**Down and Out in Late Antique Tebtunis?**

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P.Lips. inv. FF3 is a loan of money with repayment in wheat or, if one prefers, a sale on delivery, a *Lieferungskauf*, from Theodosiopolis. The agreement falls into Jördens' second category of *Lieferungskäufe*, in which the purchase price is known but the amount of the commodity is tied to the market price at the time of delivery (*P.Heid.* V, p. 305). This type is most often found in the Arsinoite nome, and is not, to my knowledge, attested in the Hermopolite or farther south, which suggests that the Theodosiopolis in FF3 is the settlement in the Fayyum, as opposed to the one located a short distance north of modern Minya, in Antiquity Coptic *tonyew*. Other textual features characteristic of Arsinoite practice are the presence of the subject accusative *μς* in the introductory formula of the *sōma* of the contract (l. 9) and the

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1 This contribution is an excerpt from the paper that I presented in Freudenstadt, “The City of Theodosius: Tebtunis in Late Antiquity.” I remain grateful to Drs. Lippert and Schentuleit for their invitation to participate in the conference. My edition of P.Lips. inv. FF3 owes its existence to the kindness and generosity of Dr. Ruth Duttenhöfer, who initially possessed the publication rights for the papyrus. I thank Dr. Duttenhöfer for sharing her preliminary transcription and notes with me; Professor Andrea Jördens, for “brokering” our meeting; and Professor Reinhold Scholl, for agreeing to transfer Dr. Duttenhöfer’s permission to me. Professors Willy Clarysse, James Keenan, and Dominic Rathbone provided helpful advice on several points.

For the abbreviations used herein, see the “Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets,” http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html (25.viii.2007).

All dates follow the “Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis der griechischen Papyrusurkunden Ägyptens” (hereafter HGV), http://aquila.papy.uni-heidelberg.de/gvzFM.html (25.viii.2007).

I dedicate this contribution to my colleague Erich Gruen on his retirement from the University of California, Berkeley, and in gratitude for his unstinting support of the Center for the Tebtunis Papyri.


3 For the southern Theodosiopolis and its nome, see now T. Derda, *APSIMNOITH NOMOΣ: Administration of the Fayum under Roman Rule*, Warsaw 2006, 113 and refs. Ironically, it is a Hamili/ANTIOOY manuscript (P.Morgan Lib. 136, fl. 21-30) that provides a *raison d’être* for the southern city, something lacking for its northern counterpart.
collocation ἀποδόσις (or ἀποδόσιμος) μηνι month name (l. 15), which is found almost exclusively in the Fayyûm.4

Fantoni has hypothesized that the Fayyûm Theodosiopolis was the former Tebtunis, and that it was the administrative center for a nome roughly equivalent to the former Polemôn meris.5 Though some have accepted this identification without reservation,6 it has not been proven. No published papyri known (or even thought) to have been excavated at Umm al-Buregat (the site of the ancient Tebtunis) have yielded the name Theodosiopolis,7 and the dates recently ascribed to Stud. Pal. X 138 would appear to pose a difficulty;8 they seem to suggest that Tebtunis (which is mentioned in l. 9 of the Stud. Pal. papyrus) coexisted with the Theodosiopolite nome. Of course it is possible for “old” names to continue in use “beneath the surface,” emerging in a complex calculus involving, among other things, the origin of the placename (e.g., external or local), its meaning(s), the posture of the author or scribe (resistant, ambiguous, and so on), and the type of document (e.g., official report or private letter).9 And one is hard pressed to put forward an alternative candidate for polis

4 Subject accusative: P. Heid. V, p. 310; collocation: Stud. Pal. XX 90.10f. (Herakleopolite, 415) is an exception.

5 CPR XIV, pp. 41-48. The correspondence of the boundaries was not exact: Theaxenis, attested as part of the Theodosiopolite in BGU I 320 (644), was located in the former Themistos, while the Polemôn settlement Kaminoi appears not to have been part of the Theodosiopolite (cf. W. Chr. 8 of 639-40). For the settlements attested in the Theodosiopolite, see Derda, op. cit. (n. 3), 113; he distinguishes Theoxenis and Theaxenis, but they clearly are the same settlement, cf. the case of Theogenis/Theagenis. In addition, Penné surely belongs to the southern Theodosiopolite.


