

ROGER S. BAGNALL

A MANDATE FROM THE GREAT OASIS

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One of the pleasures of the long-awaited appearance of the first volume of R. P. Salomons' *Papyri Bodleianae* is the publication of nine texts from the Great Oasis, part of the same group published in part by A. H. Sayce in 1894, in part in *P. Grenf.* II 68-78, with a few scattered elsewhere.¹ Among the new Oasite texts are two mandates (*P. Bodl.* I 32 and 33), which join a pair published by Sayce (*SB* I 4651, 4653) and *P. Grenf.* II 71 = *M. Chr.* 190. Like the rest of the dossier, most of the pieces of which concern *nekrotaphoi*,² the mandates are somewhat dispersed in time, but most of them belong to a period of about a decade in the middle of the third century. *SB* I 4653, in which the mandatary is (as Bingen recognized) Sarapion alias Philosarapis, dates from 240/1; *P. Bodl.* 32, which has lost its date, is issued to the same man and may well date to the same time. *P. Grenf.* II 71, addressed to the Kysite Aurelius Marianos son of Nachtis (a witness in *P. Bodl.* 32), belongs to the reign of the Philippi. *SB* I 4651 is dated to 250/1; the mandatary's name is lost, but he was a Kysite and could perfectly well have been Marianos. All four concern public registration (δημοσίωσις) of documents in Alexandria. In those where the early part is at least partially preserved, the formula is ὁμολογεῖ ὁ δεῖνα τῷ δεῖνι ἀποσυνεστηκέναι αὐτὸν ... καταπλέοντα εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν δημοσιῶσαι παρὰ τῷ ἀρχιδικαστῆ χειρόγραφον.

Against the background of these four texts, *P. Bodl.* 33 stands out. It is, the editor argues, to be dated *ca* 300 or a bit after.³ It uses a first-person formula and does not concern Alexandria. The editor has restored and interpreted the text to be a mandate to assume a liturgy on the writer's behalf. About half of the text is lost at left, probably the result of breakage along a center fold plus additional damage, and the lower part of the papyrus is also lost. The editor's text reads as follows:

Αὐρηλία Ἀσκληταρ]ία Σύρου τοῦ Πετε-
 χῶντος νεωτέρου ν]εκροτάφη τοπαρ-
 χίας Κύσεως τῆς Ἰ]βιτῶν πό]λεως
 4 *ca. 14 letters*] νεκροτάφῳ τῆς αὐτῆς
 τοπαρχίας χαί]ρειν. Ὁμολογῶ ἀποσυν-
 στησαί σε ἀ]ποδημῆσαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἄνω
] τὴν χώραν μου ἀποπλη-
 8 ρῶσοντα ἐ]πὶ τοῦ προέδρου τῆς Μωθι-
 τῶν πό]λεως κληρωθῆναι δι' αἰτή-
 σεώς μου ἀκο]λούθως τῆ ἐκδοθεί]σῃ
 ὑπὸ τοῦ *ca* 9 l.] ὑπ[ογρ]αφ[ῆ]

The restorations of only one line may be regarded as certain, that of line 9. In line 6, one might look for the perfect infinitive found in the other mandates, divided συνεστηκέναι, which would be acceptable.

¹ See generally J. Bingen, *Cd'E* 39 (1964) 157-66, who joined *SB* I 4654 and 4655 and corrected the other texts.

² On which Salomons gives a useful bibliography, p. 93, note to lines 2-6.

³ This seems to me likely to be correct, but not for the reasons given. The basis for the editor's date is largely the occurrence of the office of *proedros*, which the editor takes not to have existed before about A.D. 300. He also suggests that the *terminus ante quem* may be 307/8, when the toparchies disappeared (although he notes the occasional anachronistic use of the term after that date). As to the *proedros*, the occurrence in *P. Panop. Beatty* 1 (298) certainly cannot be discounted. More importantly, Skeat showed there (p. xxxiii) that *P. Got.* 7, with a *proedros*, was probably to be dated to the middle of the third century. More to the point is the fact that Mothis is attested as a city, and the Mothite as a nome separate from the Hibite, no earlier than 308 (*P. Grenf.* II 75). In 301 the Hibite is attested, but it is hard to say if this is evidence for the separation of the Hibite and Mothite by that date (as argued in *P. Kell.* I 41.4n.) or for the fact that the Dakhleh Oasis was still part of the Hibite. For further discussion, see the introduction to my publication of the *Kellis Agricultural Account Book*, section 4(h). As to the *terminus ante quem*, the difficulty with the editor's criterion is that the term toparchy does not occur clearly read anywhere in the text, as the reading in line 2 is anything but clear and the other supposed instances were restoration or suggested restoration. A stronger argument is that nothing in the entire dossier has a preserved date later than 308.

