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***Curatores* in Two Papyri from Heidelberg**

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Text exemplar

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-  1 These two fragments kept in the Papyrussammlung at the University of Heidelberg are connected by the appearance of the Greek transliteration of the Latin *curator*, a term found in both military and civil contexts. The first document is a letter addressed to a *beneficiarius* involving a military *curator* and a payment of a soldier’s *stipendium* and *donativum*, while the second, a rare witness to the short reign of Pupienus and Balbinus, contains the subscription of a *curator* likely operating in the civil realm.

1. Letter Addressed to a *Beneficiarius*

  [P.Heid. Inv. G. 809](#)
Acquired in 1914

6 (h) × 10.3 (w)

  [Ankyron](#)
Mid 2nd – mid 3rd cent.

-  2 The medium brown papyrus, written along the fibers with black ink, preserves part of the top margin (1 cm) and right edge. The papyrus was rolled, leaving six fold lines roughly equidistant from one another. The sheet broke along the fold line at the left. Probably no more than half the sheet is missing, given typical letter widths of 10–20 cm in the Roman period.¹ Accounting for a left margin, then, the majority of each line should be preserved, and the likely supplement to l. 3 suggests about seven letters (or slightly less) are missing at the beginning of each line. The text is written in a competent ligatured hand of the middle of the second to the middle of the third century. The back contains traces, perhaps of an address.
-  3 The papyrus was acquired by Friedrich Bilabel in the winter or early spring of 1914 while participating in the so-called ‘Badische Grabungen’ at El-H ibeh, the ancient Herakleopolite village of   [Ankyron](#).² It may have belonged to the papers of the local *beneficiarius* or perhaps a soldier who settled in Ankyron after retirement, perhaps from the *Legio II Traiana*, the unit to which both Aelius Sarapammon (  [TM Arch 532](#)) and his fellow local veteran Aelius Syrion (  [TM Arch 533](#)) belonged. Given the shared provenance, temporal proximity, and military matters, we would not exclude a connection to the Heidelberg papyrus   [P.Vet.Aelii 6](#) and   [P.Vet.Aelii 7](#), which was “found in the ruins of the houses of Ankyron during the ‘Badische Grabungen’ in or about 1914”³ and is associated with the archive of Aelius Sarapammon (  [TM Arch 532](#)).
-  4 The document is framed as a letter to a *beneficiarius* and mentions a *curator*, the writer’s *stipendium* and *donativum*, and a loan received from the *beneficiarius*. Putting these pieces together, we think that the soldier had taken the loan to cover expenses before pay day⁴ and now is arranging to repay it through his *curator*, who handled soldiers’ funds.⁵

¹   [Sarri 2018](#): Appendix II. On the format of letters, see   [Sarri 2018](#): 115–120.

² See   [Habermann and Fuchs 2014](#) for a detailed account of the excavations. On the village of Ankyron and its name (generally called Ankyronon in our period), see   [Falivene 1998](#): 39–43.

³   [S anger 2013](#): 1. For another military papyrus recently published from these excavations, though earlier in date, see   [P.Heid. G. 826](#) published in   [Deac 2023](#).

⁴ On this practice, see   [Bernini and Claytor 2022](#): 252.

⁵ Cf. Mitthof,   [P.Bingen 106–  107](#), introduction, and   [106.1–2 n.](#)

