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# Victor, Son of Psaios, and Three Aphrodito Rent Receipts

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## VICTOR, SON OF PSAIOS, AND THREE APHRODITO RENT RECEIPTS

### 1

*PSI* VIII 935, a receipt acknowledging payment of rent for land near the village of Phthla, was published in 1927. The editor in commenting on the text sought to connect it with two other papyri, both of them Phthla land leases: *P. Flor.* III 281 (A.D. 517) and *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67113 (dating clause lost at top). A third, related land lease is *P. Lond.* V 1689 (527).<sup>1</sup> These three papyri form a small archive not obviously integral to the main set of papyri issuing from Aphrodito (modern Kom Ischkaw) and preserved in the sixth-century archive of Flavius Dioscorus. Their unifying figure is their lessor, Flavius Panolbios, πολιτευόμενος (i.e. *curialis*) of Antaiopolis, son of John, deceased and former *politeuomenos*.<sup>2</sup> The rent recipient of *PSI* 935 is one Flavius John, *politeuomenos*--perhaps therefore Panolbios' father.<sup>3</sup>

It was not until thirty years after *PSI* VIII's publication that Gertrude Malz, in her important summary of the Dioscorus papyri,<sup>4</sup> pointed to *PSI* 935's (much more certain) links with *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67135 and III 67327, establishing also in her

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1 See intro. to *P. Lond.* 1689. Inasmuch as *P. Flor.* 281 refers (line 10) to the coming 12th indiction (518) and *P. Lond.* 1689 (line 17) to the coming 7th indiction (528), there is some likelihood that the 5th indiction referred to as future in *P. Cair. Masp.* 67113.7 is that of the year 526 and that the lease was drawn up in 525. See the tables in R. S. Bagnall and K. A. Worp, *The Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt* (Stud. Amstel. VII: Zutphen 1978), at pp. 86-87.

2 Aphrodito linkages are established, *inter alia*, by the witness to one of the leases (*P. Flor.* 281), Flavius Theoteknos, son of Psaios, *ex-praepositus* (for refs., *P. Michael* 51 intro., *P. Freer* I V 15 note), and by the lessee in two of them (*P. Flor.* 281, *P. Cair. Masp.* 67113), the Aphrodito shepherd, Aurelius Victor, son of Psaios and Tachymia (cf. *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67001, 67053, III 67328); V. A. Girgis, *Prosopografia e Aphroditopolis* (Berlin 1938) nos. 682 and 359 respectively.

3 If so, then *PSI* 935 (cf. the dates of the Panolbios papers) and related rent receipts (see below) are all very early sixth-, if not late fifth-century documents (cf. *PSI* 935 intro.), but this does not seem likely.

4 *Studi in onore di A. Calderini e R. Paribeni* (Milan 1957) II, 345-56.

succinct discussion (pp. 351-52) that the scribes of *PSI* 935 and *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135 were identical; his name: Victor, son of Psaios.<sup>5</sup> Malz, drawing on parallels from *PSI* 935 and *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327, offered a revised text of *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135, cf. *P. Cair. Masp.* II, pl. II. It is possible here to sharpen Malz's revision;<sup>6</sup> but the larger aim of this article is to carry the examination of these mutually illuminating rent receipts one step further by offering additional comments on *PSI* 935 that will draw its circle with the two Cairo papyri still tighter.<sup>7</sup>

## 2

It is first necessary to clarify the text of line 1 and the beginning of line 2 of *PSI* 935 by proposing a revised version with comments.

- 1 Ϙ Φλ(αούιου) 'Ιο[.]άννου λαμπρ(οτάτου) πολιδευμένου δι'  
     έμοϋ Φείβ προ(νοητοϋ) *vacat* 'Απαυλδτ[ι Διωσκώρου]  
 2 από 'Αφροδ(ίτης).

