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ANOTHER οὐσία OF D. VALERIUS ASIATICUS IN EGYPT

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## Another οὐσία of D.Valerius Asiaticus in Egypt\*

Decimus Valerius Asiaticus born at Vienna in Narbonese Gaul around 5 B.C. and the first citizen of that city to become consul suffectus (A.D. 35) is a well known person.<sup>1</sup> A friend of Gaius Caligula he became the main instigator of his murder, since the emperor had offended him during a banquet. An attempt on his part to take possession of the emperorship failed. He accompanied the emperor Claudius on his campaign in Britain and became consul ordinarius in A.D. 46. Through the contrivance of Messalina «*hortis inhians, quos ille a Lucullo coeptos insigni magnificentia extollebat*» (Tac. Ann. XI.1.1) he was condemned to death by Claudius who eschewed to mention him by name in his famous speech of Lugudunum (CIL XIII 1668,14-15) and committed suicide by opening his veins. His ownership of the horti Luculliani on the Pincian in Rome proves that he was not a man without means and Cass. Dio LX 27.2-3 tells us even that he was a rich man. The sources do not reveal of what his wealth consisted. We may assume that, as is the case with most wealthy Romans, he invested the main part of his money in land property. In P.Mich. inv. 876 v I.13 dated to A.D. 50/1 (cf. A.E. Hanson, Atti XVII Congresso III, Napoli 1984, 1116) there is a question of an (οὐσία) πρότερον Δεκίμου Οὐαλερίου Ἀσιατικοῦ at Philadelphia. If Asiaticus invested the major part of his money in landed property the Michigan text shows that he did so not only in Italy but also in Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

Another papyrus known, albeit only in description since 1907<sup>3</sup> attests another estate of Asiaticus in Egypt. This time at Euhemeria.

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\* I wish to thank Mr. T.S. Pattie for his kind permission to publish this text here.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. PIR<sup>1</sup>, Berlin 1898, s.n. Valerius no.25 (pp.352f.); Weynand, RE VII, 2nd ser., Stuttgart 1948, no.106, Sp. 2341ff.

<sup>2</sup> Asiaticus' estates in Egypt may, however, have been a present from his friend, the emperor Gaius Caligula. A. E. Hanson, loc. cit., 1118 thinks it plausible that Antonia Drusi, sister-in-law of Tiberius, mother of Claudius, and owner of many estates in the Fayum, may have recommended his acquisition of property in Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> P.Lond. III 894, p. XLIII: «Application addressed to Gaius Iulius \_\_\_\_\_, ἐπιστάτης, by Chairemon. — — — . Dated the 21st Tybi in a year, the number of which is lost, in the reign of Gaius Caesar [Augustus] Germanicus [= 16 Jan., A.D. 38-41].» In BL I 271 the cognomen of the addressee is correctly given as [Pholus]. As the subsequent full publication of this papyrus will show there are some inaccuracies in this description.

P.Lond. III 894  
Euhemeria

28.5 x 6.5 cm.

January 24, A.D. 39-41

4 Γαίωι Ἰου[λίωι Φόλωι]  
 ἐπιστάτη[ι φυλακιτῶν]  
 παρὰ Μεγχή[ους τοῦ ]  
 [ε]ως τῶν ἀ[πὸ Εὐημερείας]  
 [γ]εωργοῦ οὐσία[ς Δεκίμου]  
 Οὐαλερίου Ἀσια[τικοῦ.]  
 8 τῆι κθ̄ τοῦ Τῦ[βι τοῦ ἐνεσ-]  
 τῶτος <χ (ἔτους)> Γαίου Κ[αίσαρος]  
 Γερμανικοῦ ἐκ[λάπη μου]  
 χοιρίδιον ἄξιο[ν ἀργυρίου]  
 (δραχμῶν) ις. διὸ ἀξί[ω γράψαι]  
 12 τῶι τῆς κώ[μης ἀρχε-]  
 φόδωι ὅπως [τὴν ὑπερ]  
 τοῦ μέρους ἐπι[ζήτησιν]  
 ποιήσεται. [εὐτύχει.]  
 16 Μεγχή(ς) (ἐτῶν) μ οὐλ(ή) [  
 Verso: (2nd h) ἀρχεφόδ(ωι)  
 Εὐημερεία(ς).

5 οὐσίας: ου ex δε

7 κθ̄: κ ex λ

#### Translation:

To Gaius Iulius Pholus, chief of police, from Menches son of N.N. of Euhemeria, farmer on the estate of Decimus Valerius Asiaticus. On the 29th of Tybi of the present <x year> of Gaius Caesar Germanicus a piglet worth 16 dr(achmas) was stolen from me. I therefore entreat you to write to the archephodus of the village that he makes an inquiry into the matter. Farewell.

