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CLERGY IN THE APION ARCHIVE: TEXTS AND CONTEXTS*

THE DOCUMENTS OF THE OXYRHYNCHITE ARCHIVE of the family of Flavii Apiones feature a number of people and institutions. Among the latter are monasteries, churches, and charitable foundations which received donations of money, wheat, wine, and vinegar from the Apion estate – a testimony to the pious disposition of the family and the care for the salvation of their souls.¹ Individual monks appear in these documents only infrequently: we learn of representatives of few communities and undisclosed groups of monastics from specific locations. The people of the Church – the clergy – are better represented in the archive but emerge there in purely secular roles. Their integration with the socio-economic tissue of the Apion estate is a phenomenon which, so far, has been

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¹ For offerings to monasteries and churches recorded in the Apion archive, see E. WIP-SZYCKA, *Les ressources et les activités économiques des églises en Égypte du IV^e au VIII^e siècle* [= *Papyrologica Bruxellensia* 10], Brussels 1972, pp. 81–82; T. M. HICKEY, *Wine, Wealth, and the State in Late Antique Egypt: The House of Apion at Oxyrhynchus*, Ann Arbor 2012, pp. 100–106; specifically on monasteries, see J. WEGNER, *Monastic Communities in Context: Monasteries, Economy, and Society in Late Antique Egypt* [= *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology Supplement* 41], Warsaw 2021, pp. 27–39.

treated tangentially in scholarship.² A closer look at this issue can, however, contribute to our understanding of the standing of clerics in late ancient Egyptian society. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to examine the relevant Apionic texts in their documentary and normative contexts; the present article constitutes an attempt at such an analysis.

The multiplicity of roles in which clerics appear in the Apion archive fits well with what we know about clerical occupations outside the Church. Even though ecclesiastical moralists would gladly see a clergy supported entirely from the means of the Church and the offerings of the faithful,³ in practice there was hardly any profession or source of income with which members of the clergy would not become involved.⁴ The testimonies of the Apion archive make us think of the tension between normative regulations and real-life practices, but it would be overly simplistic to present these documents as a mere 'realistic' counterweight to 'idealistic'

² See WIPSZYCKA, *Les ressources* (cit. n. 1), pp. 171–173; G. SCHMELZ, *Kirchliche Amtsträger im spätantiken Ägypten nach den Aussagen der griechischen und koptischen Papyri und Ostraka* [= *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete – Beiheft* 13], Munich – Leipzig 2002, pp. 219–220, 242–244; J. Ph. THOMAS, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* [= *Dumbarton Oaks Studies* 24], Washington, D.C. 1987, p. 71, mentions 'clerical employment in positions of managerial responsibility', but fails to cite any examples.

³ See E. WIPSZYCKA, *The Alexandrian Church: People and Institutions* [= *The Journal of Juris- tic Papyrology Supplement* 25], Warsaw 2015, pp. 195–198; R. WIŚNIEWSKI & S. ADAMIAK, *Presbyters in the Late Antique West* (forthcoming), ch. 6, 'Income and property'. In the sources from, or closely related to Egypt, a certain ambiguity prevails. The *Canons of Pseudo-Athanasius* (see below, n. 7) on the one hand insist that the clergy devote themselves fully to the service of the altar (canon 20), but on the other make concessions for working clerics (canons 50, 57). Canon 49 says that a priest should not occupy himself with any profession that involves theft or does not give him leisure at the time of the sacrament; by implication, it may be assumed that professions which do fulfil these conditions are permitted. The *Canons of Pseudo-Basil* (available in German translation in *Die Kirchenrechtsquellen des Patriarchats Alexandrien*, ed. W. RIEDEL, Leipzig 1900, pp. 231–283) state that clerics should not perform any labour so as to have no pretext to neglect their religious duties (canon 86); later on, however, while explicitly condemning trade, they do encourage clergy to learn a craft so that they can support themselves.

⁴ See WIPSZYCKA, *Les ressources* (cit. n. 1), ch. 6: 'Les occupations laïques du clergé' (pp. 154–173); SCHMELZ, *Kirchliche Amtsträger* (cit. n. 2), ch. 6: 'Kirchliche Unterstützung und weltliche Berufe der Kleriker' (pp. 203–254).

normative texts. Rather than that, they show us a compromise achieved ‘on the ground’ by people of the Church in a dynamic dialogue with the Church’s own tradition, the imperial legislation, and the needs and expectations of powerful lay agents. In such an environment, the normative boundaries could be either accepted or challenged according to what was considered beneficial for the respective actors.

1. CLERGY IN MANAGERIAL ROLES

1.1. *Normative writings*

One aspect of probing the boundaries of ecclesiastical discipline visible in the Apion archive is the participation of clergy in estate administration. Filling administrative functions in the service of laypeople was among activities considered problematic by the Church hierarchy. The reservations sprang from the fundamental conviction that clerics should devote their time to the service of things divine rather than earthly,⁵ and that servants of God should not serve laypeople in any mundane capacity.

The issue must have arisen relatively early in the post-Constantinian Church, as evidenced by a series of North African council canons dated to the first half of the fourth century – beginning of the fifth century which forbid clerics to work as estate administrators.⁶ No similar ecclesiastical

⁵ 2 Tim. 2:4: οὐδεὶς στρατευόμενος ἐμπλέκεται ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις, ‘No one serving in the army [i.e. of Christ – J.W.] gets entangled in everyday affairs’ (NRSV). The second letter to Timothy belongs to the so-called ‘pastoral epistles’ ascribed to Paul which constituted basic Apostolic authority on the organisation of Christian communities and the conduct of their leaders.

⁶ Canon 6 of the Council of Carthage (345–348): *Ut clerici actus saecularium vel procuraciones non suscipiant*, ‘Clerics should not accept secular offices or become administrators’; canon 8 of the same: *Ut implicati negotiis alienis, nisi antea reddita ratione clerici non ordinentur*, ‘Those who run the affairs of others should not be ordained as clerics before they account for it’; canon 9 of the same: *Ut laici clericos actores vel ratiocinatores sibi non constituant*, ‘Let laymen not appoint clerics as administrators or accountants’; canon 15 of the Council of Hippo (393): *ut episcopi, presbyteri et diaconi non sint conductores aut procuratores privatorum neque*

legislation has been preserved from the East,⁷ but injunctions against the practice present in the canons of the Council of Chalcedon (451) indicate that clerical involvement in secular administration of private property was

ullo tali negotio victum quaerant, quo eos vel peregrinari vel ab ecclesiasticis officiis avocari necesse est, 'Bishops, presbyters and deacons should not be contractors or administrators of private domain, nor should they seek to earn money for living in such ways that would make it necessary to travel or be summoned away from ecclesiastical duties'; followed by canon 16 of the Council of Carthage (419): *Ut episcopi, presbyteri et diaconi non sint conductores aut procuratores neque ullo turpi negotio et inbonesto victum quaerant, quia respicere debent scriptum esse: Nullus militans Deo implicat se negotiis saecularibus*, 'Bishops, presbyters and deacons should not be contractors or administrators, nor should they seek to earn money in indecent ways, because they should consider what has been written: Nobody who fights for God should get involved with secular business' (cf. 2 Tim. 2:4 cited above. Translations by Stanisław Adamiak after the *Presbyters in Late Antique West* database (<<http://www.presbytersproject.ihuw.pl/index.php?id=1>> [accessed 17 January 2023]).

⁷ Traces of a similar way of thinking are, however, preserved in Easter pseudepigrapha which treat the subject of ecclesiastical discipline. The *Apostolic Constitutions* VIII.47.6 state, in similar vein but much more vaguely: ἐπίσκοπος ἢ πρεσβύτερος ἢ διάκονος κοσμηκὰς φροντίδας μὴ ἀναλαμβάνετω· εἰ δὲ μή, καθαιρείσθω, 'a bishop, a presbyter, or a deacon may not take upon himself worldly cares; if he does, he shall be deposed'. The text is a late fourth-century (c. 380) compilation of earlier pseudepigraphic Church regulations and was redacted in Syria. Notice the ambiguous phrase κοσμηκαὶ φροντίδες; it may be translated generally as 'worldly cares', but cf. later usage cited in LSJ, s.v. φροντίς, III.2: 'office, function, department' with reference to John Lydus and Justinianic legislation. Cf. also the usage of the papyri where, alongside the general meaning of care, φροντίς may refer to charges related to a function or a task: *P. Abinn.* 3 (346–351), ll. 9–10: ἐκ τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν σὴν φροντίδα στρατιωτῶν, 'from the soldiers in your charge'; *P. Abinn.* 12 (342–351), ll. 5–6: στρατιώτου ἐντυχόντος τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ φροντίδι, 'of soldier being in your charge'; *P. Flor.* III 304 (5th–6th cent.), ll. 6–7: κατεδέξω τὴν φροντίδα τοῦ ῥιπαρίου, 'accept the post of *riparius*'; *P. Oxy.* LIX 3985 (473), ll. 7–8: εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τοῦ νομ[ικα]ρίου χώραν καὶ φροντίδα, 'for the same position and duty of *nomicarius*' (tr. edition). Cf. also the use of the word in canon 10 of the Second Council of Nicaea (787), below, n. 10.

