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A LIST OF BIRD-NAMES (*P. AMST.* 1.13)

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In 1977 the late and greatly lamented P. J. Sijpesteijn published a papyrus of unknown provenance containing a list of bird-names.¹ This text, which Sijpesteijn dated to the fifth century A.D., subsequently reappeared as *P. Amst.* 1.13.² The list is notable for the presence in it of several extremely obscure names and also a large number of diminutive forms.³ It repays further examination.

The list, almost certainly a school exercise,⁴ is set out in two columns, the second of which is extremely defective, and contains 34 items of which 4 are totally unproblematical since no letters which are legible or legible with certainty (*viz.* 19, 24, 25, 33) are to be found in them. Nothing needs to be said about κίττα (9), κορώνη (13), ὄρνυξ (18), or about the diminutive forms of common bird-names, τρυγώνιν (4: from τρυγών: the first known occurrence of the diminutive form) and χηνόριον (16: from χήν). Some items are preserved with only their initial letter intact or semi-intact (21, 22, 23, 28, 32, 34⁵). The remaining nineteen items require and in some cases defy comment. Items in the latter category I mention ‘pour encourager les autres’.

1) περιτέριον: *i. e.* the late diminutive form ending in -ιον, equivalent to what in earlier Greek would have been περιτέριον.⁶ περιτέριον is attested as early as Old Comedy: see Pherecrates, fr. 143 Kassel–Austin where it is clearly an affectionate diminutive.

2) αἰτάριον [*sic*: I. αἰτάριον]: Sijpesteijn associates this with the obscure αἰτάλων/αἰσάρων, but it is quite obvious that the reference is to the eagle; MG αἰτός < αἰτός.⁷ This is rightly observed in the revised supplement to LSJ which, however, glosses αἰτάριον as ‘little eagle’. It is extremely unlikely in a text of this date that such a meaning was intended. Sijpesteijn notes the preponderance of diminutive forms in this list and refers to Zilliacus ‘for the well known fact that in later Greek -ιον need not have diminutive force’.⁸ There is no more likelihood in this collection of αἰτάριον having the special meaning ‘little eagle’ than there is of περιτέριον (1) meaning ‘little dove’, τρυγώνιν (4) meaning ‘little turtle-dove’ or χηνόριον (17) meaning ‘little goose’ or elsewhere, for example, βουρδωνάριον in *P. Ryl.* 238.11 (A.D. 262) meaning ‘little mule’. For the extremely productive -αριον suffix see L. R. Palmer, *A Grammar of the post-Ptolemaic Papyri* 1.1, London, 1946, 83f.

* In writing this note I have greatly benefited from the advice of Professor W. G. Arnott. It is not to be assumed that he is in agreement with all the suggestions made herein.

¹ A List of Birds, *Mnemosyne*² 30 (1977), 69–72.

² *Die Amsterdamer Papyri* I ed. R. P. Salomons et al., Zutphen, 1980. I shall for the most part refer to the English language version. References to D’Arcy Thompson are to D’Arcy W. Thompson, *Greek Birds*,² London, 1936. In *P. Amst.* 1.13 the year reference to the *editio princeps* should be corrected to 1977 and the page reference to D’Arcy Thompson in the note on item 30 should be to p. 190.

³ See below on αἰτάριον. The only really comparable text, M. E. Crum – H. E. Evelyn White, *The Monastery of Epiphanius of Thebes* II (New York, 1928), nr. 621 is very different in these respects, containing only one unusual bird name (κοῦμα I. 6) and no diminutives. (It consists of Greek bird names written in Coptic.)

⁴ See the references in Sijpesteijn, *P. Amst.* 30 n. 2 to which can now be added R. Criore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (American Studies in Papyrology 36), Atlanta, 1996, 39.

⁵ *v. l.* There are not that many Greek bird names beginning with v and I suppose that the smart money would here be placed on any one of vῆ[ττα/vῆ[ττάριον, vῆ[ττα/vῆ[ττάριον.

