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REMARKS ON THE POPYRI AND OSTRACA FROM KOSSEIR

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## Remarks on the Papyri and Ostraca from Kosseir

In BASP 23 (1986), pp. 1-60 R.S. Bagnall publishes 76 texts found in the American excavations of the Red Sea port of Leukos Limen (Kosseir). Since the texts come from an area from which written documents were hitherto all but absent, they are of more than usual interest in spite of their fragmentary state.

No. 2 is a private letter mentioning some products received or sent by the writer (25 loaves of bread, a bathing towel etc.) and ending with family greetings. Typically the products are conveyed on camel back (l. 5). The editor deplors that "since the name of the god before whom the usual proskynema is made is not preserved, we cannot deduce anything about the place of writing." This divine name must have stood in l. 3, where Bagnall reads [παρὰ - - - ]ωμαση.[ . The papyrus is badly damaged at this point, but there are clear traces of the bottoms of several letters before ]ωμαση.[ . When one takes into account that Leukos Limen was situated at the end of the caravan route departing from Coptos, ll. 2-3 can be supplemented as follows : [Τ]ὸ προσκύνημα σου ἐποίησα παρὰ τοῖς] τριχώμασιν [ . The hair (τρίχωμα) of Isis was the most famous relic to be worshipped in Coptos. It was the object of a proskynema in a letter from that town published by H.C.Youtie in 1951<sup>1</sup>. The present letter nicely confirms the close links between Coptos on the Nile and Kosseir on the Red Sea coast<sup>2</sup>.

Ostracon no. 24 is full of problems, grammatical and lexicographical as well as institutional. We reproduce here Bagnall's transcript :

Κόμαρος χιλ(ίαρχος)  
 Βήκει Ἀρυάθης  
 ἄρες μασσανδάνια  
 κολοφόνεια γ.  
 Κόμαρος χιλ(ίαρχος) Βήκει  
 [. . .] . ρεσενουφι .  
 [. . .]βις Ψενοσ[ιρι-?]

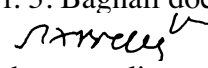
Between the name of the sender Κόμαρος, in the nominative, and that of the recipient Βήκει, in the dative, there is a short cluster of letters, which Bagnall reads as χιλ(ίαρχος) "commander of a *cohors milliaria* ".

<sup>1</sup> P.Mich. VIII 502, cf. H.C. YOUTIE, *Scriptiunculae I*, pp.483-485. See also G.GERACI, *Ricerca sul proskynema*, *Aegyptus* 51 (1971), pp. 182-183 and G. NACHTERGAEL, *La chevelure d'Isis*, *Ant. Class.* 50 (1981), pp. 584-606, esp. pp. 591-595 ("Isis à Coptos").

<sup>2</sup> In l. 9 we prefer to read ]μος ἐν τοσοῦτω .[ instead of ]ωσεντος οὔτω[ς].

This is unlikely both from the institutional and the palaeographical point of view:

1. The *cohortes milliariae* are no doubt a creation of the Flavian emperors<sup>3</sup>, and *cohortes milliariae* were probably never stationed in Egypt<sup>4</sup>. The parallel for a *cohors milliaria* in Upper Egypt adduced by Bagnall, [ - - ]ιος χιλίαρχος in SB XIV 11699, has been refuted by Gilliam, who rightly noticed that the title χιλίαρχος is not normally abbreviated. *Chi*, sometimes superimposed on *rho*, is used there for ἑκατόνταρχος, i.e. *centurio*<sup>5</sup>, not for χιλίαρχος.
2. For equestrian officers within the legions the title χιλίαρχος was also used as an equivalent of *tribunus angusticlavius legionis*. In Egypt there were probably six tribuni *angusticlavii* for each legion as the Egyptian legions did not have a *tribunus laticlavius*<sup>6</sup>, but it is unlikely that a small detachment as that in Leukos Limen would have been commanded by a *tribunus legionis*.
3. From a palaeographical point of view the group read by Bagnall as λ( ) is identical with *nu* in l. 4 (κολοφονεῖα) and l. 7 (Ψευσο).

For these reasons we prefer to read here a single proper name Χινβήκει, both in l. 2 and in l. 5. Names beginning with Χιν- or Χι- are very rare in papyrological documents. In the lexica of Preisigke and Foraboschi only the following can be found: Χινανας, Χινεμμουδς, Χινθῶνις, Χινῦρις, Χιχόις, Χινε[. Most of these are variants of better known names, such as Σινθῶνις and Σισόις<sup>7</sup>. Thus Χινβήκις might also be a variant of Χεμβήκις (SB I 5135 l. 3). Maybe another instance of the same name is attested in no.7 l. 3. Bagnall does not read this line, but on the photograph in his edition (pl. 5) we clearly see : , which can be read without problem as Πχενβήκις) and may be a variant with the masculine article of Χινβήκις.

Confusion between λ and ν is a common editorial error in Roman papyri<sup>8</sup>, and the same error may have been made in l. 3, where μασσανδάνια yields no sense. Bagnall suggests an

<sup>3</sup> E. BIRLEY, *Alae and cohortes milliariae, Römische Forschungen in Niederösterreich V, Corolla Memoriae E. Swoboda dedicata*, 1966, pp. 54-67 (= *The Roman Army Papers 1929-1986, Mavors VI*, Amsterdam, 1988, pp. 349-364); D.L. KENNEDY, *Milliary cohorts: the evidence of Josephus BJ III 4.2 (67) and of epigraphy*, ZPE 50 (1983), pp. 253-263; IDEM, *The construction of a vexillation from the army of Syria and the origins of alae milliariae*, ZPE 61 (1985), pp. 181-185.

