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Notes on Three Letters (Heroninos Archive)


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Introduction

The Heroninos archive is a large group of letters and accounts to do with the running of a large private estate in the Arsinoite nome (Fayum) in the mid-third century A.D. Heroninos, the addressee of most of the extant letters, was 'manager' (phrontistes) of the estate's 'unit' (phrontis) at the village of Theadelphia from late 249 to mid-268; the letters written to him came mostly from fellow phrontistai based in other Arsinoite villages and from members of the central administration of the estate which was based in the nome capital Arsinoe. The head of this central administration was a man called Alypios. The estate was owned by an Aurelius Appianus; hence I refer to it as the Appianus estate. The first two letters discussed here belong to the Heroninos archive and relate to the Appianus estate. The third letter, which is similar to many others in the Heroninos archive, probably relates to a separate though similar estate of the same era and area.

P. Flor. II 160 (cf. Taf. V a)

The text was published without a plate by D. Comparetti in P. Flor. II (1911); no corrections are listed in the BL. It is a letter from Alypios to Heroninos, dated 11th August of an unknown year presumably in the period 250 to 268 when Heroninos was phrontistes of Theadelphia. Like many of the letters of the Heroninos archive, this was written on the back of a piece of papyrus torn from a previously used roll. In this case the recto (unpublished) contains part of the beginning of an agricultural account for an anonymous year 1 (probably earlier third century) rendered by a phrontistes to a former gymnasiarch.

Comparetti’s transcription and translation raise some doubts. In particular, it is implied that Heroninos fixed the price at which wine produced on the phrontis at Theadelphia was to be sold, while in all the other cases known from the archive the price was fixed by the central administration of the Appianus estate (cf. P. Flor. II 123; 124; 135; 143; 146; 196; 202). A re-reading of the text, working from a photograph kindly supplied by Professor R. Pintaudi, while not solving all the problems, shows that Heroninos had been asking Alypios to set a price for the wine produced at Theadelphia. Although Alypios seems to have adopted the price suggested by Heroninos, this text too now implies central control of the pricing of estate produce.

The wine of the current vintage referred to in the text can only just have been pressed, since the date, 11th August, is early in the normal vintage season (cf. M. Schnebel, Die Landwirtschaft

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I use P. Wess. Prag. I to designate the texts for which the Checklist suggests the designation P. Prag. I and II (in fact published as one series), and P. Wess. Prag. II to designate the texts which the Checklist calls a ‘new series’ of Prague papyri. The designation P. Prag. is better reserved for the truly new series of Prague papyri of which the first volume has just appeared - which is what I mean by the designation P. Prag. I.

Stanghellini, Corrispondenza: M. Stanghellini, La corrispondenza di Heronino nei papiri fiorentini (osservazioni e note critiche ai testi), (Tesi di Laurea; Florence, 1957/8).
The vintage of this year may have been abundant, for the price of 8 dr. per monochoron is the lowest attested in the Heroninos archive, and occurs only one other time in P. Lond. III (p. 103) 1226 recto of September 254.

π(αρά) Ἀλυπίου.
ἐπέστελλες ὃξιον μὲ ὅρον
dούναι τῇ τιμῇ τοῦ π[α]ρός σοι
tρυγηθέντος οὔνομα[ν]. λει οὖν

t[ό] μονόχορπον πρὸς δραχμῆς
ὁ κτῶ ἴνα καὶ οὕτος συνθῶμαι
ὅροι]γ τῇ τιμῇ.

(m. 2) ἔρρῳ(σθαῖ) σε εὐχ(ομαι) φιλ(τατε).

From Alypios.

You have been writing requesting me to set a level for the price of the wine of the vintage at your place. So . . . . the amount you say it is . . . . the monochoron at eight drachmai, so that that is indeed the level I agree on for the price.

I pray you are well, dear friend.

To Heroninos, phrontistes of Narmouthis.

Year [?], Mesore 18.

2. Ed. pr.: Επεστειλα εἰς αξιῶν[v]ων ν ὁρον. Stanghellini, Corrispondenza, p. 79: ἐπέ-

στελλε το[.]ξι[.]ο[.]ὁ[.]ρον. In the papyri ὁρος is often used of an official decision (cf. ὁρον
dίδομαι in P. Thead. 15 = P. Sakaon 31.20) or, in the plural, of 'terms' or 'conditions'; the nearest parallel to the usage here comes in two texts of similar date (A.D.270s) where ὁρον
dίδομαι is used of 'setting a quota' for liturgic work (P. Oxy. XII 1409.15 and 1414.4, 6). We may also compare the cognate usage of ὀρίζω: e.g. "καὶ ὀρίζοις τῆ(ν) τευμήν" in P. Lond. III (p.


