

BJ 212 [2012] 414 suggests reading *ob*, and then *eius m(erita)*, but the alleged *b* in *ob* seems to me to be based on damage on the surface of the stone, and one would in any case expect the order *ob merita eius*; furthermore, *o(ptime) m(erito)* – note also the wide spaces before and after *eius* – is a suitable expression in this context). No. 109: the editors correct the reading of Perrot, Μητροφάνη, to Μητροφάνη<ν>, and say that Perrot might have missed a small *nu* at the end; but isn't Μητροφάνη in fact the correct form (and because of that used, e.g., in *IG V 1*, 563) and as such in no real need of emendation? No. 171: *Troian-* for *Traian-* is in fact not uncommon (cf. C. C. Petolescu, *Mélanges à la mémoire de M. Le Glay* [1994] 723ff.), and should perhaps not simply be dismissed as a mistake. No. 176 and 178: perhaps rather *stip(endiorum)*. No. 207: the editors read in line 4 *do[mo ---]*, but the photo seems to indicate that nothing was inscribed after *DO*. This inscription does seem earlyish, but I wonder if it can or should be assigned to the time of Augustus; certainly it would in that case be one of the earliest instances of the use of the abbreviation *D(is) M(anibus)*.

This volume may have been finished rather in a hurry, as there seem to be some imperfections in the use of accents in Greek texts; note, e.g., no. 42, ἀντιστρατηγόν (instead of ἀντιστράτηγον); 50, συνπάντος (instead of σύνπαντος); 72 and 73, ἀνέψιον (instead of ἀνεψιόν); 79, ἀρχιερείαν (instead of ἀρχιέρειαν); 261, Μάρκος (instead of Μᾶρκος); 278, θρέπτω (instead of θρεπτῶ).

However, these are minor matters, and a mistake or two in accents can in any case be found in any edition of Greek inscriptions. What is important is that we have at last a very solid edition of the inscriptions of Ancyra, an important city with an impressive epigraphical heritage. One can only hope that volume II, with the texts from late Antiquity, will materialise soon.

Olli Salomies

NIKOS LITINAS: *Greek Ostraca from Abu Mina (O.Abu Mina)*. Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete, Beiheft 25. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin – New York 2008. ISBN 978-3-11-020118-5. XI, 335 pp., 25 pls., 107 figs. USD 95.

Nikos Litinas has done a respectable job by meticulously editing over a thousand ostraca found in Abu Mina, a pilgrim centre populated in the 7th century by Melkite Christians, some 40 kilometres southwest of Alexandria. The ostraca, dated to the beginning of the 7th century, mostly deal with wine production; they deal with grape harvests and wine deliveries. Litinas gives decent introductions to the history of the site and the excavations and discusses the conclusions that may be drawn from the archive regarding the community in Abu Mina.

Small potsherds scribbled on only for ephemeral use and then discarded are notoriously difficult material for any wider historical conclusions. Their strength as a historical source usually comes from their numbers. This is also the case with the Abu Mina ostraca. While previously only about one hundred pieces were known (the first ten were published in 1908 and 107 more in 1971), the present collection comes from the so-called Ostraca House excavated between 1986 and 1995 by Peter Grossmann. The initial edition was prepared by Patrick Robinson and Georgina Fantoni, but in 1997 the publication work was transferred to Litinas (who worked only with photographs, the originals being kept in the Coptic Museum in Cairo). There are altogether 1446 ostraca: 1088 of them are published here with the whole text, the remain-

ing 358 being only described. The high number of texts allows the editor to draw conclusions regarding the contents of individual fragments, while being of use also for the editorial work (for instance, by offering solutions for sometimes cryptic abbreviations, as different writers did not always abbreviate the same words in the same way). A key element in the texts is the *phora* (φορά), usually appearing in the expression *onikai phorai* (ὄνικαὶ φοραί). The term *phora* has many different uses, but Litinas argues that in the Abu Mina texts it means 'load'. And since some texts show fractions of *phora*, but never more than four, a 'donkey's load' probably consists of four containers (of grapes). One load totals ca. 90 kg, and the less frequently appearing 'camel's load' was twice as heavy. Another unit of transport was something that was abbreviated as κ^θ, which Litinas interprets as *kollathon*, a jar of about 25 *sextarii* (13.5 liters).

Litinas has classified different hands and scribal habits grouping them from A to Z (most groups have two or more subvariants, as it was frequently impossible to distinguish between various hands). Scribal habits may include specific abbreviation methods, as in the case of *onikai*: while some writers rendered it as an *omicron* with a small *nu* inside it, this practice was not known or followed by others. Some scribal hands seem more experienced, others appear less educated. A number of the more rudimentary hands might have belonged to the farmers themselves. The photographs in this edition show only a selection of the ostraca, but they do present all hand groups.

The receipts give us an idea about the size of the grape harvests, though only a limited one, since the archive has not been preserved in its entirety. Nor do they specify the owners of the vineyards. There are some 300 personal names, some of which are accompanied by professional and monastic titles (a monk seemed to be called *monazon*, not *monachos*). The nomenclature is mainly Christian (saints' names and also Old Testament names), Egyptian or pagan names being in a clear minority. Litinas lists all the names and titles as well as the texts in which they appear and the hands who wrote them. He also presents separate tables of people attested in texts written by certain hands, together with the size of their loads. It appears that the biggest providers were also in high positions. For example, while a deacon with the abbreviated name Io() provided 120 loads, and Appa Menas 85 loads, many other people are attested with only one load. Some of the receipts have dates, though only giving the indiction year and the day. All come from the grape harvesting season extending from the end of the month Mesore to the beginning of Thoth. There is no certainty about the indiction cycle they come from, but the date suggested by handwriting and other contextual information approximately coincides with the beginning of the 7th century.

In all, this beautifully produced edition of difficult texts succeeds in obtaining as much information from them as may be reasonably expected.

Marja Vierros

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This collection of epigraphical studies in memory of Géza Alföldy, the eminent ancient historian and epigraphist based in Heidelberg who died unexpectedly in 2011 while visiting the