



The Licensed Beer Shop of Euhemeria¹

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Abstract: Discussion of the beer industry in the Fayum village of Euhemeria with an edition of *P.Fay.* 215 *descr.* and a correction to *BGU XI* 2032.

Keywords: Beer - Roman Egypt – Fayum.

مَحَلَّ مَرخَّص لبيع البيرة في قرية هيومييريا

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المُلخَص: تتناقش المقالة صناعة البيرة في الفيوم – قرية هيومييريا، مع نشر لبردية من الفيوم تحت رقم *descr.*

P.Fay. 215 وتصحيح بردية رقم *BGU XI* 2032.

الكلمات الدالة: الفيوم – البيرة – هيومييريا.

¹ I first studied *P.Fay.* 215 *descr.* as a participant in the International Seminar on Unpublished Papyri in the Egyptian Museum (2011–2014), sponsored by the Association Internationale de Papyrologues (AIP), in cooperation with the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, the Center for the Tebtunis Papyri at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University. The papyrus was unavailable for consultation in Cairo during the Seminar, so the edition below has been prepared solely from the digital images available in the International Photographic Archive of Papyri:

<http://ipap.csad.ox.ac.uk/4DLink4/4DACTION/IPAPwebquery?vPub=P.Fay.&vVol=&vNum=215> (last accessed 30 June, 2024). I thank the organizers and my fellow participants for their support. I am also grateful to Paul Heilporn and Nikolaos Gonis for feedback on a final draft of this article. The research has been co-funded by Poland's National Science Centre and the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 945339 (project No. 2021/43/P/HS3/00651).

In their recent article on the beer industry in Roman Egypt, Leonardo Bigi and Nico Dogaer argue for an ‘intensification’ of home brewing along with the continuation of professional production and distribution. Mentioned in passing are two key witnesses to the professional side of the business, *BGU XI 2032* (113) and *P.Fay.* 215 descr. (173),¹ but their connection to one another has long been obscured by a misreading in the former and the cursory description of the latter, which the present contribution intends to rectify.

The Berlin papyrus, whose addressee is lost, is an offer to lease ἐκ τῶν νομαρχικῶν ἀσχ[ολημάτων] (l. 7), that is, from the tax farms and concessions controlled by the nomarch. The object of lease was printed as δι(ά)φορον ζυ.[...] | [κώμ]ης Εὐημερείας (ll. 10–11). J. David Thomas read ζυτ[and considered restoring either ζυτ[ηρᾶς κατ’ ἄνδρα] or ζυτ[οπούας] (*BL VII 23*) with the comment: “the nature of the text would be much clearer if some explanation could be found for the enigmatic δι(ά)φορον preceding ζυτ[.”² Various ideas have been brought forward, but no commentator, it seems, has queried the curious internal abbreviation, which on closer inspection must be abandoned along with the first omicron: the papyrus has δίφρον (fig. 1).



Fig. 1. *BGU XI 2032.10* detail. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung. Scan: Berliner Papyrusdatenbank P 21548.

P.Fay. 215 descr., already known to be connected with the beer industry of Euhemeria, turns out to offer close parallel: it records a payment made, as I read it, παρὰ τ[ῶ]ν | τὸν δίφρον τοῦ ζυτοπ(ωλίου) ἀσχ(ολουμένων) (the editors printed παρὰ ... τοῦ ζυτοπ(οίαν) ἀσχ(ολουμένου) in the description: see further ll. 2–3 n.). Whereas *BGU XI 2032* is an offer to lease this ‘seat,’ *P.Fay.* 215 records a payment made by those who held it. The use of δίφρος in these texts is found elsewhere only in *P.Brem.* 68.i.15, a loan drawn up in a Hermopolite village and registered as follows: κεχ(ρημάτισται) διὰ Ἡφαιστίωνος Διονυσίου γραμματ(έως) δίφρου Θαλλοῦ. The ‘seat’ of Thallou in this context can be none other than the local notary office, as the editor tentatively suggested *ad loc.*, pointing to the analogous use of *sella* in Latin.³ The same metonymic use of δίφρος applies to the two beer-related texts from Euhemeria.

¹ Leonardo Bigi and Nico Dogaer, “The End of the Egyptian Beer Industry? Archaeological and Papyrological Perspectives on Beer Production in the Roman Fayum,” *Aegyptus* 99 (2019): 120. The two texts were already brought together by Fabian Reiter in his study of the beer tax: *Die Nomarchen des Arsinoites. Ein Beitrag zum Steuerwesen im römischen Ägypten* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2004), 155.