4. Ed. pr.: τ[ρ]π[υ]γη[θ]έντος σοι. Stanghellini, Lc.: τ[ρ]γη[θ]έντος. The nu in τρυγηθέντος was corrected from sigma. What followed οὐν- is far from clear, but οὐνο[ν] fits the traces and space and is expected after τοῦ τρυγηθέντος. The problem of what was written between οὐνοῦ and οὐν is linked to that of what was written between εἰναι and καὶ in 1.5, in that a main verb should appear in one or the other place. In 1.4 it is indeed possible to read ὕλα[.]ειο[ν]; the combination of conjunctions is perhaps odd, but the real problem is then fitting a main verb into 1.5. It is not easy, on the other hand, to suggest a suitable
main verb for l.4: τῇλέει - 'pay !' - would fit nicely, but Heroninos was almost certainly going to
sell the wine; τῳλέει - 'sell !' - is not impossible palaeographically but would lack an object;
another possibility might be ὅφεξ(i)λέει - 'it ought to be the amount you say . . .' (cf. BGU XV
2553.4 and P.Oxy.Hels. 26.17 for ὅφε(ς)λ-).

5-6. Ed. pr.: τι[μ]ας κα-τ[α] μονόχωρον. Stanghellini, p.80: τι[μήν δ]ός κα-τά. Since κα appears to be followed by a descending stroke, I read κατό μονόχωρον, which avoids the
unlikely combination of prepositions in κατα μονόχωρον προς δραχμάς. As to what was written
between εἰναι κατ, if the main verb occurred in l.4 (see note above), the probable answer is an
aorist participle active meaning something like 'having valued'. Elsewhere in the Heroninos
archive the verbs used for reckoning or setting prices are λογίζομαι (e.g. P. Flor. II 123) and
οἰκονομεύω (e.g. P. Flor. II 135); neither fits here (nor does τιμᾶσας), but ζητήσας or
απείτη[ς]ας might be possible.


10. Heroninos is nowhere else attested as phrontistes of Narmouthis, and it is virtually
certain that he never held that post. Although another name might be restored in the lacuna, it is
more probable, as Comparetti thought, that 'of Narmouthis' was a scribal slip. We may compare
the external address of P. Flor. II 132, also from Alypios, where the scribe first wrote Dionysias
as Heroninos' phronitis, then cancelled it and wrote Theadelphia. No phrontistes of Narmouthis,
incidentally, is attested in any of the documents of the Heroninos archive so far published.

P. Lips. inv.12 (cf. Taf. V b)

The text was first published (without a plate) as P. Flor. II (1911) 246* from transcriptions
by L.Mitteis and by U.Wilcken, with supplements by D.Comparetti. Some corrections were
proposed by G.Vitelli in BL I (1913), 154. Dr D.Döring of the University Library at Leipzig
reports that he cannot locate the original, and that it was perhaps a casualty of upheavals during the
last war. This revision of the text is based on a photograph which Professor G.M.Parássoglou had
made from a microfilm of the papyrus which he obtained from Leipzig in 1978. Professor
Parássoglou also kindly made available to me his transcription of the text, which I found largely
matched my own.

The text is a letter, dated 7th January A.D.258, from Syros, one of the central administrators
of the Appianus estate, to Heroninos. The main hand of the text resembles and may be the same as
that of P. Flor. II 244 (dated 9th October 255) and of P. Laur. IV 188 (dated 11th January 258),
and hence of a number of other letters from Syros. This main hand will have been that of a scribe,
while the final greeting in a second hand which closes all these letters from Syros was presumably
written by Syros himself.

It was not said in P. Flor. II and it is now impossible to tell for sure whether the piece of
papyrus had been re-used and whether there were remains of an earlier text on the other side of it,
though the hole in 1.4 (see note) implies that this was a piece of scrap papyrus. Such re-use of
papyrus was very common on the Appianus estate. *P. Laur.* IV 188, for example, written four
days later perhaps by the same scribe, had been torn from an old roll of public administrative
records, and *P. Flor.* II 244 had apparently came from the same roll. But this papyrus may equally
have come from a different source.

