

A Petition from P. Cair. Isid¹

P. Cair. Isid. 138, JE57419 -
SR2644
15 x 23 cm

319 CE

Karanis (Kom Aushim)

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INTRODUCTION

According to TM there are 500 archives dated between the 6th century BCE and the 7th century CE written in several languages (i.e. Greek, Latin, Demotic, Coptic and Arabic). The archive of Aurelius Isidoros son of Ptolemaios grandson of Pankratios “A.I.P.P” is the sixth in order according to the number of preserved documents (after Zenon son of Agreophon “1838 documents”, Temple of Narmouthis: house of the ostraca “529”, Heroninos, estate manager “452”, Temple library of Tebtynis “211” and Kronion son of Apion head of the *grapheion* of Tebtynis “192”), where Aurelius Isidoros is “175”.

The archive of AIPP is getting its importance from the variety of the types of the documents and the indications of the several people mentioned in the archive, as well as the number of the preserved documents.

The Archive can be summarized as it mentioned in TM in the following points:

- It was found in Karanis in the house with dove-cotes C35/37²

¹ This papyrus was prepared to be edited as part of the International Seminar on the Cairo Papyri, sponsored by the Association Internationale de Papyrologues (AIP), in cooperation with the Egyptian Museum, the Center for the Tebtunis Papyri at the University of California, Berkeley (which digitized photographs originally taken several decades ago by the AIP's International Photographic Archive of Papyri), and the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University. Funding for the seminar was provided by the Tianaderrah Foundation and a private donor.

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- It covers the period from 267 to 324 CE.
- Although AIPP is the central figure, not all texts relate to Isidoros himself.
- The documents of the archive have been published in the following publication: P. Cair. Isid 1-146; P. Merton 1 30; 31; 88-89; 91-92; P. Col. 7 124-125, 136-141, 169-171, 179-180; P.Mich. XII 626, 636; SB XII 10881; ZPE 172.173
- The archive has been written in Greek and 6 bilingual Greek-Latin documents.

From the Archive of AIPP, a short biography of can provide a wide angle of his activities, sufferings, relationships and the stemma³ of his family can be concluded in the short following lines:

- AIPP was born around the year 264 CE⁴ and the latest.

He had six brothers: Pankratios, Isidoros, Peras, Palemon, Heron, Heras and Demetrios and one sister: Isidora.

- The earliest attestation is in P. Cair. Isid 99, Lease of Land, Karanis (Arsinoites), 29 Aug. 297.

- The latest attestation is being in P. Cair. Isid 76dupl, Petition to a Praepositus Pagi, Karanis (Arsinoites), 16. July 318.

- He was land-owner; in 299 CE he owned $35 \frac{27}{64}$ arouras of royal and private land in Karanis and its territory⁵ and it is increased to be 140 arouras. As well as he was a tenant farmer and leasing land from residents of Karanis.

The archive contains 177 documents between 267 and 324 CE:

- Receipts (64)
- Contracts (33)
- Petitions (31)
- Lists and accounts (18)
- Reports (11)
- Declarations (10)
- Official correspond (6)
- Private correspond (4)

It seems that AIPP was struggling with different types of people whether officials⁶ such the case of this document and P.Cair. Isid 68 in

² van Minnen, *Archaeology and papyrology, in Tradition and transformation. Egypt under Roman rule*, 2010, p. 465

³ *P. Cair. Isid.*, 1960, p. 6.

⁴ See note on line 19, 20

⁵ L. Koenen / S. Omar, 'P.Cairo Isid. 5', *ZPE* 11 (1973), p. 245-250

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which he charging the secretary of Karanis and his three associates, for nominating him to the office of chaff collector or other known people who destroyed his crops as a result of arson⁷ as it happened in 298 CE.

