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Misthos, Apophora, or Something Else? A Fresh Look at *SEG XXXV 134**

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In 1985 Alan Johnston published a remarkable text incised onto the floor of a plate; the find itself was made in the Kerameikos before 1960.¹ The text predominantly comprises a series of abbreviated names followed by two sets of numerals. In Johnston's view, the most plausible interpretation is that the named individuals were slaves; the first set of numerals represents numbers of days, and the second set of numerals represents either payments of *misthos*, a rent paid to the slave's owner by a lessee for their hire; or *apophora*, a regular fixed payment made by slaves to their owners in circumstances where the slave operated independently.² Despite its many interesting features, not much discussion of this document has appeared in print since Johnston's initial publication.³ This article represents an attempt to rekindle interest in this document; for if Johnston is correct then it is of prime interest to historians of Greek slavery. Appealing as that interpretation may be, however, both hypotheses are open to several objections; in my view, an alternative scenario can better account for the production of this text: the pooling of resources by an association of lower-class individuals, perhaps for a sacrifice.

* My Thanks to the audience at Schwetzingen (September 2016) and to the participants in the 'New discoveries in Greek epigraphy' seminar at Edinburgh (October 2018) for their comments and criticisms. I would also like to thank Stephen Lambert and Ilias Arnaoutoglou for discussing the text with me. Christian Amitzbøll Thomsen, Benedikt Eckhardt, Edward Harris, Jason Porter, and Mirko Canevaro read drafts of the article and provided invaluable criticisms and suggestions. The Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Athen kindly permitted me to reproduce a photograph of the plate discussed herein; my thanks to its staff and to Dr J. Heiden for arranging this and supplying the image.

1 A. Johnston, 'A fourth century graffito from the Kerameikos' *MDAI(A)* 100 (1985): 293-307.

2 Johnston (n. 1): 303-7. I avoid the term 'living apart' (though many *apophora*-paying slaves likely did live elsewhere than their owner's house) in order that this group is not conflated with the *khoris oikountes* mentioned in Dem. 4.36. The latter were probably a category of freedmen: see M. Canevaro & D.M. Lewis, '*Khoris oikountes* and the obligations of freedmen in late Classical and early Hellenistic Athens' *Incidenza dell'antico* 12 (2014): 91-121. For *apophora*-paying slaves in classical Athens see now D. Kamen, 'Manumission and slave-allowances in Classical Athens' *Historia* 65.4 (2016): 413-26.

3 For instance, it is not discussed in C. Pébarthe's important book *Cité, démocratie et écriture* (Paris 2006). Brief discussion in R. Thomas, 'Writing, reading, public and private "literacies."' Functional literacy and democratic literacy in Greece' in W.A. Johnson & H.N. Parker (eds.) *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford 2009): 13-45, at pp. 28-9.

I. *SEG XXXV* 134: An Overview



We may begin by noting the chief features of the find. The plate is black-glazed, 14.8cm in diameter at its original undamaged extent, and was dated by Lucy Talcott to the mid-fourth century BC on ceramic grounds. Johnston dated the text to post-350 based on letter forms.⁴ I present the following text based on Johnston's *editio princeps* and the edition at *SEG* XXXV 134:

SIDE A

1 [.c.6. .]ς ἄρχων
[Ἐκ]ατ[ο]μβαιών

4 Date of plate: Johnston (n. 1): 293; date of text: *ibid.*: 297.

Column I

		[- - -]αν : ΔΔΠ
		[] Ἑρμω : ΔΔΠΠ : ΕΠΠΠC
5		ἐν τῶι ἱερ : ΠΠΠ :
	Ε	Ἀπολλω : ΔΔΔΠΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
	[]	Ἀταρβι : ΔΔ
	[]	Φίλιπ : ΔΔΓΓ
10	[] ν?	Ἰππω : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
	[] ν	Νιτα : ΔΓΓΠΠ
	Ε	Ἀρτεμ : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
	[] ν	Τιμαρ : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ :
	Ε	Γαστρ : ΔΔΔ : ΕΠΠΠ
15		[- - -]αλλι : ΔΔΓΓ
		[- - - -]νο : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ

Column II

		Θαλλω : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
		Κολχ : ΔΔΠΠΠ
	Ε	Εὐβιω : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
20		Ἀμπελι : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠ
	Ε	Μικιω : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
	Ε	ῥυνδα : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
		Κ. τυ : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ
	Ε	Μελαν : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
25		Μακεδο : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ
	Ε	Δεξι : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
	Ε	Εὐμαθ : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
	Ε	Τιριβ : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
		Φανια : ΔΔΠ
30	ποτήρια :	Ηρακ : Π Ἀριστοδή-
	ἡμικοαῖα :	μεια : ΗΔΔΔ : καρχήσια ΠΠΠ
	Γ	Σιμια : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ
		Ιταμ : ΓΠΠΠ. [- - -]
		[- -]κτ : ΔΔΓΓΠΠ : ΕΠΠ Θρακ : ΔΔΠ Ε Παρμ [:] Δ. . [- -]
35		[- -].χ : ΔΔΓΓ Ε Πετρω : ΔΔΠΠ : ΕΠΠΠC Ἀσθ. [- -]
		ἐν τῶι ἱερ : Γ

SIDE B On the underside, inside the foot Ἡρακλ(—)

In order that the reader might more easily understand the text, I have translated the numbers and tabulated the information (table 1, *infra*).

