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BGU I 23: THE DECADARCH'S COLLECTION

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In spite of various corrections and commentaries, see BL I 9, III 8, VII 10, D.J. Crawford, *JJP* 18 (1974) 169-75, and most lately P.J. Sijpesteijn, *CE* 66 (1991) 279-80, this document continues to give trouble. Sijpesteijn offers the following text, along with the translation of D.J. Crawford:

ˈEriéos Πακύσεως καὶ
Kaláβελις Σωτοῦ καὶ Ἄπυχις
ίωνος οἱ ἕ ἀπὸ κόμης
Σοκνοπαιίου Νήσου κατὰ
5 Πασίωνος κολλητίωνος
dekadárchoú. Αἰών ὁ κολλη-
tiónovos καὶ οὐκ ἀφίκεν
ἀλλὸν ἐλθεῖν πρὸς τὸν δεκά-
dáρχον καὶ ἔχει ἀδέλφους
10 δὲ. αὐτὸς αὐτοὺς σκεπάζει καὶ ἀλλοὺς σκεπάζει.
καὶ ὑποκείμενα αἵτι ἀπὸ τῶν κοιμῶν καὶ
eἰς ἑτέρας κόμμας γεναργή
yai ou metreï uper auton.

‘Heriæus son of Pakysis, Kalabelis son of Sotas and Apynchis son of .ion, all three from the village of Soknapaioi Nesos, against Pasion, the dekadarch’s kolletion. Aion, the representative of the kolletion, both has not allowed anyone else to approach the dekadarch and he has four brothers. He protects these, and others. And he demands special emoluments from the villages and whilst farming in other villages he pays no taxes on these lands.’

Sijpesteijn’s new suggestion is to translate lines 5-6 as ‘Pasion, colletion, decadarch’, so that instead of three officials: an unnamed decadarch, his colletion Pasion, and Aion, subordinate of the colletion, we have two: Pasion, who is both decadarch and colletion, and Aion, who is his subordinate.

This seems very unlikely in view of SB XVI 12949.26, from *JJP* 19 (1983) 26, Λαύτου ᾿Ιου|λίῳ (δεκαδάρχης) εἶπεν, ‘παράτητον [εὖν] τὸν κολλητίωνα τὸν εὖν’, ‘(Laetus said to) Julius, decadarch, ‘Produce your colletion’’, i.e. in court. From this it seems overwhelmingly probable, that in BGU 23 too the colletion was the subordinate of the decadarch.

The real trouble lies in the intrusive presence of Aion. the heading (1-6) indicates that the text is a memorandum about a case of complaint by three villagers against Pasion the colletion, but the body of the text as published immediately introduces Αἰών ὁ κολλητίωνος (6-7) and never returns to Pasion. In addition the expression ὁ κολλητίωνος is unusual and the printed text offers a startling asyndeton in line 10.

As a way of escape I suggest that we could articulate the troublesome passage differently. If we read οἱ ὑποκείμεναι, ὄ, alter the full stop in 10 to a comma, and remove the full stop at the end of 11, we get a smoother result:
Herieus son of Pacysis and Calabelis son of Sotas and Apynchis son of ..ion, the three from the village of Socnopaeu Nesus, versus Pasion, colletion of the dekadarch. As colletion for life, who has actually prevented anyone else from reaching the dekadarch and has four brothers, he personally protects them and protects others and demands subventions from the villages and holds land leases in other villages and does not pay grain taxes in respect of them."

*afivno* is unattested elsewhere, but it is formed in a regular way and can be compared especially with the recently discovered and now twice attested word *afivos* on which see D. Hagedorn, P. Schubert, ZPE 81 (1990) 278-80, P.Diog. 3.14 n. We can expect to find more references to *afivos*, but *afivno* is unlikely to be an official term and may have been used in irony. A decadarch’s appointment would be temporary and it is hard to suppose that a clerkship to the decadarchy would really have been conferred for life. However, the same person may have served as clerk to successive decadarchs for long enough to give an impression of being irremovable. Moreover, the memorandum looks as if it was made by or for an advocate appointed to present the case of the villagers, and such an advocate might well make use of irony and exaggeration.

If this new and unusual word meets disbelief, a rather similar result could be obtained by articulating the same letters as (\(= \alpha\alpha\nu\nu\), cf. *afivos*, *afivos*, *gevros*), or \(\text{κολλητίων, ός κτλ.}\), ‘Having been the colletion continuously, one who has’ etc. This strikes me as less satisfactory, especially in the use of the article, but better than the original interpretation of *afivos* as the name of a new character in the dispute.

I take the opportunity to draw attention to my views on *κολλητίων*, which were set out in detail and with bibliography in JJP 19 (1983) 97-100. I derive the word from *κολλάω* and take it as the equivalent of the Latin term *glutinator*, a clerical worker who glued papyrus sheets into rolls. In the employ of the military police such a clerk would be in charge of case records and so in a position to exercise undue influence. The colletiones almost invariably appear as the subjects of complaint. For *glutinatores* working on literary rolls see T. Dorandi, ZPE 50 (1983) 25-8, cf. id. Prometheus 8 (1982) 263.