Two Notes on P. Merton II 100

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TWO NOTES ON P. MERTON II 100

The papyrus now accessible as P. Merton II 100 was first edited by H.I. Bell as "A Requisitioning Order for Taxes in Kind," in Aegyptus 31, fasc. 2 (1951) (Raccolta Vitelli), pp. 307-12, and subsequently reprinted as SB VI 9232. The document, written during the emirate of Jordanes (ca. A.D. 699-704), is dated 23 Phaophi of the thirteenth induction (21 October 699). Difficulties of decipherment are owed to the colors of the inks that were used (they fade into the color of the papyrus itself), the frequent use of abbreviation, and the extreme cursiveness of the second hand (lines 5-8). Nevertheless, some improvements in the text can be made once it is recognized that the Merton papyrus belongs to a group of requisitions that also includes Stud. Pal. III 253-54 and VIII 1085. The emendations proposed here may be verified against the plate that accompanies the Merton edition.

1 Line 1: ΠΣΕΤΤΗΠΔΙΟΣ.

The order is transmitted by a pagarch whose name has been read as ΠΣΕΤΤΗΠΔΙΟΣ. The editor remarks (intro.) that the pagarch Pettpedius is otherwise unknown, and (line 1 note) that the name, though strange, "seems clear." On the other hand, the Stud. Pal. requisitions issue from a pagarch named Petterius. Reconsideration of the Merton papyrus with this in mind reveals that ΠΣΕΤΤΗΠΔΙΟΣ, specifically from epsilon to the second pi, is too long for the space available.

Read instead: ΠΣΕΤΠΔΙΟΣ.

The epsilon is written almost as a monogram with the following tau, a common feature in hands of this period. Of the rho, I detect traces of a loop. This probably explains why the letter was originally mistaken for delta.

There seems little doubt that the Merton and Stud. Pal. pagarchs are identical. This identification brings with it two additional consequences for the documents under con-

1) Inasmuch as the Merton publication is substantially the same as the editio princeps, I shall continue to speak of "the editor" in the singular.


3) Cf. PSI XII 1267 with plate III at the back of that volume, and the plates at the back of P. Apoll.
sideration. First, since the Stud.Pal. texts are unquestionably of Arsinoite provenance, conclusive support is given to the Arsinoite provenance proposed by Bell for the Merton papyrus. At the same time, the fixing of provenance lends additional weight to Rémordon’s suggestion (see, especially, introductions to P.Apoll. 1, 8 and 9) that Jordanes (P.Merton 100, 2), like his predecessor, Flavius Titus, was duke of both Arcadia and the Thebaid. Secondly, if, as seems certain, the Stud.Pal. requisitions fall within the same fifteen-year indiction cycle as the Merton papyrus, then precise dates for Stud.Pal. III 253 and 254 can replace their editorial assignations to the seventh century. The former (10 Phaophi, 12th indiction) may now be dated to 7 October 698, the latter (28 Phaophi, 11th indiction) to 25 October 697. The condition of Stud.Pal. VIII 1085 will not allow for an exact dating. 4)

2

Lines 5-6, beginning with the second hand: as published, these read:

† Ἡλίας νοτ(άριος) ἡμολογῶ?


'1, Elias, notary, [acknowledge] that I have undertaken responsibility for a requisitioning order for the nineteen λακ[κα] of salt.' 6)

Difficulties are immediately evident, and are conscientiously detailed by the editor in his commentary. Nevertheless, they can, I believe, be resolved by comparing these lines with Stud.Pal. III 254, 4-5, written by one Elias, apparently the same notary who wrote P.Merton 100, 5ff. The pertinent Stud.Pal. lines, with breathings regularized and all abbreviations resolved, read:

† Ἡλίας νοτ[άριος] ὑπεξ[γρ(αφα)] [τὸ]

ἐπισταλ(μα) τῶν κρ(ι)θῆς ἀρτ(αβών) ἐκατ[ῶν] ἐξήκοντα δύο μ[ιν]ν[ω].

With this as a model, I would offer the following reading for P.Merton 100, 5-6:


5) Read ἀλκη[ς].

6) For the technical sense of the word ἐπισταλμα, here equivalent to ἐντάγμαν in the correspondence of Kurrõh ibn Sharīk, see Aegyptus 31 (1951), p.311; P.Merton 100 intro.; Rémordon’s note on P.Apoll. 96, 4; cf. P.Grenf. I 63.
Two major comments are needed:

5. υπεγραψα: υπεγραψα τ(θ) επισταλμα των της ἀληθης λακ(ων) δεκαεννες.

