

ON ἀργύρια IN THE *ATHENAION POLITEIA* 60.3

The London papyrus of the *Athenaion Politeia* of Aristotle¹ makes this statement about the prizes awarded in the musical contests at the Panathenaic games: ἔστι γὰρ ἄθλα τοῖς μὲν τὴν μουσικὴν νικῶσιν ἀργύρια καὶ χρυσᾶ... (60.3). It has been generally assumed that the ἀργύρια and χρυσᾶ here are connected with the prizes offered in the musical contests in *IG* II² 2311.1–22. For instance the winner in the lyre-playing contest receives a gold crown worth 1000 drachmas as well as 500 drachmas of silver (lines 4–7). In consequence, the ἀργύρια in Aristotle should refer to the cash prize awarded to the winner in the lyre-playing contest. In other words, a sum of silver money would be referred to in Aristotle by the plural ἀργύρια.

The majority of editors have found this plural objectionable.² In his discussion of the passage Rhodes objects to the reading ἀργύρια³ and expresses his preference for the reading ἀργύριον καὶ χρυσᾶ advocated by Kaibel.⁴ Kaibel in his note discusses two occurrences in Attic of the plural ἀργύρια, the passage from Eupolis in Pollux 9.89–90 (= Kock v. 1, no. 155) and v. 600 in the *Birds* of Aristophanes. This is the passage from Pollux: ...οἱ Κόλακες Εὐπόλιδος, ἐν οἷς εἶπε

φοροῦσιν, ἀρπάζουσιν ἐκ τῆς οἰκίας
τὸ χρυσίον, τὰργύρια πορθεῖται.

Aristophanes writes (vv. 599–600):

τοὺς θησαυροὺς τ' αὐτοῖς δείξουσ' οὗς οἱ πρότεροι κατέθεντο
τῶν ἀργυρίων· οὗτοι γὰρ ἴσασιν·

Pollux explicitly states that the passage from Eupolis is an example of the use in Attic of the plural ἀργύρια in the sense of money. Kaibel with his usual self-confidence asserts that Pollux was wrong here and that both in Eupolis and in the *Birds* of Aristophanes ἀργύρια does not refer to sums of money but rather to ἀργυρώματα or silver plate. Kaibel's interpretation of ἀργύρια in these passages did not convince everybody. For instance, in Liddell–Scott–Jones the reading ἀργύρια in both passages is listed under the subsection *small coin, piece of money*. Sandys in his second edition of *A.P.* (1912) defends the reading of the papyrus by interpreting the ἀργύρια in Aristophanes, *Birds* 600, precisely in the sense *sums of money*, the sense rejected by Kaibel.

Even if we grant Kaibel his interpretation of ἀργύρια in these two passages, he ought to have attempted to deal with another well-known example of ἀργύρια, a prose example which most definitely refers to money and not to silver plate. In his *Oeconomicus* 19.16 Xenophon speaks about money and coins: Ἄρ' οὖν, ἔφη ὁ Ἰσχομάχος, καὶ περὶ ἀργυρίου ἐρωτῶν ἂν σε, πότερον καλὸν ἢ οὐ, δυναίμην ἂν σε πείσαι ὥς ἐπίστασαι διαδοκιμάζειν τὰ καλὰ καὶ τὰ κίβδηλα ἀργύρια; The obvious meaning of ἀργύρια here is *coins, pieces of silver*. This is a perfectly suitable meaning for the ἀργύρια in Aristotle. There is no reason why he could not have pictured in this passage the winner's prize in the form of discrete silver drachmas.

Moreover, I have come across several later occurrences of the plural ἀργύρια with reference to currency. Not mentioned by Kaibel, these passages give additional

¹ Whether or not Aristotle himself wrote this work is, of course, disputed. For a discussion see P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford, 1981), 58–63.

² For references see Rhodes, p. 675.

³ Ibid. p. 675.

