

# A Greek Acclamation in Praise of an *illustris* from Seventh-Century Egypt (P.Berol.inv. 5603 Reconsidered)

*Lajos Berkes and Ágnes T. Mihálykó*

THE PAPYRUS reedited here was first transcribed and briefly commented on by F. Krebs in 1892.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, Paul Maas reprinted its last four verses (11–16) in his editions of Byzantine acclamations as “No. viii. Auf den Pagarchen von Arsinoe,” where he also proposed an interpretation for lines 8–10.<sup>2</sup> Since this important but also extremely difficult text has been virtually neglected for more than one hundred years, we offer here a new edition with commentary and notes based on the image available online<sup>3</sup> and on autopsy of the item. The text raises more problems than we have been able to solve: we are presenting our interpretation therefore as a stimulus for further discussion.

The text consists of four metrical cola (lines 1–2, 3–5, 6–7, 8–10) and a litany-like request (11–16). It was interpreted by Krebs as a prayer, the first ten lines understood as a “Danksagung an Gott” and the last six lines as a “Fürbitte für den Kaiser, das Reich, und den ελλουστριος των πολιτων” [sic]. However, the first ten lines contain no thanksgiving to God, who is referred to only in 9 in connection with his providence. The poem starts with a light-image (read φῶς ἐνδοξότατον) in connection with the Roman camps, which represent the Roman army. The

<sup>1</sup> F. Krebs, “Altchristliche Texte im Berliner Museum,” *GöttNachr* 4 (1892) 114–120, at 115–117 (no. II) = TM 64983.

<sup>2</sup> P. Maas, “Metrische Akklamationen der Byzantiner,” *BZ* 21 (1912) 28–51, at 37.

<sup>3</sup> At <http://berlpap.smb.museum/01618/> (accessed 30 August 2018).

second and third cola (3–5, 6–7) continue with a reference to the peaceful and just arrangement of the affairs of the *oikoumene*. Then, introduced by *λοιπόν*, the *illustris*, the central figure of the text, appears in connection with the city of Arsinoe (8–10). The text concludes with four litany-like requests for the emperor, the empire, and the *illustris*, each starting with *σῶσον*, *κ(ύρι)ε* (11–16). These last lines allowed Maas to identify the text as acclamations performed in honour of the pagarch of Arsinoe.<sup>4</sup> The first four cola and the final litany display a parallel construction: as the *illustris* is addressed only in the last, fourth colon, so is he also in the final, fourth request of the concluding section.

Such rhythmical and sometimes even metrical acclamations were chanted by the people and frequently by trained choruses at public appearances of the emperor and at various ceremonies of the emperor's court.<sup>5</sup> Although the emperor was their usual recipient, they were also recited in honor of various high-ranking officials, local dignitaries, and also in church contexts. Such staged expressions of approval, praise, or dissent were in vogue from the beginning of the principate, but from the later second century A.D. on they were recorded verbatim with increasing frequency. They are attested in papyri of the third and fourth century, when acclamations pronounced at the public meetings of the city council were included in the protocols. These became routine procedure and by the late fourth century were reduced

<sup>4</sup> Maas, *BZ* 21 (1912) 28 and 37.

<sup>5</sup> Acclamations have been discussed on several occasions, see the references collected in Th. Kruse, "The Magistrate and the Ocean: Acclamations and Ritualized Communication in Urban Assemblies in Roman Egypt," in E. Stavrianopoulou (ed.), *Ritual and Communication in the Graeco-Roman World* (Liège 2006) 297–315, esp. 297 n.1. A useful overview is given by C. Rouché, "Acclamations in the Later Roman Empire: New Evidence from Aphrodisias," *JRS* 74 (1984) 181–199, at 181–190. For late antiquity see most recently H.-U. Wiemer, "Akklamationen im spätrömischen Reich: Zur Typologie und Funktion eines Kommunikationsrituals," *AKG* 86 (2004) 55–73. For the later Byzantine period see the outdated but comprehensive study of E. J. Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1961) 98–122.

to a simple reference without citing the words used.<sup>6</sup> After the fourth century, P.Berol.inv. 5603 is the only extant attestation of this genre in the papyrological documentation. Moreover, it is also unique as the only acclamation preserved independently and not as part of the protocols, and in length and complexity it exceeds all earlier acclamations on papyrus.

