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THE APHRODITO MURDER CASE (*P. MICH. XIII 660 AND 661*) AND THE
GHOST-EPITHET ΚΑΚΟΣΙΩΜΕΝΟΣ

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**The Aphrodito Murder Case (*P. Mich. XIII 660 and 661*)
and the Ghost-epithet *κακοσιωμένος***

When P.J. Sijpesteijn published *P. Mich. XIII* he included two documents which deal with a murder case where the defendant is the soldier Menas (*P. Mich. 660 and 661*). According to the editor Menas bears the epithet *κακοσιωμένος* (660.10 and 661.12 and 14), which to my knowledge is not recorded in any other Greek papyrus or literary and subliterate source. Sijpesteijn translates the epithet, without any comment, as "evildoer", and the word is recorded in the General Index by G.A. Segal as deriving from a verb "*κακοσιωῶν*", unknown otherwise. Unfortunately, the reader is not warned anywhere in the volume that this would be a *hapax*. Moreover, in order to yield the needed sense ("evildoer") the form would have to be a middle participle, pace Segal's entry in the index. And finally, the formation of a word *κακοσιωῶμαι* (from *κάκωσις*) is doubtful, to say the least.

Already in 1977, when J. Gascou reviewed the volume, he suspected the incorrectness of the reading in all three occurrences. Instead he suggested the reading *καθωσιωμένος* (for *καθωσιωμένος*), to correspond with the Latin title *devotus* or *devotissimus*, but he had no way of confirming the reading as there is no complete photograph in the edition of either papyri.¹

J.G. Keenan in a recent letter (June 18, 1991) also expressed doubts about the incorrectness of *κακοσιωμένος* and asked me to check the original in our collection. I am now in the position to confirm that both the reading and the entry in the General Index of *P. Mich. XIII* should be eliminated, as the correct reading of the papyri is indeed *καθωσιωμένος* (in 660.10), *καθωσιωμέ(νου)* and *καθωσιωμένον* (in 661.12 and 14 respectively).

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¹ Gascou notes his objection in the following way: "le soldat Ménas est qualifié de *κακοσιωμένος* ou "evildoer" (cf. encore 661.12 et 14). Cette forme est bien étrange. Je suppose qu'il faut rétablir dans les trois cas *καθωσιωμένος* pour *καθωσιωμένος*, *devotus*, *devotissimus*, épithète habituelle des soldats du Bas-Empire, mais il n'y a pas de photographie permettant de trancher" (*Chron. d' Eg.* 52 [1977] 361). Subsequently, Gascou's correction was admitted in the *BL*, and the editors accepted it with a dotted theta (*BL VII*, p. 116). However, the correction has escaped the attention in recent discussions, such as L.S.B. MacCoull in *JJP* 20 (1991) 107.