

A Zenon Letter of 256 B. C. : Papyrus Michigan 45.

his papyrus is the only one from the Zenon archives which has found its way into the University of Michigan Collection, and I am publishing it in the hope that it may prove of interest to those who are especially interested in the Zenon correspondence. The document was secured in Egypt by Professor F. W. Kelsey in the spring of 1920.

The papyrus measures 39.5 by 28 cm. The *recto* contains the letter, which is written in two parallel columns, the script following the line of the fibres. The left hand column contains 22 lines, and the right hand 11. The papyrus was folded between the columns, across the fibres of the *recto*, so that after the folding the writing was on the two inner faces. The handwriting is a large, handsome and distinct cursive, the letters being about 4 mm. in height. As the papyrus is in very good condition, without and bad breaks, or serious blurring of the writing on the inner side, there was no problem of restoration and little difficulty in reading the text of the letter.

On the *verso* there are three short lines in a different hand, writing in the lower left hand corner parallel to the fibres on that side and so at right angles to the writing on the *recto*. These lines have been badly rubbed, and consequently can only be partly deciphered.

I do not propose to write a complete commentary on the letter here, but, after giving the text, shall content myself with a brief note on some of its problems. For checking my reading, and for suggestions regarding the interpretation of the letter, I am indebted to Professor M. Rostovtseff and C. H. Oldfather.



P. Mich. 45.

Recto.


- 1 Σῶσος Ζήνωνι χαίρειν. ἐκομισάμην
 τὴν παρά σου ἐπιστολὴν ἐν ἧ ἔγραψάς μοι
 ὑπολιπέσθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑπάρχοντος ἐν τῷ
 πλοί(ωι) πυροῦ (ἀρτάβας) ρ, τὸν δὲ λοιπὸν διαθέσθαι
 10 ὅσου ἂν δυνάμεθα πλείστου. περὶ μὲν οὖν
 τοῦ καταλειφθῆναι τὸν σίτον γινώριζε
 οὐ δυνατὸν ἂν ἔτι· οὐκ εἰδότες γὰρ διότι
 χρεῖαν ἔξεις ἀπεδόμεθα πάντα τὸν
 ὑπάρχοντα πυρὸν ἐν τῷ κατ' Ἀφροδίτης
 10 πόλιν ὄρμωι διὰ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ παρά
 Ἀρχιβιάδου ἐπιστάτου εἰς (τάλαντον) τοῦ χρυσοῦ
 (ἀρτάβας) σμα, καὶ προσεδώκαμεν τοῖς ἀγοράζουσιν
 ἀντὶ τοῦ γινομένου ἀνηλώματος
 ταῖς ρ (ἀρτάβας) γ. ἀνήγγελλεν δὲ Ποίχαρμος
 15 δοῦναι Πυρρίχωι ἀργύριον εἰς βύρσας ὅπως
 ἐξ Ἑρακλέους πόλεως ἀγοράσῃ. γινώριζε οὖν
 οὐκ ὑπάρχον παρ' ἡμῖν ἀργύριον τοσοῦτο
 ὥστε ἱκανὸν συνθεῖναι Πυρρίχωι· προσ-
 οφείλονται γὰρ ἐν Πτολεμαίωι ἀπὸ τῆς
 20 τιμῆς τοῦ σίτου περὶ ὧν καὶ ἐπιστολὴν σοι
 κομίζω ἐγδοχῆς ὥστε κομίσασθαι τῆι ι
 τοῦ Μεχεῖρ (δραχμᾶς) σπη, καὶ παρ' ἐμοὶ ὑπάρχουσιν
 (δραχμαί) υ· καλῶς οὖν ἂν ποιήσαις γράψας μοι
 πόθεν τε δεῖ αὐτῶι λαβόντα προσθεῖναι
 25 καὶ εἰ συναποστείλωμεν στύρακα
 ὅπως παρακολουθήσωμεν ταῖς τιμαῖς·
 ἐπιστάμεθα γὰρ αὐτὸν ὄντα ἀξιόπιστον
 ἐν ταῖς ταιαύταις χραίαις. καταγηγόχα-
 μεν δὲ καὶ τὰ οἰνάρια πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντα
 30 ἐν Πτολεμαίδι ἐπίστειλαν δὲ μοι πόθεν δεῖ
 λαβόντα σίτον καὶ πόσον δοῦναι Ἀμμωνίωι
 τῷ σιτοποίωι ὅπως ἐτοιμασθῆι θερμίδαλις.
 δεδώκαμεν δὲ καὶ Πυρρίχωι εἰς ἐφόδιον (δραχμᾶς) ι..
 ἔρρωσο (ἔτους) κθ, Μεχεῖρ ε.

Verso.

- 1 (ἔτους) κθ . . . εβο. . ς
 Σώσωι [. . . ἀ]ποστείληι
 στύρακα . . . Πυρρίχου.

The Sosos who wrote the above letter is the Sosos of P.S.I. 362 and 589. His position was that of a sales and purchasing agent for Zenon, the manager of the large estate of Apollonius at Theadelphia (cf. Rostovtseff, *A Large Estate in Egypt*, p. 178).

In l. 4 the text reads $\pi\lambda\omicron\iota$, but the sense seems to require a form of $\pi\lambda\omicron\iota\omicron\nu$ rather than one of $\pi\lambda\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$. So I have preferred to consider that the writer inadvertently omitted $\omega\iota$ at the close of the word.

The chief problem in the letter is raised by reference to the sale of a certain number of artabas of wheat for a sum also stated. The number of artabas sold depends upon the interpretation of the numerical symbol which follows the artaba sign in l. 12, and is the same as that following the drachma sign in l. 22. This symbol has been transcribed as Σ in the text given above. It is written thus:  Mr. H. I. Bell has been good enough to compare by photograph this symbol with one used in P. Lond. 2326, 2360 and 2361. He has informed me that they are identical, and that P. Lond. 2360 and 2361 fix the value beyond question as $200 = \Sigma$.

The result is that we have 241 artabas of wheat selling for a talent in gold. Taking the value of the gold talent has 6240 drachmas, this would give a value of nearly 26 dr. for the artaba. This is absurdly high, for Wilcken (*Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, VI, p. 391) has pointed out that the average price per artaba in the Zenon correspondence is one drachma (see also A. Segre, *Circolazione monetaria*, pp. 100, 101). It may then be questioned if the reading ($\tau\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha\nu\tau\omicron\nu$) is correct. The symbol employed here is $\overline{\Sigma}$, which does not seem to admit of any other interpretation. If the symbol Σ could be read as $\varsigma' = 6000$, the difficulty would be solved, but as that seems impossible, I see no solution of the problem.

Another problem is the interpretation of the unusual phrase $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ Πτολεμαίωι, in line 13. Here there is no question of the reading. Prof. Oldfather suggests that the meaning is « on the books of Ptolemaios », that is to say, Ptolemaios the agent who disposed of the grain was still indebted to Sosos for 288 drachmas. There is nothing in such a rendering that does violence to the general sense of the letter.

From the fragmentary notation on the verso, one can gather that it referred to the matter of sending storax with Pyrrichos to Herakleopolis in regard to which Sosos asked instructions in the letter, ll. 25-26.