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THE ALLEGED *SUBSCRIPTIO* IN P.ERLANGEN 25

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## The Alleged *subscriptio* in P.Erlangen 25

In publishing P.Erlangen 25 = inv. no. 100 (p. 36) W. Schubart divided it into four sections: lines 1-6, which give the end of a petition and of which, as he correctly remarks, «nur in der letzten Zeile das Wort παραλαβεῖν sicher lesbar ist»; lines 7-8, a date in the reign of Commodus; lines 9-13, the statement that the petition had been presented by a certain Takoibis and that a person whose name remains illegible had written on her behalf as she was illiterate; and lines 14-18, which are written in a different hand and which in the edition appear as follows:

3. Hd. [.....]τι στρ(ατηγῶ) Κοπ[τίτου]· Φατρῆ τῶ ` κ(αὶ) Διδύμ(ω)  
 15 [τοῦ ἐπι]δοθ(έντος) μοι βιβλειδ(ίου) ἐξ ὀνόμ(ατος) Τακο[ί-]  
 [βεως τῆ]ς Πακ[οῖβ(εως) τὸ ἴσον ἐπιστάλ[ή-]  
 [τω .....] ἵνα τὰ ἀκόλουθα ποιή[ση].  
 [L .. ...]// Φαρμ(οῦθι) κγ (18.4.)

On the text Schubart comments: «Die Eingabe muß an einen Vorgesetzten des Strategen gerichtet sein, etwa an den Epistrategen Oberägyptens; der Strategie soll ihr Doppel dem örtlichen Beamten Phatres zustellen, damit dieser entsprechend verfüge.»<sup>1</sup>

It is this last section on which I wish to comment. It is clear from Schubart's statement that he regarded it as a *subscriptio* to the petition, and that he considered this *subscriptio* to have been addressed to the strategos of the Coptite nome by an official who was his superior. This would be unparalleled in the Roman period.<sup>2</sup> We possess scores of these *subscriptiones* and almost if not entirely without exception they are addressed to the petitioner, who is advised what further action to take, not to an official of the administration. When the official to whom a petition was addressed wanted to pass instructions to a subordinate he did this by means of a letter, not a *subscriptio*.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that lines 14-18 of P.Erl. 25 are not couched in the form of a letter.

If we are to find parallels for the type of instruction we have in these lines, we should look, I suggest, at documents like P.Petaus 24, P.Oxy. III 475 (= W.Chr. 494) and XXXVIII 2849.<sup>4</sup> P.Petaus 24 contains an instruction from the strategos to a κωμογραμματεὺς which begins, after the address (without χάριεν), ἴσον βιβλειδίου ἐπιδοθέντος μοι ὑπὸ Ἄρμιύσιος ἐπιστέλλεται σοι διὰ Εὐπόρου ὑπηρέτου, ἵνα κτλ. At the end of the instruction a second hand (no doubt that of

<sup>1</sup> I am very grateful to Mr R. Haensch for calling my attention to this papyrus and for indicating to me its apparent anomalies.

<sup>2</sup> It was of course very common for ἐντεύξεις in the Ptolemaic period to have an instruction from the official receiving the petition to his subordinate added at the foot of the petition itself.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. W.Chr. 28, a letter (in response to a petition) sent to the strategos of the Lycopolite nome by the epistrategos of the Thebaid. For general comments of the form of *subscriptiones* see my article "Subscriptiones to petitions to officials in Roman Egypt" in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World* (= Stud. Hell. 27, edd. E. Van 't Dack et alii; 1983), 369-82.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. also P.Petaus 17-23, a collection of documents concerning the sale of ὑπόλογος. Some of these include copies of instructions (ἐπιστάλματα) from the strategos to the βασιλικὸς γραμματεὺς in response to requests to purchase such land. Thus P.Petaus 17.19-21 reads τῆς δοθείση[ς] μοι ὑποσχέσεως --- ἢ ἴση σοι ἐπιστέ(λ)λετα[ι, φί]λτατ[ε, ἴν] εἰδῆς κτλ.; cf. P.Petaus 20.7-11, and 22.18-23. However, all these are couched in the form of letters, with χάριεν in the address and ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὔχομαι at the end of the instruction.

