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Two Linguistic Notes on Ostraka from Mons Claudianus

1. *O. Claud.* II 243 and 249: τὸ τοῦτο

A curious expression, for which the editor offers no parallel, occurs in these two ostraka. In 243.2-4 we read καλῶς πυή[σεις], ἰ ἄδελφε, πέμψε (1) μοι τὸ τοῦτο ὧν [πέπ]ρακες (δραχμὰς) δ (πεντάβολον), rendered by the editor as “Please, brother, send me the 4 drachmas 5 obols for what you sold” (2). In the note he comments on τὸ τοῦτο, «the same pleonasm is found in 249. Here τὸ τοῦτο must, rather carelessly, refer to the four drachmas five obols.» In 249.4-6 we find ἐρεῖς Ἀπολλωνίωι ὅτι “ἐρωτητῆς ἰ ποιήσόν μοι τὸ τούτωι καὶ πέμψων μοι αὐτῶ ἰ διὰ Λογγᾶτι ἐπι χρίαν αὐτῶι ἔχω” (3). This is translated, “Say to Apollonius: ‘I ask you, please do this for me and send it to me through Longas, for I need it’.”

Two parallels are known to me (4). The first is *BGU* III 892, where in lines 5-9 we read as follows: καὶ προσ[έ]δρευσα ἐφ’ ἡμέρας δύο ἐκδεχό[μ]ενός σε καὶ διὰ τὸ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐδυ[ν]νήθην παραγνέσθαι εἰς Τοοῦ Παλσκῶ (5). In *BL* I 78 Wilcken’s view is recorded that one should read καὶ διὰ [τὸ] τοῦτο (6). There appears not to have been any comment on the matter since then. The second is *P. Köln* III 161.9-12, reading μὴ ἰ οὖν ἀμελήσης τού<του>, τοῦτο εἰδῶς ὅτι σε ἀσφαλιέστερον καὶ ἐπιεικέστερον τῶν ἄλλων προικρεῖνας ἔπεμψά

(1) Corrected in the apparatus to πέμψων; but simpler and more conventionally grammatical than the switch to the imperative would be the aorist infinitive πέμψαι, the phonetic equivalent of what was written.

(2) One might think of translating literally, “Please send me this thing which you sold for 4 dr. 5 ob.” But the next sentence goes on to stress the writer’s need of the cash, making it much more likely that the editor’s rendering is correct.

(3) Normalized, “ἐρεῖς Ἀπολλωνίωι ὅτι “ἐρωτηθεῖς ἰ ποιήσόν μοι τὸ τοῦτο καὶ πέμψων μοι αὐτὸ ἰ διὰ Λογγᾶτι ἐπεὶ χρεῖαν αὐτοῦ ἔχω.”

(4) Even with the Duke Data Bank looking for examples is not easy, and there of course may be other instances.

(5) “And I waited for two days expecting you, and because of this I was unable to go to Toou Pasko.”

(6) Both for the dots and for the brackets I use modern (Leiden) conventions; *BGU* underlines doubtful letters and Wilcken used double angle brackets: <<το>>.

σοι. This is translated, “Kümmere dich nun darum, denn dies weißt du, daß ich sie dir schicke, weil ich dich als Zuverlässigeren und Fähigeren den anderen vorziehe.” About line 10, the editor comments, “Oder τοῦ<το>, da das Neutrum eines Pronomens auch bei Verben im Akkusativ stehen kann.” But he does not otherwise comment on his “correction.”

With the two instances from Mons Claudianus before us, it seems to me that we should recognize the existence of an idiom, so far attested only in the second century, of τὸ τοῦτο. It follows that Wilcken’s added brackets should be eliminated, and that in *P. Köln* 161 we should read μή ἢ οὐδὲν ἀμελήσης τοῦ τοῦτο, εἰδὼς ὅτι κτλ. That would suggest that only the article was declined in this expression, τοῦτο itself remaining absolute, but this is our only non-accusative instance from which to judge. The sense may simply be an increase in forcefulness, a kind of finger-pointing in words; such a usage may reflect the decline in the force of the demonstratives in the Greek of this period.

2. *O. Claud.* II 293: καταχρωματίζω / καταχρηματίζω

As can be seen on the plate (Pl. XXX), this letter of Nilion to Petearoeris was written in two parts, a main letter ending in ἔρρωσο and a six-line postscript. Because ἔρρωσο was written well below the main letter, on a line of its own, a large blank space intervenes between the two text blocks. The main letter, on various business matters, is clear enough despite some difficulties. The postscript, however, rapidly written and not all clearly preserved, is another matter. The editor says, “son contenu m’échappe en grande partie, parce que je ne puis établir si après ὅτι on cite Drillomys ou s’il s’agit d’un ordre transmis par celui-ci, et parce que plusieurs expressions peuvent être lues ou comprises différemment (ἀλλά, πεμπομένου?, ἐπὶ σέ ou ἐπεὶ σε?, sans parler du mystérieux κατακεχρώ[.]τικα.” The text of lines 10-15 as printed is as follows:

10 λέγει δὲ καὶ ὁ Δριλλομυς ὅτι “ἰς τρίτην
 ἐνεγκῶ σοι τὰς δύο κοτύλας τοῦ
 ἐλαίου”. ἐγὼ δὲ σὲ οὐ κατακεχρώ-
 [.]τικα ἀλλὰ πεμπομέ-
 νου, ἐπὶ σε [-]κα
 15α.κα.

