



TYCHE

Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte Papyrologie und Epigraphik

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

Petra A m a n n (Wien): Das konstantinische „Reskript von Hispellum“ (CIL XI 5265) und seine Aussagekraft für die etrusko-umbrischen Beziehungen (Tafel 1–3)	1
Roger S. B a g n a l l (New York), Klaas A. W o r p (Amsterdam): The Receipt for Wheat from Abusir	29
Michel C h r i s t o l (Paris), Thomas D r e w - B e a r (Lyon): Le <i>*tutor cessionarius</i> de Tralles	31
Gerhard D o b e s c h (Wien): Caesars Urteil über Ciceros Bedeutung — Gedanken zu Cic. <i>Brut.</i> 253 und Plin. <i>n. h.</i> 7, 117	39
Gerhard D o b e s c h (Wien): Noch einmal der Tod des Kaisers Claudius in der <i>Apokolokyntosis</i>	63
R. Malcolm E r r i n g t o n (Marburg): A Note on the Augustal Prefect of Egypt	69
Hans F ö r s t e r (Wien): „Ich habe gehört: Du bist betrübt“ — Ein Text aus dem Schenute-Archiv (P.Vindob. K 4716) (Tafel 4)	79
Nikolaos G o n i s (Oxford): Studies on the Aristocracy of Late Antique Oxyrhynchus (Tafel 5)	85
Hermann H a r r a u e r , Federico M o r e l l i (Wien): Eine bisher unerkannte mathematische Aufgabe (Tafel 6)	99
Elisabeth K o s m e t a t o u (Leuven): Remarks on a Delphic Ptolemaic Dynastic Group Monument	103
Barnabás L ő r i n c z (Budapest): <i>Amici</i> in Pannonien	113
Fritz M i t t h o f (Wien): Munatidius Merula, ritterlicher Procurator und stellvertretender Dioiket der Provinz Ägypten im Jahre 201 n. Chr.? (Tafel 6–7)	121
Marjeta Š a š e l K o s (Ljubljana): The Festival of Carna at Emona (Tafel 8)	129
Marjeta Š a š e l K o s (Ljubljana): The Noarus River in Strabo's <i>Geography</i>	145
Paul S c h u b e r t (Neuchâtel): P.Gen. II 99 et les archives d'Eutychidès fils de Sarapion	155
Giacomo S c i b o n a (Messina): Due note a I.G XIV 352	159
Alexander S i m a (Heidelberg): Plinius <i>nat. hist.</i> XII 63 und das Steuerwesen im antiken Ḥaḍramawt	165
Gábor S z l á v i k (Budapest): Althistorische Forschungen in Ungarn von der zweiten Hälfte des Jahres 2000 bis Ende 2001	175
Dieter W e b e r (Göttingen): Eine spätsassanidische Rechtsurkunde aus Ägypten	185
Franz W i n t e r (Wien): Die dokumentarischen Papyri Ägyptens und die Septuaginta: Studien zu 2Kön	193
Franziska B e u t l e r , Martina P e s d i t s c h e k , Ekkehard W e b e r (Wien): <i>Annona epigraphica Austriaca 2001–2002: Text</i>	205

Index	231
Konkordanzen	235
Bemerkungen zu Papyri XV (Korr. Tyche 397–489)	241
Buchbesprechungen	263
Ernst B a l t r u s c h, <i>Sparta. Geschichte, Gesellschaft, Kultur</i> (Beck'sche Reihe 2083), München 1998 (P. Siewert: 263) — Walter B u r k e r t, <i>Kulte des Altertums. Biologische Grundlagen der Religion</i> , München 1998 (P. Siewert: 263) — Claude E i l e r s, <i>Roman Patrons of Greek cities</i> , Oxford 2002 (K. Harter-Uibopuu: 267) — Günter G r i m m, <i>Alexandria. Die erste Königsstadt der hellenistischen Welt. Bilder aus der Nilmetropole von Alexandrien dem Großen bis Kleopatra VII</i> (Sonderhefte der Antiken Welt — Zaberns Bildbände zur Archäologie), Mainz am Rhein 1998 (G. Dobesch: 268) — Christoph H o r n, <i>Antike Lebenskunst. Glück und Moral von Sokrates bis zu den Neuplatonikern</i> (Beck'sche Reihe 1271), München 1998 (P. Siewert: 270) — Georges K i o u r t z i a n, <i>Recueils des inscriptions grecques chrétiennes des Cyclades de la fin du III^e au VII^e siècle après J.-C.</i> Paris 2000 (Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance. Collège de France. Monographies 12) (H. Harrauer: 273) — Stephan L ü c k e, <i>Syngeneia. Epigraphisch-historische Studien zu einem Phänomen der antiken griechischen Diplomatie</i> (Frankfurter Althistorische Beiträge 5), Frankfurt am Main 2000 (S. B. Zoumbaki: 274) — Dorothee R e n n e r - V o l b a c h, <i>Die sogenannten koptischen Textilien im Museum Andreasstift der Stadt Worms. Bestandskatalog</i> , Wiesbaden 2002 (H. Froschauer: 277) — Ulrich S i n n, <i>Sport in der Antike. Wettkampf, Spiel und Erziehung in der Antike</i> (Nachrichten aus dem Martin-von-Wagner-Museum, Bd. 1), Würzburg 1996 (P. Siewert: 278) — Heike N i q u e t, <i>Monumenta virtutum titulique. Senatorische Selbstdarstellung im spätantiken Rom im Spiegel der epigraphischen Denkmäler</i> (HABES 34), Stuttgart 2000 (E. Weber: 278)	
Index (H. Förster: koptisch; B. Leiminger: griechisch und lateinisch)	281
Eingelange Bücher	285
Richtlinien für die Abfassung der Manuskripte	289
Tafeln 1–8	

The Receipt for Wheat from Abusir

In *Tyche* 15 (2000) 111–117 (with Taf. 5), Rosario Pintaudi and Wolf Oerter publish a papyrus found in late antique occupation levels of the Fifth Dynasty funerary temple of Queen Khentkawes at Abusir. It contains a Greek receipt for wheat on one side and a Coptic letter addressed to one Apa Paulos, presumably a monk, on the other. The Greek text is dated by the editors to the fifth century, evidently on palaeographical grounds, and the Coptic (in consequence) to the fifth/sixth. The letter, written in a very undeveloped hand and erratically spelled, raises a number of problems to which we cannot offer a solution. The Greek text, although more professionally written, also has some difficulties, toward the solution of which we have some suggestions to offer.