The increased complexity of our text is in line with the developments of the genre in the Byzantine period, when acclamations moved away from simple phrases repeated in unison by the crowd to longer and more formalized pronouncements. These were intoned by κράκται, “cheerleaders,” and the crowd repeated them or responded to them. Shorter, responsorial acclamations alternated with longer, hymn-like pieces, which were usually sung to known melodic structures of ecclesiastical hymns and followed the metrical forms of Byzantine hymnography. The largest number of them are preserved in the *De ceremoniis*, a compilation describing the various festivals of the Byzantine court, written in the tenth century although the acclamations recorded in it are likely to be much earlier. One of them, cited by Maas, presents a particularly good parallel to our text. In the festival for the anniversary of the accession of the emperor, during the Torch Ceremony in the evening before, the people sing an *apelatikon*, a hymn-like acclamation, and then recite the following (*De cer.* 1.62, pp.279.20–280.2):<sup>7</sup>

καὶ λέγουσιν οἱ κράκται τὰ ἄκτα· κύριε, σῶσον τοὺς δεσπότας τῶν Ῥωμαίων. καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐκ γ'· κύριε, σῶσον. οἱ κράκται· κύριε, σῶσον τοὺς ἐκ σοῦ ἐστεμμένους. φθογγεῖ καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐκ γ'· κύριε, σῶσον. οἱ κράκται· κύριε, σῶσον τοὺς δεσπότας σὺν ταῖς ἀγούσαις καὶ τοῖς πορφυρογεννήτοις. φθογγεῖ καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐκ γ'·

The structure of this sequence, a short poem in praise of the emperor and a sequence of requests to God to preserve him,

<sup>6</sup> For the papyrological evidence of acclamations see Kruse, in *Ritual and Communication* 298, esp. nn.5 and 7.

<sup>7</sup> We cite the text of Leich and Reiske's standard edition (*Constantini Porphyrogeniti imperatoris De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae libri duo* [Bonn 1829]), reprinted with translation in A. Moffatt and M. Tall, *Constantine Porphyrogenetos: The Book of Ceremonies* (Leiden 2017).

resembles our text closely. We may imagine a similar mode of performance: “cheerleaders” could lead the singing of the first half of the text and could intone the litany, to which the people could respond with κύριε σῶσον. The copy on the papyrus might have been made for one of the cheerleaders.

Such a composition could be performed at several different events. The emperor was received with acclamations on the occasion of virtually every public appearance, e.g. crowning, anniversary of crowning, birthday, as well as the civic festival of the founding of the city, celebrations of military victory, or chariot races, and local dignitaries could be hailed at a similarly wide range of events. In the Egyptian *chora* in the sixth century Dioscorus of Aphrodito marked with occasional poems various feasts of local notables, such as their accession, their arrival (*adventus*) in the provincial capital, their birthday, or their wedding.<sup>8</sup> Of these, the accession of the addressee, his *adventus* in Arsinoe, or perhaps his return after a military campaign could be considered for this text.

The addressee of the poem is styled with the title *illustris*, which in the papyrological documentation of the seventh century refers almost exclusively to pagarchs, so he was likely the pagarch of the Arsinoite nome, as was already proposed by Maas on the suggestion of Schubart.<sup>9</sup> It is impossible to identify him with certainty, but Flavius Theodosius is a good example of the type of person who the addressee might have been. He was a local magnate in the Arsinoite who was in charge of civil and military matters in the province of Arcadia and who fell in the battle of Heliopolis fighting against the Arabs. He is not attested as a pagarch but might well have been one in the 630s.<sup>10</sup> Since lines 1–2 refer to the Roman camp and 13 to the “invincible empire,” one is tempted to connect the poem with the wars which affected

<sup>8</sup> *P.Aphrod.Lit.* 4.17–24, 32–37; cf. J.-L. Fournet, *Hellénisme dans l'Égypte du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle. La bibliothèque et l'oeuvre de Dioscore d'Aphrodité* (Cairo 1999) I 264–272.

<sup>9</sup> Maas, *BZ* 21 (1912) 37, esp. apparatus.

<sup>10</sup> See N. Gonis, “Notes on the Aristocracy of the Byzantine Fayum,” *ZPE* 166 (2008) 203–210, at 206–207.

