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A NEW ARSINOITE STRATEGOS?

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In *CE* 71 (1996) 105-114 C. A. Nelson publishes P.Berol. inv. 25581, a nomination of villagers to the position of δημόσιοι τῆς κόμης. All information pertinent to the date has been lost. In the note to line 1, however, Nelson points out that the appearance of komarchs as the nominating officials probably excludes a date before AD 245; and he cites Naphtali Lewis for the statement that the latest nomination to a liturgy addressed to the strategos is about AD 313 (P.Leit. 3; see now, however, *P.Oxy.* LXII 4344, AD 342). “Our document, therefore, would appear to be dated between A.D. 245 and 313,” he concludes.

The remains of the addressee’s title are given as follows:

[Ἄρπο]κράτιωνι στρ(ατηγῶ) Ἄρσινοίτου.

No Arsinoite strategos named Harpokration is attested, according to the editor, later than AD 215; and that was a Calpurnius Isidoros alias Harpokration, hardly likely to be addressed here *tout court* as Harpokration.

The date is actually constrained somewhat further, if one follows the editor’s restoration of [παρὰ] in line 1 after the address to the strategos, because we would have to be dealing with the reunited Arsinoite nome, no longer with strategoi of separate *merides*. Although this restoration is not certain, a significantly longer restoration (such as would be required to add mention of a *meris*) is unlikely in view of lines 4 and 5, where 4-5 letter restorations seem virtually inescapable. A strategos of the whole Arsinoite nome cannot predate the last attested strategos of the Herakleides division, Aurelius Apollonios alias Hierax, in AD 258.<sup>1</sup>

In the list of strategoi for the period after 258 there are certainly gaps, and there is no inherent reason why a Harpokration could not fill one of them. But there is another difficulty with Harpokration, namely the fact that he is addressed by a single name. Strategoi of this period are in any formal context always addressed as Aurelius NN unless they have another nomen (like Antonius Sarapammon, for example). The absence of Aurelius here is thus an embarrassment. If it were here, however, it would evidently occupy all of the lacuna at left and then a bit, for the lacuna in line 2 is filled with 6 letters (Ἀύρηλι), and that lacuna is a couple of letters shorter than that in line 1. We must, however, reckon also with the possibility that line 1 projected into the left margin by a couple of letters. Still, a short name would be required.

As it happens, we know a precisely suitable candidate, Aurelius Apion, attested as strategos in AD 305 (*P.Wisc.* I 32.3; Bastianini-Whitehorne 56). There is no difficulty in reading a pi instead of ατ, and I suggest that [Ἀύρηλί]ϙ Ἄπίωνι fits the traces on the published plate very well. A date in or near 305 is also fairly comfortable for the fact that one of the nominators is named Elias, which in this period is certainly a Christian name.<sup>2</sup> Attestations do start occurring in the late third century (*P.Oxy.* XXII 2338.74 and *PSI* XII 1268 are both tetrarchic, but *O.Mich.* 91 and *P.Laur.* III 98.9 may be somewhat earlier), but the name is rare until the period of official tolerance.

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<sup>1</sup> See G. Bastianini and J.E.G. Whitehorne, *Strategi and Royal Scribes* (Florence 1987) 38; see also p. 54 for the somewhat unclear evidence for the Themistos and Polemon division.

<sup>2</sup> Read Ἡλεία, not (ed.) Ἡλία in line 2.