

Did The Daughters Follow in Their Mother's Footsteps? Readings in Apollonia Alias Senmonthis Family Papers

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Abstract: The archive of Apollonia alias Senmonthis and her family's papers is particularly interesting because the family lived in two different worlds. Pathyris, where they lived, had received several Greek immigrants and soldiers after the great revolt in the second century B.C. The archive illustrates an image of the political, social, and cultural situations of this bicultural family. The question which is discussed in this paper is: Did her daughters follow in their mother's footsteps? Apollonia's family was a good model for a mixed marriage in a bicultural society. This paper goes deeply through this family to recognize such coexistence through documents of Apollonia the mother and her daughters.

Keywords: Dryton archive-Ptolemaic Egypt- Pathyris- Apollonia alias Senmonthis- Egyptian tradition

هل إتبعت البنات خطى والدتهن

قراءة في أوراق أسرة أبولونيا التي تدعى كذلك سنمونثيس

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المخلص: إن أرشيف أبولونيا المعروف باسم سينمونثيس وأوراق أسرتها مثير للإهتمام بصفة خاصة لأن الأسرة عاشت في عالمين مختلفين. حيث عاشوا في باثيريس التي رحبت بقدوم عدة مهاجرين وجنود إغريق بعد الثورة الكبرى التي حدثت في القرن الثاني ق.م. ويعرض الأرشيف صورة للأوضاع السياسية والاجتماعية والثقافية لهذه الأسرة النشائية الثقافة. والسؤال الذي تناقشه هذه الورقة هو: هل إتبعت البنات خطى أمهن؟ كانت عائلة أبولونيا نموذجًا جيدًا للزواج المختلط في مجتمع ثنائي الثقافات. تتمعن هذه الورقة من خلال هذه الأسرة في التعرف على مثل هذا التعايش من خلال وثائق أبولونيا الأم وبناتها.

الكلمات الدالة: أرشيف درايتون- مصر البطلمية- باثيريس- أبولونيا التي تدعى كذلك سنمونثيس - العادات المصرية.

On the world women's day on 8 March 1998 Apollonia alias Senmonthis was front-page news in the Belgian paper, *De Morgen*, with a title means (A Businesswoman) in the year 150 B.C.¹

This leads to the question, who is this woman, when and where did she live, and how does she affect her society or rather the close people to her?

A famous archive known as Dryton Archive gives more details about the life of this family and its members. The Dryton archive consists of sixty-eight papyri and eight ostraca written in both Greek and Demotic from 174 to 94 B.C. This archive contains wills, marriage, and divorce contracts, loans, receipts, petitions, letters, lists, accounts, one literary text, and tax receipts. The events of this family took place in Pathyris during the Ptolemaic dynasty.² The small town of Pathyris, modern Gebelein, is located south of Thebes. After the suppression of a huge revolt in 186 B.C, Ptolemaic military camp was built in this town. The Government took several initiatives to Hellenize the town, with the result of a bilingual society. The town produced hundreds of papyri and ostraca, discovered at the end of the 19th–to the beginning of the 20th century. Katelijn Vandorpe and Sofie Waebens³ described the history of the town and reconstructed the bilingual archives by using, among other things, prosopographical data and the method of museum archaeology.⁴ One of the residents of Pathyris was the Greek cavalryman Dryton son of Pamphilos, of Cretan descent, and a citizen of Ptolemais the Greek polis in Upper Egypt. He was attached to the military camp of Ptolemais but served in other places in Upper Egypt where control was necessary. At this town Pathyris, a girl whose family archive reached us carrying the name of her husband, Dryton arose⁵. This girl who is known as Apollonia alias Senmonthis carried the ethnicity due to her ancestors who were Cyrenean immigrants. Her father Ptolemaios alias Pamenos was an infantryman in the same unit as Dryton, who later became his daughter's husband. The documents didn't tell us much about her mother except the first syllable of her name Ta-⁶ which seems like a prefix of an Egyptian name. Apollonia alias Senmonthis has three sisters employed also

¹ Katelijn Vandorpe, , " Apollonia, A Businesswoman in a Multicultural Society (Pathyris, 2nd-1st centuries B.C)." In: *Le rôle et le statut de la femme en Égypte hellénistique, romaine et byzantine*, Actes du colloque international, Bruxelles-Louvain, 27-29 novembre 1997, ed. by H. Melaerts and L. Moeren, (Leuven: Studia Hellenistica 37, 2002): 334.