Egypt in the seventh century, the Persian occupation and the Islamic conquest. However, highlighting the military achievements of a local magnate might have been mere rhetoric as attested in the poems of Dioscorus of Aphrodito.<sup>11</sup>

The influence of the liturgy on the text is conspicuous, as it is on other Byzantine acclamations, which often make use of biblical references, hymnic structures, metrum, and language. One such composition, a victory song after a chariot race, is actually called a *troparion* (*De cer.* 1.69, p.326.5), the term for short hymns sung in combination with Psalms and Canticles. Also our text displays liturgically inspired language and uses the metrical system of the hymns. The first half of the poem, rather than being unmetrical as Maas suggested, seems to follow a metrical system called *Prosahymnus* by Ludiwg Koenen,<sup>12</sup> in which the number of accented syllables per colon is fixed (articles, prepositions, and lesser words do not count), but their position within the colon or the number of syllables between two accentuated syllables is variable. The cola are arranged in pairs or triads. This metrical system is known from a number of Christian hymns of the period, e.g. *P.David* 5, *PGM O3*, *P.Mon.Epiph.* 598, *O.Crum Add.* 39, *P.Mich.* XIX 799 (all from the seventh or early eighth century), which have two or three accents per colon. The same system may be identified also for a *triadikon* (a hymn in honour of the Trinity) sung at the chariot race in *De ceremoniis* (1.69, pp.314.17–315.3), which contains three accents per colon and four in the last pair; it is followed by a series of shorter, responsive acclamations (p.315.3–24).

Our acclamation has five accents in the first (lines 1–2) and second (3–5) cola, and four in the third (6–7) and fourth (8–10). The metrical character of the text is also suggested by the fact that the cola of the first part are divided by double obliques. By

<sup>11</sup> See the same problem in one of the poems of Dioscorus: Fournet, *Helénisme dans l'Égypte* II 510–511.

<sup>12</sup> L. Koenen, “Ein christlicher Prosahymnus des 4. Jhdts (O.Zucker 36),” in *Antidoron Martino David oblatum* (Leiden 1968) 31–52, at 33.

contrast, the four cola of the litany-like second part of the poem follow the general rules of isotony and isosyllaby of Byzantine hymnography: each colon has fourteen syllables with four stresses, which invariably fall on the first, third, eighth, and penultimate syllables.<sup>13</sup> Isotony and isosyllaby can be observed in many acclamations in the *De ceremoniis* as well, but usually in the longer and not in the short responsorial ones.<sup>14</sup>

The papyrus (*fig. 1*) is of middle-brown color written in a black ink parallel to the fibers. Apart from a hole at the height of line 12 and some minor damage, the papyrus is complete. A *kollesis* runs after the end of βλεπι in the first line. The back is blank. As for the provenance, the database of the Berlin papyrus collection notes: “Ankauf im Faijûm 1877–1881”;<sup>15</sup> this indication is corroborated by the reference to Arsinoe in the text. The rather informal, documentary hand points to a date in the first part of the seventh century, compare e.g. *P.Oxy.* LVIII 3950 (Oxyrhynchus, 610) or *Stud.Pal.* XX 218 (Hermopolis, 624).<sup>16</sup> The mention of the emperor excludes the period of the Persian occupation and shows that the text predates the Arab conquest in 641. These considerations altogether point to a date in the early seventh century, either before 619 or from 629 to 641.

The format and layout of P.Berol.inv. 5603 evoke the copies of hymns and prayers, as it displays similar sense-unit division marks. The poem starts and ends with a cross, and the two parts are divided by a horizontal stroke and a larger space. The cola are separated by double oblique strokes in the first part, and the new cola are written in a new line. In the second part each colon is started in a new line, double oblique strokes close line 11, and a cross divides the third colon from the fourth (line 14). The

<sup>13</sup> On the accent of πολύτων see Maas, *BZ* 21 (1912) 37: “drei- und mehrsilbige α-Stämme haben bei den Byzantinern oft paroxytonischen Genitiv des Plural.”

<sup>14</sup> On the meter of acclamations see M. D. Lauxtermann, *The Spring of Rhythm* (Vienna 1999) 61–65.

<sup>15</sup> At <http://berlpap.smb.museum/01618/>.

<sup>16</sup> Images of both papyri are available through HGV at <https://aquila.zaw.uni-heidelberg.de/start>; accessed 30 August 2018.

second colon (12) does not include a division mark, probably because the space was not sufficient. Oblique strokes as division marks for cola are in particular typical features of hymns, even though they occur occasionally in documents as well.

The scribe of the papyrus had a limited knowledge of Greek. The copy is affected by misspellings to the point that they obscure the understanding of the text (for details see the commentary). The misspellings are phonetic and include iotacistic mistakes (e.g. βλεπι for βλέπει in 1, διοικουνται for διοικούνται in 4, χριματιζι for χρηματίζει in 7, ληπον for λοιπόν in 8), exchanges in the classical vowel length (Ρομεα for Ῥωμαίων/Ῥωμαῖα in 2, αετητον for ἀήττητον in 13), dropped and inserted nasals (το στρατονπεδον for τὸ στρατόπεδον in 1–2, αδικια[[v]] for ἀδικία in 7), and perhaps other dropped letters (vδοξατο for ἐνδοξότατον? in 1). ἰλλούστριος is consistently spelled as ἐλλούστριος (8 and 13). The number of phonetic mistakes suggests that the text was written down after hearing rather than copied—perhaps by someone more familiar with Coptic than with Greek. The papyrus could have been the aide-mémoire of one of the cheerleaders.