1 Read Φλ(αούιος) 'Ιωάννης λαμπρ(ότατος) πολιτευόμενος,  
 'Απολλῶτι Διωσκόρου

5 Thus (Malz, p. 355), no personal name needs restoring at the end of *PSI* 935.6; Βίκτορος, at line 7's beginning, stands for the nominative. More on Victor's case confusions below, esp. n. 20.

6 Line 1: Φλ(αούιος), Malz; [Ϙ] Φλ(αούιος), Keenan. Line 2: Διωσκῶρ[ο(υ) κῶμης 'Α]φ[ρο]τίτ[ης], M.; Διωσκῶρ[ου από 'Α]φροτίτ[ης], K. (cf. *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327.38). Line 4: Φθλλᾱ, M./Maspero; Φθαλ *vacat*, K. (cf. *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327.33; read Φθῶλᾱ). Victor's alphas and lambdas are close in form, the shorter, left leg of lambda sometimes written with a flattened loop, like but flatter than the alpha loop. Φθαλ seems written larger, more clumsily (phi and theta appear corrected) than the rest of the receipt. It has the look of a later addition. Lines 4-5: [ἀκολουθῶς τῆς μισθώσεως(?)...] | .]μεις έμας έως, M.; ἀκολουθῶς (*sic*) | τῆς] μισθώσεως (*sic*), K. (*PSI* 935.3-4, cf. *P. Lond.* V 1702.4, *PSI* VIII 936.3 for the proper locution: ἀκολουθῶς τῆ μισθώσει). Line 7: π[ρ]εσβ(υτέρου) [στοιχεῖ κτλ., M.; πρεσβ(υτέρου) κα[ὶ] προνοητοϋ κτλ., K. It should be noted that the photograph of *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135 in *P. Cair. Masp.* II, pl. II, is somewhat skewed; particular visual problems are caused by the alignment of parts of lines 3-6 from the right side against lines 2-5 from the left.

7 I worked from a photograph, roughly three-fifths the size of the original, made available to me by the courtesy of Dr. Rosario Pintaudi. From this, my former student and current colleague, Thomas Federenko, made an assortment of slides, both of the full papyrus and of details. Printed enlargements were made from some of the latter (see plates a and b). Fourth-hand though they may be, they seem clear and reliable enough to support some of the observations made below.

1 Ἴο[.]άννου (see pl. a): Ἰώνου, ed., but the first omicron looks secure, as does the omicron-epsilon ending. After the first omicron, there is an extra trace, seemingly canceled (not a correction of omicron to omega); then alpha, then two nus, somewhat lapping. Victor tends to use omicron for omega, as later in the present line (Ἀπαυλῶτ[ι] and in line 3 (ἀκολούθο[ς] for ἀκολούθως), cf. *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135.3 ([τ]ῶν for τῶν); and *vice versa*, omega for omicron (*P. Cair. Masp.* 67135.2: Διωσκώρ[ου] for Διοσκόρου). His penchant for employing genitive case endings for expected nominatives is also one of his hallmarks (cf. nn. 5, 6, 20, *PSI* 935.7 n.). In the present line the genitives are perhaps founded on a notional but unwritten παρά; but this may accord Victor more credit than is his due.

δι': δι(ι'), ed., ρ pap.--προ(νοητοῦ): προ/ pap. The loop of rho looks as if it has been rewritten. Although the hand of *PSI* 935 is the same throughout, the writing of δι' ἐμοῦ φείβ προ/ and of lines 5-7, beginning with φείβ, is larger than that of the rest of the receipt. Apparently, *both* sections are later additions to the body of the receipt. In the former case, a blank space was left, but the filler δι' ἐμοῦ φείβ προ/ fell short of occupying the whole vacancy. Thus there remains a small blank space, with room for another five letters or so, after προ/. See pl. b.