The petitions of the archive of AIPP have been edited within a period of time of 29 years are 26 documents⁸. The officials to whom the petitions were addressed can be classified as follows:

- Petition to a Praepositus Pagi = 7 doc.
- Petition to a Strategos = 5 doc.
- Petition to unknown = 4 doc.
- Petition to a Beneficiarius = 3 doc.
- Petition to a Prefect of Egypt = 3 doc.
- Petition to a Logistes = 1 doc.
- Petition to a Praepositus = 1 doc.
- Petition to a Praeses of Aegyptus Herculia = 1 doc.
- Petition to an *eirenarches* = 1 doc.

They can be deduced in the following table:

Ser.	Pub. #	Title	Date
1	P. Cair. Isid 139 - unpublished	Petition to a Beneficiarius, Αὐρηλίω Γορδιανῶ	296
2	P. Cair. Isid 62	Petition to a Beneficiarius, Αὐρηλίω Λεοντίω	297
3	P. Cair. Isid 63	Petition to a Beneficiarius, Αὐρηλίω Γορδιανῶ	
4	P. Cair. Isid 64	Petition to a Strategos, Αὐρηλίω Ἡρώνι	298
5	P. Cair. Isid 65		298 - 299
6	P. Cair. Isid 66	Petition to a Prefect of Egypt, Αἰλίωι Πουβλίωι	299
7	P. Cair. Isid 67		

⁶ See note on line 8

⁷ Cf. A.E. Hanson, 'A Petition and Court Proceedings: P.Michigan inv. 6060', ZPE 111 (1996), p. 175-176

⁸ See Table and chart

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8	P. Cair. Isid 142 - unpublished	Petition	300
9	P. Cair. Isid 79	Petition to a Logistes, Αὐρηλίῳ Διονυσίῳ	301 - 325
10	P. Cair. Isid 68	Petition to a Praepositus Pagi,	309 - 310
11	P. Cair. Isid 69	Petition to a Strategos, Αὐρηλίῳ	310
12	P. Cair. Isid 70	Χρήστῳ	
13	P. Cair. Isid 73	Petition to a Prefect of Egypt, Ἰουλίῳ Ἰουλιανῶ	314
14	P. Cair. Isid 74 - dupl	Petition to a Praeses of Aegyptus Herculia, Αὐρηλίῳ Ἀντωνίῳ	315
15	P.Mert.2.91 - dupl	Petition to the Strategos	316
16	P. Cair. Isid 75	Petition to a Praepositus Pagi, Αὐρηλίῳ Γερωντίῳ	
17	P. Cair. Isid 76 - dupl	Petition to a Praepositus Pagi, Αὐρηλίῳ Γερωντίῳ	318
18	P.Col.7.169	Petition for Recovery	
19	P.Col.7.170		
20	P. Cair. Isid 138	Petition probably to <i>Strategos!</i>	319
21	P. Cair. Isid 77	Petition to a Praepositus Pagi, Αὐρηλίῳ Κ	320
22	P. Cair. Isid 140 - unpublished	Petition to a Praepositus Pagi	323
23	P. Cair. Isid 78	Petition to a Praepositus Pagi, Διοσκόρῳ	324
24	P.Col.7.171	Petition to the Praepositus Pagi	
25	P.Mert.2.92	Petition to the Praepositus	
26	P. Cair. Isid 141	A draft of a Petition to an <i>eirenarches</i>	276 - 325

This Incomplete oblong sheet of papyrus has a Light brown color and it is thin and of fine quality. The folds, breaks, frayed, misaligned and removed fibers have left the papyrus in an exceedingly bad condition and affect the legibility. The surface also marred by abrasion and darkened by discoloration in numerous parts. The right and lower edges are rather sliced

by a sharp tool rather than regularly cut, most likely done by the dealer. The lower part of the left side is regularly cut. A big portion has been lost at the connective part between top and left sides. The papyrus has preserved the left margin is ca. 1.9 cm, and lower margin is as vast as ca. 8.5 cm. From the shape of the breaks of the papyrus it seems clearly that the papyrus was irregularly folded at least five vertical times, and four horizontal times. There are several lacunae in different shapes at the middle of the papyrus. A wide space of the papyrus is covered by dark blot probably of mud. The papyrus still needs conservation and cleaning, as well as some fibers need to be aligned. The papyrus has preserved 14 incomplete and 6 complete lines at the end of the text. The text has been written along with fibers in recto in black color ink with a fine pen.