<sup>4</sup> J. LESQUIER, *L'armée romaine d'Égypte d'Auguste à Dioclétien*, Le Caire, 1918; H.-G. PFLAUM, *Un nouveau diplôme militaire d'un soldat de l'armée d'Égypte*, Syria 44 (1967), pp. 339-362 (= AE 1968, 513 = M.M. ROXAN, *Roman Military Diplomas 1954-1977*, London, 1978, 40, no.9); H. DEVIJVER, *The Roman Army in Egypt (with special reference to the Militiae Equestres)*, ANRW II.1 (1974), pp. 452-492; S. DARIS, *Le truppe ausiliare romane in Egitto*, ANRW II.10.1 (1988), pp. 743-766.

<sup>5</sup> J.F. GILLIAM, *Three ostraca from Latopolis*, BASP 13 (1976), pp. 55-61 (= *Roman Army Papers, Mavors II*, Amsterdam, 1986, pp. 379-385). See also H. DEVIJVER, *Pros. Mil. Eq. II* (1977), 977, Inc. 282, Inc. 283; *Pros. Mil. Eq. I* (1976), D30; *Pros. Mil. Eq. IV* (1987), Inc. 274. The texts are not from Latopolis-Esna, but from the neighbourhood of Thebes, cf. W. CLARYSSE, *A Roman army unit near Thebes*, *Atti del XVII Congresso internazionale di Papirologia*, Naples, 1984, pp. 1021-1026; W. CLARYSSE - P.J. SIJPESTEIJN, *A military roster on a vase in Amsterdam*, *Ancient Society* 19 (1988), pp. 71-96.

<sup>6</sup> H. DEVIJVER, *L'Égypte et l'histoire de l'armée romaine*, *Egitto e Storia Antica*, Bologna 1989, pp. 12-29 (forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> For the alternance Σ/X in Greek transcriptions of Egyptian names, see J. QUAEGBEUR, *Considérations sur le nom propre égyptien Teēphthaphonuchos*, *Or. Lov. Per.* 4 (1973), pp. 85-100, esp. pp. 92-100.

<sup>8</sup> An interesting parallel is the ghost-name ἄλιταῖος in P.Flor. III 329 l. 3 and l. 27 and in P.Giss. I 59 col.1 l. 11 (wrongly "corrected" in BL I, p. 462). The name should be read ἄνταῖος, as

alternative reading *μασσαλιδάνια*, which "sounds as if it might be connected with Massalia". This is very close to the mark, but the last two signs are not the ending of the word, but the figure *ια*, as is clear from the line above them<sup>9</sup>. Line 3 is thus a perfect parallel to line 4 :

μασσαλιδαν( ) τ̄α  
κολοφονεια γ̄

The word *μασσαλιδαν( )* is a variant of *μασσαλιταν(αί)*, attested in P.Mich. VIII 501 (A.D. II) 1. 20 : *λαγύνοι μασσαλιτανάι*. It is originally a Latin derivation of Massilia. Latin *Massilitanus* means "of Massilia" and is synonymous with *Massiliensis* and *Massilioticus*<sup>10</sup>. Martial's *xenion* 13.123 deals with the "fumea Massiliae vina", which he apparently considers a cheap brand, and is labeled "Massilitanum". When the Greeks borrow the word they adapt it slightly to the Greek name of the town *Μασσαλία* and call the wine *Μασσαλιτανός*. Thus in P.Mich. VIII 501, cited above. The change from mute τ to voiced δ in the present text is no problem<sup>11</sup>. Since the word is here used in parallel with *kolophonia*, it apparently denotes a kind of jar rather than the wine itself (so also in P.Mich. VIII 501).

In conclusion we propose the following text :

Κόμαρος Χιν-  
βήκει. Ἀρυώθης  
ἀπέσ(ταλκε ?) μασσαλιδαν(ὰς) τ̄α,  
κολοφόνεια γ̄.  
Κόμαρος Χινβήκ[ει]  
[. . .] . ρεσενουφι .[  
[. . .]βις Ψεινοσιρι-?

Komaros to Chinbekis. Haruothes has sent (?) 11 Marsilian jars and 3 kolophonia.

Komaros to Chinbekis - -<sup>12</sup>

Leuven

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was seen by U. Wilcken in *Archiv* 6 (1920), p. 427 n.2 (the correction was not incorporated in the *Berichtigungsliste*).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Bagnall's note on p. 26 : "There seem to be marks above the *ια* at the end".

<sup>10</sup> For the complex history of the suffix *-tanus*, see M.FAUST, *Die Einwohnernamen und Völkernamen auf -itani, -etani*, Göttingen 1966, pp. 81 and 109.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. F.T. GIGNAC, *A grammar of the Greek papyri of the Roman and Byzantine periods I*, Milano 1976, pp. 81-83.

<sup>12</sup> A few minor corrections can be given for some other texts : in no.4 l. 1 we read [*χαίρ*]ειν. *Καλῶς ποιήσεις*] instead of *πάλιιν καλῶ σε*, in no.27 l. 2 Ἑρμέρωσ instead of Ἑρμερῶσ and in no.28 l. 1 the name of the addressee is clearly Ἐπαφροδίτωι.