

NIKOLAOS GONIS

SEALED GOLD FOR WINE

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 227 (2023) 124–126

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn

## SEALED GOLD FOR WINE

The papyrus edited in this article is one of those summarily described in P.Lond. II, p. xxxvi, as ‘CCCXC VII–CCCC. Fragments. Sixth–seventh centuries.’ Though riddled with several textual uncertainties, largely due to its condition (conservation would have helped reveal some letters in the lower part), its interest warrants a full edition.<sup>1</sup>

Only the conclusion of the preamble and the beginning of the body of the main text are extant. The document is introduced as an acknowledgement of debt of 3 solidi incurred by the purchase of wine. This would be a sale on credit (‘Kaufpreisstundung’; see A. Jördens, *ZPE* 98 (1993) 263–82, with P.Louvre III 207 introd.), but the picture is not clear. The debtor promises to repay the solidi in Mesore at the vintage, which is normally the time when the wine is to be delivered in the so-called sales on delivery. The reference to a vat (l. 11,  $\pi\theta\omicron$  . . .) suggests that wine was mentioned. Could this be a sale of wine on delivery after all?

The solidi are described with reference to a  $\sigma\phi\rho\alpha\gamma\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  (the word is abbreviated), ‘seal’. This must have been a sealed pouch of coins, of the kind released by a *zygostates*; this ensured that the solidi had the approved weight, and the pouch functioned as a monetary unit. There are only a handful of references to such ‘seals’ in the papyri; see below, 6 n.

The papyrus might come from Leukogion in the Heracleopolite nome; see further 3 n. It is one of a group purchased from Theodor Graf on 11 April 1893. Two papyri in this lot, P.Lond. II 391–392, relate to this village (see P.Paramone, p. 180). Another Graf papyrus connected to Leukogion is P.Lond. II 450, bought in March 1893, and presumably deriving from the same find.

The text is written along the fibres. A sheet join runs vertically along what remains of the original right-hand edge. The mounting suggests that the back is blank.

P.Lond. inv. 399a

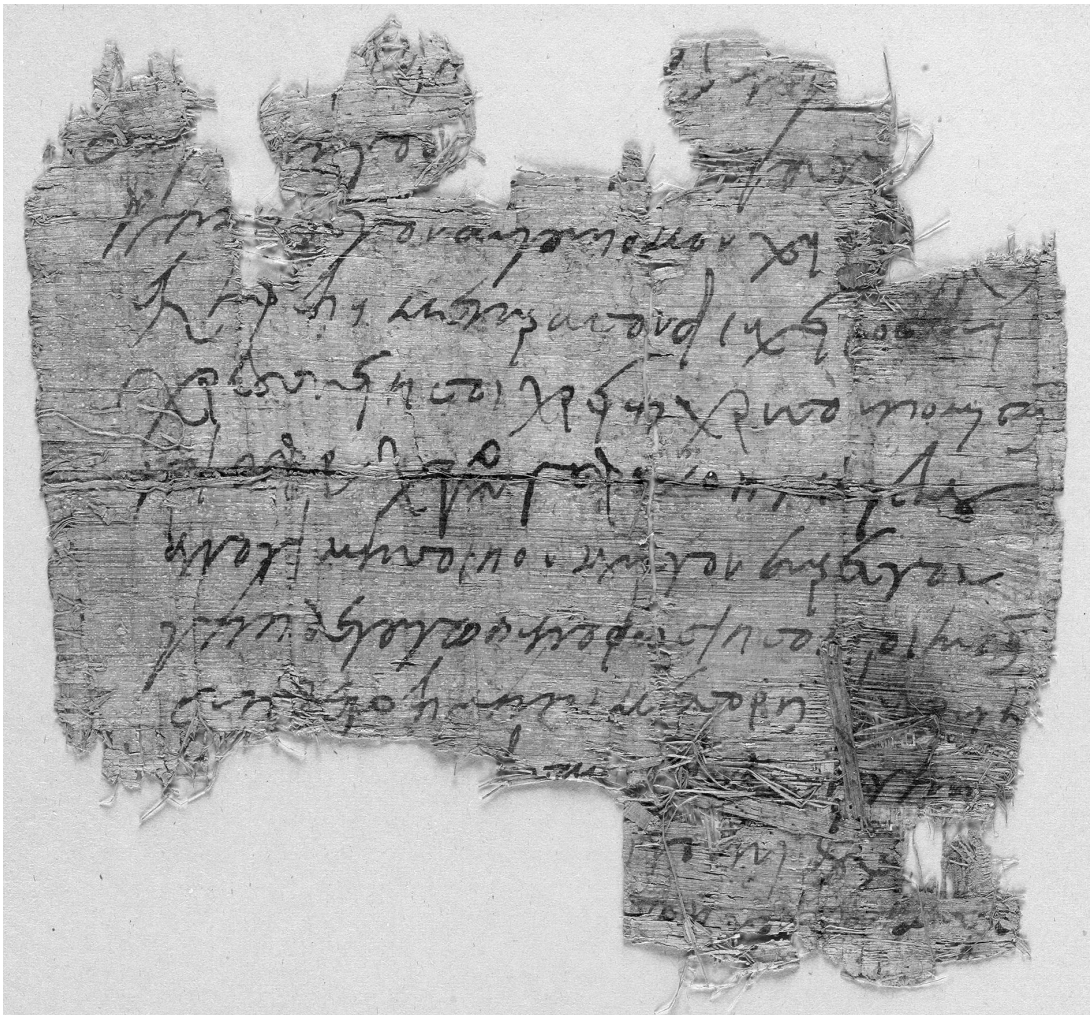
14.3 cm (w) × 12.9 cm (h)