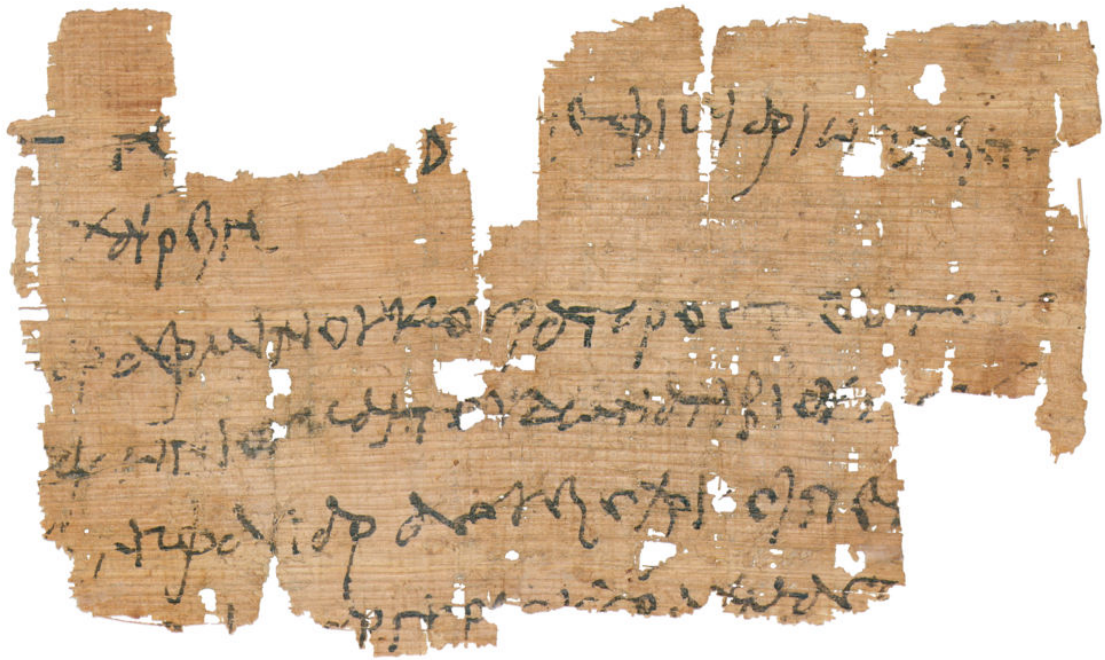


Fig. 1: P.Heid. inv. G. 809 recto. Photo: Elke Fuchs; © Institut für Papyrologie, Universität Heidelberg.



Fig. 2: P.Heid. inv. G. 809 verso. Photo: Elke Fuchs; © Institut für Papyrologie, Universität Heidelberg.

[-ca.7-]ς Γε[-ca.5-] β[ε]νεφικιαρίω πλειῖστα
χαίρειν.

[κόμισαι] παρὰ Ἑρμίνου κουράτορος ἐκ τοῦ
[-ca.7-] ὀψωνίου καὶ τοῦ δωνατιβίου μου

5 [-ca.7-] ἐίληφα παρὰ σοῦ εἰς χρῆσιν ε [-2-3-]
[-ca.7-] [..] ἀργυρίου δραχμὰς τ[-2-3-]

4 I. δωνατίβου

NN to Ge..., *beneficiarius*, many greetings. [Receive] from Herminos, *curator* from my ... *stipendium* and *donativum* [the x] silver drachmas [which] I received from you [as the principal (?)] for [an interest-bearing (?)] loan ...

- §5 1 The horizontal stroke just after the break likely comes from the end of sigma, that is, the end of the sender's name in the nominative. If the reconstruction of l. 3 is correct, both sender and recipient would be identified by a single name. The first letter of the *beneficiarius*' name seems to be a gamma but tau cannot be ruled out. The lack of *gentilicium* Aurelius is not decisive as to a date before the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 212.
- §6 *Beneficarii* were senior soldiers tasked with a variety of administrative duties throughout the provinces: see generally ☞ Ott 1995 and ☞ Nelis-Clément 2000. In Egypt, they are often found as the addressees of petitions, but this type of document appears to be unique. For a new receipt addressed to the *strategos* by a *beneficiarius* and further discussion of their roles in Roman Egypt, see the introduction to P.Jördens 13.
- §7 3 [κόμισαι] is an attractive supplement suggested to us by Demokritos Kaltsas. This verb often opens the concise military letters of the Eastern Desert and makes good sense with the following reference to the soldier's pay and the loan taken from the *beneficiarius*. The supplement suggests about seven letters are missing at the beginning of each line (or slightly less if κόμισαι were written in *ekthesis*: cf. ☞ Sarri 2018: 116-117).
- §8 A certain Herminos is possibly attested as a κουράτωρ in three ostraka found at ☞ Pselkis, in Nubia, which date more-or-less to the same period as our papyrus (☞ Rom.Mil.Rec. 78, no. 4.5-6, ☞ no. 34.1, and ☞ no. 60.3), although the readings are uncertain and in two instances the name Herminos is connected with Tyrannos.⁶ Although detachments of the *Legio II Traiana* (the possible unit of the soldier involved here: see introduction) are attested at Pselkis,⁷ we do not see any solid grounds for connecting our Herminos with the *curator* there.
- §9 3-4 Perhaps a reference to the soldier's most recent (or immediately approaching) pay day filled out the lacuna at the beginning of l. 4.
- §10 4 ὀψωνίου καὶ τοῦ δωνατιβίου μου. The ending of δωνατιβίου was probably influenced by the previous genitive ending; the spelling with beta is found twice elsewhere: δωνατίβου at ☞ O.Claud. 2

