

PAYMENT FOR SEED CORN

A.H.EL - Mosallamy

P.Eg.Mus.SR.3049.inv.104

A.D.10/11

11.sx6.3cm.

Theadelphia

The papyrus has both left and right hand margins, There is a broad higher margin as well as extensive lower one (cf.p.Oxy.3474). The begining of the first three lines is mutilated. Close parallels to the handwriting are Thompson,Pal.,no.27.A.D.17; Schubart,Pal.,no.28.A.D.13;P.Mert.104.early 1stcent.A.D.;Montvecchi,Papirologia,no.37.1.2ndcent.A.D.

Phoebammon,whose identity is not mentioned, orders Dionysius, who is almost a banker, to pay to three γεωργοί 100 drachmae of silver εἰς τὴν (ἤν) σπερμάτων πυρικών, Phoebammon is likely to be a revenue official .

The term σπέρματα πυρικὰ is not met except here, and the word πυρικός is rarely used in the papyri. As far as I am aware , there are only four examples of the word πυρικός used to specify that the grain intended is wheat and no-other grain (note 1.5). σπέρματα πυρικὰ in our document is equivalent to σπέρματα πυροῦ when used in the contracts of lease when the land was planted wholly with wheat,or in one year with other crops and in another with wheat (e.g.p.Tebt.375.4-23.A.D.14=P.Oxy.3488.25,44.A.D.70;P.Oxy.2973.A.D.103;P.Soterich.,passim;P.Mert.107.11.2ndcent.A.D.;P.Ant.89.11.4thcent.A.D.). Similar specification of payment particularly in wheat is ἐκφ

σιον παροῦ and πυρικός φόρος (BGU.920.30.2nd-cent.A.D.).

Cultivators of the holdings used to get seed corn from the government; as this was recorded in the accounts of the sitologi as εἰς δάνειον or δάνεια σπέρματα (e.g.P.Oxy.3474 introd.;P.Oxy.1024;P.Oxy.2950;P.Fay.80;Thunell, *Sitolog.Pap.IVii.12 et passim*;P.Tebt.341;BGU.835;BGU.701;P.Oxy.1031;P.Flor.21).This seed corn which was offered as advance or allowance was repaid with the rent of the coming year, as happens also in the contracts of lease (cf.JJP.15.1965.P.129 sqq.;P.Mert.70 introd.,P.Oxy.3474 introd.,P.Fay.80 introd.).

The δημόσιοι γεωργοί had to pay interest which varies between the highest rate, ἡμιόλιον, namely 50%,and lower rates for the loans or advances of seed corn (cf.C.Michurski,*Eos* 48,3,1956,p.105-38=*Symb.Taubenschlag.III*;P.Lond.1215;P.Strassb,71;Johnson, *Rom.Eg.*, p.488 sqq.).Private cultivators also resorted to loans of seed corn at almost high interest (cf.Montvecchi, *Papirologia*,p.229), since the seed corn was lended when the price of wheat was high and repaid in the season of harvest when the price was low. The cultivator,under pressure of need, may leave to the lessor to impose the rate of interest (P.Oxy.2775.16-18). In case of failure to repay the seed corn, the cultivator had to pay the price fixed by the lessor for each artaba (e.g.P.Oxy.3488.44-53 and note 1 .51;Johnson,*Rom.Eg.*,P.460 sqq.), besides a fine.To avoid troubles, the cultivator sometimes provides himself with seed corn.

Since sowing the land with seed corn was the responsibility of the cultivators themselves and on their own,it was not used to meet the

cultivators supply the seed corn and receive its price either from the administration or from the lessors. The cultivators may receive the value of the $\pi\upsilon\rho\acute{o}\varsigma$ συναγοραστικός as imposed by the government (cf. Wallace, Tax., P. 22, 365; Thunell, Sitolog. Pap. IVi. 10 etc; O. Leid 221, 223 etc.). A deposit valued in money was paid by the assistant of sitologi on account of state cultivators, though it is not clear whether they actually received this money (cf. O. Leid. inv. 1969; JEA. 52, 1966. p. 131-133).

Seed corn was offered to the cultivators on account of provisions which varied according to the condition of the land. In a contract of lease, Apollonius, the lessee acknowledges that he received from Sarapion, the lessor "for seed and other expenses of sowing without interest $7\frac{3}{4}$ artabae of barley and $7\frac{1}{2}$ artabae of lentils, and for clearing the land from rushes 1500 drachmae of copper, which are not repayable, all free from risk and not subject to any risk" (P. Oxy. 1628. 15-20. B. C. 73). Land, which was removed in land-survey from the class of profitable land, was leased in another case without grant of seed $\alpha\sigma\pi\epsilon\rho\mu\acute{\iota}$ (P. Tebt. 61(b) 17 and note 1.17; cf. P. Brit. Mus. 314; P. Amh. ii. 90. 9). Such a poor land was described in the survey-lists as $\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\rho\omicron\varsigma$ (cf. P. Tebt. 61(a) 40-41; P. Tebt. 63. 127) and the lessee was required to pay a specified rent with no allowance of seed corn $\alpha\upsilon\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon$ $\sigma\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ (P. Tebt. 105. 18; P. Tebt. 106).

It seems that the landowner of poor quality land had to help the lessee in a way or another. Heraclides has leased to Ision two catocic holdings for two years. The first holding, which is $6\frac{1}{2}$ arourae,

will be cultivated with whatever the lessee chooses for a rent in money. The second, which is 4 arourae, is leased in the first year for a yearly rent of 25 artabae of barley, with no allowance for seed $\acute{\alpha}\sigma\pi\epsilon\pi\acute{\upsilon}$. The rent for the second year, which is the last year of the lease, is $106\frac{1}{2}$ artabae of wheat, of which the lessee will receive $6\frac{1}{2}$ artabae of wheat for seed, and he will deliver to the lessor the balance, 100 artabae of wheat (P.Tebt.375.4-23.A.D.140). This means that the lessor gives the seed corn for sowing to the lessee, who pays the rent without the seed corn (cf. P.Tebt.377.17-20.A.D.210).

