



Forum Antike

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The Archive of Aurelia Serenilla: Legal Struggles of a Propertied Heiress in Late Third Century Oxyrhynchus

Based on a small archive consisting of five texts from the Oxyrhynchus Papyri Collection, this paper will attempt to reconstruct the phases of a long-lasting dispute that took place at the end of the third century. The plaintiff and owner of the archive is Aurelia Serenilla, whose father was a councillor (bouleutes) of Oxyrhynchus. Over a period of more than ten years, Serenilla repeatedly appealed to several officials, including the prefect of Egypt and the praeses of the Thebaid, accusing her opponents of illegally detaining the property of which she was the legal heir. While many stages of the dispute can be reconstructed with a good degree of confidence, several points remain obscure.