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A Late Antique Receipt for Grain from the Hermopolite Nome

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I would like to thank Luise Poulton who was the former Managing Curator, Rare Books Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, for bringing this piece to my attention and for her permission to image and publish this papyrus. I would also like to thank Lajos Berkes for looking over an earlier draft of this papyrus and for providing valuable feedback.

- §1 This papyrus is kept in the J. Willard Marriott Library, Special Collections Division, of the University of Utah. It is the only Greek papyrus in its collection.¹ The catalog record for the piece is terse. It contains a one-sentence description that purports that the papyrus comes from “Asia Minor,” and then there is a note that identifies the piece as “P. von Scherling g. 211.”² As the content of the receipt makes clear, it does not come from Asia Minor but rather the Hermopolite Nome in Egypt; the latter reference should be understood as “P(apyrus) von Scherling g(reek) 211” and has reference to Erik von Scherling, the Swedish-Dutch antiquities dealer, who sold papyri to collections all over Europe and the USA from the 1920s through the 1950s.³
- §2 Despite a thorough search of all the issues of *Rotulus*, a quarterly bulletin circulated by von Scherling beginning in 1931 to market his antiquities, I have not found an entry for this papyrus.⁴ Given this reference, it assuredly originated with von Scherling, but it is uncertain how it made its way to the University of Utah. A possible explanation could be that it was acquired for the university via Aziz Atiya, who joined the faculty at the University of Utah in 1959 and immediately began procuring texts (mainly Coptic and Arabic) from his native Egypt for the university’s Middle East Center.⁵ Whether Atiya obtained the text directly from von Scherling or through some intermediary is unknown. As Atiya was not hired until 1959 and von Scherling died in 1956, there is a three-year gap; if Atiya were involved in the procurement of the papyrus it was either done through an intermediary or Atiya had procured it sometime earlier from von Scherling, and it was part of his personal collection before it ended up at the University of Utah.⁶
- §3 The papyrus preserves seven lines of Greek text written along the fibers with dark brown ink; there is no writing on the backside. Three distinct horizontal creases on the papyrus suggest that the piece was originally folded. The right side of the papyrus is broken off, but it cannot be determined how much text is lost in the break. The text is written with a rapid cursive script, typical of documents from the later sixth or seventh century, and finds paleographic parallels in the following documents: [P.Oxy. 16 1952](#) (21 May 564; Oxyrhynchus), [P.Oxy. 83 5389](#) (10 Mar. 588; Oxyrhynchus), and [SPP 20 218](#) (28 Aug. 624 [?]; Hermopolite).
- §4 The text preserves a receipt for grain issued by two *komarchs* to an individual (the name is lost in a lacuna) who was associated with the “Holy Monastery of Apa Dorotheos” and was connected to the “*epoikion* of Neilammon.” Both the monastery and the *epoikion* are previously attested. The payment for the levy is made in kind using the “Athenian measure,” which is well-attested in documents from the Hermopolite Nome and is accompanied by a monetary payment. Regarding the overall content found on the papyrus, the closest parallels appear in the following receipts: [BGU 12 2194](#) (VI A.D.; Hermopolis); [P.Flor. 3 289](#) (VI; Antaiopolis); [P.Jena 2 22](#) (V–VI A.D.; Hermopolite); and [PSI 1 43](#) (V AD; Hermopolite).

¹ There is one other Greek item in the collection, a Greek burial stele from Egypt from the third or fourth century; on this item see: [Blumell 2016](#): 310–29.

² The catalogue entry reads: “Papyrus sample in Greek. 6th Century A.D. Grain receipt. Probably from Asia Minor”.

³ On the global commercial activities of von Scherling see [Bakker, Bakkers and Worp 2007](#): 39–72. More recently see [Worp 2016](#): 61–78.

⁴ The last issue of *Rotulus* was published in 1954. I have not been able to locate a text with the inventory number “g. 211” in any issue and I have not found any description of a Greek text that matches the features of the present text.

⁵ On the Coptic acquisitions of Atiya see [Blumell 2013](#): 182. All the ancient and medieval items of Egyptian provenance in the University of Utah’s collection for which there is a detailed catalogue record were acquired through Atiya.

