

Census Declaration from Arsinoite Nome

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Abstract: The current paper is an edition of unpublished Greek documentary papyrus from Cairo Museum under glass 86 of the Special Register Nr. 3049 with inv. 158. This papyrus is attributed to Theadelphia (Arsinoite nome) and dates to the first half of the second century AD. This text is a census declaration, the Roman government set up a fourteen-year cycle of census declarations. Each inhabitant in Egypt had to be declared in a house-by-house. The verso of the papyrus was later used for a memorandum.

Keywords: Greek Papyri, Arsinoite Nome, Demography of Roman Egypt.

إعلان إحصاء سكاني من إقليم أرسينوى

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المخلص: الورقة البحثية الحالية هي عبارة عن نشر بردية وثائقية يونانية غير منشورة من المتحف المصري بالقاهرة، رقم الزجاج ٨٦ للسجل الخاص ٣٠٤٩ تحت رقم الجرد ١٥٨. هذه البردية من ثيادلفيا (إقليم أرسينوى) وتعود إلى النصف الأول من القرن الثاني الميلادي. نص هذه البردية هو إعلان إحصاء سكاني من إقليم أرسينوى. أقامت الحكومة الرومانية اجراء الإحصاء السكاني مرة كل أربعة عشر عامًا، وكان لابد على كل ساكن منزل في مصر أن يقدم إعلانًا رسميًا يشمل جميع البيانات عن قاطني هذا المنزل. تم استخدام ظهر البردية لاحقًا كمذكرة بها قائمة بالعناصر التي لا يجب نسيانها.

الكلمات الدالة: البردي اليوناني، إقليم أرسينوتي، علم دراسة السكان في مصر في العصر الروماني.

SR 3049/158
9 x 24.5 cm.

Theadelphia
1st half of II Cent. AD

The papyrus consists of two fragments. It has been irregularly cut off on all sides. The recto and verso are written by different hands. The text on the recto is written by a legible hand, along the fibers, in 29 lines. There are remains of two margins on the recto; at the top 1 cm, and at the lower 1 cm. The text on the verso is written by a semi-cursive hand, across the fibers, in 18 lines. There are remains of two margins on the verso; at the top 3 cm, and at the lower 4 cm. The papyrus has suffered not only lacunae, but also the partial decay of the material and the ink is in places only faintly discernible. The text consists of two pieces materially joined; the two pieces came from the same papyrus roll. The beginnings and the endings of the lines in this column have been lost. But a continuous text can be reconstructed by parallel declarations.

On palaeographical grounds, it can be dated to the first half of the second century AD, due to palaeographical parallels, see: P. Fouad. 15 (Ptolemais Euergetis; AD 119, census return); P.Mich. III 178 (Bacchias; AD 119, census declaration); SB XVI 13288 (Theadelphia; AD 133, census register). For images see: <http://papyri.info/ddbdp/>.

The text is a census declaration on the recto, and the recto is a column number 2 of a papyrus roll τόμος συγκολλήσιμος. This census declaration is attributed to Theadelphia, dated to the first half of the second century AD, due to persons who were mentioned in the family's previous census return, see commentary l. 3. and may be referred to one census return from four successive censuses returns during the first half of the second century AD for years 103¹, 117²., 131³., and 145⁴. The census declarations dated to Roman era form the best documentary source of demographic information for the Roman Empire⁵. In Egypt the declarant was obliged to submit copies of his declaration to various officials concerned with the census: the στρατηγός, the βασιλικός

¹ SB XX 14303 (Ptolemais Euergetis; AD 103; Census declaration by house owners); SB XX 14309 (Ptolemais Euergetis; AD 103, Census declaration); Roger Bagnall, "Notes on Egyptian Census Declarations III." *BASP*, no. 28 (1991): 121-133.

² SB XXII 15464 (Arsinoite; AD 117, Census declaration); Roger Bagnall, "Census Declarations from the British library." *CDE*, 69, (1994): 109-126; P.Oxy. IV 786 (AD 117, Census declaration); Livia Capponi, "P.Oxy. IV 786: Conclusion of a Census-Return." *ZPE*, no. 140 (2002): 177-180.