Ἀπαυλῶτ[ι Διωσκώρου]: see pl. b. Ἀπολλῶ[—], ed., expected, but hardly accounting for what is on the papyrus. The dots do not indicate damaged letters: the writing is clear, not so its interpretation. *BL* V, p. 125, reports another reading for the end of line 1 and beginning of line 2: ἀπὸ Φθλ[ᾱ | κώ(μης) Ἀφρο(διτοπολίτου)]. Though based on inspection of the original papyrus in Alexandria, this reading, for line 1, represents no palaeographical advance over the ed.pr. On the negative side, it does not account for spatial requirements (the alpha of Φθλᾱ falls well short of filling the end-of-line lacuna) or historical context. The Aphroditopolite was not at this time a distinct nome; rather, Aphrodito, no longer a metropolis, had become a village of the Antaiopolite (cf. A. Calderini, *Dizionario dei nomi geografici e topografici dell' Egitto greco-romano* I, 2 [Madrid 1966] 310-13). Phthla, a neighboring village, was administratively independent of Aphrodito, though closely tied socially and economically. The *BL* reading does, however, point the way toward solving line 2's beginning; see below. Ἀπαυλῶτ[ι Διωσκώρου]: this comes straight from Maspero's scrupulous reading of *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135.2 (reconfirmed in essentials by Malz). The second alpha could well be

omicron (cf. ed.pr. and *BL* V, p. 125); upsilon is clear; omicron is doubly circled over another letter, possibly another upsilon (but there seems to be even more underneath). The orthography of the restored patronymic, Διωσκόρου, cannot be guaranteed; but: 1) Victor's orthographical idiosyncrasies are remarkably consistent (Malz, p. 351) and 2) both *PSI* 935 and *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135 concern rents for a second indiction. There is some ground for believing they were drafted together, the orthographical peculiarities of one being transferred to the other; see part 3 below.

2 ἀπό Ἀφοδ(ίτης): see pl. **a** (omicron, in ἀπό, looks clear) and cf. *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327.38; κώ(μης) Ἀ., *BL* V, p. 125, perhaps rightly, but not, as far as I can see, so securely. *Inter alia*, a large crack, developed from an ancient fold, runs horizontally through the writing of the first third or so of line 2, obscuring much that is there. Ἀφοδ(ίτης): the letters after phi, beginning abruptly with rho, are written somewhat above the plane on which the line begins. Delta is clear, as is another delta closely following, written larger and back on a lower plane than the first delta. I cannot locate traces of the first epsilon of the ed.pr.'s Ἐξ[εξ]όμεν (read -μην). Perhaps print <έ>δ[εξ]όμεν.

In sum: Whatever *PSI* 935's connections with the Panolbios papyri (above, part 1), the revisions proposed just now reinforce (if reinforcement was necessary) its position among the papers of Apollos of Aphrodito (below, part 3), subsequently preserved in the archive of his son, Flavius Dioscorus. Malz's identification of the scribe, Victor son of Psaios, with that of *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135 can be, and is, developed further in part 3, with reference to *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327.

## 3

*P. Cair. Masp.* III 67327 is a series of rent receipts, each in content and format akin to *PSI* 935 and *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135 and other Aphroditan rent receipts. The *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327 receipts are all addressed to the same rent-payer, Apollos, son of Dioscorus; they were never cut up into separate chits. They all concern rents for a third indiction, and therefore seemingly for the year immediately following *PSI* 935 and *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135, both of which have to do with second indiction rent payments. Interesting, and perhaps revealing, is that one of the receipts in the 67327 series, the one recorded in lines 5-12, would have had, but for the death of the rent-receiving landlord, Flavius Kyros,

the same participants as *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135. As it stands, Kyros is represented here by his heirs;<sup>8</sup> the rent-paying lessee is the same: Apollos, son of Dioscorus; so is the landlord's intermediary agent: Victor, son of Psaios, the writer of *PSI* 935 and *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135.

A further point of interest is that the very next receipt in the 67327 series, the one at lines 13-20, has the same cast of characters as *PSI* 935:<sup>9</sup>

(1) Landlord/rent-receiver: Flavius John. The Cairo text adds to the *PSI* text John's Antaiopolite connection. He is styled there (line 13): ὁ λ[α]μπρο(ότατος) πολ(ιτευόμενος) τῆς Ἀνταιοπολιτῶν.

