

## THE OSTRAKON REVALIENSE: A REVISED TEXT

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### Abstract

This paper contains a new edition of the ostrakon Revaliense, which was first published by Konstantin Vilhelmson in 1926 and subsequently in *SB IV.7274*.

An exceptionally lucky coincidence, i.e. a question raised in November 2009 by Dr. Ivo Volt (Department of Classics, University of Tartu, Estonia) on the PAPPY-list<sup>1</sup> provided me with an opportunity to obtain — through his kind services — from Mr. Tõnis Liibek M.A., curator of the Estonian History Museum in Tallinn, digital color photos of a Greek ostrakon first published almost 85 years ago by Konstantin Harald Vilhelmson.<sup>2</sup> Vilhelmson's article "De ostraco quod Revaliae in Museo Provinciali servatur" appeared in the *Acta et Commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis (Dorpatensis)*, Series B: *Humaniora*, vol. IX.6 (1926), p. 3–6, with a black and white photo of the ostrakon on p. 4.

This first edition is not easily available,<sup>3</sup> but the Greek text of the ostrakon was subsequently reprinted by F. Bilabel in *Sammelbuch IV* (1931) # 7274. Unfortunately, in the process of copying the text of the *ed. princ.* Bilabel committed a small error, i.e. he printed the end of l. 3 as 'διὰ Λεόνου (so!)' whereas the first editor printed 'διὰ Λεόνου (sic)'.

In his first edition Vilhelmson states that the ostrakon was found in 1891 under a stone on Elephantine island by Peter Zoëge von Manteuffel<sup>4</sup> and that it was donated to the Provincial Museum of Reval (= Tallinn) in 1907. Surviving the vicissitudes of the World War II and various occupations of Estonia, the ostrakon is now located in the Estonian History Museum in Tallinn<sup>5</sup> where it has the inventory number TAAM-9494 K 538.

Below, I present (A) Vilhelmson's text as stored in the *Papyrological Navigator / Duke Data Base of Documentary Papyri*,<sup>6</sup> followed by (B) my own transcript of the ostrakon, made on the basis of the digital photos for which I owe many thanks to Mr Liibek

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<sup>1</sup> A discussion list for papyrologists, see the web site: <http://adam.igl.ku.dk/~bulow/papy-1.html>.

<sup>2</sup> For a portrait and a short biography (in Estonian) of this scholar, see the web site of the Department of Classics of the University of Tartu: <http://www.fl.ut.ee/konstantin.vilhelmson>.

<sup>3</sup> I am most grateful to Dr. Volt for providing me with a copy. The scanned edition is now also available on the website mentioned in note 2.

<sup>4</sup> P. Zoëge von Manteuffel belonged to an ancient German noble family that was prominent in the Baltic region. The man himself was a Baltic German author who lived between 1866–1947. For a characterization (in German) of his work ("Russophobie", "Anti-Slavismus"), see the web site: <http://www.carlschirren-gesellschaft.de/JO-Garleff-DB-Autoren.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> For background information on the Estonian History Museum, see <http://www.eam.ee/> (also available in English).

<sup>6</sup> For this tool (indispensable for papyrologists), see the web site: <http://www.papyri.info>.

and the Estonian History Museum. Moreover, I am grateful to Dieter Hagedorn (Cologne/Heidelberg) for kindly discussing some palaeographical problems in the text by e-mail. Even so, only the present author is responsible for the new transcript of this interesting text.

(A)

διέγ(ραψεν) Βιῆγχις Ἰεμούθου μη(τρὸς)  
Τελαύρεως χειρω(ναξίου) λι(νύφων) βυσ(σουργῶν) Ἐλεφ(αντίνης) ιδ (ἔτους)  
ἀργ(υρίου) δραχ(μὰς) δώδεκα (γίνονται) (δραχμαί) ιβ. διὰ Λεόνου  
γραμμα(τέως), (ἔτους) ιε Τραιανοῦ Καίσαρος

5 τοῦ κυρίου Φαῶ(φι) κα.

(hand 2) Πόλμιος Καλὸς Πασήμεως δι(ὰ)

Παχομπρητέμωνος γραμμ(ατέως)

δραχ(μὰς) δώδεκα<sup>choice01</sup> (γίνονται) (δραχμαί) ιβ.

Apparatus: <sup>choice01</sup>: 8. δοδωκα pap (sic!, KAW).

(B): New transcript of the Tallinn ostrakon:

1 Διέγ(ραψεν) Βιῆγχις Ἰεμούθου μη(τρὸς)

2 Τεσαύρεως χειρω(ναξίου) λι(νύφων) ιερῶ(ν) Ἐλεφ(αντίνης) ιδ (ἔτους)

3 ἀργ(υρίου) δραχ(μὰς) δώδεκα, (γίν.) (δρ.) ιβ, διὰ Λεόντο(ς)

4 γραμμα(τέως). (ἔτους) ιε Τραιανοῦ Καίσαρος

5 τοῦ κυρίου Φαῶ(φι) κᾱ .

6 (M 2) .όλμιος Κανν( ) σεσημείωμᾱ δι(ὰ)

7 Παχομπρητέμων<sup>(ος)</sup> γραμμ(ατέως)

8 δραχ(μὰς) δόδωκα, (γίν.) (δρ.) ιβ.

