Classical Studies: Faculty Publications and Other Works

Faculty Publications and Other Works by Department

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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 commodoties listed (lines 4-13) as
having been purchased on the occasion of a party or reception (δοχή)
for a man named Kriton: wine, bread loaves, quail, beans, etc. The
purchases were made on Pachon 29. The following totals of days work-
ed by Horos son of Ammeneus[3] 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

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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 account-
able 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 abbrevia-
tion in line 20 ($\rightleftharpoons$ β′) may be understood as λο(ιπὸν) (ἀρτάβης) β′[4]
and refer to the remainder of 2/3 artab which was left after sub-
traction 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 con-
tinues with other expenses in artabs which occurred after the recep-
tion 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 re-
sisted 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 croc-
odile cartonnage, including that of the crocodile that yielded this
papyrus and other nearly contemporary pieces -- crocodile 23 (see
P. Teb. I, p. xvii).

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4) But cf. line 26 $\nearrow\gamma$, λο(ιπαί).

P.Teb.131 desc. (UC 2497)   13.5 x 14.5 cm.   prob. 100 B.C.
    front side

   →   Ἔτους ιδ Παχὼν κ̅θ̅ λόγος
        Πετερμοῦθις δέκτων
        τοχῆς Κρίτων
4   οἴνου α Ἐτ
        ἄρτων ιθ ἀνὰ ιε 〚Σ〛 (γίνονται) Σπε
        ὀρ{κ}τηξ   ρμ
        κυ`ά´μους   ν
8   ὀξὶς   μ
        ἐλαίου   δ΄   ν
        ἅλα   κ
        κολύκιντος   λ
12   κραβὶν   κ .ι̣
        ἀθήρα   ο .[
                (γίνονται) Ψε
        (γίνεται) τὸ πᾶν (χαλκοῦ) Ϛε
16   ἀνὰ Ἀπ (πυροῦ) ἀρταβῶν βLγ΄ .ιε̣[
        Παρμοῦθις ι̅ε̅ Ὧρος Ἀμεν() ꞁγꞁϛ ἀ[νὰ ϛ΄]
        Παχὼν δ̅ Ὧρος Ἀμενεύς
        ἡμέρας κγ ἀνὰ ϛ΄, (γίνεται) τὸ <πᾶν> (πυροῦ) ἀρταβῶ[ν δLγ΄]
20   πεστοφόρου αγ΄ ꞁⲟ̄⸗ β΄ .ιε.[
Παῦνι β̅ ἀρταβῶν   ββ΄   Μεσορή[
        Πετοσῖρις Μαρρῆς   ββ΄

    reverse side

23   ↓   ]δ̅ ἡμήρας λ ἀνὰ υ (γίνονται) (τάλαντα) β
                ]Ἀμεννεύς   Ἀπ
           Πε]τεσοῦχος Μάρων   Ἐ
26   (γίνεται) τ]ὸ πᾶν (χαλκοῦ) (τάλαντα) γ π (ὧν) (τάλαντα)
                      β Ἐχ, λο(ιπαὶ) Ἀυπ

2 read Πετερμούθιος τέκτονος   3 read δοχῆς Κρίτωνος   5 〚Σ〛 partly washed out;
when the scribe had forgotten (γίνονται) and begun the figure, he realized his
mistake   6 read ὄρτυξ   ρμ: ρ corr. fr. Σ ?   7 κυ`ά´μους: first υ corr. from
α, and a new α added above the line   8 read ὄξος ?   11 read κολόκυνθος

12 read κραμβίον   17 read Φαρμοῦθι   read 'Αμμεν(νέως)? There is no sign of
abbreviation   18 read 'Αμεννέως   19 read ἡμέρας   20 read παστοφόρου
22 read Μαρρείους   23 read ἡμέρας   25 Πετεσοῦχος : χ corr. fr. ψ ?   read
Μάρωνος

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 Πετερμοῦθις: or possibly Πετερμούθις (for gen. Πετερμούθιος). 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 οἴνου: sc. κεράμιον 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 contempo-
rary 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 ke-
ramion, 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 ἄρτων: sc. ζεύγη, "loaves." Because Ḃτ of line 4 reaches into the area of
line 5, the second half of line 5, beginning with ιθ, is out of alignment. The
vertical distance between the beginnings of lines 5 and 6 is correspondingly en-
larged.

