Stealing Livestock at Oxyrhyncha
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We present here a papyrus document housed in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin. The small fragmentary text contains a petition from Neoptolemos to Apollonios, the police chief (archiphylakites) of the village of Oxyrhyncha. A contemporary Apollonios, who was epistates of the same village, is known from a handful of documents. It is possible, we suggest, that the two were one and the same.

In the mid second century B.C. Petos son of Petesouchos, a royal farmer at Oxyrhyncha, submitted a petition to Apollonios, the epistates of the same village (P.Erasm. I 4; mid II B.C.). His complaint was similar to that of Neoptolemos: unidentified robbers broke into his yard and drove away his livestock. The editors suggested that the Apollonios in P.Erasm. I 4 may have been the same person to whom the Arsinoite strategos Demonax forwarded another petition (P.Erasm. I 3; 166 B.C.), and was very likely the same Apollonios who was instructed to deliver a summons in P.Erasm. I 11 (150 B.C.).1 These identifications are plausible but not certain.2 We may perhaps be more confident that the Apollonios, epistates of Oxyrhyncha, who received a prosangelma concerning a beating and subsequent trial (SB XXII 15542; mid II B.C.), is, as the editor suggested, the same man to whom P.Erasm. I 4 was addressed.3

All of these texts belong to the middle of the second century B.C. The Texas petition is dated to a 28\textsuperscript{th} regnal year. Palaeography urges against the 28\textsuperscript{th} years of Philadelphos (258/7) and Auletes (54/3), leaving 154/3, under Philometor, and 143/2, under the restored Euergetes II, as the only possible dates. We may be certain, then, that the Apollonios who is chief of police in the Texas papyrus was at least a close contemporary of the epistates mentioned at P.Erasm. I 4 and SB XXII 15542. At least five contemporary police chiefs were both epistates and archiphylakites of a village.4 Thus, both chronological and administrative realities allow the possibility that Apollonios the archiphylakites in the Texas papyrus was elsewhere addressed as epistates, and that a single man named Apollonios held both posts at Oxyrhyncha. Any identification must remain at best a conjecture for now, but perhaps new texts will allow greater certainty.


2 It was not uncommon for epistatai to be involved in legal proceedings, including the delivery of summonses and/or transport of litigants: cf. the commands directed to epistatai by strategoi in P.Enteux. 44, 47 (221 B.C.), and 54 (218 B.C.). Strategoi very often forwarded petitions to epistatai with instructions to resolve the conflict: P.Enteux. pp.xlii-xlvi. At P.Enteux. 50.4–5 (221 B.C.) a petitioner asked that the king have the strategos write to the archiphylakites; the strategos, however, forwarded the petition not to the archiphylakites, but to the epistates (10). At P.Enteux. 82.7–8 (221 B.C.) the petitioner requested that both the epistates write both to the epistates and the archiphylakites; the strategos forwarded the petition to the former (11).


4 Aniketos was both epistates and archiphylakites of Euhemeria: P.Giss.Univ. I 7.1–2 (II B.C.), 8.1–2 (131 B.C.); SB VIII 9674 (ca 131 B.C.), epistates restored; Pros.Ptol. I 643 and addenda at VIII 643, to which add SB XIV 11883 (170–116 B.C.); Demetrios held both posts in Soknopaiou Nesos: P.Mich. XV 688.1–2 (II/1 B.C.); another Demetrios held both at Tebytnis: P.Tebt. I 43.9–10 (118 B.C.), as did Herakleides: P.Tebt. I 230 (late II B.C.); also Heliodoros from an undetermined village in the Fayyum: SEG XXXIII 1359 [cf. I.Fay. II 209.3–4] (107–101 B.C.).
The recto preserves 16 lines of text, written with the fibers. The verso, which is badly abraded, may preserve the name of the addressee written with the fibers. Margins survive on three sides: at top, left, and right. The document is broken at the bottom. Perhaps 4–6 lines of text have been lost.