Table 1

Individual no.	Name	Numeral 1	Numeral 2 (payment)	Daily average	E?	EN ΤΩΙ IEP
1	Ἰαν	22				
2	Ἑρμῳ	23	1dr 5.5 ob (= 11.5 ob)	0.5 ob		4
3	Ἀπολλῳ	34	1dr 3ob (= 9ob)	0.26 ob	E	
4	Ἀταρβι	20				
5	Φίλιπ	26				
6	Ἴππῳ	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob		
7	Νίτα	18				
8	Ἄρτεμ	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob	E	
9	Τίμαρ	28				
10	Γαστρ	30	2dr 3ob (= 15ob)	0.5 ob	E (?)	
11	Ἰαλλι	25				
12	Ἰνο	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob		
13	Θαλλῳ	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob		
14	Κολχ	24				
15	Εὐβίῳ	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob	E	
16	Ἀμπελι	31	2dr (= 12ob)	0.39 ob		
17	Μικίῳ	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob	E	
18	Ῥυνδα	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob	E	
19	Κ. τυ	28				
20	Μελαν	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob	E	
21	Μακεδο	28				
22	Δεξι	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob	E	
23	Εὐμαθ	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob	E	
24	Τιριβ	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob	E	
25	Φανια	22				
26	Ἡρακ	2	Payment in pots	?		
27	Σίμια	28	2dr 2ob (= 14ob)	0.5 ob		
28	Ἰταμ	9	Text damaged			
29	Ἰκτ	28	2dr 2ob (= 14 ob)	0.5 ob		
30	Θραικ	22				
31	Παρμ	Numeral incomplete	Text damaged		E	
32	Ἰχ	25				
33	Πετρῳ	23	1dr 5.5 ob (11.5 ob)	0.5 ob	E	5
34	Ἀσθ	Text damaged	Text damaged			

Notable Features

Before turning to the question of interpretation, it is necessary to underscore certain key features of the text. This will involve running over some of the groundwork already well established by Johnston.⁵

Prescript

The first two lines comprise some manner of heading. In line 1 A[-]XΩN is tolerably clear; Johnston suggests that this could be θιασ[α][ρ]χῶν; but as ‘that would leave a gap at the beginning of the line’, he prefers the name of the eponymous archon followed by ἄρχων in the nominative; although this is unusual (as prescripts in official documents use the genitive form), this ‘may be sufficiently explained by the fact that this is by no means an official text.’⁶ As for line 2, Johnston notes that ‘I can envisage no restoration other than Ἐκ[ατ[ο]μβαίων, which not only fits all existing traces but would start suitably close to the edge of the plate’s interior.’⁷ This latter restoration seems more secure than the former, and at least provides us with the month Hekatombaion during which (or concerning which) the text may have been composed.

Days and Payments

As Johnston points out, it is clear that the two main columns of names were composed first, and the other elements added later: note for example from the photograph how the numerals relating to Ἐρμῶ are squeezed in behind the pre-existing entry for Κολχ. The text was thus not composed in one go, but was updated over time: after an initial blocking-in of the main two columns of names (and perhaps the first set of numerals), the second set of numerals and some further names and numerals were later added, and finally the epsilons (on which see *infra*).⁸ The most striking feature of the text is the consistency of thirteen of the entries (marked in bold in table 1), where the first numeral is 28, followed after the punctuation mark by 2 drachms 2 obols (ὁ δεῖνα : ΔΔΠΙΠΙ : FFII).⁹ Johnston makes the compelling suggestion that the first column records days, the second daily payments. For these thirteen individuals, then, the daily payment was ½ obol. There are variations on this theme that use the same basic ratio. Note for instance Ἐρμῶ (23 : 11 ½ obols = ½ obol per diem), Γαστρ (30 : 15 obols = ½ obol per diem) and Πετρῶ (23 : 11 ½ obols = ½ obol per diem). This consistency is striking; but there are deviations from the rule. Ἀπολλῶ has 34 : 9 obols, which computes as 0.26 obols per diem. Ἀμπελῶ has 31 : 12 obols, which computes as 0.39 obols per diem. Most unusual is Ηρακ, whose first numeral (2) is vastly smaller than those of the other individuals, and whose payment or contribution is made in several kinds of pot.¹⁰ This may point to a special role for Ηρακ; and he may indeed be the person who cut

5 I will avoid repeating in full Johnston’s commentary, and stick only to those aspects that bear directly on the interpretations discussed in §II *infra*; readers are referred to Johnston’s excellent commentary for further details.

6 Johnston (n. 1): 298.

7 Johnston (n. 1): 297.

8 On the order of composition, see Johnston (n. 1): 295.

9 Namely individuals 6, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, 29 in table I.

10 For excellent notes on these pot types see Johnston (n. 1): 302-3.

the inscription, for the name Ἡρακλ appears on the other side (*viz.* the base) of the plate.¹¹ Finally, in eleven entries we have the name plus first numeral but no monetary payment.¹² (This is clear due to obvious vacats; due to damage it is impossible to assess properly the entries for Παρμ and Ἀσθ).

