



TYCHE

**Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte
Papyrologie und Epigraphik**

Herausgegeben von

Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer
Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

Band 12, 1997

1997

WILHELM FUNK



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H O L Z H A U S E N

Herausgegeben von:

Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer, Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

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I N H A L T S V E R Z E I C H N I S

Christer B r u n n (Rom): Kaiser Elagabal und ein neues Zeugnis für den Kult des Sonnengottes Elagabalus in Italien	1
Loredana C a p p e l l e t t i (Wien): Il ruolo dei <i>fetiales</i> e il concetto di <i>civitas</i> in Liv. IX 45, 5–9	7
Andrew F a r r i n g t o n (Athen): Olympic Victors and the Popularity of the Olympic Games in the Imperial Period	15
Nikolaos G o n i s (Oxford): Troubled Fields. CPR VII 52 Revised	47
Céline G r a s s i e n (Paris): Deux hymnes et une litanie chrétiennes byzantines conservées par le P.Rainer Cent. 31 et cinq autres témoins (Tafel 1–6)	51
Andrew P. G r e g o r y (New Haven): A New and Some Overlooked Patrons of Greek Cities in the Early Principate (Tafel 7)	85
Wolfgang H a b e r m a n n (Heidelberg): Varia curiosa: Einige Bemerkungen zum 23. Juni in der papyrologischen Überlieferung	93
Klaus H a l l o f (Berlin): Ein Gott als samischer Eponym. SEG XXVII 510 (Tafel 8–9)	97
Peter H e r r m a n n (Hamburg): Die Karriere eines prominenten Juristen aus Thyateira (Tafel 10)	111
Francisca A. J. H o o g e n d i j k (Leiden): Ein Unicum beim ägyptischen Zensus-Vorgang. Die zusätzliche Eingabe SPP II, S. 31 (Tafel 11)	125
Werner H u ß (Bamberg): Ägyptische Kollaborateure in persischer Zeit	131
Anne K o l b (Zürich), Joachim O t t (Bonn): Eine neue römische Grabinschrift aus Riedstadt (Tafel 12)	145
Thomas K r u s e (Bielefeld): Zum βασιλικὸς γραμματεὺς im ptolemäischen Ägypten. Bemerkungen zu J. F. Oates, <i>The Ptolemaic Basilikos Grammateus</i>	149
Vasile L i c a (Galați): Die siebente Akklamation Octavians	159
Christian M a r e k (Zürich): Teos und Abdera nach dem Dritten Makedonischen Krieg. Eine neue Ehreninschrift für den Demos von Teos (Tafel 13)	169
Panagiota S a r i s c h o u l i (Berlin): Wiener Papyri aus byzantinischer und arabischer Zeit (Tafel 14–17)	179
Ralf S c h a r f (Heidelberg): <i>Constantiniaci</i> = <i>Constantiniani</i> ? Ein Beitrag zur Textkritik der Notitia Dignitatum am Beispiel der „constantinischen“ Truppen	189
Reinhold S c h o l l (Leipzig): Phylen und Buleuten in Naukratis. Ein neues Fragment zur Inschrift SB VIII 9747 (Tafel 18)	213
Klaus T a u s e n d (Graz): Lugier — Vandilier — Vandalen	229
Sophia Z o u m b a k i (Athen): Zum sozialen Status der Epispondorchester von Olympia	237