The style and language of the text, with its biblical and liturgical tenor, is comparable to other Byzantine acclamations, although the syntax is not as smooth as in the more elegant compositions recited in the emperor's court according to the *De ceremoniis* (note the sudden changes from what seems like third person singular in 1–2 to third person plural in 3–5 and third person singular in 7, and back to second person in 8–10). Even though the meter is different, the general context could link our acclamation with the occasional poetry of the previous century, represented by the Homeric language of Dioscorus of Aphrodito. The famous notary-poet also authored a *chairetismos* on the emperor (*P.Aphrod.Lit.* 40), which he stuffed with long and innovative compound words. His composition, although similar to the acclamations, was quite probably a literary exercise and not intended for performance by a chorus, as our text seems to have been. The constraints of performance and the trends of the genre prompted our author to resort to a simpler language than

that employed by Dioscorus (and his composition's lack of syntactic unity raises the question whether he would have been capable of reaching the linguistic and literary quality of Dioscorus' poetry).

In sum, this short text attests to an acclamation performed by the citizens of Arsinoe in honor of their pagarch, perhaps to celebrate his accession to office, his arrival, or his return from a campaign. It is remarkable as an immediate, Egyptian testimony for the performance of staged acclamations of the more elaborate kind which flourished in the Constantinopolitan court in the period. It could thus be interpreted as a provincial imitation of this fashion: a formal civic affirmation of belonging to the empire right before the Persian or Arab conquest.

P.Berol.inv. 5603

21 x 16 cm

Arsinoite

first half of 7<sup>th</sup> cent. (before 619  
or 629–641)

*diplomatic transcription*

*interpretative text*

1 †φωνδοξατοβλεπιτοτρα  
2 τονπεδονταρομεα//†//  
3 ταπραγματαενηρην  
4 δοιοικουνταιτελειωστης  
5 οικουμενης//  
6 ουκευδηχησισεματων  
7 αδικια[[ν]]ουχηριματιζι//  
8 ληπονελλουστριεχαρινεχεις  
9 καιαρκενοειεγυριθεουπρονη  
10 α

1 † φῶς νδοξατο βλέπι τὸ στρα-  
2 τόνπεδον τὰ Ῥομεα. //†//  
3 τὰ πράγματα ἐν ἡρην  
4 δοιοικῶνται τελείως τῆς  
5 οἰκουμένης. //  
6 οὐκ εὐδήχησις εματαῶν  
7 ἀδικία[[ν]] οὐ χριματίζι. //  
8 ληπόν, ἐλλούστριε, χάριν ἔχεις  
9 καὶ Ἀρσενοεὶ {ε}γύρις(?) Θεοῦ προνή-  
10 α.