Epsilon

The inscriber has added the letter epsilon to the left of many of the ‘payers.’ As Johnston points out, no ‘non-payer’ is marked thus.¹³ There are a number of possible explanations for this choice of letter; in particular, as the past indicative augment, epsilon could abbreviate various verbs denoting that payment had been made.¹⁴

EN ΤΩΙ ΙΕΡ

In two cases we find the phrase EN ΤΩΙ ΙΕΡ written to gloss entries with a reduced number of ‘days’ and a correspondingly smaller payment, but again on the ½ obol per diem system: Ἑρμω and Πετρω. Both paid 23 daily contributions, 11 ½ obols each. Beside the phrase EN ΤΩΙ ΙΕΡ in each instance there is marked a further numeral, 4 for Ἑρμω and 5 for Πετρω. This subsequent numeral probably represents the number of days that these individuals were ἐν τῷ ἱερ<ῶν>, *viz.* ‘in the sanctuary.’ If we add these numerals to the 23 completed payments, the figure comes to 27 ‘days’ for Ἑρμω and 28 for Πετρω. It thus appears that presence ‘in the sanctuary’ (performing some task?) exempted these two individuals from several daily payments. Note too that the lower numeral for Ἑρμω may be explained by the punctuation mark (*viz.* :) following his entry, which could indicate that something more is owed.

Onomastics

It is clear from the text that the names are abbreviated and their endings missing; their grammatical case therefore cannot be determined. Johnston believes that this list is composed ‘almost certainly all of slaves’,¹⁵ in part due to the presence of a number of clearly non-Greek onomastics: Ἀσθ, which may be Semitic¹⁶; Θρακ, obviously a Thracian ethnic name and common for slaves in Athens¹⁷; Κ. τυ, which suggests Thracian origins if we read the second letter as omicron, Celtic if we read it as alpha¹⁸; Κολχ, suggesting

11 For ownership marks on pottery see more generally M. Lang, *Graffiti and Dipinti* (Princeton 1976) = *The Athenian Agora* vol. XXI: 23-52.

12 Namely individuals 1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 19, 21, 25, 30, 32 in table I.

13 Johnston (n. 1): 299.

14 Johnston (n. 1): 304.

15 Johnston (n. 1): 307.

16 Johnston (n. 1): 300.

17 K. Vlassopoulos, ‘Athenian slave names and Athenian social history’ *ZPE* 175 (2010): 113-44 counts nine examples of Θρακ.

18 Johnston (n. 1): 301. Having only seen a photograph, I cannot profess complete certainty; but alpha appears to be far more likely: the letter seems to be formed in an angular manner, yet the cutter is perfectly capable of forming neat curves when needed (see e.g. the beta in Εὐβιω). Stephen Lambert (per. comm. December 2017) remarks to me that the cutter is skilled in forming letters, a judgement with which Thomas (n. 3, p. 30) concurs.

Colchian origins¹⁹; Ῥυνδα, Anatolian in flavour²⁰; and Τιτιβ, very likely reflecting the Persian name Tiribazos.²¹ These names do indeed fit well with the hypothesis that the document concerns slaves; however, some caution ought to be exercised here. Most slaves in Athens did not bear ethnic or foreign names²²; and even in Hellenistic documents where we possess sound evidence for slaves' foreign origins, the vast majority of these bore Greek names.²³ Such foreign and ethnic names usually provide a reasonable sense of the slave's ethnic origins when we know for other reasons that the individual is a slave. It is not safe, however, to use ethnic and foreign names as evidence for slave status where we do not have other reasons to suspect slave status; for such names can also be borne by freedmen and (occasionally) freeborn persons.²⁴ And it goes without saying that the standard Greek names (Ἑρμω-, Ἀπολλω-, Μελαν-, etc.) could be borne by individuals belonging to any of the known legal status groups. Regarding gender, although Johnston suspects mainly males, in several instances a female identity is also possible.²⁵ It is best, then, to reserve final judgement about the gender and status composition of the group. All that can be said with confidence is that the group is likely to be predominantly male, have a noticeable non-Greek element, and is probably lower-class.²⁶

II. Interpretation

The individual who inscribed this text obviously knew its purpose, was writing an accounting record for his own needs, and did not feel the need to spell its context out in detail. In interpreting it, then, we are faced with a 'goodness of fit' exercise; that is, we must advance scenarios that can account for the production of this text, scenarios of a sort known from our contemporary Athenian sources (so as not to explain *ignotum per ignotius*), and test whether or not they comfortably accommodate the text's various features.²⁷

19 On Colchian slaves see D. Braund & G.R. Tsetskhladze, 'The export of slaves from Colchis' *CQ* 39.1 (1989): 114-25.

20 Johnston (n. 1): 302. On Anatolian slaves see D.M. Lewis, 'Near Eastern slaves in classical Attica and the slave trade with Persian territories' *CQ* 61.1 (2011): 91-113; for the Hellenistic period, see idem 'Notes on slave names, ethnicity, and identity in Classical and Hellenistic Greece' *Studia Źródłoznawcze. U Schyłku Starożytności* 16 (2018): 169-99.

