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A SECOND CENTURY PETITION TO A STRATEGOS

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**A SECOND CENTURY PETITION TO A STRATEGOS
(PL. XI)**

This papyrus is an uninventoried piece from the collection of the Department of Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.¹ It measures 22.5 cm. in height and 10 cm. in width. The upper right corner of the papyrus is missing, with consequent loss of text in lines 1-5. The concluding line(s) are also lost, since the papyrus is broken off at the bottom. The text is written in a large cursive hand of the second century A.D. The hand bears some general similarities to that of *BGU V 1210* (= no. 37 in R. Seider, *Paläographie der Griechischen Papyri I* [Stuttgart 1967]), a document dated to ca. A.D. 170.

The text is a petition by a Heraklas of Oxyrhynchus to Dionysios the strategos. Heraklas complains that as a result of seeking payment of a debt he was assaulted by the debtor, one Amoitias, and the surety, Hermes. Charges of assault are not uncommon in such petitions; other instances include *P. Ryl.* II 116, 141, 144, *P. Graux* 4, *P. Mich.* V 228 and VI 424, *P. Oxy.* L 3561.

The petition follows the normal structure for this type of document. For discussion and bibliography see J.L. White, *The Form and Structure of the Official Petition* (Missoula 1972).

Διονυσίω σ[τρ(ατηγῶ) Ὀξυρυγίτου]
 παρὰ Ἡρακλᾶ το[ῦ]
 ἀπ' Ὀξυρύγχω[ν πόλεως. Ἄ]μοιτᾶς
 4 τις ὀφείλων [μοι ἀργυρ]ίου δρα-
 χμὰς δέκα ἕξ [κ]αὶ ἰκανὸν δοῦς
 αὐτῶν Ἑρμῆν γαμβρὸν αὐτοῦ
 διὰ Ἡρακλείδου τελώνου στυ-
 8 πτηρίας καὶ Βησᾶτος καθὼς
 καὶ διὰ τοῦ ἀγορανόμου ἐν-
 μάρτυρον ἐγένετο. μετερ-
 χομένου μο[υ τ]ὸν ἰκανοδό-
 12 την ἐτόλμησεν διὰ νυκτὸς

¹ I am grateful to W.K. Simpson of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for permission to publish this papyrus. In editing it, I have had the benefit of a preliminary transcript prepared by Dr. E. W. Wall.

ἐπελθεῖν τῇ οἰκίᾳ μου μετὰ
 καὶ τοῦ Ἑρμοῦς καὶ τὴν μὲν
 θύραν λίθοις διασχίσει, ἐμὲ
 16 δὲ σὺν τοῖς ἐμοῖς αἰκίσεισθαι
 πληγαῖς ὡ[ς] ἐπ' ἀπωλείᾳ
 καὶ σπάθη[ν το]ῦ ἀριστεροῦ
 πλευροῦ μου κατεάξει, ὃ καὶ
 20 φανερόν ἐγένετο τοῖς παρα-
 φυλάσσουσι φύλαξι. καὶ διὰ τὸ
 τότε ἐν τῷ νομῷ εἶναι
 ἐπέδειξα τῷ ἀγορανόμῳ τὴν
 24 θύραν. ἐπιδίδωμι τὸ ἀναφό-
 ριον καὶ ἀξιῶ [ἀ]χθῆναι αὐτοῖς
 ἐπὶ εἰς [πρὸς ἐπέξοδ(ον)] ὡς εἰάν σοι
 [δόξη. εὐτύχει.]

1. Dionysios cannot be clearly identified with any known strategos upon the basis of the information given by our text. J.E.G. Whitehorn, "A Checklist of Oxyrhynchite Strategi" *ZPE* 29 (1978) pp. 167-189, lists only one Dionysios (no. 48), a Petronios Dionysios, who was strategos in A.D. 139. A Dionysios also appears as acting strategos in A.D. 166; cf. *P. Oxy.* XVIII 1279.1. Neither seems a likely match with our Dionysios.

3. For the restoration ἀπ' Ὀξυρύγχω[ν πόλεως] cf. for example *P. Turner* 24.3 (Oxyrhynchus, A.D. 148-154) and *P. Oxy.* XLI 2997.2-3 (A.D. 214). This is the form of name originally used in the papyri for the town of Oxyrhynchus; for discussion see D. Hagedorn, "Ὀξυρύγχων πόλις und ἡ Ὀξυρυγχιτῶν πόλις" *ZPE* 12 (1973) pp. 275-292.

Ἄ]μοιτᾶς is fairly certain, since there is space for at most two letters. The name is well attested in the Oxyrhynchite nome throughout the Roman era: *P. Oxy.* I 47.13, 56.18,32 98.4, III 509.9, *SB* 7336.16,20.

6. γαμβρόν: *prima facie*, the β looks like a second μ (i.e. γαμμρόν, a possible spelling for γαμβρόν).

7-8. Herakleides is a collector of the tax on alum (κυπτηρία). References to alum and the alum monopoly are comparatively scarce in papyri of the Roman era; most of these are found in texts of the third century. Cf. *Chrest. Wilck.* 321 (Fayum, A.D. 145), *P. Oxy.* XVII 2116 (A.D. 229), XXXI 2567 (A.D. 253), XII 1429 (A.D. 300), and *P. Vindob. Worp* 20 (unknown origin, I-III A.D.). On the alum tax in general see S.L. Wallace, *Taxation in Roman Egypt* (Princeton 1938), p. 189.