⁶ On this group of ostraka, see ☞ Mitthof 2001: 307-313 and ☞ Cuvigny 2021: 329, 334-335.

⁷ E.g. ☞ I.Dakke 28. On the units stationed in Nubia, see ☞ Speidel 1988, who also notes (p. 777) the centurions of the *Legio II Traiana* attested as *curatores* of the *cohors I Flavia Cilicum*, one of the three cohorts that made up the garrison of the southern border.

258.5 (Raima, mid 2nd cent.) and at [P.Vet.Aelii 10.11](#) (Ankyron, 222–255): ἐ]κ χρησιμότητος [ca. 5]οτε δωνατ[ί]βω[ν κα]ὶ ὀψωνίων κα[ὶ τ]ῶν [.

§11 This latter passage is the only parallel for the pairing of ὀψώνιον and δωνατίβον, where ὀψώνιον must be a Greek rendering of Latin *stipendium*, the regular salary that soldiers received on 1 January, 1 May, and 1 September;⁸ later, [P.Panop.Beatty 2](#) (300) makes frequent use of the transliteration σπιπένδιον and at col. iii.54–55, we find the equivalent pairing, δω]νατίουων καὶ σπιπενδίων. *Donativa* were initially irregular payments to groups of soldiers on special occasions, such as imperial birthdays or anniversaries, which over the course of the third century became a regular form of remuneration.⁹ They were certainly given to the Praetorian Guard from the beginning and likely to legionaries as well, but it remains debated whether and when auxiliary soldiers received them before the third century.¹⁰ References in papyri are rare, especially before the Tetrarchy: besides [P.Vet.Aelii 10](#) and [P.Panop.Beatty 2](#) cited above, we find reference in [O.Claud. 2 258.5](#) (middle 2nd cent.); [SB 22 15794.7](#) and 10 (301, restored in both lines); [P.Oxy. 31 2561.14](#) (305); [P.Oxy. 7 1047.4](#) (after 324); and [P.Oxy. 63.4367.4](#) and 6 (325–337).

§12 5 The beginning of the line can probably be supplemented ἄς καὶ *vel sim.* (e.g. a prefix for -εἰληφα).

§13 5–6 The phraseology in these lines does not find precise parallel, as εἰς χρῆσιν is a fairly rare collocation. The epsilon following χρῆσιν suggests the possibility that it was defined as ἔντοκον, an adjective that would have extended into the next line, e.g. ἔν[το]κον ...], given the space. At least one more word came before ἀργυρίου in l. 6, whose remnants are the top of a curved stroke and the top of a hasta. Putting these clues together, we consider εἰς χρῆσιν ἔν[το]κον κεφαλ[α]ί[ου] ἀργυρίου δραχμάς a possible supplement.

2. Document with a Subscription by a *Curator*

[P.Heid. Inv. G. 175 recto](#)

7 (h) × 11 (w)

Provenance unknown

Acquired in 1897 from K. Reinhardt

Late June – mid September, 238

§14 The medium brown papyrus preserves the lower left part of a document with generous margins at the left and bottom, written along the fibers with black ink. A kollesis runs down the left margin. The first three lines are more fragmentary than the last two, which are approximately half preserved based on the reconstruction of the dating formula in the previous lines. The back contains traces of one line ending in η topped by an overstroke, in addition to a trace below this line and traces at the top and right.

