

JOHN REA

BGU I 23: THE DECADARCH'S COLLETION

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## BGU I 23: THE DECADARCH'S COLLETION

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:

Ἐριέως Πακύσεως καὶ  
 Καλάβελις Σωτοῦ καὶ Ἄπυγχις  
 ..ῖωνος οἱ γὰρ ἀπὸ κόμης  
 Σοκνοπαίου Νήσου κατὰ  
 5 Πασίωνος κολλητίωνος  
 δεκαδάρχου. Αἰῶν ὁ κολλη-  
 τίωνος καὶ οὐκ ἀφίκεν  
 ἄλλον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς τὸν δεκά-  
 δαρχον καὶ ἔχει ἀδελφοὺς  
 10 δ̄. αὐτὸς αὐτοὺς σκεπάζει  
 καὶ ἄλλους σκεπάζει.  
 καὶ ὑποκείμενα αἰτὶ ἀπὸ  
 τῶν κωμῶν καὶ  
 εἰς ἐ[τ]έρας κόμας γεωργί  
 15 καὶ οὐ μετρεῖ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν.

‘Herieus son of Pakysis, Kalabelis son of Sotas and Apynchis son of ..ion, all three from the village of Soknopaiou 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, Λαῖτος Ἰουλίῳ (δεκαδάρ)χ(ῳ) εἶπεν, ‘παράκτησον [σου] τὸν κ[ο]λλητίωνα τὸν δόν’, ‘(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 Αἰῶν 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 αἰωνοκολλητίων, ὅς, alter the full stop in 10 to a comma, and remove the full stop at the end of 11, we get a smoother result:

Ἐριέως Πακύσεως καὶ  
 Καλάβελις Σώτοῦ καὶ Ἀπύγχις  
 ..ίωνος οἱ γὰρ ἀπὸ κώμησ  
 Σοκνοπαίου Νήσου κατὰ  
 5 Πασίωνος κολλητίωνος  
 δεκαδάρχου. αἰωνοκολλη-  
 τίων, ὃς καὶ οὐκ ἀφίκεν  
 ἄλλον ἐλθεῖν πρὸς τὸν δεκά-  
 10 δαρχον καὶ ἔχει ἀδελφοὺς  
 δ, αὐτὸς αὐτοὺς σκεπάζει  
 καὶ ἄλλοις σκεπάζει  
 καὶ ὑποκείμενα αἰτί ἀπὸ  
 τῶν κωμῶν καὶ  
 εἰς ἐ[τ]έρας κώμας γεωργί  
 15 καὶ οὐ μετρεῖ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν.

1 l. Ἐριεύς

7 l. ἀφίκεν

12 l. αἰτεῖ

14 l. γεωργεῖ

‘Herieus son of Pacysis and Calabelis son of Sotas and Apynchis son of ..ion, the three from the village of Socnopaeu Nesus, *versus* Pasion, collection of the dekadarch. As collection 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.’

\*αἰωνοκολλητίων 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 \*αἰωνογυμνασί-  
 αρχος, 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 αἰωνογυμνασίαρχος, but αἰωνοκολλητίων is unlikely to be an official term and may have been used in irony. A dekadarch’s appointment would be temporary and it is hard to suppose that a clerkship to the dekadarchy would really have been conferred for life. However, the same person may have served as clerk to successive dekadarchs 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 ἀῖ (= ἀεῖ; cf. ἀφίκεν, αἰτί, γεωργί) ὄν ὁ κολλητίων, ὃς κτλ., ‘Having been the collection 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 αἰων 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 collectiones 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.