Two Orders of Olive-Oil Delivery

Aphrodite village (VI/VII AD)

This paper includes two unpublished ostraca. They are housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo under inventory number S.R. 18953 and the temporary number is \( \frac{251}{53}, 1 \). The two texts are complete. They are written in medium sized cursive hand with black ink. Regardless of the scribes' skill the two ostraca are written on the ribbed convex sides of the pottery shards. Maybe the uneven surfaces lead to bad handwriting; in addition to most of the words are abbreviated. The two ostraca are distinguished with lower wide margins. The concaves are blank.

The two ostraca are dated by 6th indiction and could be dated to VI/ VII AD. The handwriting is similar to S.B. XX. 14548 (Aphrodite; VI/VII AD); especially letters \( \tau, \upsilon, \beta \) (text I) and letters \( \varepsilon, \alpha \) and \( \iota \) (text II) and according to PN search e.g. ὀντισσαύοῖος (text I, l. 4) as the land-agent or estate manager in the Byzantine period does not occur before fifth century.

The two ostraca have a similar topic; the formula runs as follows: It starts with the staurogram, the date (month, day, and the indiction's number), estate employees oil producers of Aphrodite, the imperative order to delivery followed by the beneficiary (ies), the quantity of oil measured by sextarius and the summery in figures followed by the subscription of the issuer or transmitter. Each item will be discussed separately. For these reasons we can say that the two ostraca are considered as new additional texts from oil producers' archive which housed in Thermenmuseum Heerlen, IFAO and papyrologisch Institute in Leiden, see Pap. Flor. XIX, J. Gasco & K. A. Worp, “Un Dossier d’ Ostraca Du VI Siècle: Les Archives Des Huiliers D’ Aphrodité”, Florence. 1990. PP. 217-245.

According to Trismegistos places: Ἀφροδίτης Πόλις - Ἀφροδίτιώ; Aphrodite village (Kom Isqaw); Latin Veneris, located on the western Nile bank. 26° 50' N, 31° 25' E. http://www.trismegistos.org/place/270. In the late antiquity Aphrodite was the capital of a small district known as the Aphroditopolite nome. Although this nome was incorporated into lager Antacopolice nome, Aphrodite tried to stay independent from the new capital, Antacopolis, it has right of autopragia, as it paid its taxes to the government directly without intermediary of the nome capital, see Van Minnen, Traianos Gagos, A Dispute: Towards a Legal Anthropology of Late Antique Egypt, Michigan University, USA, 1994, p. 9 f.

Dioscorus was the important notary who drew up a great value of documentary texts of Aphrodite. Dioscorus’s archive is considered as a source for historical knowledge shed a most brilliant light upon sixth-century Egypt in all its different aspects; see Alasdair A, Mac Donald & others, Learned Antiquity: Scholarship and Society in the Near East, the Greco-Roman World and the Early Medieval West. Groningen University. 2013. PP. 101, 115, 161. So the archive of elaiourgai of Aphrodite -which is mentioned- shed the light on economy and society life though VI/VII century.

10.1 x 7.5 cm. 12 Jan. ind. 6

It is medium brown ostracon, many letters are faded. It consists of 6 lines.

1- \( \dagger \) Τῷ Ῥ ζ ὢνδε(ικτίονος) \( \varepsilon \)
2- τοῖς ἐλαιομογγ(όις) Ἀφροδί(της)
3- παράστη(σθε) τοῖς β Ἀπεύλλ(ωνος)
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4- τοῦ [[ο]] ἀντηγευόχοις(οίς) ἐλαίου/ ξ(ἑστα)  
5- τρεῖς, γ(νοται) ἤλ(αίου) ξ(ἑσται) γ(μ(όνοι)) Φοιβάμ-  
6- μον στοχ(εί)

Abbreviations & correction:
1- L. ἰνδ: ἰνδ(ικτίωνος)  
2- L. ἱλαίουργ.: ἱλαίουργ(οίς), Ἄρφοδ: Ἀρφοδ(ίπης)  
3- L. παράσχ.: παράσχ(εσθε), Ἄπολλ.: Ἀπόλλ(ονος)  
4- L. τοῦ [[ο]] ἀντηγευόχοι: τοῖς ἀντηγευόχοι(οίς), ἐλαίο: ἐλαΐο/ ξ(ξ(ἑστα)  
5- L. γ(νοται), ἤλ: ἤλ(αίου), ξ(ξ(ἑσται), μ: μ(όνοι)  
6- L. στοχ(εί): στοχ(εί)

Translation:

(Cross) Tubi 17, induction 6. To the olive-oil producers of Aphrodite; Deliver to 2 of the land-agents from Apollonopolis three sextarii of olive-oil, total 3 sextarii of olive-oil. Phoibammon agrees.