§15 The date is secured by Καλίου Καλ[ο]ύνου in the first preserved line, pointing to the short reign of the Senate-appointed emperors Pupienus and Balbinus, together with Gordian Caesar, the future emperor Gordian III. The last attestation of Gordian I and II, dates to 20 June, 238 ([SB 18 13153](#)), while the elevation of the new emperors is known as far as Thebes a month later on 21 July ([O.Leid. 259](#)). Pupienus and Balbinus are still recorded on 8 September ([SPP 20 51](#))¹¹, while the first indication of Gordian III's sole rule dates to 21 September ([P.Vindob. G 25765](#) published in [Wessely 1887](#)). Our papyrus therefore dates to sometime between late June and mid September, 238 and joins the short

8 [Speidel 2009](#) [1992]: 349–350; [Speidel 2014](#): 53; generally on *stipendia*: [Phang 2008](#): 166–174. For a recent discussion of military pay, see Claytor, P.Jördens 13, introduction, and for recent documents involving military salary and other payments, see the Latin receipt [P.Mich. inv. 3890b](#) published in [Bernini and Claytor 2022](#) and [P.Lund. inv. 213](#) published in [Deac 2022](#).

9 [Hebblewhite 2017](#): 72–84.

10 [Haynes 2013](#): 47 and [Campbell 1984](#): 168.

11 This papyrus has deteriorated since publication, but a high-quality plate can be consulted in [Wessely 1887](#): Tafel 1.

list of papyrological attestations of what tradition holds to be a 99-day period of rule in the tumultuous Year of the Six Emperors.¹²

- §16 Little remains of the document itself, but it appears to have been a submission of some sort (cf. l. 5), which was signed by a *curator* (l. 7 with n.).

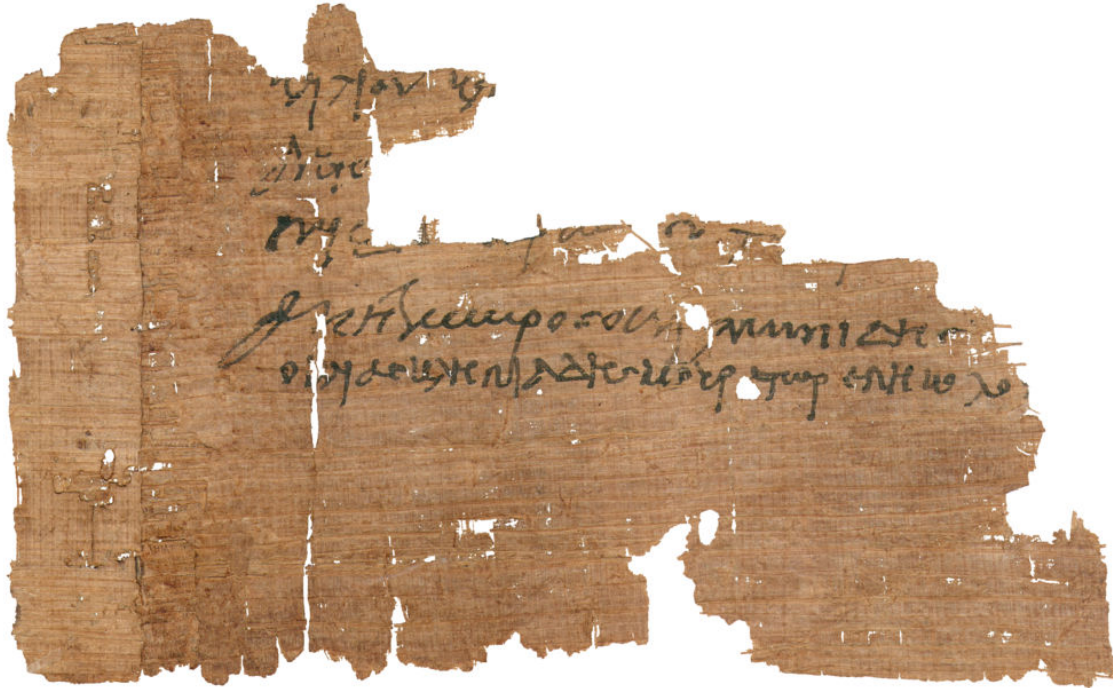


Fig. 3: P.Heid. inv. G. 175 recto. Photo: Elke Fuchs; © Institut für Papyrologie, Universität Heidelberg.

