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ΚΑΘΙΚΝΟΥΜΑΙ “COME DOWN UPON” IN P. MICHIGAN INV. 6979

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In P.Mich. inv 6979 which is the third of a trio of recently published Ptolemaic documents (they date from 217 to 215 B.C.) concerned with allegations made against the epistates of the village of Lysimachis, Tettaphos,¹ the petitioner,² Peteuris the fuller, accuses this man and some associates of having broken into his shop and assaulted him (ll. 12-14):

καὶ οὕτως Τέτταφος [καὶ Ξεν]ίας καὶ Μένικο[³
καὶ Ἑρμιπ[ο]ς καὶ Π[.....]

[(15-20 litt.)] ἔχοντες ῥοπάλια εἰς ἤλθον εἰς [τὸ ἐργ]ακτή[ρι]όν μ[ο]υ καὶ κα-
θικόμενοί μου π[.....]

[(10-15 litt.)] διεκόρ]πικαν τὴν ἐμπολὴν παρόντος Π[ετεύρι]ο^ς τοῦ φυλακίτου
κτλ.

The phrase "καθίκομενοί μου π[... is rendered as "attacked me with numerous blows" and it is noted in the commentary on line 13 "only one not very apt occurrence is recorded in papyri (UPZ 110. 189) [where the object of the verb is "the sowing of crops"], but it is clear from Steph. Lex. s.v. that the word occurred in [the] Hellenistic period with this meaning".

A more precise and more vivid translation than "attacked" is surely demanded here. Peteuris' assailants are said by him to have "come down upon him with blows", that is to say, to have hit him downward blows with the clubs (ῥοπάλια) they had brought with them, just as Laius brought down his forked goad upon the head of Oedipus at the place where three roads meet: μέσον / κάρα διπλοῖς κέντροιμί μου καθίκετο (Soph. OT 808f. which is cited by both Stephanus and LSJ: for the construction see Jebb ad loc.).

There is an excellent parallel for καθικνοῦμαι "from the Hellenistic period" which was not available to Stephanus or his revisors the brothers Dindorf and is not mentioned in LSJ. In the famous scene of arbitration in Menander's Epitrepontes, Smicrines checks the interruption made by Syrus with the threatening words:

ἐὰν λαλήῃς μεταξύ, τῆι βακτηρίαι / καθίξομαί σου
(Men. Epitr. 248f. Sandbach = 72f. Körte).

¹ See † T.Caulfield, A.Estner, and S.A.Stephens, "Complaints of Police Brutality (P.Mich. no. 6957, 69611, and 6979)" ZPE 76 (1989) 241-54.

² This third document is clearly an example of an enteuxis: see the editor's remarks on p.250 and the notes on 14-15, 16, 16-17, 17-18, and 19.20.

³ I. Μενίκο[^c.

One may also note Lucian, *Symposium* 16 τάχα δ' ἄν τινος καθίκετο τῆι βακτηρίαι (cited by Jebb on *Soph. OT* 809), *Diogenes Laertius* 6. 32, a report of Diogenes' reaction to the arrival of some men (in answer to his cry ἰὼ ἄνθρωποι), *συνελθόντων, καθίκετο τῆι βακτηρίαι*, and *Libanius* 27, 4 where the narrator says of his troublesome son καὶ μικροῦ τῆι βακτηρίαι καθικόμην αὐτοῦ.

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