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PAPYRUS TEXTS WITH OATHS REFERRING TO THE ΚΟΡΥΦΗ

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A good many papyrus texts from the Byzantine period record imperial oaths or exhortations by almighty god -- in most cases combined with the emperor's: εὐσέβειαν (e.g., P.Oxy. XVI 1880), τύχην (P.Muench. I 12), or σωτηρίαν (P.Wisc. I 11); or by almighty god and some combination of the emperor's νίκη and: εὐσέβειαν (P.Mich. XI 613), διαμονήν (SB VIII 9763), or σωτηρίαν (P.Mich. XIII 664). In most cases, the emperor's (alleged) attribute or attributes are followed by the form of imperial titulature common in papyrus documents of the time: τῶν (τὰ πάντα νικόντων, or καλλινίκων, aut sim.) δεσποτῶν ἡμῶν, with the emperors' names followed by τῶν αἰωνίων Αὐγούστων (καὶ Αὐτοκρατόρων). In a very small number of texts from this period, the position of the imperial titulature is occupied instead by the phrase τῆς (καλλινίκου, or καλλινίκου καὶ ἀθανάτου, or ἀθανάτου alone) κορυφῆς. This phrase was at first understood to act as a Christian substitution for the secular regnal formula,¹ but J.R. Rea has since established (CPR V 17, note to line 4) that it is used in fifth-century texts with reference to the emperor.² K.A. Worp (P.Rain.Cent. 106, note to lines 7 and 8) accepts this finding, adding only that the appearance of this particular phraseology requires further explanation; Rea himself had noted that in some of its latest occurrences -- exhortations in petitions, these, and independent of the oath by almighty god -- κορυφή and emperors appear together, apparently distinguished from each other.

Even before the appearance of P.Rain.Cent., Worp had catalogued the oaths and quasi-oaths referring to the κορυφή ('Oath Formulas with Imperial Titulature in Byzantine Greek Papyri,' ZPE 45, 1982, 215-216). His separate cataloguing of every variation in the object of the oath itself yields a set of seven types, a to g. Other characteristics of the texts in question -- date, provenance, and document type -- suggest that they fall into only three or four groups, corresponding to the phraseology of the reference to the κορυφή itself. I offer here a summary of these groups, with comments on the text, date, or provenance of certain texts within them, and on the characteristics of other texts from the same period and place.

I. τῆς καλλινίκου κορυφῆς

CPR V 17; P.Lond. V 1893; P.Rain.Cent. 106; SB VI 9152

Texts with this phrase standing in place of imperial titulature come from Herakleopolis in the later fifth century. All are sureties for the μονὴ καὶ ἐμφανεία of named persons. In the one case where the address is preserved, the surety is addressed to the logistes Apollos, acting for the house of Apion; this is perhaps the case with one or more of the other texts as well. The phrasing of the oath is: ὁμολογῶ ἐπομνύμενος θεὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ τὴν θεῖαν εὐσέβειαν τῆς καλλινίκου κορυφῆς ἐγγυᾶσθαι καὶ ἀναδέχεσθαι, with the names of the persons following.

¹ E. Seidl, *Der Eid im römisch-ägyptischen Provinzialrecht II*, Munich, 1935, pp. 34-36.

² See also H. Zilliacus, "Anredeformen," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, Supplementband, 486.

The phrase ἐκουσίως καὶ ἀθαιρέτως appears either before ἐπομνύμενος or before ἐγγυᾶσθαι. Restorations in P.Rain.Cent. 106 can be slightly adjusted and slightly extended, all in accordance with readings in CPR V 17 and SB VI 9152 (as emended: see CPR V 17, note to line 4):

- 7 [ὁμολογῶ ἐπομνύμενος θεὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ] τὴν θείαν
 8 [εὐσέβειαν τῆς καλλινίκου κορυφῆς ἐκουσίως καὶ ἀθαι]ρέτως
 9 [ἐγγυᾶσθαι καὶ ἀναδέχεσθαι μονῆς καὶ ἐμφανείας --]

