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Adam Łukaszewicz

TWO POPYRI FROM GIESSEN (P. GISS. INV. 56 AND 147)*

I. From internal papers of the governor's office

This document from the papyrus collection of the University Library in Giessen has been described in the volume of the *Papyri Gissenses* (no. 116). The description reads:

"Eingabe an den Statthalter der Thebais. Inv. Nr. 56. Höhe 13 cm, Breite 22 cm. Schrift eines gewandten Schreibers. 4. Jahrh.(vor dem Jahre 357). Nur die rechte Hälfte der ersten sieben Zeilen ist erhalten. Der Statthalter (*praeses*) der Thebais wird als *διασημότατος ἡγεμών* bezeichnet, er führt noch den Titel *vir perfectissimus* (s. M. G e l z e r, *Studien zur byz. Verw.* 7). Petent ist wohl ein officialis der *ἡγεμονικῆ τάξις* (Z. 2). Es scheint so, als ob er sich im Gefolge des *praeses* nach Alexandria (zum praef. Aeg.) begeben soll. Näheres läßt sich aus dem Fragment nicht ersehen."

The item under discussion is a piece of light yellow papyrus. The script is a handsome hand of an experienced scribe. Thin lines of ink point to the use of a very well prepared reed. The writing indicates the IVth century A.D.

The back is blank.

The papyrus contains only the right half of the seven initial lines and it is very difficult to understand the gist of the document.

P. Giss. inv. no.56
Thebaid

22 x 13 cm

IVth cent. A.D.
Fig. 4

ἰ διασημοτάτω ἡγεμόνι
τοῦ μου κυρίου τάξεως. ἀναφέρω εἰς
εὐτυχεῶς συνεξέυχθη ὑπὸ τῆς σῆς ἀρετῆς
Ἰθηβαίδοσ ὡς ἐπεὶ τὴν ἸΑλεξάνδρειαν τὸ ἰ
5 αἰ ἰ. ἰ. ε. τοὺς ἔξω τόποις ἔνεκεν ἀλλὰ ἐν τῇ
στῆ ἰσμενον ἀμέμπτως ἀποπῆληρ

* I wish to express my gratitude to the Director of the Papyrus Collection of the University Library in Giessen for his kind permission to publish both these texts. I would also like to acknowledge the generosity of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation that enabled me, among other research activities, to study some items from the Giessen collection.

ἴσαι δειωτάτην. ἐγὼ ὡς καὶ εἶσδε
 Ιε[]Ι[.] Ια[]κ..[]ρο
Ι..Ι

4. ἐπί

The above document is a very incomplete, and therefore not particularly informative, piece of evidence of the internal operation of the office of the *praeses provinciae* in Egypt. Our document is addressed to an unknown ἡγεμῶν, bearing also the title of *vir perfectissimus* (διασημότατος).

Cl. Vandersleyen states¹ that from the beginning of the IVth century the title of ἡγεμῶν gradually became an appellation reserved for the *praeses*. "Le mot ἡγεμῶν aura totalement cessé de désigner un préfet vers 324"²

In our text, the mention of the Thebaid in line 4 unequivocally identifies the ἡγεμῶν as the *praeses* of the Thebaid. In line 3 the title of ἀρετή is used as a style of the *praeses*. This agrees with fourth century parallels, e.g. P. Oxy. I 60.4: ἡ ἀρετὴ τοῦ κυρίου μου διασημοτάτου ἡγεμῶνος.³

The Thebaid as an administrative unit governed by the *praeses* was created about A.D. 297.⁴ From that time forward documents from Hermopolis Magna, Antinoopolis or Thebes mention names of *praesides* of the Thebaid.⁵

