

852. Nikolaos GONIS

Two notarial documents from Hermonthis:
from Armant (through Fayum?) to Berlin and Paris

Six documents from Hermonthis were published in BGU II: 668–670, 672–674. Provenance and date combined make them rarities: when datable, they belong to the mid sixth century (673 dates from 525, 669–670 broadly from *c.*537–*c.*570). To judge from the hand, BGU II 668 may also be assigned to the sixth century, earlier rather than later. The text seems to have received virtually no attention since its publication, though there are several problems and remarkable features, some of them with interesting implications.

Only the lower part of the document is preserved. The extant clauses indicate a contract concerning a financial liability, probably in connection with a loan or advance payment. Among other things, the subscription contains the statement εἰς σὴν ἀσφάλ(ειαν) πεποιήμεθα τὴν ἀλληλῳγγυον [. . .] σση . . . καὶ βεβαίαν (ll. 4–5); the editor's brief note refers to 'Wessely, Die Pariser Pap. S. 37 Z.8 sqq.', i.e., SB I 4683.8–10, a sale on delivery: εἰς τὴν ἀσφάλειαν | τοῦτο πεποιήμαι τὸ ἀλληλῳγγυον γραμμα(τεῖον) | κύριον καὶ βέβαιον. The online image (at <http://berlpap.smb.museum/01602/>) suggests reading τοῦτο τὸ ἀλληλῳγγυον [. . .] εσ . . . ρον καὶ βέβαιον in the Berlin papyrus; apparently κύριον is not a possible reading, and this must be a new formula. Of the endorsement we have the latter part, which begins] . . . ις κεφ(αλ); perhaps read] ἥμισυ (*vac.*) κεφ(αλαίου), which could be a reference to a sum of $n \frac{1}{2}$ solidi borrowed as principal. But φ is not the only possible reading, and κεφ() may also be considered: κεφ(άτια)? κεφ(άμια)? What follows was read as σ . . . λισ χ . ρ . κ() τ . . ; the papyrus seems to have πεντεισχιρις (χιρι was suggested to me by S. Kovarik: ἰς χιρικ(ήν)?).

The document is signed by a curious pair, Αὐρήλιοι | Μουσαίου γεραμανπλάστης | καὶ Λαυσύμβιος θυγάτηρ | Ἀμμωνίου (ll. 6–9). γεραμανπλάστης in l. 7 was taken to be an error for

³⁷ See <http://www.trismegistos.org/ghostnames>.

κεραμοπλάστης, but the error is of a different kind: the image shows that what was read as gamma is a combination of a stroke that belongs to the cross in the line above and the leftward extension of the crossbar of epsilon. We should read Ερμαου πλάστης; Musaios is the son of Hermau and a ‘moulder’, most probably a potter. A different division is also required in l. 8, already suggested by Wilcken but relegated to a note: Λαυ σύμβιος; for the expression, cf. P.Lond. V 1727.5 (584) Τκακὸ ἡ τούτου σύμβιος θυ[γάτ]ηρ Ἰακώβου[ν], or P.Oxy. LVIII 3938.13–14 (601) Θέκλα | [ἡ α]ὐτοῦ σύμβιος θυγάτηρ Κω[νσ]ταντίνου. Λαυ, however, is otherwise known as a male name (TM_namID 14166).

Another name that invites scrutiny is that of the father of one of the witnesses, read as Θρα[. . .]ητος (l. 16). I propose to read Ὅρα[μ]ήτος. The name has been attested in the forms Ὁραμῆς and Ὁραμῆ (TM_namID 25729).

The last line of the text (17) was transcribed as ὡανης δι . . . ἐγράφη This is the notary’s subscription, separated from the rest of the document by a blank space. I read † δι’ ἐμοῦ Ἰωάννου Δίου ἐγράφη (*sign*). This is only the second example of notarial signature from Hermonthis.³⁸

The text has been compared with SB I 4683, as we saw; the affinities of the two documents extend beyond the formulaic parts. In BGU II 668, Musaios and Lau have their subscription written by Fl. Makarios s. Pesynthios, and one of the two witnesses is the soldier Fl. Dios s. Abramios. In SB I 4683, the subscribers are again a man and a woman, Ioseph s. Dios and Anna d. Matthias, who sign through an amanuensis, Fl. Isak s. Leontis; the witness is Fl. Comes. The notary’s subscription runs δι(τ’) ἐμοῦ Κυριακοῦ Ἐρμείου ἐγρά(φ)η. The presence of Flavii and the wording of the notarial signature are common to both documents, as if they came from the same milieu.³⁹ It would be desirable to know the physical shape of SB I 4683, but it is not possible now; transcribed by Wessely at the Louvre in the 1880s, it was declared ‘nicht auffindbar’ a century later (*Byz. Not.* p. 44).

