

Houses in Syene in the Patermouthis Archive

According to Sir Harold I. Bell's paper, "Syene Papyri in the British Museum," in *Klio* 13 (1913), at p.170: "The collection includes a number of sales, which are of considerable interest in several ways; - for the formulae employed - for the light which they, with other Byzantine sales of houses, throw on the structure of the Graeco-Egyptian dwelling-house, and for the evidence they afford as to the topography of Syene. There are five of these sales, all of which are sales of house property. To them may be added Inv. 1790 (New Pal. Soc. VI, no. 128), which is a transfer of house property in consideration of the discharge of obligations which the vendor is unable to meet; and in the matter of evidence for the structure of houses we may also add Inv. 1801, a loan on the security of house property." Other texts concerning houses are in the part of the Patermouthis archive kept in Munich. J. Farber and B. Porten in "The Patermouthis Archive: A Third Look" have included 33 documents among which 20 deal with dwelling-houses in Syene and 14 contain detailed descriptions of houses. So we have an exceptional file of papyri on this subject between A.D. 493 and the end of the 6th century.¹

1. A list of the texts

All are of legal character. 11 are deeds of sale (πράξεις) of houses or parts of houses:

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| 1. <i>P.Münch.</i> 15 + <i>P.Lond.</i> 1855 | 26 April 493 |
| 2. <i>P.Münch.</i> 16 ² | ca 500 |
| 3. <i>P.Lond.</i> 1722 | 13 March 530 |
| 4. <i>P.Lond.</i> 1734 | ca 550 |
| 5. <i>P.Lond.</i> 1724 ³ | 578-582 |
| 6. <i>P.Münch.</i> 9 (+ <i>P.Lond.</i> 1834, protocol) | 30 May 585 |
| 7. <i>P.Münch.</i> 11 | 7 October 586 |

¹For dating I follow Farber-Porten, 1986.

²The courtyard sold is probably the same as in *P.Münch.* 15.

³The same house as in *P.Lond.* 1722.