The use of τελώνης in connection with the alum tax is unusual. Elsewhere we find ἐπιτηρητής (*Chrest. Wilck.* 321.6,16 and *P. Oxy.* XVII 2116.5) or μισθωτής (*P. Oxy.* XXXI 2567.3,11 and XII 1429.1). Wallace (p. 309) notes that "the government's monopoly of alum (κυπτηρία) was under the care of ἐπιτηρηταί in the Arsinoite nome."

8. Βῆσας is a not uncommon name in second century Oxyrhynchus. Cf. *P. Oxy.* III 491.20 (A.D. 126), 505.1 (2nd cent. A.D.), *PSI* V 1035.15 (Oxyrhynchus, A.D. 179), etc.

8-9. καθὼς καὶ διὰ τοῦ ἀγορανόμου evidently refers to the notarial function which the agoranomos performed in connection with loans. See M.G. Raschke, "The Office of Agoranomos in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt," *Akten des XIII. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses (Münch. Beitr. 66)*, pp. 349-356. It is unclear whether Herakleides and Bēsas are to be considered actual agents of the agoranomos or Heraklas was merely trying to strengthen his case.

9-10. ἐνμάρτυρον ἐγένετο: cf., e.g., *P. Fouad* 29.13; *P. Cairo Isid.* 66.9 and 67.12; *P. Mich.* VI 423-424.16.

17. Cf. *P. Oxy.* L 3561.10-12 (Fayum, A.D. 165) πολλαῖς με πληγαῖς ἠκίκαντο ὥστε τῷ ζῆν κινδυνεῦσαι.

26-27. The normal formulation at this point is ἐπὶ ἐὲς πρὸς τὴν ἐκομένην ἐπέξοδον; cf. *P. Ryl.* II 125.30-31, 126.24-25, 128.28-29, 149.23-24, *P. Mich.* V 228.25-26, 229.34-35, 230.27-28. Since there is only space for about ten letters in the lacuna, a shortened form of this (as in *P. Ryl.* II 135.17 ἐπὶ ἐὲς ἔξοδο(v)) is most likely.

For ὡς ἐάν σοι [δόξῃ] cf. *P. Oxy.* VI 898.38-39 ὡς ἐάν σοι δόξῃ and *BGU* 1022.19 ἐάν ὑμῖν δόξῃ.

εὐτύχει is a common, but not inevitable, closure to petitions to a strategos. For examples, cf. *P. Ryl.* II 125.31, 126.26, *P. Mich.* V 228.27, 230.31, 231.32.

Translation

To Dionysios, strategos of Oxyrhynchus, from Heraklas, son of ---, of the town of Oxyrhynchus. Amoitias, a man who owes me sixteen drachmai of silver and who gave as surety for these Hermes, his in-law, bore witness (to this) before Herakleides the collector of the alum tax and Bēsas, as if acting through the agoranomos. When I sought out the surety, he (Amoitias), together with Hernes, dared to come to my house by night and to break my door with stones and to do injury to me and mine with blows to the point of destruction and to break my left rib, which was apparent to the watchmen who were on duty nearby. And since you were then in the nome, I showed the door to the agoranomos. I present this petition and ask that these men be brought before you at the assize, if it please you. Farewell.

ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΥ
 ΠΑΡΑΤΡΑΧΕΑΤΗ
 ΑΠΟΒΟΥΧΙΟΥ
 ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗ
 ΧΥΣΑΡΜΑΤΗ ΜΙΚΑΝΟΠΕΔΟΥ
 ΧΥΣΑΝ ΠΡΩΤΗΝ ΓΑΛΛΙΑΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ
 ΔΙΑΤΡΑΧΕΑΤΟΥ ΤΡΑΜΙΝΟΥ ΤΟΥ
 ΠΕΤΗΡΙΔΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΒΗΡΩΤΟΥ ΟΚΛΩΟΥ
 ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑΤΟΥ ΔΟΥΡΑΝΟΜΟΥ ΤΗΣ
 ΜΑΡΤΥΡΟΝ ΓΕΝΕΤΟ ΜΑΤΡ
 ΧΟΜΝΟΥ ΜΕ ΟΝ ΙΚΩΝΟΣΟ
 ΤΗΝ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΥΜΕΝΗΝ ΔΑΝΤΙΣΤΟ
 ΜΕΝΟΝ ΤΗ ΟΙΚΙΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΤΑ
 ΚΑΤΟΥ ΑΜΕΛΟΥ ΟΚΛΩΟΥ
 ΘΥΡΑΝ ΛΙΘΟΙΣ ΔΙΟΧΙΩΝ ΕΙΣ
 ΔΑΝΤΟΙΣ ΜΟΙΣ ΓΑΙ ΚΙΩΝΟΝ
 ΠΙΣΤΟΝ ΟΥΚ ΕΠΙΣΤΕΥΟΝ
 ΚΑΙ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΕΣ ΤΑΡΙΣΤΡΟΥ
 ΠΛΗΡΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΑΣΤΕΔΕΥΟΝ
 ΦΑΙΝΟΝ ΟΥΚ ΕΠΙΣΤΕΥΟΝ
 ΦΥΛΑΚΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑΤΟ
 ΤΟ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΝΟΜΙΜΟΝ
 ΠΡΟΣΕΛΕΥΟΝΤΕΣ ΑΝΟΜΙΜΟΝ
 ΟΥΚ ΕΠΙΣΤΕΥΟΝ ΤΟ ΔΗΜΟ
 ΡΙΟΝ ΚΥΔΕΙΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΥΜΕΝΗΝ

Petition (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)