21 Johnston (n. 1): 302.

22 Vlassopoulos (n. 17) *passim*.

23 See Lewis (n. 20, 'Notes on slave names...'). I do not treat the Locrian manumissions in that article, but the same pattern holds for these: see T.V. Blavatskaja, 'Zur Geschichte der Sklavenhaltung in den nord-westlichen Gebieten Griechenlands' in T.V. Blavatskaja, E.S. Golubcova & A.I. Pavlovskaja, *Die Sklaverei in Hellenistischen Staaten im 3.-1. Jh. V. Chr.* (Wiesbaden 1972): 3-105, at pp. 60-62.

24 Lewis (n. 20, 'Notes on slave names...'): 174 n. 11 & n. 12.

25 O. Masson & L. Dubois, 'Bulletin Épigraphique' *Revue des Études Grecques* 100 (1987) pp. 342-3 no. 354 point to several such cases.

26 Johnston (n. 1) rightly points out (p. 302) that 'as long as we are unable to define the nature of the transactions involved we should not ignore the possibility of a mixed list, slave and free', but later asserts more confidently in his conclusion that the list is 'almost certainly all of slaves' due to his *misthos/apophora* theory. As I aim to show below, there are serious difficulties with both of these scenarios, and Johnston's earlier, more hesitant stance therefore ought to be retained.

27 My task is thus similar to the interpretation of another singular document, *SEG* L 276. On this document see E.M. Harris, 'Notes on a lead letter from the Athenian agora' *HSCP* 102 (2004): 157-70.

Misthosis

In testing the hypothesis that the text might record *misthos* payments to slaveowners for the hire of slaves, Johnston cites Xen. *Vect.* 4.14 and 4.23.²⁸ At 4.14 Xenophon writes that Nicias son of Niceratus owned a thousand slaves whom he rented out (ἐξεμίσθωσεν) in the mines to a man named Sosias the Thracian; in return Sosias paid a rent of an obol per capita per diem, and τὸν δ' ἀριθμὸν ἴσους ἀεὶ παρέχειν, a euphemistic way of saying that when any of these slaves died, Sosias was obligated to find a replacement. At 4.23 Xenophon engages in some calculations: if the Athenian state were to make slave mining at Laurion a public venture and buy 6,000 slaves, renting them out (like Nicias) for an obol per diem, then it could realise a profit of 60 talents per annum. His calculation can be broken down as follows:

60 talents = 360,000 drachms = 2,160,000 obols

2,160,000 obols ÷ 6,000 slaves = 360 obols per slave per annum

Xenophon is therefore reckoning that each state-owned slave would be working a 360-day year. This forcefully brings home a proverb noted by Aristotle (*Pol.* 1334a20), οὐ σχολὴ δούλοις. Here is an image of Athenian slavery at its most brutal and chrematistic, a grinding work-regime whose attendant attrition rate is nonchalantly figured into a calculation of projected annual profits.²⁹

However, some reservations should be noted regarding the use of this calculation as our template for *misthosis*. Mine labour was not necessarily unskilled, and various aspects of the extraction and processing of silver required specialist knowledge³⁰; but those slaves rented out by Nicias (whether or not he owned as many as a thousand of them³¹) clearly were being treated as a highly disposable, low-skilled workforce. The reason is obvious: no free person apart from the most desperate would work down Laurion's mineshafts, and thus there was no competition from free wage labour in this sector.³² Profit margins could be adjusted (in line with very low slave prices) by entrepreneurs like Nicias working with economies of scale.³³ But our document comes from the city, where in most cases there was

28 Johnston (n. 1): 306.

29 On considerations of profit, loss, and risk see P. Christesen, 'Economic rationalism in fourth-century BC Athens', *G&R* 50 (2003): 31-56; M. Faraguna, 'Calcolo economico, archivi finanziari e credito nel mondo greco tra VI e IV sec. a.C.', in K. Verboven, K. Vandorpe & V. Chankowski (eds.), *Pistoi Dia Tèn Technèn. Bankers, Loans and Archives in the Ancient World: Studies in Honour of Raymond Bogaert* (Leuven, 2008): 33-57.

30 See T.E. Rihll, 'Skilled slaves and the economy: the silver mines of the Laurion', in H. Heinen (ed.) *Antike Sklaverei: Rückblick und Ausblick. Neue Beiträge zur Forschungsgeschichte und zur Erschließung der archäologischen Zeugnisse* (Stuttgart, 2010): 203-220.

31 The figure is so far above any parallels from the orators that several scholars have expressed doubts regarding its verity: see D.M. Lewis, *Greek Slave Systems in their Eastern Mediterranean Context, c. 800-146 BC* (Oxford, 2018): 171 for references and discussion. As E.M. Harris ('Homer, Hesiod, and the "Origins" of Greek slavery' *REA* 114.4 (2012): 345-66, at 359) points out, Lysias (19.47-8) remarks that many people believed Nicias' fortune to be far larger than it really was.

