

# The Toparch Leon and his Archive

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## The Toparch Leon and his Archive

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AMONG the more interesting small archives of papyri published in recent years is that of the toparch of Philadelphia, Leon, first edited two decades ago<sup>1</sup> and republished in 1967 in *P. Yale I* with the addition of three previously unpublished fragments. Interest in the archive has centered on three documents, one of them (*P. Yale 36*) containing correspondence about the *διαγραφή του σπόρου*, most recently and ably discussed by Pierre Vidal-Naquet,<sup>2</sup> the other two (*P. Yale 37* and *40*) concerned with the production and distribution of wine, a subject discussed at length by J. A. S. Evans in the first publication of the texts.

These Yale texts come from around 230 B.C., with the three dated ones falling in the years 232–29. They date thus somewhat after the period of the archives of Zenon, also concerned largely with Philadelphia. The editors of *P. Yale I* remark in this regard (p.104) that “the relation of the world of Leon to that of Zenon, the son of Agreophon, cannot be decided positively.” They proceed to cite a few possible links, the most compelling of which is the identification of Leon himself with an agent of an *oikonomos* (Hermolaos) two decades before. It is, I believe, possible to define these connections considerably more precisely, and in so doing we will also find it possible, in effect, to expand the archive.

Let us first review the documents of the archive and the main personages attested in them. *P. Yale 36* is a letter of an Apollonios to Leon, forwarding the letter of the *dioiketes* Athenodoros to Apollonios regarding the sowing schedule and adding an admonition to Leon to be sure to do his part so that the two officials may turn in the schedule to the *archiphylakites* at the proper time. No. 37 is an acknowledgment by Leon (characterized as toparch) that an amount of wine has been released through him and through Nechthosiris the *topogrammateus* to the *leitourgoi* for the *agora* of wine. *P. Yale 38* is a letter,

<sup>1</sup> C. Bradford Welles and J. A. S. Evans, *JJurPap* 7–8 (1953–54) 29–70.

<sup>2</sup> *Le bordereau d'ensemencement* (*Pap.Brux.* 5, 1967). Vidal-Naquet's study and the revised version of the texts in *P. Yale I* were published independently.

probably from Apollonios (of no.36),<sup>3</sup> to Leon ordering him to take care of the transport of some materials. In no.39, Apollonios writes to one Dikaïos about the key to a storeroom. The author of no.40 is not known (the editors suggest it may have been Leon), the addressee is one Hermias, and the subject is wine; some agents of Apollonios are mentioned. In no.41, a fragmentary letter regarding a *pistis*, it is mentioned that Apollonios will write to the addressee. *P. Yale* 42 is a letter of Nechthosiris to his "brother"<sup>4</sup> Leon about some troubles with the courts and central administration in Alexandria, with a mention of Apollonios "your brother." The last two documents, nos. 43 and 44, are fragmentary letters about which little can be said.

The Yale editors did not attempt to link the archive with any other published texts, but in fact four papyri published in 1948 and 1949 by M.-Th. Lenger from the collection of the Bodleian Library have a close connection with the archive of Leon.<sup>5</sup> These are the following:

1. A letter of Hermolaos to Apollonios, 250 B.C., ordering him to pay a sum of money to one Theodoros without delay and to see to the delivery of a letter so that Hermolaos can recover *ὑποθέματα* and lent money.

2. A letter of Euphranor and Lamedon to Hermolaos, 248 B.C., notifying him that they had appointed one Thotortaios as their agent to supervise the perfume monopoly, both the retail sale and the 25 per cent tax on it, in the Aphroditopolite Nome. Hermolaos is instructed to direct his agents to act only in conjunction with Thotortaios and to give him every assistance.

3. A letter of Isidoros to Hermolaos, 247 B.C., itemizing fruits and birds sent to Hermolaos (for the king on some ceremonial occasion, the editor suggests) and listing those things that Isidoros wants Hermolaos to add to these.

<sup>3</sup> The reasons for suggesting this authorship are the relationship of the writer to Leon and the fact that the signature appears to be in the same hand as that in *P. Yale* 36.

<sup>4</sup> The editors of *P. Yale* 42 take it that Leon and Apollonios were probably brothers, but that Nechthosiris was not their brother, and that *ἀδελφῶν* is not to be taken literally in line 2. Cl. Préaux, *Cd'É* 43 (1968) 399–400, challenged this view, asserting that Leon and Apollonios were in all likelihood Egyptians. The text offers support for both views, for while consistency might suggest that *ἀδελφός* has the same meaning in both places in this letter, the presence of *κοῦ* in line 32 seems to suggest that Apollonios is not the brother of Nechthosiris, but only of Leon. Cf. below further on this problem.

