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Receipt for *embole* from Aphrodito

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Abstract

Edition of P.Mich. inv. 3272, a nearly complete sixth-century receipt for *embole* from Aphrodito.

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 ϣ̣ δέδωκεν Ψιμανωβερ
Κυρίου δ(ιὰ) τῶν κληρ(ονόμων) εἰς
λόγον ἐμβολῆς
- 4 κανόνος ἐνδεκάτ(ης)
ἰνδ(ικτίονος) σίτου ἀρτάβας
τρῖς ἥμισυ τρίτον δω-
δέκατον, γί(νονται) σί(του) (ἀρτάβαι) γ ϣ̣ γ' ἰϙ̣

- 8 μόν(αι) κανόν(ος). ἐξέδ[ω-]
 κεν τὴν ἀποχὴν
 ὡς πρόκ(εῖται). οἱ ἐνδοξ(ότατοι)
 πάγαρχ(οι) δι' ἐμοῦ
- 12 Μатаι τρ[ῦ] βοηθοῦ,
 στοιχε(ῖ) μοι τῶν
 ἀρταβῶν τρῖς ἥμισυ
 [τρῖ]τρῶγ [δω]δέκ[α]τον

2 κυριῶ δ, κληρ 4 ενδεκατς 5 ἰνδ, ἀρτάβας, first a perhaps corr.
 from τ 7 γρ σ τ 8 μονς κανονς 8-9 ἐξέδωκεν: ξ corr., read ἐξέδωκα or
 ἐξέδωκαν? See comm. note on 8-15 10 προκ//, ενδοξξς 11 παγαρχς

“Psimanobet son of Kyrios has given through his heirs into the account of the *annona* for the *kanon* of the eleventh indiction three (and) a half (and) a third (and) a twelfth artabas of grain, equals 3 1/2, 1/3, 1/12 art. of gr(ain) 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. ...]”

1-2 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 indiction, 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 indiction 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.

8 κανόν(ος): seemingly redundant, and postponed from its expected position (contrast *P.Cair.Masp.* 3.67286.18, γί(νονται) σίτ(ου) καν(όνος) (ἀρτάβαι)), 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 Dioscore 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(αι), 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 ὡς πρόκ(εῖται) 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 Matoï (Ruffini, *Prosopography* 367, s.v. Matoï 1) occurs as *boethos* in *SB* 20.15016 (payment for an 8th indiction), 15017 (payments for 6th, 7th, and 8th indictions), and *PLond.* 5.1666 (payment for an 8th indiction). Despite the orthographical variation, it is tempting to see Matoï ("soldier" in Coptic) as identical with Matai in our text. The *PLond.* payment is by the famous Apollos son of Dioskoros (Ruffini, *Prosopography* 56-64, s.v. Apollos 2; *PLond.* 1666 is reference bq on p. 63), and without intermediary (see Fournet, *art.cit.* in note on line 8). The *PLond.* 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 στοιχε(ῖ) μοι: the correction produces the standard formula and therefore seems preferable to the unparalleled στοιχ(εῖ) ἔμοι. 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 (ἀπραβών).

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 ἡ ἀποχή ὡς πρόκ(εῖται) based on the verbal expectations raised by lines 9-10, though the resulting word order is, to my knowledge, unprecedented. Normally ἡ ἀποχή follows directly upon στοιχεῖ μοι. Cf. *P.Cair.Masp.* 2.67135.7; 3.67326.17; 3.67327.12, 19, 35, etc. The date presumably came next.

