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FIVE DOCUMENTS FROM ROMAN FAYUM

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This article is a sequel to my ‘Three Receipts from Soknopaiou Nesos’, published in *ZPE* 200 (2016) 411–19. Like those three, the five papyri edited below were acquired by the British Museum from Chauncey Murch on 8 December 1906, and were originally intended for publication in P.Lond. VI. Soknopaiou Nesos is the origin of two of the five papyri; the other three come from elsewhere in the Fayum.¹

1. Lease of a date-palm grove

P.Lond. inv. 1602a

8 (w) × 12.8 (h) cm

91

The papyrus preserves the upper part of an offer to lease one and a half aruras of a palm grove at Ibion Eikosipentarouron for four years. Unlike many other documents of this kind, the lease does not include the grounds around the trees, which could be treated as arable land. The annual rent is 180 drachmas, two palm trees bearing fruit, and one artaba of dates. The text breaks off where the agricultural tasks incumbent on the lessee were to be described. The regnal date clause that would have concluded the document is lost, but the reference to Trajan’s year 10 in a manner suggesting that the harvest would take place in the following year (see 7 n.) points to spring or summer 91.

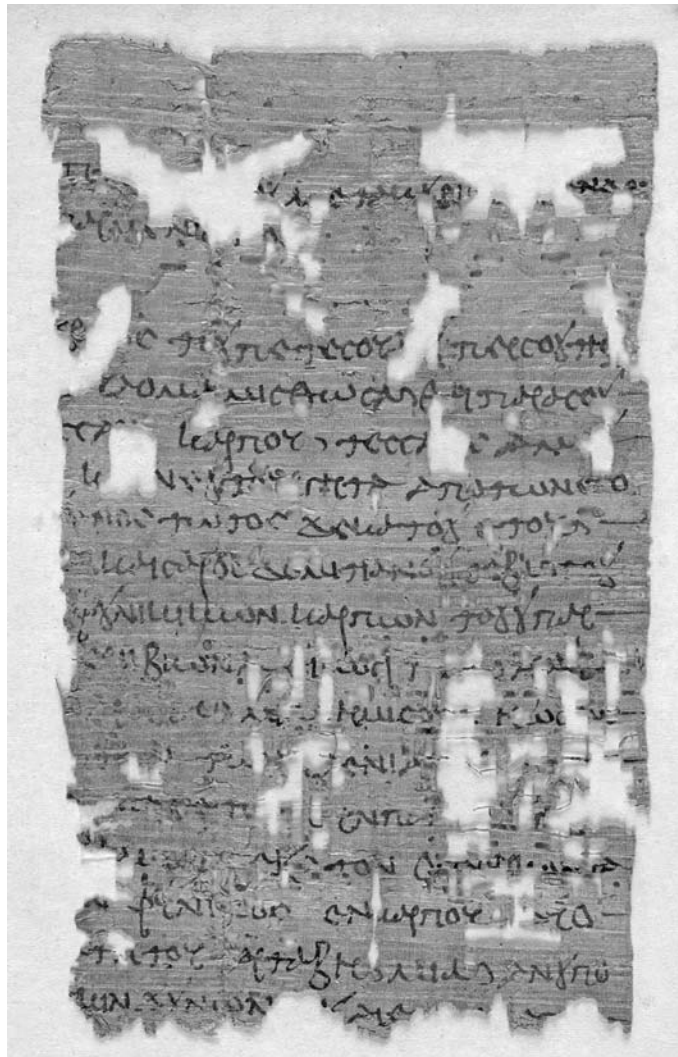
The vast majority of palm-related leases come from the Fayum. A detailed list is offered by N. Hohlwein, *EtPap* 5 (1939) 40–41, updated on several occasions later; I single out S. Omar, P.Soter. p. 39 n. 29, and D. Hagedorn, P.Hamb. IV 269 introd. These lists refer both to leases of palm groves, which are land leases, and to leases of date crops, essentially offers of a price for them. A consolidated list of leases of palm groves, but limited to the Fayum in the first three centuries of Roman rule, is appended to the commentary below.

The text runs along the fibres and the back is blank.