Early 7<sup>th</sup> century

-----  
 [ c. 6 ] . . . τ . [ c. 8 ] . . . [ c. 8 ]  
 . . . [ ] π τ ο [ . . . ] . . . [ ] . . . τ ο σ τ [ c. 5 ]  
 . . . ἡ μ α τ ο ς τ ο ὦ α ὑ τ ο ὦ ν ο μ ο ὦ χ α ῖ ρ ε [ ι ν . ὀ μ [ ο ] λ [ ο γ ] ( ὦ )  
 ε ἰ λ η φ ἔ ν α ι μ ε π α ρ ᾶ σ ο ὦ δ ι ᾶ χ ε ἰ ρ ὸ ς κ α ῖ  
 5 χ ρ ε ο σ τ ε ῖ ν σ ο ἰ χ ρ ε ῖ α ν χ ρ υ σ ο ὦ ν ο μ ῖ σ μ ( α τ α )  
 τ ρ ῖ α σ φ ρ ( α γ ῖ δ ι ? ) , χ ρ ( υ σ ο ὦ ) ν ο ( μ ῖ σ μ α τ α ) γ σ φ ρ ( α γ ῖ δ ι ? ) , ὄ ν τ α π α ρ ’ ἔ μ ο ὦ  
 ἀ π ὸ τ ι μ ῆ ς ο ἴ ν ο υ μ ο ὦ σ τ ο υ ε ὑ α ρ ἔ σ τ ο υ ,  
 τ ῆ ν δ ἔ τ ο ὦ τ α ν ἀ π ὸ δ ὰ σ ῖ ν σ ο ἰ π ο ἰ ἕ σ μ ( α ι )  
 σ ὦ ν θ ε ὦ ἔ ν μ η ν ῖ μ ε σ ο ρ η τ ῆ ς τ ρ ὦ γ η [ c ]  
 10 . [ c. 8 ] η ς α . [ . . . ] . . . . τ η γ  
 [ c. 12 ] . τ ο ὦ π ι θ ο . [ . . . ]  
 [ c. 12 ] ὠ ν τ ο υ ε . . μ . σ . [ . . . ]  
 ] . [ . . . ]  
 -----

3 ] μ [ ] λ [ ] , 5 1. χ ρ ε ο σ τ ε ῖ ν ν ο μ ῖ σ μ , 6 σ φ ρ / χ ρ / ὀ γ σ φ ρ / 1. ἔ μ ο ἰ 8 1. ἀ π ὸ δ ὰ σ ῖ ν π ο ἰ ἕ σ μ ,

<sup>1</sup> The papyrus caught my attention when I first went through the microfilms of the London papyri, some twenty-five years ago, but there were parts that I did not understand at that time, and I did not engage with it until more recently. I am grateful to Sophie Kovarik for helpful comments on my transcription.