II

12.9 x 6.6 cm.  21 July, ind. 6

It is dark brown ostracon. It consists of 8 lines.

1- Ἔπείπ θες ἰνδ(ικτίωνος) ξ
2- τοῖς ἱλαίουργ(οίς) Ἄρφοδ[οδ][ίπης]
3- παράσχ(εσθε) τοῖς ἐκ(ίκους) Ἀνταίοι
4- (καί) Ἀπόλλ[ονος] (καί) γ(μ(όνοι)
5- (καί) παιδ(αρίοις) γ(μ(όνοι)/ ξ(ξ(ἑστου)) ἡμισ(υ)
6- γ(νοται) ἤλαιο/ ξ(ξ(ἑστου)) (ἡμισ(υ))  
7- (2nd hand)  
8- γοτ(άριος) ἦμισ(υ)

Abbreviations & symbols:

1- L. ἰνδ: ἰνδ(ικτίωνος)  
2- L. ἱλαίουργ.: ἱλαίουργ(οίς), Ἄρφοδ[οδ]: Ἀρφοδ[οδ](ίπης)  
3- L. παράσχ.: παράσχ(εσθε), ἐκ(ίκους), Ἀνταίο: Ἀνταίοι
4- L. ἰ: καί, 5: καί, ἐκλήματι, ἐκλήματι(τορσί)  
5- L. γ(νοται), παιδ: παιδ(αρίοις), ἐλαίο: ἐλαίο/, ἦμισ(υ)
6- L. γ(νοται), ἤλαιο: ἤλαιο/, ξ(ξ(ἑστου)) (ἡμισ(υ)
8- L. γοτ: γοτ(άριος), ἦμισ(υ)

Translation:

(Cross) Epeiph 27, induction 6. To the olive-oil producers of Aphrodite; Deliver to dēfensores of Antaeopolis and Apollinopolis, (their) 3 stenographs and 3 paikaria, half sextarius of olive-oil, 1/2 sextarius of olive-oil (two crosses). (I) Phoibammon, the notary have issued.

Commentary:

Overview and compared with archive of Gascou J. & Worp K. A. elaiourgoi of Aphrodite:
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1- Date: As it is mentioned; the texts begin with the staurogram text I. 1.1, text II. II.1. 6, cf. SB. XX. 14558 and 14570; and then the date see texts I. II. 1. 1, cf. SB. XX. 14562. I. 6, whereas the date comes at the middle of the text, and cf. O. Wilck. II. 1603. I. 6, whereas it comes at the end of the text. It is noticed that text I. 1.1, the letter ζ in day’s number is bigger than usual.

ινδ(ικτιώνος) ἡ: See texts I. II. 1. 1. This abbreviated form which ends at letter δ is the most common form in that archive, and cf. SB. XX. 14563. I. 2 and 14565. I. 1. It is noticed that the order of the date was: name of month, number of the day, the indication then its number cf. SB. XX. 14544. I. 2.

Indiction term originally meant a levy of foodstuffs for the imperial government or it was the main method of fiscal reckoning from the reign of Licinius on (AD 312). From 1 September 312 onward it was used to refer to a 15- year tax cycle. An indication year ran from 1 September to 31 Augusts, where cereal crops were harvested in late May/early June, giving peasant farmers enough time to sell off their surplus for the money needed to pay their taxes by 1 September, see John H: Rosser, Historical Dictionary of Byzantine, 2nd edition. Published by Scarecrow Press; United Kingdom (2013), p. 247. About νέα ινδικτιων (new indication) see Bagnall S. R. & Worp K. A., "Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt" 2nd ed. Brill. Leiden. Boston (2004), pp. 36 – 42.

2- Addresser: τοίς ἐλαίωρη(είς) Ἀφροδ(ής): See texts I, II. 1. 2. ἐλαίωρη(είς):This abbreviated form which ends at letter η is the most common form in that archive, cf. SB. XX. 14545. I. 2, and 14563. I. 3. Ἀφροδ(ής): It is found that the scribe abbreviated it by putting a vertical stroke over letter δ.

Ἀφρ[οδ](ής): Text II. 1. 2; there is erased space after ρ, it is wide enough for two letters [οδ] as the most parallels show. This abbreviated form which ends at letter δ is the common form in that archive, cf. SB. XX. 14548. I. 2, 14555. I. 3 and 14571. I. 2.