SB I 4683 was long considered to be Arsinoite; it was published in *Die Pariser Papyri des Fundes von El-Faijum*, and the assumption has been that it was purchased with Fayum papyri

³⁸ *Byz. Not.* p. 58, Hermonthis 16.1.1, refers to P.Lond. I 77.88 (c.610), from the testament of bishop Abraham. J. Gascou, *Documents grecs de Qurnat Mar’y*, BIFAO 99 (1999) 203, points out that its Hermonthite origin is true ‘en un sens, mais le papyrus provient du monastère de Phoibammôn, entre Dayr al-Madīna et Dayr al-Bahary’. The heavy presence of Hermonthites as witnesses may suggest that the notary too was Hermonthite and not one from nearby Memnonia, given the format of the signature: documents from Memnonia do not contain the usual *completio*, but a statement by the person who wrote the document (καὶ ἐσωμάτισα vel sim.) which he adds after an illiteracy formula or witness statement. Memnonia is included in *Byz. Not.* p. 77, on the basis of P.Herm. 25.24f., apparently because of the reference to a λογογράφος; other contracts from Memnonia are written by a γραμματεὺς; P.Herm. 31.24, SB XVIII 13718.5, P.Lond. inv. 2912.6, 2914(1).6, 2918.5 (the last three items are published in A. Benaissa, *More Papyri from Late Antique Memnonia in the British Library*, APF 61 [2015] 352–370).

³⁹ These Flavii would have been soldiers in the local unit, though only one of them identifies himself as such. A group of soldiers occurs in another text of this group, viz. BGU II 673 (525), addressed to Φλ. ἅπα Ἰωάννης Ἀνδρέου (l. 3) and two other men, one of them a στρ(ατιώτης) ἀριθ(μοῦ) Ἐρμώνθ(εως) (l. 5) — the resolution στρ(ατιώται) is conceivable, even though nothing in the abbreviation suggests a form in the plural. It is unclear whether this ἀριθμός is strictly a *numerus* or the term was used loosely for the local military unit; according to the Notitia Dignitatum (Or. XXXI 39), the *legio II Valentiniana* was stationed at Hermonthis in the late fourth century (cf. also SB XX 14799.3 [IV] στρ(ατιώτης) λεγ(εῶνος) Ἐρμώνθ(εως)).

around 1880.⁴⁰ It was placed successively in Hermopolis (BL IX 240) and Antinoopolis (BL XIII 193) on the basis of its formulas, but the arguments are far from cogent,⁴¹ and these sites are not known to have yielded papyri as early as 1880. Nevertheless, we may be confident that it stems from somewhere in Upper Egypt — would that be Hermonthis? The names would be consistent with such a provenance.

Though presumed to have been bought with Fayum papyri in 1877–1881, BGU II 668, 669, 670, 672, 673, and 674 (= P.Berol. 5230, 5241, 5228, 5295, 5247, and 5233 respectively) were known to come from Hermonthis, otherwise the letter BGU II 674, whose text offers no clues to its provenance, would not have been ascribed to it.⁴² Such information about the Louvre papyri is lacking. SB I 4683 may be the odd piece out of an otherwise homogeneous group. Still, it makes me wonder whether papyri from other areas as well were among those considered as of the first Fayum find,⁴³ perhaps as a result of the mixing of items of various origins at the point of purchase. In the case of Berlin, however, the mixing may be due to the inventory: this group may not have been acquired with Fayum papyri.

Related to the Berlin Hermonthite group, particularly BGU II 669–670, is P.Gen. IV 167. The area to the west of Thebes links Berlin with Geneva also through the papyrus codex of the so-called *Blemyomachia*, which comes from the monastery of Phoibammon, situated not too far from Hermonthis (see now P.Gen. IV 158).⁴⁴ The bulk of the Berlin fragments (P.Berol. 5003) were acquired with other Greek and Coptic papyri by L. Stern in Thebes in early 1881; these

⁴⁰ The inv. no. of SB I 4683 as reported by Wessely is ‘6846 (App. 69)’. When this note was at proof stage, I was informed that the 6846 series was part of a group bought from J. G. Chester in 1879 (personal communication from N. Vanthieghem). This does not simplify matters: as far as I know, all other papyri acquired by the Liverpool museum (currently being prepared for publication) and the Louvre from Chester in 1879 come from the Fayum when their provenience can be established.