The Egyptian *Canons of Pseudo-Athanasius* (1st half of the 5th cent.) preclude the possibility of clerics serving as managers to laypeople by the injunction that 'no man shall suffer that any of the priests should do him service or minister unto him' (canon 3). Cf. Coptic canon 4: 'No cleric shall mediate in any public matter (...) neither shall they serve any man, but they shall remain free, that they may serve the holy altar with holy readiness'. All citations from the *Canons of Pseudo-Athanasius* given after *The Canons of Athanasius of Alexandria. The Arabic and Coptic Versions Edited and Translated with Introductions, Notes and Appendices*, ed. W. RIEDEL & W. E. CRUM, London – Oxford 1904.

a matter which did occupy the Christian Mediterranean community as a whole. Canon 3, introduced at the behest of Emperor Marcian, apparently in response to a current practice, stated that no bishop, cleric, or monk should lease estates or become embroiled in management on behalf of a layperson.⁸ Managing property was admissible only if it was done for the sake of a church or a *pia causa* and at the request of a bishop, or as a consequence of guardianship of minors imposed by law.⁹ Notably, the subject of administration of private property of laypeople is absent from post-Chalcedonian council canons, both local and ecumenical, only to re-emerge at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787.¹⁰ Keeping clergy away

⁸ 'It has come to the knowledge of the holy council that some of those enrolled in the clergy, for the sake of sordid gain, become lessees of estates and apply themselves to secular business, neglecting the service of God while they frequent the houses of secular people and, out of avarice, take on the management of property (οὐσιῶν χειρισμοὺς ἀναδεχόμενοι διὰ φιλαργυρίαν). The holy and great council has therefore ruled that in future no bishop or cleric or monk is to lease estates or involve himself in the secular administration of business (πραγμάτων ἐπεισάγειν ἑαυτὸν κοσμικαῖς διοικήσεσι), unless he is strictly required by the laws to take on the compulsory guardianship of minors or if the bishop of the city entrusts him with responsibility, out of the fear of God, for Church property or for orphans and destitute widows and people who especially need the help of the Church.' After *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, ed. R. PRICE & M. GADDIS [= *Translated Texts for Historians* 45], vol. 3, Liverpool 2005, pp. 94–95.

⁹ See, however, *Cj* 1.3.51, which released bishops, presbyters, deacons, subdeacons, and monks from the duties of *tutores* and *curatores*. Cf. canon 8 of the Council of Carthage (345–348), which states that 'procurators, managers of estates, tutors or curators of minors (*procuratores et actores, tutores etiam seu curatores pupillorum*)' may be ordained only when they become free of their duties.

¹⁰ Canon 10: οὐκ ἐξέστιν αὐτοῖς κοσμικὰς καὶ βιοτικὰς φροντίδας ἀναλαμβάνεσθαι, ὡς κεκλυμένοις τοῦτο ποιεῖν παρὰ τῶν θείων κανόνων. Εἰ δὲ τις φοραθῇ τῶν λεγομένων μειζοτέρων τὴν φροντίδα ἐπέχων, ἢ παυσάσθω ἢ καθαιρείσθω, 'it is not lawful for them to undertake mundane and secular responsibilities, since this is forbidden by the sacred canons. And if anyone is discovered holding the office of those who are called *meizoteroi*, let him either lay it down, or be deposed from the priesthood' (tr. H. Percival). See the commentary of Zonaras *ad loc.*: Καὶ τὸ, κὰν παραχωρηθῶσιν ὑπὸ τῶν εἰρημένων ἐπισκόπων λειτουργεῖν ἐν εὐκτηρίῳ οἴκῳ, μὴ κοσμικὰς καὶ βιωτικὰς φροντίδας ἀναδέχεσθαι, προνοητὰς γινόμενους ἢ λογαριαστὰς, ἢ ἄλλας τοιαύτας μεταχειριζομένους φροντίδας. (...) Ἡ δὲ τῶν λεγομένων δὲ μειζοτέρων φροντίς, ἣν ὁ κανὼν οὗτος λέγει, ἐστὶν (...) ἡ ἐν ἀγροῖς ἀρχοντικοῖς λεγομένη κουρατωρεία, ὅπου καὶ μειζότεροι ὠνομάζοντο, 'And they are not

from lay administrative posts, however, remained a concerning issue for the imperial legislator, as indicated by its mention in Justinianic Novel 123.6. The common perception of the phenomenon inside the late antique Church is difficult to grasp, as literary texts penned within ecclesiastical circles do not dwell on the problem.¹¹ This is partially a result of the fact

allowed at all by the said bishops to celebrate liturgy in oratories, nor to accept worldly and economic charges by becoming administrators or accountants, or handling such charges. (...) And the so-called charge of *meizoteroi*, of which this canon speaks, is (...) the so-called curatorship of fields belonging to nobility, hence they were called *meizoteroi* (after *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων τῶν τε ἁγίων καὶ πανευφήμων Ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν οἰκουμενικῶν καὶ τοπικῶν συνόδων καὶ τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἁγίων Πατέρων*, ed. G. A. RALLIS & M. POTLIS, vol. 2, Athens 1852, p. 588). An exhaustive excursus on *meizoteroi* and their functions is to be found in L. BERKES, *Dorfverwaltung und Dorfgemeinschaft in Ägypten von Diokletian zu den Abbasiden* [= *Philippika* 104], Wiesbaden 2017, pp. 88–121.

¹¹ A possible exception – one, moreover, of Egyptian provenance – comes in the form of a miracle story contained in the *Encomium of St Kollouthos*, attributed to Bishop Isaac of Antinoe and dated to the seventh–eighth century. The story follows the tribulations of a deacon who served in a church of Kollouthos while also pursuing other occupations: ‘One day the young deacon went to a widow and took 100 gold coins from her to work with them (ἐτρεψεν ῥαβ ῥητοῦ) and find a little comfort. He spent three years working for the widow (ἐργ ῥαβ ῥαρος), because she was an exceedingly rich woman. Through love of God the woman did many good things with the deacon, so that he became rich through her, and he ate with her at her house and she too (would eat) at his’ (Encomium 83. The edition followed here is ‘Encomium on St. Coluthus attributed to Isaac of Antinoe’, [in:] *Encomiastica from the Pierpont Morgan Library. Five Homilies Attributed to Anastasius of Euchaita, Epiphanius of Salamis, Isaac of Antinoe, Severian of Gabala, and Theopemptus of Antioch*, ed. L. DEPUYDT [= *Corpus scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 544, *Scriptores Coptici* 47], Leuven 1993, pp. 47–83 (Coptic). English translation of the text (by S. E. Thompson) is contained in the following volume of the series [= *Corpus scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 545, *Scriptores Coptici* 48], at pp. 37–64). The deacon is deposed as a result of accusations of indecency levelled at him by fellow clerics, and is reinstated after a miraculous intervention of St Kollouthos. The saint divulges that the divine punishment was meted out to the deacon as he had ‘fallen into trade (οἰκονομεῖσθαι), knowing that no trader escapes sin’. While it is possible to interpret the capacity in which the deacon worked for the widow as that of administrator, the same language is used in the encomium to refer to activities of debtors who ‘did business for’ their creditor (ἐργ ῥαβ ῥαρος). It is therefore more likely that the deacon got involved in a successful business thanks to loans given to him by a rich patroness. The story would thus continue a long tradition of chastisement of clergy embroiled in secular affairs in pursuit of gain.

that Church literature concentrates on bishops and monks to a much greater extent than on presbyters and deacons¹² whom documentary sources indicate as the most likely candidates to managerial posts.

The canonical regulations available to us reveal a continuity of concern over clerical involvement in lay management from fourth-century leaders of the Church in North Africa to the Council Fathers of the late eighth century. While persistent, however, the problem does not seem to have been as central to later ecclesiastical normative writings as other disciplinary issues such as clerical marriages or unsanctioned transfers of clergy between dioceses. The silence of the majority of the Eastern canonical sources on the subject of the discussed phenomenon may either indicate that the phenomenon itself was not overly widespread, or that, for the most part, it was met with tacit acceptance of the Church authorities. Regarding its spread, we shall see that it is relatively well documented in Egypt, and while no comparable documentation survives from other provinces, there is no reason to believe that Egyptian clergy constituted an exception in this respect. One may therefore venture a hypothesis that among the possible clerical offences, administrating the property of laypeople was not the most salient one. In and of itself, estate administration would not have caused as much scandal as cases of improper conduct in private life or disobedience to bishops, especially since clerics were fully sanctioned to handle the practical affairs of their own ecclesiastical institutions and thus their presence in mundane business settings was nothing out of the ordinary. Moreover, the employers of clerical administrators were the most likely patrons and benefactors of the Church, and the work arrangements between them and the clergy could constitute an element of the symbiosis which existed between the ecclesiastical institution and property-owning elites.¹³

¹² R. WIŚNIEWSKI, 'Clerical hagiography in late antiquity', [in:] C. GRAY & J. CORKE-WEBSTER (eds.), *The Hagiographical Experiment: Developing Discourses of Sainthood*, Leiden – Boston 2020, pp. 93–118, at 96–97.