32 Cf. Lewis (n. 31): 271-4.

33 See P. Gauthier, *Un commentaire historique des Poroi de Xénophon* (Geneva & Paris, 1976): 155-6: Xenophon's plan to increase slaveholdings from 1,200 to 6,000 within 5 years implies a price of 158 drachms per slave; to do the same within 6 years implies a price of 195 drachms per slave. Cf. the slave prices assembled in K. Ruffing & H.-J. Drexhage, 'Antiken Sklavenpreise' in P. Mauritsch et al. (eds.)

some competition between free wage labour and slave labour. A better analogy is the Erechtheum accounts, where we can see free and slave labour working side by side; interestingly, wages here are paid at the same rate for the same work regardless of whether the worker is a citizen, metic, or slave (though legal title to slave wages lay with their owners).³⁴ The base rate of pay is around 5-6 obols per diem.³⁵ Even if we use the scenario sketched by Xenophon (with a mere 1 obol per diem trickling back to the owner) as our model, the economics hardly work, for a payment of half of that sum is an unbelievably tiny payment for a full work day. On the more reasonable assumption that slaves in the city who were rented out on a medium- or long-term basis earned around a drachma a day, the *misthos* hypothesis for our document is impossibly unprofitable, a mere twelfth of what a slave could plausibly earn per diem.

There is a further problem: the *misthos* hypothesis cannot easily account for our two instances of individuals 'ΕΝ ΤΩΙ ΙΕΡ.' Johnston proposes an ingenious solution to this problem: a scholiast (*Anecdota Bekker* I 12) tells us that the Anakeion was a shrine of the Dioskouroi where slaves stood for hire; perhaps for these days Ἐρμῶ and Περρῶ were at this shrine standing for hire as day labourers rather than working in medium- or longer-term employment.³⁶ Again, however, the economics do not work; for this explanation requires us to view sending a slave to the hire market as an *even less profitable* alternative than a medium- or longer-term lease bringing in a mere ½ obol per diem. In any of these scenarios, it is hard to see why a master would expend several hundreds of drachms on a slave for so paltry a daily return.³⁷

Apophora

Johnston suggests an alternative to *misthosis*: the payments could represent instances of *apophora*, that is, a regular fixed payment that a slave operating independently paid to his or her master.³⁸ Here, Johnston cites Aeschin. 1.97: Timarchus' father bequeathed him a workshop of nine or ten slave shoemakers, each of whom paid him an *apophora* of 2 obols per diem, except the foreman, who paid 3 obols. Again, however, the same objection can be lodged as for the *misthosis* hypothesis: Timarchus' slaves were paying either four or six times as much *apophora* per diem as our individuals with their tiny ½ obol per diem payment.

We might rescue the hypothesis by conjecturing co-ownership and therefore a split *apophora* payment. The co-ownership of slaves is attested in e.g. Lysias 4, *On a Wounding by Intent* (§§ 10, 12, 16), and if we postulate such a scenario with an *apophora*-paying slave, we can whittle down the fee by assuming that what we are seeing does not represent

Antike Lebenswelten: Konstanz, Wandel, Wirkungsmacht: Festschrift für Ingomar Weiler zum 70. Geburtstag (Wiesbaden, 2008): 321-51, at pp. 321-3.

34 See Lewis (n. 31): 43-4.

35 See R.H. Randall, 'The Erechtheum workmen' *American Journal of Archaeology* 57.3 (1953): 199-210, esp. pp. 207ff. More broadly, see W.T. Loomis, *Wages, Welfare Costs and Inflation in Classical Athens* (Ann Arbor MI, 1998).

36 Johnston (n. 1): 306.

37 On slave prices in Athens see Lewis (n. 31): 170-1 for references and discussion. For hired labour see A. Fuks 'Κολωνὸς μίσθιος, labour exchange in classical Athens' *Eranos* 49 (1951): 171-3.

38 See Kamen (n. 2) *passim*.

the full fee, but the part-share that went to a co-owner. Yet this runs up against an obvious objection: why would a slaveholder co-own thirty-four slaves? Surely it would make sense to singly-own half as many slaves and avoid the attendant fuss. Yet the scenario is not impossible; we might consider the case of a workshop of slaves inherited by multiple heirs who decide to keep it as a unit and split the income. Yet this fails to explain the exemptions for being EN ΤΩΙ ΙΕΡ. Another way to work around the problem of the tiny size of the daily payment is to conjecture a scenario such as we find in Hypereides 1, *In Defence of Lycophron*. Here we find described a racket arranged between a sycophant named Ariston and a man named Theomnestus.³⁹ In order that Ariston could specialise in sycophancy full time, Theomnestus used the money that Ariston extorted from his victims to buy slaves, each of whom would pay Ariston an obol per diem (Hyp. 1.2). In such an arrangement our 34 individuals, paying ½ obol per diem each, could have furnished a joint daily contribution of 17 obols, viz. 2 drachms 5 obols, quite a handsome per diem wage. Yet to such a scenario one might object that (a) arrangements like this can hardly have been common, making the solution *a priori* an unlikely one; (2) such a solution cannot explain the recurrent numeral 28, the variant payments, the non-payers, Ηρακ's payment in pots, or why Ἐρμῶ and Περρῶ were given exemptions for several days each for being EN ΤΩΙ ΙΕΡ. The *apophora* hypothesis on any of these permutations is thus possible, but nonetheless strains credulity.