⁶ After Atiya’s death in 1988 various personal artifacts he had collected over the course of this academic career, which began in the late 1930s, were bequeathed to the University of Utah.

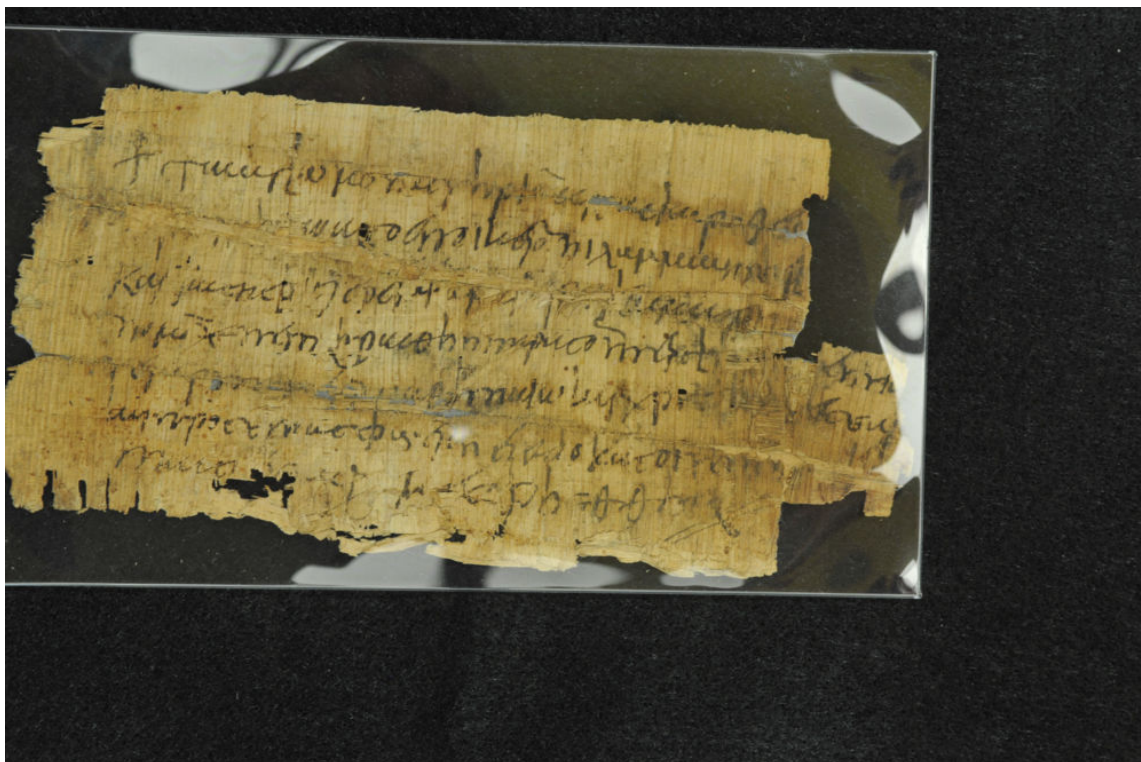


Fig. 1: P. von Scherling g. 211.

† τῷ ἁγίῳ μοναστηρίου ἅπα Δωροθέῳ[υ -ca.?-]
[.] η ω ἀπὸ ἐποικίου Νιλάμμωνος π(αρά) [-ca.?-]
 καὶ Ἰωσήφιδος Ἰερεμίου ἀμφοτέρ(ων) κωμαρχῶ[ν κώμης -ca.?- τοῦ Ἑρμοπολίτου]
 νομοῦ χ(αίρειν). πεπληρώθην παρὰ σοῦ ὑπὲρ σίτου] ἐπι [-ca.?-]
 5 τετάρτου μέτρῳ Ἀθηναίῳ καὶ χρυσοῦ νο(μίσματα) τέσσαρ[α] [-ca.?-]
 καὶ πρὸς σὴν ἀσφάλειαν ἐξέδοκά σοι τήνδε [τ]ήν π[ληρωτικὴν ἀποχὴν -ca.?-]
 ηνωσ. ἐγράφ(η) Μεσορὴ θ, θ ἰνδ(ικτίωνος). [-ca.?-]