(2) Intermediary agent (προνοητής): Phib (Φειβ in *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327.13, 19;<sup>10</sup> Φείβ in *PSI* 935.1, 6), son of Dios (patronymic in the Cairo papyrus, not given in *PSI* 935).

(3) Rent-payer/lessee: Apollos, son of Dioscorus. This is, as must be already clear, the father of the well-known Dioscorus. His leaseholdings from Flavius John, from other absentee landlords<sup>11</sup> and from ecclesiastical institutions<sup>12</sup> show him to have been something of a local entrepreneur in these endeavors, not a common tenant farmer.

(4) "Scribe": Victor, son of Psaios, priest and *pronoetes*, but only if *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327.20 is revised from its present reading, Ψ[αῦς(?) Βι]κτορος, to (simply): .[(?)Βί]κτορος. Supplying the short lacuna thereby left at the beginning of line 20 presents a problem that cannot be solved without access to the original papyrus or to a photograph;<sup>13</sup> but the problem is hardly an

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8 Cf. *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67134, III 67326, *P. Freer* 1 V 2 n.

9 The doubts that may attach to the fourth party should be removed by the discussion below.

10 Φειβ, "a curious variant for Φιβ," according to *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67141 IV r 9 n., on the same spelling. The *PSI* 935 spelling, Φείβ, is of course simply itacistic.

11 Keenan, "Aurelius Apollos and the Aphrodite Village Elite," *Atti del XVII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia* (Naples 1984) (forthcoming), which the present article serves to amplify and correct.

12 Cf. *P. Lond.* V 1690, *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67307 (rev. Malz, pp. 353-54), *PSI* VIII 936-37.

13 Several possibilities suggest themselves: (1) Maspero's Ψ is a damaged Ϝ; (2) the lacuna included the pronoun ἐγώ or the status designation Αὐρ(ήλιος); (3) the writing was slightly indented at the line's beginning; (4) the lacuna does not exist. Maspero's queried restoration is evidently intended to supply a nominative personal name to justify the (seeming) patronymic genitive, Βίκτορος; but see above, n. 5, and below, n. 20.

overriding one in view of the considerations that follow, for the Victor who wrote *PSI* 935 and *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135 has left his "signature" in *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327, even though Maspero did not fully and consistently distinguish the *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327 hands. Evidently there was a main scribe, a professional, who wrote the bodies of the receipts in the series (see Maspero's note to line 44); others wrote as required. Thus Victor, who wrote all of *PSI* 935 and *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135,<sup>14</sup> may only have written lines 11-12<sup>15</sup> of *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327 and lines 19 (after  $\iota\nu\delta\iota\kappa/$ ) and 20. The latter pair are as follows:<sup>16</sup>

19           Φλη Ἰωανη δι' εμου Φειβ προ/ο στοιχει μοι η αποχην  
              ὡς προκ/  
20    . [(?)Βι]κτορος πρεσβ/ αξιωθεις εγραψα υπερ αυτου γραμματα  
         μη ειδοτος ρ<sup>17</sup>

The pronoun αὐτοῦ in this acknowledgement and illiteracy formula must refer, not to Flavius John, but to his agent, Phib, for whom Victor had the year before (above, part 2) filled out *PSI* 935. Phib, presumably, was fully unlettered, Victor could make do, although in rough-and-ready fashion. Victor was, strictly, Kyros' agent,<sup>18</sup> but helped John's agent, Phib, on occasion by writing in his behalf. Phib, in turn, must have been a trusting soul, for

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14 Though see the remarks on Φθαλ in n. 6 above.

15 Even this short stretch, however, seems to be too perfectly done to have come from Victor's hand.

16 Incorporating the revision just proposed. Abbreviations are purposely left unresolved, articulation is limited, so that the reader may get a clearer impression of what Victor actually wrote.

