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BEMERKUNGEN ZU PAPYRI X <Korr. Tyche>

231. For the Visit of My Father Sarapion: CPR VIII 52*

In *Analecta Papyrologica* 4 (1992) 75–78 Michaela Paul announced the happy discovery that P.Vindob. G 28579 joined the papyrus (G 25982) previously published as CPR VIII 52, a letter of the late fourth or fifth century. She was thus able to give a nearly complete text, with only a few remaining problems. One of these occurs at the end of the newly discovered piece; the text is printed as follows:

7	καθὼς ἐδήλω-
8	σάζ μοι περὶ τῶν λιναρίων[ν]
9	εὔραμεν δεκαπέντε λί[τρ-]
10	ας ἐπὶ παρουσίᾳ ... ατρ[ς]
11	μου Σαραπίωνος κ...
12	ταθι.

The editor translates: „Eben hast Du mir Nachricht gegeben wegen des Leinens, wir haben fünfzehn Pfund Leinen aufgetrieben in Anwesenheit meines ... Sarapion ...“. About the unread part of line 10, she comments: „Die Lesung der offenen Stelle ist sehr unsicher und unklar. Man erwartet eine nähere Bestimmung des nachfolgenden μου Σαραπίωνος, wofür primär ein Verwandtschaftsgrad in Frage kommt. πατρός kommt nicht in Frage, auch ἀδελφοῦ nicht. Und es bleiben offene Fragen der Lesung bei ἀνδρός; neben den graphischen, die freilich für diesen Brief nichts Außergewöhnliches darstellen. Zutreffend ist die Buchstabenfolge ατρ, was zu keiner Lösung führt, da θυγατρὸς Σαραπίωνος doch wohl nicht verstanden werden kann als ‚die Tochter des Sarapion‘. Platz- und auch Leseprobleme sind gegen πάτριος (Onkel) oder θυγατρίδης (Enkel) vorzubringen. Non liquet“.

It is hard not to think of Sherlock Holmes' famous dictum: „When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth“ (The Sign of Four [1890], chapter 6). Paul's analysis shows clearly that a term of relationship is needed, and all but one are conclusively eliminated by comparing them to the surviving traces. Attention is then focused on her remark that „πατρός kommt nicht in Frage“. Why not? Reading τοῦ πατρός[ς] is not difficult¹. I can only suppose that the fact that the letter was addressed τῷ δεσπότῃ μου τῇ[ς] ψυχῇ μου[ν] ὡς ἀληθῶς τιμιωτάτῳ μου πατρὶ Θεῶν² seemed to the editor to pose the difficulty that two fathers are one too many for an individual. But this is not a real problem, as „father“ is very commonly used in the papyri (as in literature and inscriptions): „as an honorary title or a form of respectful address“ (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* [Chicago 21979] 635 s. v. πατήρ, 2b, with a number of examples from the papyri)³. A particularly

* I am indebted to Klaas Worp for discussion of several problems in this papyrus.

¹ The plate (p. 77) is perhaps already clear enough, but I am indebted to Hermann Harrauer for a good photograph. The pi of πατρός[ς] may be compared to that in παντοκράτωρι (line 6).

² For the opening phrase, about which the editor offers no comment, see the bibliography cited in Tyche 7 (1992) 9 n. 1.

³ One could multiply references easily: see G.H.R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* 4 (1987) 260–261.

fine example has now appeared in P. Kell. I G 74, where a letter addressed to „my lord father Aron“ later mentions „my father Clodianus“ (line 15), and the writer seems to have two „mothers“ also. The address on the back confirms this view: κυρίῳ μου πατρὶ ἀδελφῷ Ἀρωνί: „to my father brother Aron“. Both words are, as the editor observes (34 n., cf. 6-7 n. and 14ff., n.), terms of respect and not of family relationship. One or both of the „fathers“ mentioned here may thus be termed so with respect rather than relationship. There is no reason to assume that either „father“ here is the writer's biological father, in fact.

It should be noted that P. J. Sijpesteijn suggested (Korr. Tyche 207) reading ιατρο[υ] here. Palaeographically this is not impossible, but the phrase „my doctor“ strikes me as a modernism, and I have not found an example in papyrological usage. Sijpesteijn also offered a reading for what follows Σαραπίωνος in lines 11-12: καὶ ἡ Τᾷθι δῆλωσον κτλ. The reading καὶ is certainly possible, but there are at least two letters following it that Sijpesteijn's text does not account for. Nor is it obvious to me why another person should be mentioned here; surely the point of δῆλωσον is for the writer of the letter to be informed, not a third party. But I have not been able to formulate a convincing reading of the end of line 11 so far. One would like ταχέως or ἐν τάχει, but certainly neither was written; even if one took τάθι as an error for τάχι, ἐν cannot be read in the previous line.

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„Demande pressante de matériel; la morphologie, particulièrement barbare, fait obstacle à la compréhension“, say the editors of this letter. Their text for lines 5-10 (after the salutation) reads as follows:

- 5 σπούτασον ἀπέστιλά μαι
- 6 τῶν δύσωνα ξύλα
- 7 καὶ ταύτης τῆς ἐπερεσία
- 8 δραλῶρα ἀπέτιλα. ὁ τρίβουνος
- 9 τῆς περεσ () νερχιτε σή-
- 10 μερον εἰς Κύσεως.

This is translated, „Hâte-toi de m'envoyer les pièces de bois cher et exécute ce service (?). Veille donc à les envoyer. Le tribun ... va aujourd'hui à Kysis“.

A note argues that δύσωνος, cited in LSJ only from Herodianus Grammaticus, *Partitiones* 213, should be translated as „cher“ by opposition to εὖωνος, „bon marché“. (LSJ translates „hard to buy“, but Herodianus is citing the word only for its accent and gives no indication of meaning except derivation from ὦνω.) This *hapax*, known only from a discussion of accentuation, seems a most unlikely candidate for occurrence in an ostrakon of „barbare“ morphology. A look at the plate (pl. XV) suggests reading instead δύο ὄνας for δύο ὄνας, „two donkeys“. The feminine form ὄνη (presumably with reference to a female donkey) occurs repeatedly in the Kellis account book (R. S. Bagnall, *The Kellis Agricultural Account Book*, Dakleh Oasis Project Monograph 7, Oxford 1997; see note to line 61 for discussion). It is true that τῶν is written instead of τὰς, but τῶν does not agree with the editors' interpretation either. The writer intended, I believe, „hurry and send me two donkey-loads of wood“, σπούδασον ἀποστείλαί μοι τὰς δύο ὄνας ξύλων.

In line 8, the apparatus suggests δραλ' (ἀλ)λ' ὄρα? This is on the right track, but the plate seems to me to read straightforwardly ἀλλ' ὄρα; that is, the editors' delta is an alpha,