⁴¹ BL IX 240 = CPR XIV 5.17 n.: ‘The form of the *kyria* clause included in this contract, viz. γραμμα(τεῖον) κύριον καὶ βέβαιον, is not found in Arsinoite documents ... The document is from the Hermopolite’. Yet even if this clause is predominantly attested in Hermopolite texts, it is also found as far away as Syene: cf. P.Lond. V 1737.19 (613). — BL XIII 192 = N. Kruit, ZPE 140 (2002) 152 n. 10: ‘an Antinoopolite provenance is perhaps more likely: there too, the same formula is found. Moreover, the phrase καὶ ταύτας ἐτοίμως ἔχομεν παρασχεῖν (cf. 1. 2 with BL IX [240]) is typical for that nome, cf. P.Heid. V, p. 314 and my article in ZPE 94 (1992) 171. The notary Kuriakos of l. 20 may in fact be identical with the one who signed P.Ant. I 42 (= Byz. Not. p. 23 Antinoopolis 10.3.1).’ But this particular formula occurs in numerous loans and acknowledgements of debt from various areas, from Oxyrhynchus to Syene. As for the notary, Kyriakos in P.Ant. I 42 does not include his father’s name in his signature.

⁴² Marius Gerhardt, whom I thank, reports that ‘it seems to be clear from the inventory books that they were bought in the Fayum but were said to be from Thebes’ (email of 10.x.2017).

⁴³ Most of these papyri are now in Vienna; once again, it is worth remembering that the provenance ‘Arsinoites oder Herakleopolites’ assigned to Vienna papyri on the basis of their inventory alone should be taken as possible but not certain. The problem is compounded by the nature of Wessely’s inventory, which has been shown to be not wholly reliable; see F. Morelli, *SB XXIV 16222: due patrizi e un Liciniano*, Tyche 23 (2008) 142–145.

⁴⁴ It is not possible, however, to establish whether the two Geneva papyri were purchased together; my thanks to Paul Schubert for answering my enquiry. There are a few other papyri that connect the collections of Berlin and Geneva, the most famous of which is the Ninos-Roman (MP³ 2616), but these do not include Berlin papyri acquired as early as 1881.

included ‘Bruchstücke griechischer Contracte in cursiver Handschrift’.⁴⁵ It is conceivable that the documents from Hermonthis published in BGU II were among them.⁴⁶

There is another possible ramification. The two papyri with inventory numbers immediately prior to BGU II 668 (= P.Berol. 5228) are fragments of local hexameter compositions: 5226v, a poem about Thebes, and 5227r, a fragment that mentions Delos (= MP³ 1797 and 1799). They were reportedly acquired in the Fayum; should they not be assumed to come from the wider Theban area, and could they even be part of the same find as the (hexameter) *Blemyomachia*?

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⁴⁵ L. Stern, *Fragmente eines griechisch-ägyptischen Epos*, ZÄS 19 (1881) 70.

⁴⁶ Stern reports that his Theban papyri ‘sich nunmehr in der ägyptischen Abteilung der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin befinden’. This implies that they were formally accessioned, but with the exception of P.Berol. 5003 they were not associated with Stern. Marius Gerhardt tells me that ‘there are not many papyri registered as deriving from acquisitions made by Stern’ (e-mail of 17.x.2016); these are P.Berol. 1522 (= BGU II 561), acquired in 1880, three literary pieces bought in the Fayum and in Giza in 1881, viz. P.Berol. 5002, 5005 and 5017 (= MP³ 158, 394, 1491), and P.Berol. 5003.

⁴⁷ ZPE 198 (2016) 173–189.

⁴⁸ W. Clarysse, *Filiation the Egyptian Way in Greek Documents*, *Lingua Aegyptia* 23 (2015) 277–282, with the earlier literature cited in this article; see, for example, Ὀρουηβίς πα Ιερμουθής (c.200?, S. P. Vleeming, *Demotic and Greek-Demotic Mummy Labels and Other Short Texts Gathered from Many Publications*, *A. Texts* [Studia Demotica IX-A], Leuven, Paris, Walpole, MA 2011, no. 590B.1–2), Σενψενησις τα Βης (3rd c., ibid. no. 735B.1–2), Σενπατεμινς τα Ψενταησιος (3rd c., ibid. no. 743B.1–2) and Σενεχνηβίς τα Βης (3rd c., ibid. no. 815B.1–2).