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ORDER TO DELIVER: P. LOND. V 1655 REVISED


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A very similar order originating from the same two persons is now published as P.Oxy. LXIII 4373 and comparison with that has enabled improvements to be made to the printed text of the London papyrus. The first reading was made from a microfilm, but I have inspected the original in the British Library.

The main point of interest common to both these documents is that they attest the duty of supplying recruits which was incumbent on estates as a compulsory public service in the Later Roman Empire. Since the liability was assessed on the basis of the ownership of cultivated land, only the larger landowners would be assessed at a high enough arurage to be responsible for the delivery of one or more recruits by themselves, smaller landowners being grouped into consortia, see A.H.M. Jones, _The Later Roman Empire_ i 615, ii 1254 n. 16. Unfortunately these documents do not give us the names of the joint owners of the estate in question, which was liable for at least two recruits in the same year.

Of lexicographical interest is the occurrence of the noun νεολέκτης, not yet in the dictionaries and attested in only a few papyri, see 3-4 n.

The format of this order is rather different from that of P.Oxy. 4373, which is a narrow slip 27 cm wide and only 6 cm high, written _transversa charta_, that is, across the fibres of the recto, while this is a much less elongated and slightly deeper shape. The writing runs across the fibres, except that a strip of horizontal fibres runs through line 3. This may have been a repair. There is no sheet join to show whether this is the recto surface of the original roll or the verso. The back is concealed by the framing. There is no special reason to suspect that it bore writing. The back of P.Oxy. 4373 is blank.

The hand in which the main body of the text is written is also different from that of the main body of P.Oxy. 4373, although it is a cursive of a very similar type. The two countersignatures must be presumed to be in the hands of Apphus and Isidorianus, the pair who issued the orders, but we cannot say which is which. The first countersignature here is in the same hand as the single countersignature of P.Oxy. 4373, as is obvious especially from the idiosyncratic form of the abbreviation of χρόνος (νοικίας) in line 8. I thought it possible that the text and countersignature of P.Oxy. 4373 might have been written by the same person, and it is possible, though again not strongly indicated, that the second countersignature here was written by the person who wrote the text. This hypothesis would mean that only two persons, Apphus and Isidorianus, were involved, but it is equally possible that an estate extensive enough to be liable to supply at least two recruits in one year had two or more clerks to write its documents, in which case up to four persons, two clerks and the two named administrators, might have been involved.

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‘Apphus and Isidorianus to Apollonius, cook, greetings.’

‘Deliver to Pamuthius from Alcyoneos, who has been included among those newly enlisted men now being presented in respect of the estate of my lords the landowners for the 7th indiction, in respect of expenses for 5 days from ... (to) ..., meat lbs 2 1/2. Year 40, 9, Payni 26th. (2nd hand) I pray for your health for many years. Deliver lbs 2 1/2. (3rd hand) I pray for your health for many years.'

1 μαγευτηριον. See P.Oxy. LVI 3866.2 n. for the broad significance of this term, ‘butcher, cook, and retailer’.


3-4 νεολέκτας. The noun *νεολέκτης has not yet appeared in the dictionaries, but is now certainly read in the nominative in P.Lond. III 982.2, see P.Lond. Facsimiles III Pl. 75, and the new edition offered below. The correction from the ed. pr.’s νεολέκτης was made by R. Rémondon in Chronique d’Égypte 41 (1966) 168 and the latest version of the whole text appeared in J. Bingen et al., Choix de papyri grecs No. 28, with p. 33 (apparatus). The word has also occurred in P.Sakaon 30 (= P.Théad. 49.1) in the accusative plural, as here. That papyrus also has νεολέκτους (1) and νεολέκτων (3) in broken contexts, since the beginnings of the very long lines are lost. It would be tempting to think that νεολέκτος was used only as an adjective and that therefore the first must have had a noun for the adjective to agree with, as in P.Oxy. XLV 3261.5-10 ἐπείδη ἡτε[ε]ξειληθήναι παραξεῖν τιρία[νας] νεολέκτους κατὰ κέλευσιν το[ῦ] διοικητήτου ημῶν ἤργον[ος] Σοφιαναύνο κατὰ πρότασιν | τοῦ διοικητήτου| δοῦναι Βάρβα κτλ. However, W. Chr. 469 has the passage τῶν νεολέκτων τῶν ἀποστελλόμενων ἐκ τῆς Ἀττικῆς διοικήσεως ... ὑποδεξίωμενοι ... παραπέμψασ(ε) (3)-6), that the adjective was used also as a substantive. In the second case in P.Sakaon 30 we cannot choose for certain between νεολέκτων and νεολέκτων. For in P.Oxy. VIII 1103.4-5 can we say for certain that we should read τῶν νεολέκτων (rather than νεολέκτων) τῶν εργασθέντων ὡς ημῶν ... ἀνεγεγοντών ὡς κτλ. The present London companion piece may more strongly suggest that in P.Oxy. 4373.3 the abbreviation ought to have been expanded to νεολέκτ(ας) rather than νεολέκτ(ος), but about that we cannot be sure.

4 τῶν κυρίων μου. So also P.Oxy. 4373, although there are two senders.

5 γεωγράφος. The estate was held in joint ownership by two or more people.

The seventh indiction is 363/4, cf. R.S. Bagnall, K.A. Worp, The Chronological Systems 75, as emerges from the era date, see 9 n.

6-7 A horizontal split, running from the right edge of the sheet almost to the middle, has destroyed most of the ink in the second half of line 6, while line 7 is similarly split from the left at the beginning, so that the first surviving letter there is the kappa of κρέως, which falls under the omega of τῶν above. In 7, however, there are no ink traces near the beginning and it looks as if the line was deeply indented as far as κρέως. P.Oxy. 4373.4 in the equivalent passage has ύπερην ἡμερίδια δ’ τῶν ἄπλο Ἐπειρβ ἐν ῥο ἕνοι κυρίων ἐν μί (όνον), α, while in the date in line 5 the month and day are given as Ἐπειρβ ἐν. By analogy with this, we would expect to find here τῶν ἄπλο Ποὺνι κυ ἐνο ἧ κρέως λῃ (τρις) κτλ. I have not been able to recognize this wording for certain. Possibly the the date of the order was not in this case the first day of the period covered in it, which might have been the first five days of the next month. Epeiph, for instance, or one spanning the transition between the months

Two and a half pounds of meat for five days represents the same daily ration rate of half a pound as the mid-fourth century mansio accounts in P.Oxy. LX 4087-8, see ibid. introd. p. 192.

7-8 This second hand is the same as that of the countersignature of P.Oxy. 4373, see above introd. para. 5. πολλοίς, which is written in full in P.Oxy. 4373.5, is represented here by πο with a longish horizontal over the omicron. The chi of χρόνος is clear, then comes a very rapid ‘Verschleifung’ which I take to represent ρο; over the top of this is a horizontal from the right end of which hangs a double curve. This version of χρόνος is virtually the same as in P.Oxy. 4373.5.

9 Ποὺνι κυ. The second digit of the day number is faintly inked and was omitted from the ed. pr. The correct reading was published by H. Harrauer, P.J. Sijpsestijn, Tyche 3 (1988) 118, cf. BL IX 146.

For the conversion of Payni 26 of Oxyrhynchite era year 40/9 to 20 June 364 see R.S. Bagnall, K.A. Worp, The Chronological Systems 100, 38.

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