⁶ Sijpesteijn refers to D. J. Georgacas, On the nominal endings -ις, -ιον in later Greek, *CPh* 43 (1948), 243ff. See now F. Th. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, vol. II *Morphology*, Milan, 1981, 28f.

⁷ See G. P. Shipp, *Modern Greek Evidence for the Ancient Greek Vocabulary*, Sydney, 1979, 44 for an explanation of why Attic αἰτός has ousted koine αἰετός.

⁸ H. Zilliacus, *Zur Sprache griechischer Familienbriefe des III. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* (*P. Michigan* 214–221), Soc. Scient. Fennica. Comment. Hum. Litt. XIII 3, Helsingfors, 1943, 34f. See also, Palmer (cited above), 79–84.

3) ἀκρεοπαώνι: clearly some sort of peacock. Read ἀγριοπαώνι? It must be noted, however, that while ἀγριο- is regularly found as the first part of a compound in which a vegetable or plant is denoted, as far as I know no such compounds are to be found denoting fauna.⁹

5) τρούθιν (*sic*): since the full form is τρουθίων the word should be accented τρουθίν. On the reference here see footnote 16.

6) μελαγκόλυφον: clearly as Sijpesteijn says an alternative spelling of μελαγκόρυφον, but he does not account for the neuter form. Should we not read rather μελαγκολύφ(ι)ον, adding a further diminutive form to the list?¹⁰

7) σαλακωνηδα: a most mysterious word. It is a curious feature of the Greek vocabulary that so many Greek words which have a sexual denotation begin with σα-,¹¹ and one therefore is tempted to speculate that this is a reference to a bird of lewd habits or suggestive sexual movement. The word καλάκων (cognate with καλεύειν) is well attested as a term of disparagement connoting arrogant swaggering.¹² If it is to be detected in this bird-name, it would probably indicate that we are confronted with an alternative name for the ἕγξ. Compare χεισοπυγίς used as an alternative name for the ἕγξ in the *Cyranides* (*Cyr.* 3.41.1, 2).¹³ The last three letters of σαλακωνηδα are, however, morphologically inexplicable, which would imply that we are confronted by a non-Greek word.

8) πρύγαλος: ‘read πύργαλος . . . this undoubtedly is the same bird as the one called πύρ(ρ)αλ(λ)ις/πυργαλίτης [no authority is cited for the latter form]’, Sijpesteijn, 70 n. 8. πυργαλίτης would be a by-form of πυργίτης (the LSJ revised supplement glosses with this word) formed from the diminutive πυργαλ-: but how does one account for the -o-declension ending of πύργαλος if it is a by-form of πυργαλίτης? A more promising approach would be to treat the form as the outcome of a series of dissimilations, combined with metathesis in the first syllable, culminating from an original misspelling of the more familiar πύγαργος.¹⁴

10) κέαρ[ι]ν: Sijpesteijn states that Hesychius gives κέαρος as an equivalent of ὄρνυξ, but this is not the form found in Latte where the relevant lemma is κέαρον: Latte refers to S. Kraus, *BZ* 2 (1907), 525. If the word is related to κέαζειν, the bird in question might be either a woodpecker or a pelican. Compare πελεκῶς (woodpecker) and πελεκάν (pelican), both in all probability being formed from πέλεκυς (axe). κέαρον is given in LSJ as ‘carpenter’s axe’. Perhaps we should read κέαρ(ν)[ι]ν.¹⁵

11) ῥοιςπις: unknown and totally inexplicable.

12) ὀκτίς: the most obvious Greek bird name of similar shape is ὠτίς, but in the papyrus the two first letters are absolutely clear and, since this is certainly the master’s rather than the pupil’s hand, it is scarcely conceivable that we are dealing with a scribal error.