1 *l.* μοναστηρίῳ 2 *l.* ἐποικίου *l.* Νειλάμμωνος 3 Ἰωσηφιδος papyrus 4 *l.* πεπληρώμεθα (or ἐπληρώθην) 6 *l.* ἐξεδόκαμεν

To the Holy Monastery of apa Dorotheus [to N.N. ...] ... from the epoikion of Neilammon from [N.N. son of N.N.] and Josephis son of Jeremiah, both Komarchs [of the village of ... of the Hermopolite] nome, greeting. We have been paid in full by you for the levy of grain ... one quarter on the Athenian measure and four nomismata of gold ... and for your security, we have issued to you this [receipt for full payment ...]. Written Mesore 9, 9th indiction.

- §5 1 † τῷ ἁγίῳ μοναστηρίου ἅπα Δωροθέῳ[υ]. ☞ P.Gascou 66.2–3 (V/VI A.D.; Hermopolis), a salary receipt, has a similar error where it begins in the dative case but then the writer mistakenly defaults to the genitive for the addressee.

- §6 The monastery of Apa Dorotheos is attested in [P.Sorb. 2 69.16.2.42](#) and [93.C.1](#) (A.D. VII; Hermopolis). Additionally, it is attested in a previously unpublished dossier of Greek and Coptic documents from the collections at Strasbourg and the Sorbonne assembled by A. Boud'hors and J. Gascou.⁷ The four texts that comprise the dossier (P Strasb. inv. K 686 [Greek; A.D. VI]; P. Sorb. inv. 2764 ro [Greek; 28 Nov. – 27 Dec., A.D. 571]; P Sorb. inv. 2764 vo [Coptic, two letters on one papyrus; late A.D. VI/early VII]), either come from Hermopolis or Antinoopolis, two centers that were closely linked. On the titles used for the monastery, which include ἄγιος, see [Boud'hors and Gascou 2016: 1006](#).
- §7 [2 \[.\] . . η . ω ἀπὸ ἐποικείου Νιλάμμωνος π\(αρά\)](#). The first word (or words) on this line, before ἀπό, is not readable since the first horizontal crease on the papyrus resulted in damage to the beginning of the line and papyrus being torn away. The last letter is securely an ω, and the third last letter is securely an η; between these two letters, there are vestiges of a horizontal upper stroke that could either be a γ or a τ. If it were a γ, the reading might be [ἀ]ρχηγῶ as the extant traces could lend themselves to this reconstruction; while this term is rare in the papyri and is typically used metaphorically, it is attested in [P.Lond. 5 1680.15](#) (A.D. VI; Aphrodito). Whatever the word (or words) is, given its placement and dative ending, it seems likely to have been the title/occupation that belongs to the person representing the monastery and who was named in the lacuna at the end of l. 1.
- §8 The toponym ἐποίκιον Νειλάμμωνος is attested on two previous occasions, see [TM Geo 13496](#). For a map containing its approximate location within the Hermopolite Nome, see [CPR 30](#) p. 116.
- §9 Before the papyrus breaks off at the end of the line, there is a larger-than-usual π. Though it is slightly effaced, it appears a stroke intersects it: e.g., π. The reading that lends itself is π(αρά), and the same kind of abbreviation is used for χαίρειν in l. 4: e.g. χ.
- §10 [3 Ἰωσήφης Ἰερεμίου](#). On the name Ἰωσήφης, a variant of the name Ἰωσήφ, see [TM Nam 3467](#); for Ἰερεμίας see [TM Nam 3405](#). There are no other attestations in Greek of a Josephis son of Jeremiah; another Komarch bearing the name Joseph appears in [SB 22 15601.14](#) (A.D. V/VI; provenance unknown), but there is no way of knowing if it is the same individual.
- §11 [3–4 ἀμφοτέρ\(ων\) κωμαρχῶ\[ν κόμης ca.? τοῦ Ἑρμοπολείτου\] | νομοῦ](#). The office of Komarch is attested but is rare in this period; see [Berkes, 2017: 29–35](#). Based on parallels, one anticipates a village in the lacuna, e.g., [SB 5 7758.6–7](#) (A.D. 497; Magdola Boukolon [Hermopolite]): κώμαρχος [κ]ώμης Μαγδώλων Β[ου]κόλων τοῦ Ἑρμοπολίτου νομοῦ. The reading Ἑρμοπολίτου may have been abbreviated. For a list of the κῶμαι of the Hermopolite, see [Drew-Bear 1979: 383–386](#).
- §12 [4 πεπληρώθην](#). The form of the verb is unusual for a couple of reasons. (1) It is a hybrid form that contains the perfect reduplication (πεπ-) and the aorist passive ending (-θην); perfect: πεπλήρωμαι; aorist: ἐπληρώθην. At present, this is the only example of this hybrid form of the verb in the papyri, although hybridization of the type attested here for the perfect and aorist is attested: see [Gignac 1981, 317–18, 347–48](#). (2) Since there are two *Komarchs* (l. 3), one expects either the plural (perf.) πεπληρώμεθα or (aor.) ἐπληρώθημεν; the latter is more widely attested, but the former appears most in texts from the Hermopolite Nome. The use of the mistaken singular also appears in [P.Prag 1.15](#) (A.D. 353; Pompano [Kynopolite]), where there are two *Komarchs* (ll. 2–4), but the initial verb δίδωμι (l. 7) is in the singular. See also [ZPE 219 \(2021\) no. 7⁸ l. 4](#) (A.D. VI – VII; Hermopolis) where πεπλήρωμαι is mistakenly written instead of πεπληρώμεθα.
- §13 [4–5 ὑπὲρ σίτ\[ου\] . επι . \[ca.? \] | τετάρτου μέτρῳ Ἀθηναίῳ](#). In the lacuna between lines 4 and 5 one anticipates a reference to an artaba(s) and a whole number based on parallels: [P.Jena 2 22.3](#)