¹³ On the interrelations between the Church, state, and social elites in late antique Egypt, see R. RÉMONDON, 'L'église dans la société égyptienne à l'époque byzantine', *Chronique d'Égypte* 47 (1972), pp. 224–277.

1.2. Clerics' managerial functions in the Apion archive

As already mentioned, the papyri attest to the common character of clerical participation in estate administration in Egypt in the fifth–seventh century. The documents reveal presbyters and deacons acting on behalf of lay landowners: collecting rents and taxes, reporting on sales and storage of goods, and supervising estates.¹⁴ The single largest cluster of documents that show us clergy in such capacities comes, in fact, from the archive of the Apions. The Apionic papyri feature clergy in two functions crucial for the *endoxos oikos*, namely those of *pronoetai* and *enoikologoi*. The former were supervisors of *prostasiai*, divisions of the Apions' agricultural estate which encompassed *epoikia* and parcels in independent villages. *Pronoetai*, contracted for one year, were responsible for the collection of fiscal charges in cash and in kind, and were obliged to present yearly accounts of incomes and expenditures.¹⁵ *Enoikologoi* collected rents from

¹⁴ Documents outside the Apion archive: *P. Münch.* III 102 (455): tax payment made by Aurelia Thekla through Ioannes, presbyter and *curator* of Thekla's estate; *SPP* VIII 1069 (5th–6th cent.): Apollos, deacon and *enoikologos*, requested to provide 1,610 myriads of *kerma* for the transport of vine-props; *P. Oxy.* VII 1072 (6th cent.): presbyter Martyrios requested to take care of a new cistern (*lakkos*) on a *ktema*; *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67325 (6th cent.): presbyter Tatianos collecting grain, vegetables, and wine from *topoi*, presumably of an estate; *P. Hamb.* III 228 (6th cent.): deacon Esaias to presbyter Martyrios on estate matters; *P. Hamb.* III 229 (6th cent.): the same deacon Esaias to presbyter Martyrios on estate matters; *P. Oxy.* XVI 2016 (6th cent.): payments of grain made by presbyter Daniel in the name of the *oikoi* of Theon and Timagenes; *P. Haun.* III 52 (6th–7th cent.): letter from presbyter Phoibammon to his 'master' concerning estate matters. The archive of Dioskoros of Aphrodito includes a group of texts connected with Victor, presbyter and *pronoetes* of Flavius Kyros and his heirs, which are rent receipts written in his own name and for a steward of another estate, Pheib: *SB* XX 14249 (538/9); *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67135 (538/9?); III 67327 (539); II 67134 (547/8); *PSI* VIII 935 (6th cent.).

¹⁵ See R. MAZZA, 'P. Oxy. XVI 1911 e i conti annuali dei pronoetai', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 122 (1998), pp. 161–172; EADEM, *L'archivio degli Apioni: Terra, lavoro e proprietà senatoria nell'Egitto tardoantico* [= *Munera: Studi storici sulla tarda antichità* 17], Bari 2001; see also R. E. McCONNELL, *Getting Rich in Late Antique Egypt*, Ann Arbor 2017, pp. 43–47, 56–58, 73–75, 84–86. For pronoetic accounts and the areas supervised by the *pronoetai*, see G. RUFFINI, *Social Networks in Byzantine Egypt*, Cambridge 2008, pp. 108–119.

Apionic properties in the city of Oxyrhynchus, operated cash transactions, and were responsible for the maintenance of buildings.¹⁶

Clerical *pronoetai* are attested in five documents of the Apion archive: two contracts of employment,¹⁷ a pronoteic account,¹⁸ a list of grain arrears,¹⁹ and a list of *prostasiai* with their supervisors.²⁰ The better preserved of the two contracts states that the *pronoetes*, a deacon named Serenos, was to pay twelve gold solidi to the estate for the privilege of collection, and to deliver an amount of wheat equal to fifteen percent of the total he was expected to collect. The contract was secured with the entire property of Serenos and his guarantor, a lay *nomikarios* named Biktor.²¹ Concerning wages, the text states only that Serenos would receive an *opsonion* like the previous *pronoetes*;²² other texts from the archive give either the rather unimpressive amount of twenty-four artabae of wheat and two solidi minus five *keratia* per year or mention the wheat only.²³ The

¹⁶ See M. MOUNTFORD, *Documentary Papyri from Roman and Byzantine Oxyrhynchus*, PhD thesis, University College London 2012, p. 177 (available at <<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1348496/>> [accessed 12 December 2022]); MAZZA, *L'archivio* (cit. n. 15), p. 145. The function of *enoikologos* is attested also in the ecclesiastical milieu: a seventh-century papyrus from the Arsinoite nome mentions Theodoros, a presbyter-*enoikologos* who hands over money for the part of rent of the Church of the Martyrs and another institution (SPP VIII 881).

¹⁷ *P. Oxy.* I 136 (583): deacon Serenos son of Apollos; *P. Oxy.* LVIII 3952 (610): presbyter Phoibammon son of Phib.

¹⁸ *P. Oxy.* XVIII 2196 (586?): deacon Serenos, most likely the same as in *P. Oxy.* I 136.

¹⁹ *P. Oxy.* LXXXIV 5460 (569), l. 30: Joannes, deacon and *pronoetes* of Aspida, responsible also for Iboitos.

²⁰ *P. Oxy.* LXXXIV 5466 (2nd half of the 6th cent.), l. 19: Menas, deacon-*pronoetes* of Psempekle and NN, deacon-*pronoetes* of Matreu.

²¹ *Nomikarioi* were functionaries connected with the collection of taxes and official transport. They are attested maintaining relations with the *endoxos oikos* and could be contracted by it; they could also be nominated by village representatives. See HICKEY, *Wine, Wealth, and the State* (cit. n. 1), pp. 141–142.

²² *P. Oxy.* I 136, ll. 31–32: καὶ δεξασθαί με τὸ ἐμὸν ὀψώνιον κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ πρὸ ἐμοῦ προνοητοῦ, ‘and I shall receive my *opsonion* in the manner of the *pronoetes* before me’.

²³ Wheat and solidi: *P. Oxy.* LV 3804 (566), l. 154; XVIII 2195 (576/7?), l. 89; XVI 1912 (6th cent.), l. 130. Wheat only: *P. Oxy.* XIX 2243a (590), l. 81; XVI 1910 (6th–7th cent.), l. 7.

modest wage meant that in order to meet the demands of the estate and provide for himself, a *pronoetes* had to be able to extract more from the tenants and taxpayers, as well as draw profit from speculation and engagement with the market.²⁴

The Apion archive preserves two contracts of employment of clerical *enoikologoi*²⁵ as well as three other documents which attest to the activities of such functionaries.²⁶ The post came with considerable financial exigencies, since an *enoikologos* had to pay a fixed sum of 125 solidi to the *oikos* (*P. Oxy.* LVIII 3958, ll. 23–24). We have no solid information on the remuneration of *enoikologoi*,²⁷ and it may be assumed that most of their profit would derive from the surplus collections they would have been allowed to keep. Their contracts, similarly to contracts of the *pronoetai*, were secured with their entire property.

²⁴ The practice of extraction has been suggested by WIPSZYCKA, *Les ressources* (cit. n. 1), p. 172, and MAZZA, '*P. Oxy.* XVI 1911' (cit. n. 15), p. 172. McCONNELL, *Getting Rich* (cit. n. 15), ch. 3, 'Benefits from lower-level collections' (pp. 41–67), claims that the gain of the *pronoetai* consisted of the fifteen surplus artabae of wheat which they were supposed to collect on each 100 artabae of *embole* wheat (as stated in *P. Oxy.* I 136, ll. 27–29). G. BRANSBOURG, 'Capital in the sixth century: The dynamics of tax and estate in Roman Egypt', *Journal of Late Antiquity* 9/2 (2016), pp. 305–414, at 349, suggests that the surcharge was in fact destined to cover the cost of transport of the *embole* grain but grants it that the *pronoetai* must have had means of obtaining profit from their activities.

²⁵ *P. Oxy.* LVIII 3958 (614): Joseph, *psaltes* of the *philoponia* of St Theodore, son of deacon Victor; no. 022 in MOUNTFORD, *Documentary Papyri* (cit. n. 16), pp. 170–181: deacon Menas, son of presbyter Victor.

²⁶ *PSI* I 81 (595): rent receipt issued by deacon Apollos; *BGU* I 305 (556): lease of a *kellion* in which the Apions are represented by a deacon named Phoibammon; *P. Wisc.* II 66 (584): money receipt for a payment for window-panes for a bathhouse in an Apionic residence made by Apollos *eulabestatos*. The Apollos of *PSI* I 81 and *P. Wisc.* II 66 are most likely the same person. Phoibammon of *BGU* I 305 is not designated as *enoikologos*, but his function as a representative of the owner in a lease contract fits well with what we know about the duties of *enoikologoi*.