² TM Archive 74 = (Archive of Dryton, Apollonia and Descendants). Trismegistos [<http://www.trismegistos.org>; abbreviated as TM], is an interdisciplinary platform covering metadata about texts from the Ancient World (800 B.C.– A.D. 800). Its database currently contains information about provenance, dating and the archival context, geographic and prosopographical attestations in these texts and references to both classical authors and modern editors.

³ Katelijn Vandorpe and Waebens Sofie, *Reconstructing Pathyris' Archives. A Multicultural Community In Hellenistic Egypt*, (Brussels: Collectanea Hellenistica 3 January 1, 2009).

⁴ Brian Muhs, *The Ancient Egyptian Economy 3000-30 BC.*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 239.

⁵ Katelijn Vandorpe, *The Bilingual Family Archive of Dryton, His Wife Apollonia and Their Daughter Senmonthis* (P. Dryton), Brussels: Collectanea Hellenistica 4, (2002).

⁶ A form of coarse wheat with a small reddish-brown grain giving fine flour by Apollonia alias Senmonthis. P.Dryton 13, 7 (145-143/2 BC).

Greek names along with their Egyptian names, Ammonia alias Senminis, Heraklia alias Senapathis and Herais alias Tasris.¹ Dryton and Apollonia had five daughters.

- The eldest was Apollonia alias Senmouthis Ἀπολλωνία ἡ καὶ Σενμούθις (got married to Kaies, son of Pates)
- Aphrodisia alias Tachratis Ἀφροδισία ἡ καὶ Ταχράτις (married for three years to Pennesis, son of P[?] then was divorced (June 126 – March 123 B.C.).
- Aristo alias Senmonthis Ἀρίστοις ἡ καὶ Σενμώνθις
- Nikarion alias Thermouthis Νικάριον ἡ καὶ Θερμούθις
- Apollonia the younger alias Senpelaia Ἀπολλωνία νεωτέρα ἡ καὶ Σενπελαία²

The question is: Did the daughters follow in their mother's footsteps? Apollonia's family was a good model for a mixed marriage in a bicultural society, I'll try to go deeply through this family to investigate a special level of such society as a model of a Hellenized Egyptian family of the second century B.C. how did this coexistence run?

On the one hand, the archive of Apollonia and her family's papers is particularly interesting because the family members literally lived in two different parts of the world. This archive is an illustration of the political, social, and cultural situations in the contemporary time of this family. This archive has been reached to us through the papers of two important women, namely Apollonia alias Senmonthis and her eldest daughter Apollonia alias Senmouthis and her husband Kaies.³ On the other hand, Pathyris, the place they lived in, has an abundant stream of papyri, ostraca, and wooden tablets in the second and early first century B.C.⁴ Pathyris had received several Greek immigrants and soldiers after the great revolt in the second century B.C.⁵ Those soldiers adapted to the new society and married Egyptians, some of them had adapted far more to the local environment like the father of Apollonia who used, for instance, a Graeco-Egyptian double name – Ptolemaios alias Pamenos, as well as his daughters.⁶ While, Dryton as well as his son, from his first marriage, Esthladas, seemed less bi-cultural as they had only Greek names, in spite of their learning the Egyptian language probably to communicate with the local troops under their command in the garrison.⁷

Being influenced by her husband, Apollonia became a businesswoman for more than twenty years during her marriage. Further, she acted actively as a businesswoman in Pathyris and was granted several loans.⁸ Besides his being a military officer, Dryton had

¹ P. Dryton 33 (136 B.C.).

² P. Dryton 34 (115-110 B.C.).

³ TM Archive 74, 2.

⁴ Vandorpe, and Waebens, "Reconstructing Pathyris", 40.

⁵ Katelijjn Vandorpe, "A Successful, But Fragile Biculturalism. The Hellenization Process in The Upper Egyptian Town of Pathyris Under Ptolemy VI and VIII." in *Ägypten zwischen innerem Zwist und äusserem Druck. Die Zeit Ptolemaios' VI. bis VIII. Internationales Symposium Heidelberg 16.-19.9.2007*, (Philippika. Marburger altertumskundliche Abhandlungen. vol. 45, Heidelberg, 2007): 292-293.

⁶ Willy Clarysse, "Bilingual Papyrological Archives", *The Multilingual Experience in Egypt, from the Ptolemies to the Abbasids*, ed. By Papaconstantinou A., (London, 2010): 69.

⁷ Jane Rowlandson, *Women and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt: A Sourcebook*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 105.

