Two Greek Ostraca from Jeme in Cambridge

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The ostraca edited in this article were first published in the form of short descriptions by J.G. Tait in Greek Ostraca in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Various Other Collections I (1930), part IV, ‘Ostraca in the Cambridge University Library’, p. 170. Inspection of the originals showed them to be more legible than reported and not without interest. Internal evidence indicates that they both come from Jeme, and thus they join the small number of texts from this area written entirely in Greek.

1. Receipt for diagraphon

O.Camb. 115

6.1 (w) × 5.5 (h) cm

Described as a ‘Tax-receipt, 5 lines, illegible’, this text concerns a payment of ⅓ solidus for μέρος διαγράφου, due for indiction 11 (727/8). The

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1 As a decipherer of ostraca of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, Tait had had no equal, but he had little interest in texts of the later periods (‘Byz[antine] pap[yri] are no good to Tait’, wrote A.S. Hunt to H.I. Bell on 12 April 1924).
date is partly obscured by a scratch on the surface, which has rendered the
indiction number illegible, but comparison with other receipts in this for-
mat suggests that it was issued in indiction 13 (729/30). One of the signa-
tories is a new strategos. The other may be identified with a person who
signed numerous tax receipts in Jeme in 727–8 (see below, 5 n.).

The end of the text is lost; one or two further signatures, including that
of the scribe, will have followed.

+ ἐσχ(ον) παρὰ σοῦ Πιαμ
Δαυὶδ (ὑπὲρ) μέρ(ο)υ(ς) διαγρ(άφου)
μι ἵ(ν)δ(ικτίωνος) νο(μίσματος) γ', τρίτον. ἐγρ(άφη) μ(ηνὸς)
Ἐπὶ(ρ λ. ἵ(ν)δ(ικτίωνος) ἵ . ὁ στρ(ατηγὸς) Ἀρω(ν)

5 στ(οι)γ(εί). (m.²) ΠΕΤΡΟ[Ε] ετηκη

1 ἐςχ 2 μερ'διαγρ 3 ἑυ σγµ 4 ετραρω

‘I received from you, Piam son of David, for part of the diagraphon of the
11th indiction, sol. ⅓, one-third. Written in the month of Epiph 30, in-
diction (13?). The strategos Aron agrees.’ (2nd hand) ‘Petros agrees …’

4 ὁ στρ(ατηγὸς) Ἀρω(ν). I owe the reading of the name to a suggestion of L. Berkes. There are no other attestations of this strategos, but we know of an ape of Jeme called Aron, and the terms ape and strategos are thought to be synonymous (see P.Strasb. Copt., p. 224f.); there is also a lashane of this name. See W.C. Till, Datierung und Prosopographie der koptischen Rechtsurkunden aus Theben (1962) 63.

In most receipts from this area, especially Coptic, which were signed by strategoi, the function follows the name of the official. It precedes it in a few other Greek receipts: O.Camb. 114.4 (see below), O.Heid. 448.4, 449.5, O.Minor E 6.4 (with BL VIII 536), and the account O.Petr. Mus. 595.1, where read στρ(ατηγὸς) instead of πρ(εσβύτερος) (originally transcribed as τρ/ in O.Petr. 447).

5 Πητρο[ς. The Copticizing hand is most probably the same as that of Petros who appears as a signatory in tax receipts written by Aristophanes son of Ioannes in 727–8, always paired with Andreas; for a (partial) list of occurrences, see Till, Datierung und Prosopographie 174. The misspelled ΣΤΗΧΗ is restored after these other instances.

2. Receipt for dianome

O.Camb. 114 9 (w) × 8 (h) cm 28 February 732

Tait’s description reads: ‘Tax-receipt, 6 lines, beginning + Ἐσχ(ον) παρὰ σοῦ Λ̣ρ̣ Ἀντω̣ι̣ο̣υ (ὑπὲρ) . . . . . . . . ‘. The text is of the same type as O.IFAO inv. 146, ed. J. Gascou in Mélanges Cécile Morrison (T&MByz 16 [2010]) 384–5, which is in a bad state of preservation and whose text can be improved in the light of its Cambridge sister-piece. Both receipts concern the same tax and are signed by the same persons, two of whom recur in O.Heid. 448 and 449, both dated Mesore 8, indiction 1 (1 August 732). These are the only two known receipts of this period issued for the supply of items (in this case, a cushion), no doubt in the context of a requisition.

The tax-payer in the IFAO ostracon has been identified with a known person from Jeme, but even without this indication, Jeme would have been the most likely place of origin.
+ ἐσχ(ον) παρὰ σοῦ Μάρκου Ἀντωνίου (ὑπὲρ) διανομῆ(ς) τοῦ δῆμος(ιου) τυλ(άριον) α, ἐν. + ἐγρ(άφη) μ(ηνῶς) Φαμ(ενο)θ γ ι(ν)δ(ικτίωνος) ἐς. + ὁ στρ(ατηγός) Κύρις στοιχ(εί). (m.3) Κυριακ(ός) στ(οι)χ(εί).
(vac.)
(m.1) Δαυὶ ἐγρ(άψα).

1 ἐσχ 2 θ. διανομή 3 δήμ. τυλ 4 φαμ θ. στρ 5 στοιχ 6 ἐγρ

‘I received from you, Markos son of Antonios, for the dianome of the public (treasury), 1, one, cushion. Written on the 3rd of the month of Phamenoth, indiction 15. The strategos Kyris agrees.’ (2nd hand) ‘Kyriakos agrees.’ (1st hand) ‘I, David, wrote.’
2–3 (ὑπὲρ) διανομή(ς) τοῦ δήμ(οςίου). On this collocation see the note to O.IFAO inv. 146.2. On the term διανομή in general, see F. Mitthof, SPP ΠΠ.2 pp. xxiii–xxiv.

3 τυλ(άριον). τυλάρια occur in the context of requisitions for the fleet, and refer to cushions used by sailors; see F. Morelli, CPR XXII 48.7 n. In O.IFAO inv. 146.2 read τυλ(άριον) α instead of ἄρ(ίθμον) (νόμισμα ?) a.

4–6 O.IFAO inv. 146.4–6 should now be presented as follows:

ο ἄρ(ίθμον) Κύρις στοιχ(εῖ).
Κυριακ(ός) στ(οι)χ(εῖ).
Δαυὶδ ἔγρ(αψα).

4 Φα(μ)ε(νω)θ γ. O.IFAO inv. 146 also dates from Phamenoth, but the month-day and indiction figure are not legible.

ο ἄρ(ίθμον) Κύρις. This official is not known from any other text except for these two ostraca. For the construction see above, 1 4 n.

5 Κυριακ(ός). The same signatory (same hand) occurs in O.Alex. inv. 19940.7, O.Heid. 448.6, and 449.6.