- [c.6] Πτο[λεμαί]ου μετὰ κυρίου [τ]ο[υ] ἀνδρὸς(c)
 [αὐτῆς] Παρμενί[σκου] (vac.)
 (vac.)
 [παρὰ] ρ[]ος τοῦ Πετερούχ[ου] Πέρκου τῆ[ς]
 [ἐπιγονῆς]. β[]ύλομαι[ι] μισθώσασθαι παρὰ σοῦ
 5 [εἰς ἔτη τέ]σσαρα καρποὺς τέσσα[ρα]ς ἀμ[ε]-
 [ταμίθωτα] κ[αὶ ἀ]νευτούργητα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐπι-
 [κειμένων το]ῦ ἐνεστῶτος δεκάτου ἔτους
 [Αὐτοκράτορος] Καίσαρος Δομιτιανοῦ Σεβαστοῦ
 [Γερμανικοῦ] φυνικικῶν καρπῶν τοῦ ὑπάρ-
 10 [χοντός σοι] περὶ Ἰβιώνα Εἰκοσιπενταρ[]
 [φυνικῶνος] ἀρούρης μιᾶς ἡμίσεως ἢ ὥσω
 [ἐὰν ἢ ἐκπι]πτόντων ἐξενίαυτα φόρου
 [τοῦ παντὸς] [] καθ’ ἔτος σὺν παν[τί] λόγῳ
 [ἀργυρίου] δρ[]αχμῶν ἑκατὸν ὀγδοήκοντα
 15 [καὶ ἐξαίρετῶ]ν φύνικος ἐνκάρπου[] δύο
 [καὶ φύνικος] πατητοῦ ἀρτάβης μιᾶς ἀνυπο-
 [λόγων καὶ] ἀκινδύνων καὶ ἐπ[ι]τ[ε]λ[έ]ω

line-fillers at the end of 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 15, 17 1 ανδρ° 61. ἀνευτούργητα 91. φοινικικῶν 111. φοινικῶνος,
 ὥσω 13 l. κατ’ 15, 16 l. φοίνικος 15 l. ἐγκάρπου

¹ I became aware of these papyri from H. I. Bell’s provisional transcripts, kindly shown to me by Cillian O’Hogan in July 2015. I am grateful to Ben Henry for comments on a penultimate draft, to Gabriella Messeri for comments on early drafts of texts 2–5, and to Federica Micucci for research assistance with text 1. The images are reproduced by permission of the British Library Board.



P.Lond. inv. 1602a – © The British Library Board

‘To ... daughter of Ptolemaios with her husband Parmeniskos as her guardian, from ... son of Petesouchos, Persian of the descent. I wish to lease from you for four years, four crops, you having no power to sublet it or to cultivate it yourself, (reckoned) from the hanging date-palm fruits of the current tenth year of Imperator Caesar Domitianus Augustus Germanicus, one and a half aruras or as many as they are of a palm grove that belongs to you around Ibion Eikosi-pentarouron(?), the fruits falling in the following year, at a total annual rent of one hundred and eighty silver drachmas and a special payment of two fruit-bearing date-palms and one artaba of *patetoi* (= juicy?) dates subject to no deduction or risk; and I shall carry out ...’

- 1–2 The description of the lessor is followed by a blank space, with the name of the lessee given in a separate line. There is no reference to the origin of any of the contracting parties, and the lessee is a ‘Persian of the descent’. These features are common in Arsinoite leases of this period; cf. P.Soter. 4 (87), 3 (89/90), P.Prag. I 38 (96), P.Mich. IX 561 (102), P.Heid. IV 329 (105/6?), etc.
- 1 Πτο[λεμαί]ου, read by Bell, is plausible but not certain.
- 3] , ρ[] ος. Bell read Ἡρ[ων]ος, but the space seems too narrow. It is also possible that up to two letters were lost in the initial lacuna.