⁸ Vandorpe, "Apollonia, A Businesswoman": 327-329.

his own activities as a businessman, Apollonia acting as an active businesswoman in Pathyris and granting several loans.¹ When she acted as a guardian with her husband, she concluded loan contracts in the Greek way. Although Apollonia has a greater legal right as an Egyptian, she preferred in most of her documents to use the Greek. While in her daily life, she used her Egyptian name Senmonthis and practiced in a traditional Egyptian type. An egg-shaped pot, a common utility that is mentioned in Egyptian marriage contracts, was one of the items she had bought. This is illustrated in El-Deir El Bahari.² Apollonia used her Egyptian identity in both private letters and accounts thus she was identified as Senmonthis among her family and her friends.

The families at Pathyris followed Egyptian customs and used Demotic in their private documentation³. Regarding the Greeks who were a small minority in Thebes the native language in this area was Demotic.⁴ It is not always easy to distinguish between people whose ancestry was purely Greek, like Dryton, and those who were Hellenized Egyptians⁵, like those of Apollonia's family.⁶ The native language of Dryton and his son Esthladas was Greek, as shown by their private accounts, letters, and even by the poem which is written by Dryton himself;⁷ Apollonia probably, couldn't write Greek, the archive documents showed that her husband Dryton was the writer of her accounts which were in Greek.⁸

For the reasons of the switching between Greek and Demotic⁹, and why Apollonia wrote some of her loan contracts in Demotic it may be due to the issue of the notary. Sometimes the loans were written by the debtor himself (who is often Egyptian), or the amount is lower than the costs of going to the notary. Her daughters were like her and

¹ Sandra Scheuble-Reiter and Silvia, Bussi "Social Identity and Upward Mobility", *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*, edited by Katelijin Vandorpe, (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons 2019): 288.

² Vandorpe, "Apollonia, A Businesswoman": 333; P. Dryton 45 (Demotic, 141-140 B.C.).

³ Alexandra O'Brien, *Private Tradition, Public State Women in Demotic Business and Administrative Texts from Ptolemaic and Roman Thebes*, (Chicago, 1999), 10.

⁴ Marja Vierros, "'Greek or Egyptian? The Language Choice in Ptolemaic Documents from Pathyris." *Et maintenant ce ne sont plus que des villages: Thebes et sa region aux epoques hellenistique, romaine et byzantine*, actes du colloque tenu a Bruxelles les 2 et 3 decembre 2005, edited by Alain Delattre and Paul Heilporn, (Brussels: Papyrologica Bruxellensia 34, 2008): 74.

⁵ James Keenan G., Manning J.G., and Uri Yiftach-Firanko eds., *Law and Legal Practice in Egypt from Alexander to the Arab Conquest A Selection of Papyrological Sources in Translation, with Introductions and Commentary*, (Cambridge University, 2014), 101.

⁶ Keenan, Manning, and Uri Yiftach-Firanko, *Law and Legal Practice in Egypt*, 103.

⁷ TM Archive74, 6-7.

⁸ Vandorpe, "Apollonia, A Businesswoman": 334.

⁹ Marja Vierros, "Bilingual Notaries in Hellenistic Egypt: A Study of Greek as a Second Language," Brussels: *Collectanea Hellenistica* 5, (2012): 58.

could conduct their affairs in either Greek¹ or Demotic,² Litigation relating to the Apollonia’s daughters’ inherited land is recorded in both Greek and Demotic, with certain phrasing in the Greek indicating that it was translated from Demotic originals³

The table below shows the language used in Dryton Archive (68 texts of which 61 certain, 6 uncertain, 1 related)

Language	Frequency
Demotic	28
Demotic / Greek	6
Greek	34

Table1- the language used in Dryton Archive

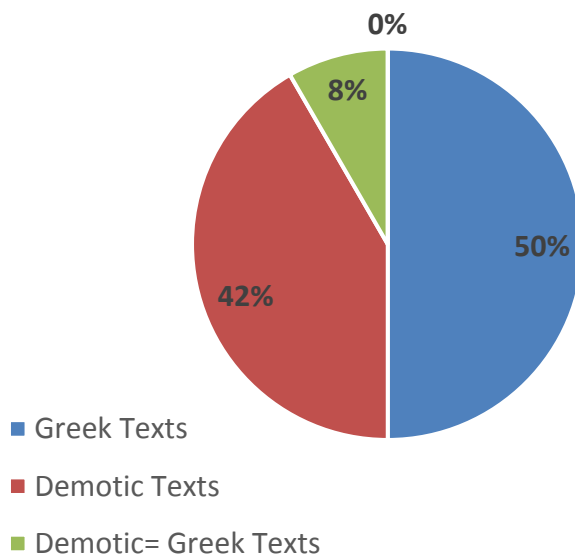


Chart 1- The Languages used in Apollonia Senmonthis Texts

¹ A Greek tax receipt for pigeon house for Apollonia alias Senmouthis: P.Dryton 56 (100 B.C.); A Greek tax receipt for pigeon house for three daughters of Dryton : P. Dryton 57 (100 B.C.).