Menches, aged 40, having a scar on [

Verso: (2nd h) To the archephodus of Euhemeria.

#### Notes:

1 Gaius Iulius Pholus (cf. P.Ryl. II p.118; cf. also SB XIV 11275?) is attested as ἐπιστάτης φυλακιτῶν from May-June, A.D. 39 (P.Ryl. II 147) through October 17, A.D. 40 (P.Ryl. II 151). This text is dated to Σωτήρος κ [cf. K. Scott, Greek and Roman Honorific Months, YClS II, 1931, 247ff.; A. E. Hanson, loc. cit., 1107ff.], i.e. in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th regnal year of the emperor Gaius Caligula. Gaius Caligula was murdered on January 24, A.D. 41. It is impossible that this fact was known in Egypt at the same day, i.e. on Tybi 29 (cf. J. R. Rea, ZPE 9, 1972, 7). It, therefore, is possible that either γ, δ, or ε (ἔτους) was left out in line 8.

- 3 Μεγλή[ους; for this form of the genitive, see F.Th. Gignac, *Grammar II*, Milano 1981, 71ff.
- 5 The Michigan text referred to above assured that Asiaticus' praenomen was Decimus, a fact hitherto deduced from the name of his grandson M. Lollius D. f. D. n. Paullinus Valerius Asiaticus Saturninus (cf. CIL XIV 4240). A fortunate mistake in the present papyrus conforms this. Originally the scribe wanted to write γεωργού Δεκίμου κτλ. However, when he had written the first two letters of the praenomen he realized that he had forgotten οὐσίας and wrote ου over δε.
- 7 Τῶ[βι; the Caligulan month-name for this month, Θεογένιος, is to date attested by one text only (year 2 of Claudius). Cf. A. E. Hanson, *loc. cit.*, 1112; cf. also P.Oxy. LV 3780,5.
- 8-9 The titlature of Gaius Caligula used in the applications from Euhemeria is mostly the most often attested: Γάιος Καίσαρ Σεβαστός Γερμανικός. It is not absolutely to be excluded that we have to supplement at the end of line 8: Κ[αίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ], either or both words written with Verschleifung or abbreviated. P. Bureth, *Les titulatures impériales*, Papyrologica Bruxellensia 2, Bruxelles 1964, 29 lists from O.Petr. 252,5-6 the titlature Γάιος Καίσαρ Γερμανικός which may have been used in the present papyrus (for SB I 5291, also cited by Bureth for this titlature, see ZPE 54, 1984, 65,1).
- 14 In P.Ryl. II 129,14 and 139,19 ἀναζήτησις instead of ἐπιζήτησις is used.
- 15 For ποῶ instead of ποιῶ, cf. F. Th. Gignac, *Grammar I*, Milano 1976, 199f.

The London text published here belongs to a large group of petitions which may have been found in the débris of the archepodus' office at Euhemeria (cf. P.Ryl. II pp. 117ff.).<sup>4</sup> It contains to date the only attestation of the estate of Decimus Valerius Asiaticus at Euhemeria.<sup>5</sup>

It is possible, even likely that Messalina came into possession of the horti Luculliani — the scene of her last hours (Tac. Ann. XI.32.2 and 37.1) — after Asiaticus' death. It is not to be excluded that Asiaticus' Egyptian estates came into her hands as well. We know of possessions of Messalina in Egypt (cf. G. M. Parássoglou, *op. cit.*, 73) although no property of her in (the neighbourhood of) Philadelphia or Euhemeria is to date attested.<sup>6</sup> The present papyrus raises the question of how many other important Romans — hardly many senators or important equites though — have possessed estates in Egypt. Chance may have bereft us of many a name!

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. also A. di Bitonto Kasser, *Nuove denuncie all'ἐπιστάτης φυλακιῶν*, *Aegyptus* 65, 1985, 3ff.

<sup>5</sup> G. M. Parássoglou, *Imperial Estates in Roman Egypt (= ASP 17)*, Amsterdam 1978 could not know the Michigan and London papyri. He, therefore, does not list (an) estate(s) of Asiaticus. It is also absent from the supplement of οὐσίαι which I gave in ZPE 63, 1986, 295f.

<sup>6</sup> In A.D. 48 Claudius' freedman Narcissus ensured that Messalina was put to death. If Asiaticus' Egyptian estates (and perhaps other possessions) had come into the hands of Messalina after his suicide they will in A.D. 48 have been confiscated in favor of the emperor. Anyhow, P.Mich. inv. 876 proves that Asiaticus' estate at Philadelphia was confiscated whithin three years of his death.