

AN OWNER OF LITERARY PAPYRI

In an interesting article W. Clarysse has canvassed the possibilities for knowing the owners of the surviving literary papyri, particularly those that may have some connection to archives.¹ His conclusions are rather discouraging, for he argues that many supposed connections must be discarded, particularly those of literary texts found in the Italian excavations at Tebtunis with family archives found in the same excavations.² An additional case of literary papyri connected to persons known from documents, though hardly constituting an "archive," deserves brief attention. In the description of *POxy.* 14.1690 (which they did not publish in full), Grenfell and Hunt state that it was "found with [*POxy.* 11.] 1365, 1386, and

1. "Literary Papyri in Documentary 'Archives'," in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World*, Stud. Hellenistica 27 (Louvain, 1983), pp. 43–61. Cf. also E. G. Turner, "Roman Oxyrhynchos," *JEA* 38 (1952): 78–93; and "Scribes and Scholars of Oxyrhynchos," in *Akten des VIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Papyrologie, Wien 1955*, *MPER* n.s. 5 (Vienna, 1956), pp. 141–46; as well as J. Krüger, *Oxyrhynchus in der Kaiserzeit: Studien zur topographie und Literaturrezeption*, Europäische Hochschulschriften 3 ser. 441 (Frankfurt am Main, 1990). The literary papyri from the Ptolemaic Sarapeion finds are discussed in D. J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 259–65; and M. L. Nardelli, "Testi letterari dall'archivio del Serapeo di Memfi: Ipotesi di una biblioteca," in *Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Papyrology, Athens 25–31 May 1986*, vol. 1 (Athens, 1988), pp. 179–88.

2. Cf. now, confirming this skepticism, C. Gallazzi, "Fouilles anciennes et nouvelles sur le site de Tebtynis," *BIAO* 89 (1989): 179–91.

1392."³ The last two of these are fragments of the *Iliad*, and thus commonplace, though not without sociological interest. But the first is the fragments of the history of Sikyon (Pack² 2181), a far more *recherché* work.

What do we know about the person who might have owned these texts? *POxy.* 1690 is a lease of five *arouras*⁴ for a rent of 3,000 dr. per *aroura*.⁵ The period around 287, the date of this document, is particularly ill-served with prices which would allow us to judge the value of that rent, with the last known wheat price 200 dr./art. in 281.⁶ Even if it had almost doubled by 287 (it was to reach the 600–650 range by the end of the century), that would make the rent a good one, equivalent to perhaps eight *artabas* of wheat. That high level suggests that this cash rent refers to flax land, which commonly enjoyed high rents,⁷ and in fact this hypothesis is confirmed by the unpublished text of the papyrus.⁸ Copies of leases might be retained by either lessor or lessee. That this lease was found at Oxyrhynchus makes it rather more likely that it was kept by the lessor, because by and large more lessors lived in the city, more lessees in the villages. The lessee's name is in any case not preserved, but the lessor is a woman named Αὐρηλία Πτολεμαίς καὶ ὡς χρηματίζω, from which one supposes that her identification was more complicated than a simple patronymic.⁹

Can Aurelia Ptolemais, other than as a landowner, be further identified? There is in fact one, and only one, plausible candidate. We possess a copy of the will of one Aurelius Hermogenes alias Eudaimon, *exegetes*, *prytanis* (?) and councillor of Oxyrhynchus, who institutes as heirs his three sons and two daughters, one of them named Aurelia Ptolemais.¹⁰ Dated to 276, this will divides evenly between Ptolemais and her sister, Didyme, a property in a location now lost, which included vineyard and arable land with all the appurtenances. Hermogenes alias Eudaimon adds an additional bequest to Didyme because he had already given Ptolemais, as dowry, four talents¹¹ and a female slave. The money is the equiva-

3. There is no way of knowing just what they meant by this statement, but it would be unreasonable to strip it of significance for that reason. Most of the Oxyrhynchus papyri were found in large batches in the ancient rubbish heaps, but that is clearly not what Grenfell and Hunt meant, for in that case most of the papyri would have had such remarks.

4. Described on the verso as ἑδαφὼν Ἀπολλωνίου στρατηγοῦ. G. Bastianini and J. Whitehorne, *Strategi and Royal Scribes of Roman Egypt*, Pap. Flor. 15 (Florence, 1987), p. 102, suggest that "reference may be to an earlier holder of the property," and not to the lessee, as the editors seem to have taken it (as they assumed that the date of the papyrus was that of the term of the *strategos*).

5. Not 300, as given by J. Herrmann, *Studien zur Bodenpacht im Recht der graeco-ägyptischen Papyri* (Munich, 1958), p. 275, n. 1, where the object is also described as "Saatland" without any basis. It is not clear why he relegates the text to a footnote rather than include it in his list.

6. See H.-J. Drexhage, "Zur Preisentwicklung im römischen Ägypten von ca. 260 n. Chr. bis zum Regierungsantritt Diokletians," *Münstersche Beiträge* 6 (1987): 36. The text in question is *O.Mich.* 1.157; K. A. Worp and W. Liesker will show in a forthcoming note that it is to be dated to 281, rather than to 276 as it has been until now.

