

NIKOLAOS GONIS

WAGES FOR A CISTERN

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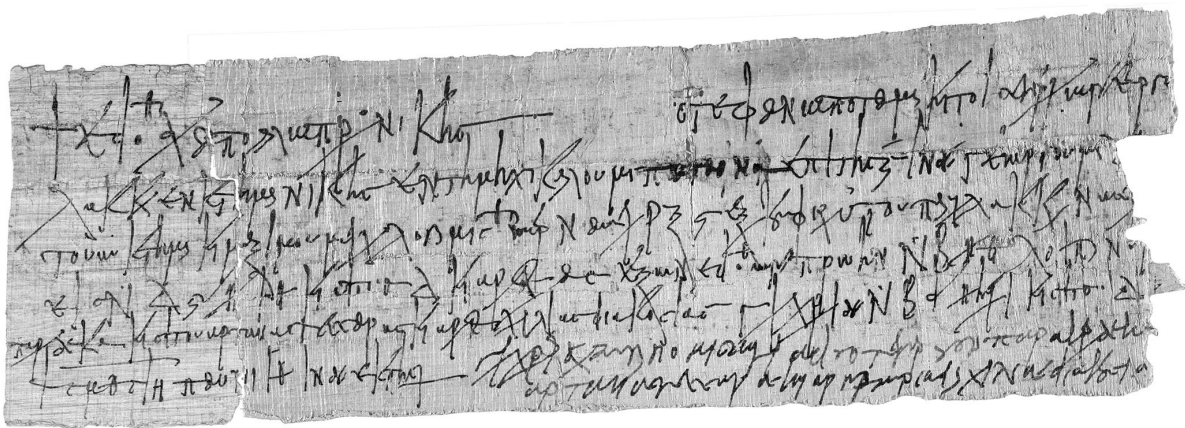
## WAGES FOR A CISTERN

P.Lond. V 1808 was published as a document of uncertain classification and unknown provenance, and was assigned to the seventh century. Much later it was established that it is Oxyrhynchite, and then that it relates to the Apion estate. The reading of the text and its interpretation were substantially advanced by F. Morelli, *Pap. Congr. XXI* (1997) ii 727–37 (BL XI 121–2).<sup>1</sup> More recently it was assigned to 572/3 and placed even more firmly within the Apion estate (P.Oxy. LXXXIV 5460.2 n.). The beginnings and ends of the lines of the London piece are lost, but the structure of the text is typical of receipts issued by Apionic functionaries. All this has been confirmed by the discovery of the missing left-hand part; an edition of the whole is offered below.

The receipt was issued by Apollon, estate manager (προνοητής) of the hamlet of Nikes, who is also known from P.Oxy. LXXXIV 5460.2 (569) and P.Herm. 77 (31.xii.571; see P.Oxy. 5460.2 n.). P.Herm. 77 comes from the same Oxford collection as the missing part of P.Lond. 1808, acquired by Grenfell and/or Hunt in Egypt not later than 1906/7; see *BASP* 45 (2008) 70–72. P.Lond. 1808, or British Library Papyrus 1621, was purchased through Chauncey Murch on 8 December 1906. This suggests that the adjoining piece, and probably also the collection of which it is part, derive from purchases in 1905/6 or 1906/7.

The text tells us that a group of river-workers were paid for work related to a cistern in an irrigated farm (μηχανή). The exact purpose of their work is obscured by the loss of the end of l. 1, but it probably concerned the digging for a new cistern. Their output is measured in naubia, 166 in all, but an unknown number is subtracted for work on an old cistern. If the new total, which would have corresponded to the size of the new cistern, was not much lower than 166 naubia, their work was going to take four months, as Morelli has shown. Their wages were 4% (or 4¼) solidi less 19 carats, 4 artabas of wheat, and 1200 myriads of denarii; the wheat (1 artaba per month), as well as the ‘myriads of silver’ but in reality bronze (10 myriads per day, corresponding to 2 twelve-*nummi* coins), would have covered daily subsistence and related expenses. The river-workers had already received an advance of about half the sum due in gold, which may relate to the length of the project.

The text is written across the fibres. The back is blank.



