List of fugitives

BL Egerton Pap. 37
15 (w) × 12.4 (h) cm

Second half of seventh century
Oxyrhynchite Nome

A list of five persons who had fled from Tanais to three other villages: a pair of brothers had gone to Thouskou Sarapammonos, two other brothers to Psempkle, and one man to Tampeti. Tampeti was located close to Tanais, and perhaps the same applies to Psempkle; the fugitives had not gone far from their place of residence. What prompted their migration is not stated, but financial concerns would have been the likeliest reason. There is no date, but the term χωριζων points to the time after the Islamic conquest; the hand, an early version of the minuscule, also suggests a date in the second half of the seventh century.

The origin and purpose of our text are not obvious. Like most of the few post-Conquest Oxyrhynchite texts published to date, it was acquired on the antiquities market, which is a non-starter. The fairly formal character of the script and the type of the abbreviations indicate a professional scribe operating within an institution, and the technical terms used (χωριζων, ὀνόματα) point to a state office. Fugitives were the concern of the fiscal agents of the state, and the small compass of the list suggests a level below that of the pagarchy: the administrators of the village of Tanais or, more likely, the Oxyrhynchite skelos that included Tanais.

We might also consider whether our list comes from a large estate's administration, but there is virtually no evidence for Oxyrhynchite estates in this period. At any rate, there are parallels from earlier times. P. Oxy. xvi 2055, headed γνώσας(ις) γεωργ(ῶν) φυγ(ῶν των) ἐκ τοῦ κτήμα(τος) Θεσσαλίας | εἰς τὸ κτήμα Μαχαυλίας, διασφέροντος ἡ τῆς θεοῦ ὅρα (ll. 1-3), tells us that twenty-three agricultural workers had fled from an Apionic holding to one under the domus divina some time in the sixth-century. Their relative location is unknown, but the high number of the fugitives suggests that the two holdings did not lie far from each other. The list was drawn up in an office of the Apion estate, perhaps the central headquarters at Oxyrhynchus, on the basis of information supplied by local administrators; the fluid boundaries between the domus gloriosa of the Apions and the domus divina would have facilitated the flow of information.

The text is written along the fibres. Back blank.

1

2 + γν(ῶσις) ἀνθρωπ(ῶν) φυγ(ῶν) τ(ῶν) ἀπὸ χωριζ(ου) Τανάεως διν(ῶν)
3 εἰ(ς) τ(α) ἔξ(ῆς) χω(ρ(α))
4 ὀῦ(μων)
5 εἰ(ς) τ(α) χω(ρ(α)) Θουκ(οου) Σαρ(κα) ὑπ(του) ὧν(ῶσις) Β Ἱσσακ(α και) ἀδελφ(ου) αὐτ(ου)
6 εἰ(ς) τ(α) χω(ρ(α)) Ψέμπεκλη ὧν(ῶσις) Β Πλούτων(οου) και) ἀδελφ(ου) αὐτ(ου)
7 εἰ(ς) τ(α) χω(ρ(α)) Ταμπετη(ς) διν(ῶσις) Β Πεκυσιου Σιλάς
8 γί(νονται) ὄνομά(τα) ε.

List of people who fled from the village of Tanais and are in the villages below, as follows:
In the village of Thouskou Sarapammonos, persons 2, Isaak and his brother.
In the village of Psempkle, persons 2, Plouton and his brother.
In the village of Tampeti, person 1, Pekysios son of Silas.
Total: persons 5.

2 γν(ῶσις) ἀνθρωπ(ῶν) φυγ(ῶν) τ(ῶν). P. Apoll. 13.8 (661/676?), τὴν γνω̣ς τῶν φυγόντων ἀνθρωπ[ῶν]
ἀπολύσατε αὐτὴν πρὸς μέ, which refers to the fugitives of the entire pagarchy, offers a close verbal parallel. Cf. also P. Oxy. XVI 2055.1-3 (6th c.), cited above.

Τανάζως. A village of the old Middle toparchy, and then probably part of the 7th pagus; see J.R. Rea, P. Oxy. LV 3795-12 n., and A. BENAISSA, Rural Settlements of the Oxyrhynchite Nome (2nd ed., Trismegistos Online Publications 4, Köln / Leuven, 2012) [= RSONv], pp. 379-81. It is only sparsely attested after the third century; this is its latest instance in a papyrus.

5 Θουσκου Σαρ(ι)τ(άμωνος). Cf. T. Varie 10.2 (7th c.) ἀπὸ κώμης Θουσκου Σεραπάμωνος τοῦ Ὄξυρυγχείτου, as read by BENAISSA, ‘Miscellanea Toponomastica’, ZPE 183 (2012), p. 193. The reading Θουσκου in T. Varie 10.2 appears acceptable on the published photograph (Tav. XII), though traces above the left-hand element of the putative u-shaped beta could belong to the left-hand part of kappa.

ἀδελφ(ῶ)ς. Cf. 6. The resolution relies on the use of the genitive for the persons in ll. 6 and 7, Πλουτίωνος and Πεκυίου.

6 Ψεμπεκιχη. Formerly in the Middle or the Western toparchy, it was part of the Apion estate in the sixth century. See BENAISSA, RSONv, p. 435.

7 Ταμπετ. Modern Tambidi, this was another village of the Middle toparchy and the 7th pagus, and had also strong Apionic connections. P. Sijp. 37.17 (8th c.) offers another late attestation. See BENAISSA, RSONv, pp. 367-8.

Σίλας: nominative instead of genitive, which takes the forms Σίλα (P. Oxy. LVI 3863.19), Σίλου (P. Oxy. XVI 2029.4), and Σιλάτος (SPP XX 219.3).

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