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IDION AND IDIOTIKON PLOION

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Idion and idiotikon ploion

In naukleros documents ships are often called ἴδιον πλοῖον or ἰδιωτικὸν πλοῖον. Whereas the meaning of the latter expression is clear ("a private ship"), the former can, at face value, mean either "private ship" or "(his, my) own ship"¹. The problem has first been raised by F.Oertel in 1917² and was recently resumed, with a short status quaestionis, by Meyer-Termeer³. Both decided in favour of the more general meaning "private ship". Meyer-Termeer points out that only if a personal pronoun (ἐμόν) or a definite article accompanies ἴδιον, we have certainty that the "private ship" was also the property of the naukleros (or kubernetes). Others felt inclined to translate ἴδιον πλοῖον as "his own boat", no doubt because in the context this usually looks the more natural translation⁴.

Meyer-Termeer cites two passages where in her view this interpretation is excluded and where the only possible translation is "a private ship". The first is P.Mil. Vogl. III 189, mentioning a certain Panesatis κυβερνήτης ἰδίου πλοίου Ἑλληνικοῦ Οὔσιδώρου, "captain of a private boat of the Greek type, belonging to Ousidoros". Since the owner of the boat Ousidoros is explicitly mentioned, the boat cannot belong to the kubernetes and ἴδιος cannot mean "his own boat". However, the personal name Οὔσιδωρος, considered by the editors as a "forma analoga e parallela ad Ἰσίδωρος", is very strange. Cf. Gallazzi, whom I asked to check the original in Milan for this word, read it as ὀξυπλώρου⁵. This reading is beyond doubt, as I could ascertain from a photograph kindly sent to me by Gallazzi. Though the word is apparently new⁶, there can be no doubt that it is a simple variant, no doubt due to dissimilation⁷, of ὀξύπρωρος, "with a sharp prow", a very fitting description for a boat⁸. With this new reading Panesatis may be considered as the owner and we can translate the phrase κυβερνήτης ἰδίου πλοίου Ἑλληνικοῦ ὀξυπλώρου as "captain of his own boat, of a Greek type, with a sharp prow".

¹ On ἴδιος meaning both "private" and "his own", see E.MAYSER, Grammatik II.2, pp. 73-74.

² F.OERTEL, Die Liturgie, p. 122 and n. 4.

³ A.J.M.MEYER-TERMEER, Die Haftung der Schiffer im griechischen und römischen Recht, Studia Amstelodamia 13 (1978), p. 8.

⁴ Thus H.HAUBEN, ZPE 8 (1971), p. 274 n. 77 and O.KRUGER, P.Ross.-Georg. II 94 (both cited by MEYER-TERMEER, op. cit., p. 31 nn. 98 and 99). Following Oertel, Preisigke's Wörterbuch I, col. 687 translates in several instances the group πλοῖον ἴδιον by "Privatschiff". None of the examples given is, however, compelling. P.Par 18 b 1.8, for instance, was recently reedited in Pap. Lugd.-Bat. 19, pp. 230-231 with the translation "in his own ship"; P.Lond. III 948 1.2 = MEYER, Juristische Papyri no. 43 = M. DAVID - B.A. VAN GRONINGEN, Papyrological Primer 4 (1965) no.49; Meyer leaves the problem open, but David and Van Groningen resolutely translate "owner and captain of his ship".

⁵ Cf. already Parson's suggestion (Gnomon 38, 1966, p. 675, not included in BL V, p. 72) to read σκαφοπλώρου.

⁶ In the papyri the word is attested here for the first time. In Liddell-Scott the word ὀξύπρωρος is listed only with the derivative sense "sharp-pointed".

⁷ Cf. F.T. GIGNAC, A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods I (1976), pp. 103-104.

⁸ Cf. also the alternation between σκαφόπρωρον (P.Oxy. XLII 3031 l. 3) "with a bow like a σκάφη and σκαφόπλωρον (P.Cairo Preis. 34 l. 6). In BGU II 812 col. 2 ll. 2 and 4 σκαφό[πρωρος] and σκαφό-πρωρος respectively should be supplemented, unless here also dissimilation has occurred.

The other text cited by Meyer-Termeer is Pap. Lugd.-Bat. XI 1. In this papyrus ἴδιον and ἰδιωτικόν are used for the same boat, but the use of the two words is not at all indiscriminate, as Meyer-Termeer thinks. On the contrary, in col.1 l.4 and col.2 l.3, in the part of the text that is formulated in the objective style, ἰδιωτικός is used in its only possible sense "a private boat". No information is given here about the identity of the owner. But in col.2 l.21 (and no doubt also in col.1 l.22, now in lacuna) the kubernetes speaks for himself in the first person and proudly calls the ship τὸν προκ(είμενον) ἴδιον ἐμὸν πλοῖον. In the expression ἴδιον ἐμόν, ἴδιος is used to strengthen the reflexive pronoun, a well-known usage in later Greek⁹.

I would have liked to conclude that πλοῖον ἴδιον means in all known instances "his own ship". However, since the note by Meyer-Termeer two new texts have been published which throw new light on the problem.

In P.Erasm. II 45¹⁰ Heroides is called naukleros of a boat belonging to the Macedonians (ναύκληρος τῆς τῶν Μακεδόνων κερκουροσκάφης). On the back is a short docket, read as follows by the editor :

ναυ(τικὸν) πλοῖον ἴδιον.

καὶ χ..υ

The editor translates this as "a private sea-going ship" and refers to Oertel, p. 122 n. 4 for the translation of ἴδιος as "private". If ἴδιον is rightly read, it must indeed mean "private", not "his own" because of the recto. But the docket is much abraded and therefore this passage cannot be adduced as proof for the meaning of ἴδιον in naukleros documents. In the forthcoming English edition of P.Erasm. II Ph.A. Verdult has changed the reading into ἰδιωτ[ικόν], thus avoiding the problem.

But the evidence of P.Rainer Cent. 44 cannot be circumvented. The granary official Stotoetis declares that he has loaded 725 artabas of grain εἰς κέρ(κουρον) Ἀσκληπιάδου ἴδιον, ἐφ' οὗ κυ(βερνήτης) Πᾶσις. The editor's translation "in das private Schiff" must be right here and the problem of ἴδιος cannot therefore be solved once and for all. Although in most instances an ἴδιον πλοῖον will no doubt have been the property of the naukleros, it can not be excluded that in some cases it is in fact a private boat, belonging to a different person.

Leuven

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⁹ Cf. F.T.GIGNAC, A Grammar, II, p. 171 (with bibliography in n.2). The expression τὸ ἴδιον ἐμὸν πλοῖον cannot, therefore, be translated as "das Privatschiff, das ich zu meiner Verfügung habe" (thus Meyer-Termeer, *op. cit.*, p. 32 n. 103), but should be rendered as "my own ship".

¹⁰ First edition Ph.A. Verdult, P.Erasmiana II. Delen van een arsinoitisch sitologen-archief mit het midden van de tweede eeuw v.Chr., Mededelingen van het juridisch instituut van de Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam 45 (1988). The revised English edition will appear in *Studia Amstelodamensia*.