³ SB XX 14163 (Samaria; AD 131, Census declaration); Roger Bagnall, "Census Declarations from Tebtunis." *Aegyptus*, no. 72 (1992): 61-84; SB XVIII 13288 (Theadelphia; AD 131, Census declaration); SB XXII 15336 (Arsinoite; AD 103, Census declaration); Roger Bagnall, "Notes on Egyptian Census Declarations V." *BASP*, no. 30 (1993): 35-56; Ruben Smolders, "SB XXII 15336 and the Interpretation of BGU IX 1897." *ZPE*, no. 148 (2004): 239-240.

⁴ SB XX 14111 (Arsinoite; AD 145, Census declaration); Orsolina Montevicchi, "Epikrisis e dichiarazioni di censimento di cateci arsinoiti." *Aegyptus*, no. 70 (1990): 27-31; SB XX 14304 (Herakleopolites; AD 145, Census declaration); Roger Bagnall, "Notes on Egyptian Census Declarations II." *BASP*, no. 28, (1991): 13-32; SB XX 15465 (Oxyrhynchite; AD 145, Census declaration); SB XX 15466 (Oxyrhynchite; AD 145, Census declaration).

⁵ Hin Saskia, "New light on Roman census papyri through semi-automated record linkage." *Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History*, no. 49 (2016): 50-65.

ἰου Παυόϊς ὑπόμ(νημα) Κεφάλλων[ι

Corrections:

Recto 1. 6 ψιλοῦ 1. 7 Πασεῦτος 1. 10 Πετεφθοῦς 1. 23 ψιλοῦ 1. 28 ψιλοῦς
Verso 1. 1 διειρηῆσθαι 1. 3 3, ἀλοήτρα 1. 7 παραδότης 1. 10 Ἀρψόιτος
 1. 11 συμπλήρωσιν 1. 15 πορείαν 1. 16 διέγραψε

Translation:

Recto

2 ✓

brother of the same mother, aged
 another brother, of the same mother, aged
 Pastous son of Petesouchus his mother is
 son of Psoiphis grandson of Psoiphis his mother is
 5 his brother, of the same mother, aged
 of the courtyard and the vacant plot
 Paseus fatherless his mother is
 son of Harmiysis grandson of Harmiysis
 of the courtyard paternal (inheritance) owned in common with
 10 grandson of Petephthous the wife
 the same mother, a cultivator of state
 total 7 men
 his mother is
 his mother is share likewise
 15 brother his mother is
 share paternal and grandmother (inheritance)
 of the paternal courtyard Apollodorus
 (grandson of) Pieus his mother is
 of an open courtyard and
 20 the wife of
 Thases daughter of Phasis grandson of Demarus
 his mother is Thenphatres
 of the vacant plot and open courtyard of thermouthis
 grandson of Petsiris his mother is
 25 grandson of Pouplius, a cultivator of state, aged
 fatherless his mother is thermouthis, aged
 share of both paternal and maternal (inheritance from) the dead father
 of the vacant plot near the village, and other vacant plots
 it has been accomplished through Demarus

Verso

they have divided eight dichora of wine
 in the village Herakleia
 sixty drachmae (for the costs of) threshing
 he appears to be Piolis
 5 in the eastern quarter near me
 he pillaged 20 and the other 5 (in the month) Epiph

you shall not hand over (the amount) owed to them

.....
He has paid

10 of Harpsois
the completion he paid
I have sold
of the wine-merchant

.....
15 through the caravan of Hatres
of the Arsinoite nome, Herakleides division, he paid
three and three obols the above mentioned
memorandum of . . . son of grandson of Papsos to Kephallon

Commentary:

✓ : It filled in empty space at the ends of lines to prevent uncalled-for additions and forgery.

l. 1: μητρὸς: The scribe of the papyrus has written μητρὸς in two ways: The first way with a word has been written out in full, see lines 2, and 5. the second way with a word has been written as a symbol, see lines 22 and 26.

