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THE COPTIC VERSO OF *P. PRINC.* II 84

The Coptic Verso of *P. Princ.* II 84 (Plate V)

Since E.H. Kase Jr. edited *P. Princ.* II 84, a Greek document, in 1936, no attention has been paid to the editor's statement that "on the verso there is an extensive Coptic fragment" (ed. princ. p. 81). Thanks to the kindness of Charles E. Greene, Keeper of the Rare Book Room of Princeton University Library, I have obtained a photograph of this unpublished other side (actually →). To understand the Coptic text written along the fibres may also help in the reinterpretation of the already published Greek text, a sale of a house, on the ↑ side.[1]

The Coptic text is a contract for the provision of wine, of the type often referred to as a "sale on delivery", really a form of trading in wine futures.

Many nearly exact parallels are to be found in *SPP* XX 144, from the sixth-century Hermopolite. Coptic parallels to the stereotyped phraseology, standard for this type of document, also exist. Our Coptic document is framed in the first person by the vinegrower/négociant (assumed to be the same person) and addressed to the future recipient of the wine. While the document is drawn up in Choiak, it promises to provide wine from the vintage (harvest) of the following Mesore. Unfortunately neither the amount of wine nor the type of measure used is preserved.

Almost nothing can be read of the first five fragmentary lines; to what can be seen I shall return below (see on line 15). I begin giving a text with line 6; restorations are *exempli gratia*

6 ΝΑΪ ΤΙϨΟΜΟΛΟΓΕΙ ΜΝΛΑΑΥ Ν[ΑΜΦΙΒΟΛΙΑ ΠΑΡΑСΧΕ ΝΑΚ ϨΝ

7 ΜΕСΟΡΕ ΠΕΒΟΤ [СΥΝ ΘΕΩ ΜΝΤΟΥΕ ΙΝΔΙΚ(ΤΙΟΝΟС) x (measures)

8 Ν̄ΗΡΠ Ν̄ΒР̄РΕ ΕΝΑΝΟΥΟΥ ΕΥΑΡΕСΚΕ ΝΑΚ ΑΥΩ

9 ϨΒΩ ΝΑΚ ΕΡΟΟΥ Ν̄ϨΜ̄Ϫ ϨΙϬΩΝ ϨΙΛΩΜΗС ϢΑ ΤΩΒΕ

10 ΠΕΒΟΤ Ν̄ΤΙΡΟΜΠΕ Ν̄ΟΥΩΤ ΠΕΤΕΚΑϨΕ ΕΡΟϤ ΕΒϨΟΟΥ

11 ϨΙϢΟΥ ΤΑΑΛΛΑССΕ ΝΜΟϤ ΝΑΚ ΤΑΤΑΑΒ ΝΑΚ Ν̄ΗΡΠ

12 ΕΝΑΝΟΥϤ ΕΙΛΕ Μ̄ΠΤΑΑΥ ΝΑΚ Ν̄ΤΙΠΡΟΘΕСΜΙΑ ΕΠ

13 ΤΑΤΙ ΤΡΙΜΗСΙΝ СΝΑΥ Ν̄ΑΤϨΑΠ Ν̄ΑΤΝΟΜΟС Ν̄ΑΤΛΑΑΥ

14 Ν̄ΑΜΦΙΒΟΛΕΙΑ ΕΙΩΡΚ̄ Μ̄ΠΝΟΥΤΕ ΠΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ϪΕ

