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Ptolemaic Account (P. Teb. 131)

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PTOLEMAIC ACCOUNT (P. TEB. 131) (SEE PL. XVI)1)

The papyrus is light yellow in color and well-preserved. The text of the front side of the papyrus is complete at top and bottom and on the left side. At its lower right it has suffered some losses, which presumably, though not with absolute certainty, correspond in proportion and extent to losses at the left of the reverse-side text. At 3.3 cm. from the left margin of the front page, which generally has horizontal fibers, ends the protocollon with its vertical fibers. Hence the present piece of papyrus was either cut from the beginning of a presumably used roll or was itself the beginning of a roll (cf. CPR V 2.21 introd.; P.Mich. XIV 680 introd.; E.G. Turner, The Terms Recto and Verso, Pap. Brux. 16 (Brussels 1978), 20ff.). The writing begins immediately to the right of the joint, except for the secondary addition of the date Payni 2 which is written on the left margin, evidently as an insert before line 21.

The writing on both sides is in the same hand throughout — large, unskilled, mistake-prone, orthographically erratic. The writer, a carpenter named Petermouthis, seems to fare well enough when it comes to vocabulary and the rudiments of arithmetic, but displays an inconsistent regard for grammatical cases.2) He was apparently an Egyptian whose mastery of Greek was far from complete.

It is in fact such peculiarities as those just mentioned that partly give the papyrus whatever interest it holds. Also of interest, however, is the variety of the commodities listed (lines 4-13) as having been purchased on the occasion of a party or reception (δοκή) for a man named Kriton: wine, bread loaves, quail, beans, etc. The purchases were made on Pachon 29. The following totals of days worked by Horos son of Ammeneus3) are entered under earlier dates (line 17: Pharm. 15; line 18: Pachon 4). This fact seems to indicate that the order of the entries, at least through line 19, reverses the

1) For permission to publish this piece we express our gratitude to Ms. Irene Moran and to the Rare Books Department of the Bancroft Library on the University of California's Berkeley campus. Keenan's very early transcript of the papyrus benefitted from corrections by John Shelton, who of course is in no way accountable for the problems that have remained unsolved.

2) Personal names, for example, are, when written in full, written exclusively in the nominative case (for a possible exception see note to lines 2-3), without regard for the requirements of grammar. See also note to line 7.

3) He may, however, not have been himself a worker but possibly some kind of day-labor contractor since the 23 days mentioned in line 19 exceed the number of days between Pharmouthi 15 (line 17) and Pachon 4 (line 18).
actual order of events and the purchases were made on conversion of wheat earned through day-labor (at the rate of 1/6 artab per day (see lines 17 and 19) into cash (bronze drachmas), the purchases thereupon being made in cash. Under this assumption the abbreviation in line 20 (\( \text{λο}(\iota\pi\omicron\nu) \)) may be understood as \( \lambda\omicron\iota\pi\omicron\nu \) (\( \Delta\omicron\tau\alpha\beta\eta\zeta \) \( \beta \)).\footnote{1)} and refer to the remainder of 2/3 artab which was left after subtraction of the expenses of 2 5/6 artabs (line 16) and 1 1/3 artab (line 20) from the salary of 4 5/6 artabs (line 19). Line 21 continues with other expenses in artabs which occurred after the reception for Kriton (line 21: Payni 2; for Mesore see below).

Although (or perhaps more accurately: because) the hand is slow and clumsy, the text is for the most part easily read. It is only toward the bottom, after the calculation in line 16, that problems arise. Here the writing becomes squeezed, cramped, and occasionally more puzzlingly out of alignment. These lower lines also contain, at the end of lines 16 and 20, some letters or symbols that have resisted satisfactory decipherment. Not impossibly, these line ends, also some mysterious traces at the right edge of the papyrus on a level with lines 12 and 13, and even the month-name Mesore in line 21, belong to a second column (almost completely lost), erratically laid out and intruding into the first, and fully preserved, column.

