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NEW TEXTS FROM THE OXYRHYNCHUS RACING ARCHIVE

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In O.Ashm. Shelton pp. 73-138 are printed more than a hundred orders from a *προνοητής* named Cyracus or Cyriacus to the effect that a certain Theon should deliver various amounts of wine to participants in the chariot races at Oxyrhynchus. Professor Bagnall has found three further pieces of this archive among the holdings of Columbia University, received there from the distributions of the Egypt Exploration Society for 1897, and has very generously ceded publication rights to me.

No. 1, inv. 97.4.33 (10.3 x 13.6 cm), is so effaced that I cannot with certainty make out more than the introductory ¹Κυρακός | ²Θέωνι χ(αίρειν). δὸς Ἀβὰι³νέω and ἀπό at the beginning of line 8. The other texts at Columbia record wine distributions in Pharmuthi, and there is no objection to that reading here too.

No. 2, inv. 97.4.34 (9.2 x 9.1 cm), is an order to pay a σκυτεύς one ceramion of wine for four days' work. Σκυτεῖς are not otherwise attested in connection with chariot racing in the papyri and I find nothing obviously relevant to them in the indexes to Humphrey's *Roman Circuses*.¹ In this context a 'tanner' can hardly be meant; otherwise the word signifies 'leather-worker' or more specifically 'shoemaker'.² Here I imagine that a person to replace or repair whips, reins and the other leather objects directly connected with horses is more likely than a cobbler.

That a σκυτεύς should so far be attested only for the races of Pharmuthi may be purely due to chance, but it is also possible that his employment was connected with the special nature of those races: they were particularly long, and there is some slight reason to believe that they were particularly professional (O.Ash.Shelton p. 76). The pay was poor: only ἵπποκόμοι and ἀκολουθοῦντες τοῖς ἡνιόχοις received less (cf. the list *op.cit.* pp. 79-80). The odd working period of four days, not otherwise attested for Pharmuthi,³ just may indicate that that man was called in for some specific task and dismissed when he had completed it.

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|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Κυρακός Θεώνι χ(αίρειν). |
| 2 | δὸς Ἀπφυγ'γίω σκυτί ἡ- |

¹ John Humphrey, *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing* (London, 1986).

² On the meanings of σκυτεύς see O.Lau, *Schuster und Schusterhandwerk in der griechisch-römischen Literatur und Kunst* (Dissert. Bonn 1967) 50ff. The definition 'tanner' is not mentioned in LSJ or Preisigke, but Maehler is doubtless right in supposing that the σκυτεύς who acquired acacia pods in BGU XII 2182 wanted them for tanning, see his introduction to the text; cf. also Reil, *Gewerbe* 132f. Most papyri which mention σκυτεῖς give no clue as to the precise nature of the trade. In P.Mil.Vogl. VI 278 = SB VI 9385.6 there may be a connection with horses and other animals. That would be vaguely comparable to the situation here. In PSI I 50 a reference to sandals presumably implies that the σκυτεῖς of that text made at least shoes, if nothing else. See also H. Cadell, *Pap.Flor.* VII p. 37 n. 31.

³ There are three more texts in the archive which apparently refer to a racing period of four days. The question now arises whether any of these could after all refer to Pharmuthi. So far as I can see, the arguments against that month in the case of no. 188 and 190 are decisive. In 189 the matter depends on the text of line 6, but despite a legible phi it is not an attractive reading there.

3 μερῶν δ' οἴνου κεράμι-
 4 ον ἔν, κερ(άμιον) α, Φαρμοῦ-
 5 θι α ἕως δ. Κυρα-
 6 κός. 

2 σκυτεῖ 3 There is an extra stroke in the μ of ἡμερῶν.

«Cyracus to Theon, greeting. Give Aphynchius, leather-worker, one jar of wine, 1 jar, for 4 days, Pharmuthi 1 to 4. Cyracus.»

2 Ἐφυγγίω: this particular variant of the name otherwise spelled Ἐφυγγίς, Ἐφύγγιος etc. does not appear in the NB or OnAlt.

No. 3, inv. 97.4.35 (7 x 7.7 cm), shows that one Syrus, who had worked as ἀφέτης in the races of Tybi (O.Ash.Shel. 89 and 118) and Mecheir (no. 150), also held that post in Pharmuthi, at the expected rate of 1/3 ceramion a day. This brings to nine the number of known ἀφέται for Pharmuthi 1-6.

1 Κυρακὸς Θέωνι
 2 χ(αίρειν).
 3 δὸς Σύρω ἀφέτη ἡ-
 4 μερῶν ς οἴνου κε-
 5 ράμια δύο, κερ(άμια) β
 6 μόνα, Φαρμοῦ-
 7 θι α ἕως ς. Κυρακός.


«Cyracus to Theon, greeting. Give Syrus, starter, two jars of wine, 2 jars exactly, for 6 days, Pharmuthi 1 to 6. Cyracus.»