P.Lond. V 1893 can now be regarded with some confidence as originating in fifth-century Herakleopolis; its text can be partly restored, in a tentative fashion, starting with the oath formulation identified by Worp, 'Oath Formulations,' p. 215:

- line 4 [] ὁμολογῶ διὰ
 5 [(ταύτης τῆς ὁμολογίας aut sim.) . . . ἐπομνύμενος θεὸν παντοκράτορα
 καὶ τὴν θείαν] εὐσέβειαν τῆς καλλινίκου
 6 [κορυφῆς ἐκουσίως καὶ ἀθαιρέτως ἐγγυᾶσθαι καὶ ἀναδέχεσθαι μονῆς
 καὶ ἐμφανείας . . .] Ἰούλιον Ἀντωνίου

These fifth-century sureties from the Herakleopolite referring to the κορυφή occur alongside, if perhaps slightly later than, a number of similar documents with more conventional oath formulations. In several, the object of the oath is expressed as τὸν θεῖον καὶ σεβάσμιον ὄρκον (e.g., CPR X 116), with the emperors' names and titulature following. Two others give as the object of the oath θεὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν (BGU III 936) -- or, after καί, τὴν θείαν εὐσέβειαν καὶ νίκην (P.Mich. XI 613) with, once again, the emperors' names and titles.

II. τῆς καλλινίκου καὶ ἀθανάτου κορυφῆς

A. P.Laur. II 27; Stud.Pal. XX 128 (= SB I 5273).

This phrase appears in the position of imperial titulature in two somewhat different sets of papyrus texts, both from the Arsinoite nome. One set consists of two sureties from the years 478-491, both addressed to the same official. The phrasing of the oath is: ὁμολογῶ ἐκουσίᾳ γνώμῃ ἐπομνύμενος θεὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν καὶ νίκην τῆς καλλινίκου καὶ ἀθανάτου [κορυφῆς]³ ἐγγυᾶσθαι καὶ ἀναδέχεσθαι, with the names of persons thereafter.

³ As indicated by Worp, p. 215, the word κορυφῆς should be restored in place of the editor's γραφῆς in P.Laur. II 27, at the end of line 5; [γρα]φῆς appears in SB I 5273, line 8, but is correctly restored as [κορυ]φῆς in Stud.Pal. XX 128.

The Arsinoite has left relatively few transcriptions of the imperial oath later than the middle of the fourth century. Those in the sureties mentioned above are the only examples known from the fifth century.

B. P.Lond. I 113 i; SB I 4815; Stud.Pal. XX 269

A second set of documents with the same phrase occupying the position of imperial titulature seems to originate from the Arsinoite as well (P.Lond. I 113 i is there assigned, and the two others, published as of provenance unknown, seem likely on the basis of the phraseology to belong to the same place) but from a distinctly later date (no firm date appears in any of the three, but two are assigned by their editors to the sixth or seventh century, and the third -- SB I 4815, described as Byzantine -- seems likely to belong to the same period). All are private contracts, sales or settlements. The formulation of the oath is somewhat more variable in private contracts of this later date than in fifth-century sureties, and one text of this set (Stud.Pal. XX 269) gives what would normally be the accusative object of the oath in the genitive after a preposition, placing the word σωτηρία where εὐσέβεια would otherwise be expected. The oath may be restored after the indications of Worp, 'Oath Formulations,' p. 215:

line 13 [. . . ὁμολογῶ ἐπομνυμένη κατὰ⁴] παντοκράτορος θεοῦ καὶ τῆς
σωτηρίας κ[αὶ] νίκης τῆς καλλινίκου καὶ ἀθανάτου
14 [κορυφῆς . . .]

In P.Lond. I 113 i, the oath is expressed in the third person plural: ὁμολογοῦσιν ἐπομνύμενοι θεὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν καὶ νίκην τῆς καλλινίκου καὶ ἀθανάτου κορυφῆς . . . with the verb ἐμμενεῖν indicating that the parties undertake to abide by the terms of the contract. It seems virtually certain that the same formulation, in whatever person of discourse, is to be restored in SB I 4815:

line 4 [ὁμολογ--]
5 ἐπομνύ[μεν -- θεὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν καὶ νίκην τῆς
καλλινίκου]
6 καὶ ἀθανάτ[ου κορυφῆς . . . ± 48 . . .]