**Text and Translation**

1. 'Απολλωνίωι ἀρχιφυλακίτη καὶ τοῖς φυλακίταις ὁ Οξυρύχχων παρά

4. Νεοπολέμου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου ἔνδειξι Νακθίου τοῦ πατρικοῦ [μου] κλήρου.

8. τὴν εἰς τὴν ἑβ πτὸ ["]

12. εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν μου, ὅ / ἔν τῇ]

16. . . ν . . θα . . . ["]

**Recto:** To Apollonios, archiphylakites, and the phylakitai of Oxyrhyncha, from Neoptolemos, son of Ptolemaios, Macedonian, inheritor of his father’s allotment. On the night before the twelfth of ..., year 28, while I was ..., certain individuals broke into my yard, where my flock was penned, and departed in possession of (them?)...

**Verso:** To Apollonios (?).

**Notes**

1–3: Correspondence addressed to a police official and his phylakitai: e.g. P.Giss.Univ. I 8.1–4 (131 B.C.): 'Ανίκητοι ἐκπέμμεν τι καὶ ἄρχιφυλακίτες καὶ τοιοῦτο φυλακίταις ἑμνημερήσατο.

4: This Neoptolemos is not otherwise known.

7: A month is required and given the available space, Thoth, Hathyr, and Tybi are the most likely candidates.

8: Sense and parallel phrasing (e.g. P.Erasm. I 4.5–7) do not suggest a need for additional clarification at the end of the line. Word order and space do not admit the kind of redundant precision attested at P.Tebt. III.1 796.3–4 (185 B.C.): τῇ νυκτὶ τῆς ἑις τὴν τα τοῦ προγεγραμμένου μνήμος.

9–10: Parallel formulary suggests that these lines contained a statement of the petitioner’s whereabouts at the time of the incident: P.Enteux. 27.2 (222 B.C.): ἔχοντος μου ἐπιστολὰς εἰς τὴν Θεσσαλία; 55.4 (222 B.C.): ὅτι τοῦ μου ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ πρὸς κρίσει; P.Tebt. III.1 793.xi.12 (183 B.C.): ἀναλύοντος μου οὐκέτι τις ἄρας πρὸς ἐμνημοσύνης; III.2 895.3 (ca 175 B.C.): ὅτι τοῦ ἐν Κροκοδόλων πόλεως P.Zen.Pestm. 44.1–2 (253 B.C.): ἀναβαίνοντος μου ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ; SB VI 9068.9–10 (Moithymis, III B.C.): ὅτι τοῦ μου ἐν τῷ ιερῷ. Restore ἕν or (less probably) ἐκτα at line-end?
11-12: For parallels for this common turn of phrase see *P.Heid.* VIII 421.2 (Herakleopolis?, ca 201 or 177 B.C.?) with commentary at 325–326.

13-14: ἐκοιναζεῖς[τὸ - -] | τὰ κτήνη: We might supply the necessary sense by restoring [μου] | τὰ κτήνη, but one would expect the more common word order τὰ κτήνη μου. This restoration would also leave a gap of 3–4 letters. Alternatively, something like ἐκοιναζεῖς[τὸ πάντα] | τὰ κτήνη (cf. *UPZ I* 110.173-4 [Memphis, 164 B.C.]) would satisfy both sense and space. Perhaps the neuter plural τὰ κτήνη took a plural verb: ἐκοιναζεῖς[ντο; cf. Mayser, *Grammatik* II.3 28–30. We have assumed that the form is middle/passive: “where my flocks were penned,” but the active voice (ἐκοιναζεῖς[ντο] would not be impossible; cf. e.g. *BGU VI* 1223.12 (Hermopolite, II/I B.C.); *P.Mil.Vogl* VII 305.107, 307.29, 32 (Tebtynis, II B.C.); *P.Würzb.* 11.18 (Arsinoide, A.D. 99). Traces after the ζετα seem to be more consistent with *epsilon* than *omicron*, but we hesitate to rule out either. The use of the imperfect may have been frequentative, suggesting that it was Neoptolemos’ habit to pen his flock in the courtyard.


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