² For example, A Demotic tax receipt for pigeon house for Senmouthis, her sisters and other: P. Dryton 54 (108 B. C.); A Demotic tax receipt for pigeon house for Senmouthis: P. Dryton 55 (101 B.C.); Vandorpe, “Apollonia, A Businesswoman”: 331.

³ O’Brien, *Private Tradition*, 201.

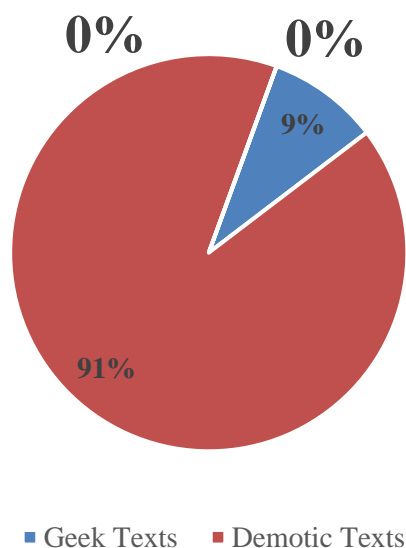


Chart 2 - The Languages used in Apollonia's offspring Texts

Three of Apollonia's daughters apparently married men with Egyptian names, two of them presumably were soldiers.¹ They followed Egyptian customs and laws by drawing up Demotic marriage contracts and gave only Egyptian names to their offspring. Unfortunately, they did not enjoy similar long marriages since the three eldest daughters got divorced. For instance, Tachratis married Psenesis after 126 B.C. as her father mentioned her dowry in his will.² And by 124 B.C. she was divorced after two years of marriage.³ In another instance, another daughter whose name was anonymous had divorced her husband Erienupis⁴. Moreover, there is no evidence of the marriage of the two younger daughters.⁵ In general, the female descendants of Dryton were infelicitous in their marriages⁶.

A number of questions to be raised are whether Apollonia's daughters were businesswomen like their mother, Did they have private properties? how were Apollonia's daughters able to maintain these properties? What was the nature of their relationship with each other? To provide answers to these questions, it is necessary to refer to the papers of the family. Their father, Dryton, made three wills, two on his marriages in 164 B.C. and 150 B.C., and one shortly before his death in 126 B.C. The last document was very detailed as Dryton divided his property between his son from his first marriage, Esthladas, and his five daughters from Apollonia alias Senmonthis who

¹ P. Dryton 9 (Demotic marriage contract, 95 B.C.).

² The third will of Dryton, P. Dryton 3 (126 B.C.).

³ P. Bad. 7 (Demotic divorce contract, 124/123 B.C.).

⁴ Sarah Pomeroy B., *Women in Hellenistic Egypt: From Alexander to Cleopatra*, (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 114; P. Bad. 8 (100-99 B.C.).

⁵ TM Archive74, 3.

⁶ Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt*, 113.

inherited half of Dayton's property, both immovables, and movables, including three female slaves, as well as a part of a house and several building lots.¹

How old were the daughters of Apollonia at the time of their father's third will? Pomeroy suggested that they ranged in age from five to eighteen.² Apollonia, the daughter, is referred to by her name in that will she, probably, was married at that time, since no provision was made for her dowry,³ while the second or third daughter, is stipulated. As well as the maintenance of the two youngest daughters was recorded and covered for a further eleven years, probably until they become married.⁴