12 On the chronology of 238, see [Rea 1972](#) and now the thorough analysis of [Strasser 2016](#) building on earlier discussions (Annexe 3 contains papyrological attestations of regnal dating from this year).



Fig. 4: P.Heid. inv. G. 175 verso. Photo: Elke Fuchs; © Institut für Papyrologie, Universität Heidelberg.

[(ἔτους) α Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Μάρκου Κλωδίου Πουπιηνοῦ]
 [Μαξίμου Εὐσεβοῦς Εὐτυχοῦς Σεβαστοῦ καὶ Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Δεκίμου]
 Καιλίου Καλ[ουίνου Βαλβεΐνου Εὐσεβοῦς Εὐτυχοῦς Σεβαστοῦ καὶ Μάρκου]
 Ἄντω[ν]ί[νου Γο]ρ[διανοῦ τοῦ ἱερωτάτου Καίσαρος -ca.?-]

- 5 (m2) ἐπιδ [] κ . . . ε . το [] [-ca.?-]
 (m3) Αὐρήλ(ιος) Μῶρος ὁ καὶ Λεωνίδης [-ca.?-]
 (m4) ὁ καὶ Ἀσκληπιάδης κουράτωρ ἐπηκολού[θηκα -ca.?-]

1 orβ

(...) in the first/second year of the Emperor Caesar Marcus Clodius Pupienus Maximus Pius Felix Augustus and Emperor Caesar Decimus Caelius Calvinus Balbinus Pius Felix Augustus and Marcus Antoninus Gordianus the most sacred Caesar (month, day) ... Aurelius Moros alias Leonides ... I, NN alias Asklepiades, *curator*, have concurred.

§17 1–4 The reconstruction here is *exempli gratia*, based on ☞ [O.Leid. 259](#). For the titulature of Pupienus, Balbinus, and Gordian III, see ☞ [Bureth 1964](#): 112 with updated readings and discussion in ☞ [Rea 1972](#), especially p. 3, ad ll. 2–3.

§18 4 Ἄντω[ν]ί[νου Γο]ρ[διανοῦ: only the descenders of the last two dotted letters are preserved, crossing into the following line.

- §19 5 Possibly ἐπιδεῶκαμεν τὸ []. The vertical, partially-abraded stroke following the first delta appears to be the descending iota of Ἄντοϛ[ν]{[ν] in the previous line. A clearer descender is then found before the kappa, which we assign to the rho of Γο]ρ[δ]ιανοῦ. The rounded letter after the lacuna has a similar shape to the epsilon at line beginning.
- §20 6 An Aurelius Moros alias Leonides is otherwise unknown. On double names in Roman Egypt, at the peak of their popularity in this period, see [Broux 2015](#).
- §21 7 ὁ καὶ Ἀσκληπιάδης κουράτωρ ἐπηκολούθηκα: [PSI 15 1561](#) (Oxy. [?], 287–299 CE), a fragmentary record of proceedings before the prefect, affords the only exact parallel: κο]υράτωρ ἐπηκολούθηκα (l. 25). Given that this case involves a refused nomination to the liturgical office of *kosmetes*, a *cessio bonorum*, and a *curator* (l. 21), the editors are surely right to see the individual signing at the bottom to be a civil-law *curator* rather than a military official (l. 25 n.). In our papyrus, the clues are fewer, but since double names are rare in the military sphere ([Broux 2015](#): 97–100), we rather expect a civil context here as well. On civil curatorship, see [Taubenschlag 1955](#): 157–181 and on the various uses of the verb ἐπακολουθέω, found in both administrative and private subscriptions, see Neues Fachwörterbuch, [s.v.](#)

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