μητρὸς τῆ[ς αὐ]τῆς: The addition a phrase "the same mother" implies that the mother is the same, probably the father died, and the mother married another one ¹.

l. 2: ἄλλος ἀδελφὸς: This expression followed by the third brother in the census return, see: P.Corn. 22, Col. III (Philadelphia; AD 25-50), ll. 74-76 (census roll):

l. 3: Πα]στωῦτος τοῦ Πετῆ[σο]ύχου μη(τρὸς) [: This man was mentioned in a previous census return from Theadelphia; see: BGU IV 1072 (Theadelphia; AD 128), ll. 6-7 (a dowry declaration):

Ἡροῦτι Παστωῦ[τ]ος Πετεσοῦχου μητρὸς Θε-
νηρακλεία[ς] ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς κώμης,
Herous son of Pastous and grandson of Petesouchus his mother is Theneraklea

l. 6: ψειλ'/(οῦ) τό(που): This place is located within the urban communities or in their vicinity (περὶ κώμην), and it has formed an intermediate area between the village and the cultivated lands. A ψιλὸς τόπος constitutes both an area buildable, and one in which the building is demolished or falls into ruins: therefore it is not a ψιλός land in an absolute sense, but it can also contain ruins and rubble². The declarations were

¹ Nadine Quenouille, *Edition und Kommentar neuer Papyri aus den französisch-italienischen Grabungen in Tebtynis (Ägypten)*, (P.Tebt. Quen.), (Trier: University of Leipzig, 2012), 98.

² Klaus Maresch, *Bronze und Silber: Papyrologische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Währung im ptolemäischen und römischen Ägypten bis zum 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, *Papyrologica Coloniensia* 25, (Germany: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 1996), 87-88; Isabella Bonati, *Il lessico dei vasi e dei contenitori greci nei papyri: Specimina per un repertorio lessicale degli angionimi greci*, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete - Beihefte* 3 (Germany: de Gruyter, 2016), 32, 55-58.

submitted when a general census of property was ordered by the prefect: κατὰ τὰ κελευσθέντα ὑπὸ τοῦ κρατίστου ἡγεμόνος. See BGU II 420 (Soknopaiou Nesos; AD 130-131), ll. 6-7 (census declaration)¹.

l. 7: ἀπάτωρ: The expression ἀπάτωρ was used to distinguish the legal status of illegitimate children².

l. 8:]υς Ἀρμύσεως <τοῦ> Ἀρμύσεω[ς: The scribe has written the name of grandfather without τοῦ, although he had written τοῦ with the name of grandfather in the lines 3, 4, 10 and 24.

l. 9:] ἀλ'(ῆς) πατρικ(ῆς) κοι[v]ω[v]ικῆς [: For the closest parallel wording, see: SB XX 14164 (Talei; AD 160), ll. 8-10 (Census declaration):

ἐ[v τῆ αὐτῆ]
κώμη γ' ἔμει οἰκίας πατρικῆ[ς κοι-]
ωνικῆς πρὸς τοὺς [ἀ]δελφο[ύς]
in the same village, 3rd share of a paternal house, owned in common with my brothers.

l. 11: μητρὸς τῆς [α]ὐτῆ[ς δη]μόσιος γεω[ργός]: For parallel, see P.Lond. II 258 (Arsinoite; AD 94), l. 58 (Census declaration).

l. 12: ζ: There is an indication that seven persons were listed in the previous lines. For parallel form, see: P.Congr. XV. 14 (Philadelphia; AD 46-47), l. 27 (Census list):

(γίνονται) ἄνδ(ρες) δ
total 4 men

l. 15: μη(τρὸς) Τεφορ[: For completing of the name, there are names such as: μητ(ρὸς) Τεφορσάιτος³, μητ(ρὸς) Τεφορ(σάιτος)⁴, μη(τρὸς) Τεφορσάιτ(ος)⁵, μη(τρὸς) Τεφορᾶτος⁶, μη(τρὸς) Τεφορσάιτος⁷, and μη(τρὸς) Τεφορεῦ(τος)⁸.

