

Jennifer Sheridan - January 28th, 1995

## The Power of the Pen: Cultural Aspects of Women's Literacy in 4th Century CE Egypt

Four years ago

one of them about whom we know their status are specifically attested as acting without a guardian. (Koprilla's guardian is her brother and we don't know about Demetria.) What is the statement about their literacy intended to tell others?

Aurelia Thaisous (263-266) is from Oxyrhynchus and we don't know her class or whether her husband is alive, but she claims certain rights because she had the *ius trium liberorum* and could write - and therefore claims the right to act without a guardian. Youtie says that her literacy was not a factor because there were many illiterate women without guardians, but Thaisous is probably saying she is particularly capable of exercising her right to be without guardian because of her literacy, i.e., she would not as readily be cheated.

There are many reasons, economic rather than social (for example) for the *ius trium liberorum*. Charite (rich, old, widowed) is saying that as "a knower of letters" she will know what written documents are saying.