On the reverse side of the papyrus there are parts of four more lines of writing similar in format to some of the lines on the front side. But here the day-labor (if that is at issue in line 23) and attendant calculations are all made in cash. The relationship to the front-side text is unclear. The reverse-side text can neither be asserted nor denied to be a continuation of the front-side text.

The papyrus is dated to the year 14 of an unnamed Ptolemaic king whom Grenfell and Hunt took to be Ptolemy Alexander I (thus the date 100 B.C.). This of course accords with, and probably was suggested by, the late-second-century vintage of nearly all the Tebtunis crocodile cartonnage, including that of the crocodile that yielded this papyrus and other nearly contemporary pieces -- crocodile 23 (see P. Teb. I, p. xvii).

\footnote{1)} But cf. line 26, \( \lambda\omicron\iota\pi\omicron\nu \).
P. Teb. 131 desc. (UC 2497) 13.5 x 14.5 cm. prob. 100 B.C. front side

4 οίνου α' Βτ ἀρτοφ οyrıca ιδ' ανα ιε [Σ] (γίνονται) Σπε δρ[μ] της κυ' α' μους ν
8 δες μ ἀλα κολόκυντος λ
12 κραβῖν κ α ἀθήρα υ

(γίνονται) Ψε
(γίνεται) το πάν (χαλκοῦ) Τε
16 ἀνα άπ (πυρωδ) ἄρταβον βλγ' [ό]
Παρμοθύμις τε ᾴρος Ἀμεν(ή) [γ]ς ἀνα ζ' Παχὸν δ' Ἀρος Ἀμενεύς
ἡμέρας κν ἀνα ζ' (γίνεται) τὸ <πάν> (πυρωδ) ἄρταβον[ν βλγ']
20 πεστοφόρον α γ' β' λε'.[
Παύνι β' ἄρταβον ββ' Μεσορή[ Πετοσιρίς Μαρφής ββ'

reverse side

23 + ]δ ἡμήρας λ ἀνα υ (γίνονται) (τάλαντα) β
]Αμενεύς Ἀπ
Πε]τεσοθυς Μάρων Β'
26 (γίνεται) το πάν (χαλκοῦ) (τάλαντα) γ π (δύν) (τάλαντα)
β ἄχ, λο(ιπαί) ᾦαπ

2 read Παρμοθύμις τέκτων 3 read δοξῆς Κρίτων 5 [Σ] partly washed out; when the scribe had forgotten (γίνονται) and begun the figure, he realized his mistake 6 read ὄρτες ρμ' ρ corr. fr. Σ? 7 κυ' α' μους; first υ corr. from α, and a new α added above the line 8 read δέκος? 11 read κολόκυνθος
read κραμβίον 17 read Φαρμονθή 18 read Άμμεν(νέως)? There is no sign of abbreviation 19 read Άμμεννέως 20 read παστοφόρου
22 read Μαρμέλους 23 read ημέρας 25 Πετεσόδχος: χ corr. fr. ψ? read Μάρμωνος

1 Pachon 29: June 12, by Skeat's tables (The Reigns of the Ptolemies, 2nd edn., Münch. Beitr. 39, 1969), on the assumption that 100 B.C. is the correct year assignment for the papyrus. Similarly, below, in lines 17, 18, 21. The line is out of alignment as its second half, beginning with Παχών, is written ca. 4 mm. below the plane of the first half.

2-3 Πετερμοθῶς: or possibly Πετερμοθῶς (for gen. Πετερμοθῶος). For the apocope of omicron that this would imply, see D.J. Georgacas, CP 43 (1948) 243-60 for a full discussion. For the interchange of dental consonants in these lines: E. Mayser, Grammatik der griechischen Papyri aus der Ptolemäerzeit, I, 1, 2nd edn., rev. H. Schmoll (Berlin 1970) 146-49 (hereafter cited as Mayser-Schmoll).