²⁷ No. 022 in MOUNTFORD, *Documentary Papyri* (cit. n. 16), ll. 24–25: πρὸς τῷ καὶ δέξασθαι με λόγῳ μισθοῦ ἥτοι [ὀψωνίου παντὸς τοῦ ἐνός] ἐνιαυτοῦ κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἐνο[ικολόγου], 'in order that I may receive on account of wages or [salary for the entire] one-year period the same as the rent-collector before me' (tr. Mountford in the edition), is the only mention of *enoikologos*' wages in our documentation.

More details of the activities of clerics in estate service can be gleaned from two sixth-century letters, *P. Hamb.* III 228 and 229, non-Apionic but most likely from the Oxyrhynchite nome, addressed by deacon Esaia to presbyter Martyrios, which are worthy of quoting in their entirety:

P. Hamb. III 228: May your piety know that all the farmers of the village came saying, 'We have our woad; we will not provide one *keration* for our *demosion* if the *monopolarios* does not come and take this our woad.' And those who do not have woad produced a suitable guarantor to the effect that those who have surplus woad will pay for those who do not have (any). May you please come up to the *geouchos* and ask him so that he sends the same *monopolarios* here first. And concerning the wheat, God only knows I did not sell it for a single solidus. And those who owe the remainder of the wheat did not want to pay the price of the same wheat, saying, 'Only if you take this wheat.' Write to me what should happen. For I collected six solidi and gave them as a down-payment. For the servants Petros and Menas hold me back [---] and you have their promissory note for 1 1/3 of a solidus. For you have [---] through *apa* Sirios the *symmachos* for one solidus, so that the same *apa* Sirios [---] one solidus. I send you many greetings.

Give to our most God-fearing lord, presbyter Martyrios [---] from Esaia deacon. [---] note of wheat and gold for the village Senyris [---] indiction.

P. Hamb. III 229: Even as your piety wrote to me about the treasury, look, Petros the servant came up to the city. Make the *comes* speak with him together with the *pronoetes*. I did not find any place to put the wheat, because the two barges were already laden. Make haste and come up here for the rest of the wheat. When your piety comes, bring a boat so that I put [---] and put the wheat there. For with God's help the matter of the wheat advanced and the pay is very good. If you have my *opsonion* ready to send before your coming, let me know. For this year I toiled more than others. God only knows that you, were you here, would not do the things that I do. God is my witness how I labour for you. Even as your piety informed me about the wine, by God, I already had in use four other wines. For I did not want to give wheat for the wine which I had put into use. Write to me about [---] of the letters. I send you many greetings, from the small one to the great. Send us a little oil, for I did not find any here, nor did Menas the *eirenarchos* want to give it to me for the solidus. May your piety know that I did not receive gold from Justus, your son.

The editors of these texts proposed to see Martyrios and Esaïas as either persons involved in tax collection on behalf of the state, or representatives of a church which was the patron of the farmers mentioned in the first letter. Juxtaposing the Hamburg letters with the Apionic documents, however, I believe that the activities of Martyrios and Esaïas are best understood in the context of an estate, as the letters contain elements of the standard estate parlance: the mention of a *geouchos* and a *symmachos* in the first text, and an *opsonion* in the second one. The editors are right to see the texts in a fiscal context, as the former explicitly mentions taxes in cash, while the latter seems to refer to arrangements for the storage of grain that may have well been fiscal. It appears, however, that Martyrios and Esaïas would have served the state only indirectly, as members of the apparatus of an estate belonging to a *geouchos*.²⁸ Esaïas' letters also mention market transactions and financial operations; this, again, fits well with the profile of administrators which can be reconstructed from the Apionic documents.

In his discussion of the employees of the Apionic *oikos*, Peter Sarris has stated that '[t]he estate overseers emerge as individuals of relatively high social rank, frequently associated with the Church'.²⁹ A profile of a *pronoetes* or an *enoikologos* that we may reconstruct from the documents is that of a literate person of means,³⁰ with an experience of managerial activities and the handling of money. As shown by Ewa Wipszycka, the

²⁸ For fiscal responsibilities of estates, see J. GASCOU, 'Les grands domaines, la cité et l'État en Égypte byzantine. Recherches d'histoire agraire, fiscale et administrative', [in:] IDEM, *Fiscalité et société en Égypte byzantine* [= *Bilans de recherche* 4], Paris 2008, pp. 125–213.

²⁹ P. SARRIS, *Economy and Society in the Age of Justinian*, Cambridge 2006, p. 68. Both Apionic *enoikologoi* whose employment contracts have been preserved were at least the second generation of clerics in their families: *psaltes* Joseph, son of deacon Victor (*P. Oxy.* LVIII 3958); deacon Menas, son of presbyter Victor (Mountford 022).

³⁰ Functional literacy and accounting skills were a *sine qua non* condition for being employed as an administrator. The degree of literacy of clerical estate employees must have varied from case to case. The pronoetic account *P. Oxy.* XVIII 2196, prepared by deacon Serenos, is written in correct Greek (but we have no guarantee that it was committed to paper by Serenos himself). The archive of Dioskoros of Aphroditon preserves receipts written by presbyter and *pronoetes* Victor, a manager of the Antaiopolite section of the estate of Flavius Kyros and his heirs (*P. Cair. Masp.* III 67327 [539], ll. 5–6: δι' ἐμοῦ Βίκτορος Ψαίτο(υ) πρεσβ(υτέρου) καὶ προνοητο(ῦ) τῶν Ἀνταιοπολιτικῶν πραγμάτων). James Keenan

clergy were the obvious group in late antique Egypt where literate people could be found.³¹ The expansion of ecclesiastical property, which, according to the same author, took place in the sixth century, must have provided at least part of the clerical personnel with an opportunity to hone their administrative skills. A look at the list of Apionic *prostasiai* with their *pronoetai* points further at the profile of clerical administrators of the estate: the entries which state the occupation of the *pronoetai* list, alongside a deacon, two *nomikarioi*, village scribes (*kommogrammateis*), and an *ex-riparius* (*P. Oxy.* LXXXIV 5466, ll. 9, 13–15). This places our cleric on a par with a milieu of officials who functioned in highly documentarised administrative settings.

All of the Apionic clerical functionaries whose origin is known to us came from Oxyrhynchos; they likely lived there and served in one of the many churches of this city.³² They could be well acquainted with rural affairs through the ownership of land in the countryside, which was common to numerous city dwellers (including clerics), or through the administrative work which they could perform on behalf of their churches.³³ Despite their possible business connections to the countryside, urban clergy were less likely to be involved in conflict and cooperation networks in the rural settlements where they were supposed to operate as representatives of the

wrote thus of Victor's scribal efforts: '(...) Victor had greater quantitative range and qualitative skill than a "slow subscriber", but was still well short of the accomplishments of a fully competent writer' (J. G. KEENAN, 'Victor, son of Psaios, and three Aphrodito rent receipts', *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 20/3–4 [1983], pp. 123–134, at 133). The above-mentioned *P. Hamb.* III 228 and 229, although sent by the same person, deacon Esaïas, were written in two different hands, which suggests the use of an *amanuensis*.

³¹ E. WIPSZYCKA, 'Le degré d'alphabetisation en Égypte byzantine', [in:] EADEM, *Études sur le christianisme dans l'Égypte de l'antiquité tardive* [= *Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 52], Rome 1996, pp. 107–126, at 117–121.

³² *P. Oxy.* I 136, ll. 10–11: deacon Serenos and his guarantor, *nomikarios* Victor ἀμφότεροι ὁρμώμενοι ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς πόλεως, 'both hailing from the same city' (i.e. Oxyrhynchos); LVIII 3952, l. 13: presbyter Phoibammon and his guarantor, *grammatodidaskalos* NN [ὁρμώμενοι ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς Ὀξ]υρρυχιτῶν πόλεως, 'hailing from the same city of Oxyrhynchites'; LVIII 3958, l. 14: *psaltes* Joseph ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς πόλεως, 'from the same city'.

³³ For landowners among city clergy, see *CPR* VIII 68 (6th–7th cent.); IX 29 (631–641); XIX 26 (718 or 733); *P. Herm.* 34 (7th cent.); *SB* VI 9590 (7th cent.).

Apions. That village clerics were not free from such entanglements is clear from a handful of documents of the Byzantine period.³⁴ One of the testimonies is *P. Oxy.* XVI 2058 (6th cent.), a list of property stolen from the household of Kyriakos, a presbyter and headman (*meizon*)³⁵ of the village of Spania, and his brother, followed by another list enumerating persons who were to compensate the brothers for their loss. Spania was a large and independent village;³⁶ while part of its territory was occupied by Apionic holdings, its population included also local landowners (*kletores*).³⁷ The village most likely possessed more than one church: the list of people due to compensate Kyriakos and his brother records the names of five presbyters, a son of yet another presbyter, a deacon, and a son of a deacon.³⁸ Kyriakos' family belonged to the village's privileged strata: the worth of the property stolen from the household amounted to 86 solidi, and the possessions taken from the house included 240 artabae of wheat. Theft was a common tactic in internal village strife, as the archive of Dioskoros of Aphrodito makes evident.³⁹ The implication of so many

³⁴ For testimonies from the sixth-century archive of Dioskoros of Aphrodito, see J. WEGNER, 'Scenes of clerical life: Clergy in sixth-century Aphrodito', *U Schyłku Starożytności. Studia Źródłoznawcze / Studies in Source Criticism* 20 (2021), pp. 139–162.