11 ωωνκετονφιλοχρῆβασιλεα//

11 σῶσον, κ(ύρι)ε, τὸν φιλόχρ(ιστο)ν  
βασιλέα, //

12 ... [ . . ] . . [ . . ] . φ . . [ . . ]  
χρῆν ευεργετην

12 σῶσ[ον], κ(ύρι)ε, [τὸ]ν φιλ[ό]-  
χρ(ιστο)ν εὐεργέτην,

13 ωωνκετηνηαετητον

13 σῶσον, κ(ύρι)ε, τὴν ἀέτητον

14 βασιλειαν †

14 βασιλείαν, †

15 ωωνκετονελλουστριον

15 σῶσον, κ(ύρι)ε, τὸν ἐλλούστριον

16 τωνπολειτων †

16 τῶν πολείτων. †



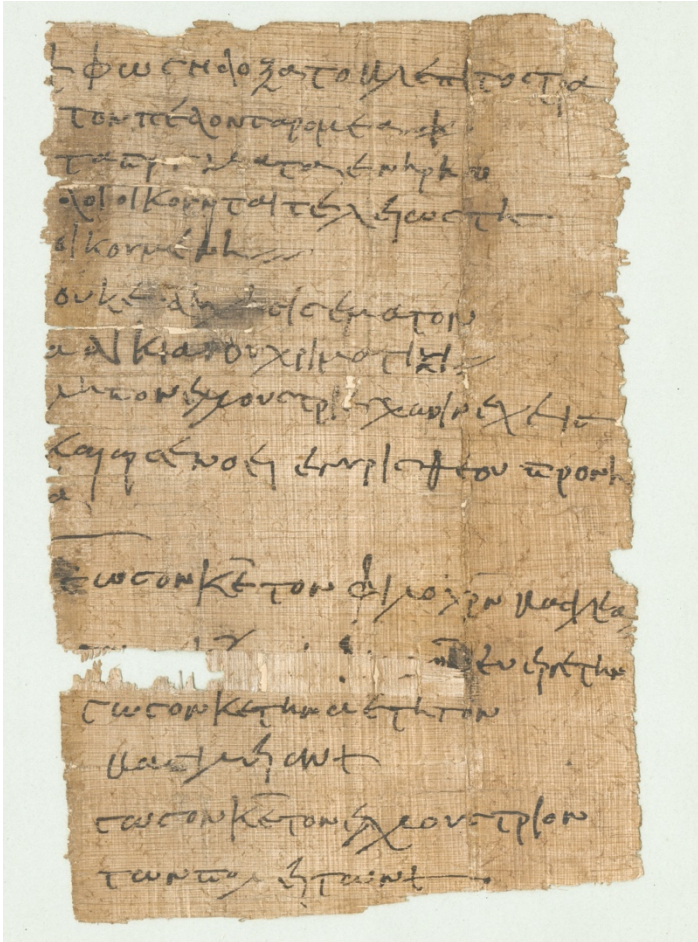


Figure 1: P.Berol.inv. 5603

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1–2 The ed.pr. interpreted these lines as φῶς η (?) δόξα βλέπει τὸ στρατόπεδον τὸ Ῥωμαίων. Krebs did not understand the putative η and explained the το after δοξα as a scribal error. However, what he read as an η seems to be rather a clumsy ν with an unusually long descender on the right. This gives the

sequence  $\nu\delta\omicron\zeta\alpha\tau\omicron$ , which recalls the common epithet  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\delta\omicron\zeta\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ .<sup>17</sup> This would result in  $\phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\delta\omicron\zeta\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ , “a most glorious light watches the Roman camp(s).”<sup>18</sup> There are parallels for such light-imagery in acclamations, e.g., *De cer.* 1.6, p.52.14–16,  $\tau\acute{\omicron}\ \beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\nu\ \kappa\rho\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\lambda\eta\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\alpha}\delta\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \nu\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\rho\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \mu\epsilon\gamma\alpha\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\nu\epsilon\iota$ ,  $\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \lambda\alpha\mu\pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \eta\lambda\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ,  $\pi\rho\omicron\epsilon\rho\chi\acute{\omicron}\mu\epsilon\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma\ \sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\rho\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \delta\acute{\omicron}\zeta\alpha\nu$ ,  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \chi\alpha\upsilon\chi\eta\mu\alpha$ ,  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\rho\sigma\iota\nu\ \Upsilon\omega\mu\alpha\iota\acute{\omicron}\nu$ , and 1.83, p.384.5,  $\phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\iota\lambda\epsilon\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\acute{\omega}\ \kappa\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\ \eta\lambda\iota\omicron\upsilon\ \delta\acute{\iota}\kappa\eta\nu\ \eta\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\epsilon\tau\acute{\eta}\ \sigma\alpha\varsigma$ . The motive of gazing at something respected also reappears in *De cer.* 1.71, p.349.18–19,  $\acute{\iota}\delta\omicron\upsilon\ \gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ ,  $\eta\ \pi\acute{\omicron}\lambda\iota\varsigma\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon\ \phi\iota\lambda\acute{\omicron}\pi\omicron\lambda\iota\nu\ \beta\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\iota\ \sigma\epsilon\ \beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\alpha$ ,  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\alpha\iota\varsigma\ \sigma\alpha\iota\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\gamma\kappa\alpha\iota\nu\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\ \kappa\alpha\tau'\ \acute{\epsilon}\chi\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\nu\delta\rho\alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota\varsigma$ , and introduces similarly an acclamation in *De cer.* 1.62, p.279.14–16,  $\chi\alpha\iota\rho\epsilon\iota\ \acute{\omicron}\ \kappa\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\omicron}\rho\acute{\omega}\nu\ \sigma\epsilon\ \acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\omicron\kappa\rho\acute{\alpha}\tau\omicron\rho\alpha\ \delta\epsilon\sigma\pi\acute{\omicron}\tau\eta\nu\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \eta\ \pi\acute{\omicron}\lambda\iota\varsigma\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon\ \tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\pi\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ ,  $\theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\sigma\tau\epsilon\pi\tau\epsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\ \delta\epsilon\iota\nu\alpha\ \acute{\omega}\rho\alpha\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota\ \eta\ \tau\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma\ \sigma\epsilon\ \beta\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\ \tau\alpha\zeta\iota\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta\nu$ . In these cases it is the celebrating crowd and the military ranks which look at the emperor. In our case the “most glorious light” could be understood literally, as some kind of natural or artificial light which perhaps shone on the *illustris* at his *adventus*, such as the light of daybreak or the light of torches. Nevertheless, a poetic reference to the celebrated *illustris* is perhaps also possible, especially since the epithet  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\delta\omicron\zeta\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$  is often associated with *illustres*, e.g. *BGU* I 323.3 (Arsinoe, A.D. 651),  $\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\delta\omicron\zeta\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\iota}\lambda\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\tau\rho\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon$ . Thus he could be portrayed as surveying the army.

