

GUY WAGNER

KÔM OMBO, SECOND PRELIMINARY REPORT

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 107 (1995) 121–125

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OSTRACA

The Greek and Latin ostraca, discovered in the town of Kôm Ombo during the second Campaign in 1990 / 1991 by the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation (EAO), have been registered under the following inventory numbers:¹

Inv. No.	Ostraca	Inv. No.	Ostraca	Inv. No.	Ostraca
1903	19	1911	23	1920	9
1904	12	1912	1	1921	22
1905	8	1913	6	1922	13
1906	8	1915	13	1923	5
1907	16	1916	14	1924	6
1908	4	1917	11	1925	2
1909	22	1918	17	1926	2
1910	13	1919	11	1927	2
				Total	259

All of these 259 ostraca were transcribed in November – December 1992 in the German House at Elephantine, but they have not, as yet, been photographed. It seems useless in this Preliminary Report to indicate the Inventory Numbers as many of them belong to a large group of numbers: Inv. No. 1909 includes 22 ostraca, Inv. No. 1911 includes 23 ostraca.

There were about 400 ostraca in the two 1990/1991 Season boxes, but apart from our 259 pieces most of the others were Demotic, some of them being Arabic. It is noteworthy that this time there were neither Ptolemaic nor bilingual documents among the ostraca.² So almost all the ostraca are to be dated from the Roman Period, 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., a high proportion of them belonging to the 1st century. If we consider the date of only the tax-receipts, we see that they range from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius, but among more than 100 of them, there are about 12 dated from Augustus, about 15 from Tiberius, 5 or 6 from Caligula, 11 from Claudius, 8 from Nero, 2 from Domitianus, 2 from Nerva, about 15 from Trajan, about 10 from Hadrian, 4 from Antoninus, 1 from Marcus Aurelius; that means that c. 60 pieces = 65 % belong to the 1st cent. and only c. 30 pieces = 35 % belong to the 2nd cent. Of the 60 receipts from the 1st cent. almost 50 are dated from the 1st half and the middle of that century.

* See U. Abdel Wareth and G. Wagner, *Kôm Ombo I, Preliminary Report: Excavation and Ostraca*, MDAIK 49, 1993, 295-300, and Taf. 61 - 63.

¹ They are kept in two wooden boxes inside a magazin in the Kôm Ombo Temple and were brought to the German House at Elephantine in order to be transcribed and studied; for each registration number there is one plastic bag.

² There remains a doubt about the date of half a dozen of ostraca which for palaeographic reasons might be dated to the very late Ptolemaic Period, i.e. the 1st cent. B.C., or the beginning of the 1st cent. A.D.; among these one fragmentary piece is bilingual (Greek-Demotic) and another one, fragmentary too, is clearly Ptolemaic.

There are 246 Greek ostraca and 17 Latin documents. Most of the Greek texts are tax-receipts (more than 100, most of them being well preserved), accounts and name lists (55 pieces), private letters and fragments (on the whole about 50 items), *memoranda*, jar-inscriptions and dockets (16 ostraca); 3 more orders concerning *vestigatores* represent a special kind of document; for the first time there are also some sub-literary texts (6 items) and some orders (6 items).

- tax-receipts: the tax-receipts are mostly money tax-receipts, and we find only a few grain tax-receipts (11 pieces); the money receipts are receipts for poll-tax (25 pieces), dike-tax (22 pieces), γεωμετρία of palm-trees and vineyards (10 pieces), tax on palm-trees and vineyards (6 pieces), ἐγκύκλιον (a tax on sales; 4 pieces), *adaeratio* of wheat (3 pieces) different work-taxes, weaver's tax (3 pieces), mender's tax (3 pieces), fowler's tax, for catching birds with birdlime (2 pieces), χειρωνάξιον (2 pieces), ἐνοίκιον (1 piece), tax on wagons (1 piece); there are also some taxes which have not yet been identified or are indeterminable, one concerning sacred or public fields, ἱερ() / δημ() ἄγρο() (3 pieces) and a tax ἀπομ() σιτ() μετ() (1 piece). It is also noteworthy that 90 % of the tax-receipts are issued by τραπεζίται, i.e. (public) bankers.