Bemerkungen zu Papyri X (<Korr. Tyche> 231–249)	245
Buchbesprechungen	259
Richard A l s t o n : <i>Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt. A Social History</i> . London 1995 (M. P. Speidel: 259) — Pedro B a r c e l ó : <i>Altertum</i> , Weinheim, 2. Aufl. 1994 (P. Siewert: 259) — Holger B e h r : <i>Die Selbstdarstellung Sullas. Ein aristokratischer Politiker zwischen persönlichem Führungsanspruch und Standessolidarität</i> . Frankfurt am Main 1993 (G. Dobesch: 260) — Laurent B r i c a u l t : <i>Myrionymii. Les épicles grecques et latines d'Isis, de Sarapis et d'Anubis</i> . Stuttgart 1996 (H. Harrauer: 261) — Michel C a s e v i t z : <i>Le vocabulaire de la colonisation grec ancien. Étude lexicologique: les familles de κτίζω et de οἰκέω-οἰκίζω</i> , Paris 1985 (P. Siewert: 262) — Laura C h i o f f i : <i>Gli elogia augustei del Foro Romano. Aspetti epigrafici e topografici</i> . Roma 1996 (G. Dobesch: 262) — Raffaella C r i b i o r e : <i>Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt</i> . Atlanta 1996 (P. Arzt: 263) — Traianos G a g o s, Peter v a n M i n n e n : <i>Settling a Dispute. Toward a Legal Anthropology of Late Antique Egypt</i> . Ann Arbor 1994 (H.-A. Rupprecht: 264) — Christian H a b i c h t : <i>Athen in hellenistischer Zeit. Gesammelte Aufsätze</i> . München 1994 (P. Siewert: 269) — Clemens H e u c k e : <i>Circus und Hippodrom als politischer Raum. Untersuchungen zum großen Hippodrom von Konstantinopel und zu entsprechenden Anlagen in spätantiken Kaiserresidenzen</i> . Hildesheim 1994 (G. Dobesch: 270) — Günther H ö l b l : <i>Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches. Politik, Ideologie und religiöse Kultur von Alexander dem Großen bis zur römischen Eroberung</i> . Darmstadt 1994 (F. Mitthof: 271) — B. K r e m e r : <i>Das Bild der Kelten bis in augusteische Zeit. Studien zur Instrumentalisierung eines antiken Feindbildes bei griechischen und römischen Autoren</i> . Stuttgart 1994 (K. Tomaschitz: 275) — J. N o l l é : <i>Side im Altertum. Geschichte und Zeugnisse</i> , Band I. Bonn 1993 (K. Tomaschitz: 279) — Claudia-Maria P e r k o u n i g : <i>Livia Drusilla – Julia Augusta. Das politische Porträt der ersten Kaiserin Roms</i> . Wien 1995 (G. Dobesch: 280) — J. R u d h a r d t : <i>Notions fondamentales de la pensée religieuse et actes constitutifs du culte dans la Grèce classique</i> . Paris 2. Aufl. 1992 (P. Siewert: 282) — <i>Germani in Italia</i> . A cura di Barbara e Piergiuseppe S c a r d i g l i , Roma 1994 (G. Dobesch: 283) — Argyro B. T a t a k i : <i>Macedonian Edessa. Prosopography and Onomasticon</i> . Athens 1994 (E. Kettenhofen: 284) — Uwe W a l t e r : <i>An der Polis teilhaben. Bürgerstaat und Zugehörigkeit im Archaischen Griechenland</i> . Stuttgart 1993 (P. Siewert: 286) — Heikki S o l i n , <i>Namenpaare. Eine Studie zur römischen Namengebung</i> , Helsinki 1990 (W. Hameter: 287) — E. W. H a n d l e y , H. G. I o a n n i d o u , P. J. P a r s o n s , J. E. G. W h i t e h o r n e , <i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume LIX, Nos. 3963–4008</i> . London 1992 (B. Palme: 287)	
Indices (J. Diethart)	289
Tafeln 1–18	

ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ ΓΟΝΙΣ

Troubled Fields

CPR VII 52 Revised

CPR VII 52 preserves the lower part of „a business letter containing many difficulties of reading and interpretation“ (P.Oxy. XLIX 3489, 3n.), which the editor assigned on palaeographical grounds to the early first century AD. On the basis of the photograph (Taf. 37) an important correction for lines 5–6 was offered in P.Oxy. XLIX 3489, 3n. (= BL VIII 114). Based on the same photograph I present below a new version of the text with translation and commentary, which, despite some uncertainties, I hope makes the understanding of the text smoother and easier to obtain¹.