P.Lond. inv. 399a © The British Library Board

‘... holding (?) of the same nome, greeting. I acknowledge that I have received from you by hand and that I owe you – need – three gold solidi in a seal (?), 3 gold solidi in a seal (?), which are with me from the price of new, high-quality wine, and I will return them, God willing, in the month of Mesore of the vintage ... of the vat ...’

2 . . . . [ ]πτο [ . . . ] . . . [ ] . . . τοτ [ . The first letter would be α or ς, less likely ο; then perhaps υ, followed but ρ or τ (Αὐτ[ ] ?, αὐτο[ ] ?). After a small break, we seem to have π or η (broken above); then, ρ may also be considered in place of τ. What follows is also very uncertain. We need a word to construe with the genitive that follows at the start of the next line. If the papyrus has κτήματος there, l. 2 would have ended ἀπὸ τοῦ Λευκογίου or ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ, but neither phrase matches the traces. I have considered reading τοῦ [αὐτοῦ] κτήματος τοῦ [αὐτοῦ], an inadvertent repetition, but it is hard to read ἀπὸ before τοῦ, and the letter after το may well be c.

3 κτήματος seems inevitable, but κτ is difficult to verify. If this is what the papyrus had, the phrase κτήματος τοῦ αὐτοῦ νομοῦ elsewhere refers to Leukogion in the Heracleopolite nome; cf. P.Dubl. 28.9 (611/12?), P.Bodl. 73.5<sup>2</sup> (611–19), and P.Paramone 17.4–5 (early 7<sup>th</sup> c.).

<sup>2</sup> The edition has [ἀπὸ] Κτήματος τοῦ Ἡρακλεοπολίτου νομοῦ and ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ Κτ[ήμα]τος τοῦ αὐτοῦ νομοῦ in lines 4 and 5 respectively. In the untranscribed part of l. 3, we find ἐν τῷ Λευκογίῳ κτήματι; cf. P.Dubl. 28.4 ἐν Λε(υκογίῳ) κτ(ήματι) (Λε(υκογίου) κ(ώμη) ed., but with κτήματι also considered), and SB XX 15092.5 (7<sup>th</sup> c.) ἐν Λευκογίῳ. We may thus read ἀπὸ τοῦ Λευκογίου] κτήματος in P.Bodl. 73.4 (cf. CPR VI 7.6–7, P.Dubl. 24.3, P.Paramone 16.4) and κτ[ήμα]τος in P.Bodl. 73.5.

5–7 The formula is unattested but recalls two contemporary texts from Leukogion: P.Dubl. 28.10 ἐξχηκέναι ἡμᾶς παρὰ σοῦ διὰ χειρῶς ἡμῶν καὶ χρεοτεῖν σοι; SB XX 15092.11–13 ἐξχηκ[έναι παρ]ὰ σοῦ διὰ χειρῶς καὶ χρεο[τεῖν σοι εἰς] | ἀναγκάζει μού χρείασ. For the introductory formulas in sales on credit, see A. Jördens, *ZPE* 98 (1993) 274.

5 χρεοτεῖν. All papyri in DDbDB that attest this spelling come from Leukogion; apart from the two mentioned above, see P.Paramone 17.8.

χρείασ is probably a corruption of the formula εἰς ἰδίαν μου χρείασ.