9 Obvious Egyptian examples are Hermopolis/apion and Apollonopolis Magna/thau, which shed Greek names for Egyptian ones (with pharaonic antecedents) in Late Antiquity. In more recent history, I am reminded of Ireland: “The most patent example of the ways in which British authority was inscribed in the land through naming was the use of the Royal names of Kingstown for Dún Laoghaire, Queenstown for Cobh, King’s County for Offaly and Queen’s County for Laois...[D]espite its symbolic power, the policy was relatively ineffectual. Gaelic names continued to be used by the native Irish and while English-speaking settlers introduced new names, they continued to use partially Anglicized forms of Irish placenames on their newly acquired land” (C. Nash, “Irish Placenames: Post-colonial Locations,” Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, n.s., 24 (1999) 461). Theodosiopolis is a late antique signing of Kingstown, of course (though I do not pretend that the power dynamics were identical). Note
status that is more satisfying than Fantoni's. At 57 ha, Tebtunis is certainly the largest archaeological site in the Polemon meris, three times larger than the as-yet unidentified "Kom Nicola" (19 ha).\textsuperscript{10} This is a crude measure, however, given that it does not account for settlement shifts over time, something that we know occurred in Tebtunis and other Fayyûm villages.\textsuperscript{11} But if we employ other criteria, no stronger candidate emerges. Derda has recently argued that the merides had no capitals during the Roman period, so Theodosiopolis would seem not to have had an immediate precedent.\textsuperscript{12} If we look back into the Ptolemaic period, Oxyrhyncha and Mouchis were the principal settlements of the Polemon,\textsuperscript{13} but even if one is inclined to disregard the significant chronological gap (i.e., the lengthy opportunity for administrative and demographic transformations), neither seems worthy to supplant Tebtunis. Both Oxyrhyncha and Mouchis were much closer to Arsinoê than Tebtunis,\textsuperscript{14} making them less likely choices for administrative centers,\textsuperscript{15} and they too are attested in documents that suggest coexistence with the Theodosiopolite.\textsuperscript{16} This is also the case for other villages (e.g., Narmouthis) that might be proposed.\textsuperscript{17
P.Lips. inv. FF3 would seem to have something to contribute in support of Fantoni's hypothesis. The "FF" in the inventory number is shorthand for the University of Leipzig's Förderer und Freunde, through whom the papyrus was acquired in the winter semester of 1931/32, according to the database of the Halle-Jena-Leipzig Papyrus Projekt, there are about three dozen papyri in the collection that bear this designation. Only a small number of the FF pieces in the Leipzig database have been assigned provenances, and all but one of these (FF3) were published by Duttenhöfer in *P.Lips.* II; they belong to the "Umkreis des Graphieions von Tebtunis." The date of acquisition for the FF papyri, moreover, corresponds to the most intense period of fellahin digging at Tebtunis. Finally, FF3 is the only papyrus that we can assign, with some confidence, to the City of Theodosius itself; in fact, all but one of the extant Theodosiopolite papyri reference the nome, the enoria, or the combined (with the Arsinoite) pagarchy, and not the city. This state of affairs is strikingly reminiscent of one of Keenan's observations about the documents concerning seventh- and eighth-century Tebtunis: They are 'unlikely to have been produced there; rather the majority...likely come from one of the clandestine 'Fayyûm finds'...in the ruins of Kimâni Fâris northwest of Madīnat al-Fayyûm.' Some Byzantine sectors of Umm al-Burqât, left largely undisturbed by the fellahin, did not fare well at the hands of the sebakhin, while others remained unscarred.

18 *P.Lips.* II, p. 54.
19 Searching http://papyri.uni-leipzig.de/content/below/start.xml yields 35 items (6.x.07); there are fewer texts due to joins. The highest FF inventory number, however, is 50, so additional fragments may exist (or have existed). Cf. *P.Lips.* II, p. 54, referencing "43 praparierte Papyri."
20 *P.Lips.* II 127-31 (FF4, 20 BC; FF4a+b, 19 BC; FF2+4f, AD 8; FF1, AD 16; FF7, before AD 46). It may also be noted that FF20 was apparently sent from Oxyrhynchus. The unpublished FF papyri assigned to the fifth century or later are 8 (V), 9 (V-VI), 17 (V), 19 (VI), 25 (V), 36 (IV-V). A recheck of these pieces kindly undertaken by Dr. Nadine Quenouille revealed no obvious indicators of provenance (e-mail, 21.viii.07).
21 Cf., e.g., C. Gallazzi and G. Hadji-Minaglou, *Tebtynis I: La reprise des fouilles et le quartier de la chapelle d’Isis-Thermouthis,* Cairo 2000, 7ff. The bulk of the "graphieion archive" entered collections (specifically, those of the University of Michigan and King Fu’âd) between 1921 and 1923, cf. C. Gallazzi, "La prima campagna di Vogliano in Egitto: Gli scavi a Tebtynis e gli acquisti di papiri," in *Achilla Vogliano cinquant’anni dopo,* Milan 2003, 164. Duttenhöfer (*P.Lips.* II, p. 55) mentions *P.Bingen* 57, which was probably acquired in 1930, as a graphieion papyrus that was obtained later, but I do not see the connection; the text likely predates the graphieion archive (which I prefer to call the archive of Kronion, son of Apion).
22 Given that both parties hail from the City. Of course one cannot exclude the possibility that FF3 was drawn up or unearthed elsewhere.
23 *Stud.Pal.* VIII 1091 (VI) is the exception.
24 Op. cit. (n. 11), 130, n. 37
25 Cf. Gallazzi and Hadji-Minaglou, op. cit. (n. 21), 9: "...s’ils [the fellahin] avaient opéré dans la zone nord du kôm, au milieu des ruines les plus récentes, les objets ou les textes d’époque tardive n’auraient pas manqué"; and 9-10, "Les chercheurs de sebakh commencèrent à entamer le kôm sur son versant nord, qui était le plus proche de l’oasis...en l’espace de quelques dizaines d’années les sebakhin pénétrèrent dans la colline sur environ 300m, mettant presque
unexplored until recently.  