the strategos himself) has added σε[σ]η(μείωμα), and the first hand then records the date. This is followed by a copy of the petition. Very similar, but even more instructive for our purpose, are the two Oxyrhynchite papyri just referred to. P.Oxy. 2849 (AD 296) contains a petition to τὸ κοινὸν πρωτοστατῶν of Oxyrhynchos from a woman who claims she is unable to supply one of two oxen which have been requisitioned. Above this petition, in lines 1-7 of the papyrus, we have an instruction from the *protostatae* to Ἐρμείᾳ ὑπ(ηρέτη), which reads τῶν ἐπιδοθ(έντων) βιβλίων ὑπὸ τῆς ἐνγεγραμ(μένης) ἴσον ἐπιστέλλεται σοι ὅπως ἀκόλουθα οἷς ἠξίωσεν πράξης; this is followed by the date and, in a different hand, σεσημ(είωμα). P.Oxy. 475 (AD 182) is in the same format and provides us with what I suggest is our best parallel for the Erlangen papyrus, since it is addressed to the strategos. Here the petition occupies lines 13ff. Above this we have an instruction which reads as follows:

Ἰέραξ στρατηγὸς Ὁξυρυγγεῖτου Κλαυ-  
δίου Σερήνω ὑπ(ηρέτη. τῶν δοθέν-  
των μοι βιβλιδί[ω]ν ὑ[π]ὸ Λεωνίδου  
το[ῦ] κ(αὶ) Σερήνου τὸ ἴσον ἐπεστέλλεται σοι,  
5 ὅπως παραλαβῶν δημόσιον ἰατρὸν  
ἐπ[ι]θεωρήσης τὸ δηλούμενον νε-  
κρὸν σῶμα καὶ παραδοῦς εἰς κηδεί-  
αν ἐνγράφως ἀποφάσεις προσφω-  
νήσητε. (2nd hand) σεσ[η]μ(είωμα).

This is followed by the date.<sup>5</sup>

What I am suggesting is that P.Erlangen 25 followed this pattern;<sup>6</sup> i.e. the reference in line 14 to the strategos should be in the nominative, and Phatres also called Didymos who is mentioned thereafter is the ὑπ(ηρέτης and the addressee of the instruction. There is no difficulty about this second suggestion: ὑπ(ηρέτη abbreviated to no more than upsilon followed by a curve (as in P.Oxy. 2849.3 referred to above) can easily have stood at the end of line 14 or in line 15, altering ἐπι]δοθ(έντος) to δοθ(έντος). The first suggestion is more difficult since it is obvious that a strategos' name in the nominative cannot have ended in iota (as read in the ed. pr.). I believe it is possible to read the supposed crossbar of the tau and the iota as a raised eta, raised to indicate an abbreviation; i.e. the strategos' name was not written in full but abbreviated thus: ] η( ). The rest of the text will then have followed very much the pattern of the three papyri just referred to.

There is one objection to this suggestion: in all these three papyri the instruction from the official *precedes* the petition to that same official; whereas if my suggestion is adopted, this instruction in P.Erlangen 25 comes after the petition. In other words P.Erlangen 25 would not follow

<sup>5</sup> In their critical note the editors correct ἐπεστέλλεται to ἐπέσταλται; but it will have been noted that the parallels we can now cite suggest ἐπιστέλλεται, a correction already suggested by Wilcken in Chr. 494. The epsilon is marked as doubtful and one suspects that the first editors only read this because they were expecting ἐπέσταλται, and that the true reading is ἐπιστέλλεται. Dr John Rea has been kind enough to look at a photograph of the papyrus at my request, but reports that the remains of the doubtful letter are too uncertain on the photograph to permit a sure reading.