 1 $\sigma\upsilon\tau\alpha\varsigma \ \xi\alpha\sigma\tau \ \dots \ \kappa\omega\iota$
 2 $\lambda\upsilon\theta\eta\iota \ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\upsilon\varsigma. \ \gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\omega\sigma\kappa\epsilon \ \delta\grave{\epsilon}$
 3 $\acute{o}\tau\iota \ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\alpha\kappa\alpha \ \pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \mu\iota\sigma\theta\acute{o}\nu \ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha$
 4 $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\iota \ \text{Ἡρακλᾶτι}. \ \pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\eta}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha-$
 5 $\varsigma \ \delta\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma \ \pi\alpha\upsilon\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\theta\alpha, \ \acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota$
 6 $\omicron\iota \ \text{Περετνουῖται} \ \lambda\upsilon\pi\acute{\omega}\sigma\iota\nu$
 7 $\tau\acute{\alpha}[\varsigma] \ \acute{\alpha}\nu\kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha\varsigma \ \acute{\eta}\mu\acute{\omega}\nu. \ \pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota} \ \delta\acute{\epsilon}$
 8 $\tau\acute{\omega}\nu \ \theta\epsilon\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\omega}\nu \ \gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\omega\sigma\kappa\epsilon \ \acute{\upsilon}-$
 9 $\tau\iota \ \sigma\upsilon \ \pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \mu\iota\sigma\theta\acute{o}\nu \ \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\upsilon\varsigma \ \theta\epsilon\rho-$
 10 $\acute{\iota}\sigma\sigma\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu, \ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha} \ \pi\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \ \acute{\alpha}\rho\omicron\upsilon\rho\iota\sigma\mu-$
 11 $\acute{o}\nu \ \theta\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\zeta\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\nu \ \acute{\epsilon}\kappa\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\eta\varsigma \ \acute{\alpha}\rho-$
 12 $\omicron\upsilon\rho\eta\varsigma \ \acute{\alpha}\nu(\acute{\alpha}) \ (\delta\rho\alpha\chi\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma) \ \beta \ (\tau\rho\iota\acute{\omega}\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\nu). \ \epsilon\upsilon\tau\acute{\upsilon}\chi\eta\iota.$

Back: 13 $\text{Παχῶ(ν)} \ \overline{\iota\beta}$

2, 8 *l.* γίνωσκε 4 *l.* Ἡρακλᾶτος 5 *l.* παυσόμεθα, ἐπεὶ 7 *l.* ἀγκάλας 9 *l.* αὐτοὶ 10. -σιν *v ex corr.*
 12 *av l.* εὐτύχει

„.... Know that I hired a man for wages in the place of Heraklas. We shall stop binding for some days, since the inhabitants of Pheretnouis are damaging our sheaves.

¹ I had the opportunity of discussing various points of this paper with Prof. M. Manfredi and Prof. G. Messeri-Savorelli (Florence), Dr. J. R. Rea and Mr. M. L. Sharp (Oxford), and Dr. A. Papatthomas (Salzburg): to all my thanks. Of course I alone am responsible for the views expressed here.

As for the harvesters, know that they are not going to harvest for wages, but they harvest according to the measuring in arourae, charging two drachmas and three obols for each aroura. Farewell“.

1. I reproduce the transcription of the first editor. Of the line mainly letter-feet survive, and I am unable to make out anything different.

2. λυθῆ: λυθη *ed. pr.*, but the way line 1 ends rules out ἐλύθη. I do not see how to restore its context convincingly. One may consider κω{ι}λυθῆ (for the erroneous addition of ι to ω in medial position *cf.* F. Th. Gignac, *The Grammar of the Greek Papyri* I, Milano 1976, 185f.), but it is hard to associate the passive form with αὐτούς.

3. ὄτι: ὄτι *ed. pr.* The dotted letters have suffered from damage, which renders reading doubtful. Comparison of the group τι in lines 4 and 9 makes reading it here rather difficult, but the construction of γείνωσκε with ὄτι receives support from lines 9–10, and indeed suits sense and syntax very well. It should also be said that the writer often changes the *ductus* of his letters.

ἔστακα is usually transitive, *cf.* P.Oxy. XXXIV 2729, 25n.; also Gignac, *Grammar* II, Milano 1981, 396f. (In P.Oxy. XXXVIII 2835, 8, a private letter from the archive of Komon, not much later in date than our papyrus (mid-I cent.), the editor reads ἔστα(λ)κα πρὸς αὐτόν?. It is to be queried whether this is not another example of the construction of ἔστακα with πρὸς, and we should eliminate the added lambda.)