P.M. Meyer and E. Kornemann dated our document to the IVth century, before 357. Their opinion results apparently from the title of *perfectissimus* which in our text denotes a *praeses* of the Thebaid. The chronological inference of the editors is based on P.Oxy. I 66 (A.D. 357) which shows that at that date the *praeses* of the Augustamnica became a *clarissimus*. However, we know now that in 363 the *praeses* of the Thebaid was still styled *perfectissimus*⁶ and became *clarissimus* only about 368. Some irregularities in the titles are known also after that date.⁷ Anyway, we may date our papyrus to the first half of the IVth century. According to the opinion of P.M. Meyer expressed in P. Giss. 116 (description), the text concerns an *officialis* who accompanied the prefect of the Thebaid in his travel from Upper Egypt to Alexandria. However, the verb συζεύγνυμι in line 3 (συνεξεύχθη) does not necessarily imply that the *praeses* ordered the writer to join his own retinue travelling to Alexandria. It may in this case simply indicate

¹ *La chronologie des préfets d'Égypte de 284 à 395*, "Collection Latomus", vol. LV, Bruxelles 1962, p. 100 sqq.

² *Ibid.*, p.102.

³ Cf. P. Thead. 19.15: δέομαι τῆς σῆς ἀρετῆς κελεῖσθαι (IVth cent. A.D.)

⁴ J. L a l l e m a n d, *L'administration civile de l'Égypte de l'avènement de Dioclétien à la création du diocèse (284-382)*, [in:] *Académie Royale de Belgique, Classe des Lettres, Mémoires* LVII, fasc. 2, Bruxelles 1964, p. 44 ff. Cf. P. Beatty Panop. 1; 2 (A.D. 298 and 300).

⁵ The new province was - at least temporarily - divided into two districts: Lower and Upper Thebaid. For towns of the Lower district cf. P. Beatty Panop. 2. 35, 127, 255, 258 (A.D. 300). The capital of the Thebaid, at least in the later IVth century, was Antinoopolis; see L a l l e m a n d, *op.cit.* p. 47, 54-55.

⁶ P. Lond. V 1651. 18-19.

⁷ L a l l e m a n d, *op. cit.* p. 62 n. 1 quotes sources.

P. 147

ὁ δὲ λέγει

ἔτι καὶ

ἐπιτοκοφάντες

ἀναπύσαντες τὸν ἴδιον ἑαυτοῦ

ἐν τὰς ἀκαταστάσεις

ἰσχυροῦς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ

κτῆτορικῶν τῆς ἐκείνου

ὡς ἐπιτοκοφάντες ἐν τὰς

ἰσχυροῦς ἀποκρίσθη τὸ

τοῦ ἐκείνου

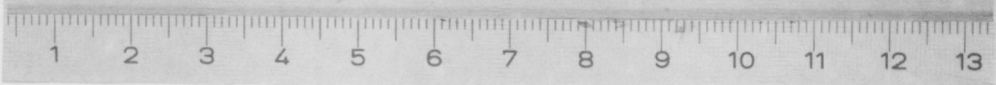


Fig. 5. P. Giss. inv. 147; to A. ŁUKASZEWICZ.

an order to go to Alexandria together with some other persons. The author of the letter was probably sent by the *praeses* to Alexandria and was expected to stay there on some duty, which is not specified in the extant part of the document. We have not enough data to discuss this enigmatic matter in a more detailed way.

ἐντυχῶς which is a plausible supplement of the beginning of the preserved portion of line 3, agrees with the following verb. However, there is not enough evidence to be completely sure of this supplement.

The most complicated problem is the very nature of the document. The presence of ἀναφέρω εἰς κτλ. makes γνώσις etc. an almost inevitable supplement. An alternative could be ἀναφέρω εἰς with a title of the addressee. Anyway the expression indicates that the document is rather not a petition. ἀναφέρω with a different meaning (cf. P. Lips. 84 iii 19 [IVth cent. A.D.]: οἱ ἀναφερόμενοι τῇ τάξει τοῦ ἡγεμόνος) is not very likely in our document. Although in ἀναφερ...σ there is little space for ωει, it is more reasonable to admit that the text reads ἀναφέρω εἰς or εἰς, than to abandon the reading of ς at the end of line 2 and conjecture other possibilities. The final *sigma* of line 2 has close parallels in our text, e.g. in line 3.