Although we believe that the interpretation proposed above is likely, we would like to mention two alternatives. Jean-Luc Fournet has proposed an understanding that could reverse the roles: if we understand  $\phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma$  as the object, we can also interpret the line as “it is a most glorious light that the Roman camps behold.” This would mirror the situation in the acclamations of the *De ceremoniis* with the armies looking at the *illustris* as their

<sup>17</sup> It must be mentioned that even if we follow Krebs’ original reading,  $\eta\delta\omicron\zeta\alpha\tau\omicron$  could be still traced to a form of  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\delta\omicron\zeta\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$ .

<sup>18</sup> For the dropping of a final, silent  $\nu$ , which is a frequent phenomenon in the papyri, see F. T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Milan 1976) I 111–112.

leader. Fournet also suggested as an alternative to correct βλέπι as an imperative βλέπε and understand the line as “ο most-glorious light, look at the Roman camps.” The vocative opening, a poetic reference to the celebrated person, would suit the encomiastic style of the composition, and vocatives are frequent in the acclamations in general; however, the interchange between final ι and ε is relatively rare<sup>19</sup> and the second person singular does not occur otherwise in the first four cola.

Another solution would be to assume that the poetic word φώς “man” is meant. The following word would need to be understood as ἐνδοξότατος,<sup>20</sup> and φῶς ἐνδοξότατος could be a more immediate reference to the addressee than the metaphor φῶς ἐνδοξότατον. Although the poetic φῶς might seem unexpected in an acclamation, it is attested in a similar context, in a report of an election to municipal offices, *P.Ryl.* II 77.33–34 (Hermopolis, A.D. 192), τῶν π[αρ]εστῶτων ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως ἐπιφωνη[σ]άντων· στεφῆσθω Ἀχιλλεὺς κοσμητεῖαν· μιμοῦ τὸν πα[τ]έρρα τὸν φιλότιμον τὸν [γ]έροντα φῶτα. If we accept this interpretation, the meaning of these two lines could be reconstructed as follows: “a most glorious man looks at the Roman camp(s),” or possibly with the imperative (see above), “ο most glorious man, look at the Roman camp(s).”

Since the pagarch had no military authority, it seems strange to find an *illustris* connected to the army. This oddity could be explained by assuming that we are dealing here with a person who held the title *illustris*, but was not (or no longer?) a pagarch. One could also imagine that the turbulent times of the early seventh century required special arrangements in the administration so that a pagarch—or at least a high-ranking local magnate—would have been in charge of military troops as well, such as Flavius Theodosius mentioned above.

The interpretation of τὸ στρατόνπεδον τὰ Ῥομεα is also am-

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Gignac, *Grammar* I 250.

<sup>20</sup> The final σ, also silent by this period, is dropped with similar frequency as the final ν, see Gignac, *Grammar* I 120, 124–126.

biguous; it is not clear whether the singular or the plural is meant, τὸ στρατόπεδον Ῥωμαίων or τὰ στρατόπεδα Ῥωμαία.<sup>21</sup> The military virtues of the addressees are emphasized in both Dioscorus' poems (e.g. *P.Aphrod.Lit.* 18.26, 19.8) and in the acclamations, cf. *De cer.* 1.73, p.367.19–21, τὸ ἔαρ ... πάλιν ἐπανατέλλει ... ἀνδραγαθίαν ἐκ Θεοῦ τῷ βασιλεῖ Ῥωμαίων καὶ νίκην θεοδώρητον κατὰ τῶν πολεμίων. This can be no more than a *topos*; nevertheless, the unusual reference to the camps might imply an actual, imminent or recent, military action.