No further examples of the imperial oath are known from the sixth-century Arsinoite -- only one exhortation in a petition (Chr. I 471, with the introductory verb ἐνορκοῦμεν, the oath κατὰ τοῦ δεσπότης Χριστοῦ and some quality of the emperor's lost in lacuna, and imperial name and titles following). The seventh century has left eight texts with imperial oaths sworn by almighty god, most of them undertakings addressed to officials (e.g., CPR XIV 1). In some cases, a compressed reference to rulers appears in a second object of the oath: τὴν βασιλικὴν σωτηρίαν. In the others, almighty god is the only object of the oath, and no reference is made to rulers.

⁴ For κατὰ after the verb of swearing, see, e.g., P.Lond. V 1724; alternatively, πρὸς, as in, e.g., SB I 5112.

III. τῆς ἀθανάτου κορυφῆς

P.Lond. V 1676; P.Cair.Masp. II 205; P.Cair.Masp. (I 10 &) III 279

Three late sixth-century petitions from the Antinoopolite nome include an exhortation urging the addressee to take action in the name of the κορυφή. The exhortation follows a statement of the petitioner's case, and is phrased: ὄθεν (or περὶ ἧς) ἐξορκίζω ὑμᾶς (or ὑμᾶς ἐξορκίζω) κατὰ τῆς ἀθανάτου κορυφῆς καὶ . . . , following which there appears some more familiar form of reference to the emperor -- τοῦ δεσπότης aut sim., possibly much elaborated, but apparently without rulers' names, the whole leading eventually into infinitives specifying the action requested of the addressee. It is to be noted that in these texts, in contrast to those described above, the κορυφή is in effect the object of the exhortation, rather than appearing in the genitive case after some other object -- and of course that regular imperial titulature appears in these documents after the reference to the κορυφή, where it was absent in those other texts. The emperor himself was the direct object of the imperial oath in its earliest form -- but not in any papyrus known to me from later than the second century.

The sixth century in Antinoopolis has transmitted a number of examples of the imperial oath. The object of the oath is regularly either τὴν ἀγίαν καὶ ὁμοούσιον τριάδα καὶ τὴν νίκην καὶ διαμονὴν of rulers whose names and titles follow in the genitive (ten or twelve examples: see, e.g., P.Koeln III 156), or τὸν φρικαδέστατον ὄρκον, followed by no reference to rulers at all (nine examples: see, e.g., P.Turner 54); all these are attached to sureties or private contracts, and introduced by forms of ἐπωμοσάμην or ὁμολογῶ ὁμνύς. Only a few texts from the sixth century in Antinoopolis offer any form of the oath by almighty god, and these again include the names and titles of rulers (P.Cair.Masp. III 340 r and SB I 4678). Several sixth-century petitions from the Antinoopolite, in addition to those described above, exhibit an oath-like exhortation: P.Cair.Masp. III 353, with ἐξορκίζω introducing the words κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸ πάντων καὶ τῆς νίκης καὶ διαμονῆς, and the names and titles of rulers following; in P.Lond. V 1675 and 1677, the exhortation seems to have been κατὰ τῆς ἀχράντου τριάδος and κατὰ τῆς ἀενάου θεοῦ σωτηρίας, respectively.

Afterword

It should perhaps be noted that the epithet καλλίνικος is commonly incorporated into imperial titulature in agreement with the title δεσπότης, at least in imperial oaths, from as early as the later fourth century of our era.⁵ The appearance of the same adjective in agreement with the word κορυφή goes some way towards confirming that this term does amount to an extremely reduced form of imperial titulature in the fifth-century sureties from the Herakleopolite nome. The adjective ἀθάνατος, by contrast, does not appear in regnal formulae, either in document dates or in the imperial oath. There are however two papyrus texts from the early fourth century, neither one

⁵ See Worp's table of epithets, 'Oath Formulations,' p. 222, and my own 'Epithets with the Title Despotēs in Regnal Formulae: Document Dates and the Imperial Oath,' ZPE 90 (1992) 251-257.