¹ James Keenan & Joseph Manning, & Uri Yiftach, *Law and Legal Practice in Egypt from Alexander to the Arab Conquest, A Selection of Papyrological Sources in Translation, with Introductions and Commentary* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 74.

² Uri Yiftach, "Apatōr metros: The Rise of a Formula in Bureaucratic Perspective." *In Symposium 2015: Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte, 1-4 September 2015* (Serbia: Coimbra, 2016), 115-120, Myrto Malouta, "Families, Households, and Children in Roman Egypt." *in Riggs, C. (ed.) Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 2012), 288-304; Maria Nowak, "The Fatherless and Family Structure in Roman Egypt." *In Symposium 2015: Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte, 1-4 September 2015* (Serbia: Coimbra, 2016), 99-114.

³ P.Col. 2 1-r-1b, Col. IV (Theadelphia; AD 134-135), l. 5 (report of taxation).

⁴ P.Col. 2 1-r-1a, Col. VII (Theadelphia; AD 134-135), l. 18 (report of taxation).

⁵ BGU IX 1891, Col. IX (Theadelphia; AD 134), l. 280 (report of taxation).

⁶ BGU IX 1891, Col. IX (Theadelphia; AD 134), l. 292 (report of taxation).

⁷ BGU IX 1891, Col. XI (Theadelphia; AD 134), l. 332 (report of taxation).

⁸ BGU IX 1891, Col. XII (Theadelphia; AD 134), l. 372 (report of taxation).

l. 19: αἶθριον κα[ι]: This phrase could be restored as follows, see: P.Tebt. II 322 (Tebtynis; AD 189), ll. 8-9 (Census declaration):

ὑπάρχει μοι ἐπ' ἀμ-
φόδου Μοήρεως μέρος οἰκίας καὶ αἶθριον καὶ αὐλή(ης)
*I own in the Moeris quarter a share of a house and open courtyard, and
courtyard.*

Husson shows that αἶθριον and αὐλή are the two Greek terms used for “courtyard” in papyri. The αὐλή seems to have been less private than the αἶθριον: in fact, the αὐλή is often defined as adjacent (προσοῦσα), showing that it was placed on a side of the house and not at the center of it. Those outside the family could also rent the αὐλή of a house¹. The αἶθριον was in a central position in the house; it never appears as being rented to someone else. Therefore, the αἶθριον was the private courtyard of the house which gave access to private rooms. While the αὐλή was likely used for household activities².

The courtyard was the center of activity and socialization for the members of the family. Ovens made of mud and built into the wall of the courtyard, grain bins and millstones used by those making bread for the household, and cooking is believed to have taken place in the open courtyard. Various instruments for spinning and weaving have been found, as well as tools for making wooden domestic utensils and simple furnishings. Domestic animals were also kept in the courtyard³. The αἶθριον includes in the list of dwelling-rooms, on the possibility of it having a flat roof and that there was also another inhabitable space on a higher floor, see: P. Monts. Roca IV 78 (Oxyrhynchus; AD 49-54), ll. 9-10 (loan of money):

εἰσοικισθη-
[σόμενο]ι ἐν τῷ αἶθρίῳ, τῷ δὲ ἐτέρῳ ἐπάνω τ[όπῳ]
They will live in the open courtyard, and on the second floor above.

l. 20: ἡ σύμβιος: The noun σύμβιος (partner, husband, and wife) can have both a masculine and a feminine article⁴. For a feminine article, see: P.Oxy. XXXI 2559 (AD 100-200), ll. 12-13 (letter of Arrius eudaimon).

For a masculine article, see: P.Oxy. XLVI 3312 (AD 100-200), ll. 8-10 (private letter).

l. 26: ἀπ]άτωρ μη(τρὸς) Θερμούθεως: For completing of the name, there are two possibilities, it could be one of them, the first possibility, see: BGU IX 1891 (Theadelphia; AD 134-135), l. 73 (financial reports of the collectors of money taxes):

Φάσεις ἀπάτωρ μη(τρὸς) Θερμουθ(εως) η χ(ωματικοῦ)
Phaseis fatherless his mother is Thermouthis, dike tax 8.