4 οἶνος: sc. κεραμίαν and understand δραχμῶν with the ciphers in this and the following lines (down through line 13, and line 15). The price of 2300 dr. per keramion of wine is in accord with the prices stated in other, roughly contemporary accounts from among the P.Teb. I descripta: 2000 dr. in P.Teb. 224, 2200 to 2400 in 177, 2800 in 257 (which also, however, has an entry at 1400 dr. per keramion, presumably for lower quality wine). Contrast the price of 4000 dr. in P.Teb. 253, which may, however, be later than this set of texts and date to 63 B.C.

5 δρτων: sc. ζελόγη, "loaves." Because Βτ of line 4 reaches into the area of line 5, the second half of line 5, beginning with ο, is out of alignment. The vertical distance between the beginnings of lines 5 and 6 is correspondingly enlarged.

6 δρ[χ]τῆ (read δρτνχ): Herodotus (2.77) comments on the eating of quail in Egypt. Alternatively, this word may refer to the so-called quail-plant (plantain, Plantago lagopus), cf. Theophrastus, HP 7.11.2.

7 κυ'ά'μων: according to Strabo (1.17.15), these beans grew abundantly in lakes and marshes, especially those of the Lower Delta. Cf. Theophrastus, HP 4. 8.7-8 (see LSJ s.v.). The writer in this line gives the name of the purchased commodity in the accusative case though he had just in the preceding line used the nominative. The nominative recurs in lines 8, 11, 13, the accusative in line 10. Line 12 is ambiguous. The genitive cases for the commodities in lines 4, 5
and 9 depend of course on the measures (κεράμια, ζέση, κοτόλαι, respectively) that must be understood because they were supplied neither in full nor in abbreviation by the writer.

8 δέζις: "vinegar cruets" (cf. WB II s.v.), unless this is a blunder for δέζος.


12 κραβίν (= κραμβίων): "decoction of cabbage" (LSJ, citing Hippocrates, Mul. 1.63, 2.121, and Galen 19.114), "abgekochter Kohl" (WB I s.v. κραμβίων, citing P.Oxy. XII 1479.10). For a mysterious trace at the right edge of the papyrus (also in line 13) see the introduction.

13 δήθρα: the usual spelling of this word in the papyri (Mayser-Schmoll, pp. 10, 123). An Egyptian loan-word according to Jerome, In Genes. op. 2.543; defined by Hesychius, s.v., as: βρώμα διὰ πυρῶν καὶ γάλακτος ἡγισμένον παρ' Αλγυπτίος (cf. Mayser-Schmoll, p. 26).

14: the sub-total of lines 5-13, calculation correct.

15: correct total for line 4 and the sub-total given in line 14.

16: In respect to the conversion rate set in this line and the 3005 dr. total in the preceding line, the figure of 2 5/6 (βλγρ') artabs is a rounding up of the more precise, but more difficult to write, figure of 2 19/24 (βλζ'ωβ'κδ'). Toward the beginning of the line, the mark for thousand takes the space of a normal letter and A is written below it. The writer continues at the bottom line of A, curves up a bit, then slopes downward. Then there are traces, raised up, that have resisted decipherment. They are in vertical alignment with the mysterious traces after lines 12 and 13 and may possibly belong to another column (see introduction).

17 Pharmouthi 15: April 29. Ἀμων is evidently an abbreviation for Ἀμωννέως, which the writer, however, would probably have written out in the nominative case, possibly with single η (see lines 18, 24). After Ἀμων, ζ has been corrected from γ (or vice versa). If vice versa, then the 23 days in line 19 may be the sum of these 3 days and the 20 days from Pharmouthi 15 to Pachon 4 (inclusive
reckoning); but this would mean that the separate reckoning for Pharmouthi 15 in this line is not paralleled by a separate reckoning for Pachon 4 in the next line. The end of the present line is restored from line 19.

