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Rodney Ast – Roger S. Bagnall

## The Receivers of Berenike. New Inscriptions from the 2015 Season

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Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale, Podbielskiallee 69–71, 14195 Berlin, Tel: +49 30 187711-0

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RODNEY AST – ROGER S. BAGNALL

## The Receivers of Berenike. New Inscriptions from the 2015 Season

Excavations conducted at Berenike, on the Red Sea coast of Egypt, by a joint US-Polish team in 2015 turned up two Roman-period inscriptions, one a dedication to Isis the nursing goddess (*Isis lactans*) and the other an offering of a statue made by a secretary of the spice magazine (γραμματεὺς ἀποθήκης ἀρωματικῆς). Both texts attest the office of the Receiver (παραλήμπτης)<sup>1</sup> of Berenike and shed light on the movement of goods through the port. The inscriptions were found in the area of the so-called Temple of Sarapis, probably in a courtyard or partially enclosed area immediately in front of the entrance; the excavations of this area are ongoing, however, and it is not yet possible to characterize the context as precisely as it will be once work there is completed. Fragments of a number of other inscriptions of the Roman period, datable at least as late as the joint reign of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, were found in the same area. Further fragments are still in situ awaiting excavation. Given the completeness of these two inscriptions and the significant information about the administrative structures

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The excavations at Berenike, sponsored by the University of Delaware and the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw, are directed by STEVEN E. SIDEBOTHAM and IWONA ZYCH; we are grateful to them for making these inscriptions available to us and for the photographs published here. We are indebted to MARTIN HENSE for the plan of the temple and RODERICK GEERTS for information about the stone blocks on which the inscriptions are carved and the tracings of them. We also thank HÉLÈNE CUVIGNY and FEDERICO DE ROMANIS for their comments on an early draft of this article, and RUDOLF HAENSCH for a number of improvements to the final text. Texts from Berenike have been published in: BAGNALL – HELMS – VERHOOGT (2000) and (2005); a third volume by AST and BAGNALL is forthcoming, as is a chapter publishing inscriptions from seasons 2010 and 2011, AST – BAGNALL (forthcoming 2015).

<sup>1</sup> Note on accentuation: throughout this article we treat παραλή(μ)πτης as paroxytone (pace LSJ), following the sole extant MS of the *Periplus maris Erythraei*, in which the word occurs (an image of the passage in question is accessible at <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpgraec398/0091>; the word appears in the 10th line from the bottom). This goes against the general rule that masculine first declension nouns in -της are oxytone when they are formed from a related verb, denote the agent of the verbal action, and have a long penultimate syllable. If the accentuation found in the *Periplus* MS is not a mistake, then παραλή(μ)πτης joins other known exceptions to this rule, such as κυβερνήτης, σφενδονήτης, ὑφάντης, et al.; cf. PROBERT (2003) 90. We thank PHILOMEN PROBERT for responding to our query about this matter.

of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade that they add to our knowledge, we have chosen to give them more rapid publication than the full ensemble can receive.

*1 Dedication to Isis the Nurse Goddess by the Secretary of the Receiver's Department*

Field No. BE15–111/015/005. Fig. 1 (photo), 2 (tracing).

24 June AD 49

A gypsum/anhydrite block, 104 cm high, 72 cm wide, 50 cm thick. It lay in situ east of and only a few centimeters from what appears to be the outer (eastern) wall of the temple and just south of a partially blocked entrance (location marked A on the plan, fig. 5). It sat atop another large block that was only partially excavated in the 2015 season.

Lines 2 and 4 of the inscription are indented by a space of about two letters, while the dating clause in lines 5–7 is not indented. The carving is competent, if not particularly elegant. The surface of the stone was never fully smoothed, and stray chisel marks occasionally interfere with individual letters.

Ἴσιδι τῆι ἐν Βερενεΐη[ι]  
 θεᾶ τροφῶ μεγίστηι  
 Εἰρηναῖος Ἄρποχρατίωνος  
 4 γραμματεὺς παραλήμψεως  
 ἔτους ἐνάτου Τ[ι]βερίου Κλαυδίου  
 Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικο[ῦ]  
 Αὐτοκράτορος, Παῦνι λ̄

To Isis in Berenike, the greatest nurse goddess, Eirenaios son of Harpochration, secretary of the Receiver's department. Ninth year of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus Imperator, Pauni 30 (24.6).

1f. «To Isis in Berenike, the greatest nurse goddess.» The many-named Isis bore a variety of different titles throughout the towns and nomes of Egypt, as well as in other parts of the Greco-Roman world, and some of them we learn about in an invocation to the goddess preserved in P.Oxy. 11.1380 (early 2nd c.). As our inscription shows, one of her epithets at Berenike was ἡ θεὰ τροφὸς μεγίστη, which is otherwise unattested in inscriptions, even if the iconographical type of the nursing Isis is very well known (see discussion below); in another dedication from Berenike she bears the better-known title Ἴσις Τύχη, see AST – BAGNALL (forthcoming 2015).