Despite the fact that Apollonia's daughters were not keen on business like their mother, they were able to have a standard of living similar to the one they had with their parents. They continued to manage their affairs either individually⁵ or with each other⁶, three of them (Thermouthis, Senmonthis, and Sempelaiia) paid their taxes for the pigeon-house together⁷ Likewise, more than ten years after their father's death, it appears that half of the vineyard had come into their possession⁸. The vineyard was situated on the other side of the Nile, the sisters did not have direct control over it. A certain Ariston son of Athenodotos, from Great Diospolis (Thebes) took advantage of these circumstances and planted the lot partially with vines.⁹ Apollonia alias Senmouthis the eldest daughter of Apollonia together with her sisters “παρὰ Ἀπολλωνίας τῆς <καὶ> Σενμούθεως καὶ Ἀφροδισίας τῆς καὶ Ταχράτιος ἀμφοτέρων Δρύτωνος θυγατέρων κατ[οι]κουσῶν ἐν Παθύρει”¹⁰, petitioned Phommous, epistrategos, and strategos of the Thebaid,¹¹ in the name of their three younger sisters “ὑπάρχοντος ἡμῖν τε καὶ ταῖς ἡμῶν αὐτῶν ἀδελφαῖς Ἀριστοῦ τῆτι καὶ Σενμώνθει καὶ Νικαρίω τῆτι [καὶ] Θερμούθει καὶ Ἀπολλωνίαι νεωτέρας τῆτι καὶ Σενπελαίαι”¹². They presented together a petition to recoup their vineyard land and its appurtenances, which has been occupied by force in times of unrest.¹³ Thus, they were safeguarding their properties together and they deal with legal procedures to claim their taken vineyard with each other.¹⁴

¹ Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt*, 170.

² Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt*, 107.

³ Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt*, 106.

⁴ Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt*, 107.

⁵ P. Dryton 56 (100 B.C.).

⁶ Rowlandson, *Women and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt*, 111.

⁷ P. Dryton 57 (100 B.C.).

⁸ P. Dryton 34, (shortly after 116 B.C.).

⁹ O'Brien, *Private Tradition*, 201.

¹⁰ P. Dryton 34, 3-5 (115-110 B.C.).

¹¹ Keenan, Manning, and Uri Yiftach-Firanko, *Law and Legal Practice in Egypt*, 107.

¹² P. Dryton 34, 5-7 (115-110 B.C.).

¹³ P. Dryton 34 (115- 110 B.C.).

¹⁴ O'Brien, *Private Tradition*, 201.

Similarly, their mother had an experience after the death of her father. Apollonia, the mother, acting together with her three sisters “παρ’ Ἀπολλωνίας τῆς καὶ Σεμμώνθιος κα[ὶ] Ἀμμωνίας τῆς καὶ Σεμμίνιος καὶ Ἡρακλείας ἢ Σεναπᾶθις καὶ Ἡραίδος ἢ Τάσριζτων Πτολεμαίου Κυρηναίων καταγνομένων ἐν Παθύρει”¹ presented petitions to claim the right of inheritance. Their father, Ptolemaios alias Pamenos didn’t leave behind a will, and they didn’t have relatives. Kallimedes, a colleague of her father who lived next door to them took on the role of the guardian and managed their property, unlawfully. “ὁ ἐνκεκλημένος ὑπερισχύων καταφρονήσας τῶι νε[ω]τέρας ἀπολελειῖσθαι...” the accused behaving in an overbearing and sumptuous manner since we had been left as minors...”² They have been wronged by this Kallimedes, his wife, and their sons. Kallimedes wanted to take the affair to the court of Laokritai, the Egyptian judges. Because of their Greek origins, Apollonia and her sisters did not want to be judged by an Egyptian court “ἐὰν φαίνεται μεταδόνθ’ ἡμῖν [τῶν παρὰ σοῦ φι]λανθρώπων συντάξαι γράψαι [οἷς καθήκει ὅ]πως μὴ περισπώμεθα ἐπὶ τὰ [μὴ καθήκον]τα κριτήρια,...if it (seems good to you) that you let us participate in your benefactions and give orders to write to the proper authorities so that we are not dragged before unauthorized tribunals...”³ Concerning this lawsuit, it is not certain how it ended, however, since Dryton is in Apollonia's house, they must have acquired their rights back. but Dryton lived in Apollonia’s house, so they seemed to be restored their rights back.⁴

Apollonia, the mother, kept in contact with her sisters after her marriage, as shown in texts, for example, an account written in two parties in demotic, the first part is an account of wheat which has given by Apollonia Senmonthis to her sisters Senapathis and Tiesris; the second part is a purchase of kitchen utensils.⁵ It is notable that Apollonia, the mother, got into contact with her sisters in demotic.

Dryton in his last will allocated a provision for his wife Apollonia for a further four years⁶, after the death of Dryton (ca. 126 B.C.)⁷ Apollonia perhaps lived with her oldest daughter Apollonia and her husband Kaies. The latter apparently took over the business activities of the family, which can be concluded from several loan contracts which he left behind⁸

¹ P. Dryton 33, 1b-2 (136 B.C.).

