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ζυτουργεῖον: A SCHOLARLY GHOST WORD

It is generally accepted that the word for a brewery in ancient Greek was ζυτουργεῖον (or ζυτουργία), following the model of such terms as ἔριοργεῖον ('wool factory'), καθηρουργεῖον ('bakery'), λινουργεῖον ('linen factory'), πλυνθουργεῖον ('brick factory'), or υαλουργεῖον ('glass factory'). However, ζυτουργεῖον is found in no ancient text and is in fact a modern scholarly invention.

In 1902, Grenfell, Hunt, and Smyly wrote that the Ptolemaic government in Egypt possibly levied a beer tax “from the ζυτουργοί who worked at the βασιλικὸν ζυτουργεῖον.” This ‘royal brewery’ is found in no ancient text. By 1905, Smyly, this time with Mahaffy, had found an opportunity to restore ζυτουργεῖον/ζυτουργεῖον from ζ in one of the Flinders Petrie papyri (from the third century B.C.), and twice from ζυ in another contemporary papyrus where a place for beer production was needed. The ghost word was then accepted, for instance, by Preisigke, and from there in Liddell, Scott, and Jones, where it remains unchallenged (there is no retraction in the supplement).

The proper word for a brewery, as far as we know, was ζυτοπωλεῖον (almost always found as ζυτοπώλειον), literally ‘beer store’. Peremans and Van 't Dack have shown that in Ptolemaic Egypt the term ζυτοπωλεῖον could denote a brewery, citing two letters from Apollonius to Zenon of 254 B.C. In the first, Apollonius speaks of twelve artabs of barley to be used to make beer daily at a ζυτοπώλειον in Philæphia; in the second he mentions Amenæus the ‘beer-maker’ ζυτοπωλεῖον (there is also a ζυτοπώλειον in the same series both the ζυτοπωλεῖον and the έργαστήριον are mentioned, and both have also been restored in yet another papyrus of the series). There is further proof for this contention. In another Ptolemaic text (dated to 253 B.C.) in which barley is to be supplied for beer, it is sent to a ζυτοπώλειον; surely a simple beer store would have no need for cereal. Later instances could also be advanced; for instance, in A.D. 29, Papontos the former ‘beer-maker’ ζυτοπωλεῖον allegedly broke into a house in Dionysias from the ζυτοπώλειον next door, where he presumably had worked (and neglected to return the key?).

In two of the restored instances of ζυτουργεῖον, both in a papyrus dating to 228 B.C., the texts involve a μεγάλον ζυ. There is little doubt that this should be read as μεγάλου ζυτοπωλεῖον and not μεγάλου ζυτουργεῖον. In one of the famous papyri of the Zenon archive, dated to 253 B.C., Haüncbis, who is petitioning Zenon to help her get her daughter back from a so-called abductor, says that she distributes beer each day from τοῦ

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MEGALOU ZYTOPSALIOU. Moreover, this is again more than likely a large brewery and not a beer wholesaler as sometimes thought.12)

I do not wish to argue that every 'beer store' was a brewery, or conversely that every brewery had an on-site beer store, only that ZYTOPSALION/ZYTOPOKALION could denote either, and that, as far as we know, the word ZYTOPOURION/ZYTOPOURION, since it never existed, denoted neither.13)

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1) Some of the -OPEION terms denote a place where a substance is naturally found or produced, such as OMPHLOOPEION ('vineyard'), LIOUPEION ('quarry'), MELIOPHLEION ('beehive'), or METALLOPEION ('mine').


3) J. P. Mahaffy, J. G. Smly (eds.), The Flinders Petrie Papyri (= P.Petr. III) (Cunningham Memoirs 11; Dublin 1905), 221: 87, fr. a, r, l. 16, where even the ζ is not a certain reading; 312 and 313: 124, fr. a, col. i, l. 5 and fr. b, col. iii, l. 2 for ζ, restored at 374 (and see the note at 314). ZYTOPOURION is found in the first case at 221 while ZYTOPOURION is found for all three cases in the index at 374.