Although there is some space after α and before τ in line 2, there is no sign of iota adscript.  
 3 This Eirenaios is not known to us from other documents.

4 This is the sole example of this title, and an interesting use of the term παραλήμψις. Elsewhere the word denotes the receipt of something, whether dues or payments, as, e.g., in P.Amh. 2.35.15 (Soknopaiou Nesos; 12 August 132 BC), or reports (βιβλία), as in P.Flor. 3.358 (Euhemeria; 22 August 146) and P.Princ. 3.127 (Theadelphia; after 7 March 161). It does not normally describe an office, as it does here (see below).

Although the title γραμματεὺς παραλήμψεως is otherwise unattested, Eirenaios is not the only known secretary to a παραλήμπτης. CUVIGNY has pointed out to us that the Modestos of

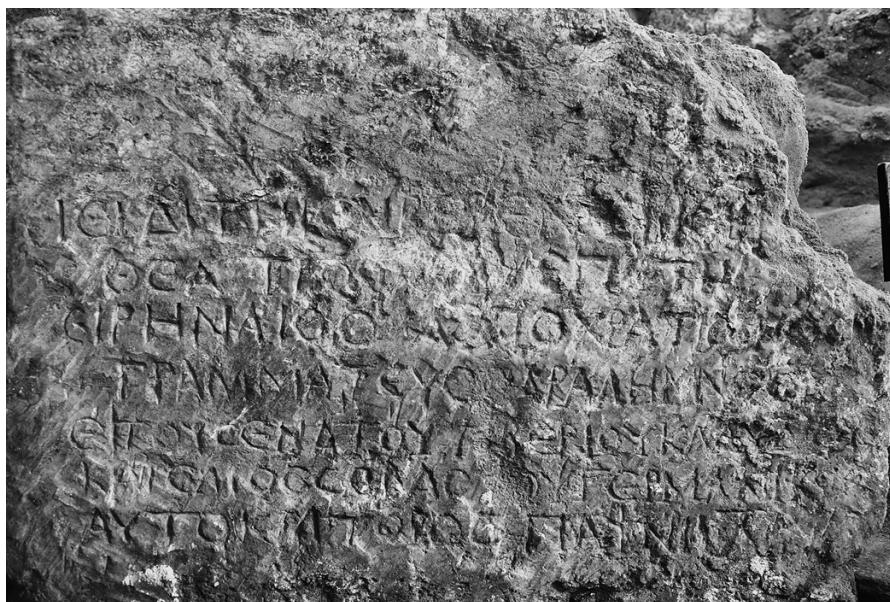


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

O.Krok. 1, ln. 27 (after[?] 28 March 108), was probably also a secretary working in the office of the παραλήμπτῆς Avitus. The reading γραμμ( ), discussed in the commentary to O.Krok. 1 but not adopted in the text, is doubtlessly correct (see Pl. 1m).

## 2 Dedication of a Statue of the Receiver of Berenike

Field No. BE15–111/021/002. Fig. 3 (photo), 4 (tracing).

25 July AD 112

A block of gypsum/anhydrite, not yet fully disengaged, minimum 70 cm high, 68 cm wide, 30 cm thick. It was found in the same (apparent) courtyard in which no. 1 is located; the location is shown as B on the plan (fig. 5). This text likely abutted or lay very close to the southern face of an east-west wall extending from the temple, but the precise location remains to be determined in future excavations.

The letters preserve traces of red paint.

[Γάι]ον Ἰούλιον Φαυστεῖο[ν]  
 παραλήπτῃν Βερενεΐκης  
 Γάιος Ἰούλιος Εὐχάριστος  
 4 γραμματεὺς ἀποθήκης  
 ἀρωματικῆς φιλαγα[θίας]  
 χάριν ὡ. (ἔτους) ἰε̅ Τραιανοῦ  
 Καίσαρος τοῦ κυρίου, Μεσορῆ ᾗ

(A statue of) Gaius Iulius Faustinus, Receiver of Berenike, Gaius Iulius Eucharistos, secretary of the spice magazine, (set up) on account of his benevolence. Year 15 of Trajan Caesar the lord, Mesore 1 (25.7).

1 The individual is not otherwise attested; the only other Iulius Faustinus we know of from Roman Egypt appears in a document dating to AD 198 (P.Hamb. 4.274 ii.50) and in an acrostic from Talmis (CIL III Suppl. 2, 12076, ca. 134). The name Faustinus is not uncommon, and for the Eastern Desert one thinks above all of the Lepidius Faustinus in O.Claud. 1.90, 92–95, and 97, who is, however, clearly not the same person.