4. ἀντί Ἡρακλᾶτι. Solecisms in the use of prepositions are not unusual, *cf.* E. Mayser, *Grammatik* II 2, 367f., but I have found no example of ἀντί with dative.

πρὸς ἡμέρας. Accusative plural rather than (a solecistic) genitive singular. I have found this prepositional construction only in P.Oxy. XVIII 2190, 40, a letter of the late first century AD. The translations offered for that passage differ slightly; C. H. Roberts (*ed. pr.*) translated „daily“, while J. R. Rea (ZPE 99 [1993] 78) opts for „every few days“. Neither of these renderings can be applied here. Furthermore, one may notice that the construction πρὸς + acc., when conveying temporal sense, signifies either *Zeitraum* or *Zeitpunkt*, see Mayser, *op. cit.* 499; „every few days“ does not fall within any of the two semantic areas. I believe that the meaning of πρὸς ἡμέρας must be equivalent to the more frequent πρὸς ὀλίγας ἡμέρας „for the space of a few days“ (P.Oxy. XXXI 2595, 5–6n.)². I should thus be inclined to translate πρὸς ἡμέρας as „for a few days“ both here and in P.Oxy. XVIII 2190, 40.

5. δέσεως παυσώμεθα (1. παυσόμεθα): δὺς. πευσώμεθα *ed. pr.* This reading caused much trouble in the commentary, which can now be ignored. The shape of alpha in παυσώμεθα is virtually the same as in Περερνουῖται in line 6. The new decipherment renders the punctuation of the *ed. pr.* impossible, and one should now put a full point after Ἡρακλᾶτι in line 4.

5–6. ἐπὶ οἱ Περερνουῖται λυπῶσιν. *Ed. pr.* ἠὰ ἐὰ οὔπερ ἐγνονταὶ λύσῶσιν.

6. Περερνουῖται. The mention of Περερνουῖται provides the only clue to the provenance of this papyrus. In P.Oxy. XLIX 3489, 3n. we read that „Oxyrhynchus seems a more likely provenance for this text than anywhere in the Cynopolite nome“; this assertion has found its place also in BL VIII 114 and in the *Dizionario Geografico*. But this is no more than a possibility; we may only infer that the writer of the letter was in the vicinity of Pheretnouis, be it in the Cynopolite or the Oxyrhynchite nome. For the location of P(h)eretnouis, see the *Tübinger Atlas* B 69, map 2, where it is doubtfully identified with the modern village Bardanuha; P. J. Sijpesteijn, K. A. Worp, P. Vind. Pher., p. 7ff.; N. Litinas, APF 40 (1994) 159f.; and J. Rowlandson, *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt*, Cambridge 1995, 11.

² This prepositional construction occurs in, e.g., P.Oxy. XLVII 3356, 5f. (76), P.Bad. II 42, 10f. (ii), P.Flor. II 150, 5 (iii), P.Oxy. XXXI 2595, 5f. (iii), LV 3793, 12 (340).

7. ἀγκάλας, ἀγκάλη is a technical term, often interpreted as a measure; cf. D. Foraboschi, *Parola del Passato* 121 (1968) 314. As far as our evidence goes, it was used for hay, fenugreek, and vines. We are not told which agricultural product is concerned here, but the mention of harvesters may give us a clue. In the agricultural account SB VIII 9699 (= P.Lond. I 131) we find a report of a harvest of fenugreek taking place between 7 and 12 May 79, and ἀγκάλαι is the word used for its sheaves (lines 599, 615, 623). In the same document some of the fields are said to produce both grain and fenugreek; perhaps the situation is not much different here. The date of this letter (12 Pachon = 7 May) seems to favour the hypothesis. (For fenugreek in Hellenistic Egypt see M. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Aegypten*, München 1925, 195f.) The stage when ἀγκάλαι were made was known as δέσις; cf. P.Oxy. XLVII 3354, 9 (257) and XVI 1631, 9 (280), where we find ἀνκαλισμὸς καὶ δέσις ἀγκάλων juxtaposed — but there the reference is to the cut-off shoots of vines.

