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*P. LOND.* III 875A: A PUZZLING BEGINNING

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### ***P.Lond.* III 875a: A Puzzling Beginning**

In *JJP* 23 (1993) 141-142, along with several other short Byzantine texts from the British Library, P.J. Sijpesteijn gives a complete publication of *P.Lond.* III 875a (descr.). The papyrus, according to the editor, can be dated on palaeographical grounds to the Vth century and seems to be coming from the Oxyrhynchite nome. The document is a receipt for 150 artabas of barley that was paid by a landowner called Agenios, through his agent Makarios. The barley will be used to feed pigs in the course of a fifteenth indiction. The receipt was issued on Thoth 6 of the same indiction.

The editor thought that there was a place name at the beginning of the document and printed the opening sentence as follows:

τῶν ἀπὸ Ἐξάρχησις [ . . . ]ομένων β ἔδεξάμην παρὰ Ἀγενίῳ γεούχου εἰς τρ[ο]-  
φὴν χοίρων  
πεντεκαίδεκάτης ἰνδ[ι]κτ[ί]ο[ς] κριθῶν ἀρ(τάβας) ἑκατὸν πενήκοντα, etc.

The otherwise unattested locality Ἐξάρχησις can be removed easily if we try a different word-brake. I propose the following reading:

τῶν ἀπὸ ἐξάρχης ἕως ἐ[παγ]ομένων β ἔδεξάμην παρὰ Ἀγενίῳ (read Ἀγενίου), etc.

In effect, with the new reading the text is relieved from all the unwelcome intruders and it will simply mean: “for the account (vel sim.) from the beginning until epagomene 2, I have received from Agenios the landowner, etc.” Since the receipt was issued on the fifth day (Thoth 5) of the fifteenth indiction, then the beginning of line 1 implies that the payment was for the fourteenth indiction.

For other receipts starting with the same expression, see *PNYU* I 8, 2 and 10, 5 and 10, both from the middle of the fourth century and both parallels to the London papyrus. For the redundant use of the prepositions ἀπό and ἐξ—a rather common linguistic phenomenon in every day modern Greek usage—in the same expression, see *ZPE* 99 (1993) 94, note to line 19 of *P.Haun.* III 58. The phenomenon is closely related to the combinations of praepositions including ἀπέκ (already *Hom. h. Ap.* 110) and ἀπέξ (E. Schwyzer, *Griech Gramm.* II 429; J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen zur Syntax*<sup>2</sup> II 231; E. Mayser, *Gramm. d. griech. Pap.* I.3. 206).