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P.Mich.inv. 3272: Receipt for Embole from Aphrodito

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Abstract


Aphrodito  
H x W = 14 x 7.7 cm  
Aphrodito, VI AD

The APIS entry by NL (= Nikos Litinas) aptly describes this piece as a tattered, dark-brown papyrus. Its top (1.2 cm), left (1 cm), and right (0.2 cm) margins are preserved in full, but the bottom has been lost. There is an apparent sheet join running vertically near the left edge. The papyrus itself is full of holes, which, fortunately, do not much impede the reading of its formulaic text. The hand is a medium-sized cursive recording the payment of three and 11/12 artabas of wheat for the *embole* of an eleventh indiction; further on the date, see the notes to lines 1-2 and 12. Although the place-name is absent, document type, nomenclature, and possible prosopographical links – for the last of which see again the notes to lines 1-2 and 12 – assure the Aphrodito provenance.

The papyrus was purchased from Maurice Nahman in 1925; it came to Michigan in October 1926 as a gift of Oscar and Richard H. Webber of Detroit. I am grateful to R. James Cook for arranging permission to publish this piece, to Nikos Litinas for identifying it as worthy of attention, to Todd Hickey for precise comments on the penultimate version of the text, and to the BASP readers for further helpful comments. Residual or new blemishes are mine. The image has been digitally reproduced by permission of the Papyrology Collection of the Graduate Library of the University of Michigan.

The receipt is written with the fibers on the recto; the verso is blank.

1  
*δέδωκεν Ψιμανωβετ*
*Kυρίου δ(ιά) τών κληρ(ονόμων) εἰς*
*λόγον ἐμβολῆς*

4  
*κανόνος ἐνδεκάτ(ης)*
*ίνδ(ικτίονος) σίτου ἄρταβας*
*τρίς ἤμισυ τρίτον δω-*
*δέκατον, γι(νονταί) σί(του) (ἄρταβαι) γ γʹ ἵνα*
Psimanobet son of Kyrios has given through his heirs into the account of the annona for the kanon of the eleventh induction three (and) a half (and) a third (and) a twelfth artabas of grain, equals 3 1/2, 1/3, 1/12 art. of grain only for the kanon. He has issued the receipt as aforesaid. The most glorious pagarchs through me, Matai, the assistant (adiutor): I approve [the receipt] for the three (and) a half (and) a third (and) a twelfth artabas [as aforesaid. ...]

A Psimanobet son of Kyros (G. Ruffini, A Prosopography of Byzantine Aphrodito [Durham, NC, 2011] 514-515, s.v. Psimanobet 5) features in documents from the 520s into the 540s, including various payments recorded in P.Aphrod.Reg. (4th indiction, 525/6). It is tempting, despite the variant patronymic, to see him as identical with Psimanobet son of Kyrios of the present text. If so, our 11th induction, with Psimanobet now deceased and represented by his heirs, can have been, at its theoretical earliest, 532/3; but the dating scheme worked out by C. Zuckerman (Du village à l'empire [Paris 2004] 32-34 and 47-50) has Psimanobet still alive in the 9th indiction of 545/6. This would place Psimanobet's death after 545/6 but before 547/8 and perhaps make that our 11th induction year (see lines 4-5), but 562/3 is also theoretically possible if the payment was posthumously made in Psimanobet's name. See below, note on line 12.

Psimanobet seems redundant, and postponed from its expected position (contrast P.Cair.Masp. 3.67286.18, γι(νονται) σιτ(ου) καν(όνος) (άρταβαι)), but supportive of the notion that the word may define the artabas in question specifically as "kanon-artabas" or "artabas [reserved] for the kanon." See J.-L. Fournet, "Le système des intermédiaires dans les reçus fiscaux byzantins et ses implications chronologiques sur le dossier de Dioscoré d'Aphrodité," APF 46 (2000) 233-247 at 237. It is tempting, following this suggestion, to
resolve the abbreviation here as κανον(ικαί), but there is for this no known precedent. The translation in its treatment of μόν(αί), which could be resolved as accusative if the total in ciphers were treated as a fully self-contained parenthesis ending right before it, attempts to convey this possible sense of line 8, including its ambiguity.

8-15 ἐξέδ[ω]κεν κτλ: the formulas seem confused, partly owing to the writer's variation between personal and impersonal point of view. I here accept the text as read and assume the third person singular is meant to have Matai as its implicit, though postponed, subject. I punctuate and translate accordingly, accepting ως πρόκ(εται) in line 10 as marking the end of its own short sentence. Notional correction to the first person singular with Matai as subject (cf. PSI 4.284.5, SB 24.15975.4) or to the third person plural with the pagarchs as subject may also be pondered (see app.crit. on lines 8-9). Editorial treatment of the Aphrodito receipts, particularly with respect to their punctuation, has been chronically inconsistent. A full review is needed.

12 Matai: a Matoi (Ruffini, Prosopography 367, s.v. Matoi 1) occurs as boethos in SB 20.15016 (payment for an 8th indiction), 15017 (payments for 6th, 7th, and 8th indentions), and P.Lond. 5.1666 (payment for an 8th indiction). Despite the orthographical variation, it is tempting to see Matoi ("soldier" in Coptic) as identical with Matai in our text. The P.Lond. payment is by the famous Apollos son of Dioskoros (Ruffini, Prosopography 56-64, s.v. Apollos 2; P.Lond. 1666 is reference by a lost line 16) and without intermediary (see Fournet, art.cit. in note on line 8). The P.Lond. payment by Apollos (died 546/7) has nevertheless been treated as (tacitly) posthumous and its 8th indiction equated with 559/60. This might help set the present receipt at 562/3, but would require a very long-lived Psimanobet (see above, note on lines 1-2).

13 στοιχεῖον: the correction produces the standard formula and therefore seems preferable to the unparalleled στοιχεῖον έμοι. What may look like an extra squiggle (and notice of abbreviation) in the lower right extension of chi is in fact the top loop of beta from line 14 (άρταβδῶν).

14-15 These lines confirm that the writer treats the number and fractions as indeclinable; cf. lines 6-7.

15 The line after this (a lost line 16) probably continued ή ἄποχη ως πρόκ(εται) based on the verbal expectations raised by lines 9-10, though the resulting word order is, to my knowledge, unprecedented. Normally ή ἄποχη follows directly upon στοιχεῖον. Cf. P.Cair.Masp. 2.67135.7; 3.67326.17; 3.67327.12, 19, 35, etc. The date presumably came next.