

## ***FAMILY OF APION***

A wealthy landowners prominent in Egyptian imperial and public life in the first half of the sixth century. The earliest known member of the family, Apion I, held land around Herakleopolis Magna (see AHNAS AL-MADINAH) in 497 (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 1982; *Studien zur Palaeographie und Papyruskunde* 20.129). He was already prominent, having held an honorary consulship between 492 and 497. The date of his [death](#) is not known.

Better known is a member of the next generation, Flavius Strategius Apion. He was *patricius* in 503 and vice-prefect of the East in 503-504. Emperor Anastasius (491-518) appointed him to reorganize the commissariat of the [Roman](#) armies on the Persian frontier, and he supplied the town and garrison of Edessa with enough wheat to provision the garrisons of Dara and Amida. Flavius was regarded as very efficient (Theodorus Lector *Epitome* 482). He moved to Alexandria in May 504 with similar duties—"to make the soldiers bread there and send a supply" (Joshua Stylites, *History of the Calamities Which Befell Edessa, Amida, and All Mesopotamia*)—but was later recalled to Constantinople, allegedly for conspiring to obstruct the Persian campaign (Theophanes, *Chronographia* A.M. 5998).

While in Constantinople (508-510) Flavius made the [acquaintance](#) of SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH, who dedicated his work *Against Eutyches* to him and a certain Paul. (He thus at this time must have been an anti-Chalcedonian.) In 510, however, Flavius was condemned by the emperor Anastasius on political grounds and ordained presbyter at Nicaea by force (Lydus, *De magistratibus* 3.17; Theodorus Lector, *Epitome* 482; Theophanes *Chronographia* A.M. 611). He was recalled by Emperor Justin I in 518 and promoted to the rank of praetorian prefect of the East in 519. (*Chronicon Paschale* sub anno 519). He became a convinced supporter of the new dynasty's Chalcedonian Creed, a conviction shared by his son. He died about 530.

His son Flavius Strategius was even more distinguished than his father. In 518 he was honorary consul and honorary *magister militum*, and was sent to Egypt as *praefectus Augustalis* (518-523). He was *patricius* by December 530 (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 2779). His government, in a time of increasing tension between pro- and anti- Chalcedonians following the arrival of [Severus of Antioch](#) at Alexandria in the autumn of 518, was successful—peace was kept. In 532, bearing the rank of *agens vicem magistri officiorum*, Flavius was sent by Emperor [Justinian](#) to negotiate with the Persians. In this capacity he attended the meeting arranged by the emperor to attempt to solve the differences between orthodox and Monophysites.

The meeting took place late in 532 at Constantinople, in the palace of Hormisdas. Flavius took part in the discussion but did not influence either side decisively. From 535 to 538 he held various senior offices in the financial administration of the empire. His last known position was in 538, when he was sent by [Justinian](#) to arbitrate in a dispute between Arab *shaykhs*, which the Persians had hoped to use to renew war against the empire (Procopius of Caesarea, *The Persian War* 2.1.9). He was a landowner at Oxyrhynchus (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 1984, 2779) and died about 545.

His son, Flavius Strategius Apion, was consul in 539 and held the title of *protopatricius* (probably, “leader of the Senate”) (*Papyri Oxyrhynchus* 136, 137). He lived until May 577, but is not known to have filled any senior positions after his consulate, though he remained closely connected with the [dynasty](#) of Justinian. His grandson, Apion III, had as his mother Praejecta (*Papyri Oxyrhynchus* 1989), the daughter of the elder Praejecta who had been the wife of the grandson of Hypatius, Justinian’s kinsman, who had momentarily seized power at the time of the Nika riot in 532.

The Apions were great landowners whose estates were minutely organized through a hierarchy of bailiffs, overseers, and local leaders

ruling over an army of servile labor. They served the empire well. They seem to have been as liberal in religious conviction as the age allowed, but placed greater emphasis on ability to serve the state than on the “accuracy of doctrine” demanded by Severus and his supporters. They made their [mark](#) in the service of JUSTIN I and JUSTINIAN.

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