A Private Association

Before venturing his *misthosis* and *apophora* hypotheses, Johnston proposed another possibility:

A second possibility is that we have here a rare document from an eranos group, i.e. a record of contributions paid in by club members, in this case slaves, for some specific purpose, most likely manumission or cult expenses. Monthly contributions and expenditure are often mentioned in this context; preserved lists on stone are of a roughly similar character, mentioning those who contribute as well as those comparatively dormant. In detail, however, there are difficulties. If we think of a manumission fund, Herak's vases become problematic and there is no apparent reason for exemption being granted to those ›in the sanctuary‹. The sanctuary could indeed be the centre of the eranos-group, but on this, or any other interpretation the numerals are very worrying; there seems little that can intervene between the member of the group and his contribution. If the numerals are taken as days, the fact that they are noted at all is perplexing, not to mention the patchy ›attendance‹ of some members and the non-contributory ›attendance‹ of others; the daily contribution of half an obol also seems very high. If the numerals are not days, we again face the problem of the regular appearance of 28.⁴⁰

Although Johnston abandoned this hypothesis, a fresh appraisal is warranted; for the context of private associations can account for many of this document's singular features, and the sticking points that led Johnston to discount this line of enquiry can be accounted

39 On sycophancy in Athens see F.D. Harvey, 'The sycophant and sycophancy: vexatious redefinition' in P. Cartledge, P. Millett & S. Todd (eds.) *Nomos: Essays in Athenian Law, Politics and Society* (Cambridge 1993): 103-21.

40 Johnston (n. 1): 305-6.

for. If we suppose that our text derives from a private association that was pooling money towards some common goal – a sacrifice or festival for example – then a good parallel can be found in a contemporary Attic document, *IG II² 1361*, a decree of the *orgeones* of Bendis.⁴¹ In this decree the association's *hieropoioi* (the club officials who organise the sacrifice) must collect two drachms per member during the month of Thargelion to go towards the association's annual festival and sacrifice. Lines 16-20 state:

ἀγο[ρὰν δὲ κ]αὶ [ἐ]ύ[λλ]ογον ποιεῖν τοὺς ἐπιμελητὰς καὶ τοὺς ἱεροποιοὺς ἐν τῷ ἱερ-
[ῶ] περὶ τῶν κοιν[ῶν] τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἰσταμένου τοῦ μηνὸς ἐκάστου. νν διδόναι δὲ
[τοῖς ἱ]εροποιοῖς εἰς τὴν θυσίαν : FF : δραχμὰς ἕκαστον τῶν ὀργεόνων οἷς μέτεστι
[το]ῦ [ἱ]εροῦ τοῦ Θαργηλιῶνος πρὸ τῆς ἔκτης ἐπὶ δέκα, ὃς δ' ἂν ἐπιδημῶν Ἀθήνη-
[σι] καὶ ὑγαίνων μὴ συνβάλληται, ὀφειλέτω : FF : ἱεράς τῇ θε[ῶ].

The supervisors and the *hieropoioi* shall arrange an assembly and convocation in the sanctuary to (discuss) the association's affairs on the second day of each month. *Vacat*. Each of the *orgeones* who have a claim in the sanctuary shall give to the *hieropoioi* 2 drachmae during Thargelion for the sacrifice, before the 16th day (of the month). Whoever is at home in Athens and in good health but does not contribute, owes 2 drachmae, sacred to the goddess. (tr. Kloppenborg & Ascoug)

This 2-drachma fee for the month of Thargelion provides a close parallel for the apparent fee of just over 2 drachms per 'payer' in our text, (probably) in the month of Hekatombaion, and shows that Johnston's belief that the fee is too high for an association is unwarranted: it need not be seen as a daily fee paid year-round. It is also worth underscoring Jones' view that the *orgeones* of Bendis lay at the poorer end of the spectrum of attested associations.⁴² That parallel would fit with our onomastics, which suggest low-status individuals. One might note as a further parallel *IG II² 2940*, a fourth-century list of individuals (probably composed of slaves) who constituted an association of *eranistai* operating in and around Laurion, and perhaps dedicated to the worship of the Anatolian god Men (if the restoration is correct).⁴³

Nevertheless, as Johnston points out, the figure 28 (and variants thereof) present problems. The Athenians did not have months of 28 days, but 'full' months of 30 days and 'hollow' months of 29 days; Hekatombaion should have 30 days.⁴⁴ A straightforward

41 On this group see N.F. Jones, *The Associations of Classical Athens: The Response to Democracy* (New York & Oxford, 1999): 256-62; I. Arnaoutoglu, 'Cult associations and politics: worshipping Bendis in Classical and Hellenistic Athens' in V. Gabrielsen & C.A. Thomsen (eds.) *Private Associations and the Public Sphere* (Copenhagen 2015): 25-56.

42 Jones (n. 41): 260-261: 'Taken together, these particulars suggest the absence of an endowment and, again, of wealthy benefactors by the earnings or generosity of whom the association might perpetuate itself. Rather, the impression is left of dependence upon a trickle of small dues and fines, with cash reserves so small that the association cannot finance its annual festival without collecting a small fee (or equivalent fine) from its entire membership.'