The hand is of relatively small-sized cursive with frequent ligatures. Despite of the hand is neat and careful, there are some faulty orthography occurs in lines 8, 18, 19 and 20. It is fluent and has some calligraphic features. The hand is characterized by following letter characteristics:

Alpha usually formed in two loops that are facing left. *Theta* mostly is drawn small and contracted with a horizontal stroke from the middle used as a connective to the following letter. *Chi* is written with two crossed diagonal strokes sometimes with hooks on the top and bottom of left one and sometimes not. *Epsilon* is inconsistent, either lunate with attached tongue from the middle, or as a rather angular with small L-shape from the upper end, or formed without lifting the pen in a contracted ogee shape. *Kappa* is very distinguished with two vertical and sweeping strokes forming the Roman K. *Iota* when ligatured with previous letter it has a long descender and if not it is medium-sized equal ascender and descender. *Omicron* is always complete small circle and it is of an even size. *Delta* generally forms a ligature with the following letter; it sometimes has a hook on top of its vertex. *Rho* formed with almost round head and a short vertical stroke ends with serif. The *tau* is T-square with a serif at the left side of the bar. *Upsilon* is small Y Shape sometimes with a loop underneath. *Xi* formed as Roman Z shape with a loop in the junction of the base. The Interlinear spaces are even of ca. 0.4 cm. The scribe has a tendency towards not leaving space between words. There is a diaeresis (*trema*) mark over the *iota* of *ίva* in line 19. There are no other abbreviations or other punctuation marks. The document dates back to the 1st quarter of 4th century, specifically 319 CE⁹.

⁹ The Info provided description by: Boak, Arthur E. R. / Youtie, Herbert Chayyim in the online description of AIP in the PN, and note on line 20

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This document belongs to Karanis (modern Kom Ushim); Arsinoite nome (Herakleidou meris); Heptanomia region. This document represents a Petition from Aurelius Isidoros son of Ptolemaios to an official whose name and title are lost¹⁰, asking to be relieved of a liturgy. It is worthy to mention that the archive¹¹ of Aurelius Isidoros son of Ptolemaios is currently exists in the following institutions:

Cairo, Egyptian Museum (156 documents)

New York, Columbia University (14 documents)

Ann Arbor, Michigan University, Library (8 documents)

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library (6 documents)

New York, New York University, Fales Library (1 document).

The archive covers a period of 57 years. It is an archive of the family of Aurelius Isidoros, rather than his personal archive. Actually many documents belong either to his father, or his brothers or even some other non-relatives people (Atisios, son of Hatres); yet A. Isidoros considers a central figure of this archive.

The verso is blank.