The main historical gain from this re-reading of the letter is that Monimos, who here and in
other texts acts as a wine-dealer (*oinopoles*) for the Appianus estate, is now known for certain to
have been employed by the estate at some previous time as head of its transport corps (*epiktenites*)
- on which post see the notes of J.Bingen ad *P. Flor.* 119 recto in *CdE* 25 (1950), 97-9. Other
extant and published letters to Heroninos from Monimos are: *P. Flor.* II 209, 210 and 211,
*P. Prag.* I 110, and *P. Wess. Prag.* I 20 and 21 (= *SB VI* 9078 and 9079). Monimos is also
mentioned in two accounts from the Heroninos archive: *P. Flor.* I 76.28, 53, 68-9 and *P. Flor.*
164 verso.15 (= *SB VI* 9472).

Σύρος Ἑρωνείνω τῷ φιλ(τάτω) χαίρειν.
παράδος καὶ νῦν Μονίμῳ
ποτὲ ἐπικτηνείτη

5 ἄφ’ ἄν ἔχε[1]ς παρὰ [σ]οί οἶνου
μονόχωρα [ἐ]κ τῶ[ν] ἐτοιμω-
tέρων ἄλλα, ἵνα μονόχωρα
ἐκατόν π[ε]ντῆκοντα,
ἀν ἐνάτη[ζ]ς λη[
μ]ονόχωρα

10 ἐκατόν [καὶ] τετάρτης μονόχω-
ρα πεντῆκοντα, τῆς τιμῆς
αὐτῶν χαρ[α]ούσης εἰς τιναγ-
μόν ἐλαιικῶ[ν] κτημάτων,

15 ἰνα μὴ διὰ τοῦτο ὁ τιναγμός
ἐμποδίσθη. (m. 2) ἐρρῶσθαι
ε (ἐτους) σε εὐχόμαι
Τὐβὶ ἰβ” φίλ(τατε).

1 φιλ 12 τιναγ’ 13 ἐλαιίκω[ 15 ἰνα, τιναγ’ μος 17 ε/ 18 φιλ

Syros to his dear friend Heroninos, greeting.

Hand over now too to Monimos, once *epiktenites*, some *monochora* of wine from the ones
you have at your place, from the readier ones again(?) another one hundred and fifty *monochora*,
of which one hundred *monochora* from the ninth press and fifty *monochora* from the fourth, the
price of them going towards the harvesting of the enclosed olive-groves; but be sure to give them
to him so that the harvesting is not held up on account of this.
Year 5, Tybi 12.
I pray you are well, dear friend.

3. Ed. pr.: [Μ]ονιμω [τω. There is not sufficient space at the end of the line for το.

4. Ed. pr.: επι [τω] κτην[η ου]τι (?); noted as dubious by Vitelli. The final letter is certainly an eta, and it is unlikely, comparing the ends of the preceding and following lines, that there were any letters after it which have been abraded. Once κτηνείτη is read, the preceding επι cries out to be attached, thus forming the title of ἐπικτην(ε)ίτης which is well attested on the Appianus estate. The gap between επι and κτην-, in which there was theoretically room for three or four letters, appears to be taken up by a large hole, which presumably existed before the scribe wrote this text.

5-6. Ed. pr.: μονόχωρα [ο]κτο; corr. Vitelli: παρα [σο]ι. {οίνου} l {μονόχωρα} [ἐ]κ τῶν. But οίνου μονόχωρα is no mistake, even if the resumption of ἐκ τῶν κτλ. and the repetition of μονόχωρα are inelegant.

7. Ed. pr.: α[λο[ιν]]; corr. Vitelli: ἐ[λα οίνου]. Dr Rea has persuaded me that ἀλλά γύν cannot be read; he tentatively suggests ἀλλα π[α][λ]ιν. Syros makes similar ‘emphatic’ use of παλιν in P. Wess.Prag. II 41.6 (= SB VI 9415.20).


17. Ed. pr.: υμας ευχομαι. But the letter is to Heroninos alone, and σε is clear. Verschleifung of the dotted letters in σε εὐχομαι is often found in the countersignatures to Syros’ letters which he presumably scribbled himself (cf. for example P. Flor. II 244.11 and 245.21, both published with a plate). Although most of the following letters were published without a plate, it is probable that σε εὐχομαι should be read in them in place of the various longer readings proposed: P. Flor. II 242.16 (ἐπευχομαι); 252.14 (ὑμᾶς ἐπευχομαι, although ὑμᾶς is correct here); 254.18 (σε ἐπευχομαι, with plate); P. Prag. inv.I1Hb.23 = SB VI 9466 (ἐπευχομαι); P. Wess.Prag. II 41.23 = SB VI 9415.20 (σε εὐχομαι); and perhaps P. Wess.Prag. II 40.18-20 = SB VI 9415.19 (σε σε εὐχομαι).