15 ΜϢΠΑΡΑΒΑ ☧ ΕΓΡ(ΑΦΗ) ι ΧΟΙΑΚ ΙΝΔ(ΙΚΤΙΟΝΟС) Ϊ̅α+++ (2nd h.) СΗΜΙ(ΟΝ) ✝ ΑΝΟΚ ΠΛΑΚΗΤ
    (3rd h.) ΠΛΑΚΗΤ

16 ΠϢΕ ΝΒΙΚΤΩΡ ΤΙСΤΟΙΧ(ΕΙ) ΕΤΙΑСΦΑΛΕΙΑ Ν̄ΘΕ ΕССΗϨ Μ̄ΜΟС✝

17 ✝ ΑΝΟΚ ΛΕΟΝΤΙ[ΟС ΠΕΛΑΧ(ΙСΤΟС)] ΔΙΑΚ(ΩΝ) ΠϢΕ ΝΠΜΑΚΑΡΕ ΘΩΜΑ ΠР(ΕСΒΥΤΕ-
    РОС)

18 ΑΙСϨΑΙ ϨΑΡΟϤ] ϪΝ ΒΝΟΪ ΑΝ ϤΘ ☧

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15 ΕΓР⸌   ΙΝΔ⸌   СΗΜΙ⸌   16 ΤΙСΤΟΙΧ⸌   17 ΔΙΑΚ⸌   ΠР⸌

"… for me, I agree with no [equivocation to furnish you in] the month of Mesore [of the D.V. eleventh indiction, x measures] of new wine, good ones, satisfying you and protecting them for you from vinegar and going off and mold until the month of Tybi of this same year, sheltering it from deterioration (coming) upon them (or else) I shall exchange it for you. I shall give it to you, good wine, and if I do not give it to you by the appointed time, I shall pay two trimesia, without (resorting to) judgement or law, without any equivocation, swearing by God Almighty not to transgress (this). ☦ Written on 10 Choiak, ind. 11. (Sign of Plaket) (m₃, added beneath the sign) Plaket. (m₂) ✝ I, Plaket, son of Victor, I agree to this *asphaleia* as it is written.✝ ✝ I, Leontios, humble deacon, son of the late Thomas the priest, I wrote for him since he is illiterate. Amen. ☦ "

8 ηρπ ⲛ̄ⲃ̄ⲣ̄ⲣⲉ ⲉⲛⲁⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ: cf. *SPP* XX 144.5-6, οἴνῳ νέῳ καλλίστῳ.

9-10 ϩⲛ̄ⲝ ϩⲓϭⲱⲛ ϩⲓⲗⲱⲙⲏⲥ: cf. *ibid.* 8-9 ὄξος ἢ ἀποίητος ἢ ὀζόμενος. On ὄξος, ἀποίητος, ὀζόμενος, "vinegar, not fit for use, having a moldy taste," see N. Kruit, *ZPE* 90 (1992) 266-268. In *SPP* XX 144.9 ὀζόμενος Wessely says "ζ ex ξ." On the meaning of these flaws for sales on future delivery see Kruit, pp. 272-276. In Coptic the same three flaws in wine are specified in the same order in the (still unpublished) Mich. Copt. 4237, cited by Crum *Dictionary* 821b and 143a; cf. also *CPR* II 29.6 = IV 82.6 and ST 89.5, which also specify a guarantee until Tybi as does *SPP* XX 144.9-10; and Mich. 21, also written in Choiak. In Crum's lemma (*Dict.* 143a) s.v. ⲗⲱⲙⲥ, citing Mich. 4241, "104" is a misprint for "144".

11 ⲁⲗⲗⲁⲥⲥⲉ: cf. *SPP* XX 144.10, ἀλλάξει.

12: The same phrase is found in Greek *ibid.* 11-12.

13-14 ⲁⲧϩⲁⲡ ⲁⲧⲛⲟⲙⲟⲥ ⲁⲧⲗⲁⲁⲩ ⲛ̄ⲁⲙⲫⲓⲃⲟⲗⲉⲓⲁ: cf. *ibid.* 7-8, χωρίς τινος – – – ἀντιλογίας καὶ κρίσεως καὶ δίκης; the stereotyped phrase is also often found in Coptic (e.g. Mich 21.7).