¹⁰ See note on line 2

¹¹ See the online article published in 2013 by Karolien Geens in TM

TRANSCRIPTION

→

- [Αὐρηλίῳ Εὐστοχίῳ στρατηγῷ Ἀρσινοΐτου]
 [παρὰ Αὐρηλίου Ἰσιδώρου Πτολεμαίου ἀπὸ κώμ]ης
 Καρα-
 ± 35 νίδος Ἀρσινοΐτου νομοῦ. στρατηγῶ]ν ἀριστε
 ± 35]ς προνο(ία)
 4- ± 36.].εκ. . ε
 ± 35.]. παντος
 ± 35.]
]καὶ τῶν υἱῶν μου λειτουργούντων εἰς τε σιτο-
 8- λογία]ς καὶ ἀπαιτήσις οἱ τῆς κώμης κώμαρχοι βου-
 λόμε]νοι με τὴν ἰδίαν ἐγκαταλι(πεῖν) προσηγγεῖλαν
]. .[. .]ους ἀμίμνας ἔναγχος ἀπαλλαγέντα τιχ .[
 απ[. .]αι .[. .]αστ . . σπο[.] ἐπὶ κατασ. ε[.]ς χαρτου
 12- αφ. [. .]ων πεν.[.] . . ἑτέρων περισπᾶν ιν. . .[
 . . σ[. .] καὶ μος τὴν κεκτητῆ.γ. . .
 γ[. . .]διο πρόσειμι σοι ὑπὲρ τοῦ μ. χρυσασθαί
 ὅπως του . ισκ. . υσης παύσασθαι μὲν τῆς κατ' ἐ-
 16- μου καὶ τῶν υἱῶν μου ἐνοχλησεως ἕτερον δὲ
 εἰς ταύτη[ν] τὴν πορείαν ἀναδοθῆναι και γὰρ ἔ-
 ναγχος οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι μου υἱοὶ λειτουργείαις ἐξε-
 ταζονται ἵνα δυνηθῶ τῇ ἀρδία τῶν ἀρουρῶν ἄν-
 20- θρωπος πραΐσβυς ἀσχολάζειν. διευτύχει.

CORRECTIONS

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------|
| Line 8: ἀπαιτήσις | → | ἀπαιτήσεις |
| Line 18: λειτουργείαις | → | λειτουργίαις |
| Line 19: ἵνα | → | ἵνα |
| Line 19: ἀρδία | → | ἀρδεία |
| Line 20: πραΐσβυς | → | πρέσβυς |

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TRANSLATION

[To Aurelius Eustochios, strategos of the Arsinoite nome, from Aurelius Isidoros, son of Ptolemaios, from the village of Karanis division of the Arsinoite nome.....] O noblest of *strategoï*,

...demanding...

and although my sons were serving liturgies for both the office of sitologos and tax collector, the *komarchs* of the village want me to abandon my own statement, just now release papyrusof the others to molest ... come to you for the in order that the to stop the troubles against me and my sons, to give up the other to this course and because of the past, on one hand my other sons present themselves for liturgies so that the old man may be able to engage working in the irrigation of the arouras. Farwell

COMMENTARY

Line 1-2: κώμ]ης Καρᾱ- although that the sigma is unclear as those in the rest of the document, it is still confirmed according to the constant formula of the archive.

As it is cited in all petitions of the archive of AIPP, the header of the text should be in the following formula: the official to whom the petition addressed “in dative” + παρὰ AIPP in genitive + ἀπὸ κώμης Καρανίδος then sometimes division name “i.e. τοῦ Ἀρσινοεῖτου νομοῦ”.Such as in P. Cair. Isid 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 74, 75, 76dubl and 79.

Although all these documents are addressed as petitions, only two documents (P. Cair. Isid 70 and 76dubl) that have a definite word (i.e. βιβλίδιον) indicating an apparent meaning of the content of the text.

Line 2 στρατηγῶ]ν ἄριστε: the average of the missing letters in this line are ca. 35; the formula of the provenance and the name of the official are enough to restore 28 letters and the other letters (ca. 8) are hard to figure out what they could be, where there is no specific phrase can be suggested at that part of the petition.

The word ἄριστε is cited twelve times, seven of them describing the *strategos*; three are unknown officials, one to the *praepositos* and one to *hypomnematographos* “scribe of the minister of finance”, nevertheless still the word exclusively attested with the official *Strategos*.

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The Strategoi who were in office during the period from 310 to 320 are:

-Αὐρηλίῳ Χρήστῳ στρατηγῶ in P. Cair. Isid 69, Petition to a Strategos, Karanis (Arsinoite), dated in 310 CE, Ἀντωνίῳ Σαραπάμμωνι στρατηγῶ in P. Cair. Isid 54, Receipt for the Price of Clothing, Karanis (Arsinoite), dated in 15. Jan. 314 CE.