⁷ [Boud'hors and Gascou 2016](#).

⁸ [Benaissa 2021: 186](#).

(A.D. V/VI; Hermopolite): σίτου ῥυπαροῦ ἀρτάβης μιᾶς ἡμίσεος μέτρῳ Ἀθηναίῳ; [P] SB 5 7758.15–17 (A.D. 497; Hermopolite): ἀναγκαίαν χρεῖαν κεφάλαιον σίτου ἀρτάβα[ς] δέκα καὶ κριθῶν ἀρτάβας δύο ἡμισυ μέτρῳ Ἀθηναίῳ; [P] P. Scholl 8.18 (A.D. 515; Hermopolis): ἀρ[τά]βης μιᾶς τρίτου μέτρῳ Ἀθηναίῳ.

- §14 μέτρῳ Ἀθηναίῳ. An “Athenian measure” is used almost exclusively in the Hermopolite Nome and appears in both the Roman and Byzantine periods. On the meaning of the “Athenian measure,” see [P] Clarysse 1985: 232–36; for the use of the dative, see p. 234; [P] Ronchi 1974: 1.77–80 provides an enumeration of the passages in which the measure appears.
- §15 6–7 καὶ πρὸς σὴν ἀσφάλειαν ἐξέδοκά σοι τήνδε [τ]ήν πληρωτικὴν ἀποχὴν ca. ?] | ηνωσ. In l. 6, the phraseology becomes somewhat formulaic; cf. notably (from a different nome) [P] P.Flor. 3 289.10–13 (A.D. VI; Antaiopolis): καὶ εἰς σὴν ἀσφάλ(ειαν) ἐξεδ[ώκ]αμέν σοι τήνδε τὴν πληρωτικὴν ἀποχὴν ὥς πρόκ(ε)ται. On l. 7 the third and fourth letters are ως, but it is followed by ἐγράφη and not πρόκειται. The formula that precedes ἐγράφη must end with an adverb, but it is unclear what it should be.

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