7. Cf. *POxy.* 1.102, 31.2585, 45.3255, 3257. These offer rents ranging from 1 T. 2500 dr./ar. in 306 to 4 T./ar. in 315 and 3 T. 1,000 dr. in 318. All of these seem to be in the 6+ to 8+ art./ar. equivalent range, although price information for the period 315 to 318 is poor.

8. Now in Ghent. On a photograph in the Ashmolean Museum, for the use of which I am indebted to R. Coles, I read in line 9 σποράν λιγ[οκαλάμης].

9. The phrase καὶ ὡς χρηματίζω (-ει) is commonly used where a party would, if fully identified, have a cumbersome string of titles.

10. *POxy.* 6.907, reedited as *M.Chr.* 317 and *FIRA* 3.51. Cf. also *O.Oslo*, p. 64. Turner singles the estate out as an example of wealth in "Roman Oxyrhynchus," p. 85.

11. Restored by E. Kalinka on the basis of what Didyme is to get, cf. *BL* 1.329.

lent of some 120 artabas of wheat at that date, and the slave was probably worth more than that. Obviously this is a family of substantial, though probably not vast, means. There were four other slaves to be disposed of, and obviously at least two main country properties. Since this is "a copy taken after the original was opened," as the editors put it in their introduction, its date will be later than that of the will by some indeterminable amount of time, after Hermogenes' death.¹²

Ptolemais was the only adult (i.e., in the case of a woman, married) child of Hermogenes alias Eudaimon at the time he made the will; the others are all specified to be minors. It is thus likely that he was himself very young in 235, when he and his father are declared as the sole residents of a house in Oxyrhynchos belonging to the father, Athenaios alias Herakleides, himself at the time a *bouleutes*.¹³ Athenaios alias Herakleides later served as *kosmetes* and as *tamias* of city funds in 247.¹⁴ It is natural enough that Hermogenes named one of his sons Herakleides after this reputable father.

But the most tantalizing fact of all is that his will "is preserved on the verso of [POxy. 3.] 412,¹⁵ a fragment from the *Κεστοί* of Julius Africanus," as the editor said. It may reasonably be assumed that the copy of the will was made for or by one of the interested parties, presumably one of the heirs. Now it is impossible to be certain which heir did this, or how that heir came by the work of Africanus reused for this purpose. In the absence of any evidence for a market in partly used papyrus, however, the most plausible explanation is simply that it was inherited from Hermogenes. If so, the fact that Hermogenes, as it seems, possessed a remarkably *recherché* work like this can only strengthen the probability that his daughter inherited the *History of Sikyon* from him.¹⁶ Since Ptolemais is the one heir of whom we may reasonably claim to know something, this copy of the will may well have been part of her papers as well.¹⁷

The space-saving phrase *καὶ ὡς χρηματίζω* denies us the final proof of identification, a patronymic for Ptolemais; but if the identification is denied, we must posit the existence of one well-to-do, landowning woman with that name who owned the *Sikyonika* and the two Homer papyri, and another well-to-do, landowning woman with that name whose family owned Africanus' *Kestoi*. That, however, seems like

12. H. Kreller suggested, in fact, that one restore ἀντίγραφον at the start; *Erbrechtliche Untersuchungen auf Grund der graeco-ägyptischen Papyrusurkunden* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1919), p. 405.

13. *P.Oslo* 3.111.258–63. It was in a good quarter, to judge from the fact that the neighboring properties on either side belonged to ex-gymnasiarchs. The father also owned another house in the city, rented out (lines 288–93).

14. *POxy.* 44.3177; the editor cites the Oslo papyrus, but not his will.

15. Pack² 53.

16. It may be worth adding that it has been suggested by E. A. Judge and S. R. Pickering, "Papyrus Documentation of Church and Community in Egypt," *JbAC* 20 (1977): 47–71 at 65, that the phraseology of the reference to Hermogenes' wife in the will, *πρεπόντως περὶ τὴν συμβίωσιν ἀναστραφείση*, coupled with the fact that Julius Africanus was a Christian, may indicate that Hermogenes himself (and very likely his family) were also Christians. That suggestion assumes what is argued above, that the text of Africanus belonged to Hermogenes or one of his children (and was not acquired already as scrap); it also, less compellingly, assumes that the owner of a work written by a Christian, even a work without specifically Christian character, is likely to have been a Christian.

17. The situation is thus the reverse of what Krüger, *Oxyrhynchos in der Kaiserzeit*, p. 160, hypothesized as common for literary papyri in private libraries, i.e., that literary works were copied on the back of documents no longer needed. It is interesting that one of the *Iliad* fragments is on the recto (1392), the other on the verso (1386).

an uneconomical hypothesis, and it is thus highly likely that one Aurelia Ptolemais was the owner of the *Sikyonika*, of Africanus' *Kestoi*, and of the two *Iliad* fragments, along with her land, money, slave, and no doubt much else. It is not surprising to find a member of her class in possession of literature, but few cases have been documented with such specificity so far. To what extent she herself read these works inherited from her father cannot be known, but she could read and write. Her signature on *POxy.* 1690 is in a slightly uneven but fairly rapid cursive.¹⁸

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18. Not the hand of someone who could barely sign, certainly.