-Αὐρηλίῳ Ὀκταίῳ κρατίστῳ στρατηγῶ in p.mert 2 91dupl with P.Cair. Isid. 74, Petition to the Strategos, Karanis (Arsinoite), dated in 316 CE and Αὐρηλίῳ Εὐστοχίῳ στρατηγῶ in p.sakaon 7, Report of Sitologoi, Theadelphia (Arsinoite), dated in 320 CE.

Hence, if the date was 319 CE - and mostly it is -, the *strategos* to which this petition was addressed is mostly Αὐρηλίῳ Εὐστοχίῳ and the restoration of the header would be:

Αὐρηλίῳ Εὐστοχίῳ στρατηγῶ Ἀρσινοίτου παρὰ Αὐρηλίου Ἰσιδώρου Πτολεμαίου ἀπὸ κόμης Καρανίδος Ἀρσινοίτου νομοῦ.

Accordingly, the header should be restored in the following formula:

παρὰ Αὐρηλίου Ἰσιδώρου Πτολεμαίου ἀπὸ κόμης Καρανίδος Ἀρσινοίτου νομοῦ. στρατηγῶ]ν ἄριστε

Line 3, 4, 5 and 6: these lines lost about 35-36 letters in the missing portion at the beginning of the first six lines. A word such as βιβλίδιον (petition) was mostly written after the header of the petition (probably in line 3). The reading is a problematical; the word προνο(ία) “foresight, providence” at the end of line 3 is not definite, the *sigma* after the lacuna is doubtful, as well as the *omicron* after *pi*. Though, it stands a good restoration for the preserved letters. While the preserved letters at the end of line 4 are faded and illegible. Except for the illegible letter after the break, the letters at the preserved part of line 5 are more legible and might stand for a good restoration for the παντὸς. Only traces of faded letters at the preserved part of line 6.

Line 7 καὶ τῶν υἱῶν μου: we know from his *stemma* that AIPP had two sons: Patieis, who was acting as AIPP’s agent for the payment of taxes on 294 CE (P.Ciar.Isid. 9) when he was 12 years old, he also was *kephalaiotes* in 315 CE at the age of 29. According to the archive of AIPP Patieis must have been about twenty years older than his step-brother Peeous son of the second wife (Tales) of AIPP, who was thirteen years by 319 CE. Consequently, Patieis must have been 33 years old and Peeous must have been 13 years old when this petition was written; and surely they can be nominated for the liturgies the office of sitologos and tax collector.

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Line 8 οἱ τῆς κώμης κόμαρχοι, These *Komarchs* of Karanis are mostly: Aurelius Ariston, son of Serenus and Aurelius Germanus, son of Selpous who are mentioned in the archive around that date¹². It seems clearly that AIPP had chronic troubles with them where from P. Cair. Isid 73 in which complain to the prefect of Egypt about the injustices being inflicted on the people of Karanis by the *praepositus* of the *pagus* and by the *komarchs* of Karanis that has been dated in 314 CE (5 years earlier to the current petition) which might lead to the reason by which the *komarchs* of Karanis have intentionally nominated him although he was “an old man” instead of his sons, who they of course younger and stronger, for liturgies.

Line 9 ἐγκαταλι(πεῖν) “to abandon” the ending of this infinitive is abbreviated by a long horizontal stroke as it is scribed in Boak. AIPP is convincing the *strategos* that the *komarchs* are intentionally impairing his properties.

προσηγγελαν “statement” the *alpha* is attached to the right leg of the *lambda* a part of it is washed out then traces of ink which is mostly is the connection of the *alpha* and *nu*.

Line 10]. The reading is a problematical as a result of the abrasion of ink and the severe tear of fibers. ἀμίμγας: some letters are legible, other are not, there is no reasonable restoration of the word. ἔναγχος ἀπαλλαγέντα τυχ. [there is no a pattern construction with participle to figure out what is expecting afterwards.

