

DOMINIC MONTSERRAT

A NEW READING IN P.FAY. 103

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A New Reading in P.Fay. 103

The second line of P.Fay. 103, a third century account of burial expenditure, was transcribed by the original editors as βλάβη ἦν πρὸς τὴν ταφήν α...τωρία. Their note on the reading says: “At the end of the line ἀνακτώρια could be read, but this is unsuitable.” The problem of the final word in P.Fay. 103,2 is solved by comparison with P.Oxy. XII 1535, another account of funeral expenses, dated to 16 Mecheir in the sixth year of an unnamed third century Emperor.¹ In lines 8-9, the account mentions ‘a pair of fine *amictoria* and a pair of coarse ones’ (ζεῦγος ἀμικτωρίου εἰσχνὸς καὶ παχέος ζεῦγος) required for the burial of the writer’s father and sister. In 1989 I was able to examine P.Fay. 103, now in Princeton, and confirm that the word at the end of line 2 can indeed be read as ἀμικτώρια: the editor was confused by the damage to the μ, which is also rather mis-shaped, with a low second bow and its descender ligatured to the stumpy ι, so that the whole configuration resembles να rather than μι.

ἀμικτώριον, a loan-word from the Latin *amictorium*, a cloth wrapper or cover, has occurred several times in the papyri in a number of different contexts.² This item is not purely for funerary use, because there are letters where individuals request their ἀμικτώρια to be sent to them (e.g. P.Meyer 22, SB XVI 12594) As. R. Rémondon points out in his *editio princeps* of SB VI 9238, “le mot ... peut désigner toute étoffe vestimentaire que l’on jette autour de soi: amictoria s’oppose à induere”.³ This is confirmed by the fact that *amictorium* appears glossed as περιβόλαιον and κέπαγμα,⁴ though it is interesting that both the latter words can also have the meaning of winding-sheets or grave clothes in patristic Greek. In SB VI 9568, a pair of ἀμικτώρια appear in connection with the three *κινδόνες* in a list headed ἐντολικὸν ὀθονίων. *κινδόνες* and ὀθόνια both appear in the papyri as terms for funerary wrappings. P.Haun. II 17,5-6, is a letter with a request for 80 drachmas’ worth of a *κινδών* to bind a corpse, the implication being that this is a standard amount known to the recipient of the letter (ὅτι οὖν ἐτίτταται τὰ μέτρα αὐτῆς). It would be tempting to interpret SB VI 9568 as a list of linens for funerary use, as the pair of ἀμικτώρια might suggest, but terminology for textiles in the papyri is extremely loose and there is nothing in this text that points specifically to burials.

Expenditure on textiles for funerals was high, not surprising when one considers the colossal amount of linen that was used to envelop a wealthy individual in Roman period burials.⁵

¹ To judge from the hand and the prices of the commodities, P.Oxy. XII 1535 should be assigned to the first half of the third century AD, probably after 212 (since an Aurelius is the countersignatory in line 16) and before Valerian. The most likely possibilities for the date are therefore 10 February 227 (6th year of Alexander Severus), 10 February 243 (6th year of Gordian) or 10 February 249 (6th year of Philip the Arab).

² Occurrences of this word known to me are: BGU XIII 2351,6 (II AD); SB VI 9238,17-18 (198-211 AD); SB VI 9568,2-3 (III AD); SB XVI 12594,16 (III AD); P.Oxy. XII 1535,8-9 (for date, see note 1); P.Meyer 22,10 (III-IV AD). For the meaning of the word in Latin, see Theodosian Code VIII 5,48: *reliquae vero vestes, sed et lintamen amictorium, nostrorum viribus necessarium. lineae vel amictoria quibus hactenus onerari redae solebant nec ulterius redis sed angariis vel navibus dirigantur.*

³ R. Rémondon, *Autour de quelques termes du P.Fouad inédit inv. no. 45, CE 53 (1952), 199.*

⁴ *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum*, ed. G.Goetz (repr. Amsterdam, 1965) II 433,6; II 402,18; II 307,15 (glossed as ἐπιβόλαιον).

⁵ See SPP XXII 56,9 (III AD), where 136 drachmas were spent on burial linen, in addition to 24 drachmas for ‘an old tunic’, which was presumably incorporated in the wrappings. In P.Giss. 68 (mid-II

At Hawara in 1910, Petrie unwrapped several mummies, which he dated to the Antonine period: one of these contained over 200 individual pieces of linen in the form of pads, bandages, straps and large cloths, so that the body with its wrappings weighed over a hundredweight.⁶ However, it is not easy to use Petrie's or any other descriptions to relate the papyrological evidence to actual mummy wrappings. The word ἀμικτώριον implies something that envelops, which in the context of wrappings could suggest either the large shroud that covers the body itself (in the mummy Petrie unwrapped it measured 86 x 33 inches), the various binding strips which surround the body, or even a term for the entire ensemble of linen used to prepare a corpse, including the pads, bandages, straps and large cloths: like *κινδόνες*⁷ and *ὀθόνια*, 'wrappings' in the most general sense. In this context, the mention of a ζεῦγος ἀμικτωρίου in P.Oxy. XII 1535 may be relevant: ζεῦγος, literally meaning a pair of something, can also be used in late Greek to mean a set of something, such as a suit of clothes (see LSJ s.v. ζεῦγος which cites BGU III 814,9 (III AD) ζεῦγος ἱματίων).⁸ Therefore it seems possible that ἀμικτώριον is a generic term for funerary wrappings, and that of the two individuals in P.Oxy. XII 1535, one was equipped for eternity with a set of finely-woven wrappings, while the other had to be content with coarser stuff.⁹

London

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AD), Arsis requests new linen and 300 drachmas to cover the costs of the secondary burial (δευτέρω ταφῇ) of her son.

⁶ W.M.F. Petrie, *Roman Portraits and Memphis IV* (London, 1911), 16-18 and plate XXI.

⁷ Cf. P.Grenf. II 77,27 (= Sel.Pap. I 157, late III AD) where the meaning of *κινδών* is obviously funerary wrappings. The sense of the Greek word has come into modern Greek and Italian, where *La Sindone* is the term for the Holy Shroud of Turin. The now-archaic word *sendon* was also used in sixteenth-century English to mean a shroud or winding-sheet. For the relationship between *κινδόνες* and *ὀθόνια* in the papyri, see J. Blinzer, *Ὀθόνια und andere Stoffbezeichnungen im «Wäschekatalog» des Ägypters Theophanes und im neuen Testament*, *Philologus* 99 (1955), 158ff.

⁸ Sets of funerary garments also appear in Coptic inventories: see W.E. Crum, *Coptic Ostraca from the Collections of the Egypt Exploration Fund* (London, 1902), no 459,15: ωοιεω κκερεα (= κερία) ωηνηω. and idem, *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes II* (New York, 1926), no.348. In Coptic there are different terms for the bandages or binding-strips and for winding-sheets and shrouds, the former being designated by the Greek word κερία and the latter by the generic Coptic word ρεοc linen.

⁹ Thanks are due to Dr Walter Cockle for reading a preliminary version of this article, and T.G. Wilfong for his comments on Coptic funerary garments.