3–5: Read τὰ πράγματα ἐν εἰρήνῃ διοικούνται τελείως τῆς οἰκουμένης. Although unclassical, it is not surprising in this period to find a neuter plural subject with a verb in the third-person plural. For the phrase cf. Thphn. *Chron.* I 183.22 de Boor, ἐκ Θεοῦ διοικεῖσθαι τὰ πράγματα, and *De cer.* 1.6, p.52.12–14, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ... εἰρήνην χαρίζεται πάσῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ. Peaceful governance is a commonplace in both Dioscorus' poems (*P.Aphrod.Lit.* 18.53–55) and the acclamations (e.g. *De cer.* 1.63, p.282.1–2), but it is noteworthy that here the praise of the pagarch is linked with the peace of the whole world. Could this emphasis on peace, not only in the city, but in the empire, possibly be linked to the defeat of the Sasanid empire and the reconquest of Egypt in 629? This allusion to general peace could perhaps also provide a weak link between the Roman army in the first colon, the peaceful governance of the *oikoumene* in the second, and the ending of bloodshed, which seems to be the meaning of the third colon (6–7).

6–7: Krebs read ουκεδηχησις, but there is a small bowl-shaped υ after the ε on the papyrus. The interpretation of these two lines is difficult. Krebs tried to make sense of them in the following way: “Bei ουκεδηχησις sind mehrere Erklärungen denkbar: Es ist entweder = οὐ κατηγήσεις (ἐμαυτὸν ἀδικίαν) ... (Das οὐ χρηματίζει müßte dann für sich und in prägnantem Sinne stehen.) Oder es ist gemeint οὐκ ἀδικήσεις (ἐμαυτόν) ... Am nächsten läge οὐκ ἀτυχήσεις, was aber hier keinen Sinn ergibt.” Since these explanations do not align well with the con-

<sup>21</sup> Did perhaps the *plurale tantum* of the Latin *castra* influence this confusion?

tent of the poem, we propose tentatively instead to understand ευδηχησις εματον as εὐδόκησις αἱμάτων, “pleasure in bloodshed/murder.” The noun would be governed by χρηματίζει in the following line. αἶμα in the plural denotes murder/bloodshed in the Septuagint, e.g. ἀθῶός εἰμι ἐγὼ καὶ ἡ βασιλεία μου ἀπὸ κυρίου ἕως αἰῶνος ἀπὸ τῶν αἱμάτων Αβεννηρ (2 Kings 3:28), ὃ πόλις αἱμάτων ὅλη ψευδῆς ἀδικίας πλήρης (Nah 3:1), ὃ πόλις αἱμάτων (Ez 24:6), or ἄνδρες αἱμάτων and forms in Pss 5:7, 25:9, 54:24, 58:3, 138:19.

The sequence αδικια[[v]]ουχρηματιζι can be better understood in light of parallels with acclamations in Thphn. *Chron.* I 183.6 de Boor: ἡ δίκη οὐ χρηματίζει, “justice disappears,”<sup>22</sup> and 183.28–29, σώζου δίκη, οὐκέτι χρηματίζεις, “Farewell, justice, you exist no more.” The verb χρηματίζω has in these phrases the late sense “to be, to have been in existence.”<sup>23</sup> We understand the phrase as ἀδικία οὐ χρηματίζει, “injustice does not exist” or “there is no injustice.” The traces of washed out ink around the ν of αδικιαν and the fact that the following ο is written over its right part show that the scribe erased the letter, correcting another of his phonetical errors. Justice is another virtue of officials and of the emperor commonly praised by Dioscorus (e.g. *P.Aphrod.Lit.* 19.3–5) and in the acclamations (e.g. *De cer.* 1.79, p.376.10–13). Thus, we understand this colon as “no pleasure in bloodshed, no injustice exists.”

8 χάριν ἔχεις: only faint traces of the descender of the ρ are preserved. Although the αρ-ligature is less well executed than in the following line, the same basic shape can still be recognized. We follow Krebs’ translation (which includes Θεοῦ προνοία from the next line): “du stehst in Gunst bei Gott.”

9–10: The sequence αρκενοειεγυρις is difficult. Krebs commented on these lines as follows: “‘du stehst in Gunst bei Gott, und darum steht auch Arsinoe unter Gottes besonderer Für-

<sup>22</sup> Translations are taken from C. Mango and R. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Oxford 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. E. A. Sophocles, *A Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (New York 1957) 1169 s.v. 3.

sorge.’ αρ ist zu ἀρίστη zu ergänzen: Das unmittelbar folgende gleichlautende θε(ου) hat den Schreiber irre geführt.” In this interpretation, both the number of assumed scribal errors and the sense are difficult, especially in the second part of the sentence. Schubart’s solution, reported by Maas in his apparatus, Ἀρσινόης κυρεῖς, is more reasonable, as it involves only itacistic mistakes, the dropping of a (silent) final σ,<sup>24</sup> a superfluous ε, and a γ/κ exchange.<sup>25</sup> The meaning expected for κυρέω here is “obtain,” which seems the preferred meaning of the period, and it could refer to the accession to the pagarchy by the *illustris* praised in the text.

