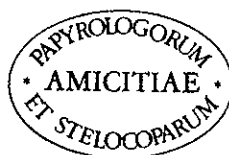


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SB XIV 11273: NO VOCATIVE

A petition to the strategos from the second half of the second century B.C., and assignable more precisely to 124-120,¹ P.Med. inv. 71.38 was published in *Aegyptus* 54 (1974) 34-36 and reprinted as SB XIV 11273. The editor's text is as follows:

Διοφάνηι τῶν ὁμοτίμων τοῖς συγγενέσι
καὶ στρατηγῶι
παρὰ Τρυφ[]
4 τῶν ἐν τοῖς κατοίκοις ἱπαρχῶν. ἀνόμως
καὶ παρὰ πᾶ[σα]ν δικαιοσύνην Ἄμεν{ον}ῶπις
καὶ Ταῆσ{ο}ις τ[ῶ]ν ἐξ Ἀπιάδος τῆς Θεμίστου
μερίδος εἰσβιασάμενοι εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν μου
8 τὴν οὖσαν [ἐν] τῇ αὐτῇ κώμη σὺν Θαυβάστι,
καὶ τῇ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ ἐπιτεταγμένη Ἑσερχᾶφι
δόντες πληγὰς πλείους, τῶν ἐμῶν
ἔνδον ὄντων, ὧν τὸ καθ' ἐν ὑπόκειται,
12 καὶ ἐγκρατε[ί]ς τούτων γενόμενοι,
ἐνφκήκασ[ι] οὐδενὸς δικαίου ἀντε-
χόμενοι τῇ δὲ βίᾳ συνχρόμενοι.
ἀξιῶ οὐ[ν σε] συγγράψαι ἐπιστρε-
16 φέστερον [τῶι] ἐπιστάτῃ καταστήσαι
[αὐ]τοὺς ἐ[πὶ σὲ ἴν' ἔσ]ομ[αι] τετευχῶ(ς)
τῶν δικαίων πα[ρὰ σοῦ, στρατηγὲ σε]μνότητε.
εὐτύχει.

Apart from the lacuna in line 3, affecting only the identity of the petitioner, most of the text is relatively certain, until the ending of the petition, which is lacunose and requires considerable reconstruction. This reconstruction includes on the editor's view a vocative phrase, not a single undotted letter of which survives.

It is precisely this vocative phrase that elicits doubt about the text. In the course of a study of the general patterns of vocative usage in papyrus letters and petitions,² we found that the vocatives of SB 11273 were most unusual for such an early document, and this discovery in turn has led to a reconsideration of the entire latter part of the papyrus. The main problem with the vocatives in SB 11273 is simply that one would not expect anyone other than the king to be addressed with a vocative title in a papyrus document of the second century B.C. The commonness of βασιλεῦ in petitions has perhaps tended to obscure the absence of other vocatives in third and second-century petitions. In the first century B.C. and later, the situation changes markedly, and there comes to be a group of titles that can be used vocatively in petitions to officials other than the king; this group includes ἡγεμῶν, διοικητά, and ἐπιστάτα as well as στρατηγέ. But this entire class of addresses is unattested in papyri of the third and second centuries B.C. The reason for this omission seems to be that papyrus documents

¹ The online *Prosopographia Ptolemaica* gives this date, citing L. Mooren, *La hiérarchie de cour ptolémaïque* (*Studia Hellenistica* 23, Leuven 1977) 97-98 no. 2 and 214. Mooren's date is based on changes in aulic titulature.

² See Eleanor Dickey, "The Greek Address System of the Roman Period and its Relationship to Latin," forthcoming in *Classical Quarterly*.

earlier than the first century B.C. usually follow the classical norms of vocative usage, according to which vocative titles are used only to the actual monarch (who is frequently called βασιλεῦ³) while the rare other addressees, if they receive vocatives, are simply addressed by name.⁴

Arguments from silence are of course open to question, especially given the small percentage of papyri that has survived to modern times. But in this case the large number of surviving petitions of the last three centuries B.C. suggests that such an argument can have some force. Comparison strengthens this point: the third and second centuries B.C. have each left us more than twice as many petitions as the first century B.C., so the complete absence in that corpus of types of address that are well attested in the first century B.C. is unlikely to be due to chance.⁵

Another problem with reconstructing the address στρατηγὲ σεμνότατε is that both these vocatives are extremely rare in papyrus documents. We can find only one example of their being used together, namely that cited by the editor in support of the restoration, σεμνότατε στρατηγέ at BGU VIII 1843.13 (50/49 B.C.). The two words occasionally appear independently in the vocative, but even such limited parallels are very rare and later: we can find only two other occurrences of σεμνότατε in documentary papyri of any date⁶ and only three other occurrences of στρατηγέ.⁷ And none of these parallels is as early as the second century B.C.: two are from late in the Roman period, and the other four from the first century B.C., with the earliest being 60-59 B.C.⁸ Nor is there any match with SB 11273 in terms of location, for whereas our papyrus was written in the Arsinoite nome, the first-century parallels all come from the Herakleopolite, and the later ones from elsewhere.⁹

