

CHARISTERION PER REVEL A. COLES

Trenta testi letterari e documentari dall'Egitto
(P.Coles)

a cura di
Guido Bastianini
Nikolaos Gonis
Simona Russo

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ABBREVIAZIONI BIBLIOGRAFICHE

Si avverte che non solo le collezioni di papiri, ma anche i principali sussidi del lavoro papirologico (riviste, lessici e repertori onomastici, grammatiche, raccolte e studi di paleografia, manuali) sono di regola citati secondo le sigle proposte in *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets* (<http://papyri.info/docs/checklist>)

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23. CUSTOMS HOUSE RECEIPT

Ashmolean Museum inv. 1928.⁶¹

Soknopaiou Nesos

cm 4.5 x 7

Tavola XXI

22.9.212^P

This text tells us that Melas (see 4n.) has paid customs dues on vegetable seed and linen exported on one donkey. For the latest update on documents of this type, see F. Reiter, P.Poethke 22, p. 422.

Although seemingly insignificant in themselves, these texts are instructive, and illustrate how individual documents, when collected into a corpus, can add significantly to our knowledge. The registers in particular are important, because they contain details of economic activity taking place over extended periods of time; we can see individuals involved in transport over several weeks. P.Wisc. II 80, for example, covers the period 29 August to 27 September 114^P for the customs station at Bacchias. The individual receipts and those detailed in the register are consistent in form and content. The earliest dates to 18^P, the latest to 214^P. The receipts are clearly those issued to transporters, while the registers preserve a record of those so issued for state records. The texts are bunched in those villages that lay on the boundaries of the nome, as we would expect, and most derive from Soknopaiou Nesos. The issue of tax boundaries has been explored in Sijpesteijn, P.Customs, pp. 16-26, and is more fully treated in Cottier, *The Customs Districts*, pp. 141-148. Soknopaiou Nesos is of central importance for our understanding of these documents, and is discussed in our article *Two Customs-House Receipts*, pp. 213-215. The commodities transported were diverse, and included a wide range of agricultural produce including staples, as well as more desirable luxuries, but wine and oil are the most commonly attested. It is unlikely that these documents concern goods that were being transported as part of non-commercial exchange between friends or relatives, for the necessity of paying taxes would probably deter such activity; it is certain that this activity is trade. A careful study of the documents reveals patterns in trade; see Adams, *Land Transport*, pp. 239-248.

¹ The papyrus was presented by J.G. Milne to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, in 1928, and was for many years on display in the Museum's Egyptian gallery. We are grateful to Dr Helen Whitehouse for making the papyrus available for study (some ten years ago), and for granting us permission to publish it.

τετελ(ώνηται) διὰ π[ύ]λ(ης) Co-
 κνοπ(αίου) Νήσου ρ'
 καὶ ν' καὶ ἴχνους
 ἐρημοφυλ(ακίας) Μέλας
 5 ἐξ(άγων) ἐπὶ ὄμφ ἐνὶ
 λαχανοπ(έρμου) (ἀρτάβην) μίαν
 καὶ ὀθονίων
 ἰκτοὺς τρις. (ἔτους) κα//
 [Θ]ῶθ πέμπτη
 10 καὶ εἰκάδι, κε.

Paid through the gate of Soknopaiou Nesos for the 3% tax and the tax for the protection of the desert route by Melas, exporting on one donkey one artaba of vegetable seed and three webs of linen clothes. Year 21, Thoth twenty-fifth, 25.

2-4. ρ' καὶ ν' καὶ ἴχνους ἐρημοφυλ(ακίας) : on these taxes see Reiter, *Die Nomarchen des Arsinoites*, pp. 236-259; P.Oxy. LXXVIII 5179, 12n. The same combination is attested in P.Fay. 76.

4. Μέλας : this name occurs forty-six times in customs house receipts and registers from Soknopaiou Nesos; see P.Customs, p. 34, n. 117. There were at least two persons of this name; cf. P.Lond. III 929, 6-7 (p. 41) = P.Customs 508-509. It is conceivable that P.Customs 425, 445 (= P.Ryl. II 197B), 449, and 522 (= P.Lond. III 929, 21), which feature a certain Melas exporting commodities on one or two donkeys, refer to the same man as our receipt. It is likely that Melas is a professional transporter, or at least an individual who specialized in transport when not engaged in agricultural production, perhaps using transport as a secondary economic activity. For discussion see Adams, *Land Transport*, p. 244.

6. λαχανοπ(έρμου) : on this product see F. Morelli, ZPE 149 (2004), pp. 138-142.

7-8. ὀθονίων ἰκτοῦς : for the construction cf. LSJ s.v. ἰκτός II.2, citing Polybius 5.89.2 ὀθονίων ἰκτοὶ τριχίλιοι. Another reference to ὀθόνια in this context is offered by the customs house register BGU XIII 2327, 18 (II^P); cf. also BGU III 812, 2, 5 = P.Customs 667 (II/III^P) ἐξ[άγ(ων)] ἐν πλοί(ω) [Ἐλ]ληνικ(ῶ) ἰκτο .[.

8. τρις : *lege* τρεῖς.

(ἔτους) κα// : this must be the 21st year of Caracalla rather than of Commodus; see P.Customs, p. 71ff.