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STILL FURTHER NOTES ON PAPYRUS DOCUMENTS WITH THE IMPERIAL OATH

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In two earlier articles -- ZPE 89 (1991) 91-102 and ZPE 90 (1992) 258 -- I have offered observations on the date, provenance, or text of papyrus documents which incorporate some version of the imperial oath. As in those earlier offerings, so in these below, suggestions are based on a comparative study of published texts; in no case have original papyri or photographs been consulted.

OBJECT OF THE OATH

In the first centuries of Roman rule in Egypt, the emperor himself, and then somewhat later the emperor's *τύχη*, was the commonest object of the imperial oath. A variety of new formulations appeared in the fourth century, and from the fifth century on, the commonest first object of the oath was almighty God -- joined, in most cases, by one or more other objects representing qualities of the emperor: *τύχη*, *νίκη*, *διαμονή*, *εὐσέβεια*, or *σωτηρία*, among others.

P.Wash.Univ. I 24. In lines 5-6, the editor has restored as the object of the oath in addition to almighty God: . . . καὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν [καὶ νίκην τῶν δεσποτῶν ἡμῶν κτλ.], after the pattern of several fifth-century texts from the Hermopolite or Herakleopolite. So, from the Hermopolite, P.Flor. III 313 and 323, and P.Lond. V 1793, and, from the Herakleopolite, P.Mich. XI 613. P.Wash.Univ. I 24 is an Oxyrhynchite text, however, and might better be restored from other Oxyrhynchite texts of the fifth century, as follows: [θεὸν τὸν παντ]οκράτορα καὶ τὴν εὐσέβειαν [τῶν τὰ πάντα νικῶντων δεσποτῶν ἡμῶν κτλ.]. So P.Oxy. XVI 1880 and 1881; PSI VI 689 and X 1114.

SB I 4820. Lines 11 and 12 appear as follows:

... ἐπ[ομνύμενος]
[]ικὴν σωτηρίαν τε καὶ νίκην παρ[]

As in other texts where τὴν βασιλικὴν σωτηρίαν is given as an object of the oath (see P.Lond. I 113 x, SB VI 9402, and Stud.Pal. XX 227), the preceding object was almost certainly almighty God. Lines 11 and 12 can therefore be restored as follows, giving much the same indication for the original length of line as indicated elsewhere:

... ἐπ[ομνύμενος θεὸν παντοκράτορα καὶ τὴν βασι-]
[λ]ικὴν σωτηρίαν τε καὶ νίκην ...

INTRODUCTORY VERB

In the earlier period of Roman rule in Egypt, the imperial oath is regularly introduced by forms of the verb *ὀμνύω*. In the second and third centuries of our era, the participle becomes more common -- *ὀμνύς* or *ὀμνύων*, depending in most cases on a form of *ὀμολογῶ*. Still later, the participle occurs in the compound form -- *ἐπομνύμενος*. And many of the fifth- and sixth-century examples of the oath are introduced by forms of *ἐπωμοσάμην*.

P.Cair.Masp. I 115. In line 7, the oath is introduced by a participle represented as π[αρ-ομνύμ]ενο[ς]. The reading should be corrected to ἐ[πομνύμ]ενο[ς], as in some 45 other texts of the Byzantine period: for texts, like this one, from sixth-century Aphrodito, see, e.g., P.Cair. Masp. I 94, P.Flor. III 284, and P.Lond V 1660.

P.Cair.Masp. II 156. In line 32, as read and restored, the oath is introduced in the following clause: ... ἐφ' οἷς [καὶ ὥμοσα τὸν φρικῶ]δέστατον ὄρκ[ον κτλ. The verb ὥμοσα is not otherwise found introducing an oath so formulated, and should be replaced by ἐπωμοσάμην, some form of which is found with the same object in several other private contracts from sixth-century Antinoopolis: see P.Cair.Masp. II 158, P.Lond V 1712, and P.Stras. VIII 720.