6 σφραγιδῖ. For the resolution in the dative, cf. P.Louvre III 221.10 (see below); another possibility is σφραγιθέντα. There is a useful collection of the evidence on the practice of ‘sealing gold’ in N. Borek, “Specialized Personnel”: *The Zygostates, the Solidus, and Monetary Technology in the Later Roman Empire* (MA thesis, Queen’s University 2015) 31–8 (<http://hdl.handle.net/1974/13496>); see also F. Carlà, *Loro nella tarda antichità* (2009) 204. I have found four other references in the papyri:

– P.Oxy. XVI 1886.6 (late 5<sup>th</sup> c.) refers to a *zygostates* who ὑπεδέξατο π[α]ρ’ ἐμοῦ φανερ[ὸν] χρυσίον ἐπὶ τῷ | . . . καὶ τοῦτο π[α]ραδοῦς ἐδεξάμην τὴν αὐτοῦ σφραγι[δα, κ]αὶ μεθ’ ὀλ[κῆ]ς ταύτην | λύσας ὁ προειρημένος ζυγοστάτης (ll. 4–7), ‘received from me a certain sum of money on condition . . . and having given him this I received his bond (?). And the aforementioned inspector, having discharged this by weight (?).’ The editors, whose translation I reproduce, refer to a hagiographical text to illustrate their understanding of σφραγίς as ‘bond’: ἦν τις ζυγοστάτης ἐν τινὶ πόλει καὶ ἔρχεταιί τις τῆς πόλεως φέρων αὐτῷ σφραγιδα πεντακοσίων νομισμάτων (F. Nau, *Revue de l’Orient chrétien* 12 (1907) 176f.). This could also be a sealed purse of coins that was undone.

– P.Ant. III 205.4 (7<sup>th</sup> c.) σφραγίς Καλλινίκου νο(μ.) κε παρὰ ζ (sim. 5); 13 (ὑπὲρ) διαφ(όρων) σφραγίδων νο(μ.) τη παρὰ γ δ’ (sim. 17). The same text mentions ἀπόλυτον (χάραγμα), loose coinage. Cf. Carlà, *Loro nella tarda antichità* 230 n. 129.

– P.Leid.Inst. II 63r.ii.7 (Herm.; 6<sup>th</sup> c.) σφραγίς νο(μ.) α.

– P.Louvre III 221.9–12 (Ars.; early 7<sup>th</sup> c.) ἀπαιτῆσαι αὐτὸν σφραγιδῖ | γόμισμα, τουτέστιν | εἴκοσι κεράτια. The dative in this context is difficult to explain, unless we think that ἐν were implied. As the editor notes, the reference to a solidus of 20 carats indicates a deduction of 4 carats from the notional 24-carat solidus. The standard rate of deduction in the Fayum from the 580s to the 620s was minus 7¾ carats; the sealed solidus would have been heavier than the solidus commonly in circulation, which is not surprising.

6–7 ὄντα παρ’ ἐμοῦ ἀπὸ τιμῆς. Cf. P.Köln XIV 586.12 (Ars.; 477) ὄ[ν]τα π[α]ρ’ ἐμ[ο]ῖ εἰς τιμήν. ἐμοῦ here was used instead of ἐμοί.

7 ἀπὸ τιμῆς οἴνου μούστου εὐαρέστου. The formula has been attested only in Arsinoite documents; see P.Heid V, p. 324 n. 229; CPR XIV 4.8 n.

8 τὴν δὲ τούτων ἀπόδοσιν σοι ποιήσομαι. The phrase has occurred only in Arsinoite and Heracleopolite documents.

9 ἐν μηνὶ Μεσορῆ τῆς τρύγης. There are references to τρύγη in Oxyrhynchite and Hermopolite sales of wine on delivery, phrased as ἐν τῇ τρύγῃ τοῦ Μεσορῆ μηνός, and (ἐν) καιρῷ τρύγης.

11 τοῦ πιθοῦ. Presumably πίθου, but it is difficult to reconcile the ink with υ. We find μέτρον τοῦ πίθου and similar expressions in Hermopolite sales of wine on delivery; cf. οἴνου ἐφ’ ἀλώλων τοῦ πίθου in SB XVI 12267.8 (540), a sale on credit (cf. BL X 212).