Two Notes on P. Merton II 100

† Ἡλιας νοτάρ(ιος)

υπεγραψα τ(θ) επισταλμα των της ἀληθης λακ(ων) δεκαεννες.

Also possible are νοτάρ(ιος), or, simply, νοτ(άριος), with a filler stroke after the ταυ.

It is hard to construe the traces, if in fact they are ink, toward the end of the line.

6. υπεγραψα: υπεσχηκης επισταλμα is unparalleled. Regarding palaeographical details, he observes: "υπεσχηκης is fairly clear; χ, though almost obliterated, seems recognizable." The reading proposed here fits the lacuna exactly and, at the same time, removes the problems of scribal error and unparalleled usage. Furthermore, though sigma may seem clear on the papyrus, it may be noted that that letter is easily confused with certain forms of gamma in hands of this period. As a case in point, cf. S.G. Kapsomenakis, Voruntersuchungen zu einer Grammatik der Papyri der nachchristlichen Zeit (München. Beitr. 28), Munich, 1938, p.104, emending πρέγκηκης to πρεσβύτερος in P. Flor. III 336, 4 (7th cent. ?). Any remaining doubts might be removed were it possible to verify Wessely's reading of υπεγραψα in Stud. Pal. III 254,4. Unfortunately, it has not as yet been possible to locate the papyrus in question.

Wessely identifies it as "Paris Musées Nationaux 7113 App. 681," but Professor Jean Scherer has informed me (letter of 7 Nov. 1973) that Wessely's reference is incorrect.

The verb υπογράψω is common in papyri of the late Byzantine period, especially as used, intransitively, in contracts (e.g., the έξης υπογράψων formula in P. Oxy. XVI 1894, 7; 1898, 17; 1987, 13, and many other documents). For the transitive use and for the sense here, cf. Liddell-Scott-Jones, Greek-English Lexicon, s.v.2. For a parallel,

7) Despite Norsa, who re-examined the papyrus and defended the original reading of πρέγκηκης; see the page of Nachträbe at the end of Kapsomenakis' book. In this connection, it may be noted that beta at this time is often written so as to be virtually indistinct from kappa, and, in the context, presbyteros is more suitable than princeps. We would, for example, expect a princeps (sc. officii) to have had the gentilicum Flavius (ZPE 11 [1973], pp.48-49, 58-59), but the man in question here has the gentilicum Aurelius. Furthermore, the usual spelling of princeps is πρέγκηκης; see P. Mich. XI 613, 2 note, cf. Daris, II lessico latino nel greco d'Egitto, s.v., where the reference to P. Flor. 336, 4 should now be deleted.
though earlier in date and in a more obscure, and apparently elliptical, passage, cf. P. Abinn. 40, 5-6: τὸ δὲ ἐπίστολα ὑμᾶς ἔγραψα.

Lesser details of the readings proposed here may be checked against the plate of P. Merton 100. Problems remain, not only elsewhere in the text, but even, I must admit, in the two lines under consideration here. Nevertheless, these emendations have, I trust, gone some way in making sense out of these troublesome lines, which may now be translated:

"I, Elias, notary, have signed the requisitioning order for the nineteen lakka of salt."

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8) For example, the alpha of ἀλικ(ης) is hard to discern, but might be construed as being formed by the extra flourish at the end of the sigma of της and by that at the top of the following lambda. More important, apart from the question whether λακ, a Coptic loanword (Crum, Coptic Dictionary, 138a, s.v. ΛΟΧ), is correctly resolved (why two kappas instead of one? why declined at all?), is the question whether that word has been correctly read. The ink is clear enough, but, except for kappa, the letters are amorphous. In place of ἀλικ(ης) λακ I might hazard a reading of ἀλικης κ( )θ( ), with theta of which there appear to be traces, suspended immediately above the second kappa. This would be more in conformity with the original mention of this item in line 3: ἀλικης κ( )θ( ). The editor resolves κ( )θ( ) in line 3 as κ(α)θ(αρᾶς), following Rémondon and abandoning his own resolution, κ( ddlα)θ(α), printed in the editio princeps (cf. P. Lond. IV 1414, 25 n.) - but κ(ddlα)θ(α) may well be right and, if so, should be printed in line 3 and, if the conjecture advanced in this footnote is right, in line 6 of the text. In the latter case, of course, the proper resolution would be κ(ddlα)θ(ων).