² J. David Thomas, “Notes on Documentary Papyri (P. Yale 65 and 68, BGU 2032),” *ZPE* 10 (1973): 69.

³ While LSJ is silent on the matter in their entry for δίφρος, *DGE* cites several examples of “*sital* de diversas magistraturas y cargos.”

The ‘seat’ in question is that of Euhemeria’s beer shop: the expansion to ζυτοπ(ωλίου)¹ in *P.Fay.* 215 is assured by the preceding article. The term ζυτοποιία (as the *P.Fay.* editors saw it, with different syntax) is nowhere securely attested, and even ζυτοποιός fades out after the middle of the first century² Thereafter, ζυτοπώλης takes over for beer professionals,³ both brewers and retailers, who, as Bigi and Dogaer have underlined, were often one and the same:⁴ ζυτοπώλιον might literally mean beer shop, but the beer was generally brewed in house.

With the help of this parallel, *BGU XI 2032* can thus be understood as an offer to lease the beer shop of Euhemeria, for which the applicants promise an annual rent of 1,300 drachmas in addition to subsidiary charges. The purpose of payment in *P.Fay.* 215 lies in the damaged fourth line, where the clear ὑπ(ἐρ) φ[at the beginning encourages us to see a rental payment of the type envisioned in the Berlin papyrus. The payment of 140 drachmas, 3 obols, however, is much lower than the annual rent for the office 60 years earlier, which suggests that the Cairo receipt records only a monthly installment (the total for 12 months would be 1,686 dr.), or else there had been a significant reduction in the value of the concession in the meantime (see further l. 4 n.).

Receipt for Rent (?) of a Beershop

P.Fay. 215 descr.; Cat.Gen. 10817

22.3 x 9 cm

Euhemeria

9 August 173 CE

The sheet is mostly complete, except for tears and gaps along the fold lines and elsewhere. The hand is a rapid cursive. Nothing is said of the back in *P.Fay.* or the *Catalogue général*, so it is presumed to be blank.

→ Αὐρήλιος . . . [.] (.) .

διεγράφην παρὰ τ[ὼ]ν

τὸν δίφρον τῷ ζυτοπ(ωλείου) ἀσχ(ολουμένων)

4 ὑπ(ἐρ) φ[.] . . [.] ἐν κόμ(η) Εὐη(μερία)

ιγ (ἔτους) δραχ(μὰς) ἑκατὸ(ν) τεσαλάκον-

τα (τριώβολον), (γίνονται) (δραχμαὶ) ρμ (τριώβολον)

(ἔτους) ιγ Αὐρηλίου Ἀντωνίνου

8 τοῦ κυρίου Μεσορη ις̄.

3 ζυτο) ασχ 4 ν), κω̄ εῡ 5, 7 L 5 δραχ̄ εκατ̄ 5-6 l. τεσσαράκοντα 6 f / 5, f

¹ Although iotacism obscures the distinction, the form ζυτοπώλιον appears to be far more common than ζυτοπωλείον: Max Nelson, “ζυτουργεῖον: A Scholarly Ghost Word,” *Mnemosyne* 54 (2001): 721 with n. 5.

² See the list of Hermann Harrauer, *CPR XIII*, pp. 82–86 but note that the second-century examples of the word there listed (no. 32–34) are all abbreviated and thus the expansion to ζυτοποιός (as opposed to ζυτοπώλης) is not secure; the letter *P.Flor.* III 336 (II–III) appears to contain the latest example of the word (spelled δυτοποιῶ in ll. 10–11).

³ Hans-Joachim Drexhage, “Bierproduzenten und Bierhändler in der papyrologischen Überlieferung,” *MBAH* 16.2 (1997): 33.

⁴ Bigi and Dogaer, “The End of the Egyptian Beer Industry?”: 121.

“I, Aurelius ... , have been paid by those occupying the seat of the beer shop on behalf of rent (?) ... in the village Euhemeria for the 13th year one hundred forty drachmas, 3 obols, equals 140 dr., 3 obols ... Year 13 of Aurelius Antoninus the lord, Mesore 16.”

- 1 Αὐρήλιος ... [.] (). Paul Heilporn suggests οὐκάρριος(ς) at the end of the line: a small omicron followed by the tops of upsilon, the right arm of which ligatures into iota (bottom lost); thereafter kappa ligatures into alpha (mostly lost), and a relatively high rho with a tiny head ligatures into iota (though differently formed, cf. κυρίου, l. 8), followed by a raised omicron. The title is supported also by its connection to the rare payment formula found in the next line (see n.).

