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'Abū' and 'Apa'. Arab onomastics in Egyptian context

The Journal of Juristic Papyrology 31, 47-49

2001

Artykuł został zdigitalizowany i opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.
The publication of “L’emploi des titres abba, apa et papas dans l’Égypte byzantine” by Tomasz Derda and Ewa Wipszycka in JJP 24 (1994) 23-54, marks a major step forward in our understanding of the titulature and onomastics of Christian Egypt. The aim of the short note that follows is to discuss a particular use of the word apa in Greek and Coptic documents that was not dealt with in the said study: that when apa precedes an Arab name, there is a fair chance that it is not a title, but an Egyptian version of Abū, used alongside the more faithful and common transliterations ṣAbū (ṣAbū) and ṣAbūy.1

This is not news. W. E. Crum, Coptic Dictionary 13a, has long pointed out that ṣAbū may correspond to Abū: [in] ṢAbū ṣAmṭayxa(Ṣ) BM 1231, ṣAmṭoy Bodl(P) d 20 [ṢAbū] is for ṣAmḥ. The Bodleian papyrus has been published as P. Bal. 102: in this document, the monastery of ṣAbū Apollo at Bala’izah undertakes to repay a loan of eight solidi to a certain ṣAmḥ ṣAmṭoy ṣWālṣyoy. The editor made the following comment:2

“Amrou is an Arabic name cf. P. Lond. IV 1441.55 note. This would be a most unusual name for a Christian at this period3 and Crum: Dictionary p. 561a citing this passage suggested that ṣAbū might stand for

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1 Abu means ‘father’; for the significance of the syntagm Abū + name, see The Encyclopedia of Islam II V 395–396, s.v. kunya.
2 P. E. KAHLE, Bala’izah: Coptic Texts from Deir el-Bala’izah in Upper Egypt (P. Bal.), Oxford 1954, II p. 495 n. 4
3 There is however the curious Ṣamṭoy ṢAbou in SPP VIII 1082, 3, see N. GONIS & F. MORELLI, ‘A Requisition for the Commander of the Faithful: SPP VIII 1082 Revised’, ZPE 132 (2000) 195 n. 1. 3. Could it be that the name was borne by Christians too?
But there is nothing unusual in Crum's suggestion. To my knowledge, there are four other examples of this particular usage: to the cited BM 1231 and P. Bal. 150, 3, one may add two further instances from Greek documents from the Fayûm.

The case of ἄπα ΛΠΛΛΣΘΛ in BM 1231 is more or less clear. The text lists a number of persons, Christians as well as Muslims. The Muslims are called ΛΠΛΛΣΘΛΜΥΝ (Abd al-Mûmi) and ἄπα ΛΠΛΛΣΘΛ; the element ἄπα seems to be an integral part of the latter's name (note that none of the Christians is an ἄπα), so that it is likely that his name was Ὀμπtheses Abû cAbd Allah.

Another straightforward example is furnished by SPP III 474 (VII/VIII), a receipt for a payment of wheat made δ(ιά) Απα Μοζεειλ αμιρ(α) του σίτου Βα-βυλάωνο(νο) (l. 3). With Μοζεειλ being an Arab name, it seems probable that this ἀμιρ was a Muslim called Abû Mu'zil.

A further instance of the usage may be recognised in the case of Απα Μοικη in SPP Χ 54.10 (VIII). Although this person could have been a Christian called Απα Μοικη, the possibility exists that he is a Muslim named Abû Mosâ. The document records tax payments made from a number of Arsinoite villages through various individuals, including two with Arab names (lines 4 and 8).

I would also be inclined to think that ΛΠΛΛΣΘΛΜΥΝ in P. Bal. 150, 3 is a Muslim called Abû Sulaymân. It is significant that, as the editor noted, the name is unusual for a Christian at that time. Besides, in this putative tax receipt there is nothing that would identify ΛΠΛΛΣΘΛΜΥΝ as a monk. The fact that the papyrus was found at Bala'izah need not imply that Sulaymân 'was probably a member of the community there'; several texts in the collection appear not to have any relation with the monastery.