The grain tax-receipts – always concerning wheat – are issued by σιτολόγοι, wheat tax-keepers.

- accounts and name-lists: all the money accounts are in drachmas and obols; among them we notice an account of seeds, an account concerning objects of daily use (cloaks, altar, ποτήρ [a drinking-cup], κίσηλις [a chisel]), a daily work account of young slaves (παιδάρια); there are several long accounts of donkeys carrying Κῶα (wine-jars from Kos); an account of μυροβάλανοι [Behen-nuts]; a very long daily account concerning the whole of the month of Hathyr, in which the same names Sarapis, Hermes, Euploia (= Isis ?) keep on reappearing - they may perhaps be names of merchant-ships. Among the name-lists there is a list of at least 14 ἀρχιερείς, high-priests (all the names are Egyptian), and a list of 13 δεκανοί, members of a δεκανία.

- private letters: among the 50 private letters, 33 are written by Egyptians or Greco-Egyptians; their purpose is strictly private. 17 others are written by or to Roman soldiers and belong to military circles; a great number of "civilian" private letters are sent by or to women and apart from the usual greetings they deal with the sending of wheat or barley, wine, bread, cakes (στεφάνια), or money, drachmas, stateres. In the letters pertaining to the military circles, the senders or the addressees are often σημεαφόροι, *curatores*, once a *centurio*, and the letters deal with money deliveries, denaria, stateres, drachmas, the sending of wheat, wine, *cibaria*; σκοπελάριοι, *commilites* (συνστρατιῶται) and the "two *praesidia*" are mentioned; one asks for wheat for his *dimissoria*, another for an arrow (πυρόβολον), another for a φαιλόνη (= paenula), another for a στήμων, a warp, that has to be bought.

- memoranda: there are 6 memoranda, mentioning for example μίγμα(ατα) (mixtures) or donkeys carrying μαργ() [5 donkeys – 50 μαργ()], donkeys carrying jars (3 donkeys - 30 κοῦφα); two memoranda make mention of δημ() στελ(), perhaps στελ(έχη), trees?, logs?

- jar-inscriptions: one jar-inscription mentions Nasidius σταγμα(τοπόλης) (?; cf. ZPE 84, 1990, 69-74), two others have Κέρδων twice.

- dockets: as usual, the dockets consist only of isolated numbers, 9 1/2, 193, 500; once a sum in money: (drachmas) 84.

- *vestigatores*-ostraca: 3 new texts, all with a date in Mesore, ending twice with κάτω "down", showing probably a relation between the *vestigatores* and the ἄνω / κάτω ostraca.

- sub-literary texts: an interesting horoscope, dated "from the 3rd hour of the night of the 6th to the 7th Payni, year 23 of Caesar", that is 31.v./1.vi. 7 B.C.; a fragment with the words γράψαι μελωδίαν, "to write a melody"; a Latin alphabet.

- Latin ostraca: among the 17 Latin ostraca, not yet well deciphered, there are some letters, official or private, and a group of texts consisting of 3 or 4 lines each, in which centurions give furlough to soldiers;³ there were some other documents of this kind among the Latin ostraca of the First Campaign, 1989/1990.

OFFICIAL TITLES

As we noticed in the previous Preliminary Report, almost all tax-receipts are issued by *τραπεζίται*, i.e. (public) bankers: in 70 tax-receipts, there are about 15 or 16 different bankers acting with their associates during a long period from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius. Six or seven different *τελώναι* were active from Augustus to Trajan; they are sometimes in charge of the weaver's tax. Four times the tax-keepers are *πράκτορες*, called twice *πράκτορες ἀργυρικῶν*: they acted under Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.

For the grain taxes, the officials are always *σιτολόγοι*; they are responsible for Ἀραβία and Νῆσος, or for Τεση(); they acted under Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus.

PLACE - NAMES

The number of known toponyms from the Kôm Ombo area and the Ombite nome is growing. The name of the town itself appears four times: three times in the combination εἰς Ὀμβους, and once in the phrase εἰς καινὸν Ὀμβους, "to the new Omboi (?)", which seems to indicate that Ὀμβους was sometimes understood as an indeclinable word.