6 ὄρ{κ}τηξ (read ὄρτυξ): Herodotus (2.77) comments on the eating of quail in
Egypt. Alternatively, this word may refer to the so-called quail-plant (plaintain,
Plantago lagopus), cf. Theophrastus, *HP* 7.11.2.

7 κυ`ά´μους: 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, ζεύγη, κοτύλαι, respectively) that must be understood because they were supplied neither in full nor in abbreviation by the writer.

8 ὀξίς: "vinegar cruet" (cf. WB II s.v.), unless this is a blunder for ὄξος.

9: sc. κοτύλη. Cf. *P.Teb.* 116.40 note for this and for comparable prices.

11 κολόκιντος: "pumpkin" or "gourd" (cf. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, Münch. Beitr. 7, 1925, 202-203). For the orthography: Mayser-Schmoll, pp. 75 and esp. 152; see also Mayser I (1st edn., Leipzig 1906), p. 178.

12 κραβίν (= κραμβίον): "decoction of cabbage" (LSJ, citing Hippocrates, *Mul.* 1.63, 2.121, and Galen 19.114), "abgekochter Kohl" (WB I s.v. κραμβεῖον, 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 ἀθήρα: 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: βρῶμα διὰ πυρῶν καὶ γάλακτος ἡψημένον παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις (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 (βLγ´) artabs is a rounding up of the more precise, but more difficult to write, figure of 2 19/24 (βLϛ´ιβ´κδ´). Toward the beginning of the line, the mark for thousand takes the space of a normal letter and Λ is written below it. The writer continues at the bottom line of Λ, 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. 'Αμεν is evidently an abbreviation for 'Αμεννέως, which the writer, however, would probably have written out in the nominative case, possibly with single nu (see lines 18, 24). After 'Αμεν, ϛ 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 πεστοφόρου (= παστοφόρου): for ε<α 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 ⨎ β´ as λο(ιπὸν) (ἀρτάβης) β´ see the introduction. ⨎ is written slightly up, apparently to fit in above the fraction stroke over β 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 β´. As other writing on the right side of the papyrus, they may belong to a second column.

21 Payni 2: = June 12. -- ἀρταβιῶν: or perhaps articulate as ἀρταβίων (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. -- Μεσορή (possibly from the oft-mentioned but elusive second column): Aug. 13-Sept. 11.

22 Μαρρῆς: read Μαρρείους, which examples checked from *P.Teb.* I and IV indices indicate to be the standard genitive of Μαρρῆς in the late second/early first century Kerkeosiris and Tebtunis texts; or Μαρρήους, 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 δ̄ cannot be recovered.

25: The reading Πε]τεσοῦχος, 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
                                [4 5/6] artabs (of wheat).

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.].

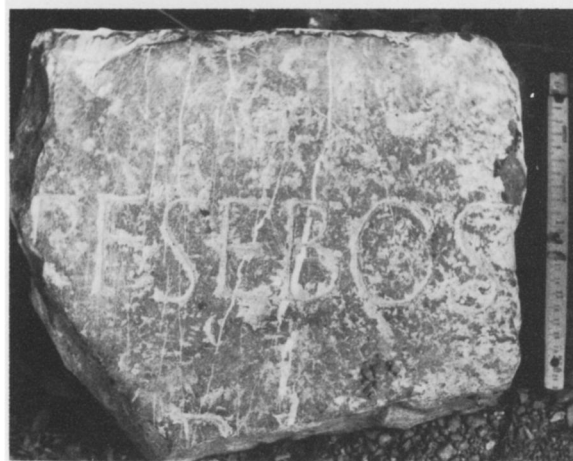Loyola University of Chicago   James G. Keenan
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Nr. 24

Nr. 26

Nr. 27

Inschriften aus Saguntum; zu G. Alföldy S. 219 ff.