

STEALING LIVESTOCK AT OXYRHYNCHA

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 *proselgelma* 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 28th regnal year. Palaeography urges against the 28th 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.

¹ Identifications proposed at *P.Erasm.* I pp.17, 19 (reproducing P. J. Sijpesteijn, "Ptolemaic Papyri in the Collection of the Erasmus University," *ZPE* 40 [1980] 119–129, at 120, 121), and p.33.

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 *strategoï* in *P.Enteux.* 44, 47 (221 B.C.), and 54 (218 B.C.). *Strategoï* 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 the *strategos* write both to the *epistates* and the *archiphylakites*; the *strategos* forwarded the petition to the former (11).

³ N. Gonis, "A New 2nd Century B.C. Proselgelma," *Acts* XX 231–235, identification at 233.

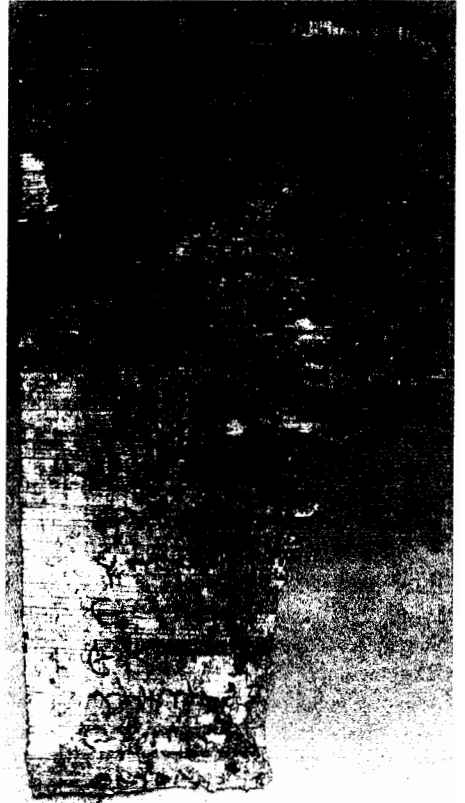
⁴ Aniketos was both *epistates* and *archiphylakites* of Euhemeria: *P.Giss.Univ.* I 7.1–2 (II B.C.), 8.1–2 (131 B.C.); *SB VIII 9674* (ca 131 B.C.), *epistates* restored; *Pros.Ptol.* I 643 and addenda at VIII 643, to which add *SB XIV 11883* (170–116 B.C.); Demetrios held both posts in Soknopaiou Nesos: *P.Mich.* XV 688.1–2 (III B.C.); another Demetrios held both at Tebtynis: *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.).

P.Texas inv. 2
Oxyrhyncha

14 x 8 cm.

154/3 or 143/2 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

- ^{ro} Ἀπολλωνίωι ἀρχιφυλα-
 κίτηι καὶ τοῖς φυλακίταις
 Ὁξυρύγγων παρὰ
 4 Νεοπτολέμου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου(ου)
 Μακεδόνοιο διαδόχου
 τοῦ πατρικοῦ {μου} κλήρου.
 τῆι εἰς τὴν ιβ τ[οῦ - ^{ca 2-4} -]
 8 τοῦ κη L. [- ^{ca 6-8} - -]
 φερούσηι νυκ[τὶ - ^{ca 4-6} -]
 οντος μου εἰ[- ^{ca 7-9} - -]
 ὑπερέβησά[ν τινες]
 12 εἰς τὴν ἀύ[λῆν μου, οὐδ' ἐν ἡι]
 ἐκοιτάξ[ε]το [- ^{ca 6-8} - -]
 τὰ κτήνη, καὶ ὄϊχοντο]
 ἔχοντες. [- ^{ca 7-9} - -]
 16 .. γ . θα ... [- ^{ca 7-9} - -]

^{vo} Ἀπολλ[λωνίωι?]

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.): Ἀνίκητωι ἐπιστάτῃ καὶ ἰ ἀρχιφυλακίτῃ [καὶ τοῖς ἰ μετ'] αὐτοῦ φυλακ[ι]ταῖς ἰ Εὐήμερ[ι]α].
- 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 ι εἰς τὴν ια τοῦ προγεγραμμένου μηνός.
- 9–10: Parallel formulaery 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.): ἔχοντός μου ἐπιστολάς εἰς τὴν Θηβαΐδα; 55.4 (222 B.C.): ὄντος μ[ου] ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείαι πρὸς κρίσει; *P.Tebt.* III.1 793.xi.12 (183 B.C.): ἀναλύοντος μου ὀπίτερον τῆς ὥρας πρὸς ἑμαυτόν; III.2 895.3 (ca 175 B.C.): ὄντος μου ἐν Κροκοδίλων πόλει; *P.Zen.Pestm.* 44.1–2 (253 B.C.): ἀναβαίνοντός μου ἰ ἐκ τοῦ πεδίου; *SB V* 9068.9–10 (Moithymis, III B.C.): ὄντος μου ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ. Restore ἐ[ν] or (less probably) ἐ[πί] 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: ἐκοιτάζε[το - - ^{ca 6-8} - -] | 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 ἐκοιτάζε[το 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: ἐκοιτάζο[ντο; cf. *Mayer*, *Grammatik* II.3 28–30. We have assumed that the form is middle/passive: “where my flocks were penned,” but the active voice (ἐκοιτάζο[ν] 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 (Arsinoite, A.D. 99). Traces after the zeta 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.
- 14–15: [ᾠιχοντο] | ἔχοντες: Variations on the phrase are common in reports of theft: cf. *BGU* VI 1253.8–10 (? , II B.C.): τὰ τε κτήνη ἀπειβιάσαντο καὶ ᾠιχοντο ἔχοντες; *P.Cair.Zen.* IV 59659.7–9 (241 B.C.): περιείλοντό μου ὑποζύγια | Ζήνωνος δύο, ἃ ᾠιχοντο | ἔχοντες; *P.Coll.Youtie* I 7.6-8 (? , 224 B.C.): ᾠιχοντο δ’ ἔχοντες ποδανιπτῆρα χαλκοῦν μέγαν; *P.Dion.* 10.7-8 (Hermoupolis Magna, 109 B.C.): τὰ πρὸς τὴν γεωργικὴν κατασκευὴν καὶ ἄλλα τὰ ἐν τῷ | αὐτῷ τόπῳ ᾠιχον[τ]ο ἔχοντες; *P.Frankf.* 3.20 (Tholthis, 212 B.C.): ᾠιχοντο ἔχοντες αὐτῆς κρόκην; *PSI* IV 396.11–12 (Philadelphia, 241 B.C.): ᾠιχοντο ἔχοντ[ες οἴνου] κεράμια | δεκαεννέα; *P.Tebt.* I 52.7–10 (ca 114 B.C.): ᾠιχοντο ἔχοντες τ[ῆ]ν τῆς οἰκίας μου συγγραφήν καὶ ἕτερα βιοτικά | σύμβολα; III.1 796.6-7 (185 B.C.): οἴχονται [ἔ]χοντες ἐν τῇ προστάδι σφυρίδα σίτων; 797.19–20 (II B.C.): ᾠιχοντο ἔχοντες | τὸ μέλι [τε καὶ] τὸ ὀθόνιον; *SB* XVIII 13160.10–11 (Moeris, 244 or 219 B.C.): ᾠιχοντ’ ἔχοντες | συρίαν γυναικείαν.

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