The formulation of the concluding lines evokes other doubts as well. Particularly troubling is συνγράψαι, which is not used in other petitions in such a context. Examples of what one would expect include διὸ ἀξιῶ [σ]υντάξαι γράψαι τῷ τῆς κόμης ἐπιστάτῃ καταστήσαι τὸν τε Παποντᾶν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ἐπὶ σὲ ὅπως ἐγὼ μὲν τὸν χόρτον καὶ τὸν πυρὸν κομίσωμαι καὶ τὸ ἡμέτερον ἱμάτιον αὐτοὶ δὲ τόχῳσι ὧν προσήκει, in SB XVIII 13087.23-27 (another petition in the Milan collection, but dated to 4 B.C.); ἀξιούμεν ἐὰν φαίνεται συντάξαι γράψαι Ζωίλῳ πράκτορι παρὰ τοῦ προγεγραμμένου τὴν ἀπαίτησιν ποιήσασθαι κτλ., in BGU VIII 1851.4-6 (64-44 B.C. [Gesamtverzeichnis]), or ἀξιῶ, ἐὰν φαίνεται, συντάξαι πρὸ πάντων μὲν γράψαι τῷ τῆς Ἀκώρεως ἐπιστ[ά]τῃ μὴ ἐπιτρέπειν τῷ ἐγκαλουμένῳ μήτ' ἐμὲ μήτε τὴν μητέρα μου παρενοχλεῖν κτλ. in P.Dion. 11.26-30 (108 B.C.). With these parallels (which could be multiplied¹⁰) in mind, we propose to read as follows (lines 15-18):¹¹

ἀξιῶ συντάξαι γράψαι ἐπιστρε-
φέστερον [τῷ] ἐπιστάτῃ καταστήσαι
[αὐ]τοὺς ἐπὶ [σὲ] ὅπως τοῦχῳ (1. τύχῳ) τῶν
δικαίων π[.] . . . τ α τ ι ς .

³ 193 times in the third and second centuries B.C.

⁴ Only at P.Cair.Zen. I 59034.18 and UPZ I 66.6; there is also one example of πάτερ in the recounting of a dream at UPZ I 78.36. For the rules of classical address usage see E. Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address* (Oxford 1996).

⁵ III B.C.: 281 petitions, III/II B.C.: 7; II B.C.: 287; III B.C.: 1; I B.C.: 137; I B.C. - I A.D.: 2. For the method of calculation of these figures, and the methodology used to search for the vocatives, see the forthcoming article cited above, n. 2.

⁶ These are σεμνότατε διοικητά at BGU VIII 1756.15 and σεμνότατε ἐπιστάτα at BGU XVI 2600.9-10.

⁷ BGU VIII 1816.15, στρατηγὲ ἄριστε at CPR 17A.6.3, στρατηγὲ πιστέ at P.Oxy. I 41.27.

⁸ BGU VIII 1843: 50-49 B.C., BGU VIII 1756: 58 B.C., BGU XVI 2600: 13 B.C., BGU VIII 1816: 60-59 B.C., CPR XVII A 6: A.D. 316, P.Oxy. I 41: III/IV A.D.

⁹ CPR XVII A 6: Hermoupolis Magna, P.Oxy. I 41: Oxyrhynchus.

¹⁰ The standard study is by A. Di Bitonto, *Aegyptus* 47 (1967) 5-57 (on petitions to the king) and 48 (1968) 53-107 (on petitions to other officials). For συντάξαι phrases in petitions to officials, see pp. 78, 80, 82 and 84 of the second instalment.

¹¹ A good plate is provided in the edition (Tav. VIII); we are grateful to Carla Balconi for an excellent color digital image.

It will be observed that the difficulties in lines 15-17 are essentially resolved, although at the cost of a misspelling in $\tau\acute{\upsilon}\chi\omega$.¹² Line 18, however, remains difficult. There are in fact slight traces of ink on the surface almost throughout the lacuna, but none is clear enough that we have felt able to print any particular letters outside the brackets. The traces after pi do not look like alpha. Although the reading $\tau\alpha\tau$, which undoubtedly contributed to the editor's proposed reading, is good (although perhaps not inescapable), we do not think it is possible that the line ended with an epsilon; there is too much ink for a single letter. The surface of the papyrus is disturbed at this point, and it is possible that the fibers with the upper part of these letters are out of place. Parallels suggest that we should have a concluding expression of the hoped-for results of the intervention by the strategos: that the petitioner will be helped or benefited. We have considered a variety of possibilities from the phrasings attested elsewhere,¹³ none yielding a reading we find acceptable.

The ending appears to be $-\iota\varsigma$, and the letter before iota appears to be lunate in form, thus probably epsilon or omicron. These considerations suggest two possibilities to us: (1) a masculine nominative singular ending of an aorist passive participle in $-\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, presumably dependent on the subject of the verb—the petitioner, that is—and expressing some sentiment like "having been benefited by you." (2) A masculine dative plural ending in $-\tau\alpha\tau\iota\varsigma$, thus a superlative adjective modifying some preceding noun. For neither of these, however, have we been able to find either a persuasive parallel or a reading that accommodates the other surviving traces and makes sense. We hope that readers will be more successful.

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¹² We owe the omicron to Willy Clarysse. One might also read epsilon and suppose contamination from the stem used in the future and perfect. The surface is too disturbed and the writing too blotted to allow certainty. In any event, this would simply offer a different misspelling. The editor's text here, of course, required an omitted letter; in no case does it seem possible to read a form that does not require correction. For these phrasings see Di Bitonto (above, n. 10, 1968) 103-04.

¹³ One will find in Di Bitonto (above, n. 10), 1967: 52-55 and 1968: 103-06, the repertory. None seems to us possible here.

¹⁴ We thank Willy Clarysse and Klaas Worp for discussing this text with us.