3 This person is also not otherwise known. Eucharistos is a rare name in Roman Egypt, with only a few instances before the fourth century and not many after. The contrast with Rome, where the name is fairly common, especially in the early imperial centuries, is striking; see SOLIN (1982) 2.735f. There, some are certainly or probably slaves and freedmen (only a few of them imperial), as one might expect. But the one epigraphical example in Egypt (KAYSER, I.Alex.imp. 102, dated to AD 157) is a soldier, C. Pompullius Eucharistus. Eucharistos could be a freedman of Faustinus, but there is no direct indication of such a relationship.

4f. The ἀποθήκη ἀρωματικῆ was perhaps one of multiple facilities that goods were stored at along their journey; cf. in the Muziris papyrus the δημόσια παραλημπτικαὶ ἀποθήκαι at Kortos and the ἡ ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ τῆς τετάρτης παραλημπτικῆ ἀποθήκη (SB 18.13167.4–8).

The word ἀποθήκη can denote different kinds of storage facilities, both public and private, whether for animals (chickens in P.Kellis 4.1373, dated probably to 361–364), equipment (P.Tebt. 3.1.703.158, ca. 210 BC, and O.Claud. 4.854.7, ca. 186–187), grain (cf. HAENSCH [2012] 77f.), or other things; see HUSSON (1983) 41 for discussion of the term and additional examples. Storehouses could be locked (PSI 15.1562.18, 4th c.) and sealed (P.Tebt. 3.1.703.157f.).