Line 11 χαρτου “papyrus, roll, sheet” the word is *hapax* in the archive.

Line 12 - 15 περισπᾶν “vex, disturb, molest” the infinitive shows what AIPP was exposed to by the *komarchs*. The reading generally is unclear and hard to construct an accurate phrase, but it is generally AIPP tries to concentrate on the ways by which the *komarchs* of Karanis persecute him.

Line 18 λειτουργείας: Although AIPP was an illiterate man has been assigned to the following ten Liturgies¹³: In 298/299 was *Kephalaiotes*, 299/300 was *Pediophylax*, 300/301 was *Apaitetes*, (301 to 304) was Collector of meat, 308/309 was *Komarch*, 309/310 was *Sitologos*, 310/311 was Chaff collector, 313/314 was *Tesserarius*, 317 was replaced by the son of Tanouphis, probably because he elderly and called upon to

¹² Cf. P.Ciar.Isid 56, 57 and 58 315 CE.

¹³ Cf. Boak, 1956, p. 37-40; *P.Cairo Isid.*, 1960, p. 11-17

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perform an *ergasia* and in 318 he was nominated to a liturgy, and he tried to evade it by an exchange of liturgies with Ptolemaios, a much younger man and finally in 319 CE in this document he was nominated for another liturgy.

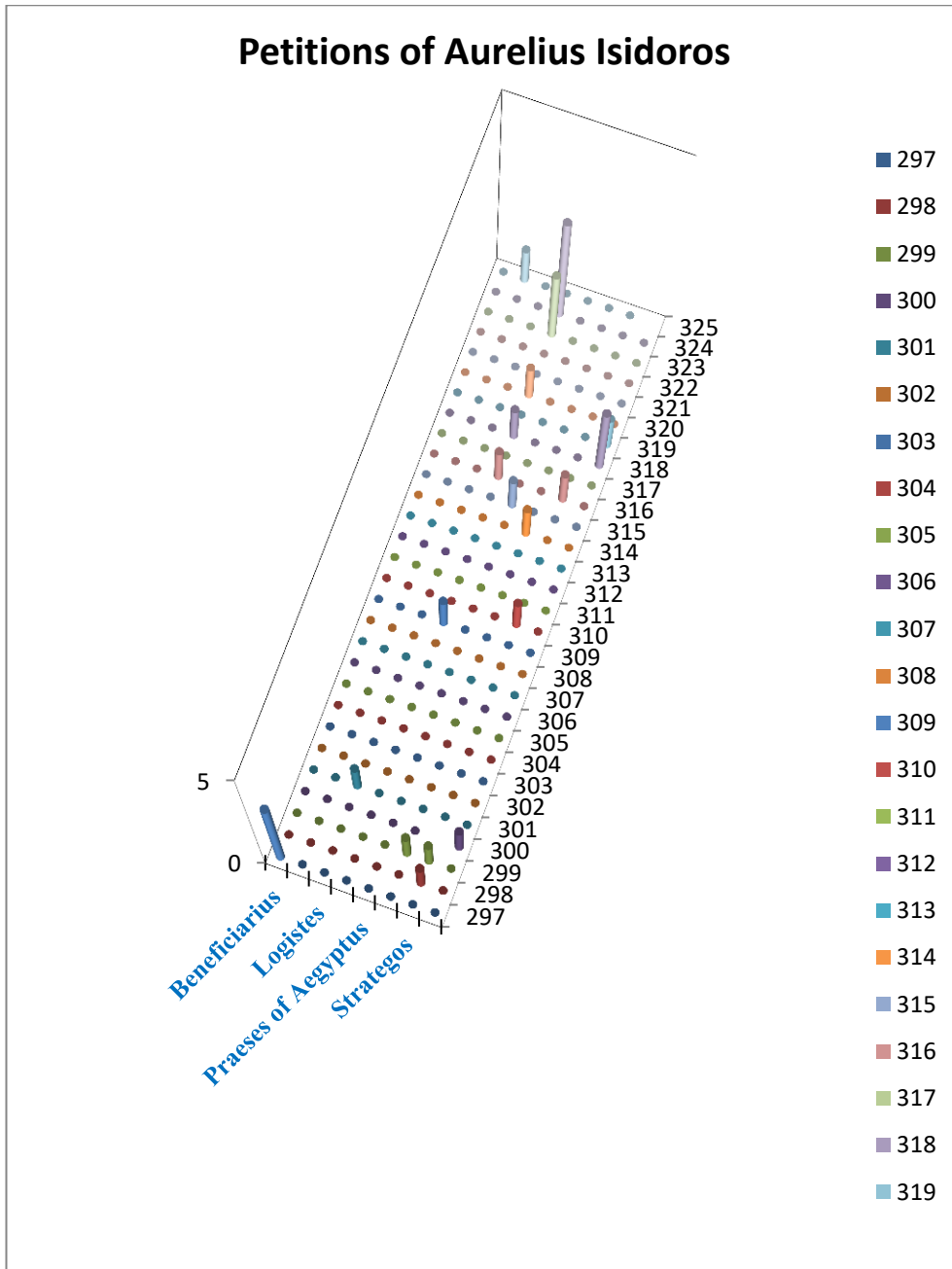
Line 19, 20 although the word *ivā* has been attested nine times in the archive, it is cited only once with the *trema* in line 27; in P. Cair. Isid 77, Petition to a Praepositus Pagi, Karanis (Arsinoite), 320 CE; in the same Archive of Aurelius Isidoros. Yet the composition “*ivā dūνηθῶ*” has been used once in another Petition to a Strategos, P. Cair. Isid 64, dated in 298 CE).