8. θεριστῶν. For harvesting in Hellenistic Egypt see Schnebel, *op. cit.* 162ff., and in the Roman Empire K. D. White, *Roman Farming*, London 1970, 182ff.

9. οὐ: ἐά (l. ἐάν) *ed. pr.* The editor's commentary on 9–12 reads: „Der erste Buchstabe ist e oder o; ἐά(ν) paßt besser zu dem Zusammenhang als οὐ“³. The plate shows that ἐα is virtually impossible (ε cannot be read); further, although ἐά is not unattested, it always precedes a word beginning with a liquid, nasal or sibilant, see Gignac, *Grammar* I 112, and not a voiceless stop as here. On the other hand, the context makes οὐ appear unavoidable (I rely on my reading ἀλλὰ in line 10), and on this I have based my translation and interpretation. But there is some palaeographic difficulty: although there is no problem with *omicron*, and after it the traces at the upper part of the line suggest a v-shaped *upsilon* (the dotted *alpha* of the *ed. pr.*), I cannot account for what appears as a rightwards-curved letter-foot lower in the line. Perhaps it is only accidental, but certainty is denied us.

αὐτούς. The editor notes „αὐτούς Z. 9 scheint auf die Schnitter hinzuweisen, aber es ist kein Verb vorhanden, als dessen Objekt es stehen könnte“. I would share the view that αὐτούς must refer to the harvesters — it clearly picks up something mentioned before — but is not the object of any verb: I believe the scribe wrote αὐτούς instead of αὐτοί, as if the pronoun depended on γείνωσκε; for verb subjects found in the accusative see S. G. Kapsomenakis, *Voruntersuchungen zu einer Grammatik der Papyri*, München 1938, 108f.⁴ Alternatively, αὐτούς could be taken as the object of θερίζουσιν, and refer to the crop (we find αὐτούς also in line 2, although the context there is even more unclear). There is nothing very obvious, however, that would suit. P.Flor. I 80, 7f. (i/ii) θερίζοντες οὓς ἔχεις [π]υρίνους σπόρους (similarly PSI VII 789, 3) may provide a parallel for a similar construction, but I doubt whether the writer of this letter had this legalistic and hardly colloquial phrase in mind⁵.

9–10. θερίζουσιν: θερίσωσιν *ed. pr.* θερίσωσιν seems conditioned by the editor's reading ἐά earlier in the line, but is palaeographically impossible. After the putative *sigma* there is a large hole, at the bottom of which some ink is visible; after the hole what can be seen on the plate is not incompatible with the right-hand loop of *omega*. But the editor's reading would leave the ink on the lower edge of the hole, which cannot belong to *omega*, unexplained; and if that ink is nothing but accident, one would have to assume that several millimetres of papyrus between *sigma* and *omega* remained blank, something for which the rest of the papyrus provides no parallel. I believe that the papyrus had θερίζουσιν: I take the low trace as the base of a large *omicron*, such as the *omicron* which starts line 12, and the stroke after the hole as the right-hand part of the bowl of *upsilon*. No trace of the descender of the presumed *upsilon* is clearly visible, but some specks of ink close to the lower right-hand edge of the break, if not

³ The *ed. pr.* offers the following translation: „Über die Erntearbeiter wisse, dass, wenn sie für Lohn die Erntearbeit leisten ..., sie nach der Vermessung der Aruren für einen Lohn von zwei Drachmen drei Obolen für jede Arure ernten“.

⁴ Cf. also P.Harris II 235, 9f. (iii/iv) οἶδας ὅτι "Αννειλαν ἐν τῷ Ὀξυρυγγεΐτῃ ἔσσιν.

⁵ I have also considered, but think it unlikely, that αὐτούς stands for something like τοὺς ἀγρούς/κλήρους.

accidental, may have been part of the missing descender; the rest of the descender may have been rubbed away, although from the plate I cannot confirm it. $\omicron\upsilon$ also satisfies spacing better. And I would not completely rule out the possibility that there was some correction of the writing lost in the lacuna; the last two letters of the word seem to be a correction. Finally, if $\omicron\upsilon$ in line 9 is secure, we should seek an indicative.

