



TYCHE

Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Herausgegeben von

Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer
Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

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Tafel 1–16

BASIL G. MANDILARAS

The Feast of Thynis — Ἐν ἑορτῇ Θύνεως

It has come to our knowledge through papyrological data that the *feast of Thynis* (ἑορτῇ Θύνεως) was celebrated at Θύνις, a village situated in the Hermopolite nome. The information we possess from the papyrus sources about the feast is so vague that we assume it was familiar to those referring to it.

Θύνις (written also as Θῖνις or Θεῖνις) was a place-name connected with two villages. (For particulars see M. Drew-Bear, *Le nome Hermopolite*, Missoula 1978, 118 – 121). The first, often appearing as κόμη Θύνεως, is found in a papyrus of A. D. 104 (P.Sarapion 15, 2), and is placed in the Hermopolite nome. Drew-Bear has collected 41 texts of Greek and 6 of Coptic papyri which record the village of Thynis. Further texts mentioning the same village have appeared since her book was published. From the chronological point of view the last reference to Thynis is made in a papyrus dating from the seventh or eighth century (CPR V 25, 7). It follows, therefore, that the tradition of the village Thynis remained intact from the beginning of the second century A. D. until after the Arab conquest. This suggests that for a period of almost seven centuries, life in the village of Thynis remained unaffected by any disruptive historical events.

A second village with the same name was situated in the district of Hermonthis (south Egypt, near Thebes). Drew-Bear observes (119 – 120): “Ce village de Θύνις est à distinguer d’une localité homonyme, située dans la région d’Hermonthis et attestée notamment par UPZ ii 196 et 180a (116 et 113 avant J.-C.), SB vi 9211a (2e siècle après J.-C.), SB x 10270 (3e).” She adds that the editors of O.Bodl. II 1830 render the provenance of five ostraca to the district of Hermonthis, since these ostraca could not possibly have come from the Hermopolite nome (namely O.Strasb. 615, 1, II A. D.; 625, i 22; ii 3, II A. D.; P.Lips. I 92, 1, II – III A. D.; O.Bodl. II 1830, 1, II – III A. D.; 2422, ii 8, III A. D.). She also mentions two more papyri, P.Lips. I 97, xv 5, A. D. 338, and P.Lond. I 125 (p. 192), 42, IV A. D. from Hermonthis which refer to a place named Θύνις.

So much for the village of Θύνις itself. For its geographical situation see A. Calderini, S. Daris, *Dizionario* II 298 with bibliography.

We now turn to “the feast of Thynis”. It has been accepted by papyrologists (if not somewhat reluctantly) that the ἑορτῇ Θύνεως was a feast which used to take place in the village Thynis. In other words, it was a local feast named after the village where it was celebrated. The content of this feast, however, has never been sufficiently revealed by ancient sources, and its date has not yet been defined by research.

In CPR V 26 a reference is made to the feast of Thynis, and the editor of this papyrus comments on the area and the precise site of the village, which he places in the district of Περὶ πόλιν ἄνω. The relevant lines read: τ]ῆς ἑορτῆ <ς> (or τ]ῆ{ς} ἑορτῆ) Θείνεως (vacat) οἴ(νου) δι(πλᾶ) κς (line 469), and similarly τῆ ἐ]ορτῆ Θύνεως (vacat) οἴ(νου)

δι(πλᾶ) κβ (line 799). It is beyond any doubt that the feast was celebrated at the village of Thynis in the Hermopolite nome, since all the villages mentioned in this text are situated within the area of this nome¹.

This papyrus is an unusually lengthy text (1037 lines), written primarily for recording the collection of taxes. Later it was used to include the personal notes of the writer, most probably a wine merchant, who was required to make some calculations on how much wine would be consumed at the feast of Thynis: i. e. 26 and 22 dipla of wine, respectively. One positive fact emerging here is that wine was an indispensable element for the feast. See PSI VII 807, 45 (A. D. 280): a list of accounts mentioning the expenses for wine ὑπὲρ ἑορτῆς. Cf. also P.Oxy. X 1297, 11 (IV A. D.); SB VI 9587, 26 (VI–VII A. D.); SB I 4483, 16 (A. D. 636). To offer wine for a feast was an old custom associated with pagan worship.