This is translated, "Notre Drillomys⁽⁷⁾ dit aussi «je t'apporterai dans deux jours les deux cotyles d'huile». Moi je ne t'ai pas - - -."

At the start of line 13, I believe that it is possible on the plate to see clearly before the tau the shape of an alpha, ligatured to the tau. The descending iota of ἐλαίου may be overlapped by the alpha, but the letter does not seem particularly doubtful. Before that are faint traces of another letter. The word thus appears to be κατακεχρω.άτικα. Neither the dictionary (LSJ) nor a search of the TLG turns up any suitable compound verb. But a look at simplex verbs with the proper beginning shows that only χρωματίζω is possible. The traces before alpha are in my opinion consonant with a reading of mu, and reading κατακεχρωμάτικα apparently formed from καταχρωματίζω is thus almost inescapable.

The verb χρωματίζω means to color, and "I have not colored you" does not at first seem to offer any attractive sense. It is true that LSJ cites Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Dem.* 22) for a metaphorical use in speaking of rhetorical tone, for which χρῶμα was a standard term. When the verb seemed to appear in the Bonn papyrus now cited as *SB XIV 11381*, the editors (H. Braunert and U. Buske), after noting that χρωματίζω had not appeared in the papyri up to that time, speculated, "Können wir hier auch eine metaphorische Bedeutung von 'färben' annehmen, so ergibt sich mit grosser Wahrscheinlichkeit die gewählte Übersetzung 'anschwärzen'"⁽⁸⁾. All the same, this is a bold leap, and in our case it is all the more uncomfortable in that a search of the TLG shows that χρωματίζω is not attested in the perfect active; indeed, its passive forms are far more common overall. Moreover, χρωματίζω is very poor in compounds, only διαχρωματίζω and ἐπιχρωματίζω appearing, both rare.

When John Shelton reedited the papyrus⁽⁹⁾, he recognized the form as χρωματίσαντες, but he corrected this, commenting only "χρωματίσαντες must be a slip for χρηματίσαντες, 'enter in an official document'. The misspelling may have a phonological basis; cf. Gignac, *Grammar I* p. 293." One may be skeptical that this is the correct explanation of the form, for only a single example of η < ω is cited by Gignac, and ο/ē as a whole is not common. But the context of the word in the Bonn document is such that the translation as "list" must be correct.

(7) It is tempting to suggest that this name, otherwise inexplicable, is a metathesis for Δριμόλος, a Greek name well-attested in the Ptolemaic papyri. But the editor tells us that an unpublished ostrakon gives the genitive Δριλομυτος.

(8) *JJurPap* 18 (1974) 48, note to line 13.

(9) *ZPE* 25 (1977) 178-183. The remark quoted below comes from p. 183, note to line 13.

Is this the explanation in our ostrakon? The compound καταχρηματίζω is rendered by Preisigke as “ein Rechtsgeschäft vornehmen, rechtswirkend verfügen über etw[as]” (*WB* I 770). The commonest usage is in phrases like μή ἐξέστω αὐτῷ πωλεῖν οὐδὲ ὑποτίθεσθαι οὐδ’ ἄλλως καταχρηματίζειν, with reference to a piece of property: one is forbidden to sell, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of something⁽¹⁰⁾. It is hard to see that this offers much help. The beginning of the sentence in ἐγὼ δέ seems to link it backward to the statement that Drillomys says he is coming on the day after tomorrow with the oil. But even if this is a false impression — the writer shows elsewhere that he knows the use of connective particles is necessary for good style, and there may be no real connection of subject — καταχρηματίζω as it appears in the papyri is difficult to understand with a personal object. If we fall back on the less specific meaning of “treat, handle, deal with” the possibilities seem better, particularly if the force of the compounding κατα- is, as often, negative for the object of the verb. In this respect it is worth noting that καταχράομαι may mean not only to use fully or use up, but also to mistreat or misuse (*WB* I 770, s.v. 2; *LSJ* s.v. 3). Some contamination between these two verbs is not unthinkable, particularly in a writer who can confuse καταχρωματίζω and καταχρηματίζω. “I have not mistreated you” would in this case be the meaning⁽¹¹⁾.

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(10) *LSJ* s.v. gives “deal with” and “dispose of” as definitions.

(11) I have had no success to date in understanding what follows in lines 14-15.