If the title is correct, the name of Aurelius' owner should be sought in the middle of line 1 (rather than a cognomen), since a *vicarius* was a slave owned by another, often high-ranking, slave.¹ In Egypt and elsewhere, they were often owned by and worked for imperial slaves with the title *dispensator* (= Gr. οἰκονόμος): cf. Νυμφόδοτος Μόσχου Καίσαρος οἰκονόμου [οὐκ]άριος (*SB XIV* 12169.4–5, 96); Θεόφιλος Λουκιφέρου Καίσαρος ο[ἰ]κον[ό]μ[ο]υ οὐκάρριος (*BGU I* 102.1, 161); Οὐκτωρι Κομαρίνω (l. -ου) Καισάρων οἰκονόμου οὐκάρριου (l. -ω) (*Rom.Mil.Rec.* 81.ii.5–7, 205). Here, however, there is no room for both the name and title of the owner. A solution may be to read Καίσι[α]ρος, which is palaeographically defensible, although Juan Lewis notes that *vicarii* are not attested as direct slaves of the emperor.² A personal name without a title may also have stood here.

- 2 διεγράφη παρὰ. The first person passive is a rare form of the payment phrase found in *BGU I* 102.2 (Soknopaiou Nesos, 161 CE) and *P.Yale IV* 169.5 (Prosopite, 183): see the comments of the editor of the Yale text.³ The formula emphasizes the role of the payee, so it is perhaps telling that these two receipts were not issued by regular village tax collectors but rather an agent (πραγματευτής) of tax farmers in the case of the Yale text and a *vicarius* of an imperial *oikonomos* in the Berlin example; the present issuer may also have borne the title *vicarius* (see previous n.).

- 2–3 παρὰ τ[ῶ]ν | τὸν δίφρον τοῦ ζυτοπ(ωλείου) ἀσχ(ολουμένων). In their brief description of the papyrus, the editors of *P.Fay.* presented these lines as παρὰ ... τοῦ ζυτοπ(οίαν) ἀσχ(ολουμένου), evidently taking what intervened as the identity of the brewer. Given the reading τὸν δίφρον, however, this approach must be modified. Following παρὰ is an apparent tau, a lacuna, a couple of traces, and what appears to be the right margin. There is thus little room for a

¹ Paul R.C. Weaver, *Familia Caesaris. A Social Study of the Emperor's Freedmen and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972): 200–206. For the loan of *vicarius* in Greek, see Eleanor Dickey, *Latin Loanwords in Ancient Greek. A Lexicon and Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023): 81–82. On Aurelius as a personal name, see Francisca A.J. Hoogendijk and Klaas A. Worp, “Drei unveröffentlichte griechische Papyri aus der Wiener Sammlung,” *Tyche* 16 (2001): 56.

² Juan Lewis, “External Evidence and the Reconstruction of Missing Texts: *CIL III* 256 as Case Study,” *Epigraphica* 77 (2015): 109.

³ *BGU VII* 1586, the other example cited by the editor of *P.Yale IV* 169, is rather a case of garbled formulas.

name and the article τοῦ going with ἀσχ(ολουμένου), so I take the payees to be the anonymous operators of the beer shop, whose identities would of course be known to the relevant authorities.