<sup>1</sup> I examined the original in connection with this article in 1995, with no inkling of what was to follow. I am grateful to Federico Morelli for responding to queries brought up by the new edition, to Ben Henry for scanning the new piece and creating the composite image above, and to the participants of a hybrid workshop at Udine on 8 June 2022, particularly Giuseppina Azzarello, the organizer. The image of P.Lond. inv. 1621 is reproduced by permission of the British Library Board.

P.Misc. inv. II 177b + P.Lond. inv. 1621

27.3 × 8.7 cm

13 June 573

- 1 † ἐδόθ(η) δ(ιὰ) Ἀπολλῶ προ(νοητοῦ) Νίκης (vac.) Cτεφάνῳ ποταμ(ίτη) καὶ τοῖς ἐτέρ(οις)  
αὐτ(οῦ) ἐργα[ζομέ(νοις) - - - ]
- 2 λάκκ( ) ἐν κτήμ(ατι) Νίκης ἐν τῇ μηχ(ανῇ) καλουμ(ένῃ) Πατνηα ἐπὶ τῆς ζ̄ ἰνδ(ικτίωνος)  
γεωργουμ(ένῃ) . . [ - - - ]
- 3 τοῦ αὐ(τοῦ) κτήμ(ατος) καὶ Μαξίμου μείζ(ονος) λόγ(ω) μιθ(οῦ) ὑπὲρ ναυεί(ων) ρξς ἐξ (ῶν)  
κουφίζ(ονται) ὑ(πὲρ) τοῦ παλαι(οῦ) λάκκ(ου) ναύει(α) [ - - - ]
- 4 εἰς νο(μιμμάτια) δ ζ' π(αρά) ιθ καὶ τίτου (ἀρτάβαι) δ καὶ ἀρ(γυρίου) (δηναρίων μυριάδες)  
,Ac, ἐξ ῶν ἐδόθ(η) αὐτ(οῖς) πρώην νο(μιμμάτια) β π(αρά) θ, λοιπ(ὰ) νομ[ιμμάτια  
δύο τέταρτον]
- 5 παρ(ὰ) δέκα καὶ τίτου ἀρτάβας τέσσαρας καὶ ἀρ(γυρίου) (δηναρίων μυριάδας) χιλίας  
διακοσίας, γί(νονται) χρ(υσοῦ) ἰδ(ιωτικῶ) νο(μιμμάτια) β d/ π(αρά) κερ(άτια) ι  
καὶ τί(του) (ἀρτάβαι) δ κ[αὶ ἀρ(γυρίου) (δηναρίων μυριάδες) ,Ac μ(όνα).]
- 6 (ἔτους) μῆθ̄ κιη Παυνι ιθ̄ ἰνδ(ικτίωνος) ἔκτης. † (*m.*<sup>2</sup>) γί(νονται) χρ(υσοῦ) ἰδ(ιωτικῶ) ζυγ(ῶ)  
νομιμμάτια δύο τέταρτον παρὰ κερ(άτια) δέκα [καὶ τί(του)]
- 7 ἀρτάβας τέσσαρας καὶ ἀργυρ(ίου) μυριάδ(ας) χιλίας διακοσία[ς μ(όνα).]

1 εδο<sup>65</sup>δχ, πρ<sup>o</sup>, ποταμ<sup>s</sup>, ετεργ<sup>o</sup> αυτ// 2 λακκ, κτημ<sup>s</sup>, μηχ,καλουμ<sup>s</sup>, γεωργουμ<sup>s</sup> Πατνηα *ex corr.*  
2, 6 ινδ// 3 αὐκτημ<sup>s</sup>, μειζλογμ<sup>65</sup>, ναυει, εξκουφίζ<sup>o</sup>, παλαιλακκναυει 4 Ν, π, σ, εδο<sup>65</sup> αυτ//,  
Νβπθλοιπ, 4, 5 αρκ 5 παρ (added in the margin opposite δεκα), γχριδ<sup>o</sup>Νβ d/ πκερ, τιτ<sup>o</sup> 6 Η,  
γγχριδ<sup>o</sup>ζυγ, κερ 7 αργυρμυριαδς

1 l. ἐταίροις 3 l. ναυβίων, ναύβια 5, 7 l. ἀρτάβαι τέσσαρες, μυριάδες χίλια διακοσία