15 ⲡⲗⲁⲕⲉⲧ·[: The subscript ⲡⲗⲁⲕⲏⲧ is written by a third hand, different from the main scribe as well as from Leontios, who wrote the rest. The writing of the name is fluid, and the hand experienced, not that of an illiterate person. The cross with which Leontios begins to write the formula substituting for Plaket's signature (ⲁⲛⲟⲕ ⲡⲗⲁⲕⲏⲧ etc.), left no space for the subscript name of Plaket. Thus the subscript name of Plaket seems to be a later addition, seemingly added by an official in order to identify the three crosses as Plaket's sign. Strictly speaking, such identification was not needed.

Plaket's name also occurs in the first line of the Coptic where the barely visible traces can be read as]ϯ ⲡ ⲗⲁⲕⲏⲧ ⲡⲥ[ⲁ ⲛⲏⲣⲡ ⲡ]ϣⲉ ⲛ̄ⲃⲓⲕⲧⲱⲣ, "Plaket the wine-seller, son of Victor" (another possible restoration is ⲡⲉ[ϭⲙⲉ], as in *CPR* II 29.1 = IV 82.1). The name has no exact parallels in known Greek or Coptic documents. For Plakē in *P. Aberd.* 34.3 (Fayum, 7th c.) Turner suggested a formation from the Latin Placidus: cf. also Πλάκιδος/-κυτος in *P. Lond.* IV 1432.45 et sim. s.vv. in Preisigke *Namenbuch*.

We note that no price has been preserved, only the amount of penalty or fine specified. If any money has already changed hands, this has not been preserved. The penalty agreed upon is two trimesia, two-thirds of a solidus: notwithstanding the dealer's expected protestation that the wine is "good" (i.e. not spoiled), one cannot infer what amount of what quality of wine two trimesia might have been the value of. L. Casson in "Wine measures and prices in Byzantine Egypt," *TAPA* 70 (1939) 1-16, pointed out the incommensurability of various qualities and ratios. *SPP* XX 144, our parallel, is Casson's Table I no. 22 (p. 11): he calculates for that document that one xestes/sextarius cost 1/620 sol. In Coptic documents the most usual wine measure is the ⲗⲁϩⲏ; one ⲗⲁϩⲏ can equal 4, 5, or 8 xestai (Casson pp. 6-7). Using *SPP* XX 144 as a yardstick, two-thirds of a solidus would have been the value of 413 1/3

xestai, or 101, just under 83, or nearly 52 *lahe.* We do not know what to restore, or if the yardstick indeed is applicable.

As in *CPR* II 29.8-9 = IV 82.8-9, the vinegrower/seller is illiterate; here a deacon, a priest's son, signs for him.