<sup>5</sup> *Cd'É* 23 (1948) 109–21, and 24 (1949) 105–12. The texts were reprinted as SB 9089–91 and 9103. Vidal-Naquet, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 19 n.1, points out the identity of Leon in no.4 as possible, but does not pursue the matter. See below on his view of the texts.

4. A letter of Leon to Apollonios, 240 B.C., complaining that settling with the farmers at the end of the harvest had been delayed because Demetrios the *sitologos* and his agents had not come with the measures. Apollonios is asked for a *κατὰ φύλλον γεωμετρίαν* so that Leon can finish his accounts with the cultivators.

It was first suggested by Vidal-Naquet that the Leon of no.4 might be the same as that of *P.Yale* 36 and the other documents: "On peut songer à l'identifier, le nom n'étant pas extrêmement répandu, au Léon dont une lettre à un autre Apollônios a été publiée par M.-Th. Lenger . . ."<sup>6</sup> More factors than the name support this identification: (1) Leon is in both documents an official in Philadelphia; (2) in both cases he is responsible for the crops of the area; (3) in both cases his superior<sup>7</sup> is an Apollonios, who also deals with the schedules of what is to be planted and then what has been planted; (4) the papyri all seem to come from the same ultimate source.

This last point requires amplification. The Yale pieces were bought from M. Nahman in 1935, with no record of provenience, although internal evidence shows that they concern Philadelphia, and plaster adhering to them shows them to have been cartonnage.<sup>8</sup> The Bodleian texts, on the other hand, were actually found as cartonnage at Philadelphia (Rubbayat) in early 1901 by Grenfell and Hunt, from a group of tombs that the excavators stated had already been opened and much damaged.<sup>9</sup> It seems clear that the texts were in the possession of one or more officials in Philadelphia itself, and that the Yale texts come from the same cemetery as the Bodleian ones, whether their clandestine excavation preceded or followed the work of Grenfell and Hunt.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See n.5 *supra*. The reason for Vidal-Naquet's assumption that the Apollonios is different is presumably the commonness of the name, but that factor is not decisive either for or against any identification.

<sup>7</sup> The editors of *P.Yale* I (p.105) and Vidal-Naquet (*supra* n.5) both suggest that Apollonios was an *oikonomos* (with nomarch as alternative for Vidal-Naquet), rejecting the identification of him in the first edition as an *epimeletes*. The connection with the wine trade is not decisive, since all branches might be involved. Leon's nominal superior should have been a nomarch, of course, but A. E. Samuel (*Essays Welles* [*Am.St.Pap.* 1, 1966] 213-29, cited with approval by Vidal-Naquet) has shown that lines of authority and organization rarely followed the schematic drawing we can construct, and the presence of these two bureaucrats in different "branches" in no way contravenes their obvious relationship in the documents. Cf. below on Apollonios' office.

<sup>8</sup> Welles and Evans, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 29.

<sup>9</sup> Lenger, *Cd'É* 23 (1948) 109-10.

<sup>10</sup> Lenger, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.9), remarks rightly that cartonnage may come from a distance

The common factor to what we may call the expanded archive of some thirteen texts is the involvement of Leon and Apollonios. Despite the commonness of the latter name, I do not think we will err in thinking that the same man is responsible for the attestations in these documents, for a consistent picture of his activity and relationships can be drawn, yielding circumstantially at least a strong likelihood that this is one person and not several.

We may begin with the earliest documents, the first three Bodleian papyri and the Zenon papyri connected with Hermolaos and Leon. Hermolaos was *oikonomos* of the Aphroditopolite Nome and also, it seems, of the Memphite; some twenty-three documents concerning him are known.<sup>11</sup> His span of activity is attested as 254–247, although many of the documents are undated and might belong outside these years. Leon was already known as an agent of Hermolaos from the Zenon texts of the years 251–248,<sup>12</sup> and it is clear that Apollonios in the first Bodleian document (SB 9089) is acting in the same capacity. There is no indication of the place of the activity of Apollonios at this time, but it was in all probability one of the nomes in which Hermolaos is known to have acted as *oikonomos*. Leon was active in the Memphite Nome (PSI 372). Since Apollonios was Leon's brother (P.Yale 42.32), it is only too characteristic of the Ptolemaic bureaucracy that the brothers should enter royal service at about the same time in the retinue of the same fairly important official.

Two of the Bodleian documents are addressed to Apollonios; it is reasonable that they should have been in his possession after some years. If, as I will suggest below, Apollonios was the abler bureaucrat, it would scarcely be surprising that as an assistant to Hermolaos he should have had some of his superior's correspondence also, which

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and therefore casts doubt on the Philadelphian origin of the documents before they became cartonnage, noting in particular the Aphroditopolite concerns of her no.2. But as it is, as I argue, through Leon and Apollonios that these documents are preserved, no hypothesis of long-distance transportation is necessary to account for the documents' presence there.