The object (αὐτόν in the third-person formula) follows immediately after the infinitive. The editor's restoration gives 9 letters; the perfect would require 13. Line 9, with line 8, is at the widest point of the preserved papyrus, and the difference in preserved width allows about four additional letters in line 6. The editor's restoration thus tallies exactly (5 + 4 = 9), where the perfect would be four letters longer, so it may be regarded as reasonably certain.

By the same token, however, line 8 may make us uneasy with its 8 letters, even though it has exactly the same size lacuna as line 9; and line 10 should be only a letter or so longer (i.e., 6-7), where it has 10 in the restoration. Now the editor saw the possibility of restoring διατητήν at this place, but rejected it because of "the fact that this functionary is only attested for the Ptolemaic and Late Byzantine periods. Moreover, the function is not known as a compulsory service" (note to lines 9f.). The latter objection is weak, because it assumes the correctness of the editor's interpretation of the papyrus as having to do with appointment to liturgy. I shall argue that this interpretation is incorrect. The former objection is equally without foundation. A case held before a διατητής, a "delegated arbitrator" in Revel Coles's description, is recorded in *P. Oxy.* LIV 3764, dated *ca* 326. The person in question was a councillor evidently appointed for this case. Not only does this papyrus provide a roughly contemporary instance of the use of an arbitrator, but it suggests that διατητήν is an excellent subject for κληρωθῆναι. Now that we do not need μου in line 10 either, the restoration is reduced to 6 letters, just what the space requires.

With σε no longer seen as the subject of κληρωθῆναι, the need for the participle of line 8 is removed, and we may restore instead the infinitive ἀποπλη[ροῦν ἐ]πί κτλ. As line 8 requires the same width of restoration as line 9 (5 letters), this restoration fits well. We are, however, left with difficult questions about the overall structure of the sentence.

In line 7, the editor did not restore anything, but his note *ad loc.* says that "the most attractive restoration of the beginning of 1.7 is τὴν ἄνω [ἑ]τοπαρχία]ν, which commonly has the meaning of 'southern toparchy' in Egyptian topography ... The rather vague order given to the mandatary of the present papyrus 'to travel to the southern toparchy etc.' perhaps means that he is to go to Mothis in the ἄνω-toparchy to meet with the president of the council." This hypothesis raises several difficulties. One is that the distinction of upper and lower toparchies in Egypt has to do with north-south position along the Nile, and in the middle of the western desert such terminology has no meaning. A second is that there is no evidence for ἄνω and κάτω in the naming of toparchies in the Mothite Nome (the Dakhleh Oasis). On the contrary, the evidence known so far points to the naming of toparchies after their chief places (see *P. Kell.* I G. 28.5n.). Moreover, given that the parties are from the Hibite, the toparchy would have had to be identified by the name of the nome, not only that of the toparchy, at first mention.

A more attractive restoration is χώραν, with ἄνω meaning "further away from the Nile, inland" as it so often does once the axis of travel is no longer the Nile valley. The ἄνω χώρα with respect to the Hibite is indeed the Mothite, some 150 km to the west. Of course the use of χώρα immediately afterward to refer to the 'place' or 'stead' of the writer would make the phrasing rather awkward, but the sense does seem correct. Now roughly 10 letters should stand before the nu of τὴν, and χώραν and τη occupy 7 of them, indicating that a few letters should still be accounted for. At this point we may recollect that the sentence structure is harsh: ὁμολογῶ ... ἀποσυστήσαι σε ... τὴν χώραν μου ἀποπληροῦν. One wants something to bring ἀποπληροῦν into a more defined relationship with what precedes. The best possibility seems to be ὥστε. This would slightly overload the lacuna, but only by one letter, and that seems within the margin of possibility. The traces in this part of the line are very slight, and I cannot say for certain whether we should read ὥστ[ε] τὴν, which is what the editor's text might encourage, or ὥστ[ε] τ[ε] τὴν, which would fit the overall space requirements better.