We now turn to the little that can be read above line 6. In line 3, I believe one can read the name of the recipient as ⲧⲁⲩⲣⲓⲛⲉ: Taurinos (-ⲉ in Coptic) is such a typically Hermopolite name that this would give a Hermopolite provenance for the Princeton papyrus. In line 2 the verb ⲥϩⲁⲓ is just visible, in accord with the usual cheirographon form of this type of document. The name of Plaket, the wine seller (see on line 15), is extant on the loose fragment placed at the top of the fragment.[2]
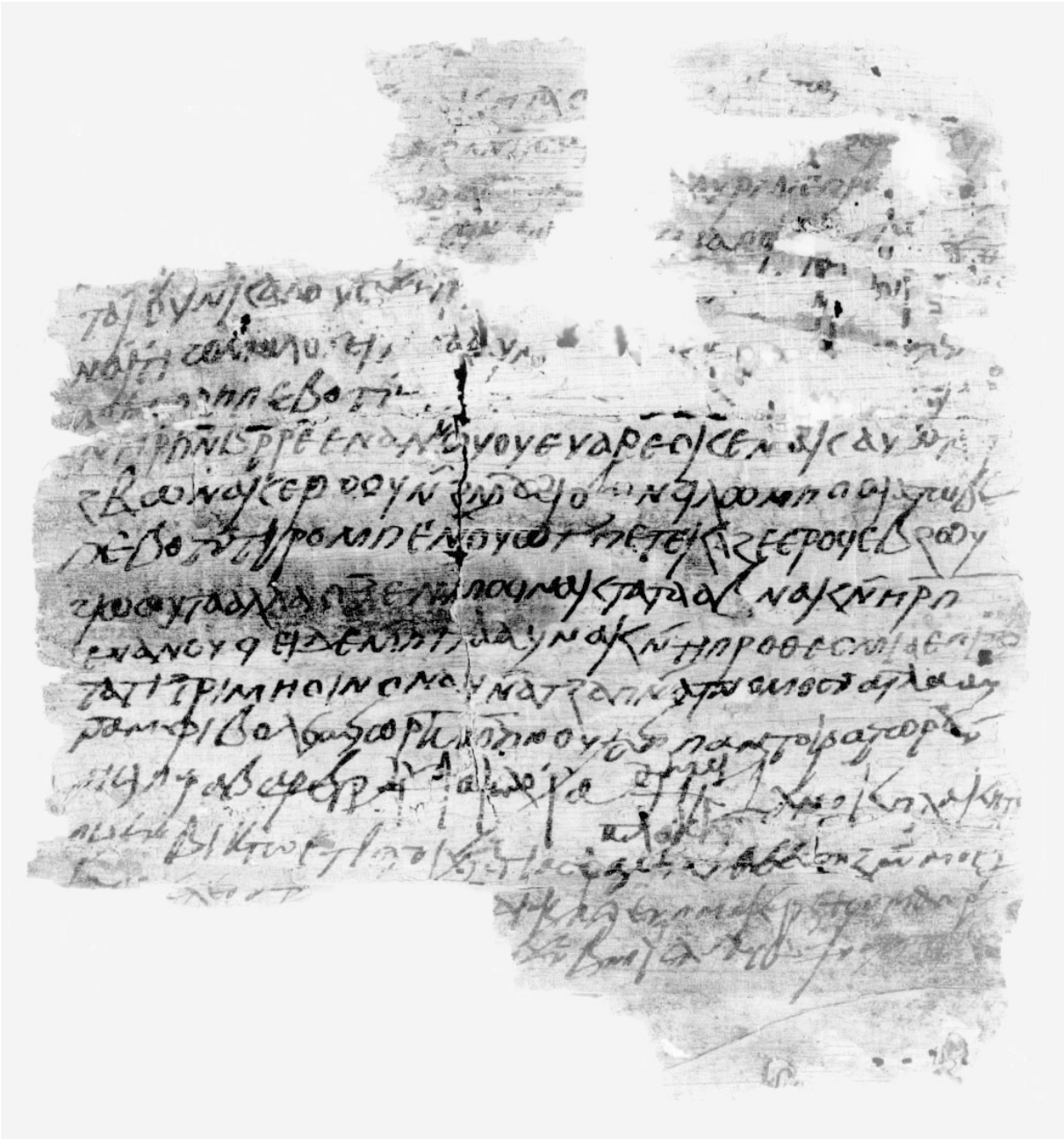
Finally, a note on the Greek document, *P. Princ.* II 84↑:[3] since one of the parties to the sale is Euphemia daughter of John, a nun (μονάζουϲα), it is possible that αμα in line 5 might not be understood as ἅμα but rather as the religious title Ἄμα, "Ama, Mother", here in the dative: "I have sold to Ama Euphemia …" This could make the Greek document an instance of a religious woman purchasing a dwelling.

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[2] The placement of the fragment at top left (top right in the Greek) is uncertain: no violence would be done to the sense of the fragmentary beginning of the Greek document if it were to be placed further to the left, giving more space for a more extensive restored text.

[3] Dated by the ed. princ. "5th c. (?)"; it is uncertain which side was written first, with what interval.

P. Princ. II 84 (back)