The text as presented by the editors reads as follows:

† Ἀρπάλω Διδύμου ὑπερ(έτη) κόμης Μελαίλαειδος
 ὑπὲρ ιε (ινδικτίωνος) σίτου καθαροῦ ἀρτάβας ἑπτὰ, σίτου (ἀρτάβας) ζ, τὰ
 προσχωρήσαντα εἰς ἐμβολήν. (2. H.) Ἄτ'τίων στυχι με
 (3. H.) † Φλ[ῶ]ρωσ Ἀμμωνᾶ ἱστουρ(γὸς) μαρτυρῶ Paraphé

The editors remark on a number of oddities in the text, including the presence of a patronymic with the name of a *hyperetes* (they correct to ὑπηρ(έτη)), the unique occurrence of a ὑπηρέτης κόμης, the name of the witness in line 4, and the title of the witness.

The anomalies connected with the *hyperetes* are sufficient to make one doubt that this is in fact what we have. Nor is the meaning of the supposed syntax clear: Is Harpalos receiving a tax payment or making one? In the former case, he should be issuing the receipt; in the latter, one might expect him to be in the nominative, or else for the name of the receiver to appear in the nominative before his. These difficulties and the general principle that one should not assume error in the face of uncertainty lead us to suggest that one should understand *υπερ* to be exactly what it looks like, ὑπέρ. This does, admittedly, encounter the objection that there seems to be a diagonal line through the *rho*, suggesting abbreviation¹. We believe (and colleagues we have consulted have the same recollection) that we have encountered such a phenomenon — the false abbreviation mark — in other cases, although we have not to date managed to locate a precisely analogous example. Although it is not a perfect parallel, we may cite the writing of ἀπό in the form of απ^ο (as if the omicron were

¹ We are grateful to Rosario Pintaudi for a digital image of the papyrus which is better than the printed plate.

raised in abbreviation) in *P.Cair.Masp.* III 67279. 2, if one may judge from the manner in which Maspero prints the text. The phrase ὑπὲρ κόμης is, of course, what one would expect to find in a receipt.

Before it should stand the name of the taxpayer. We are not persuaded by the reading Ἀρπάλω. There should be room after the initial chrim, of which only the top is visible, for two or three letters before rho. The scanty traces just before *rho* do not look like an *alpha*. There also appears to be a diagonal stroke through *rho*, which ought (despite what we have just said) to indicate abbreviation. We suggest reading [A]ῦρ(ήλιος)². The name that follows does indeed begin in *pi*, but the letters after *pi* are more difficult. With some hesitation we suggest reading Πμῶν. This name is not, as far as we know, attested elsewhere in this spelling. In its defense, however, we point out that the first name listed among the writers of the Coptic letter that reused this papyrus is named Moun. This name is adequately well attested in the form Μοῦνις (three instances in *NB* and *Onomasticon*). A superficially similar form, with the article *p*-, Πμοῦν, is well known as part of toponyms („the water of“ with reference to wells), but there is apparently one example of this spelling as a personal name in L. Robert, *Collection Froehner* 75 (repr. as SB V 8959), an inscription of unknown provenance and date. Alternation between forms with the article and those without are not unknown elsewhere; a good example is Psais son of Pamour in the Greek papyri from Kellis (P.Kell. I Gr. 44, 76), who is simply Shai in the Coptic papyri (see P.Kell. V, p. 43). *Moun* in the names Moun, Mounis, Pmoun, and Pmōn is unlikely to refer to water, since the *n* is not part of the stem and requires a following name; it is instead perhaps Coptic ΜΟΥΝ (Crum, *Coptic Dictionary* 171b), „perseverance“ or the adjective „persevering“; one is reminded of the Greek adjective used as a name, Μόνιμος, mentioned by Crum. We may advance the suggestion that (P)moun received the receipt for his wheat and eventually recycled it as the bearer of a letter.

The beginning of the name Φλ in line 4 naturally suggests at this date the name Flavius, and we believe that we should read the witness's name as Φλ(άουιος) Σαραπάμμων. We cannot imagine why a weaver would indicate his occupation in witnessing a receipt, nor is a weaver likely to have the designation Flavius. We suggest, instead, reading ἀκτούρ(ιος), for ἀκτούράρ(ιος). This rendering of *actuarius* is attested in P.Abinn. 77B ii. 13 and (with -ις ending) in P.Panop.Beatty 1, 21. For references to the appearance of this position in Egypt and discussion, see I. Cervenka-Ehrenstrasser, *Lexikon der lateinischen Lehnwörter* I, Wien 1996, 63–66. Although she does not mention witnessing receipts as one of their duties, they were closely connected with the handling of government wheat, particularly for military purposes.

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² Palaeographically and syntactically, [δέ]γρ(αψεν) would also be possible, but this seems not to be used in receipts beyond the middle of the fourth century; P.Amh. II 140, 14 (349) is the latest dated example known to us.