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A SHORT NOTE ON BGU XII 2170

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The first part of BGU XII 2170 is a tax account from the fifth century. Its editor professes in the notes that he is unable to resolve the question of the inconsistencies in the line by line calculations of the conversions from grammata to keratia.

The account seemingly gives details of keratia received in settlement of liabilities specified in grammata. The reasons for this are not known.

The relevant calculations are set out below. In the presentation of the table the restored figures are derived by dividing the keratia by six.

Line	Grammata	Keratia
3	[7 $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{12}$]	47 $\frac{1}{2}$
4	[4 $\frac{1}{6}$]	25
5	[4 $\frac{1}{3}$]	26
6	[1 $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{6}$]	10
7	$\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{3}$	5
8	[$\frac{1}{6}$]	1
9	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	23
10	2	12
11 Total ¹	24 $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{12}$	149 $\frac{1}{2}$

It will first be noticed that all the extant calculations except that in line nine are correct, including that of the total. The solution to the problem of the incorrect one lies in the manner in which the text has been compiled.

It is further noted that the total in the keratia column is also correct, but that there is a discrepancy in the column for the grammata. The difference in the total for the grammata is $1 \frac{1}{3}$ or $24 \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{3} \frac{1}{12}$ minus $23 \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{12}$. If this amount is added to the $2 \frac{1}{2}$ in line nine for the grammata the amount becomes $3 \frac{1}{2} \frac{1}{3}$ which multiplied by six gives the amount in the keratia column. The error is thus explained because the account was constructed by working backwards from the keratia column to the total of the grammata and then the individual grammata figures were calculated. The person preparing the account did not then perform the necessary reconciliation to ensure the individual grammata figures were correct.

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¹ Vide B.L. VIII, p. 53.