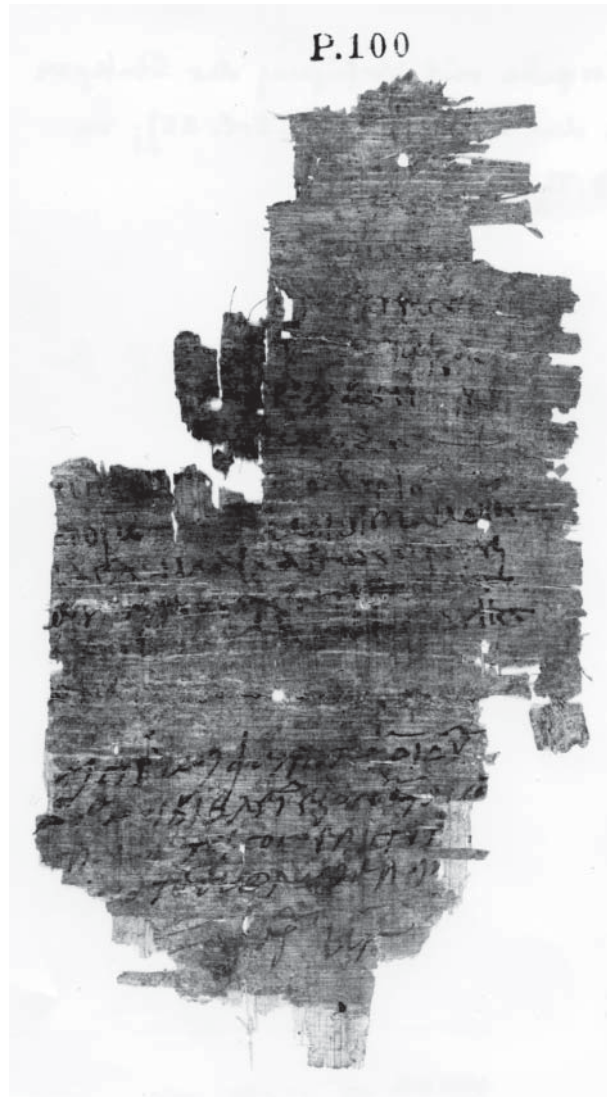
<sup>6</sup> Mr. Haensch kindly allowed me to see a photograph of the papyrus and I am very grateful to Frau Sigrid Kohlmann of the Handschriftenabteilung of the University Library of Erlangen for permission to publish it (Plate XIIb).

the diplomatic form which is otherwise attested and indeed would have a form to which I know of no parallel from the Roman period.<sup>7</sup> Although this objection appears at first sight to be serious, it may be that it is not really so important. In the introduction to P.Oxy. 2849 we read of the instructions issued by the *protostatae* that «the last line ... overlaps the first line of the petition. Clearly what we have is one copy of the original petition, ... and in drawing it up the scribe left the top five cm. of the papyrus blank, space which was subsequently used by the office of the *protostatae*». There is no indication in the publications of P.Petaus 24 and P.Oxy. 475 as to whether the same applies to them. It may be then that the petition preserved in P.Erlangen 25 was written in such a way that insufficient blank papyrus remained at the top for the strategos to give his instruction to his subordinate and so had no choice but to append it at the foot. My proposed text of lines 14-17 would run as follows:

- [ ± 5 ] η( ) στρ(ατηγός) Κοπ(τίτου) Φατρῆ τῷ κ(αὶ) Διδύμ(ω) [ὑπ(ηρέτη)].  
 15 [τοῦ ἐπι]δοθ(έντος) μοι βιβλιδ(ίου) ἐξ ὀνόμ(ατος) Τακο[ί-]  
 [βεως τῆ]ς Πακοίβ(εως) τὸ ἴσον ἐπιστέλ-  
 [λεταί σοι] ἵνα τὰ ἀκόλουθα ποιή[σης].

- 14: both the text and the critical note to P.Erlangen 25 print Κοπ[τίτου], but this is just a misprint; the papyrus has κο followed by the usual curve marking an abbreviation with pi.  
 As remarked above, it is also possible that ὑπ(ηρέτη) stood on line 15 and that we should replace ἐπι]δοθ(έντος) with δοθ(έντος), the word used in P.Oxy. 475.  
 16-17: the ed. pr. has ἐπισταλ[ή]τω, but this conflicts with the normal pattern and it will be noted that the alpha is marked as doubtful. This letter is indeed not clear on the photograph, but I believe there is no great difficulty in taking it as the epsilon we should expect.  
 17 ποιή[σης]: it is far more common to use πρόσσω rather than ποιέω in expressions of this kind, but the reading here is not in doubt; we may compare P.Mil.Vogl. I 25 iv 17: τ[ὸ ἀ]κό-  
 [λ]ουθον ποιῆσαι.  
 18: as will be apparent from the ed. pr. (quoted above), more has been lost at the left in this line than in those preceding. Before the month's name all that survives are two diagonal strokes, which will have been preceded in the lacuna by the symbol for ἔτους and the year number. Before this there would have been ample room to insert an abbreviated form of σεσημείωμαι. It is less likely, but not impossible, that this was added at the right of line 17 and that the date in line 18 was centred.

<sup>7</sup> Instead it would be following the pattern of the Ptolemaic ἐντεύξεις referred to above (n. 2).



b) Eingabe mit Verfügung des Strategen an den Amtsdienner (P.Erl.25)