2 λῑ ostrakon 6 l. σεσημείωμᾱ 7 γραμμ/ ostrakon 8 δρα<sup>x</sup> ostrakon, l. δώδεκα

Translation:

“Has paid Bienchis, son of Iemouthes and mother / Tesauros, for *cheironaxion* due by weavers of the temples of Elephantine for the 14th year / twelve silver drachmas, in total 12 dr., through Leon, / scribe. In the 15th year of Trajan Caesar / the lord, on Phaophi 21th.

(M 2) I, -olmius son of Kann( ), have signed through / Pachompretemon (?), scribe (for) / twelve drachmas, in total 12 dr.”

The date of the text is 19.x.111 CE. Lines 1–5 contain a tax receipt for a payment made by Bienchis, son of Iemouthes and mother Tesauros, for *cheironaxion* due by weavers of the temples of Elephantine for the 14th year (of the emperor Trajan, i.e. 111/2 CE); the amount paid is 12 drachmas and the receipt was recorded by a scribe Leon in the 15th year of the emperor Trajan on Phaophi 21. It is to be expected that lines 6–8, again mentioning a payment of 12 drachmas, concern the same payment

as recorded in lines 1–5. From this it follows that at the start of line 6 one expects the name of the tax collector who signs the receipt through a scribe Pachompretemon (?). However: no *praktōr*, *epiterētēs* or *misthōtēs* is already known from the Syene/Elephantine area for the years 110–112 CE and the collector’s name itself is problematical, cf. line 6n.

Notes:

1. In itself, the name Bienchis is popular enough in the Syene / Elephantine area, but a Bienchis son of Iemouthes is nowhere else recorded. The name Iemouthes is relatively rare (there only 6 attestations in the *DDBDP*, all except this one in texts from the Arsinoite nome).

2. Despite the comments on the mother’s name made by the *ed. princ.* (“[Telayris] adhuc inauditum --. Tesayris et Teseyris quidem, per σ scripta, haud raro occurrunt neque tamen dubitari potest, quin hoc loco nomen per λ scriptum exstet, longe enim alio ductu ac λ in ostraco σ exaratur”), I am certain that there is no convincing palaeographical argument in favor of keeping the exceptional name Τελαύρεως (gen.); the reading of a -σ- instead of a -λ- is absolutely acceptable, hence we should read, after all, the normal name Τεσσαύρεως (gen. of Τεσσαῦρις, 7x attested in the *DDBDP*).

Actually, as the dots indicate, my reading ἱερῶ(ν) is all but secure. Only so much is certain here that for palaeographical reasons the reading of the *ed. princ.*, βυσ(σοουργῶν) (= ‘producers of fine linen’), is definitely impossible; unfortunately, there is no parallel tax receipt from the Syene / Elephantine region that offers an immediately convincing alternative (for such receipts mentioning weavers and sellers of linen, cf. *O.Wilcken* 45, 47, 62, 65, 73, 74, 97; *O.Leid.* 179 [= *O.Wilcken* 23]; *P.Bingen* 85; for other texts from the same region dealing with linen in general, cf. *O.Eleph. DAIK* 116; *SB I* 4364, V 7575 and 7579 [all texts are from the late 1st and early 2nd century CE]). In favor of the reading ἱερῶ(ν) it may be argued that (a) our present knowledge about textile production in Egypt does not form an argument against this reading (throughout the country it is found prominently in local temples, see E. Wipszycka, *L’industrie textile dans l’Egypte romaine*. Wrocław etc, 1965), while (b) the word combination χι(ρωνα-ξίου) λιγύφω(ν) παστοφό(ρων) in *O.Leid.* 179.2 may be taken to support it.

3. For the scribe Leo, cf. *O.Wilcken* 42 (110/1 or 111/2 CE; tax receipt issued by a certain Pompeius Valens represented by N.N.), *SB I* 4352 (111 CE; issued by N.N.) and *O.Bodl.* II 454 (112 CE; no issuer mentioned).

6. Reading here the first name as Π<τ>ολ<ε/ο>μαῖος looks unlikely. I am not certain that the first letter is indeed a Π, and the cluster of spelling errors in only one form seems to make the reading of this common name here excessively dubious.

The abbreviation Κανν( ) can be taken as the beginning of a personal name like, e.g., Καννᾶς, Καννίων, or Καννεῖς. For the form of the second -ν-, cf. the same letter in Τραιανοῦ, line 4.

The *DDBDP* contains 41 references for the verb σεσημείωμαι in tax receipts on ostraka from Elephantine.

Δι(ᾶ) is needed because of the expected formula (“Tax collector X, represented by scribe Y”), but one could also read here a supralinear tau, attributable to a form γραμμ(α)τ(έως) in l. 7.

7. Actually, the scribe’s name Παχομπρητέμων<sup>τ(ος)</sup> may have to be split up into Παχομπρη<sup>τ(έως)</sup> ἐκώ<sup>ντ(ος)</sup> (l. ἐκόντος?), because a compound name in Παχομπρητ- is unknown and because the tau stands marginally higher than the other letters on this line. I cannot convince myself that a personal name in Ἀμωνι-, abbreviated by a horizontal dash on top of the iota, follows after Παχομπρη<sup>τ(έως)</sup>.

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**Appendix.** Digital photos of the ostrakon Revaliense (courtesy of the Estonian History Museum, Tallinn).