17 προ/ο: abbreviation for προ(νοητοῦ). Maspero remarks (ad loc.) that the omicron was added after the bar indicating abbreviation because the scribe feared confusion with προ(εσβύτερος). Another explanation is that Victor, when writing for himself, labeled himself as a priest first, a *pronoetes* second (*PSI* 935.7, *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135.7, with n. 7 above); when writing for Phib (not a priest), Victor, from force of habit, began his titling with the short-form abbreviation for priest. The omicron was added not to clarify but to correct, or to clarify *and* correct.

18 προ/ του κυριου Κυρος (read κυριου Κυρου) in *PSI* 935.7. That Kyros had other holdings outside the Antaiopolite, these under the supervision of agents other than Victor, may be the force of Victor's title in *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327.6: προνοητοῦ τῶν Ἀνταιοπολιτικῶν πραγμάτων.

Victor, priest though he was,<sup>19</sup> although he managed to get his point across, had difficulty in spelling and declining personal names (his own included),<sup>20</sup> and apart from other evidences of clumsiness, struggled with the most elementary of documentary formulas--with incomplete success.<sup>21</sup>

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19 Some Aphrodito priests "did not know letters" (e.g., *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67129.29-31, a priest previously a deacon, 67128.32-35; *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67283 II 10--a "reader," ἀναγνώστης, signs for an illiterate priest); others could subscribe for others (*P. Mich.* XIII 664.43), or for themselves in their own hands (*P. Cair. Masp.* 67283, for many examples; *P. Mich.* XIII 667.34 ff.), occasionally, however, only very "slowly," βραδέως (*P. Cair. Masp.* III 67297.3-4). In general, Youtie, *Scriptiunculae* II, 611-27, 629-61. Victor had greater quantitative range and qualitative skill than a "slow subscriber," but was still well short of the accomplishments of a fully competent writer.

20 *Spelling*: Ἰοάννου (*PSI* 935.1, revised above); Ἰωάνη (*P. Cair. Masp.* 67327.19); Ἀπαυλῶτι (*PSI* 935.1, revised above, *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135.2). The itacistic Φεῖβ for Φῖβ (*PSI* 935.1, 6) is hardly worth mention, but Φεῖβ is notable (*P. Cair. Masp.* 67327.19; did Victor copy this spelling from line 13?). *Declining*: Βίκτορος, gen. for nom. (*PSI* 935.7, *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327.20, revised); Ἰοάννου, Ἰωάνη, gens. for nom. (refs. above; for Ἰωάνη as gen.: F. T. Gignac, S.J., *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* II, pp. 104, 436); Κῦρος, nom. for gen. (*PSI* 935.7). Presumably Κῦρος in *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135.1 is correctly nom. for nom., but the model of *PSI* 935.1, with the spelling Κῦρος in line 7, might suggest otherwise. If so, *P. Cair. Masp.* 67135.1 (and Malz's revision, too) needs resolutions and restoration in the genitive case to represent what Victor would have thought and may have written.

21 Cf. *P. Cair. Masp.* 67327.19: στοιχει μοι ἡ ἀποχὴν (*sic*) ὡς πρόκ(εῖται); *PSI* 935.3-4: πε] | ποίπημαι (*sic*) τὴν πληρωτικὴν [η] ἀποχὴν. In light of such bungling, the restoration of *PSI* 935.6 can hardly be guaranteed: στοιχει μοι ἡ ἀποχὴ [ὡς πρόκ(εῖται)]. In fact, the square bracket does not open up a pure lacuna. Rather, there are numerous, broken traces of writing, obscured by another horizontal crack, from an ancient fold (see above, part 2, note to *PSI* 935.2). The first traces are hardly reconcilable with omega, but they include a clear hasta, reconcilable with nu. For another example of Victor's handiwork, see *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67134.9-10.





**a)** *PSI 935* (enlarged detail, upper left)



**b)** *PSI 935* (enlarged detail, upper right)