³⁵ For this village functionary, see BERKES, *Dorfverwaltung* (cit. n. 10), pp. 68–69.

³⁶ Contra THOMAS, *Private Religious Foundations* (cit. n. 2), p. 86, who considers it an Apionic possession. For Spania, see A. BENAÏSSA, *Rural Settlements of the Oxyrhynchite Nome: A Papyrological Survey* [= *Trismegistos Online Publications* 4], Cologne – Leuven 2012, pp. 354–356.

³⁷ Ll. 36–37: γνῶσι(ς) τῶν κτητόρ(ων) Σπανίας ὀφειλόντων πληρῶσαι τὴν γεναμένην βλάβην ἐν τῷ οἴκ(ω) τοῦ μείζ(ονος) Κυριακοῦ πρε(σβυτέρου), 'list of the landowners (*kletores*) of Spania liable to repaying the damage done in the household of the *meizon* Kyriakos, a presbyter'. It must be noted, however, that not all of the listed men would have necessarily been local inhabitants: lines 138 and 140 feature the abbreviation πολ() which the editors propose to resolve πολ(ιτευόμενος), or city-based *curiales* who owned land in the countryside. Cf. the so-called cadastre of Aphrodito, where the abbreviation recurs several times (SB XX 14669, ll. 1, 4, 10, 13, 18, 37, 104, 113, 141, 156).

³⁸ Ll. 46, 57, 75, 114, 117, 121, 123, 133. However, we need to consider the possibility that not all of the listed clerics lived and served in Spania.

³⁹ See G. R. RUFFINI, *Life in an Egyptian Village: Aphrodito Before and After the Islamic Conquest*, Cambridge 2018, pp. 63–74; Ph. VENTICINQUE, *Honor among Thieves: Craftsmen, Merchants, and Associations in Roman and Late Roman Egypt*, Ann Arbor 2016, pp. 92–94.

individuals and groups from Spania in the crime against Kyriakos' family suggests that the presbyter may have fallen victim to factional strife which tended to erupt among village leadership.⁴⁰ Clergy were obviously not above such endemic conflicts. The five presbyters and one deacon listed in the text may well have banded together to undermine the position of a stronger and wealthier player from their own circle.

Urban clergy, who did not occupy positions of power in the villages, were unlikely to be involved in local clashes in the same way and to the same extent as Kyriakos was. This could seem convenient to the landowners, who could view excessive embroilment in internal village affairs as a hindrance to an efficient fulfilment of the administrators' duties. In fact, however, we do not know if clerics from the city were always the Apions' preferred choice for administrative posts. While this can be safely assumed in the case of *enoikologoi*, whose focus was on the Apions' urban property, we lack the data to definitively ascertain what the situation was among the *pronoetai*.

Evidence from outside the Apion archive suggests that some among estate supervisors lived in the countryside and could have been recruited from among local people.⁴¹ In this group, clerics were the most likely to possess the skillset essential for the exercise of administrative functions. One factor that must also be taken into consideration at this point is the time-consuming character of the office of *pronoetai*: the Apionic documents allude to their various occupations besides the collection of rents and taxes, such as the supervision of the estate expenditures (within their *prostasiai* and outside them⁴²), or the handling of donations to religious

⁴⁰ VENTICINQUE, *Honor Among Thieves* (cit. n. 39), p. 94.

⁴¹ See, e.g., a letter from Besa, the head of the Shenoutean federation of monasteries in Middle Egypt, to the 'priests, deacons, administrators, headmen, and all the people who live in the *epoikia*' (βεσα πηλαχιστος πετςραι ηνεπρεσβυτερος μινδιακονος ηνεπρονητης μινκεφαλαιωτης μινπλαος τηρϣ ετογνηρ ζηνεποικιον): 'To the dignitaries and people of the villages' [in:] *Letters and Sermons of Besa*, ed. K. H. KUHN, vol. I [= *Corpus scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 157, *Scriptores Coptici* 21], Leuven 1956, pp. 129–130). The construction of the address shows that the author views all the mentioned groups as inhabitants of the rural settlements.

⁴² See MAZZA, 'P. Oxy. XVI 1911' (cit. n. 15), p. 169.

institutions.⁴³ Since the *prostasiai* spanned various locations in the countryside, a certain level of mobility between them, as well as between the *chora* and the city, would have also been demanded from the administrators. The areas on which the *pronoetai* operated were not overly large, and even the distances between Oxyrhynchos and the outlying properties could be managed with relative ease; travelling, however, required time which had to be added to the hours otherwise spent on administrative activities. As far as we can reconstruct the realities of the ancient Church, rural presbyters, time-wise, had an advantage over their urban colleagues as their flocks were less numerous, giving them leisure to pursue activities outside the Church.⁴⁴

Both groups – urban as well as rural clerics – had therefore characteristics that could be advantageous to their potential aristocratic employers. The volume of the transactions on the Apion estate and the complexity of their documentation may give the idea, however, that the level of literacy and general education was an essential feature that was sought for in future administrators. These were more likely to be found in urban rather than rural milieus, and the fact that both of our clerical *pronoetai* from the Apion archive hailed from Oxyrhynchos may not be incidental. One should nevertheless be wary of drawing any sweeping conclusions from such a modest source-base, especially in the presence of valid arguments for the possible participation of rural clergy in administrative activities.

2. CLERICS AS CULTIVATORS

Clerical administrators of rural and urban property are not the only representatives of the Church who appear in the Apion archive. Members of the clergy are also mentioned in the documents as *georgoi*: two of them are labelled *enapographoi* (*adscripticii*),⁴⁵ while others appear without any

⁴³ WEGNER, *Monastic Communities* (cit. n. 1), p. 47.

⁴⁴ See R. WIŚNIEWSKI, 'How numerous and how busy were late-antique presbyters?', *Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* 25/1 (2021), pp. 3–37.

⁴⁵ Generally on this category of rural population, see A. J. B. SIRKS, 'The colonate in Justinian's reign', *Journal of Roman Studies* 98 (2008), pp. 120–243. See also B. HAUG, 'Depen-

designation.⁴⁶ None of the clerical cultivators attested in the Apion archive appear in any connection with ecclesiastical ministry. The two clerics explicitly called *enapographoi* are guarantors in sureties issued for fellow registered farmers,⁴⁷ one (unlabelled) *georgos* appears as a recipient of parts for a waterwheel,⁴⁸ few other clerics feature at the head of groups of *koinonoi*,⁴⁹ while yet others stand alone as payers of sums due to the estate.⁵⁰

Making payments and receiving waterwheel parts were banal occasions on the Apion estate and demand no further discussion. More interesting are the surety acts, in which guarantors took it upon themselves to ensure that a person (guarantee) would stay at his place of residence and

dent labor: The case of the *enapographoi georgoi*, [in:] J. G. KEENAN, J. G. MANNING, & U. YIFTACH-FIRANKO (eds.), *Law and Legal Practice in Egypt from Alexander to the Arab Conquest: A Selection of Papyrological Sources in Translation, with Introductions and Commentary*, Cambridge 2015, pp. 430–441; A. BENAÏSSA, 'P. Oxy. LXXVII 5123 and the economic relations between the Apion estate and its *coloni adscripticii*', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 50 (2020), pp. 49–56, with further bibliography. The presence of *coloni adscripticii* in the imperial legislation, where this category is extensively discussed, indicates that they were an empire-wide phenomenon. In Egypt, however, they are attested only in documents from the Oxyrhynchite nome, in particular from the archive of the Apions.

⁴⁶ This does not mean that the 'unlabelled' *georgoi* were not *adscripticii*: Itzhak Fikhman suggests that the documents, especially those drawn up in estate contexts, may have not always used all the status labels, as the standing of the individuals involved would have been known to the administration (I. FIKHMAN, 'Coloni adscripticii – ἐναπόγραφοι γεωργοί in den Papyri', [in:] IDEM, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im spätantiken Ägypten: Kleine Schriften Itzhak F. Fikhman*, ed. A. JÖRDENS & W. SPERLING [= *Historia Einzelschriften* 192], Stuttgart 2006, pp. 190–250, at 194).

⁴⁷ P. Lond. III 778 (568): deacon Georgios son of *apa* Horos (also a deacon) from *ktema Meskanounios*; SB XVI 12484 (584): presbyter Anesios son of Anoup.

⁴⁸ P. Oxy. XIX 2244 (6th–7th cent.), l. 76: presbyter Apollo son of Philemon, *georgos* of the irrigation machine (*mechane*) τοῦ Κτήματος. *Georgoi* such as Apollo were irrigators responsible for watering installations and the associated land (HICKEY, *Wine, Wealth, and the State* [cit. n. 1], pp. 75–76).

