

A NOTE ON BGU I 140

The opening of this famous papyrus (= M.Chrest. 373) containing a letter from the emperor Hadrian to the prefect of Egypt has been discussed in latest instance in P.Lugd. Bat. XXIII pp. 1-6 (cf. BL VIII 19). Lines 1-2 were read there (p. 5) as

ἀν[τί]γρα(φον) ἐπιστ[ολ]ῆς τοῦ Κυρίου με]θηρμ[ην]εῦ-
 μένης []ω

In itself this is virtually the same reading as the one proposed already by the first editor of the text, U. Wilcken. Dots below letters left aside, the main difference is only that Wilcken printed an abbreviated ἐπιστ[ολ]ῆς, apparently in order to reduce the size of his restoration in view of the size of the lacuna.

For reasons unknown, no scholar seems to have bothered very much about the restoration of line 2, featuring an isolated (and doubtful) omega. A check of plate I in P.Lugd. Bat. XXIII makes me feel that there is here still some opportunity for further improvement. It would seem to me that the tail of the ρ at the end of l. 1 should not be extended all the way down to the bottom of l. 2; the lower part of the ρ-tail belongs in my view to a separate letter featuring a vertical hasta at its right hand side, e.g. a ν. Furthermore, there is nothing in the doubtful ω which characterizes it as only ω; one may read here an ο as well. The result is that one may read]ον at the end of l. 2. If this is related to the preceding participle με]θηρμ[ην]εὺς, with the help of the DDBDP it becomes possible to propose for l. 2 a restoration which finds a decent number of parallels in already published papyri, viz. με]θηρμ[ην]εὺς [κατὰ τὸ δυνάτ]ον. This restoration implies that one should better keep Wilcken's abbreviation ἐπιστ[ολ]ῆς, because otherwise the number of letters to be restored in l. 1 is too large in comparison with the size of the restoration in l. 2.

Furthermore, in l. 5 one may restore προε[τέθη ἐν 'Αλεξ(ανδρεΐα) ἐν τ]ῇ παρεμβολ(ῇ). Checking the DDBDP for the form προετέθη = 'it was posted' one finds that a substantial number of attestations of this form are followed by ἐν 'Αλεξανδρεΐα. Moreover, as long as the legio III Cyrenaica was stationed in Egypt it had its permanent headquarters (cf. l. 6, χειμασία = 'hibernae') there.

Santpoort-Zuid

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PETITION TO THE EPISTRATEGOS VEDIUS FAUSTUS¹

58 26.16016

P.CtYBR inv. 1086
160/61 CE

8.4 x 13.8 cm

Narmouthis

Together with other papyri purchased by Michael Rostovzeff from Maurice Nahman in Cairo, this papyrus came to Yale University in 1931. It is light-brown in color, with black ink; the text is written along the fibers and the verso is blank. The sheet has been folded along the fibers three times (at lines 9-10, 15-16, 20-21), and at each of the folds the text is severely damaged. Much of the lower right-hand portion of the papyrus is lost due to tearing. Margins are preserved at left and top, measuring about 0.8 and 1.0 cm respectively; at the bottom and right, the text continues to the edge of the sheet.

The 27 lines of text are written in the same documentary hand. Lines 1-2, the address to the epistrategos, are written large, with letters 0.4-0.5 cm in height; the lines thereafter become increasingly cramped, and the letters as small as 0.2 cm in height. Lines 16-19, which contain a copy of the prefect's *subscriptio*, are again written large; the lines thereafter again become cramped and the letters small. There are between 23 and 33 characters per line.²

The text is a petition from a *hierous*, Apion, and a *pastophoros*, whose name is lost but whose patronym and papponym are preserved, to the epistrategos Vedius Faustus. The two priests³ include a copy of a *subscriptio* that they received in a previous petition to the prefect L. Volusius Maecianus (lines 16-20?), and then a copy of the previous petition itself, in which the priests ask the prefect⁴ to take action through Harpokration, the strategos of the Themistos and Polemon divisions of the Arsinoite nome (lines 21?-28). The copy of the petition to the prefect is incomplete, as the closing lines of the papyrus do not contain language customary in the conclusion of a petition.⁵ The remainder of the petition to the prefect, therefore, as well as the remainder of the petition to the epistrategos are now lost.

Each of the three officials mentioned in this papyrus is attested elsewhere. L. Volusius Maecianus, a jurist who previously had held scholarly posts in the imperial court, is attested as prefect from 13 February to 15 November 161. The actual duration of his prefecture may have been longer, as Volusius' predecessor, T. Furius Victorinus, is last attested in a text dated to 28 September 160, and his successor, M. Annius Syriacus, is first attested in a text dated to November/December 161.⁶ Harpokra-

¹ I have received assistance with this text from a number of scholars, and I thank them warmly for their enthusiasm and generosity: Willy Clarysse, Sven Vleeming, Rudolf Haensch, J. David Thomas, and Dieter Hagedorn. I am also grateful to the staff of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, especially Ellen Cordes, for providing me with a photograph of the papyrus, and Robert Babcock, for encouraging my work on the text. The image that appears in this article was reproduced from the on-line papyrus database of the Beinecke Library, located at <http://inky.library.yale.edu/WWWpapyrus.htm>.

² Line 1 is exceptional with only 19 characters; this low figure can be attributed to the large size of the characters.

³ Although the titles of the two religious officials are different in Greek, for convenience I will refer to both officials as priests. On *pastophoroi*, who are technically inferior to *hierous*, see the commentary on line 5.

⁴ In the copy of the petition to the prefect, the prefect is referred to not by name, but by the phrase λαμπρότατη τύχη (lines 22-23). The honorific λαμπρότατος can only describe the prefect (cf. line 11), and not the epistrategos who is properly described as κράτιστος (cf. line 1). See the commentary on lines 22-23 for further discussion.

⁵ None of the following elements which might indicate closure is present in the text: the phrase ἵν' ὄμην εὐεργετημένοι *vel sim.*, the word δευτέρῃ, signatures, a "booking notice," noting that the petition has been received by the office of the petitioned official, or the official's response. For a more typical conclusion to a petition, see, e.g., *P. Oxy.* VII 1032.55ff.

⁶ For references to Volusius and the other prefects here mentioned, see G. Bastianini, "Lista dei prefetti d'Egitto dal 30a al 299p," *ZPE* 17 (1975) 294-96. Bastianini's subsequent additions and corrections to this list contain no new references to Volusius: *id.*, "Lista dei prefetti d'Egitto dal 30a al 299p. Aggiunte e correzioni," *ZPE* 38 (1980) 75-89; *id.*, "Il prefetto d'Egitto (30 a.C.-297 d.C.): Addenda (1973-1985)," *ANRW* II.10.1 (1988) 503-17. Published after Bastianini's last update, *P. Oxy.* LX 4060, a dossier of official correspondence, contains four references to Volusius; all of the correspondence dates to