¹ Geneviève Husson, *OIKIA. Le vocabulaire de la maison privée en Égypte d'après les papyrus grecs*, (Paris: Sorbonne, 1983), 29-36; Geneviève Husson; “Houses in Syene in the Patermouthis archive,” *BASP*, no. 27 (1990): 123-137; Robert Daniel, *Architectural orientation in the papyri* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010), 123-147,

² Ada Nifosi, *Becoming a Woman and Mother in Greco-Roman Egypt: Women's Bodies, Society and Domestic Space* (London: Routledge, 2019), 184.

³ Sabine Huebner, *The Family in Roman Egypt: A Comparative Approach to Intergenerational Solidarity and Conflict* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 41-42.

⁴ Peter Head, “Epistolary Greetings in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri,” *Tyndale Bulletin*, no. 70 (2019): 269-290.

The second possibility, see: BGU IX 1891 (Theadelphia; AD 133), l. 6 (census return):

Ἀρσύθμις ἀπάτωρ μη(τρὸς) Θερμούθεω(ς)
Harsythmis fatherless his mother is Thermouthis

l. 27: (μέρος) πατρικ(ῶν) καὶ μητρικ(ῶν): This expression is unusual in census declarations, but it can be restored, cf. P.Rein. I 46 (Soknopaiou Nesos; AD 189), ll. 18-19 (Census declaration).

l. 28: ψιλ(οῦ)] τό(που) περὶ [κώ]μην ἑτέρους ψειλ(οῦς) [τόπ(ους): For similar phrase, see: P.Harr. I 71 (Oxyrhynchus; AD 189), ll. 19-20 (Census Return):

ψιλ(ὸν) τό(πον), καὶ περὶ τὴν α(ὕτην)
 ἑτέρους ψιλ(οῦς) τό(πους).

l. 29: ἔτελ(ειώθη) δι[ά] Δημάρου: The signature of the scribe of the papyrus, because the signature makes it original¹.

Verso l. 1: δ'ίχωρ(α): The term δίχωρον a unit of capacity used for wine, the δίχωρον equaled 2 μονόχωρα = 8 χόες = 96 κοτύλαι. The μονόχωρον a wine measure to be equivalent to about 7.3 liters, and that a donkey load was 8 μονόχωρα².

l. 2:] ἐν κώμῃ Ἡρ[α]κλ(εία) [: The papyrological evidence for Herakleia consists of 144 texts³, ranging from the mid-third century B.C. to the eighth century AD⁴, the village of Herakleia is situated in the division of *Themistes* of the *Arsinoite nome*. Herakleia was somewhere near the southern border of Lake Moeris, close to the *meris* of *Herakleides* and Soknopaiou Nesos. As the lake has shrunk considerably over time, it may well have been on the southern shore of the lake in antiquity⁵.

l. 3: (δραχμῶν) ἐξή(κοντα) ἀλώή[τρα]: This phrase could be restored as follows, see: P.Theon. 25 (Oxyrhynchite; AD 160), ll. 6-8 (payment application):

δραχμὰς
 τεσσαράκοντα ὀκτ[ῶ] καὶ εἰς ἄ-

¹ Carolin Arlt, "The Egyptian Notary Offices in the Ptolemaic Fayum." In *Graeco-Roman Fayum-Texts and Archaeology*, edited by S. Lippert and M. Schentuleit (Germany: Wiesbaden, 2008): 15-26; Graham Claytor, *Mechanics of Empire: the Karanis Register and the Writing Offices of Roman Egypt* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 2014): 176.

² Nico Kruit & Klaas Worp, "Metrological Notes on Measures and Containers of Liquids in Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Egypt," *APF*, no. 45 (1999): 96-127; Philip Mayerson, "The Monochoron and Dichoron: the Oxyrhynchition," *ZPE*, no. 131 (2000): 169-172; Philip Mayerson, "Standardization of Wine Measures at Oxyrhynchus in the Third Century A.D. and its Extension to the Fayum," *BASP*, no. 37 (2000): 105-109; Taco Terpstra, "A Third-Century CE List of Wine from Five Estates", *BASP*, no. 49 (2012): 109-118.

