An Antinoite Document of 181–183

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Text exemplar

Citation
The papyrus published in this article was purchased by the British Museum from the Cairo dealer M. Nahman in July 1921. It first became known to the world outside the Museum ninety years ago. H.I. Bell’s publication (Bell 1933) of papyri from Antinoopolis, with references to unpublished papyri that related to this city, prompted a long letter from U. Wilcken on 22.11.33. While working on the future P.Würzb. 8 and P.Würzb. 9, Wilcken had developed a new hypothesis on the administrative status of the region of Antinoopolis, and asked Bell whether there was anything relevant among the London inedita. Bell obliged by supplying information that lent support to Wilcken’s views. Bell’s letter is not available, but Wilcken’s response on 7.1.34 acknowledged it as ‘extraordinarily valuable’ (außerordentlich wertvoll) to his work.1 Wilcken went on to mention this exchange in the volume that he sent to the press shortly thereafter (P.Würzb., p. 55). He paid particular attention to P.Lond. inv. 2269, a second-century document that includes the phrase ἀπὸ Ἀλαβαστρίνης τῆς Ἀντινόου νομαρχίας, offering an additional reference to this nomarchy and a hint to the location of the village of Alabastrine within the older Hermopolite nome (P.Würzb., pp. 55, 57). Since then, there have been several mentions of this text in scholarly literature, all of which rely on Wilcken’s report, but the papyrus has remained unpublished.2

What remains is the top of the papyrus, with a small part missing on the left side. Two hands are visible. One wrote an address to a procurator Caesaris (name lost) by Stephanos son of Apollonios, who originated from Alabastrine in the nomarchy of Antinoopolis (lines 1–2). Another, more compact hand wrote a document that begins with the same Stephanos addressing a nomarch of Antinoopolis (name also lost). This is followed by a reference to the prefect Veturius Macrinus in the dative, which implies that a petition was mentioned and probably appended; cf. the contemporary P.Fam.Tebt. 43 (182), a petition to a nomarch of Antinoopolis which includes a petition to an epistrategus. The papyrus breaks off at this point. The two addresses do not appear to be part of one and the same text; nothing seems to have been lost between lines 2 and 3, and the hands are different. Perhaps the first two lines were added to the top margin after the document addressed to the nomarch was written, for whatever reason.

The prefect D. Veturius Macrinus is attested in office between 4 July 181 and April/May 183 (Faoro 2015: 123f.), which provides the basis for the dating of the text. The procurator Caesaris may have been a procurator usiacus, making this a late instance of the use of this appellation for this official (see 1 n., §5). The text also offers an early reference to the village as Alabastrine, not Alabastron polis (see 2 n., §7), and is the sole evidence of its position in the Antinoite administrative district (νομαρχία) prior to the late fourth century.

The text is written along the fibres. The papyrus is mounted and the back is presumably blank. There is a sheet join running vertically close to the right edge. The ink traces before it look like offsets.

P.Lond. inv. 2269 23.7 cm (w) × 5 cm (h) 181–183
TM 369456 Antinoite

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1 On these two letters, see Essler 2023 §§12–13.
2 One other unpublished papyrus mentioned in P.Würzb., viz. P.Lond. inv. 2288, has been edited by Susan Fogarty and will appear in Tyche 38 (2023).
(hand 2) To …, procurator of lord Caesar, from Stephanos, son of Apollonios, from Alabastrine of the nomarchy of Antinoou. (hand 1) To …, nomarch of the city of Antinoos, from Stephanos, son of Apollonios, from Alabastrine of the nomarchy of Antinoos. … to Veturius Macrinus, the clarissimus prefect, through(?) …

§5 1 ἐπιτρόπῳ τοῦ κυρίου Καίσαρος. P.Lond. inv. 2263, a lease of 99/100, from the same acquisition, is addressed to a procurator (ἐπιτρόπ(ῳ), l. 1) by farmers from Alabastron (Polis) (γεωργῶν ἀπὸ Ἀλαβάστρων, l. 2). P.Lond. inv. 2277.4 refers to an ousia at Alabastrine in 153/154, suggesting that this may be a procurator usiacus, for the address, cf. e.g. P.Oxy. 43 3089.19 (146). If this holds, it represents a survival of the earlier way of referring to this official. Aelius Socraticus, attested between 151 and 155, was the last known procurator usiacus whose jurisdiction was unspecified, while P.Tebt. 2 317.17 (174/175), τοῦ κρατίστου οὐσιακοῦ ἐπιτρόπου, marks a new starting point; see Beutler 2007.

§6 2 Στεφάνου Ἀπολλωνίου. Cf. 3. Not known from elsewhere.

§7 Ἀλαβαστρίνης = TM Geo 2684. Cf. 3. This village was located in the northern part of the Hermopolite nome, on the east bank of the Nile; see most recently Eller 2022: 235–236. Third-century documents describe it as part of the Hermopolite nome (SB 13 13030.1–2 [205]; P.Lond. 3 1157va.14 [246]; P.Stras. 1 5.8 [262]; P.Oslo 3 134.7 (3rd c.) — see §8), but it belonged to the Antinoite nome in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, and probably later as well: Alabastrine is mentioned in SB 26 16491.19, a tax register of the early eighth century, alongside Antinoite villages. Additionally, there are references to the village in three other fragmentary papyri from the same acquisition in the British Library: P.Lond. inv. 2263.2 (see 1 n., §5), 2276.3 (see Appendix), and 2277.1 (153/154) ἀπὸ Ἀλαβαστρίνης, 3 περὶ κοιμαρίαν(ματίαν) Ἀλαβαστρίνης.