5) For ZYTOPOLAION, see P.Lond. III.1177, col. iii, l. 51; P.Mich. V.322b, col. i, l. 3; P.Ross.Georg. V.14, l. 8 (restored); and P.Stras. V.449, ll. 4-5. For ZYTOPOLAION (aside from the instances discussed further on), see BGU IV.1126, l. 10, X.1908, l. 10; P.Cair.Zen. II.5976, l. 206, 59109, l. 6, IV.59791, l. 6; P.Mich. II.123v, col. ii, l. 4, col. vi, l. 21, V.326, col. ii, l. 62, XI.620v, col. v, l. 109, XVIII.777, l. 6, 778, l. 9; P.Oxy. LXIV.4441, col. vi, l. 13; P.Prag. II.132r, l. 6; SB III.6094, l. 10; P.Zen.Poim. 63v, col. iii, l. 33 (= SB III.6803, col. iii, l. 2); as well as no. 3, l. 11 in W. Clarysse, The Financial Problems of the Beer-Seller Ammonus, Enchoria 16 (1988), 11-21, at 14. Also [ZYTOPOLAION is read in one inscription: SB V.8797, l. 7 = SEG XXXVI.1398, l. 7. The emendation ZYTOPOLAION from ZYTOPOLAION in P.Prag. II.176r, l. 11 is likely wrong; read instead ZYTOPOLAION. The word is also abbreviated as ZYTOPO at P.Gen. II.91r, col. ii, l. 26 (= SB VI.9224, l. 26), and see BGU IX.1898, col. xi, l. 227. It should be also noted that the term ZYTOPOLAION could be used synonymously with ZYTOPOLAION (see A. Loftus and G. Schwendorn, in: C. E. Römer, T. Gagos [eds.], P. Michigan Koonen (= P.Mich. XVIII] [Amsterdam 1996], 148).

6) For the ancient Greek terms for the beer-maker/beer-seller ('Zypitougos, ZYTOPOLAION/ZYTOPOLAJES, and ZYTOPOG'), see H. Harrauer (ed.), Corpus Papyrorum Ranuti XIII, griechische Texte IX (= CPR XIII) (Vienna 1987), 82-86 and H.-J. Dreuxhage, Bierproduzenten und Bierhändler in der papyrologischen Überlieferung, Münstersche Bieträge zur antiken Handelsgeschichte 16 (1997), 32-39. To their instances of the text added SEG XI.1612, l. 5 (Zytopos) and Euseb. Comm. in L. 1.73 (PC 24.2227B) (Zytopo-

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\[\zeta \omicron \omicron \omicron /\zeta \omicron \theta \omicron \omicron \zeta\] was not brewed, if we are to trust the recipe preserved in the works of Zosimus of Panopolis (from around A.D. 300), in which heated malted bread is fermented in water (M. Berthelot, C.-E. Ruelle [ed.], Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs [Paris 1888], vol. 2, 372; for this recipe having been added by a scribe to Zosimus’s work, see M. Mertens, Les alchimistes grecs, tome IV, Ire partie: Zosime de Panopolis, Mémoires authentiques [Paris 1995], lxx with n. 163). However, D. Samuel has recently argued from an analysis of the morphology of starch granules from surviving ancient Egyptian beer residue that there is no certain evidence for the use of this method (see especially Archaeology of Ancient Egyptian Beer, Journal of the American Society of Brewing Chemists 54 [1996], 3-12 as well as Brewing and Baking, in: P. Nicholson, I. Shaw [ed.], Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technologies [Cambridge 2000], 537-576, esp. 555). The use of the term \[\zeta \omicron \omicron \omicron /\zeta \omicron \theta \omicron \omicron \zeta\] itself is also somewhat complicated; it could be taken to mean ‘(a type of) Egyptian beer’ (first in Theophr. Caus. Pl. 6.11.2, who distinguishes it from simple barley beer or wheat beer), ‘beer generically’ (a usage perhaps coined by Posidonius fr. 22 and 170 Theiler, followed by Strabo 17.2.5, and misunderstood by Diodorus Siculus 5.26.2 [= Posid. fr. 169 Theiler]), or ‘barley beer generally’ (beginning with Diosc. Mat. med. 2.87).


8) P.Mich.Zem. 1.36, ll. 8 and 10 (May 7, 254 B.C.) and P.Col.Zem. III.34r, ll. 2, 7, 9, and v, l. 13 (May 21, 254 B.C.). For a discussion of this whole series, see C. Préaux, L’économie royale des Lagides (Brussels 1939), 153-154.

9) P.Tebt. III.701v, col. iii, l. 249.

10) P.Ryl. II.127.

11) P.Pet. III.124, fr. a, col. i, l. 5 and fr. b, col. iii, l. 2. Note that the ëk toû \[\zeta\] at P.Col.Zem. III.34v, l. 13 has been expanded by the editors as ëk toû \[\zeta\] (\tauοποι\’\alphav). Furthermore, instead of the third restored instance of \[\zeta\tauουργείον/\zeta\tauουργείν\] (at P.Pet. III.87, fr. a, r, l. 16) F. Heichelheim long ago pointed out that \[\zeta\tauοποι\’\alphav\] should be read (Monopole, RE 16.1 [1933], 147-199, at 170).


13) I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer of this journal for his/her comments and criticisms, as well as the patient and obliging librarians at Miskatonic University.