Another possibility, which necessitates fewer phonetic exchanges, could be to interpret εγυριε as ἐγείρεις. This verb could refer to building activities of the addressee in Arsinoite Polis, such as are sometimes alluded to in acclamations.<sup>26</sup> For the phrase cf. Paul. Sil. *Ekphrasis* 8 (ed. Friedländer), where Justinian is styled νεὼς ἐγείρων. In this case it is not straightforward what case αρκενοει represents. We would reconstruct an accusative instead of a dative as we would have expected a preceding ἐν if the word denoted the place where the building activities took place. This could give the meaning Ἀρσινόην ἐγείρεις Θεοῦ προνοίᾳ, “you let Arsinoe rise with the help of God’s providence.”

Although both interpretations are possible, Schubart’s suggestion strikes us as more likely. References to accession to office are frequent in acclamations, and the agency of God both in blessing the addressees and in having helped them to their office is pervasive. In *De cer.* 1.80, p.377.21 God’s help is expressed similarly with προνοίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν, as in our papyrus.

11 φιλόχρ(ιστο)ν: this relatively rare adjective is commonly referred to emperors.<sup>27</sup>

12 εὐεργέτην: this adjective was often part of the imperial

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Gignac, *Grammar* I 124–126.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Gignac, *Grammar* I 77–80.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Kruse, in *Ritual and Communication* 309, esp. n.49.

<sup>27</sup> L. Berkes, “Die christusliebende Thebais,” *Tyche* 29 (2014) 23–27, at 24.

titulature,<sup>28</sup> and it occurs in acclamations as well, e.g. *De cer.* 1.3, p.42.21.

13 ἀέτητον: read ἀήττητον. This title does not occur in Egyptian dating formulas after the fourth century, but it is attested in *P.Cair.Masp.* I 67019.29 (Antinoopolis, A.D. 548/9) referring to the κράτος of the emperor. Cf. also *De cer.* 1.83, p. 383.4–5, ἀηττήτω Θεοῦ παλάμη ἐστέφθης, δέσποτα, οὐρανόθεν.

16 πολείτων: On the accent see n.13 above.

On the basis of our commentary we present here a hypothetical reconstruction with translation (without dots and brackets):

- 1 † φῶς ἐνδοξότατον βλέπει τὸ στρα-
- 2 τόπεδον τὸ Ῥωμαῖον (?). //†//
- 3 τὰ πράγματα ἐν εἰρήνῃ
- 4 διοικοῦνται τελείως τῆς
- 5 οἰκουμένης. //
- 6 οὐκ εὐδόκησις αἱμάτων (?),
- 7 ἀδικία οὐ χρηματίζει. //
- 8 λοιπόν, ἰλλούστριε, χάριν ἔχεις
- 9 καὶ Ἀρσινόης/ν κυρεῖς/ἐγείρεις Θεοῦ προνοί-
- 10 α.

- 11 σῶσον, κύριε, τὸν φιλόχριστον βασιλέα, //
- 12 σῶσον, κύριε, τὸν φιλόχριστον εὐεργέτην,
- 13 σῶσον, κύριε, τὴν ἀήττητον
- 14 βασιλείαν. †
- 15 σῶσον, κύριε, τὸν ἰλλούστριον
- 16 τῶν πολιτῶν. †

† A most glorious light looks at the Roman camp(s). (?) //†//  
 The affairs of the *oikumene* are being governed perfectly in peace. //  
 No pleasure in bloodshed (?), no injustice exists. //  
 Therefore, *illustris*, you are favoured  
 and obtain/raise Arsinoe (?) with the help of God's  
 providence.

<sup>28</sup> For the titulature of Heraclius see e.g. R. S. Bagnall and K. A. Worp, *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt*<sup>2</sup> (Leiden 2004) 53–54.

Save, Lord, the Christ-loving emperor! //  
Save, Lord, the Christ-loving benefactor!  
Save, Lord, the invincible empire! †  
Save, Lord, the *illustris* of the citizens! †<sup>29</sup>

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Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin  
Theologische Fakultät,  
Seminar: Neues Testament  
Burgstraße 26, 10178 Berlin  
berkesla@hu-berlin.de

Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem  
Eötvös József Collegium  
Ménési út 11–13, 1118 Budapest  
agi.mihalyko@gmail.com

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