43 The restoration is far from certain: see the remarks of H. Pleket and R. Stroud in *SEG XXIX* 163. For *eranistai* as members of an association, see C. Thomsen, 'The eranistai of classical Athens' *GRBS* 55.1 (2015): 154-75. See also M. Faraguna, 'Diritto, economia, società: riflessioni su *eranos* tra età omerica e mondo ellenistico' in B. Legras (ed.) *Tranferts culturels et droits dans le monde grec et hellénistique* (Paris 2012): 129-53.

44 B.D. Meritt, *The Athenian Year* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1961): 12-13.

solution can be proposed, however, if we think of the payments being organised not around a ‘month’ of 28 days, but around the figure of 2 drachms 2 obols per member. What if, like the *orgeones* of Bendis, this putative association decided to pool resources for a sacrifice or festival, and the group’s treasurer came up with a sum of 2dr 2ob per person, a figure based on the projected total cost of the sacrifice (or festival) divided by the number of members of the group? For an association of poor individuals, this would have been a sum not to be sniffed at; and so the treasurer could have made subscription to the fee more manageable by breaking it down into daily contributions of ½ obol which, paid into the common pot, would eventually amount to the required fee of 2dr 2ob per person. The figure 28, then, can be seen as an incidental figure, the product of a calculation for breaking down the overall fee into affordable daily payments. Those who paid more (*viz.* Γαστρ) might then have been the more public-spirited members of the group (or perhaps they had outstanding debts to the association from an earlier event). But what about those who underpaid or whose payment was missing?

A common genre of inscription relating to associations is the honorary decree for officers of the association who had done a good job.⁴⁵ In some of these, one of the virtues for which that the honorand is praised concerns dealing admirably with the association’s funds. For example, *IG II² 1323* honours Theon for his scrupulousness and promptness in dealing with funds when he was treasurer of an association of *thiasotai*. In *IG II² 1329* the *orgeones* of the Mother of the Gods honour Chaireas for his public-spiritedness towards the association, especially during his term as secretary, and praise his consistent contribution of funds (line 10) and his contribution of interest-free loans to the association when the treasurer was absent (line 17). In *SEG XXIV 156* a priest is honoured by *thiasotai* for making sure that the *eranos* (common fund) was always full by promptly paying over any donations that were deposited with him. So our text could fit into a context where an association’s *tamias* or *hieropoios* was chasing up members to pay their fees for an annual sacrifice: the text then records what each member owes; some had paid up in full, others had not, and one had delivered a load of pots in kind, perhaps as a bond whilst he scraped the money together for his contribution. (If Hpακ was indeed the author of the text and treasurer for this group, perhaps he exercised more effort in chasing up the payments of the other members than setting a good example himself).⁴⁶ One can cite as a parallel *Agora* 16: 161 (3rd c BC), an inscribed list of debtors to an association: the fact that the members went to the trouble of inscribing this list of debtors shows how seriously they took the problem of members lagging in paying what they owed. So on this interpretation, the presence of ‘non-payers’, or perhaps ‘tardy payers’ is not all that surprising. Theophrastus, indeed, lampoons various attitudes to *eranos* contributions – grudging payment, for

45 I. Arnaoutogou, *Thusias Heneka Kai Sunousias: Private Religious Associations in Hellenistic Athens* (Athens, 2003): 115–118.

46 Benedikt Eckhardt suggests to me another possibility: that Hpακ’s contribution comprised the crockery needed for the ceremony in the sanctuary. Alternatively, Johnston (n. 1): 302–3 argues that the total value of this crockery may have been equivalent to the ‘full payment’ of 2 drachms 2 obols.

example (*Char.* 15.7), or boasting about one's contribution (*Char.* 23.6). We ought not, then, to be surprised to see inconsistency in payment.⁴⁷

What about discounted payments for Ἐρμῶ and Περρῶ, whose entries on the text bear the phrase ΕΝ ΤΩΙ ΙΕΡ? This can be paralleled too: Migeotte has recently drawn attention to a document from Callatis on the Black Sea (*IScM* III 35, 3rd c BC), where several of an association's subscribers offer days of labour instead of monetary payments.⁴⁸ Perhaps our individuals 'in the sanctuary' also did not have to pay for the days in which they were employed in sacred duties, their labour representing a fungible alternative to daily payments. Note too the mention of a meeting ἐν τῷ ἱερ[ῶι] in the decree of the *orgeones* of Bendis (lines 16-17) and instructions in lines 8-9 for the upkeep of ἡ οἰκία καὶ τὸ ἱερόν. It is customary in decrees of praise passed by associations in Attica that the document be inscribed and set up in the association's shrine.⁴⁹ The list of members with outstanding fees in *Agora* 16:161 is likewise to be set up ἐν τῷ ἱερῶι (line 7). For some poorer associations it was necessary to rent a plot of land or use a public shrine, or a shrine belonging to a wealthier association.⁵⁰ As we can see in *IG* II² 1324 and 2499, these sites might be a little dilapidated and require some work to set in order for the celebration; and this sort of work may explain the discounts to Ἐρμῶ and Περρῶ in our document: they had to take time off work to prepare the shrine, and therefore were not charged contribution fees for the days when they were working ἐν τῷ ἱερ<ῶι>.

