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BGU XI 2086 col.i: The Opening Formula

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BGU XI 2086 COL.I: THE OPENING FORMULA

The editor of BGU XI 2086 (Arsinoe, A.D.235) rightly labels this document as an "Epikrisis-Eingabe". Unfortunately, the first column is very much mutilated, but it is obvious from parallels that the opening formula followed the usual pattern "To A from B". The question remains - to which person(s) or to which officials is this document addressed?

The opening of the papyrus is printed as follows:

1 - - - - -] μίε ν Ἀρσινόειτῶν
2 πόλεως καὶ - - - - -] Ἀλκίμω [γε]γυῖ (μνασιαρχηκότι) ἐνάρχω πρό-
τ (ανι)

3 καὶ πρὸς τῇ ἐπικρίσει]
4 Παρὰ Αὐρηλίου Εὐπόρου Λεοντᾶ τοῦ] Χαϊρήμονος κτλ.

The editor's translation of the first two lines betrays his uncertainty, as to what preceded the name of Alkimos (line 2): "(An ..., ... der Stadt) Arsinoe, (und ...) Alkimos, gewesenen Gymnasiarchen und amtierenden Prytannen", etc.

A check of the original has enabled me to suggest some new readings and to offer a new interpretation¹⁾. The remains of the word preceding Ἀρσινοεῖων (line 1) are to be read/restored as Πτολῆμαίων. This is, no doubt, part of some official indication of the metropolis of the Arsinoite nome (cf. J.F.Oates, BASP 12, 1975, 113-120). In fact, one finds this indication also in BGU VII 1588 (A.D. 222) and in BGU II 362 v (cf. BL II.2 15-16; A.D. 215), and one may safely exclude the possibility that this indication of provenance was added to the name and title of an official mentioned before the former gymnasiarch and officiating prytanis Alkimos. Instead, one expects here mention of the local town-council and/or the body of archontes, for example:

- a. [Ἀρχουσι βουλῇ τῆς τῶν Ποτλ]εμαιέων Ἀρσινοειτῶν
[πόλεως διὰ] Ἄλκιμου, κτλ. (cf. BGU II 362 v; VII 1588)
b. [Τῇ κρατίστῃ βουλῇ Ποτλ]εμαιέων Ἀρσινοειτῶν
[διὰ - - - - -] Ἄλκιμου, κτλ. (cf. SPP V passim; PSI IX 1067)
or
c. [- - - - - Ποτλ]εμαιέων Ἀρσινοειτῶν
[ἀρχουσι βουλῇ διὰ - -] Ἄλκιμου, κτλ.

In favour of the latter solution one may refer to the conclusion of V. Martin (*Aegyptus* 13, 1933, 294-98), that before A.D. 244 documents addressed to the archontes / town council of a city normally seem to start with an

1) I should like to thank W.M.Brashear for his hospitality during my stay in Berlin and for his correcting an earlier version of this article.

ethnic²⁾. At the same time it should be remarked, however, that it is difficult to guess what should have preceded Πτολ[ε]μαίων, if this version is adopted. As the epikrisis declaration seems to have been written by several hands it is obvious that col.1 is not a copy and that a restoration like [Ἀντίγραφον ἐπικρίσεως. Πτολ[ε]μαίων Ἀρσινόειτ[ο]ν, κτλ. is out of the question.

Alkimos as officiating prytanis should be the intermediary between the archontes / town council and the sender of the document in question, and his name and functions should stand in the genitive preceded by δίδ (cf. e.g. the numerous documents addressed to the town council of Hermopolis as published in SPP V; for a list cf. A.K.Bowman, *The Town Councils of Roman Egypt*, Toronto 1971, 164ff.). A check of the original has in fact confirmed this hypothesis. Read in line 2: [- - δίδ - -] Ἀλκίμου [γε]γυ(μνασιαρχικός) ἐνδόχου πρυ(άνεως). It seems likely that Alkimos' name was at least preceded by an Αὐρηλίου, but one cannot be certain whether the man was simply named Aurelius Alkimos, or Aurelius N.N. alias (ὁ καὶ) Alkimos. This uncertainty is enhanced by the fact, that there seem to be various possibilities of restoring lines 1 and 2. With regard to line 3 the tables of Oxyrhynchite prytaneis (cf. Bowman, op.cit., 131ff.) show, that such an addition of καὶ πρὸς τῇ ἐπικρίσει after the title of prytanis is unparalleled, and one could equally well assume that this line was left blank on the papyrus.

C.A.Nelson (*Status Declarations in Roman Egypt*, Amsterdam 1979 [= ASP 19], 12) informs us that Arsinoite epikrisis declarations were usually addressed to two officials (always former gymnasiarchs) who were members of the commission specifically in charge of the epikrisis. If the restorations suggested here for lines 1-2 find acceptance this papyrus is remarkable for being not only the latest epikrisis declaration from Arsinoe (cf. BGU XI 2086 Introd.), but also apparently the only one which is addressed not to a commission of former gymnasiarchs, but to the town-council (and archontes?) of the metropolis of the Arsinoite nome.

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2) But cf. PSI IX 1067 from A.D.235.