Nikolaos Gonis

A Symmachos on Mission and His Paymaster: P. Herm. 80 Enlarged

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P. Herm. Rees 80 + P. Misc. inv. II 137c 15.3 x 11.9 cm 27 November - 26 December 553

Oxyrhynchus

A fragment of the original document has been published as P. Herm. Rees 80. A further fragment, contiguous to the latter, has been identified among the unpublished papyri of the collection from which P. Herm. also came (P. Misc.). Although about one third of the piece (the right outermost panel) is still missing, it is now clear that it is a receipt for payment issued by a ζυγοστάτης (weighmaster) to a σύμμαχος (armed guard or messenger) who was about to depart on a mission. Unfortunately, the latter’s destination and/or the purpose of his journey are obscured by the damage.

Documents recording cash payments to σύμμαχοι in respect of journeys include SB XVI 13052 (V), SPP VIII 1009 (VI?) (cf. below n. para. 5), P. Oxy. XIX 2243A.92-95 (590), P. Amh. II 158 = SPP III 278 (612), P. Oxy. XVI 1904 (618); also SPP VIII 1130 (VI) (wine) and 943 (VII/VIII) (oil).

As J. Gascou, T&MByz 9 (1985) 56 n. 320, has pointed out, the ζυγοστάτης Ioannes appears again in P. Oxy. XXXVI 2780.22, dated 16 July 553, a few months earlier than our text; there, he is expressly called an employee of the patricia Flavia Gabriela (ζυγοστάτου αὐτῆς). It is a reasonable assumption that the σύμμαχος too was in the employ of the (οἶκος of the) same grand lady.

The writing is across the fibres. The back is blank.

1 This small collection belongs to the Egypt Exploration Society, and is housed in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; I am grateful to the Society for permission to publish the new fragment. I am also obliged to Dr P. McNiven, who supplied a photocopy of P. Herm. 80 on which I was able to confirm my initial suspicion that the two fragments belonged together, and who also arranged that I receive a photograph; this is reproduced by courtesy of the Director and Librarian of The John Rylands University Library of Manchester, where the papyri published in P. Herm. are now held.
‘There was given through the most admirable Ioannes, zygostates, to Georgios, symmachos, who is departing ... in the month of Choiak of the second indiction, [one-third] of a solidus [less one-and-a-half carat] of gold by the private standard, total 1/3 solidus less 1 1/2 carat of gold by the private standard, only. (m.2) Total one-third of a gold solidus less one-[and-a-half] carat [only.]

‘Year 230/199, Choiak, indiction second.’

1 έδοθε (θη). This introductory verb is typical of Oxyrhynchite receipts of this period.

2 νομ[ι!ματ¤ou tr¤ton parå kerãtion ©n ¥mi!u

3 νομ[ι!ματ¤ou tr¤tou parå kerãtion ©n ¥mi!u

4 νομ[ι!ματ¤ou tr¤tou parå kerãtion ©n ¥mi!u
Possibly nothing was written after (the restored) μ(όνον) in the lost part of the line, but cf. P.Oxy. I 145.4, which ends μόν(α) ιδιοτικ(ῆ) ζυγ(ί).  

4 For the conversion of the date see R. S. Bagnall, K. A. Worp, The Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt (1978) 87, 97, cf. 36-42 on the Oxyrhynchite era years.

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