Cultivators sometimes acknowledge that they received from the sologus seed corn for the κλήροι which they hold, but nothing is mentioned about repayment (e.g. P.Hib.87.B.C.256). This may show that the government offered seed corn to certain cultivators of the κλήροι as present or grant, since repayment of the loans of seed corn was usually mentioned (e.g. P.Hib.85; P.Hib.86). In receipts for payment of rent, we meet the lessor acknowledges that he received the ἐκφόριον from the lessee without mention of the repayment of the σπέρματα (e.g. P. Ibscher 15.A.D.209; in JJP.13, p.82 sqq.).

In certain lease contracts, the condition of the land may require that the lessor should provide both seed corn and be responsible for all expenses. Petesuchus has leased 15 arourae on condition that he should pay 15 artabae for seed and all expenses (P.Oxy.108.B.C.93 or 60). More help is sometimes offered by the lessor. Aurelius Aeil proposed to Aurelius Abinas to lease from him 10 arourae planted with wheat. The lessor will have the rent of one artaba per aroura, offer the seed corn,

furnish the beasts, undertake the charge of irrigation and pay the δημόσια (P.Thead.5.A.D.338).The low rate of the rent indicates the poor condition of the land. A similar proposal of lease (metayage) is offered by Aurelia Cotyrillous to Sakaon, from Theadelphia shows that the lesseewill receive half of crops and the lessor must offer the seed corn, furnish the beasts and pay the δημόσια (P.Thead.6.A.D.322). There is evidence that the lessor presents seed corn to lessee (S.Weszynski,die Bondenpacht.P.78-79).

It seems that the government sometimes buys the seed corn and supplies it to the cultivators. This may be deducted from the troubles in which Criton and Plutarchus found themselves. The two persons, who are suggested to have been minor revenue officials at Heira Nesus in the Arsinoete nome, were involved in a demand to pay for some seed which had been sown upon βασιλικοὶ κλήροι . Criton sends a letter to Plutarchus saying παραγενόμενος πρὸς μὲ Νίκαιος ἀπῆιτει τὴν τιμὴν τοῦ σπέρματος οὗ ἔφη ἐμβεβληκέναι εἰς τὸν Πρωταγόρου κλήρον (ἐτῶν) γ (ἀρτάβας) λγ , (εἰ) δὲ μὴ ἔφη καθέξειν τὸν χόρτον μου τὸν ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ (P.Hib.63.2-10). Such a practice is seen also in case of private lands. A landowner found himself obliged to search for seed for the cultivators . He sent a letter to his agent telling him "if the cultivators come to you wanting seed, tell me at once in order that I may send you a few measures to them from somewhere " (P.Tebt.423.20-23. eaely 3rd cent.A.D.).

Dionysius in our document may be, as mentioned before, a banker, who had received an order from Phoebammon, who in this case may be a

revenue official. But , since the cultivators are simply described as γεωργοί , Phoebammon could be a landowner and Dionysius is his agent, who paid to the cultivators the value of the seed to supply themselves with the seed corn (cf. J. Hermann, Studien zur Bondenpacht in Recht der Graeco-Aegyptischen papyri - 1959, P-129 sqq.).

The accounts of an estate deal in the third year only with expenditures for purchase of wool, hay and seed: τειμῆς σπερμάτων σπερματο (P.Princ. 152.ii.13. A.D.55 - 60; cf. P.Mil.Vogl.iv.212.p.2. 2. A.D. 109). The agent of the estate paid the price of seed to unmentioned person . So, our document is an explicit evidence of paying the price of seed directly to the cultivators. (1)

1- I should like to express my gratitude to Professor W.H. Willis of Duke University for checking the phrase τειμῆ σπερμάτων through the Duke Data Bank .

- Φοιβάμ ?) μων Διονυσίωι
 διά) γρ (αψον) Πανισκῶι καὶ
 Ἀγ) αθονικῶι καὶ Ηρακλίω
 τοῖς τρῖσι γεωργοῖς εἰς τιμ (ἦν)
 σπερμάτων πυρικῶν
 5 ἄργυρίου δραχμὰς ἑκατόν.
 γ (ἴνονται) ἄργ (υρίου) (δραχμαὶ) ρ (έτους) μ Ἐπειφ μη-
 (νός) κβ.

" Phoibam ?) mon to Dionysius. Deliver to Paniskos, Agathenicus and Heraclius, the three cultivators, 100 drachmae of silver, the price of seed corn; total 100 drachmae of silver. 40th-year, Epeiph 22 "

1. Φοιβάμ) μων: The letters in the lacuna are counted by analogy of 1.4.

5. πυρικὸς (P.Mich.226.34.1st-cent.A.D.); πυρικὸς φόρος (BGU.920.30.2nd cent.A.D.); τὰ πυρικὰ " wheat " (P.lond.iii.924.9.2ndcent A.D.); πυρικὸς γόμος (OGI.629.86.2ndcent.A.D.).

7.Pauni is expected as time of harvest, but the letter epsilon is clear. Epeiph may be a suitable time for selling the surplus of the crops after paying the government or private dues.

8.(ἔτους) μ suits the reign of Augustus, cf.o.Leid.43.44.

51
0713

A.3049

Handwritten text, possibly in a cursive script, appearing on a textured surface. The text is heavily obscured by noise and artifacts, making it largely illegible. Some faint characters are visible, including what appears to be "A.3049" and "0713" at the top of the block.