ἄνθρωπος πρᾶίβυς “the old man”, the argument discussed by Boak, p. 394 shows a significantly confusion in the documents considering the age of AIPP. That can be concluded in the following table:

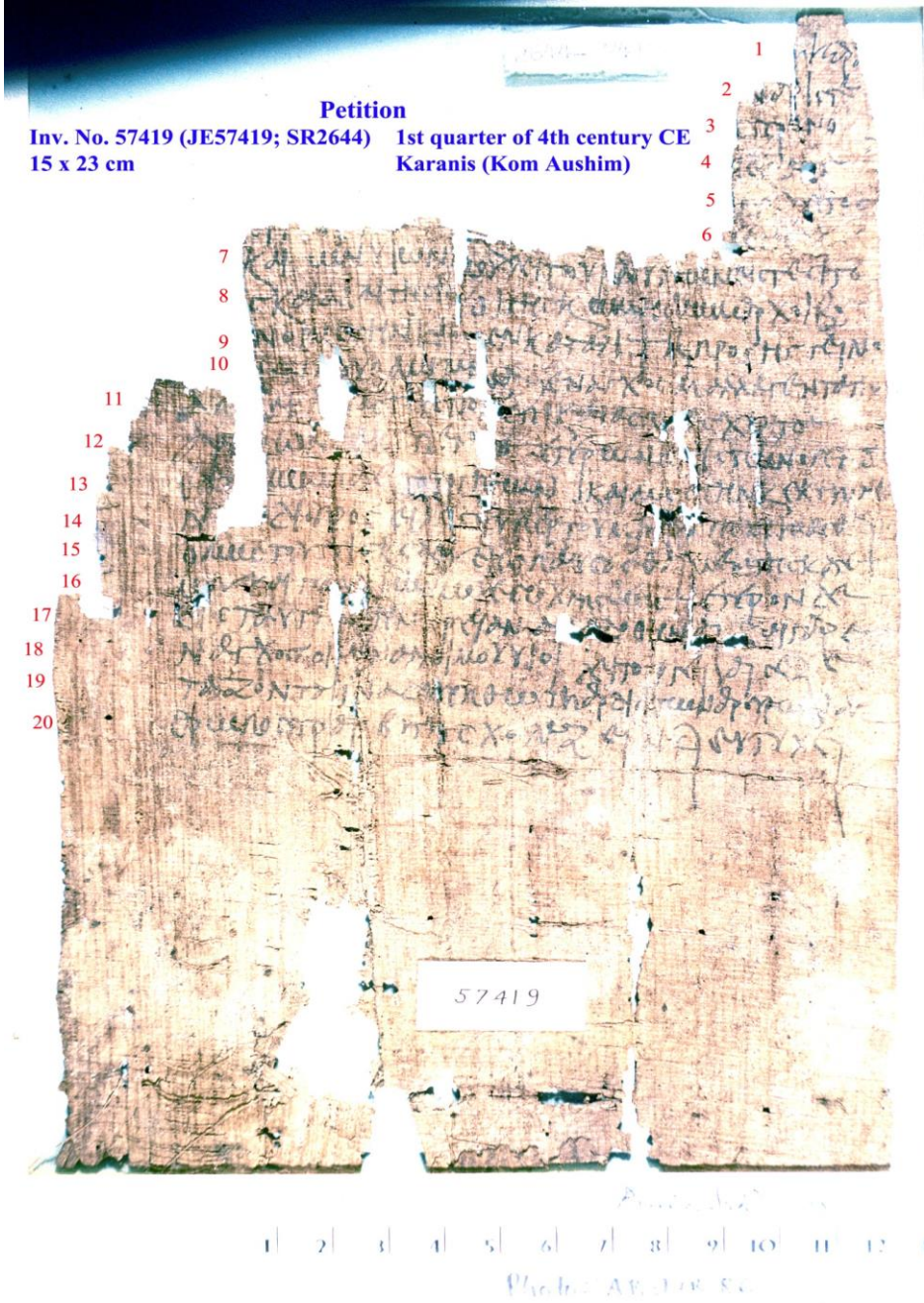
Document	Date	Age	319 CE	DOB
P. Cair. Isid 81	297 CE	35	57	262 CE
P. Cair. Isid 97	308 CE	37	48	271 CE
P. Cair. Isid 125	308 CE	40	51	268 CE
P. Cair. Isid 91	309 CE	45	55	264 CE
P. Cair. Isid 8	309 CE	40+	51-55	264-268 CE

According to P. Cair. Isid 97, the age 48 is excluded by the year 319 CE as age of AIPP, where he is considered young to be called πρᾶίβυς.

Since AIPP was replaced the liturgies twice: in P. Cair. Isid 123 and in P. Cair. Isid 82, by a private agreement during, the years 317-319 which reflects the incapability as a result of elderliness. As well as, P. Cair. Isid 91 and P. Cair. Isid 8 are indicating that he was in his fifth decade (specifically 41 - 45) which means that in 319 CE he was in the sixth decade. Yet, P. Cair. Isid 91 is giving more specific age for AIPP (i.e. 45) which does not conflict with P. Cair. Isid 8. Hence, he mostly was 55 years old by 319 CE and consequently he was born around or in in 264 CE.



A CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF THE PETITIONS OF AIPP'S ARCHIVE



Petition
Inv. No. 57419 (JE57419; SR2644) 1st quarter of 4th century CE
15 x 23 cm Karanis (Kom Aushim)

P. CAIR. ISID. 138

Key words:

Archive, Cairo Museum, Greco-Roman History, Greco-Roman period, Greek Language, Isidoros, Karanis, Kom Aushim, Papyri, Papyrology, Petition, Roman Egypt, Roman period, *Strategos*.

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- P.Mert. = A Descriptive Catalogue of the Greek Papyri in the Collection of Wilfred Merton, from 1948 to 1967

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Online Resources:

- PN, Papyrological Navigator. Papyri.info
- TM, Trismegistos, trismegistos.org