There is still a difficulty in the following lines, in that the phrase with κληρωθῆναι is still not provided with a satisfactory construction. The editor's text certainly did not provide one: ὁμολογῶ ἀποσυστήσαι σε ... τὴν χώραν μου ἀποπληρώσαντα ... κληρωθῆναι. But neither does the sharp shift of "I acknowledge that I have authorized you to travel so as to act in my place ... for an arbitrator to be chosen." One would like an εἰς τὸ before κληρωθῆναι or perhaps in the lacuna in 8 before ἐ]πί. But it is

not there before κληρωθῆναι, it is hard to see that space could be found for it in the lacuna in 8, and I do not see any other solution to the problem. Since infinitives of purpose after verbs of motion are well attested in the papyri, it seems most probable that the writer simply wrote an infinitive without any other construction.⁴

We must now turn back to the opening lines. The restorations are ambitious and represent the editor's invention of a daughter for the Syros son of Petechon the younger known in *SB I 5679* and *P. Grenf. II 78*, both dated to 307. The justification of the invention is (a) the length of the lacuna in line 1, and (b) the existence of a Petechon in *P. Grenf. II 71* whose mother was named Asklataria. The first of these is reasonable, although I would be more inclined to put the lacuna at 13-14 letters. The second, however, is without foundation. The Petechon who has a mother named Asklataria is not Petechon νεώτερος who was the father of Syros. Moreover, there is a chronological difficulty. The Syros of *P. Grenf. II 78* is a married man with apparently minor children, whose wife and children have been claimed as slaves. The writer of *P. Bodl. 33* is an apparently adult woman acting on her own. And yet the latter text is supposed to be at least no later than the former. Given the very uncertain reading of Πετε[χώντος], the overall restoration is at best speculative.

The restoration of τοπαρχίας in line 5 is also uncertain. The lacuna at this point should be about 11 letters, where the restoration requires 13. Given that the only certain topographical indication earlier in the text is the city of the Hibites (line 3), restoration of πόλεως, leading to a restoration of 10 letters, seems more likely. As to line 2, I cannot see anything except specks. Overall, then, it seems better to adopt a policy of prudent non-restoration for lines 1-4, with indicated length of lacuna about one letter shorter than shown by the editor.

The mandate will, on the view proposed here, be much more like the others published from the Great Oasis than the editor's text suggested. The writer, a woman from the Hibite, authorizes the recipient to represent her at a hearing before the *proedros* of the Mothite nome at which an arbitrator will be appointed. One may suppose that the arbitrator will be designated to hear a matter in which the writer is involved, perhaps concerning property in the Mothite; but the present hearing is a purely procedural step and her representation at it can be left to a mandatary. Because the papyrus was presumably part of the same find as the others, it is likely that the mandatary (who kept the papyrus) was not only a *nekrotaphos* but specifically one from Kysis (Dush). That does not, however, tell us anything about the mandator, who could have come from elsewhere: simply ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰβιτῶν πό[λ]εως, or ἀπὸ κόμης -- τῆς Ἰβιτῶν πό[λ]εως, or as the editor suggests, ἀπὸ τοπαρχίας Κύσεως τῆς Ἰβιτῶν πό[λ]εως.

The results of the above discussion are the following text:

[ca 13]ία Σύρου τοῦ Πετε-
 [ca 13] traces
 [ca 8 τῆς Ἰβιτῶν πό[λ]εως
 4 [ca 12] νεκροτάφῳ τῆς αὐτῆς
 [πόλεως χαίρ]ειν. ὁμολογῶ ἀποσυ-
 [στήσαι σε ἀ]ποδημῆσαι ἐπὶ τὴν ἄνω
 [χώραν ὡστ]ε τὴν χώραν μου ἀποπλη-
 8 [ροῦν ἐ]πὶ τοῦ προέδρου τῆς Μωθι-
 [τῶν πό]λεως κληρωθῆναι διαιτη-
 [τὴν ἀκο]λοῦθως τῇ ἐκδοθείσῃ
 [ὑπὸ ca 11] ὑπ[ογρ]αφ[ῆ]

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⁴ See B. Mandilaras, *The Verb in the Greek Non-Literary Papyri* (Athens 1973) 320 §770.