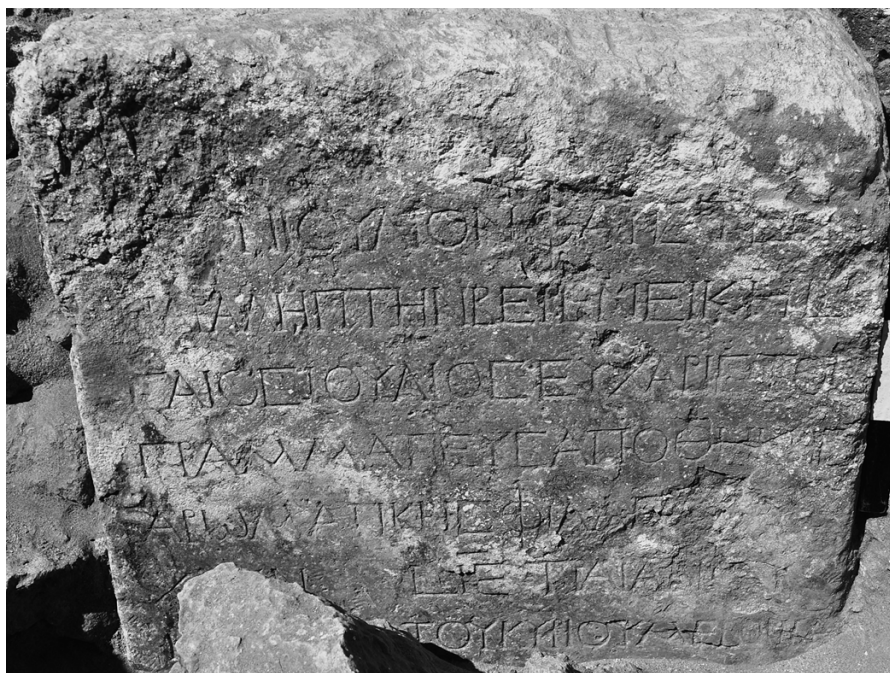


Fig. 3



Fig. 4



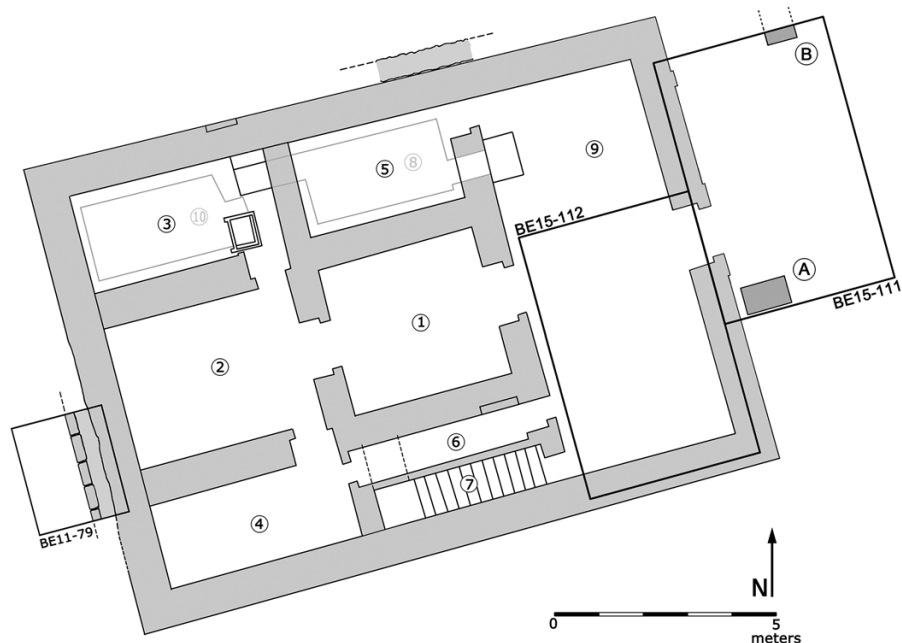


Fig. 5

How narrowly or specifically we are to take ἀρωματική is hard to say. CASSON (1989) 17 lists the native spices, drugs, and aromatics of India as «costus, bdellium, lykion, nard, malabathron, pepper». The list of tax levied on import items such as Minaean and Trog(l)odyte myrrh (μύρον), cinnamon (κασία), the mysterious ἄμιος ὑκσιωτική (perhaps aloe), ladanum (λάδανον), etc., which is found in W.Chr. 273 (Oxyrhynchus; 2nd or early 3rd c.), gives some idea of the types of imported aromatics that were taxed in the province, although we unfortunately do not know where the assessments were made, see WILCKEN (1906). Cf. too the verso of SB 18.13167, which accounts for Gangetic nard and perhaps pepper and malabathron, common imports from India, DE ROMANIS (2012).

Treatments of the archaeobotanical finds at Berenike and comparison with the textual evidence can be found in CAPPERS (2006) and WENDRICH et al. (2003).

### *Isis lactans*

In the dedication to Isis, which was made by a secretary of the Receiver's department (γραμματεὺς παραλήμψεως) named Eirenaios son of Harpochration, the goddess is addressed as the greatest nurse goddess, ἡ θεὰ τροφὸς μεγίστη. This is related to her widespread iconographical representation as *Isis lactans*, in which she is depicted nursing her son Horos-Harpocrates. Known from Ptolemaic Alexandria and earlier prototypes, the iconography becomes exceedingly common in the imperial period, both in statuary and on Alexandrian coins, starting with Trajan but with the majority

of specimens from the reigns of Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius.<sup>2</sup> It has been presumed that the coins depict an Isis-Harpocrates shrine in Alexandria.<sup>3</sup>

Although the iconography of Isis *lactans* was widespread, there is no direct epigraphical attestation of the goddess in this guise outside our inscription. On the basis of secondary evidence, however, it is likely that a dedication set up at Koptos by the rhetor Didymos son of Theon, which was accompanied by an inscription mentioning the παραλήμπτης and στρατηγός Claudius Chrysermos, was in fact a statuary representation of Isis *lactans* (I.Portes 70, 30 Aug. 103).<sup>4</sup> The inscription reads:

ὕπερ τῆς Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Νέρουα Τραιανοῦ  
 Σεβασ(τοῦ)  
 Γερμανικοῦ Δακικοῦ καὶ τοῦ παντὸς οἴκου αὐτοῦ,<sup>5</sup> Ἴσιδος  
 ἐν ἀτρίῳ τὸ ξόανον καὶ τὸν ναὸν καὶ τὰ περὶ αὐτὸ πάντα,  
 ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνος Οὐβίου Μα[ξίμου] καὶ ἐπιστρατήγου Πομπη-  
 5    ίου Πρόκλου καὶ παραλήμπτου καὶ στρατηγοῦ Κλαυδίου  
 Χρυσέρμου, Δίδυμος Θεῶνος ῥήτωρ ἀνέθηκεν  
 ἔτους ζ' Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Νέρουα Τραιανοῦ  
 Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ Δακικοῦ Θῶθ ᾶ.

On behalf of Emperor Caesar Nerva Trajan Augustus Germanicus Dacicus and his entire house, a wooden statue of Isis *in atrio* and a chapel and all things associated with it were set up by the rhetor Didymus son of Theon during the prefecture of Vibius Maximus and epistrategia of Pompeius Proclus, and while Claudius Chrysermos was Receiver (παραλήμπτης) and strategos. Year 7 of Emperor Caesar Nerva Trajan August Germanicus Dacicus, Thoth 1.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of the iconography are collected and discussed in TRAN TAM TINH (1973); see, too, RAC 16 (1994) 590f. and LIMC V 1, p. 777, and V 2, nos 211–248, with descriptions of not only the Isis-Horos iconography, but also of Isis nursing the Apis bull. HIGGINS (2012) offers a balanced comparative assessment of Isis-*lactans* and Mary-*lactans* iconography. Sample images of statuettes depicting Isis *lactans* are available at <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/552064> and <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/552072>. Earlier examples can be found at [http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/4035/Isis\\_Nursing\\_Horus](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/4035/Isis_Nursing_Horus) (ca. 712–525 BC) and <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/statuette-isis-nursing-horus> (664–332 BC).

<sup>3</sup> HANDLER (1971), esp. 61–63, with pl. 11 figs. 5–7.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. TRAN TAM TINH (1973) 18–19.