18 Pachon 4: May 18.

19: For labor at the rate of 1/6 artab per day, see P.Teb. 175. The supplied total is for the 6 days of line 17 and the 23 days of the present line.

20 πστοφόρου (= παστοφόρου): for εκά see Mayser-Schmoll, pp. 33-37. The pastophoroi belonged to one of the minor orders of priests in Egyptian temple service; their title indicates that one of their functions was to carry in processions the παστοί, which appear to have been some kind of replica shrines (cf. LSJ s.vv. παστός, παστοφόρος; WB III, p. 382; H.I. Bell, Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt, Liverpool 1953, 51) or, less likely, woven paraphernalia (W. Otto, Beiträge zur Hierodulie im hellenist. Ägypten, München 1950, 24 n. 92. For a recent discussion see H.B. Schönborn, Die Pastophoren im Kult der ägyptischen Götter, Meisenheim am Glan 1976, 6ff.).

For the tentative solution of $\frac{1}{2}$ as $\lambda o(\pi o\delta)$ (Δρτάβης) $\beta$ see the introduction. $\frac{1}{2}$ is written slightly up, apparently to fit in above the fraction stroke over $\beta$ in the next line. It would seem to be later insertion.

The following symbols are ambiguous. They do, however, not constitute a series of fractions connected with the preceding $\beta$. As other writing on the right side of the papyrus, they may belong to a second column.

21 Payni 2: = June 12. -- Δρταβίων: or perhaps articulate as Δρταβίων (gen. neut. pl.), see P.Teb. I 5.59 note. The word appears to refer to certain moderate land taxes, sometimes, but not always, at the rate of one artab per aroura. See P.Teb. loc. cit.; refs. in WB III, p. 230; Rostovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World I 286. -- Μισορή (possibly from the oft-mentioned but elusive second column): Aug. 13-Sept. 11.

22 Μιρρῆς: read Μιρρήσιος, which examples checked from P.Teb. I and IV indices indicate to be the standard genitive of Μιρρῆς in the late second/early first century Kerkeosiris and Tebtunis texts; or Μιρρῆς, the most common form in the generally earlier texts of P.Teb. III (cf. Mayser-Schmoll, p. 44).

23: The month-name that must have preceded $\delta$ cannot be recovered.

25: The reading Πελτοσούχος, for the most part, looks good; the letter chi, however, is problematic. If it is correctly read, it would seem to have been
written lopsided or to have been corrected from psi. The hand is the same as
that on the papyrus's front side, but more unsteady.

TRANSLATION

1 Year 14, Pachon 29, account
of Petermouthis, carpenter,
for Kriton's reception:
wine, 1 [keramion] 2300 [drachmas]

5 bread, 19 [loaves] at 15 [dr.] apiece 285
quail 140
beans 50
vinegar cruet 40
oil, 1/4 [kotyle] 50

10 salt 20
pumpkin 30
decoction of cabbage 20
porridge 70
(sub-total): 705

15 This makes a grand total of 3005 (bronze drachmas),
which, at the rate of 1080 [dr.], make 2 5/6 artabs (of
wheat).

Pharmouthi 15, Horos son of Amenneus, 6 [days] at [1/6],
Pachon 4, Horos son of Amenneus,
23 days at 1/6 [art.] per day, make a grand total of

20 For the pastophoros, 1 1/3, remainder: 2/3 artabs (?)
Payni 2, for the artab-tax, 2 2/3 Mesore ---
Petosiris son of Marres, 2 2/3.

(reverse side):

--- (month) 4, 30 days at 400 [dr.] per day make 2 (talents).
--- Amenneus 4080 [dr.]

25 --- Petesouchos son of Maron 2000
The grand total is 3 (bronze) (talents), 80 [dr.]. Sub-
tract 2 (tal.), 4600 [dr.]. Remainder: 1480 [dr.].
Inschriften aus Saguntum; zu G. Alfoldy S. 219 ff.