⁴⁹ P. Oxy. XVI 2037 (6th cent.), ll. 19 and 23; XIX 2243a (590), ll. 15 and 23; LXXXIII 5381 (581), fr. 3, l. 7 (?); SB XXIV 16324 (557), l. 33. *Koina* on estates could be composed of *enapographoi georgoi* or count them among their members: FIKHMAN, 'Coloni adscripticii' (cit. n. 46), p. 200.

⁵⁰ P. Oxy. XVI 2037 (6th cent.), l. 34; XIX 2243a (6th cent.), l. 22; LXXXIII 5381 (581), fr. 3, l. 8, PSI VIII 954 (6th cent.), l. 45: heirs of a presbyter.

fulfil his duties. The guarantor was obliged to deliver the guarantee into the hands of the individual to whom the surety was addressed (a landlord or an official) at their request. Should he fail to do so, he was expected to pay a prescribed sum of money or perform tasks stated in the document.⁵¹

The archive of the Apions preserves two sureties in which the guarantors are clerical *enapographoi* (see above), and one, *P. Oxy.* XXVII 2478 (595/6), where the same function is fulfilled by a steward of a church (who, however, bears no ecclesiastical titles).⁵² The steward's surety guaranteed that Aurelius Pambrechios, a registered fruit-grower (*enapographos pomarites*) would 'continually remain and abide on [---] estate-orchard and show all care and good cultivation to it without blame or hesitation or condemnation, and shall return the rent upon it every year and (perform) all the estate tasks usually presented by it' (ἐφ' ᾧ αὐτὸν ἀδιαλείπτως παραμεῖναι καὶ διάγειν ἐν τῷ αὐτῶν γεουχικῷ πωμαρίῳ καὶ πᾶσαν φιλοκαλείαν (sic) καὶ καλλιέργειαν ἐπ' αὐτὸ ἐνδείξασθαι ἀμέμπτως καὶ ἀόκνως καὶ ἀκαταγνώστως καὶ εὐγνωμονεῖν τὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ φόρον κατ' ἔτος κ[αὶ τ]ὰς διδομένας παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐξ ἔθους γεουχικὰς ὑπηρεσίας πάσας [ll. 16–21]).⁵³ Of the sureties where the guarantors are *enapographoi* clerics, one, *P. Lond.* III 778, was given by deacon Georgios from the *ktema Meskanounios* for Aurelius Onnophris, a registered field-guard (*enapographos agrophylax*) from the *epoikion* of Mega Chorion.⁵⁴ The other one, *SB XVI* 12484, was given by presbyter Anesios and a *phrontistes* named Anoup from the *epoikion* Megalou

⁵¹ For a comprehensive discussion of sureties, see B. PALME, 'Pflichten und Risiken des Bürgen in byzantinischen Gestellungbürgschaften', [in:] G. THÜR & F. J. FERNÁNDEZ NIETO (eds.), *Symposion 1999: Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte (Pazo de Mariñán, La Coruña, 6.–9. September 1999)*, Cologne – Weimar – Vienna 2003, pp. 531–555. The list of sureties in Palme's article is updated in the introduction to *P. Oxy.* LXX 4787; to this, we now need to add *P. Oxy.* LXXV 5064, *P. Pintauidi* 19, *P. Oxy.* LXXXIII 5371–5363, 5375, 5377–5379, 5382, 5384, 5390, 5395–5397.

⁵² Ll. 7–10: Ζαχαρίας οἰκονόμος τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἁγίας ἀναστάσεως υἱὸς τοῦ τῆς περιβλέπτου μνήμης Ἀναστασίου ὀρμώμενος ἀπὸ ταύτης τῆς Ὁξυρυνχικῶν πόλεως, 'Zacharias, steward of the church of the Holy Resurrection, son of Anastasios of admirable memory, originating from the same city of Oxyrhynchites'.

⁵³ Translation after HAUG, 'Dependent labor' (cit. n. 45), p. 434.

⁵⁴ For Meskanounios and Mega Chorion, see BENAÏSSA, *Rural Settlements* (cit. n. 36), pp. 185–186, 430–431.

Moucheos for Praous, an *enapographos georgos* from the same *epoikion*.⁵⁵ Neither of these two texts preserves the penalty clause, and we do not know how the clerics-*enapographoi* were supposed to make good the losses incurred by the addressee of the sureties, which in both cases is the house of the Apions,⁵⁶ in case of their failure to fulfil the stipulations of the deeds. Some among the sureties preserved in the archive of the Apions stated that the guarantors would answer for all that would be demanded from the guarantees⁵⁷ (the *ὑπεύθυνος*-clause which may mean that the guarantors were expected to perform the tasks left undone by the guarantees, or provide financial compensation⁵⁸); others explicitly stipulated that the compensation would be paid in cash or in ore.⁵⁹ As the Apionic sureties issued by *enapographoi* consistently utilise the *ὑπεύθυνος*-clause,⁶⁰ it may be assumed that this was also the case in our two documents with clerical guarantors. Due to the imprecise character of the formulation, it is impossible to draw conclusions about the material standing of the guarantors in such documents.⁶¹

⁵⁵ See *ibidem*, pp. 191–192.

⁵⁶ *P. Lond.* III 778, dated to 568, is addressed to Flavius Apion II (539–577/579); *SB XVI* 12484 (584) is addressed to the heirs of Apion II. For Apion II and the problem of his succession, see MAZZA, *L'archivio* (cit. n. 15), pp. 60–68.

⁵⁷ *ὑπεύθυνος ἔσομαι πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπιζητούμένοις πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀποκρίνασθαι*, ‘I will be under liability for answering for everything that is demanded from them’; thus *P. Oxy.* LXXXIII 5373 (552), 5375 (557), 5378 (571–578), 5379 (570–579), 5382 (582), 5384 (584).

⁵⁸ PALME, ‘Pflichten und Risiken’ (cit. n. 51), pp. 538–545.

⁵⁹ Elsewhere, the sums were fixed and can be said to be on the high end: 8 solidi (*P. Oxy.* I 135 [579]); 3 litras of gold (*P. Oxy.* LXXXIII 5395; 592–602); 1 ½ litras of gold (*P. Oxy.* LXXXIII 5396 [595]); 16 solidi (*P. Oxy.* LXXXIII 5397 [6th–7th cent.]). For a financial penalty explicitly related to tax payment, see *P. Oxy.* LXXXIII 5377 (565/6 or 580/1), ll. 6–7, where the guarantor undertakes to pay from his own means the *demosion* of the guarantee: *ἐπὶ τῷ ἐμῇ οἰκοθεν τὸ δημ[ό]σιον αὐτοῦ διδόναι*.

⁶⁰ It is preserved in *P. Oxy.* LXX 4794 (580; here the *ὑπεύθυνος*-clause is followed by the institution of a general hypothec on the possessions of the guarantor, which suggests financial character of the arrangement); LXXXIII 5384 (584); *PSI* I 61 (609), *SB XXVIII* 17002 (614).

⁶¹ The material situation of *enapographoi* was not uniform: while certain of them were landless, destitute peasants, other could enjoy the possession of private assets from which they could draw profit. See BENAÏSSA, ‘*P. Oxy.* LXXVII 5123’ (cit. n. 45), p. 65; SIRKS, ‘The colonate’ (cit. n. 45), p. 130.

An examination of the preserved documents shows that *enapographoi* issued sureties only for other *enapographoi*, both on the Apion estate and elsewhere.⁶² Other Apionic guarantees are issued (for *enapographoi* and free villagers) by people from independent *komai* (usually under the pagarchic responsibility of the Apions) or the city, as well as functionaries of villages, state, or estate.⁶³ In the Apionic documentation, religious figures feature as guarantors five times. Both the *enapographoi* and free villagers connected with the Apion estate seem to have had a wide access to guarantors representing various social groups. The clergy are the best-

⁶² For this observation, see *P. Oxy.* LXXXIII, p. 124 (introduction to no. 5373). The documents in question are: *P. Oxy.* LXX 4790 (Apionic): Aurelius Serenos from Oxyrhynchos and NN, *enapographos* from *ktēma* Megalou Tarouthinou for Sourous from the same *ktēma*; 4791 (Apionic): Aurelius Philoxenos from *epoikion* Kyamonos for NN and his brother, from the same *ktēma* (most likely *epoikion* is meant); 4794 (Apionic): Aurelius Ieremias from *ktēma* Paloseos for Ioulios, his brother, and a trader named Enoch, from the same *ktēma*; LXXXIII 5384 (Apionic): Aurelius Anoup and NN, *enapographos nautes* from *ktēma* NN for Aurelius Ioustos, *enapographos nautes* from the same *ktēma*; *SB* XII 10944 (Apionic?): persons from *ktēma* Meskanounios for Aurelius Apa Sirios from the same *ktēma*; XVI 12484 (Apionic): presbyter Anesios and *phrontistes* Aurelius Anoup, both from *epoikion* Megalou Moucheos, for Praous from the same *epoikion*; XVIII 13949 (non-Apionic): Aurelius Anouthios for Aurelius Victor, his brother; 14006 (non-Apionic): Aurelius Kametis from *epoikion* NN for Aurelius Enoch from the same *epoikion*; XXVIII 17002 (Apionic): Aurelius Makaris from *epoikion* Megalou Eirenarcheïou for Aurelius Biktor from the same *epoikion*; *PSI* I 61 (Apionic): Ieremias from *epoikion* Pangouleïeïou for Aurelius Pamoun from the same *epoikion*; *P. Lond.* III 778 (Apionic): deacon Georgios from *ktēma* Meskanounios for Aurelius Onnophris from *epoikion* Megalou Choriou; *P. Wash. Univ.* I 25 (non-Apionic): Aurelia Nonna for her son and his wife.