If the editor of CPR V 26 is right in dating the papyrus to the fourth century (cf. ZPE 24, 111; CPR IX 43a, CdE 58, 226), we can say that the feast of Thynis was inaugurated, at least, in that century, and that it was, presumably, a Christian feast. It is unlikely that a pagan feast would have been accepted with such vigour in a notably Christian environment.

On the nature of the feast, E. P. Wegener (the editor of PLBat. III 16) has propounded the theory that it was a harvest celebration associated with the village Thynis. He fails, however, to account for the problems involved, i. e. whether this feast was a village celebration or an expression of devotion to a Patron Saint of the village of Thynis or, finally, the name of a local deity, as expressed by the editors of P.Lond. III 1036 (p. 268); but this last one must be rejected without hesitation, since there is no Saint or Martyr under this name recorded in the Byzantine or Coptic Church Calendars². Had such deity existed, we would have some information from other literary or non-literary texts. The one we are concerned with runs as follows:

11 ὄνπερ φόρον νέον καθαρὸν κεκοσκινευμένον μέ[τ]ρφ Ἀθηναίῳ
 12 ἀποδώσω καὶ μετρήσω τῷ Ἐπειφ μηνὶ κατ' ἔτος ἀνυπερθέτως καθισ-
 13 τανόμενος αὐτὸν τὸν φόρον εἰς τὸν αὐτὸν Φιλοπώνιον ἰδίους μου
 14 ζώοις καὶ ἀναλώμασιν. Παρέξει δὲ κατ' ἔτος καὶ ἀχύρο(υ) καυσίμου
 15 σαργάνην μίαν καὶ γάλακτος χύτραν μίαν καὶ σταχύων δεμάτων δέκα
 16 καὶ ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ Θύν(εως) ὄνον ἓνα εἰς τὸ ἀπελθεῖν χωρὶς φολέτρων.

(11. κεκοσκινευμενω, 12–13 καθιστονομενον Pap.)

The text concerns arrangements of the payment of tax for the lease of some land. In addition, the tenant is obliged to provide several goods, including “one ass for/in the feast of Thynis, so that the proprietor of the land can go there without paying the cost of carriage”. An interesting point arising from this text is that the feast was considered so exceptional that the lessor mentioned it when drawing the contract, putting a condition in it for transportation, thereby allowing him to attend the feast.

¹ Cf. L. Casarico, *EOPTH e ΠΑΝΗΓΥΡΙΣ nei papiri*, Aegyptus 64 (1984) 150.

² This I have checked in O'Leary de Lacy, *The Saints in Egypt*, New York, London 1937 and V. Grumel, *La chronologie*, Paris 1958.

Given that the text enumerates goods at hand during harvest time, the editor concluded that the feast of Thynis was a harvest-feast. It is not obligatory, however, to relate the items in the text to the date of the feast, since the conjunction καί does not necessarily put all the terms of the contract on the same chronological level. Certainly it is beyond any doubt that an ass had to be provided for the occasion of the feast, but it is arbitrary to connect the other items with the feast.

It is worthwhile reexamining the three London papyri which refer to the feast of Thynis: Of these 1036 has been published in p. 268, while the other two, namely 1039 and 1056, have been described in pp. liv and lv respectively, and subsequently published by G. Parássoglou in Ἑλληνικά 37 (1986) 77–79; 80–82. No. 1039 has a reference to the feast of Thynis similar to that of 1036, 9 and 1056, 13, i. e. οἶνο(υ) ἀγ[γίον παλαιὸν ἔ]ν ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ Θύνεως (revised reading: it could be equally ἀγ[γεῖον μέγα ἔ]ν as supplemented by G. Parássoglou). No. 1056 has preserved the second part of a lease, the terms of which include a contribution of a cask of wine paid yearly at the feast of Thynis. Both these papyri support the view that wine was indispensable to the feast and justify the expression λόγῳ συνηθείας which occurs in 1036, 7. No. 1036 is an acceptance of a lease of land with a yearly rent of 27 carats and a further payment in wine at the feast of Thynis; as with the previous two, it dates to the sixth or seventh century³. The text also refers to the “standard of Hermopolis”, thus identifying the village with that of Thynis.