⁹ This is not the case, however, with medieval Greek. Sophocles’ lexicon gives ἀγριόβουσι as early as Cosmas Indicopleustes and I note from the *Lexikon der byzantinischen Gräzität* ἀγρίονος, ἀγριοπετεινάλιον, ἀγριοπέτεινον, ἀγριορνίθιον, ἀγριοχηνάριν, ἀγριόχηνον, ἀγριοχοίριν, ἀγριόχοιρος and from the lexicon of Kriaras (ΛΕΞΙΚΟ ΜΕΣΑΙΩΝΙΚΗΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΔΗΜΩΔΟΥΣ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΑΣ, Athens, 1968–), ἀγριότραγος, ἀγριοχοίρι, ἀγριοχοιρίδιον. Professor Arnott questions the existence of wild peacocks in Egypt.

¹⁰ For the most up to date and best informed discussion of the identity of the μελαγκόρυφος see W. G. Arnott, Some Bird Notes on Aristophanes’ *Birds*, in *Tria Lustra: Essays Presented to the Editor of the Liverpool Classical Monthly on the Occasion of its 150th Issue*, ed. H. D. Jocelyn (Liverpool Classical Papers 3; Liverpool, 1993), 127–34, 133–34.

¹¹ See Felix Solmsen, *IF* 30 (1912), 36ff. who connects them all, not altogether plausibly, with the σα-element in κάθη. Note also the name Κάρων (see Herter, *Gnomon* 6 (1930), 228).

¹² See Cope on Arist. *Rhet.* 1391a4.

¹³ See D’Arcy Thompson, 257–58.

¹⁴ On this eagle see W. G. Arnott’s article: Peripatetic Eagles: A New Look at Aristotle, *HA* 8 (9), 618b18–619a14, in A. F. Basson and W. J. Dominik (edd.), *Literature, Art, History: Studies on Classical Antiquity and Tradition. In Honour of W. J. Henderson* (Natal, forthcoming).

¹⁵ See P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: Histoire des mots*, Paris, 1968–80, s. v. πελεκάν and, for πελεκάν, G. Björck, *Das Alpha impurum und die tragische Kunstsprache: Attische Wort- und Stilstudien* (Skrifter utgivna av Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Uppsala 39), Uppsala–Wiesbaden, 1950, 288.

14) ἀκρεγιαῖον: unknown.

15) ἀκρυτα: Sijpesteijn suggests a connection with ἀκυλάα.

17) ὀρνίθιν: Sijpesteijn was excessively cautious in his first edition of the text when he said that the meaning is ‘probably . . . chicken’. In a text of this date and character there can be little doubt. The third book of the *Cyranides* which deals exclusively with birds and creatures of the air, a text not all that earlier than this papyrus, eschews any form of ὄρνις as the generic term, using in its place either τρουθίον,¹⁶ πτηνόν, or ὄρνεον.

20) γ.ε[: there are no known Greek bird names which begin with a γ and have as their third letter ε.

26) τι.[: the only bird whose name begins thus listed in D’Arcy Thompson is τιτίς.

27) τα[: ταῶς? Sijpesteijn. Unless we are faced by something very recherché, presumably he is right in assuming that the item contains a reference to the peacock. ταῶς is not the only available supplement. In later Greek ταῶν is an alternative form and, in view of what is so commonly found elsewhere in this text, one must also entertain the possibility that the peacock was referred to by a hitherto unattested diminutive form (?ταῶνάριον).

28) τετρ[: Sijpesteijn notes that there are five bird-names in D’Arcy Thompson which begin τετρ-.

30) λαε[δός (?): Sijpesteijn plausibly sees this as by-form of λαῖός.

31) τακη[νάριν: Sijpesteijn is obviously correct to see here a phonetic spelling of ταγηνάρι(ο)ν, which is in turn an alternative form of ἀτταγήν, ἀτταγάα. The revised supplement to LSJ which takes account of seven of the words found in this list does not mention this one: this is the first attestation of the word outside the lexicographical tradition.

¹⁶ In view of this, one might entertain the possibility that τρουθίν (item 5) does not mean ‘sparrow’, but rather represents the generic word for bird current at the time of writing, but I would not wish to press this notion.