1 [π](αρά) BL I 304: δ// *ed. pr.* αὐτ(οῦ) ἐργα[ζομέ(νοις): . . p// εργα[τς] *ed. pr.* (ἐργά[τ(αις) BL XI 121]  
2 κτήμ(ατι): [κτ]ημ(ατ-) BL XI 121: ]ημ<sup>s</sup> *ed. pr.* . . [: δ/ .] *ed. pr.* 3 ὑπὲρ ναυεί(ων) BL XI 121: . ερ ν  
ασει/ *ed. pr.* ἐξ (ῶν) κουφίζ(ονται): εξ/ κουφίζ/ *ed. pr.* παλαι(οῦ) λάκκ(ου): Παλι( ) λάκκ(ου) BL XI 121–2:  
παλιλ/ ακκ/ *ed. pr.* ναύει(α): ναυεί(ων) BL XI 122: ν ασει/ *ed. pr.* 4 εἰς νο(μ.) δ ζ' π(αρά) ιθ: [νο(μ.) δ δ'  
π(αρά)] (κεράτια) ιθ BL XI 122: ] γ ιθ *ed. pr.* νομ[ιμμάτια δύο τέταρτον]: νο( ) α γ [κ BL XI 122: ν α γ [ιε  
*ed. pr.* 5 κ[αὶ ἀρ(γυρίου) (δηναρίων μυριάδες) ,Ac μ(όνα)] (mostly after BL XI 122): .] *ed. pr.* 6 [καὶ  
τί(του)]: [καὶ] BL XI 122: [ *ed. pr.*

‘† There were given through Apollos, pronocetes of Nikes, to Stephanos, river-worker, and his companions, who work ... cistern in the holding of Nikes in the irrigated farm called Patnea in the 6th indiction, which is farmed (by the farmers?) of the same holding and Maximos, headman, on account of salary for 166 naubia, out of which ... naubia are deducted for the old cistern, at 4½ solidi less 19 (carats) and 4 artabas of wheat and 1200 myriads of denarii of silver, out of which 2 solidi less 9 (carats) were given to them previously; there remain two (and) one-quarter solidi less ten (carats), and four artabas of wheat, and one thousand two-hundred myriads of denarii of silver, total 2¼ solidi of gold by the private (standard) less 10 carats, and 4 artabas of wheat, and 1200 myriads of denarii of silver only.

‘Year 248/218, Payni 19, indiction sixth. †’ (2<sup>nd</sup> hand) ‘Total two (and) one-quarter solidi of gold by the private (standard) less ten carats, and four artabas of wheat, and one thousand two-hundred myriads of denarii of silver only.’

1 καὶ τοῖς ἐτέρ(οις) αὐτ(οῦ) ἐργα[ζομέ(νοις). ἐτέρ(οις) is a phonetic writing of ἐταίροις. What followed was read as . . p//. The same abbreviation recurs at 4, transcribed as ωρ//, but αυτ// is to be read in both cases, to be resolved as αὐτ(οῦ) at 1 and αὐτ(οῖς) at 4. Cf. P.Oxy. XVI 1911.157 (557) Ἀβρααμῶ ποταμίτη καὶ τοῖς ἐταίρ(οις) αὐτοῦ ἐργαζομέ(νοις); LV 3804.223 (566) Ἀπολλῶ ποταμίτη καὶ τοῖς ἐταίρ(οις) αὐτοῦ; sim. XVIII 2195.134 (576/7).

2 At the beginning of the line, read λάκκ(ου) or λάκκ(ω), probably preceded by νέου or νέω in the previous line. For the context, cf. P.Oxy. XVIII 2197.191 εἰς χρεΐ(αν) τ[ῆ]ς διορθώ(εω)ς τοῦ λάκκου ἐ[ν κ]τήμα(τι) Πήλεως ὑπὸ Γεώργ(ιον) [γ]εωργ(όν); LV 3804.213f. τοῖς ποταμ(ίταις) ἀνορύξαι νέον λάκκ(ον) ἐν κτήμα(τι) Πακριακ ἐν τῇ μηχ(ανῇ) λεγομέ(νη) Τοῦ Κτήμα(τος) ὑπὸ Ἰάκκωβον | καὶ κοιν(όν) γεωργ(ῶν).