§8 Drew-Bear 1979: 57 suggested that three copies of a census declaration of 161, namely P.Oslo 3 99 = SB 20 14668 and P.Mich. inv. 158 = SB 20 14666–SB 20 14667, came from Alabastrine and not from Alabanthis, as previously thought. Bagnall 1990: 9–10 (= BL 9.176) later (re)confirmed the Antinoite origin of this declaration, but without referring to Drew-Bear’s discussion. The declarant recurs in P.Lond. inv. 2277 (153/154); although the name of the village is abbreviated, its
association with a group of papyri from Alabastrine is significant. Furthermore, it seems possible to me, on the basis of the online image, to read Ἀλαβαστρίνης instead of Ἀλαβανθίδος in SB 20 14666.ii.2. Another disputed occurrence is P.Oslo 3 134.7 (3rd c.) Ἀλαβανθίδος, later read as Ἀλαβαστρί[νης] (BL 8.229–230), probably correctly (see the online image; Gagos and van Minnen 1992: 192 n. 11 = BL 10.134 defended the original reading based on the presumed occurrence of Alabanthis in SB 20 14666–SB 20 14668).

§ 9 τῆς Ἀντινόου νομαρχίας: νομαρχίας Ἀντινόου in l. 3. Wilcken’s discussion in P.Würzb., pp. 53–58, remains useful, but some parts require revision. For example, he posited that the nomarchy was part of the Hermopolite nome, which would explain the shifting administrative affiliation of Alabastrine, but evidence published later suggests otherwise; cf. Thomas 1974: 401. (Wilcken’s assumption that P.Iand. 7 140 provided additional support for his ideas relied on readings that were subsequently corrected; see BL 6.57.) For a list of references to the nomarchy, see Eller 2022: 240.


§ 11 4 [ca.12 Οὐετουρίῳ Μακρίνῳ 
[τῷ λαμπροτάτῳ ἡγεμόνι διὰ ἀναφορίου; for a partial parallel, see SB 22 15782.11 (Ars.; 150/151).

APPENDIX

§ 12 I publish here a fragmentary papyrus acquired with the one edited above because it may offer the earliest attestation of the toponym ‘Alabastrine’. The document appears to be a petition or possibly a declaration addressed to an authority, but too little has survived to form a coherent narrative. Sarapion, whose name is flanked by blank spaces, would have held an official position; a Roman nomen gentile and Sarapion’s function would have been lost to the left and right, respectively. Line 2 contained the name(s) of the petitioner(s), and l. 3 mentions Alabastrine. The text then refers to a separation (l. 4, ἀπηλλαχότι; cf. l. 7), a 14th year (l. 5), an edict (ll. 6, 10), and perhaps an amount of money (l. 9). The 14th year would be 150/151 if the ruler was Antoninus Pius, although Marcus Aurelius (173/174) or even Hadrian (129/130) may also be considered. P.Iand. 7 140 preserves a prefectural edict concerning Antinoites with a covering letter dated to year 14 of Antoninus; however, this may be a mere coincidence.

§ 13 The text is written along the fibres. The back of the papyrus is not visible and presumably blank.

P.Lond. inv. 2276 150/151(?)
TM 987704 Antinoite/Hermopolite
... to Sarapion ——lion, son of Maximus — at Alabastrine. Still ... left(?) for ... in/for the 14th year ... through an edict ... released(?) from troubles ... force ... one thousand (drachmas?) ... edict ... 580(?) ...

§14 Σαραπίων. The name is not borne by any Hermopolite or Antinoite official attested in or around a 14th year in the second century.

§15 λίων Μαξίμου τοῦ. I have taken λίων to be the ending of a name; τοῦ would introduce an alias (τοῦ [καὶ name]) rather than a grandfather. Alternatively, this could be the ending of a Roman gentilicium (e.g. παρὰ Αἰλίων) in the plural, followed by either an alias or a name (e.g. Τούρβωνος).

§16 ἐν Ἀλαβαστρίνῃ ἔτι. It may be that we have to punctuate after ἐν Ἀλαβαστρίνῃ, which would mark the end of the prescript.

§17 εἰς τὸ συν[. An articular infinitive of a compound of συν[.

§18 διὰ προστάγματος. Cf. 10 προστάγματ[.

§19 πραγμάτων ἀπηλλ[α-. Cf. ΕΕ SB 22 15350.4 (3rd c.) ἀπαλλ[ά]σσων αὐ[τ]ὸν τοῦ πράγματος; ΕΕ P.Oxy. 36 2768.23 (3rd c.) πραγμάτων ἀπαλλάχθαι; ΕΕ PSI 7 741.10 (3rd/4th c.) τὰ πράγματα ἀπαλλάξαι.

§20 τῆς ἐμῆς δυνάμεω[ς is an easy guess but would be unparalleled in the papyri.

§21 [?]?λι, ἀς φπ[. λι may also be read as γ. If phi is correctly read (the shape is not common in this period), φπ[ will be the number 580.

Bibliography


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