<sup>5</sup> I.Portes 70 reads τοῦ παντὸς οἴκου (τύχης) here, even though the stone clearly has αὐτοῦ after οἴκου, as was correctly recorded in SB 5.8815. The presence of τῆς in line 1 suggests that the writer confused his formulas (cf. I.Portes 71 and 73).

The statue of Isis is said in line 3 to be ἐν ἀτρίῳ, a striking description of unclear meaning, presumably a calque from the Latin *in atrio* and perhaps indicating that the goddess was shown in a temple-like structure, e.g., a naiskos, somewhat similar to what is found on second-century Alexandrian coins and reliefs.<sup>6</sup>

The identification of Isis lactans as the iconographical type lurking behind the expression ἐν ἀτρίῳ is based on an excerpt from Teucer of Babylon made by Rhetorius of Egypt. In a description of the constellation of Virgo, Teucer notes that «with its first decan there arises a goddess seated on a throne and nursing a baby, whom some call «goddess Isis ἐν ἀτρίῳ nursing Horos»» (καὶ τῷ μὲν α΄ δεκανῶ παρανατέλλουσι θεὰ τις ἐπὶ θρόνου καθεζομένη καὶ τρέφουσα παιδίον, ἣν τινες λέγουσι τὴν ἐν ἀτρίῳ θεὰν Ἴσιν τρέφουσαν τὸν Ὠρον).<sup>7</sup> An Alexandrian dedication from the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (AD 180) describes a similar statuary offering made by a certain Sarapodoros, Σαραπόδωρος ἀνέθηκεν ἐπ' ἀγα[θῶ] | ἐν ἀτρίῳ μάκαιραν Εἷσιν, «Sarapodoros set up for his good (fortune) a (statue of) blessed Isis *in atrio*» (KAYSER, I.Alex.imp. 55). The offering that accompanied the inscription from Berenike was presumably also a statue or relief of the nursing goddess. While the text does not explicitly locate it ἐν ἀτρίῳ, it is possible that, if it was a relief, the goddess was depicted within a model of a small shrine or chapel.

#### *The Receiver (παραλήμπτης) of Berenike*

The word παραλήμπτης is found in many contexts in Roman and Byzantine Egypt, and it has been tempting to see it as a generic term.<sup>8</sup> But the diversity of later usages should not distract us from the key facts that despite its good Greek formation it is never found before the Roman imperial period, and, with the two telling exceptions discussed below, it is not found outside Egypt.<sup>9</sup>

First, let us consider the evidence from Egypt. The occurrence of a παραλήμπτης named Avitus (δίπλωμα Ἀουεῖτου π[α]ραλήμπτου), who appears to have been sta-

<sup>6</sup> For coins, see HANDLER (1971), and for reliefs, TRAN TAM TINH (1973) 16f., with figs. 13 and 14; cf. also LIMC V 2, nos 211–248.

<sup>7</sup> BOLL (1908) 202. Cf. BERNAND's commentary in I.Portes 70. On Teucer of Babylon, see most recently HÜBNER (2010). Teucer is generally dated no later than the 1st c. BC. He came from the Egyptian city of Babylon and is thus not to be identified with the Teucer of Cyzicus, PINGREE (1978) 442f. Some of his thought may be preserved in an excerpt of Rhetorius the Egyptian (6th or 7th c.), although it is unclear how much actually goes back to Teucer; CUMONT (1909) 265 argues that the only information in the excerpt that derives from him is the part on the *paranatellonta*, or contemporaneously rising extrazodiacal constellations; cf. PINGREE (2001) 6, with fn. 31, and 11. We thank STEPHAN HEILEN for letting us see an unpublished paper related to Greco-Roman astrology that touches on Teucer, and ALEXANDER JONES for additional bibliography.

<sup>8</sup> See REGGIANI (forthcoming).

<sup>9</sup> The form without *mu*, used as the headword in LSJ, is extremely rare in the papyri, and its occurrence in our second inscription is noteworthy.

tioned at Myos Hormos, in O.Krok. 1, line 26, a «journal de poste» dated to early 108, led CUVIGNY to discuss in detail (O.Krok., pp. 13–16) the distinctive use of the term in the context of the Eastern Desert and Red Sea. Evidence for the title is found in two inscriptions, where it is also joined to the title of strategos.<sup>10</sup> In one, a graffito on the Temple of Hermes at Pselchis (OGIS 202; SEG 49.2341 A+B), to be dated to about AD 60, Apollonios son of Ptolemaios describes himself as the strategos of the Ombite nome and the areas of Elephantine and Philae, and Receiver of the Red Sea (παραλήμπτῃς Ἐρυθρᾶς θαλάσσης); his father is identified as arabarch. In a graffito added to the first one in AD 65 by a man named Senas, the same Apollonios is said to be now a Roman citizen and himself an arabarch. This, along with the *Periplus maris Erythraei* (see below), is among the earliest datable uses of the term παραλήμπτῃς in our sources.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the first inscription above, with its reference to the γραμματεὺς παραλήμψεως, offers additional, indirect evidence for the official title in the middle of the century, for the fact that there was a secretary of the παράλημψις presupposes, in our view, the existence of a παραλήμπτῃς.