P.Stras. VI 526. In line 12, there appears the phrase [ὁμολογοῦμεν ὀ]μνύοντες introducing the imperial oath in a record of receipts submitted by sitologoi to a basilikos grammateus / acting strategos. It seems likely that προσφωνοῦμεν should be restored in place of ὁμολογοῦμεν. The date of this text -- AD 156/57 -- is over a hundred years earlier than the next appearance of the verb ὁμολογῶ with ὀμνύων introducing the imperial oath, whereas a number of second-century texts record sworn submissions to their superiors by lesser officers of the state introduced by forms of προσφωνῶ ὀμνύων: so, e.g., PSI VII 766 and P.Meyer 4.

LIABILITY CLAUSES

In many papyrus documents incorporating the imperial oath, that oath is referred to again at the bottom of the text, in what might be called a liability clause. In first-century texts, the reference often occurs in the phrase εὐορκοῦντι μὲν μοι εἶ, ἐπιορκοῦντι δὲ τὰ ἐναντία. In second- and third-century texts, the same position in the text is often occupied by the phrase ἢ ἔνοχος εἶην τῷ ὄρκῳ. In the fourth century and afterwards, the adjective θεῖος is added: ἢ ἔνοχος (or ὑπεύθυνος) εἶην (or ἔσομαι) τῷ θείῳ ὄρκῳ. In only a very few fourth-century texts, the adjective σεβασμίῳ appears in place of θείῳ.

P.Col. VIII 222. In lines 31-33, the phrase εὐορκοῦντι μὲν μοι εἶ, ἐπιορκοῦντι δὲ τὰ ἐναντία has been restored in lacuna at the end of a text which incorporates the imperial oath. This sort of clause occurs on a dozen published texts from the Oxyrhynchite nome, whose dates range from 3 BC (P.Amst. I 28) to AD 91 (C.Pap.Gr. II 1 17). The date of P.Col. VIII 222 is however AD 160/61 -- seventy years later than any other Oxyrhynchite document known to me which includes this expression.

If a liability clause is to be restored in P.Col. VIII 222, it should perhaps be supplied as ἢ ἔνοχος εἶην τῷ ὄρκῳ, which appears in texts from Oxyrhynchus from AD 66 (P.Oxy. II 239) to 292 (P.Oxy. I 255), and of which a half dozen Oxyrhynchite examples are known from the third quarter of the second century (P.Lips. 121, P.Oxy. LV 3782, PSI V 447 as restored, SB VI 9550, C.Pap.Gr. II 1 54). For the use of this clause in even earlier reports of property to bibliophylakes, which I adduce as being remotely comparable to agoranomic reports, see P.Mil. II 36 and P.Oxy. IV 715.

P.Flor. I 32 a. In line 15, the editor has restored in lacuna a liability clause referring to τῷ σεβασμίῳ ὄρκῳ; in line 17, there survives a subscript acknowledging τὸν θ(ε)ῖον ὄρκον. In other documents where both are preserved, the same adjective is attached to the word ὄρκος in both liability clause and subscription: σεβάσμιος in a few cases (P.Flor. I 32 b, P.Lond. V 1647, and

P.Stras. III 152), and θεῖος in a great many more, including, from a somewhat later date, a number of texts which, like this one, originate in the Hermopolite: see, e.g., P.Cair.Goodsp. 12, P.Flor. I 34, and P.Lond. III 1249. It makes sense to restore P.Flor. I 32 a from the closely related and less damaged b -- but as the adjective employed in the subscription of a is θεῖος, rather than σεβάσμιος, as in the subscription of b, it is reasonable to restore θεῖος also in the liability clause of a, rather than σεβάσμιος, as in b.

P.Harr. I 65. Line 16 ends with the words ἡ ἔνοχος εἶην τῷ, and the editor supplies, in the lacuna at the beginning of line 17, ὄρκῳ. In fourth-century undertakings addressed to the logistes (cf., e.g., P.Oxy. XXII 2347 and XXXVI 2767), a reference to the oath after ἔνοχος will have been in the form τῷ θείῳ ὄρκῳ. The same adjective appears at this time in references to the oath which occur in subscriptions: so in this document at line 18.