The manufacture of olive-oil was a seasonal occupation, requiring a plant which could only be used for one or two months of the year. While, to be sure, it was at least not the universal custom for estate to make all their own oil. They occur as estate employees, issuing oil on the order of managers’ e.g. O. Wilck. 1603 - 1605 (Unknown provenance; AD 323/ 642). See Hardy E.R., The Large Estates of Byzantine Egypt, New York (1931) p. 130 f. About the production process of oil see Forbes R. J., “Studies in Ancient Technology”, Vol. III, Brill, Leiden, Netherlands, Printed in Netherlands. 1965. PP. 103, 106f.

3- Order’s verb to delivery παράσχ(εσθέ): See texts I. II. 1. 3. This verb and its abbreviated form are stable throughout the archive of elaiourgoi of Aphrodite see e.g. SB. XX. 14544. I. 4, 14545. I. 3.

4- Beneficiary (ies): ἀντιγενῆ(οις): See text I. 1. 3f. τοίς β ’Ἀπόλλ(ονος) τοίς ἀντιγενῆ(οις); Beneficiary must be in dative case after παράσχ(εσθέ), so the genitive singular article is corrected into dative plural article. At the beginning of ἀντιγενῆ(οις). It is found that the scribe wrongly wrote an oval o letter instead of α which made him to cancel it by adding a stroke over the canceled o then he wrote a clear α. And it is noticed that the o letter in the middle of ἀντιγενῆ(οις) is very big and it looks like right angled triangle, so ’A letter at the beginning of ’Ἀπόλλ(ονος) is open and bigger than usual.
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The land-agents or estate managers in the Byzantine period landlord’s agent is self explanatory, ἀντιγεύοχος is commonly person of importance and he is classed among the officials e.g. ΒΓ. Ά. 303, (Arsinoite; AD 586) l. 4f, Φλ(ασιού]ς Στεφάνος τῷ μεγαλοπρεσπάτῳ τριβόνῳ καὶ ἀντιγεύοχος, (to the most magnificent Stephanos, tribune and land-agent), see Hardy E.R., The Large Estates, Op. Cit. p. 80).


ἐκδικάσκος Ἀνταίοις καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος: See text II. l. 3 f, ἐκδίκαιος: This abbreviated form is the same at SB. XX. 14550. l. 4f, ἐκδίκαιος is as a legal representative P. Mich. VIII. 507, 4 - 8 (Karanis; Π/ΠΙΙΙ AD) ἀρσενίω σε ἕνα δύνασθης πέμπον μοι ἕνα ἐξ ἴμων ὅτι γὰρ χάριν ἔχω ἢν ἕκδικος μοι γίνεται, ἢπ γὰρ ὅτι ἔξεστι γυνὴ χορής ἐκδίκου δικασάσθαι (I ask you, if you can, send me one of your group, since I need him to be my legal representative, for a woman is not permitted to engage in a lawsuit without a legal representative). ἐκδίκαιος was an official of central government is used as Greek equivalent for the Latin defender civitatis early in the fourth century, see P. Lips. I. 34 (Hermopolis; AD 375) l. 1, ζηταῖης ὁ διπηθνωρ (Zenegenes, the defender), P. Münch. III. 19 (Hermopolite; AD 378) l. 1, ἐκδίκαιος Ἐρμουπόλεως (the defender of Hermopolis), P. Herm. 19 (Unknown provenance; AD 392) l. 4, ὑπὸ τοῦ λαμπροτάτου διπηθνωροῦ (through the most illustrious defender). These variant uses of the Greek and the Latin title for the office suggest certain fluidity in terminology at the local level. In general, in the fifth century ἐκδίκος seems to replace σύνδικος as a term for office in Egypt; although διπηθνωρ appears once again, see P. Harr I. 135 (Unknown provenance; V AD) l. 8, διπηθνωρ κύριος (oh defender, the master), see Robert M. Frakes, Contra Potentium Injurias: The Defender Civitatis and Late Roman Justice, München: Beck. 2001. P. 179.

ἐκλήμπτοσ: See text II. l. 4. cf. abbreviated form at SB. XX. 14550. l. 5. This title already known is the secretary-stenographers or executores, contractor of works, tax-collector. ἐκλήμπτως later ἐκλήμπτως, O. Stras. l. 786 (Thebes; ΠΙΙΙ BC) l. 1f, Ποσειδώνιος Παυλίσκου καὶ Ἀμμονίκιος ἐκλήμπτως (from Poseidon to Paniskos and Ammonions, the contractors), P. Fay. 58. (Thedelphia; ΠΙΙΙ AD) l. 4 - 8, διεγραφεῖς Ἀμμονίῳ καὶ Πολεσ(μ)ῶν καὶ τοῖς λο(ποῖς) ἐκλήμπτως (στρ) κοπ(ῆς) καὶ τρίχ(ας) καὶ χειροτοξίου (paid to Ammonios and Ptolemaeus and the rest of the farmers of the tax on cutting, hair and trade), see also P. Rain. Cent. 81(Hermopolis Magna; VI/VII) l. 2, 6.