The text runs as follows (revised reading).

- 1 [σπο]ρά[ν καὶ κατὰθεσιν] καρπῶν ὧν ἂν αἰρῶμαι
 2 φόρου τῶν αὐτῶν δύο ἄρου[ρ]ῶν κατ' ἔτος χρυσοῦ
 3 νομισματίου ἑνὸς ἡμίσεως παρὰ κεράτια ἑννέα
 4 ζυγῶ Ἐρμοῦ πόλεως γι/ χρ/ νο/ αL π/ κερ/ θ// ὄνπερ
 5 χρυσικὸν φόρον ἀπ[ο]δώσω σοι οὕτως. Ἐν μὲν
 6 νόμισμα παρὰ κερ/ ἕξ ἐν τῷ Φαῶφι μηνὶ κατ' ἔτος, τὰ δὲ
 7 κεράτια ἑννέα ἐν τῷ Φαμενώθ μηνὶ κατ' ἔτος ἀνυπερθέτ(ως).
 8 Δώσω δὲ κατ' ἔτος λόγῳ σ[υν]ηθείας ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ Θύνεως
 9 οἶνο(υ) ἀγγίον μέγα ἐν καὶ πινάκιον μεστὸν διαφόρων
 10 [βρωμάτων] . [] . [] .

Lines 9–10 have been rightly supplemented by E. P. Wegener (see PLBat. III 16, p. 78). The correction is also recorded in BL III 95. For parallels see SB IV 7369, 17 (A. D. 512); BGU XII 2175, 6–7 (V–VI A. D.).

This text provides us with considerable information about the feast. Firstly, we learn that the supply of wine was an “obligatory contribution” (not a “customary present”)⁴, while the wine could be accompanied by other goods as well. Since the second payment was to be made in the month of Phamenoth (= 25 Feb. – 26 March), i. e. six months after the first installment in Phaophi (= 28 Sept. – 27 Oct.), it is obvious that the wine

³ L. Casarico, *Aegyptus* 64 (1984) 151 attributes P.Lond. 1036 to the sixth century.

⁴ For the correct interpretation of this expression see G. Rouillard, *L'administration civile*, Paris 1928, 76–81.

was given with the second — and last within a period of twelve months — installment at the end of Phamenoth, i. e. on the 26th of March. That would be the date of the feast. This is further exemplified by P.Sta. Xyla Inv. 0/154, a papyrus of the sixth century A. D. containing the text of a contract made for the sale of wine on delivery. The text in question runs as follows:

- 7 Eἰ δὲ ἐδρηθ[εῖη]
8 ὄξος ἢ ἀποι[ητ]οῦς ἢ ὀ[ζ]όμε[νος] ἐκ [τοῦ]
9 αὐτοῦ οἴνου ἕως ἑορτῆ <ς> Θείνως
10 τοῦ Φαμενώθ μηνὸς τῆς παρού-
11 σης τρίτης ἰνδικ(τίονος)

This text enables us to place the date of the feast of Thynis to the end of month Phamenoth, i. e. on the 26th of March, as this is agreed to be the last day of the testing period of the wine. This date falls within the same indiction in which the wine was bought. The date must fall before May, when the indiction would change into the following one. It further means that the feast could not take place in harvest time, when we would have the next indiction. On the other hand, according to the Christian Church Calendar (cf. O'Leary, *The Saints of Egypt* on the date of 26 March) the last day of Phamenoth was the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. We are surely justified in concluding that the ἑορτὴ Θύνως can be identified with Ἀνάστασις. It seems that the Christians were somewhat restricted to refer to Ἀνάστασις by name. Out of the whole corpus of the Byzantine papyri we have only one reference to it, namely P.Oxy. XXVII 2480, 84 (A. D. 565–566?) ἐν τῇ ἀγί(α) Ἀναστάσει ὄξ(ου)ς δι(πλᾶ) β and line 94 of the same papyrus ἐν τῇ ἀγί(α) Ἀναστάσει κατὰ τὸ ἔθ(ος) καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ἰδ ἰνδ(ικτίονος) οἴν(ου) δι(πλᾶ) δ. Both sentences are constructed in a wording similar to that we find “in the feast of Thynis”.