We may now turn to ΛΠΛΛΣΘΛΜΥΝ in P. Bal. 102. He is a μύροιος, an official associated with the collection of taxes. Interestingly enough, one entry in the

4 H. I. BELL, 'An Official Circular Letter of the Arab Period', JEA 31 (1945) 80, notes: 'here the ἀμιρ appears to be either the director or the local representative of the director of the government granaries at Babylon'.

5 The name Μοσâ = Mosâ is also attested in P. Lond. IV 1350, 5 (710), 1434, 256 (714–6), 1435, 125 (715–6), and SB XVIII 13218, 11 (713), always in connection with Mosâ b. Nusair, the conqueror of North Africa. A further instance of the name may be recognised in SPP X 80, 18 [Μ]ουσα (Μουσα ed. pr.) γυναικα (Mûsâ b. 'Abd al-Rahmân). The cases of Μουσα in SPP X 74 recto 11 14 or of Μουσα ἐγγυτεις in CPR IX 67, 1 and 6 are more difficult to evaluate. Cf. also J. VON KARABAČEK, 'Zur Kenntnis des Umlautes im Arabischen', MEPER 5 (1892) 61.

6 This point is discussed in 'Arabs, Monks and Taxes: Notes on Documents from Deir el-Balâ'izah', forthcoming in ZPE.

7 P. E. KAHLE, P. Bal. II, p. 740 no. 9, suggested that the term may correspond to Greek παπατζούς, an official generally involved in the collection of taxes; cf. also S. J. CLACKSON, Coptic and Greek Texts
fiscal register *P. Lond.* IV 1441 concerns an Abū 'Amru who had come to Aphrodito to collect a fine: Α[β]ου Αμρου ἐλθ(όντοο) (ὑπέρ) ζημία(ο) (l. 55). In view of their function, it is conceivable that ΑΡΑ ΑΜΡΟΥ and Α[β]ου Αμρου are one and the same person.8

Before closing, I cannot refrain from raising the question whether in certain or all of the cases in which ἀρα precedes an Arab name the word should be understood as a title and not as a version of Abū. Even if it is difficult to take ἀρα as a title in BM 1231, the possibility cannot strictly be ruled out. But it may be significant that there are a few examples of the equation ἀρα/αββα = Abū in Arabic documents of the eighth century, that is, of roughly the same date as the Greek and Coptic documents discussed above.9 Why should one exclude the opposite process, an Abū turned into Aра?

*ABŪ AND APA. ARAB ONOMASTICS IN EGYPTIAN CONTEXT*

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relying to the Hermopolite Monastery of Aρα Apollo (*P. Mon. Apollo*), Oxford 2000, 25-6. KAHLE further referred to an unpublished papyrus attesting such officials in the service of the σύμβουλος, the Arab governor of Egypt (μεγαλόπους ἀρχηγός[ος]). But this makes the equation of θαλαγι with πλευτηρ problematic: πλευτηρ is nowhere else accompanied by a further qualification; and there is no instance of a θαλαγι τοῦ σύμβουλος in the papyri, whereas we find several μαυλεῖς (mawâll) (*P. Lond. IV 1441, 81 and 83; 1447 passim*), παλλικάρια (*P. Lond. IV 1447 passim*), ἀνδράποδα (*P. Lond. 1447, 172*), παῖδες, and one νοτάρχ (P. Lond. 1447, 140 and 190) of the σύμβουλος.

8 If the identification holds, the date of *P. Bal.* 102 (Mechir 16, indiction 3) should correspond to 10 February 705. *P. Lond.* 1441 was written in the course of 706, but refers to exercises that took place in 701 or 702, see F. MORELLI, ‘Legname, palazzi e moschee. *P. Vindob. G 31* e il contributo dell’Egitto alla prima architettura islamica’, *Tyche* 13 (1998) 170 n. 18. The entry concerning Α[β]ου Αμρου probably dates to Phamenoth 1, i.e., 25 February 701 or 702.

9 The monastery of Aρα Jeremias at Saqqara is called the monastery of Abū Harmis already in the eighth century; see Y. RĂCIG, ‘Sauf-conduits d’Égypte omeyyade et abbasside’, *Annales* 31 (1997) 143-68, texts I.3 (717-20), V.4 (750), VII.4-5, VIII.4 (751). (Of course, one should note that Arabic renders /p/ as /b/).