It is also a question whether lines 5-6 contain a declaration to perform the task properly or whether they are a part of a report containing a description of a completed duty. A document beginning with ἀναφέρω seems rather to be an account of some accomplished activities. We may easily interpret it as a report sent from Alexandria to the bureaux of the *praeses* of the Thebaid. If the writer actually accompanied the *praeses* to Alexandria, the lengthy introductory part explaining the nature of the task and the allegedly excellent performance of the author would be senseless.

Line 5 apparently means that the writer did not (or does not intend to) waste time to visit places "outside" (τοὺς ἔξω τόπους), which he would perhaps see for some reasons (ἐνεκεν, line 5), but faultlessly performed his actual task. If the letter immediately preceding τοὺς is not an *iota*, it could be a *rho*, perhaps of ὑπέρ.

After ἐν τῇ at the end of line 5, line 6 certainly began with Ἀλεξανδρεία. We cannot clearly see, whether the *officialis* reported that he visited only the city of Alexandria, or whether he promised to do so in future. Either interpretation of the text seems to contradict the opinion of the editors of the volume of P.Giss. who thought that the *officialis* under discussion was ordered to go to Alexandria together with the *praeses*. N.B. the characteristic wording seems to indicate that the text concerns Alexandria.⁸ It is, however, possible, that, in spite of the initial formula containing ἀναφέρω, the document is in fact a declaration made by a government agent whom the governor of the Thebaid had just appointed to go to Alexandria and who promises to fulfil correctly his duties. In such case δειωτάτην in line 7 could be a part of a formula mentioning an eventual punish-

⁸ For the meaning of οἱ ἔξω τόποι in an Alexandrian context see BGU IV 1114. 5 (8/7 B.C.): ἐν τοῖς ἔξω τόποις, which is explained by the editor as "oberhalb Alexandriens, also in Ägypten" and by P. r e i s i g k e, *Wörterbuch* I, s.v. ἔξω as "außerhalb Alexandriens (doch noch in Ägypten)". Cf. BGU IV 1106. 10 (13 B.C.) which, however, throws little light on the matter.

ment threatening in case of a transgression. If our papyrus is such a declaration, it is quite possible that our officer was indeed supposed to accompany his superior going to Alexandria, as suggested by Kornemann and Meyer in the *editio princeps*. However, the interpretation of the document as a report appears to the present writer as a more convincing possibility.

ἀποπληρῆ at the end of line 6 may be either an infinitive or a participle. If the text was a report, it was certainly an aorist participle. Line 7 probably alludes to some other duties of the officer in question.

We can only guess the nature of the task of our *officialis*. The assumption that his mission was a part of contacts between the *praeses Thebaidis* and the prefect of Egypt is tempting but has no foundation in the text. Was the writer dispatched to Alexandria to watch and report some of the troubles so frequent in that city in the IVth century? (Our document belongs to the time of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria [328-373]). In such case, and if the document is indeed a report, δεωσάτην could perhaps refer to some events in Alexandria. Anyway, we may take for granted that our writer was probably dispatched to Alexandria with a letter or as an informer.

In papyri there are several instances of τάξις or office of the governor.⁹ Generally, we may take for granted that the office of the *praeses* assumed some of the aspects of the earlier office of epistrategus, which disappeared before the office of the *praeses* came into being.¹⁰ However, according to J. David Thomas, "We should be very cautious in comparing epistrategoi with the *praesides* known from the early fourth century. ... The *praefectus* was of higher rank than the *praesides*, but it is very questionable whether he had any authority over them or any right to intervene in the territories under their control."¹¹ We know that in A.D. 368-9 the *praefecti praetorio* communicated in fiscal matters directly with the *praeses* of the Thebaid.¹² In spite of this circumstance, official journeys of the *praesides* to meet the prefect in Alexandria were not unlikely. The character of mentions of the τάξις ἡγεμονική in papyri does not allow any detailed conclusions. However, we possess another extremely useful source: the *Notitia dignitatum* contains a list of superior functionaries of the *officium* of the *praeses* of the Thebaid (Or. XLIV 7-14). Unfortunately, the title of our writer is lost and we cannot guess his rank within the structures of the governor's office. As we assumed above, it is possible that he was a simple *singularis* or *speculator* sent to Alexandria on a less important duty. Even in such case our document is an interesting piece of evidence of the practice of written reports observed in the *scrinia* of the *officium*.