The place-name *Ανκ()*, which is very often mentioned, appears for the first time fully written as Ἀνκῶνος, i.e. the genitive of Ἀνκῶν (a so called village is known in the Fayoum, coptic *ΚΑΛΛΑΝΚΕΞ*); a place located at a bay or a cove of the Nile may be meant; the abbreviation Ἀνκ() is found in tax-receipts twelve times.

Amongst the tax-receipts about forty examples make mention of the *μη(τρόπολις)*, once written *μη(ρόπλις)*.

Once more the mysterious place-name *Τιφαν()*, *Δριφαν()* etc. appears, as always coming just after the title *τραπεζίτης* and before the name of the tax-payer: we can now read it as *Διφωνιω*, *Διαφωνη*, *Διαφων vel sim.*; twice it is abbreviated *Διαπηωνη()*. But is it actually a place-name? This question remains open. A verbal form of *διαφωνέω* doesn't make sense here.

Seven times we have mention of Ἀραβία together with Νῆσος, but also of Νῆσος alone (6 examples) and of Ἀραβία alone (2 examples); for the first time we have the ethnic *Νησιώτης* in the Kôm Ombo ostraca.

Well known toponyms occur like *Σοήνη* and – in a list of names as the designation of the origin of two people – twice *Τῆτις*, which is probably Qertassi in Lower Nubia.

There are also new toponyms of the Kôm Ombo area: A military letter is sent to a place called "the White Rock", εἰς τὴν Λευκὴν Πέτρων. Twice, as mentioned above, a *σιτολόγος* of Τεση() appears. Several times we find the following place-names in tax-receipts: *Κορχη()*, *Κορχ()*; *Πομπ()* – also written *Πονπ()* –; *Αρρ()* – also written *Αρρο()*. But is it actually a toponym?

³ First line: (*centuria*) of NN; second line: the name of a soldier; third and fourth line: *dedi emansionem* + a number (of days) or a date, e.g. *Nonas Dec(embres)*.

NAMES OF PERSONS

Beside the usual Greek anthroponyms, classical ones like Ἀσκληπιός / Ἀσκληπιάδης / Ἀσκλᾶς, Διονύσιος, Διογένης, Αἰνέας, Μένανδρος, Ἑρμίας, Ἑρμιόνη, Κράτης, Χρύσιππος, Ἐπαφρόδιτος, Εὐφροσύνη, Λέων, Κλέων, Καλλίας, we noticed several people called Κορκόδιλος, people called Κέρδων, three slaves called Νόθος, Ἀβάσκαντος and Σελήνη; some names are very rare, like Κυνάριον, a woman, Ἰάμβλιχος and Σφοδρίας.

Egyptian names are clearly connected with the gods of the temple. So theophoric names belonging to the god Panebtaoui are very frequent: Πετε(π)νεβτοῦς (more than 20 examples); belonging to the god Haroeris: Πετεαροήρις, Ἐσαροήρις, Σεναροήρις (about 20 examples); belonging to the god Sobek: Πετεσοῦχος, Πετεσοῦς, Τασοῦχος, Νεφώτης, Πετενεφώτης (about 20 examples); other theophoric names that occur very often are Πετεῆσις, Ψεννήσις, Πετοσίρις, Πετεχῶν, Τιθοῆς, Φμόις, Τιθοφομοίς, Πετεφομοίς, Σενφομοίς, Παχνοῦμις. Rare or new names are Φάφις, Πίπις, Τφοῦς, Ἐτπεβῶς, Ὅμοοῦς, Ἡσομανοῦφις, Πχερσ(), Πχερστα(), Σενπρηθ(), Ἀργοννώ(φρις), Ἰσμηνος, Σκοννᾶς, Κατῦτις, Ἐφρῦς.

Latin names, written in Greek or in Latin, always belong to officers and soldiers of the Roman Army, some of them being known from elsewhere: Vettius Valens, Iulius Valens, Iulius Barbarus, Iulius Proclus, Iulius Longinus, Iulius Crispus, Publius Antoninus, Annus Valerianus, Longinus Maximus, Menenius Chares, Mamercinus, Stadius, Pompeius, Fronto, Fortunus, Pompeius, Primus, Tatianus, Herennius, Petronius, Salustius, Quintilianus, Gemellus, Lasus, Nasidius etc...