P.Herm. 21. At the end of line 19, there stands in a liability clause a reference to the imperial oath as τῷ ἀγίῳ ὄρκῳ. The adjective ἀγιος is not otherwise found in agreement with ὄρκος in a phrase of this sort. Almost certainly, the phrase should be τῷ θείῳ ὄρκῳ, as in many other Hermopolite texts of the fourth century: see, e.g., P.Flor. I 34; P.Stras. III 129 and 149. Experience suggests that initial theta and epsilon can easily be confused with initial alpha and gamma in a cursive hand.

P.Lips. 45. The text includes a liability clause, lines 20-21, read and restored as ἡ ἔνοχος εἶην [τῷ θείῳ καὶ σεβασμίῳ ὄρ]κῳ. The adjectives θεῖος and σεβάσμιος are never seen combined in such a clause, and where restored should be corrected: see BL VI p. 5 on P.Amh. II 140. The reference should be simply to τῷ θείῳ ὄρκῳ, as in other texts of the same date addressed to the officialis: see P.Lips 46-53. Elimination of καὶ σεβασμίῳ will bring line 21 to a length more nearly comparable with that of lines above and below it.

P.Oxy. XLVI 3308. Fragment 1 ends with the words ἡ ἔνοχος (line 15), and the editor suggests (note to lines 14 and 15) that there followed the words εἶην τῷ ὄρκῳ. In fourth-century undertakings addressed to the logistes (see above on P.Harris I 65), a reference to the oath after ἔνοχος will have been in the form τῷ θείῳ ὄρκῳ. The same adjective appears at this time in references to the oath which occur in subscriptions: so in this document, fragment 2, line 16.

SB XIV 11548. In lines 13-14, there appears a liability clause which is read and restored as ἡ ὑπεύθυνος ἔσομαι τῷ θ[είῳ καὶ σεβασμίῳ ὄρκῳ] καὶ τῷ ἐπηρητημένῳ κινδύνῳ. The adjectives θεῖος and σεβάσμιος are never seen combined in such a clause, and where restored require correction: see above on P.Lips. 45. One Hermopolite text from the fourth century offers ὑπεύθυνος ἔσομαι τῷ σεβασμίῳ ὄρκῳ (P.Lond. V 1647; cf. P.Stras. III 152, restored). Many others offer ἡ ἔνοχος ἔσομαι τῷ θείῳ ὄρκῳ (see, e.g., of comparable date, P.Cair.Goodsp. 12 and P.Lond. III 1249). With theta securely read before the lacuna in SB XIV 11548, the reference should probably be simply to τῷ θ[είῳ ὄρκῳ]. This reading implies a smaller gap between the two fragments of SB XIV 11548 than originally suggested, and it may be that the text should be reconsidered in those terms. Lines 12 and 13, as restored, read as follows:

ἄποχα γράμμα[τα τῆς τούτων παρα]δόσεως τῇ στρατηγικῇ τάξει. εἰ δὲ ἀφύ-
στερήσι ἔν τινι ἐγὼ [αὐτὸς ὁ προκείμ(ενος) τὸν] ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ λόγον ὑποστήσ[ομ]αι

But the word τούτων in line 12, while present with τῆς παραδόσεως in some published texts (e.g., P.Mich. XV 724.11 and P.Vind.Sijp 1 r 2. 16), is absent in others (e.g., P.Laur. IV 162.17 and P.Stras. VII 654 r 17). And the words ὁ προκείμενος never appear, so far as I know, with ἐγὼ αὐτός in a context like this one: see, e.g., P.Cair.Preis. 13.14, P.Herm. 55.3, and P.Lond. V 1648.33 -- all, like SB XIV 11548, fourth-century sureties from the Hermopolite. If τούτων is removed from line 12, and ὁ προκείμ(ενος) from line 13, the lacuna is reduced to a length compatible with that of the lacuna in line 14, after the correction suggested above.

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