At that time civilians certainly prevailed among the governor's attendants, since the military administration had been already separated from the civilian structures. However we have an example of a βενεφικιάριος τάξεως ἡγεμονίας

⁹ Cf. e.g. P. Oxy. XII 14223. 2; 13; P. Lips. 20. 4; P. Lips. 84 iii 19.

¹⁰ J. David Thomas, *The epistrategos in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt*, Part 2, *The Roman epistrategos*, Opladen 1982, p. 68.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹² P. Lips. 64 = W. Chr. 281. 11-12

Θηβαίδος¹³ that came from the Thebaid. *Beneficiarii* are not infrequent in papyri in their role of police officers. They certainly also belonged to the governor's service. However, we should not go too far in the attempt to reconstruct the unclear situation described in this papyrus fragment.

II. Fragment of a letter?

The following fragment, like the precedent one, has been described in the volume of Papyri Gissenses edited by P. M. Meyer and E. Kornemann (P. Giss. 124, p. 120). The description reads as follows:

"Deutliche Schrift eines Schreibers. 6. Jahrh. Erhalten sind Reste von zehn Zeilen mit höchstens je 19 Buchstaben. Bemerkenswert ist Z. 7 κτητορικών; s. die κτήτορες possessores (M. Geizer, *Studien z. byz. Verwalt. Ägyptens* 64 f.; "Archiv" V 374; M. Rostowzew, *Kolonat* 226 f.; U. Wilckens, *Grundzüge* 220)."

The extant fragment contains a portion of the left margin and the left half of ten lines. The papyrus is yellow, of mediocre quality. The writing is rather clear, surely datable to the VIth century A.D.

The appearance of proper names in a fragmentary narrative context seems to justify the interpretation of the document as a fragment of a private letter. However, other possibilities, e.g. a fragment of minutes, cannot be excluded.

P. Giss. inv. 147
Provenance unknown

12.5 x 12.5 cm

VIth cent. A.D.
Fig. 5

|πολλαπι
|,εφη Θεοδω|
] ...[π]ερί τοῦ κοφου τι.εισ|
5 Αυροπ τὸν υἱὸν Ταπευ.|
 ἐνταῦθα καὶ εἴ τι συνεσ|
 Ἰωάννην τὸν τῆς χ..|
 κτητορικὸν τῆς σπα|
 ὦ δὲ ἐμοῦ ὄντος ἐνταῦθα
10 καὶ τῆν ἀπόκρισίν τιμι ε|
 τοῦ κοφου

6. Ἰωαννην 8. ὁ δὲ

1. A name like *Πτολλάπις could be possibly guessed here. Otherwise Πτολλά π. could be suggested, the letter on the edge of the lacuna being possibly an ι or perhaps a ρ.

2. λ is probable before the initial ε of the extant text.

3. The beginning and the end of the extant part of the line are uncertain. ι.. can perhaps be read before περί. After κοφου a new word starts; cf. line 10. It is a question

whether τοῦ κοφου is a misspelled form of ὁ κωφός. However, it is more likely to convey the meaning of κόφινος "basket-load"; cf. "Archiv" 5, 1913, p. 381.

4. Ἄνορπ?: Ἄνοῦπ could probably be read here, but it seems that there is too little space for an υ between ο and π.

6. What remains after χ at the end of this line does not seem to be an η which would make possible τῆς χῆρας. Another possibility is χυρ| (for χεῖρ| ?).

7. κτητορικόν certainly refers to a landowner or, more generally, to ownership. τῆς σπά|θης is rather not very likely here. We would preferably expect here a name of a place.

9. The use of the word ἀπόκρισις could possibly point to the text being rather a fragment of a text more official than just a piece of private correspondence.

10. After κοφου there is a blank space.

[Warszawa]

Adam Łukasiewicz