THE ROMAN ARMY

A very high proportion of the 1990/1991 Season ostraca are related to the Roman army, not only the Latin ones, but also the Greek ones. A fine document makes mention of "Reginus (centurio) Legionis II Traianae fortis". At Ombo there was a *praesidium*, but somewhere else there were "two *praesidia* and one *skopelos*". There are at least 5 different *centuriones*, several σημεαφόροι, several *curatores* (one of them is the *curator* of Ἀγκῶν), some ἰππεῖς (*equites*), a *miles*, a σκοπελάριος. Very interesting are three new ostraca concerning οὐεστιγάτορες. Of special interest is also the occurrence of a παραβάτης, an auxiliary soldier belonging to the *velites*.

APPENDIX: PUBLICATION OF TWO OSTRACA

1. LETTER FROM MENENIUS CHARES, *CURATOR* TO IULIUS PROCLUS, *CENTURIO*
 Inv. 1918 / 25 14 x 11 cm. Ist Cent. A.D.
 February 2 - 3

Ἰουλίῳ Πρόκλῳ (κεντυρίωνι)
 χαίρειν
 Μενήνιος Χάρης κουρά-
 τωρ • Ἀγκῶνος ἀπέλοι-
 5 σα κιβάρια τῷ Παυλί-
 νον • ἐπὶ ἐν τῇ σήμερον

ἡμέρα • κατεβή(σ)ατο εἰς
σκοπέλου • Μεχειρ • η •
ἀπέλυσσα Μεχειρ θ

4-5 l. ἀπέλυσσα 5-6 l. Παυλίνω 6 l. ἐπεὶ 8 l. σκόπελον

The dots between many words, used as word dividers, are clearly due to Roman influence.

"To Iulius Proclus, centurio, greetings. I, Menenius Chares, *curator* of Ankon, have delivered provisions to Paulinus, as he left to-day to the skopelos (watch-tower), on the 8th of Mecheir. I delivered (the provisions) on the 9th of Mecheir".

The *curator* was usually in charge of the *cibaria* and is often associated with a place. Here we have for the first time the place name Ἄνκων, gen. -ῶνος, fully written. Up till now we found it many times abbreviated as Ανκ() (see the First Preliminary Report); Paulinus was obviously a σκοπελάριος; he left to go to the watch-tower (probably in the desert) and the *curator* sent provisions to him one day later.

2. RECEIPT FOR THE FOWLER'S TAX

Inv. 1920 / 21

9 x 9 cm.

January 4, 1 A.D.

August 4, 1 A.D.

August 30, 1 A.D.

Ἄσκλη(πιάδης) τρα(πεζίτης). Δια(γεγράφηκεν) Ὀνής Παθώτου
τέλος ἰξευ(τῶν) λ (ἔτους) ἄρ(γυρίου) (δραχμάς) ις.
(Ἔτους) λ Καίσαρος, Τῦβι θ.
ὁμοίως Μεσορήι ι̅α
5 λόγ(φ) δραχμ(ὰς) δεκαπέντε
(γίνονται) (δραχμαὶ) ιε. ὁμοίω(ς) (δραχμάς) ζ (τριώβολον).
ὁμοίω(ς) (ἔτους) λα Καίσαρος
Θωὺθ β̅ (δραχμάς) δ (διώβολον).

"Asklepiades, (public) banker. Ones, son of Pathotes, has paid 16 silver drachmas for the fowler's tax of year 30. Year 30 of Caesar, 9th of Tybi. Likewise, on the 11th of Mesore, for the account, fifteen drachmas = 15 (drachmas); likewise 7 (drachmas) and 3 obols; likewise, year 31 of Caesar, Thot 2, 4 (drachmas) and 2 (obols)."

The banker Asklepiades is very well known in the Kôm Ombo Ostraca. Ones was an ἰξευτής a fowler, who catches birds with birdlime (ἰξός); as far as we know, neither this kind of activity nor the tax itself are known in the papyrological documentation. Tybi 9 and Mesore 11 = 4th of January and 4th of August; it is noteworthy that these days are also *pridie nonas Ian.* and *Aug.* If all the payments belong to year 30 of Augustus, the tax was 42 drachmas 5 obols a year (16 + 15 + 7 + 4 + 3 obols + 2 obols).