[. . .] δ(ιὰ) [. . .] *ed. pr.*, but ὑ[πό] seems more likely than δ. τῶν γεωργ(ῶν) probably followed in the lacuna.

3 ναυεί(ων) ρξς. This number would have reflected the size of the new cistern. The work needed for it would have been less than 166 naubia (see below). A cistern whose size was  $161\frac{1}{9}\frac{1}{54}$  naubia is described in P.Oxy. LXVI 4538 (6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> c.).

ἐξ( ὧν) κουφίζ(ονται) ὑ(πὲρ) τοῦ παλαι(οῦ) λάκκ(ου). The reading of this passage had been improved since the first publication, but some uncertainties remained. After BL XI 121, it would read ἐξ( ) κουφίζ( ) ὑ(πὲρ) τοῦ Παλι( ) λάκκ(ου). ἐξ is a common abbreviation for ἐξ( ὧν), written out in full in the next line. We may then resolve κουφίζ(ονται), with ναυεί(α) being its subject. Παλι( ) was taken as a toponym, but the word order is not smooth. παλῃ would indeed be an obvious reading, but the curve in what would be the right-hand of λ may be interpreted differently, resulting in a smoother sequence: τοῦ παλαι(οῦ) λάκκ(ου).

The background to this subtraction can only be guessed at. Perhaps the work on the old cistern had already been remunerated, and for this reason it was not covered by the present payment.

4 εἰς νο(μικμάτια). Cf. P.Oxy. VII 1053.8 γί(νεται) νόου(α) , Εφκη εἰς νο(μ.) ρις, 11 νόου(α) τν εἰς νο(μ.) ζ.

(δηναρίων μυριάδες). The shape of the symbol here and at 5 is unusual, and received comment in the *ed. pr.* The summary added by the second hand at 7 would suggest (μυριάδες), but this will not account for all the ink, especially the medial horizontal. Perhaps the symbols for the denarii and myriads were merged into one.

ἐξ ὧν ἐδόθη(ν) ἀπ(τ)οῖς πρώην. This advance may be compared to the payment to canal-workers λόγῳ | ἀραβῶνος in P.Lond. inv. 2238.6–7 (Oxy.; 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> c.), ed. T. M. Hickey, *APF* 58 (2012) 302–7, but that consisted of wheat and ‘myriads of denarii’.

λοιπ(ὰ) νομ[ικμάτια δύο τέταρτον]. Restored from the next line, νο(μ.) β d. It is not obvious how the subtraction works. ( $4\frac{1}{2}$  sol. min. 19 car.) – (2 sol. min. 9 car.) =  $2\frac{1}{2}$  sol. min. 10 car., but we have  $2\frac{1}{4}$  sol. min. 10 car. One of the fractions would be wrong. If the deduction was  $4\frac{1}{2}$  carats per solidus, as implied by those 2 solidi minus 9 carats, the minus 10 carats are the product of a small downward rounding, 10 instead of  $10\frac{1}{8}$ . The minus 19 carats also imply rounding:  $18\frac{3}{4}$  car. for  $4\frac{1}{2}$  sol.,  $19\frac{1}{8}$  for  $4\frac{1}{4}$  sol. This may be a tenuous indication that the real figure was  $4\frac{1}{4}$  sol. An alternative explanation for this discrepancy has been suggested to me by K. Maresch: the difference is  $\frac{1}{12}$  sol. or 2 carats, which would correspond to 1 carat per solidus; since the  $2\frac{1}{4}$  solidi are reckoned on the ἰδιωτικὸς ζυγός, one may wonder whether the difference is due to the *obryza* of 1 carat per solidus not being taken into account in this standard.

6 Oxyrhynchite era year 249/218 = indiction 6 = 572/3; see *CSBE*<sup>2</sup> 151.

Παυνι ιθ = 13 June. ‘Digging was done in the dry period and needed to be completed by June’ (P.Oxy. LXVI 4537 introd.). Cf. P.Oxy. LXXXVII 5606.2 (545) ὀχυρώσεως θ ἰν(δικτίωνος) μ[η(νός)] Παυνι, for work on embankments carried out in Payni, or P.Oxy. VII 1053.1 (6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> c.), for the same kind of work performed in Epeiph.