A variant explanation could lie in a subscription⁵¹ by a private association for e.g. the repair of a shrine, which has some attractive parallels. This would explain the variant payments rather better than the aforementioned scenario; but it does not account as well for the consistent 2 drachma 2 obol payments. As noted above, there is a close parallel for discounts for those working ἐν τῷ ἱερ<ῶι> in *IScM* III 35. Another variation on the private association theme requires a dramatic rethink of the meaning of the first numeral; that is, to discount the notion that the collection is for a sacrifice or festival, and to view our document as an account for the month of Hekatombaion of a year-round collection aimed at reaching 28 drachms per member per annum.⁵² The figure of 2 drachms 2 obols is exactly one twelfth of 28 drachms. The advantages of this interpretation are several: (i) it does not

47 In these instances in Theophrastus the *eranos* is a loan, not an association fund; but attitudes towards both kinds of contribution may have been similar. On collecting fees see also Arnaoutoglou (n. 45): 101.

48 L. Migeotte, 'Les souscriptions dans les associations privées' in P. Fröhlich & P. Hamon (eds.) *Groupes et associations dans les cites grecques (III^e siècle av. J.-C. – II^e siècle apr. J.-C.)* (Geneva, 2013): 113-27, at 116.

49 e.g. *IG* II² 1252+999.16-17; 1253.11; 1256.11-12; 1263.26; 1277.35-6; 1278.14 (restored); 1284.17-18; 33-4; 1292.27; 1297.5; 1298.11; 1314.23-4; 1315.27-8; 1316.21-2; 1324.27-31; 1325.31; 1326.50; 1327.27; 1328.20; 1329.29-30; 1335.6-7; 1343.39-40; 2499.41-2; *SEG* 2:9.9; *IRhannous* II 59.29-30; *AM* 66:228 no. 4.20.

50 For associations renting out their shrines see Arnaoutoglou (n. 45): 110. On association shrines in Athens, see J. Steinhauer, *Religious Associations in the Post-Classical Polis* (Stuttgart, 2014): 118-21; C.A. Thomsen, 'The place of honour: association sanctuaries and inscribed honours in late Classical and early Hellenistic Athens', forthcoming in A. Cazemier & S. Skaltsa (eds.), *Private Associations in Context: Rethinking Associations and Religion in Context*.

51 This was suggested to me by Edward Harris, who further suggests that the epsilon could denote ἐπέδωκε.

52 This suggestion – and what follows in this paragraph – I owe wholly to Christian Amitzbøll Thomsen.

require our *tamias* to be keeping a constant tally of daily payments, but instead collect just one monthly payment (somewhat like the 2 drachms paid by members of the *orgeones* of Bendis in Thargelion, but in our case the payment would be monthly rather than once per annum); (ii) it rids us of the need to explain the figure 28 in terms of either an impossibly short month, or a calculation aimed at producing, through $\frac{1}{2}$ obol per diem payments, the figure of 2 drachms 2 obols, which is open to criticism on the grounds of being overly elaborate and, again, requiring a busybody *tamias* collecting money on a daily basis. As in the previous scenario, the lower payments from Ἐρμῶ and Περρῶ can be accommodated by them providing labour ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ instead. The reason for irregular payments for Ἀπολλῶ, Ἀμφελι, and Ἡρακ remains a problem; Christian Thomsen has suggested to me a discounted fee for members of more slender means. Another attractive aspect of this hypothesis is that Hekatombaion is the first month of the Athenian year, and thus the regular 2 drachms 2 obols as the most frequent second numeral would represent in our text the projected first instalment; perhaps in the accounts for the following month, Metageitnion, the next instalment would be added to the previous one, thus slowly climbing across the year towards the projected 28 drachma total until the second numeral tallied with the first.

At any rate, if all 34 of our individuals had contributed what they owed per annum (on the assumption that this is what the first numeral indicates), then our putative association was in better financial health than the previous scenario based on the model of the *orgeones* of Bendis allows; for its annual income would then be over 1,000 drachms. This would not place it in the top tier of private associations, such as the *orgeones* of Amynus and Asclepius, which on one occasion spent 1,000 drachms on golden crowns to honour philanthropic members (*IG* II² 1252 + 999); but it would be rather better off than the poorest private associations. This scenario is still compatible with our foreign-looking (and possibly servile) names: 2 drachms 2 obols per month would be a serious financial commitment for lower-class individuals, but the sum is not implausibly onerous.

Conclusion

Once we realise that the several servile-seeming names in this document do not need to be accounted for in terms of a group wholly composed of slaves, we need not be locked into an explanation based on *misthosis* or *apophora*, which as I have argued are hardly credible based on the very small size of the ‘daily payments.’ The size of the group, the amount and consistency of the payment in thirteen of the entries, and especially the mention of a shrine and discounts to those individuals working (?) there, all fit better with a scenario involving a private association. That is not to say that this line of interpretation is without its problems. However, if this article manages to rekindle interest in and debate over this enigmatic and unique document, I will count that as success enough. If the hypothesis that this text was produced by a private association is indeed correct, then it provides us with a unique insight into the accounting practices of such groups, and perhaps a rare example of a mixed-status association at quite an early point in the history of private associations in the Greek world.

