monastery (ca. 330–340, Herakleopolite nome: see H. Hauben in *AncSoc* 32 [2002] 337–352; with *BL* 8.195, 12.110). The words κηπολαχανία and κηπολάχανον up to now only seem to be attested in the Herakleopolite nome, which is probably also the origin of the present text.

The separate parts of the compound κηπολαχανία, κῆπος and λαχανεύω, are found together more often and in various places, e.g., *P.Flor.* 1.16.8–9: κήπου λαχανευομένου (239, Euhemereia, Ars.), *P.Stras.* 2.122.5: κήπου λαχανευομένου (161–169, Arsinoite nome). Cf. also *CPR* 8.71.12: κήπιον λαχανευόμενον (654, Arsinoite nome), *Stud.Pal.* 10.36.2: κήπου λα[χ]άνου (VII, Arsinoite nome), *P.Louvre* 1.48.98 (212, Soknopaiou Nesos): κήπου λαχανοσπορ(ίμου) and cf. *P.Oxy.* 84.5462.13 (576–577, Oxyrhynchus): τοῖς κηπουρ(οῖς) Νήσου Λαχανίας. Cf. in general H.-J. Drexhage, “Λάχανον und Λαχανοπῶλαι” (n. 5).

4 τῆς αὐτῆς κ[ώ]μης: τῆς αὐτῆς supplied because the name of the village would have followed, not preceded, the word κώμης. Τῆς αὐτῆς κώμης would then refer to the village name mentioned in the lacuna of line 2 as the origin of the writers of this document; here it must refer to the location of the vegetable garden (and perhaps another field mentioned in the lacuna to the left).

– (ὕπερ) τῆς καταβολῆς: “for the instalment,” probably of wages for agricultural work (see introduction). The fragmentary *P.Rain.Cent.* 129 (630 or 645, Arsinoite nome), hesitatingly presented as contract or loan, might well be a similar receipt for wages for agricultural work using the word καταβολή (although καταβολή is translated as “Steuerumlage” in the note to l. 4): cf. τῶν π[αρ]’ ὑμῶν ἀρουρῶν διαφεροῦ[σῶν] (l. 3), followed by the amount of four *solidi* (l. 5) paid ὑπερ κ[ατα]β[ο]λῆς τοῦ παρόντος μηνὸς [Θ]ῶθ τῆς π[α]ρούσης x ἰνδικτίονος (l. 4). Cf. the instalments (without the word καταβολή) agreed on in a contract for agricultural work, *Stud.Pal.* 20.217.13–15: λέγω [δ]ὴ ἐπὶ μὲν μηνὸς Θῶθ | νομισμ(άτια) δύο καὶ ἐπὶ μην[ὸς] ΤϚ]βι νομ(ισμάτιον) ἐν ἡμισυ καὶ ἐπὶ μηνὸς Παῦνι | νομ(ισμάτια) δύο (581, Arsinoiton Polis).

5 [(number) ἰνδικτίονος] χρυσοῦ νομισμάτια]: the supplement in this line determines the length of the lacuna, which is however restricted by the size of the papyrus roll (see above, footnote 8). The indiction number is mostly written in full, so, depending on the length of the number, the word indiction may have been abbreviated.

– νομισμάτια] τέσσαρα παρὰ κεράτια εἴκοσι τέσσαρα: the formula νομισμάτ(ι)α x παρὰ κεράτια y is attested in papyri between 444 and the occupation of the Sassanids (619–629), mainly in the sixth century; see F. Carlà, *L’oro nella tarda antichità: aspetti economici e sociali* (Torino 2009) 367–378 and J. Banaji, “Discounts, Weight Standards and the Exchange Rate between Gold and Copper: Insights into the Monetary Process of the Sixth Century,” in J. Banaji, *Exploring the Economy of Late Antiquity: Selected Essays* (Cambridge 2016) 91–109; esp. 93–10, where it is argued that the system was used to standardize payments of different localities by converting them into the general standard used in Alexandria.

In the present text, 4 *solidi* minus 24 *siliquae* points to 1 *solidus* minus 6 *siliquae*, which used to be the standard in Hermopolis but is also attested in other regions; see the list of all attestations known up till that time in K. Maresch, *Nomisma und Nomismata* (Cologne 1994) 159–171, including one Herakleopolite text (*P.Erl.* 67) with the same ratio of minus 6 *siliquae*.

Data for the Herakleopolite nome are still scarce, but the three instances known to us all have the ratio of 6 *solidi* minus 6 *siliquae*, which again reinforces the possibility that the present text could stem from the Herakleopolite nome. They are: *SB* 26.16344.2, 8 (V): 2 *solidi* minus 12, 7 *solidi* minus 42 and 1 *solidus* minus 6 *siliquae*, *P.Erl.* 67.13–14 (591): 6 *solidi*

minus 36 *siliquae*, and *Stud.Pal.* 3(2)2.206 + 354.3 (VI–VII):  $\frac{1}{3}$  *solidus* minus 2.<sup>11</sup>

6 ] πεποιήμεθα τὴν ἀπόδε[ι]ξιν: in the lacuna, a phrase including ἀσφάλειαν is expected: καὶ πρὸς (or εἰς) τὴν σὴν ἀσφάλειαν *vel sim.* See, e.g., the Herakleopolite receipts *CPR* 5.18.20–21 (538): καὶ πρὸς σὴν ἀσφάλειαν τήνδε τὴν ἀπόδειξιν πεποιήμαι | γραφεῖσαν μηνὶ Φαρμουῦθι κτλ. and *Stud.Pal.* 3.356.4 (VI–VII): [καὶ πρὸς ὕμετ]έραν ἀσφ[άλ]ειαν π[επο]ίη[ι]μ[αι] ὕμ[ιν] τ[ῇ]ν[ν] παροῦ(σαν) ἀπόδειξιν γρ(αφεῖσαν) μην(ὶ) Χ(οιὰ)κ κτλ.

– γραφ(εῖσαν): it was more common to end a document with ἐγράφη μηνί etc., but ἀπόδειξιν is also followed by γραφεῖσαν in papyri from various places including the Herakleopolite nome, e.g. *SB* 6.9576.3 (643), *Stud.Pal.* 3.356.4 (VI–VII) and the two receipts mentioned above in note to line 6 above.

<sup>11</sup> Excluding the school exercises *P.Rain.Unterricht* 13 r<sup>o</sup> and 83 and the problematic *SB* 24.16209 (V, Herakleopolite origin uncertain). The text listed by Maresch with origin Arsinoite or Herakleopolite nome, *Stud.Pal.* 3.44.fr.2.7.12, mentioning 1 *solidus* minus  $7\frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{4}$  *siliquae*, is republished as *Stud.Pal.* 3(2).1.44 and there stated to be of unknown origin (looking at the number of *siliquae*, the text would rather stem from the Arsinoite nome).