The text was published without a plate by L.Spohr in P. Iand. III (1913). No corrections are listed in the BL. It is an epistolary receipt from Aurelius Isidoros, a phrontistes, to Aurelius Nepotianus, phrontistes of Philadelphia. Although the exact provenance of the papyrus is unknown (most of the papyri published in P. Iand. III were purchased at Ashmunein, some at Giza), this Philadelphia is fairly certainly the Arsinoite village. The text is written in a third century hand and dated year 9, Phamenoth 30, which must be 26th March of either 230 or 262 (Severus Alexander or Gallienus). A re-reading of the text, based on a photograph kindly supplied by Professor H.G.Gundel, has produced rather negative results, yet of some importance: Isidoros, like Nepotianus, seems to have been manager (phrontistes) of part of a private estate rather than
guardian (*phrontistes*) of a lady; Teschia, the alleged name of this non-existent lady, is a ghost-name; the transfer for which this text is the receipt was ordered by the owner or a superior administrator of this estate and not by the Prefect of Egypt (in fact neither Reinmuth nor Bastianini cited this text in their lists of Prefects).

Nepotianus was not a common name in Roman Egypt, and our man is almost certainly to be identified with the Nepotianus, steward (*epitropos*) of the ‘most perfect’ Valerius Titanianus, who in *SB* IV 7464.12 (= Sel.Pap. II 291), dated 22nd November 248, is reported to have been a witness to an assault in Philadelphia. From the account P. Mich. XI 620, dated A.D.239-40, and some other texts (see the list in CdE 59 (1984), 350), we know that this Valerius Titanianus, who had been Praefectus Vigilum in A.D.217, was owner of a large private estate in the Arsinoite nome, with units under *phrontistai* attested at Alexandrou Nesos, Dionysias, Theadelphia and, apparently, Philadelphia. His *epitropos* in 239-40, according to the Michigan account, was a certain Aurelius Areios. If P. Iand. III 36 is assigned to 230, it could be that Nepotianus was then *phrontistes* of Titanianus’ unit at Philadelphia, and was later promoted to *epitropos*. However he may, like other managers known from the Heroninos archive, have worked at the same time for two or more separate estates, and have been *phrontistes* of someone else’s unit at Philadelphia.

Isidoros, the writer of the letter, does not help us to place it in context because the name of his *phrontis* is largely indecipherable while his own name is very common. Several men of this name appear in the Heroninos archive, but none have any attested links with the Memphite nome or are in any other way promising candidates for identification. Until and unless new evidence emerges we may only conclude that P. Iand. III 36 dates to either 230 or 262, and comes from a large private estate in the Arsinoite nome, perhaps that of Valerius Titanianus.

I have received from you by order of [    ?    ] seventy [+?] and a half and a quarter [artabai of wheat ?].

Year 9, Phamenoth 30.

3-4. Ed. pr.: Τησχίας Ἀκούτος ᾑ τοῦ Μύστου. In 1.4 we might read Μ(εμ)φέτου, a case of careless haplography perhaps not implausible from someone dashing off a standard receipt.

10-12. Ed. pr.: [διασ]ημ[στ(άτου)] ἐπά[ρ-]χου πυ[ρο|μ]έτρ[ω] δη-μο[σίῳ [ἀρτάβας]. The traces of these lines are too scant for so complete a restoration. Since this is a private letter [κυρίον] ἡμ[ῶν + NAME or perhaps [εὐσχ]ημ[ον] are likelier restorations in 1.10. The sub-units 'a half and a quarter' make it probable that the measure concerned was the artaba rather than a wet measure; the receipt may have been for a quantity of wheat, and πυροῦ ἀρτάβας may have been written, perhaps abbreviated, in the second half of 1.12. The remaining spaces doubtless contained some of the various standard phrases, such as ὁν λόγον δόσω, διὰ X ὀνηλάτου and so on, which are commonly found in similar receipts from the Heroninos archive.

13. A blank space may have been left after ἐβδομήκοντα, but they may have been another short number, perhaps δύο or ἐξ.

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a) Brief aus dem Heroninos Archiv (P. Iand. III 36)