involving an oath or exhortation, where the adjective does appear to be applied to the emperor: P.Flor. I 33.17,⁶ τοῦ . . . βασιλέως Διοκλητιανοῦ τοῦ ἀθανάτου; CPR VII 20.27, ἡ θεία τύχη τῶν ἀθα(νάτων) [καὶ] Αὐτοκ(ρατόρων) τε κ(αὶ) Καισά(ρων). It therefore seems comfortable to take as imperial reference the later use of the term κορυφή with the phrase καλλίνικος καὶ ἀθάνατος appearing before it, as in the fifth-century sureties and sixth-century contracts from the Arsinoite nome. Where the adjective ἀθάνατος stands alone before κορυφή, in the late sixth-century petitions from the Antinoopolite, the case is less clear -- perhaps to the writers as well as to us: The erased καὶ in CPR VII 20, when set down, would have effected a separation of the immortal from the imperial very comparable to that which seems to stand in the Antinoopolite petitions.

Moreover, the fact that the few references to the κορυφή in oaths or exhortations are seen to occur in several distinct groups of documents can perhaps contribute a little to the understanding of the term itself. Where κορυφή stands in the genitive after the object or objects of the oath, as in the Herakleopolite and Arsinoite texts cited above, it should probably be understood as a reduced form of imperial titulature: This is the position normally occupied by the regnal formula in the imperial oath. Compare, e.g.:

θεὸν τὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ τὴν [εὐσέβ]ιαν τῶν τὰ πάντα νικῶντων δεσποτῶν ἡμῶν
 Θεοδοσίου (καὶ) Οὐαλεντινιανοῦ τῶν
 αἰωνίων ἀγούστων (BGU III 936)⁷

θεὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ τὴν θεῖαν εὐσέβιαν τῆς καλλινίκου κορυφῆς (CPR V 17)

Where, however, κορυφή acts itself as the object of the oath or exhortation, as in the Antinoopolite petitions, it is perhaps preferable to see in it a religious, rather than a secular, sense. The first object of the oath in the fifth century and later, except where it is the word ὄρκος itself, is almost always either almighty god or the holy trinity, and this is true of exhortations as well.⁸ Compare, for example:

πρὸς τῆς ἀγίας καὶ ὁμοουσίου τριάδος καὶ τῆς νίκης καὶ διαμονῆς τῶν καλλινίκων ἡμῶν δεσποτῶν
 Φλ(αουίων) Ἰουστίνου τοῦ αἰωνίου ἀγούστου μεγίστου
 εὐεργέτου καὶ αὐτοκράτορος καὶ Αἰλίας Σοφίας τῆς
 εὐσεβεστάτης ἡμῶν δεσποίνης (PSI I 76)

κατὰ τῆς ἀθανάτου κορυφῆς(ς) καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ δεσπ(ό)του ἡμῶν βασιλ(έως) (P.Lond. V 1676)

The use of the verb ἐξορκίζω itself all but guarantees a religious reference thereafter; the verb is of course more common in religious and magical texts than in documents.⁹ Byzantine literature

⁶ Line 18 in J.R. Rea's re-edition, Chr.d'E. 46 (1971) 142-145.

⁷ See BL III, p. 15.

⁸ See, in addition to documents cited above, PSI I 76, from the sixth century in Oxyrhynchus.

⁹ See the indices of R.W. Daniel and F. Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum*, Opladen, 1990 and 1992, and R. Merkelbach and M. Totti, *Abrasax*, Opladen, 1990, 1991, and 1992.

offers no examples, so far as is known to me, of god being addressed referred to as κορυφή. In one passage from Athanasius' de decr. Nicaenae synodi, however, the term stands between, and in a way refers to, the holy trinity and almighty god -- both regular objects of the documentary oath in the Byzantine period: ἤδη καὶ τὴν θεῖαν τριάδα εἰς ἓνα, ὡσπερ εἰς κορυφὴν τινα, τὸν θεὸν τῶν ὅλων τὸν παντοκράτορα λέγω, συγκεφαλαιοῦσθαί τε καὶ συνάγεσθαι πᾶσα ἀνάγκη.

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