⁶³ *P. Oxy.* I 135: a lead-worker (*molyboursos*) from Oxyrhynchos; XXIV 2420 (614): *chartoularios* of the *endoxos oikos* of the Apions; XXVII 2478 (595/6): steward of the Church of Holy Resurrection in Oxyrhynchos; LXX 4787 (564): *meizon* of the village Paneuei; LXXXIII 5371 (551): 'Aurelius (...) conducting business at the village of Septha of the Oxyrhynchite nome'; 5372 (552): a dweller of the city of Oxyrhynchos; 5373 (552): three men from the village of Sepho, of whom one is a *grammateus*; 5375 (557): an *epikeimenos* and *enoikologos* of the Apion estate; 5378 (571–578): a village *meizon*, a steward of a *topos* (a church or a monastery), and a scribe (*grammateus*); 5382 (582): the archimandrite of the monastery of Pamouthis; 5390 (588): a former *meizon* from an unknown village; 5395 (592–602): an *adiutor* of *scrinium*; 5396 (595): an *archisymmachos* of the house of Apion assisted by his brother, an Apionic *riparius*; *P. Pintaui* 19 (575–625): a man from *epoikion* Aktouariou; *PSI* I 62 (613): a man from *epoikion* Pilasiēnos.

represented occupational group among the guarantors, and while there is no reason to think that they were, overall, preferred from other, lay, individuals, their visibility in these acts points to their active participation in power negotiations on the estate. We can be certain that from the point of view of the *endoxos oikos*, clerical guarantors were equally capable of exerting pressure upon the guarantees as their lay counterparts, including estate officials. The exact character of the relationship between guarantors and guarantees remains a matter of speculation; according to Bernhard Palme, a kind of dependence of the latter on the former is most likely to be discerned here.⁶⁴ The sureties, therefore, were means by which individuals with appropriate resources could bind others to themselves taking advantage of the weaker party's unfavourable circumstances.⁶⁵ Through them, local hierarchies and networks of low-level patronage could be established or confirmed, and the clergy – both free and dependent – were likely to participate in them.

A question may be asked about the ecclesiastical affiliation of the clerical cultivators attested in the Apion archive, in particular the *enapographoi*. This is best addressed against the backdrop of imperial legislation which made provisions for churches founded on estate property. A law of Honorius and Arcadius stated that

For the churches which have been established, as is customary, on the landholdings of various proprietors, or in the villages also, or in any place whatsoever, clerics shall not be ordained from any other landholding or village, but from that one where it appears that the church is located, so that such clerics shall assume the responsibility and burden of their own capitation tax. Moreover, in proportion to the size and population of each

⁶⁴ PALME, 'Pflichten und Risiken' (cit. n. 51), p. 555.

⁶⁵ The most likely context of the sureties was imprisonment or flight; the prisoners and fugitives needed a guarantee of a third party to resume normal functioning in the society. The sureties constituted a tool thanks to which this was achieved – at a price which we cannot fully determine (see FIKHMAN, '*Coloni adscripticii*' [cit. n. 46], p. 204: '(...) bei den Gestellungsbürgschaften handelte es sich nicht um eine Norm, sondern, wie in der Forschungsliteratur bereits festgestellt, um ein Verfahren, das durch besondere Umstände ausgelöst wurde').

village, a fixed number of clerics shall be ordained for the churches, according to the judgement of the bishop.⁶⁶

A later constitution of Zeno precised the conditions of ordination for *coloni adscripticii*:

We order, in accordance with an old constitution, that the ordinations of unfree tenants (*adscripticii*) are of no substance unless the manifest consent of the owners of the properties from which they come is obtained. The owners of the estates who have not manifestly consented to the ordination as stated are granted the freedom to exercise their right over their unfree tenants just as in the case of other tenants (*coloni*) as if no ordination had taken place.⁶⁷

Based on these laws, we may surmise that the clerics-*enapographoi* mentioned in the sureties served in churches in the locations which are stated as their places of origin (*ktema* Meskanounios and *epoikion* Megalou Moucheos) and to which they were bound fiscally, and that the Apions, through their representatives, consented to both ordinations. It may seem logical to assume that the churches with which the clerics were affiliated were themselves foundations of the Apions; unfortunately, infor-

⁶⁶ *Ecclesiis, quae in possessionibus, ut adsolet, diversorum, vicis etiam vel quibuslibet locis sunt constitutae, clerici non ex alia possessione vel vico, sed ex eo, ubi ecclesiam esse constiterit, eatenus ordinatur; ut propriae capitationis onus ac sarcinam recognoscant, ita ut pro magnitudine vel celebritate uniuscuiusque vici ecclesiis certus iudicio episcopi clericorum numerus ordinetur: CTb 16.2.33 (398); translation after *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, transl. & comm. C. PHARR, Princeton 1952, p. 446.*

⁶⁷ *Iubemus adscripticiorum creationes secundum veterem constitutionem, nisi dominorum possessionum, unde oriundi sunt, evidens concurrerit consensus, nullius penitus esse momenti, sed isdem fundorum dominis, qui faciendae creationi non sicut dictum est evidenter consenserint, ius proprium ad similitudinem ceterorum colonorum in suos adscripticios exercendi, tamquam si nulla creatio intercessisset, tribui facultatem: CJ 1.3.36 (484); after *The Codex of Justinian: A New Annotated Translation with Parallel Latin and Greek Text Based on a Translation by Justice Fred H. Blume*, ed. B. FRIER et alii, Cambridge 2016, p. 101. Apparently, in the late fifth century ordinations of *coloni* taking place without the consent of estate owners must have become enough of a problem to merit addressing it in the imperial legislation.*

mation about church-founding activities of the *oikos* is surprisingly scant. Apionic accounts record amounts of grain and sums of money given to churches on *ktemata* of the estate.⁶⁸ The amounts of grain disbursed to the churches rarely exceed ten artabae and the sums are as a rule smaller than one solidus. John Philip Thomas has argued that these churches were most likely foundations of the Apions; the estate, however, was not overly burdened with their maintenance, as their clerics would have derived means of sustenance from leases of Apionic land, and the estate itself would have provided only for the eucharistic offerings.⁶⁹ That at least some among the Apionic *enapographoi* earned their living by leasing land from the estate has been expounded in a recent article by Amin Benaissa.⁷⁰ *Enapographoi* constituted local pools of potential ecclesiastical personnel who were expected to fulfil their obligations toward the estate also after accessing the ranks of the clergy; they were also, in many cases, capable of fending for themselves. In this way, the landowner would incur no loss by consenting to their ordinations and would have little reason to oppose these. The fact that *enapographoi* were bound to the estate and their condition was inherited, paired with the tendency of the sons of clerics to follow in the footsteps of their fathers and choose ecclesiastical careers, would work toward ensuring the continuity of the functioning of churches founded on *ktemata* and in *epoikia*.⁷¹

⁶⁸ *P. Oxy.* XVI 1910 (late 6th–7th cent.), ll. 3–4; 1912 (before 566), ll. 115–119; XVIII 2195 (576–577?), ll. 84–88; XIX 2243a (590–591), ll. 75–78; LV 3804 (566), ll. 144–148. *PSI* VIII 953 (576–578), l. 8, mentions a donation of wine for the church of Papsau, an Apionic *epoikion* which is listed as a recipient of wheat and money in *P. Oxy.* XVI 1912, l. 116.

⁶⁹ THOMAS, *Private Religious Foundations* (cit. n. 2), pp. 84–85. Thomas does not discuss the clerical *enapographoi* attested in the documents. On the legal status of churches and monasteries on private estates, see A. STEINWENTER, ‘Die Rechtsstellung der Kirchen und Klöster nach den Papyri’, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Kanonistische Abteilung* 19/1 (1930), pp. 1–50, at 24–27.

⁷⁰ BENAÏSSA, ‘*P. Oxy.* LXXXVII 5123’ (cit. n. 45).

⁷¹ Cf., e.g., *P. Lond.* III 778 (568), which features Georgios, a deacon and a son of a certain *apa* Horos, who was a deacon himself. On inheritance of ecclesiastical functions, see E. WIPSZYCKA, ‘Fonctionnement de l’Église égyptienne aux IV^e–VIII^e siècles (sur quelques aspects)’, [in:] EADEM, *Études sur le christianisme* (cit. n. 31), pp. 195–224, at 212–217.

3. OTHER FUNCTIONS

A large estate like that of the Apions would regulate its multiple affairs through a variety of legal deeds. Therefore, it was necessary for it to secure the services of people who had the expertise required to draw them up; the Apion archive reveals the presence of clerics among such specialists working for the *endoxos oikos*.