⁴ G. Kaibel, *Stil und Text der Πολιτεία Ἀθηναίων des Aristoteles* (Berlin, 1893, reprint by Olms, 1973), 249.

support to the papyrus reading in *A.P.* Since Liddell–Scott–Jones lists only Pollux as an example of the post-classical use of ἀργύρια, they also constitute a small contribution to Greek lexicography.

The first two examples are found in the New Testament. In Matthew 25.27 we read: ἔδει σε οὖν βαλεῖν τὰ ἀργυρία μου τοῖς τραπεζίταις, καὶ ἔλθὼν ἐγὼ ἐκομισάμην ἂν τὸ ἐμὸν σὺν τόκῳ. Matthew 28.12 and 15 reads: ... συμβούλιόν τε λαβόντες ἀργύρια ἱκανὰ ἔδωκαν τοῖς στρατιώταις... οἱ δὲ λαβόντες ἀργύρια ἐποίησαν ὡς ἐδιδάχθησαν.

The next example is found in *P. Oxy.* no. 494, line 22, dated A.D. 156, where reference is made to income from sale and mortgage: ἐμπεσουμένοις ἦτοι ἐκ πράσεως καὶ ὑποθήκης ἀργυρίοις. Grenfell and Hunt, the editors, translate: 'the money accruing from the sale or mortgage'.

The fourth example occurs in the *Code* of Justinian 6.4.4–5 in a constitution of A.D. 531. It states, *inter alia*, that in certain situations the former owner of a slave does not have the *ius patronatus*: ... οὐκ ἔχει (sc. the ex-owner) δὲ πατρωνικὸν δίκαιον... ἐπὶ... τῷ... (sc. ex-slave) ἰδίῳ ἀργυρίῳ ἀγορασθέντι... Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἀργύρια ἀντὶ τῶν ὑπηρεσιῶν ἐπερωτήσει ὁ πάτρων τὸν ἀπελεύθερον... πάντων ἐκπίπτει τῶν πατρωνικῶν...

Another example appears to be present on a mutilated inscription from Apamea of the second century A.D. in which the meaning *money* for ἀργύρια is printed by L. and J. Robert.⁵

Taken together with the example in Xenophon these occurrences show that the employment of the plural ἀργύρια with reference to currency was an established usage extending over many centuries. Therefore, there seems to be no linguistic reason to impugn the reading ἀργύρια in *A.P.* 60.3. It does not make much difference for the text of *A.P.* whether the meaning of ἀργύρια in the new examples adduced by me is money in general or pieces of money. Both meanings are suitable for denoting a cash prize. It so happens that not one of the occurrences for ἀργύρια in the new examples is in a context which clearly requires one or the other of these two meanings.

At this point a lexicographical question should be answered. If no clear example of ἀργύρια in the sense *money in general* is attested, should we postulate this meaning for the plural at all? Perhaps all the attested examples should be subsumed under the meaning coin, piece of money, the meaning found in Xenophon, *Oec.* 19.16. This has been done in Liddell–Scott–Jones, where none of the attested plurals is placed in their subdivision of *money*.

It seems to me, however, that one of the well-known occurrences of ἀργύρια, an occurrence listed in *LSJ* and mentioned by Kaibel, reveals the use of this plural as an equivalent of ἀργύριον in the sense *money* as a mass noun. Plurals of mass nouns with apparently the same meaning as the corresponding singulars are, of course, well known in Greek.⁶

The occurrence which I have in mind is found in Pollux 9.89: ὡς δ' ἐπὶ τῶν κερμάτων οἱ ἀρχαῖοι Ἀττικοὶ ἦκιστα τῷ ἐνικῷ ἐχρῶντο οὕτως ἐπὶ τῷ ἀργυρίῳ τῷ πληθυντικῷ. τὰργύρια γὰρ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀργυρίου σπανίως ἂν τις εὕροι παρ' αὐτοῖς (examples follow). Here the context clearly shows that τῷ ἀργυρίῳ and τοῦ ἀργυρίου cannot refer to pieces of money; the meaning must be *money* as a collective. It is also reasonable to assume that when Pollux says that the word *money* has a plural, this plural is intended by him to have the same meaning as the singular, to wit *money*.