The second inscription from Egypt in which the title παραλήμπτῃς is joined to στρατηγός is the dedication discussed above of a statue of Isis *in atrio* (I.Portes 70). The inscription was set up on Aug. 30, 103, under the prefect Vibius Maximus, the epistrategos Pompeius Proclus, and the paralemptes and strategos Claudius Chrysermos. It is universally assumed that it was the Koptite nome that Claudius Chrysermos was strategos of, and, if this is true, he was presumably παραλήμπτῃς there, too.

Two sources from outside Roman territory refer to παραλήμπτῃς. The longest known and most discussed is a reference in the *Periplus maris Erythraei* 19, a text now generally dated to the mid-1st century:<sup>12</sup> διὸ καὶ παραφυλακῆς χάριν καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν (sc. Λευκὴ κώμη) παραλήμπτῃς τῆς τετάρτης τῶν εἰσφερομένων φορτίων καὶ ἑκατοντάρχης μετὰ στρατεύματος ἀποστέλλεται, «For that reason and as a security measure, there is dispatched there too (sc. to Leuke Kome) the Receiver of the quarter tax on incoming merchandise as well as a centurion with a detachment of soldiers.» This passage has generated a considerable amount of discussion about whether the

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<sup>10</sup> The fact that the two titles are often held together suggests to us that the παραλήμπτῃς was an appointed official rather than a tax farmer. Lack of evidence does not allow us to be certain about this, however.

<sup>11</sup> The dates associated with the graffiti from Pselchis should be treated with some caution. The 11th year of Nero (AD 65) is recorded after the second graffito, in which Senas says that he has come to the temple for the fifth time. Even if we assume that Senas visited the temple each of five consecutive years, this would give us only the date of Senas' first trip. It would not tell us when Apollonios came and recorded the first graffito. All we can say is that Apollonios' visit was sometime before 65. While we have found no evidence for repeated annual temple visits elsewhere, we do know of multiple visits of a single person to individual sights, such as the two trips that a strategos named Artemidoros made to the same temple at Pselchis over the course of three years, SB 1.4114 = I.Dakke Gr. 33.

<sup>12</sup> See CASSON (1989) 6f.

Receiver and centurion mentioned in it were Roman or Nabataean. Some have maintained that if they were Roman, we would have to presume that Leuke Kome was under Roman authority by the time of the *Periplus*.<sup>13</sup>

The second source outside Egypt that refers to a παραλήμπτης is P.Dura 20, a contract of AD 121 in which the borrower belongs to the retinue of a Parthian official described among other terms as παρα[λ]ήπτου και στρατηγού Μεσοποταμίας και Παραποταμίας και ἀραβάρχου. The reading παρα[λ]ήπτου, owed to ROSTOVΤΖΕFF, while not certain, is very compelling both paleographically and in light of the parallel texts from Egypt. If this is the same official as the παραλήμπτης τῆς τετάρτης of the *Periplus*, the presence of this concatenation of terms in Parthian territory might perhaps be taken to favor the view that the officials in the *Periplus* are Nabataean rather than Roman.<sup>14</sup> One might wonder, however, whether ἀποστέλλεται is really appropriate if that is the case: «dispatched» seems more fitting for functionaries sent from outside than for those installed within their own state.<sup>15</sup> At all events, one may be inclined to see this at least as a matter of Roman institutions adopted or retained by a neighboring kingdom in the case of the Parthians.<sup>16</sup> In the case of Leuke Kome, however, the official might well be a Roman dispatched to a post in an area in which the Romans controlled only some places. In any event, this would be at an early date, around AD 50, suggesting that the introduction of these Roman officials goes back to the early days of Roman dominion in Egypt.<sup>17</sup>

Let us return to Avitus. The man appears not only in the postal daybook mentioned above, but also in an unpublished ostrakon from Myos Hormos.<sup>18</sup> In it, an Ichthyo-

<sup>13</sup> For discussion of the different positions and further bibliography, see CASSON (1989) 145; CUVIGNY, O.Krok., 14f. with n. 22; JÖRDENS (2009) 355–367, esp. 364–367. YOUNG (1997) argues that, although Leuke Kome was not Roman at the time of the *Periplus*, Romans were stationed there in order to prevent ships from avoiding the quarter tax by unloading at its harbor instead of at Myos Hormos or Berenike. SPEIDEL (2007/2009), however, has suggested that Augustus already laid claim to the Red Sea basin and that there was a significant Roman presence there before the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom in 106, in which case perhaps Leuke Kome was in fact under Roman control at the time of the *Periplus*.