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παῦδ(αρίως): See text II. l. 4, SB. XX. 14550. l. 5. This abbreviated form are stable throughout the archive of elaiourgoi of Aphrodite e.g. SB. XX. 14549. l. 2, παῦδαρια as house slaves is one of general terms for slaves in Egypt, see P. Bad. IV. 97 (Unknown provenance; AD 642?) l. 5, τοῖς παῦδαρι(οίς) τοῦ οἴκου (to the slaves of the house). These slaves were employed on a range of contracts and most employees of this description are mezoteroi (headmen) or ex- mezoteroi; The Apion paiddaria and their families received food allowances whose amount varied P. Princ. II. 96. Col. I (Oxyrhynchus; AD 551 - 2/ 566 - 7) II. l. 1 - 4, ἔβρε(οισιν) ὄψωνίων παῦδαρι(ῶν) Αἰγυπτίων καὶ γυναικών καὶ ἄλλων ἐπὶ τῆς ἐν ἴνη ἰκτίνων, οὕτως ἐβρε(οισιν) ὄψων παῦδαρι(ῶν) Αἰγυπτίων: Φιλοζένης μειζοτέρῳ σίτου κακέκλωμο (ἀργάζας) ἵβι, (Cross) list of the wages of the Egyptian slaves, women and others in the 15th indication, as follows; List of the wages paid to the Egyptian slaves, as follows, paid to, Philoxenos, headman, 12 artabas of wheat by the cancellus measure), see Jairus Banaji, "A Agrarian change in Late Antiquity: Gold, Labour and Aristocratic Dominance" Oxford University Press, United State, 2002, pp. 183, 186.

There are variable beneficiaries are mentioned throughout the archive of elaiourgoi of Aphrodite e.g. βουκελλαρίοι (bucellarii) SB. XX. 14562. l. 5. στρατιῶται (soldiers) SB. XX. 14558. l. 2.

5- Quantity: See text I, l. 4f, ἐλαιώνυκτε (ἔστατες) τρεῖς, γί(νονται) ἰΔ(αίον) ξί(ἔστατι) γ μ(όνοι), the quantity of the olive-oil is only 3 sextarii. It is noticed that the scribe wrote letter γ as total amount bigger than usual. μ(όνοι): this abbreviated form is common, see SB. XX. 14544. l. 6, cf. SB. XX. 14550. l. 6. Text II, l. 5, the quantity of the olive-oil is half sextarius. Since the quantity throughout that archive is ranging between ¼ and 5 ½/8 sextarii see SB. XX. 14544. l. 6, SB. XX. 14562. l. 3ff.

6- Issuers or transmitter: See text I, l. 5f. Φοίβαμιμον στοιχ(εί). Phoibammon, signed about four receipts of elaiourgoi of Aphrodite, he is the author of the sixth induction order to supply Anonymous, see SB. XX. 14551. l. 7, for the seventh induction order to supply paiddarioi, perhaps of an unknown kurios, see SB. XX. 14556. l. 4. G. R. Ruffini, A Prosopography of Byzantine Aphrodito, American Studies in Papyrology. Vol. 50, Editor: James G. Keenan. Durham. 2011. P. 450.

Φοίβαμιμον γοτ(άριος) ἐξέδωκ(όκα): See text II, l. 5f. Φοίβαμιμον: Phoibammon, the notary is the author of a fifth induction order to the archive of elaiourgoi of Aphrodite to supply people from Apollinopolis e.g. SB. XX. 14545. l. 7, also of a sixth induction to supply summachoi, see SB. XX. 14552. l. 8f, Giovanni Roberto Ruffini, "A Prosopography. Op. Cit", p. 449f. γοτ(άριος): This abbreviated form is stable throughout that archive, see SB. XX. 14545. l. 7, SB. XX. 14547. l. 5f.

στοιχ(εί): See text I, l. 6. This abbreviated form of the signature verb which ends at letter χ is the most common form in the archive of elaiourgoi of Aphrodite, cf. SB. XX. 14553. l. 6. ἐξέδωκ(όκα): See text II. l. 8. These verbs are two of three verbs used in that archive. σεσήμε(ωμαι) occurs only one time, see SB. XX. 14558.

Seham Diab Almasry Aish
Plate I

(Aphrodite; 12 Jan.ind. 6 VI/ VII)

Plate II

(Aphrodite; 21 July.ind. 6 VI/ VII)