P.Lips. inv. FF3 is conspicuous for its spare (by Byzantine standards) language, its case errors, and a high incidence of non-standard spellings; the regular inversion of omicron and omega is particularly striking. The poor quality of this legal instrument makes one wonder why it was not executed through a *tabellio*; access to such services should not have been an issue in an administrative center like Theodosiopolis. Perhaps discretion was desired, or maybe it was simply a matter of economy: The sum at issue, the equivalent of roughly 3 *artabai*, was rather small and may not have justified the expenditure. In any case, we are left to wonder why Phoibammôn, a member of the Flaviate, of the military and administrative hierarchy — crudely put, someone from the upper class — needed such an advance, though elites were not immune from money troubles, of course. Phoibammôn’s apparently limited means, combined with his inability to write (and presence at the transaction), suggest that he may have been a soldier.

A vertical *kollesis* runs down the middle (roughly) of the papyrus. Its back is blank.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theodosiopolis (Fayyûm)</th>
<th>13.6 x 30.5 cm</th>
<th>27.iii.473</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 
  μετὰ τὴν ὑπατίαν τοῦ λαμπροστότου καὶ τοῦ ἰσόθεοσομένου,
  Φλ(αους) ομοίοθη α
| 4 
  *vacat* τής Ινδικής ὀψαλίας, *vacat*
  Φλ(αους) Φοιβόμενον ὑιὸς Μουσῆ
  ἄπο τῆς Θεωδοσίου πόλεως
  Φλ(αους) Τιμοθέου ὑιὸς Πέτρου ἀπὸ τῆς
| 8 
  αὐτῆς πόλεως. ὁμολογῶ |

entièrement au jour les quartiers les plus récents de l’habitat. Les murs furent en grande partie épargnés, mais le contexte archéologique fut complètement détruit et presque rien ne fut sauvé du matériel ensevel dans les édifices.”


27 In Freudenstadt, Professor Jördens, noting that both parties were members of the Flaviate, suggested that this may have been a “gentleman’s agreement.”

28 Cost of the wheat: I have used P.Oxy. L1 3632 (V) as a guide; see S. Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs: Imperial Pronouncements and Government, AD 284-324*, Oxford 1996, 227, for these declarations. The amount of wheat would have been larger if the transaction involved interest, cf. Bagnall, op. cit. (n. 1).


30 On literacy in the army during this period, see R.S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, Princeton 1996, 243. Flavius Samouèles (previous n.) was also a soldier.
After the consulship of Flavius Marcianus, vir clarissimus, and of the consul to be announced, Pharmouthi 1 of the 11th indiction. Flavius Phoibammon, the son of Mouses, from the city of Theodosius, to Flavius Timotheos, the son of Petros, from the same city. I acknowledge that I have received and owe to you for my pressing need seven hundred fifty myriads of silver, [that is], 750 myriads of denarii, for the price of wheat at the price prevailing [at the time of delivery], and I will deliver [the wheat] in the month of Epeiph, [from the] crops of the 12th indiction, without delay and without any dispute, and in response to the formal question I have consented. I, Flavius Phoibammon, the aforementioned, agree to the aforesaid. I, Horion, the son of Matthaios, have written for [him] in his presence [since he is] illiterate (?)..

1-3 For the postconsular date, see CSBE2, 199. Despite καὶ τὸ δῆλον δηλωθησομένου, Latin et qui nuntiatus fuerit, there was a Western consul for 472, Festus, but his name was added very late in that year in the East, cf. CLRE, 478-79. No papyri date from the short period after Festus' mention in CJ 2.7.15 (16.xii.472), but the postconsular dates from 473 (besides the Leipzig papyrus, P.Oxy. LIX 3985 [9.v.473] and SB XVIII 13620 [14.ix.473]) suggest that his name was never disseminated in Egypt (standard practice concerning e.g. n.f. consuls, cf. CLRE, 30). To date, only the postconsulate of Marcianus has been attested in the year 473, raising the possibility that Egyptian texts were never dated by the Emperor Leo I’s fifth consulate.

2-3 There is a gap of 1 letter after the first τοῦ, and of 2 letters after -Θη-. I suspect that the scribe was copying the consular date.
18 -ο[βα]- has been smeared, presumably as a result of an attempt to correct the text.
21 Though there is space for it (and then some) at the beginning of the line, αύτοῦ was not written. The end of the line is difficult; it is conceivable that ἀγραμμάτον was abbreviated after rho, and that ὅντος followed, but the traces better suit the reading presented above. There are some possible ink traces on the left side of the papyrus that might correspond to a twenty-second line; these are absent, however, from its right two thirds.