² P. Dryton 33, 6 (136 B.C.).

³ P. Dryton 33bis, 31-34 (136 B.C.).

⁴ Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt*, 113.

⁵ P. Dryton 45 (Demotic, 140-141 B.C.).

⁶ P. Dryton 3 (126 B.C.).

⁷ TM Archive 74, 5.

⁸ Vandorpe, “Apollonia, A Businesswoman”: 335.

The second-generation returns to Demotic, not only for loans¹ but also for contracts of marriage² and divorce³. The Greek impulse shown by Dryton seemed as if it was temporary. Even his only son Esthladas, Greek by birth, married in the Egyptian way.⁴

Overview

There is no evidence of the kind of relationship between Apollonia and her husband Dryton. Being married for at least 25 years, the couple never exchanged any letters. However, Dryton acted as Apollonia's guardian in contracts drawn up according to Greek practice suggests that he was supportive of his wife's business activities, in return Apollonia was supportive of Dryton receiving Esthladas, son of Dryton from a previous marriage who had joined the family as a member even before she has her own daughters from Dryton. A letter from Esthladas to his father Dryton and the stepmother Apollonia, in which he addressed Apollonia my mother "Ἐσθλάδας τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῆμητρὶ χαί(ρειν) καὶ ἐρρῶσθαι", showed the good family's the relation they enjoyed.⁵ All that led to a more intermixed in such a Hellenistic blended family.⁶

Unlike their mother, the daughters were not as lucky in their marriages. Probably, the eldest daughter was the only one who kept her marriage bond with her husband Kaies, meanwhile, her daughter failed in that, as her divorce contract in demotic was kept in her father's archive.⁷

The distinct difference in language preference between Dryton and his son Esthladas as Greek citizens and their tendency toward their mother language, Greek; on the other hand, Apollonia the mother and her daughters and sisters, and their swing between the elite language, the Greek, and the country language, the demotic. Apollonia was an intelligent lady, and she could use the Greek initiatives and trends of the Ptolemaic state in her time, she needed to show off her superior status as a Greek lady⁸, to have high respect in her society, and to avoid inequity, especially which she faced as well as her sisters after their father's death. On the other hand, Apollonia appeared with her Egyptian face in both private letters and accounts, so she is Senmonthis between her family and her friends.

¹ P. Dryton 29 (Greek-demotic loan receipt, 105 B.C.).

² P. Dryton 7 (Demotic marriage contract of Senenouphis, daughter of Apollonia and Kaies, 107- 11 B.C.); P. Dryton 9 (Demotic marriage contract of Tbokanouphis, daughter of Apollonia and Kaies, 95 B.C.).

³ P. Dryton 5 (Demotic Divorce agreement for Aphrodisia alias Tachratis Sister of Apollonia alias Senmonthis, 123 B.C.); P. Dryton 6 (Demotic Divorce agreement for a daughter of Dryton, 123-100 B.C.); P. Dryton 8 (Demotic Divorce agreement for Senmonthis, daughter of Apollonia and Kaies, 100 B.C.).

⁴ Clarysse, "Bilingual Papyrological Archives": 69.

⁵ P. Dryton 36 (130 B.C.).

⁶ Maryline Parca, "For I have no other sun but you": Emotions and Married life in Greek Papyri", *Married Life in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. by Claude-Emmanuelle Centlivres Challet, London: Routledge, (2021) 198.

⁷ P. Dryton 8 (100 B.C.).

⁸ Clarysse, "Bilingual Papyrological Archives": 69.

This return of Dryton's offspring and his grandchildren to Egyptian tradition exemplified what was going on in Upper Egypt at that time. Around 100 B.C., the Greek initiatives in Upper Egypt on the part of the government disappeared. Greek notaries, Greek banks, Greek tax farmers, and Greek jurisdiction had dropped out of the picture. In the 80s B.C. Upper Egypt revolted once more against Ptolemaic rule.¹ Apollonia's native village of Pathyris, once brought to prosperity by the government, was wiped off the map by the king in 88 B.C. and didn't survive this defeat. The end of Pathyris marks the end of the family- archive of Dryton, Apollonia²

¹ Keenan, Manning, and Uri Yiftach-Firanko, *Law and Legal Practice in Egypt*, 103.

² Vandorpe, "Apollonia, A Businesswoman": 336.

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