³ [https://papyri.info/search?PLACE=Herakleia%20\(Arsinoites\)](https://papyri.info/search?PLACE=Herakleia%20(Arsinoites))

⁴ P.Cair.Zen. IV 59656 (Herakleia, BC 256-248), l. 4 (Memorandum); SB XXII 15729 (Herakleia; AD 639), l. 9 (Lease); Deborah Hobson, "The Village of Heraklia in the Arsinoite Nome", *BASP*, no. 22 (1985): 101-115.

⁵ Deborah Hobson, "The Inhabitants of Heraklia," *BASP*, no. 23 (1986): 99-123.

λόητρα χόρτου κα[ἰ πυ]ροῦ
forty-eight drachmae and for the costs of threshing the grass and the wheat

l. 13: [ο]ἰ[ν]εμπ[ό]ρο[υ]: The wine trade can be found in many documents, therefore, was the presence of Greek terms for wine merchant: οἰνέμπορος, οἰνοπόλης, οἰνοπράτης and οἰνοκάπελος¹. The sales and purchases of wine always entail large amounts P.Oxy. VII 1055 (AD 267), ll. 2-3 (Order for Delivery of Wine):

παράδος Ἡρακλ[ε]ῖδη οἰνεμπόρω τε-
τάρτης ληνοῦ [κε]ρά[μ]ια διακόσια <τρία>
deliver to Heraclides, wine-merchant, two hundred and three jars from the fourth wine-tub.

l. 15 πορῆα[ν]: The πορεία (caravan service) is a group of people with vehicles or animals who travel together for safety through a dangerous area, especially across a desert. The caravans could easily be used upon the roads and tracks associated with irrigation channels by horse, camel, ox, or donkey. The caravans travel to the desert from the Nile Valley at Memphis, and from villages lying in the north of the Arsinoite nome, would travel through Soknopaiou Nesos, and the other villages of the nome were connected by routes to these important stations, and the Nile Valley, by other routes crossing a small section of desert in a direct line to the valley². The caravan was used for the transport of crops, bulky commodities, passengers' transport of animals, transport of stones, and transport of military supplies³.

Conclusion:

Finally, it may be concluded:

- The papyrus offers new insight on the census declarations from Theadelphia.
- Their residents had mentioned in the family's previous census declarations from Theadelphia.
- The papyrus has preserved details about fatherless (ἀπάτωρ).
- There is a description of the precise location of the property, such as: the courtyard (αὐλή), the vacant plot (ψιλὸς τόπος), and the open courtyard (αἶθριον).
- The papyrus gives papyrological evidence for the caravan service (πορεία).

¹ Dorota Dzierzbicka, "Wine dealers and their networks in Roman and Byzantine Egypt. Some remarks"; in *Proceedings of the 28th Congress of Papyrology, Barcelona 1-6 August 2016*, ed. by Alberto Nodar & Sofia Torallas Tovar (Barcelona: University of Barcelona, 2019): 510-524.

² Colin Adams, *Land Transport in Roman Egypt: A Study of Economics and Administration in a Roman Province* (London: Oxford University Press, 2007), 33; Fatma Hamouda, *Communication and the Circulation of Letters in the Eastern Desert of Egypt during the Roman Period, Inaugural dissertation for attaining a doctorate from the Faculty of Philosophy of Heidelberg University* (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University, 2018): 109-112.

³ Adam Bülow-Jacobsen, "Communication, Travel, and Transportation in Egypt's Eastern Desert during Roman times (1st to 3rd century AD)," in *H. Riemer, F. Förster (eds), Desert Road Archaeology in Ancient Egypt and Beyond*. Africa Praehistorica 27 (Germany: Köln, 2013): 557-574.

Census Declaration from Arsinoite Nome



Egyptian Museum in Cairo under glass 86 of the Special Register Nr. 3049 with inv. 158 recto.

Census Declaration from Arsinoite Nome



Egyptian Museum in Cairo under glass 86 of the Special Register Nr. 3049 with
inv. 158 verso.

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