ἀλλὰ: ἀλ *ed. pr.*, commenting that before πρὸς „sind die unteren nach links gebogenen Teile der zwei Vertikalen zu sehen, viele verschiedene Möglichkeiten stehen aber offen“. Despite some palaeographic ambiguity, I think ἀλλὰ is inevitable: it receives support from the general run of the text, which now becomes smoother and more intelligible. The two „Vertikalen“ do not exclude the sequence λα. *Lambda* is easier to admit than *alpha*. The latter in this shape is not exactly paralleled in the rest of the text, but may be — although somewhat remotely — compared with the second *alpha* of ἔστακα in l. 3, or the third of ἀνκάλας in l. 7.

9–12. In agricultural works payments were made either by day or according to the work performed, calculated on the basis of the number of arourae (harvested in our case). On hired agricultural labourers see White, *op. cit.* 347, and D. W. Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third-Century AD Egypt*, Cambridge 1991, 148ff. For a discussion of harvesters' payments in Roman Egypt see D. Foraboschi, *SCO* 21 (1972) 44ff., and H. Drexhage, *Preise, Miete/Pachten, Kosten und Löhne*, St. Katharinen 1991, 408ff. (Foraboschi lists the evidence for harvesters' payments on p. 44 — note that many of his data are missing from Drexhage). Harvesters were either contracted, and their payment was according to the number of arourae they would harvest, as is shown by P.Mich. II 123r xiii 26 (45/7), P.Flor. I 80 (i), 101 (i/ii), PSI VII 789 (i/ii), P.Sarap. 51 (125), or they were paid daily wages, as on the estates of Epimachus, the descendants of Laches, or Appianus. Our text provides evidence for both practices. The worker employed πρὸς ἡμέρας was paid daily wages, independently from the amount of land he harvested. But this method of payment was not accepted by the θερισταί of l. 8, who claimed 2 dr. 3 ob. for every aroura they would harvest. This may imply that groups of agricultural workers did not favour payments by day, which seems to have been the rule with individual workers, but tended to prefer a payment according to the amount of work done in the fields.

πρὸς μισθὸν *prima facie* seems to be the opposite to πρὸς ἀρουρισμόν. But μισθός applies to all kinds of wages (for the term *cf.* Rathbone, *op. cit.* 92), and the two drachmas and three obols per aroura is a μισθός. Compare the clauses in the labour contracts of harvesters P.Flor. I 80, 10ff. μισθοῦ ἐκάστης ἀρούρης ... πυροῦ ἀρτάβης ἡμισυ; P.Flor. I 101, 3ff. ὑπὲρ μισθοῦ θερισμοῦ [ὁ] ἐκάστης ἀρούρης πυροῦ ἀρτάβης ἡμισυ τρίτου; similarly P.Sarap. 51 and P.Oxy. XLVII 3354, 20. In all these their payment is invariably called μισθός, and is made πρὸς ἀρουρισμόν. Thus I think that μισθός here means „daily wages“, ἡμερήσιος μισθός, as in, *e. g.*, P.Fay. 91, 23 (99).

The only other example of contracted harvesters paid in cash is P.Mich. II 123r xiii 26 of 45/7, where the rate is 4 dr. per aroura. There is no means of knowing the market value of 2 dr. 3 ob. at the time of our letter. The prices of wheat in the first century fluctuated considerably, see the tabulated data in Drexhage, *op. cit.* 13f.

11. θερίζουσιν. The commentary wavers between third person plural indicative and dative plural of the participle, but a participle is plainly impossible.

11–12. ἀρούρης: ἀρούρ[α]ς *ed. pr.* The right-hand hasta and the tip of the crossbar of *eta* are clearly visible on the photograph. ἀρούρης is the form we should normally expect, but we often find the form in -ας in the expression ἐκάστης ἀρούρας, *cf.* Gignac, *Grammar* II 4.