- 3 τὸν δίφρον τοῦ ζυτοπ(ωλείου). For the term δίφρος and the expansion of ζυτοπ(ωλείου), see the discussion in the introduction.
- 4 ὑπ(έρ) φ[.] . . [] ἐν κώμ(η) Εὐη(μερία). A horizontal tear beginning with the phi has obliterated the next several letters between the two vertical fold lines, leaving what may be faint traces a letter or two after phi (difficult to verify on the images) and then a few strokes before ἐν κώμ(η), separated by a lacuna. Given the connection to the lease *BGU XI 2032*, ὑπ(έρ) φ[όρου] comes to mind: the rhos in this hand are short (cf. δίφρον, l. 3, and Μεσορη, l. 8), which could explain why it is not clearly visible below the line (the spelling φόλου could also be considered based on τεσαλάκον|τα in ll. 5–6). Reading a month name here, Φαμενωθ or Φαρμουθι, is not likely given that the receipt was written in Mesore. For what follows, I would lean towards the reappearance of τοῦ] ζυτ[οπ(ωλείου)], which would go well with ἐν κώμ(η) Εὐη(μερία), but have also considered ἐ]πὶ λ(όγου) or ἐ]πὶ λ[όγ(ου)], indicating an installment (for its position after ὑπέρ φόρου, cf. *P.Mich. X 599.5*, 177 CE).
- 6 Nothing is expected after the recapitulation of the sum. It is possible that what I have read as the second 3-obol sign is rather ὑπ(έρ) (with the 3-obol sign mostly lost in the lacuna), and one might read ὑπ(έρ) ζύτου, but it is unclear what that would mean and there could be another letter before the presumed zeta.
- 7-8 Αὐρηλίου Ἀντωνίνου | τοῦ κυρίου. Usually Καίσαρος follows Ἀντωνίνου: Paul Bureth, *Les Titulatures impériales dans les papyrus, les ostraca et les inscriptions d'Égypte (30 a.C. - 284 p.C.)* (Brussels: Fondation Egyptologique Reine Elisabeth, 1964), 82–83.

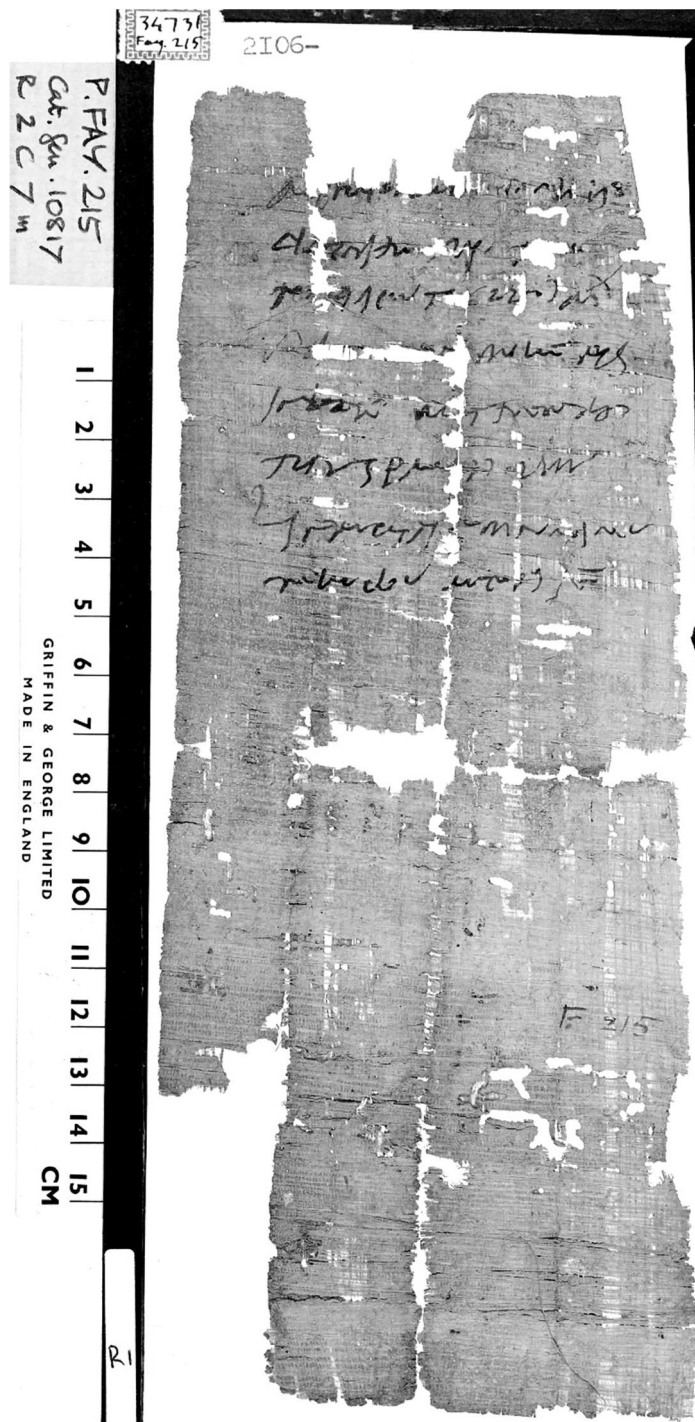


Fig. 2. *P.Fay.* 215 = Cat.Gen. 10817. Image courtesy of the Photographic Archive of Papyri in the Cairo Museum.

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