⁵ *Revue des Études Grecques* 89 (1976), 564.

⁶ E. Schwyzler and A. Debrunner, *Griechische Grammatik II* (Munich, 1966), 43.

This seems to be the natural interpretation. Pollux makes the same statement about ἀργύρια also in 3.86 and 7.103, passages not adduced in *LSJ* or by Kaibel.

If, then, Pollux in these passages understood ἀργύρια to mean *money*, then the entry in *LSJ* should be corrected accordingly.

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PERIPLUS MARIS ERYTHRAEI 60

The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* is a handbook written by an anonymous author in the second half of the first century A.D., for the use of merchants from Roman Egypt who traded with east Africa, Arabia, and India.¹ In it the author devotes a good deal of space to the trade with India's west coast. He notes that there were two main commercial centres: one was Barygaza on the northwestern coast (44.15.4–7), and the other the twin ports of Muziris and Nelkynda on the southwestern (53.17.27–8), the area he calls Limyrikê, more or less the equivalent of the Malabar coast. He spells out in detail what Barygaza imported and exported (49.16.20–31) and then does the same for Limyrikê (56.18.16–28).

On the other hand, when he reaches the eastern coast, particularly the southeastern, he treats it almost perfunctorily. He merely lists the names of the principal harbours (60.20.6), notes that shipping between them and Limyrikê was handled by local small craft (60.20.6–8), and in one sentence summarizes their trade (60.20.10–13):

προχωρεῖ δὲ εἰς τοὺς τόπους τούτους πάντα τὰ εἰς τὴν Λιμυρικὴν ἐργαζόμενα, καὶ σχεδὸν εἰς αὐτοὺς καταντᾷ τό τε χρῆμα τὸ ἀπ' Αἰγύπτου φερόμενον τῷ παντὶ χρόνῳ κα<ι> τὰ πλείστα γένη πάντων τῶν ἀπὸ Λιμυρικῆς φερομένων...

The most widely used translation, that of W. Schoff,² renders the passage as follows:

There are imported into these places everything made in Damirica [Limyrikê], and the greatest part of what is brought at any time from Egypt comes here, together with most kinds of all the things that are brought from Damirica.

Schoff mistranslates χρῆμα – here, as elsewhere in the *Periplus*, it means ‘money’³ – and gives a questionable rendition of τῷ παντὶ χρόνῳ. But over and above this, he creates an unreal distinction, between products ‘made in Limyrikê’⁴ and products ‘brought from Limyrikê’. The only product that Limyrikê ‘made’ was pepper (cf. 56.18.22–3), and that certainly was among the products ‘brought’ from there, indeed the chief one.

Another version of most of the passage is offered by G. Giangrande:⁵

All that is produced in Limyrike is exported to these places, and almost all the currency which flows out of Egypt annually falls to their share.

Giangrande has not only corrected the translation of χρῆμα but also improved that of τῷ παντὶ χρόνῳ, for although, as will be shown in a moment, ‘annually’ mistranslates τῷ παντὶ χρόνῳ, he properly takes χρόνος here to mean ‘year’, a sense

¹ H. Frisk, *Le Périphe de la Mer Érythrée*, Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift 33 (Göteborg, 1927), offers the sole reliable text; it replaces C. Müller's in *Geographi Graeci Minores* 1 (Paris, 1855), pp. 257–305. I cite by chapter followed by Frisk's page and line number(s).

² *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (New York, 1912).

³ Cf. Frisk, p. 97.

⁴ ‘Damirica’ is Schoff's misguided and unnecessary emendation.

⁵ *JHS* 96 (1976), 156. G. Huntingford's translation (*The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, Hakluyt Society, New Series No. 151 [London, 1980]) follows Giangrande.