<sup>14</sup> Pliny too mentions a quarter tax that was levied on myrrh by the king of the Gebbani (Nat. 12.68). WILCKEN (1906) 199 connects this with the *vectigal* paid by merchants transporting frankincense over the kingdom of the Gebbani (Plin. Nat. 12.63). YOUNG (1997), who does not cite WILCKEN's discussion, sees no evidence for the τετάρτη duty in the passage of Pliny.

<sup>15</sup> A similar objection is voiced also by JÖRDENS (2009) 364f.

<sup>16</sup> WILCKEN (1906) 195–200, however, believes that the quarter tax is of Arab origin and that the *Periplus* simply puts Roman names (particularly the ἑκατοντάρχης) on what are in effect Nabataean officials.

<sup>17</sup> Later, in the second half of the 2nd c., we find officials in Palmyra responsible for the quarter tax bearing the title τεταρτώνης, Agora de Palmyre 161, III.01 (AD 174) and 182, VI.16 (AD 161).

<sup>18</sup> CUVIGNY presented the ostrakon in a lecture at the Collège de France in 2013; video of the presentation is available here <http://www.college-de-france.fr/site/jean-pierre-brun/seminar-201312-03-10h00.htm> (accessed 17 March 2015); she also discusses it in (2014) 171f.

phagos named Pakybis requests from Avitus permission to sail his *σχεδία* to the port at Philoteras. The text thus illustrates the role of the *παραλήμπτῆς* not only in receiving goods, but in controlling the movement of vessels along the Red Sea coast, probably in an attempt to discourage smuggling. Neither in this ostrakon nor in the other document concerning Avitus does he bear the title *strategos*, and CUVIGNY rightly says that he was likely of lesser significance than the two *παραλήμπται* mentioned above who functioned also as *strategoí*. Avitus' jurisdiction was confined to Myos Hormos and not tied to a metropolis (O.Krok., p. 14). At the same time, CUVIGNY is naturally struck by the comparison with the Receiver of the quarter tax at Leuke Kome. But she points out, following DE ROMANIS, that Myos Hormos and Berenike were not emporia, unlike Leuke Kome: «et, si de lourdes taxes étaient payées à l'entrée sur le territoire égyptien comme au temps de Strabon, elles devaient l'être non dans les ports de la mer Rouge, mais à Koptos où, au IIe s., le célèbre contrat de prêt maritime pour un voyage commercial à Muziris atteste l'existence d' «entrepôts publics de la perception»: τὰς ἐπὶ Κόπτου δημοσίας παραλημπτικὰς ἀποθήκας (SB 18.13167.4). Encore la tetartè, d'après ce papyrus, est-elle payée à Alexandrie, dans l'entrepôt alexandrin où l'on perçoit la taxe du quart» (O.Krok., p. 15). CUVIGNY proceeds from the assumption that taxes on imported goods were paid in Koptos or Alexandria, and that has indeed been the view of all recent scholarship. It is also consistent with the view adopted in O.Berenike I, p. 11, that goods traveling in the other direction, from Egypt to Berenike, were taxed at Koptos.

One of the gains of the second new inscription from Berenike is its mention of an ἀποθήκη ἀρωματική, of which the dedicant is the secretary. Since the inscription was erected at Berenike and Faustinus was Receiver of Berenike, and since no geographical tag is attached to the ἀποθήκη, it would be uneconomical to suppose that it was located anywhere except at Berenike. If that is right, we would be forced to accept that there were ἀποθήκαι in both Berenike and Koptos; and it seems likely that there was one in Myos Hormos as well. It also becomes more difficult to suppose that these *παραλήμπται* only collected «d'autres taxes que les droits d'importation: par exemple un droit d'entrée frappant les personnes, qui aurait été le symétrique de l'ἀποστόλιον et du *πιττάκιον* levés à Koptos; ou encore un droit d'émigration hors d'Égypte; ou encore les taxes que les bateaux devaient acquitter pour utiliser les ports», in CUVIGNY's words (O.Krok., p. 15). Rather, the probability is increased that we should see the ports as having played a more substantial role than has been suspected in the process of assessing the basic customs dues.

How this is to be reconciled with the evidence for collection in Koptos and Alexandria is harder to say. But it is not difficult to imagine that the authorities wished to control the quantity and value of the goods imported from India and East Africa immediately upon disembarkation, even if the actual payment was to take place later. From the authorities' point of view, receiving very large sums of cash in Berenike would not have made much sense, and the same is probably true of Koptos as well. On the other hand, the possibilities that importers might cause some goods to vanish

during the long journey by camel between Berenike and Koptos must have been obvious to the government. It would have made good sense for παραλήμπτai in the ports to examine cargos, establish authoritatively their composition and value, and send documentation of these points to Koptos independently of the caravaners, so that the integrity of the loads could be verified at the end of the desert journey. Such procedures, which are consistent with what we see in the Muziris papyrus (SB 18.13167; mid-2nd c.),<sup>19</sup> are well known in the shipment of grain from towns in the Nile valley to Alexandria, and far more cash value was at stake with the aromatics and other imports than with grain. Furthermore, it is essentially what FABIENNE BURKHALTER suggested to CUVIGNY, that the function of the paralemptes of the Red Sea was to estimate taxes and seal the merchandise (O.Krok., p. 16). And CUVIGNY recently adopted this same view, acknowledging the important role the παραλήμπτης played in verifying, registering and sealing the imported goods at Myos Hormos.<sup>20</sup> The appearance of the ἀποθήκη in our inscription makes it clear that this was not something perfunctory, but involved the entry of the goods into a customs warehouse.