<sup>11</sup> The complete list is given by Lenger, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.9) 116 n.3; twenty certain or possible attestations up to the time of her publication. Lenger's discussion of the geographical range of his competence is as definitive as the evidence allows and certainly correct in its conclusions.

<sup>12</sup> A complete list is given by Lenger in *Cd'É* 24 (1949) 108 n.1. Both she and the editors of *P.Yale* I (p.104) find the identification probable. Lenger's conclusion that Leon was probably still agent of the *oikonomos* in 240, however, need not be correct; *cf. supra* n.7.

would explain the presence of Bodleian nos. 2 and 3 with the others. One may suppose that Hermolaos might have delegated to Apollonios the carrying out of the work ordered by these letters.

The next stage of the two men's careers is represented by *SB 9103*, the fourth Bodleian papyrus. Now, in 240, Apollonios is higher than Leon, and the relationship in fact appears to be much the same as in the documents of 232–229. Leon's office is a localized one concerned with agricultural production, surely the toparchy that he held later, while Apollonios is at a higher level, either a nome or some division of it, the latter being likely here because it is the Arsinoite Nome that we are dealing with if Leon's position is the same as in the later documents.<sup>13</sup>

At this point we may mention the evidence of *P.Hib. 133*, a petition to Eutychos the *dioiketes* mentioning Apollonios τοῦ οἰκονομ[οῦ] τὴν Ἡρακλείδου μερίδα; the papyrus is not dated, but I have demonstrated elsewhere<sup>14</sup> that it belongs around year 10 of Euergetes (238/7), shortly after *SB 9103*. Since Philadelphia lies in the Herakleides division, the supposition that the Apollonios of *SB 9103* and of the Yale texts was *oikonomos* of that division becomes very strong.

Eight years later we find the same people in much the same places and positions, concerned with the same responsibilities and problems. By 228 more than two decades of service to the crown is attested for each brother; they were thus mature bureaucrats in what were undoubtedly their final niches in society. Whether Nechthosiris, the *topogrammateus* of the archive, is the true brother of Leon and hence of Apollonios must remain for the present uncertain; he is at any rate an intimate of the other two.

We can now define the relationship of the archive of Leon to that of Zenon with somewhat more precision. Leon was a subordinate of

<sup>13</sup> Lenger, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.12) 108–09, argued that the tone of the letter suggested equality, while Apollonios' connection with the crop schedule argued for his being a member of the bureau of the nomarch or of the *basilikos grammateus*. The latter point is surely based on too rigid a conception of the bureaucracy; cf. *supra* n.7 on the likelihood that Apollonios was an *oikonomos*. I do not see that any indication of rank is given except that (1) Leon was not writing to a subordinate, and (2) Apollonios was being warned of a difficult situation developing in Leon's district. If the letter was necessary, it suggests that Apollonios was not in Philadelphia and therefore probably had a wider sphere of competence than did Leon—which suggests a higher office. Cf. below and n.14.

<sup>14</sup> *Ancient Society* 3 (1972) 113–15. I also raise the possibility that this Apollonios was the recipient of *P.Teb. 705* of year 14 of (I argue there) Euergetes, but this still seems to me less likely than the identification of the *epimeletes* Apollonios with the addressee of *P.Teb. 705*.

the *oikonomos* in the Memphite Nome as a young man, while his brother was a subordinate of the same official at this time. Zenon at least knew about Leon, if he did not know him personally, and Leon was clearly familiar with several of Zenon's correspondents. The later appointments of both brothers belong to the period after the downfall of Apollonios the *dioiketes*, a time when Zenon was still living in Philadelphia, a wealthy and important citizen, having survived Apollonios' fall, probably by virtue of having been fired by him in 248/7.<sup>15</sup> Since Zenon continued to be active in his own enterprises in Philadelphia until at least the tenth year of Euergetes, Leon as toparch of the area of that village must certainly have come into contact with him. Leon's brother Apollonios must likewise have known the older and much wealthier Zenon.<sup>16</sup> Leon and his kind were apprentices in the age of Apollonios the *dioiketes*, and the less distinguished successors to the associates of the great finance minister.

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<sup>15</sup> On Zenon's firing, see *P.Cair.Zen.* 59832, the draft of a petition from Zenon to Euergetes near the start of the latter's reign. One can only guess at the reasons for the firing, but it is not impossible that the shrewd Zenon provoked his firing by some connections with the partisans of the future king (and Apollonios' enemy) that were inimical to the *dioiketes'* interests.

<sup>16</sup> The best general account of Zenon's activities in this period is still that of M. Rostovtzeff, *A Large Estate in Egypt* (Madison 1922) 158-64. Year 10 of Euergetes is attested in *P.Mich.* 70, where Zenon receives from the king the response to a petition on his behalf.