Clerics educated in law (*symbolaiographoi* and *nomikoi*) performed their function alongside other professional writers from the same ecclesiastical milieu who did not go through formal legal education (*notarioi* and *grammateis*). Most of the attestations of clerical professional writers, legal and not, are dated to the seventh–eighth century;⁷² the sixth-century testimonies come predominantly from the archive of the Apions.⁷³ The archive preserves six legal deeds produced by two deacons–*symbolaiographoi*; of these, five are the work of Iustus, who initially subscribes as subdeacon, then as deacon. His career is likely to have spanned around twenty years, and his promotion to the deaconate took place somewhere between 545 and 553. Deacon Anastasios, attested over twenty years after the last document signed by Iustus, is a completely obscure figure.

The two deacons, educated in law, came most likely from the propertied urban ‘upper middle class’ from which the Church would willingly

⁷² *SPP* III 347 (7th cent.): Theodoros, deacon and *nomikos*; VIII 898–945 and 1074–1076, *SB* XX 15002 (7th–8th cent.): Petterios, deacon and *notarios*; *SB* I 5690 (6th–7th cent.): Kosmas, deacon and *symbolaiographos*; *P. Ross. Georg.* III 40 (538): NN, presbyter and *notarios*; *P. Apoll. Ano* 57 (708): Papnouthis, deacon and *nomikos*; *P. Edfou* I 3 (618): Kyrillos, deacon and *symbolaiographos*; *P. Grenf.* II 104 (7th–8th cent.): Phil(otheos?), presbyter and *grammateus*; *SB* I 5114 (630–640): Kyrillos, deacon and *synallagmatographos*; *CPR* IV 126 (7th–8th cent.): Chael, deacon and *nomikos*; *RIC* 758 (no date): NN, deacon and *grammateus*. Cf. *P. Lond.* V 1724 (578–582), which is an elaborate sale contract drawn up by Theophilos, a deacon from Syene, who does not bear any professional designation. WIPSZYCKA, *Les ressources* (cit. n. 1), p. 170, observed that clerical scribes and lawyers are a rare phenomenon in the sixth century and become numerous only in the eighth century (the shift is already perceptible in the seventh century).

⁷³ *P. Oxy.* XVI 1985 (543), LI 3641 (544), LXIII 4397 (545), XXXVI 2780 (553), I 134 (569): Iustus, (sub)deacon and *symbolaiographos*; *P. Oxy.* XVI 1989 (590): Anastasios, deacon and *symbolaiographos*.

draw its personnel.⁷⁴ As members of families wealthy enough to provide for the education of their sons, they would have had access to more prestigious ecclesiastical posts. Moreover, their legal expertise would have made them attractive candidates for ordination to larger and richer churches, whose more extensive economic activities must have generated the need for more frequent conclusion of legal deeds. One may even risk a guess that Iustus and Anastasios, connected as they were to the most prominent family in Egypt, could have belonged to the ‘cathedral clergy’ of Oxyrhynchos and served the bishop of the city. Notably, the ecclesiastical careers of both men proceeded in a regular manner, beginning from (sub)deaconate and without jumping straight to presbyterate; Iustus, in fact, did not achieve presbyterate in over twenty years. This may also suggest his involvement with the episcopal see of Oxyrhynchos, since the closest collaborators of bishops were recruited from among deacons rather than presbyters.

4. CONCLUSIONS

A fundamental conclusion that can be drawn immediately after the reading of documents from the Apion archive is that the functions of the clergy on the Oxyrhynchite estate did not differ in any way from those of laypeople. That being said, a closer analysis of the different performances of clerics in both managerial and subordinate functions does point to their important standing in the Apion-dominated socio-economic landscape of the Oxyrhynchite region. On the one hand, clerics were likely to be found among administrators of Apionic *prostasiai* on account of the specific skillset possessed by numerous members of this group. The documents from the Apion archive and beyond bring into relief the banal character of the employment of clergy in estate administration and provide justification for the persistent (although not very frequent) condemnation of this practice which we witness in normative sources. The landowners of Egypt were obviously inclined to pick their administrators from among clerics, who

⁷⁴ WIŚNIEWSKI & ADAMIAK, *Presbyters* (cit. n. 3), ch. 6: ‘Income and property’.

were often endowed with a convenient combination of material, social, and symbolic capital. Ambitious clerics, in turn, could employ their skills in potentially profitable ways, devoting their time and effort to furthering the interests of estate owners. The latter, on their own part, frequently assisted religious institutions with pious grants and donations; such dialogue of business and piety could provide fertile grounds for justifying the continued involvement of clergy in lay administration.

The question arises whether we should see the practice of employing clerics on lay estates as a form of patronage extended by social elites to the people of the Church. Patronage of clergy by laypeople was an issue for ecclesiastical moralists. The *Canons of Pseudo-Athanasius* concede this only for clerics deprived of means of sustenance and neglected by their bishops; even under such circumstances it was still considered sinful, but the sin would burden the conscience of the bishop, not of the clerical client.⁷⁵ The relevant canon makes it explicit that providing relief to the clerics was intended to allow them to devote themselves fully to their ministry. What Pseudo-Athanasius expected from lay patrons was an exercise in charity performed *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*. The reality on the Apion estates was, as we have seen, much different: the clerical administrators incurred multiple obligations which hardly facilitated the devotion to the service of the altar. The *endoxos oikos* could present clerics who fulfilled certain prerequisites with attractive opportunities, but these were earned rather than granted.

The visibility of religious figures among the sureties addressed to the Apionic *oikos* points to specific circumstances in which clerics (along with village and estate officials) could boost their status through establishing relations of dependence. Although unclear in their details, the sureties indicate a strong presence of clergy among low-level rural patrons who offered access to otherwise inaccessible benefits to the weakest players in the Apion-influenced countryside. This group of mediators included also

⁷⁵ Canon 23: 'If a church possess not sufficient for the sustenance of them that serve the altar, then the bishop shall give them whereof they have need, that they may give themselves wholly unto the altar. But if the bishop give nought, then shall one of the priests go unto a rich man by reason of the needs of his house. And his sin falleth upon the bishop' (*The Canons*, ed. RIEDEL & CRUM [cit. n. 7], p. 29).

clerics who themselves originated from the legally and socially underprivileged stratum of *coloni adscripticii*. It is likely that religious authority and the related capacity to exert pressure on third parties played a role in surety arrangements involving members of the ecclesiastical institution.

John Philip Thomas, in his discussion of private religious foundations in Byzantine Egypt, has underscored the ‘tenuous independence’ of clerics serving the estate churches.⁷⁶ While the examples that he gives are both non-Apionic, they do show forms of personal dependence experienced by clergy within the orbit of prominent *oikoi*.⁷⁷ The fact is, however, that there is nothing specifically ‘clerical’ about them: imprisonment and debt (as well as the dependent status related to the position of *en-apographoi*, which Thomas curiously does not discuss) were simply the lot of the weaker parties in relations with the estates. If such examples show us anything, it is that membership of the clergy did not always improve the situation of those who came from disadvantaged backgrounds. Thomas confusedly states that ‘clerical employment in positions of managerial responsibility on the great estates must have brought some prestige and security, if not complete personal independence’.⁷⁸ This does not take into account the fact that the clerical administrators – at least those attested in the Apionic documents – were, in fact, independent figures, who most likely entered the arrangements with the *oikos* with profit in mind. The intimidating profile of the *oikoi* should not overshadow the fact that persons who interacted with them did not always come from precarious backgrounds. Although the administrators were incomparably weaker than their employers, the perspectives of their relations with the estates were not necessarily bleak.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ THOMAS, *Private Religious Foundations* (cit. n. 2), p. 70.

⁷⁷ *P. Oxy.* XVI 2056 (7th cent.), l. 16: presbyter Pekysios incarcerated in the private prison of the *oikia* of Anianos; *P. Oxy.* XVI 1892 (581): debt, secured with a pledge of a half-aroura field, incurred by presbyter Hareotes with Epimachos, a supervisor (*epikeimenos*) of an imperial estate (*theios oikos*).

⁷⁸ THOMAS, *Private Religious Foundations* (cit. n. 2), p. 71.

⁷⁹ See MCCONNELL, *Getting Rich* (cit. n. 12), p. 61 (quoting ‘Ruffini 2010’, ultimately not mentioned in the bibliography) on the conferral of status of the landowners onto their administrative representatives.

The documentary sources pertaining to the clergy which have been preserved in the archive of the Apions and elsewhere put socio-economic diversity of clergy as a group clearly on display. They also provide a context for the injunctions of Council Fathers and Church moralists by pointing out the routine character of certain practices which tended to earn condemnation of conscientious ecclesiastical leaders and pious emperors. The texts bear testimony to the fact that for part of the clergy social standing and material situation shaped their behaviour to a greater extent than the tradition of the Church. On the other hand, the hierarchical social structure and the extreme inequality in the distribution of privilege in estate contexts created opportunities for the emergence of lower-level relationships of dependency in which different factors, mostly unclear to the modern reader of the papyri, could have played a role. It is likely that clerical status was among these factors. What emerges from our reading of the papyri is therefore a prominent presence of clergy in intermediary roles on different levels of estate organisation.

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