In addition, as CUVIGNY points out, some of the goods imported from the East were consumed locally: «il est vraisemblable qu'avant d'être mis sur le marché local ils étaient frappés eux aussi de droits de douane» (O.Krok., p. 15). In fact, we have evidence of pepper and frankincense, that is, of imports that came through Berenike, being purchased in the desert outposts.<sup>21</sup> Whether these goods were «leaked» along the road from Berenike to Koptos, where they would have been assessed customs dues,<sup>22</sup> or some portion of them was unloaded and taxed already at Berenike before being sold locally, remains an open question. The presence of a storage facility there suggests to us that there could have been some local trade and related assessment of duties at the port of entry.

### Conclusion

Evidence collected to date shows that there was a παραλήμπτης at Myos Hormos (O.Krok. 1, ln. 26; after (?) 28 March 108) and, as we see in the inscriptions published here, at Berenike. There also existed a παραλήμπτης of the Red Sea who served simultaneously as strategos of the Ombite nome (OGIS 202; SEG 49.2341), and another co-office holder in the Koptite nome (I.Portes 70) – the collocation of the titles παραλήμπτης and στρατηγός in the I.Portes inscription suggesting, on analogy with

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<sup>19</sup> See the discussion of the papyrus and additional bibliography in RATHBONE (2000); cf. also the discussion and re-edition of the verso in MORELLI (2011), as well as DE ROMANIS (2012).

<sup>20</sup> CUVIGNY (2014) 172.

<sup>21</sup> O.Did. 319 and 323, for example, mention frankincense (λίβανος), and 327, 328, 364, and 399 refer to pepper (πίπερι, πιπερίδιον).

<sup>22</sup> This is the suggestion made at O.Did. 323.10n.

the preceding inscription, that the man was παραλήμπτῆς of the Red Sea. The Receiver of the quarter tax (παραλήμπτῆς τῆς τετάρτης) is known to have been active at both Leuke Kome (Periplus 19) and Alexandria (SB 18.13167.8). Finally, the existence of a Parthian παραλήμπτῆς who served concomitantly as strategos of Mesopotamia and Parapotamia suggests that there were similar Near Eastern institutions (P.Dura 20).

As far as the Egyptian evidence is concerned, it is unlikely that the παραλήμπται in Myos Hormos and Berenike were the same officials as the παραλήμπται of the Red Sea in Koptos and that of the quarter tax in Alexandria. We can therefore presume that the process of receiving goods at harbors on the Red Sea coast and then assessing them at stations inland was overseen by different individuals, who were perhaps arranged in a loose hierarchy, with, for example, the agents at the ports serving under homonymous officials in Koptos and Alexandria, who in turn answered to the arabarchs.<sup>23</sup> The role that receivers like Avitus and Gaius Julius Faustinus played was crucial for the imperial administration, since they were responsible for controlling the harbors and receiving and registering commodities at the ports of entry, even if they did not themselves collect the quarter tax on the shipments. Having inspected the cargoes, they dispatched them to the Nile valley, while perhaps taxing the small amounts that were destined for local markets, which served, for example, troops stationed at outposts throughout the desert. Their influence was thus considerable, and alone the fact that Faustinus could be honored for his benevolence with a statue set up by a secretary of the spice magazine gives some idea of the social and financial standing of these παραλήμπται in the eyes of the people who relied on them, such as the secretary, and of their importance to Eastern trade operations as a whole.

*Institut für Papyrologie  
Ruprecht-Karls-Universität  
Marshallstr. 6  
69117 Heidelberg  
Deutschland*

*Institute for the Study of the Ancient World  
New York University  
15 East 84th St.  
New York, NY 10028  
U. S. A.*

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<sup>23</sup> The exact relationship of the arabarch(s) (SB 18.13167 col. II, 11 shows there could be more than one) to the παραλήμπτῆς of the Red Sea is difficult to discern, and we cannot suppose a hierarchy in any strict sense, so JÖRDENS (2009) 357–364, who cautions against conflating these officials with wealthy financiers of the early imperial period, such as the arabarch Gaius Julius Alexander, father of the prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander, who belong to a different economic and social stratum.



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Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Amalienstr. 73b, 80799 MÜNCHEN, DEUTSCHLAND  
redaktion.chiron@dainst.de*