- 5 [εἰς ἔτη τέσσαρα καρποὺς τέσσα[ρα]c. Other four-year leases that involve palm trees are P.Corn. 10 (119), P.Stras. VI 571 (175), and P.Corn. 11 (204/5 or 233/4), all three from Philadelphia. Leases of longer duration are also known: five years in P.Oxf. 13 (154/5), six in P.Soter. 4, seven in P.Stras. IV 267.
- 5–6 ἀμ[ε]ταμίεωτα κ[αὶ] ἀνεντορύγητα. Cf. P.Soter 3.38f. n.; M. Hombert in J. Bingen et al. (edd.) *Le monde grec ... Hommages à Claire Préaux* (1975) 607f. (26/29 n.). As F. Micucci points out to me, this clause is only attested in Arsinoite land leases.
- 7 τοῖς ἐνεστώτος δεκάτου ἔτους. ἐξενίαυτα (l. 12) refers to the ripened fruits to be harvested ‘in the following year’ (probably in October). From this we may infer that the lease was made before the end of Year 10 Domitian (29 August 91), probably in the summer or late spring. When the name of the month is extant and the fruits are described as still on the trees, leases of palm groves or crops date from between late May and September; cf. e.g. P.Corn. 10 (119), BGU II 603 (168), P.Mich. XII 631 (185), SPP XX 21 (215).
- 10 Εἰκοσιπενταρ Εἰκοσιπενταρούρων is expected, but I cannot match the traces at the end of the line with any letters; it is also possible that there is a correction. The village of Ibion Eikosipentarouron (TM GeoID 885) was located in the division of Polemon, in the southwest of the Arsinoite nome, near Kerkeosiris. The presence of a palm grove in the village is also attested in P.Mil.Vogl. IV 209.iii.7 (108).
- 11 [φοινικῶνος] ἀρούρης μιᾶς ἡμίους. Unless we emend ἀρούρης to ἄρουραν, μιθώσασθαι will remain without an object. Cf. P.Heid. IV 329.9–12 φοινικῶνος ἄρουραν | μίαν ἢ ὅσων ἐὰν ᾖ εἰς ἔτη δύο | καρποὺς δύο ἀπὸ τῶν τοῦ ἰσιόντος δεκάτου (ἔτους) | ἐκπιπτόντων ἐξενίαυτα κ[αρπ]ῶν. ὥω . . Not ὥσων. The traces suggest either ἐ[άν] or a line-filler.
- 12 ἐκπιπτόντων suits the traces and the space, but its position is somewhat anomalous, too far from τῶν ἐπ[ικ]ειμένων . . . φυνικικῶν καρπῶν, to which it corresponds. For the construction cf. P.Heid. IV 329.11–12 (quoted above); P.Soter. 4.8–11 ἀπὸ τῶν τοῦ ἐνεστώτος ἐβδόμου (ἔτους) . . . ἐκομένων, ἐκπιπτόντων δὲ . [.] . [.] . ἐξενίαυτα καρπῶν; P.Aberd. 57.15–16 (with BL V 1).
- 12–13 φόρου | [τοῦ παντός]c [] καθ’ ἔτος cὺν παν[τί] λόγῳ. (φόρου is essentially a guess.) Cf. P.Heid. IV 329.14–15 φόρου τοῦ παντός | κατ’ [ἔ]τος; BGU II 393.8–9 (Ars.; 167) ἐνοικίου τοῦ παντός κατ’ ἔτος cὺν παντί | λόγῳ; P.Aberd. 57.15–16. A similar construction occurs in P.Laur. III 72.10 (118–38)]ων ἐξενίαυτα κατ’ ἔτος φόρου τοῦ παντός; ἐκπιπτόντων would suit the context of this lease, which concerns an olive grove, palm-trees, and other plants.
- 14 δρ[α]χμῶν ἑκατὸν ὀγδοήκοντα. This is the highest rent attested in a lease of this kind; it corresponds to 120 dr./ar. Only P.Stras. VI 571 (175) comes close, with a rent of 1000 drachmas for 9 aruras, which however will also be sown with other crops.
- 15–16 For the extras described here, cf. e.g. SB XVIII 13850.10–13 (141?) ἐξαιρέτων ἐπὶ τὴν [τετραετίαν] | κατ’ ἔτος φοίνικος ξηροῦ πατητοῦ ἀ[ρτάβ] . . | κ(αὶ) ἐπὶ τὴν ὅλην τετραετίαν φοίν[ε]ικ[α]c . . | ἐνκάρπους δύο ἐπ’ ἐγλογῇ.
- 15 φύνικος ἐνκάρπου [] δύο. δύο implies ἐνκάρπου[c]; cf. SB XVIII 13850.13. φύνικος would then need to be corrected to φοίνικας, but perhaps no letter was lost in the break after ἐνκάρπου, and the scribe began to write as if there were only one date-palm required (I owe the suggestion to Ben Henry); cf. P.Flor. III 369.12–13 (Herm.; 149 or 159) φοίνικος ξηροῦ πατητοῦ ἀρτάβας δύο καὶ φοίνικος κατ’ ἔτος ἐνκάρπου ἐπ’ ἐκλογῇ ἐνός (the grammar is at fault, under the influence of the earlier genitives; J. Kloppenborg, *Tenants in the Vineyard* (2006) 514, mistranslates ‘one choice cluster of fresh dates’). P.Soter. 4.20–21, φοινίκων ἐνκάρπων | ἐπ’ ἐγλογῇ τεccάρων, also shows that the reference is to a number of trees.
- 16 [καὶ φύνικος π]ατητοῦ. It is uncertain whether καὶ was written, but there is clearly no room for ξηροῦ in the lacuna. On the term, see G. M. Parássoglou, *EEThess* 15 (1976) 250; P. Mayerson, *ZPE* 136 (2001) 225–8.
- 17 ἐπ[ι]τ[ε]λ[ε]ῖ[ω] was followed by the agricultural tasks (ἔργα) that the lessee promised to carry out.

Appendix: Leases of date-palm groves in Roman Fayum²

<i>text</i>	<i>location of lease</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>object</i>	<i>duration</i>	<i>rent</i>
P.Mich. II 128. iii.15 .18 .22	Tebtunis	46	2 ar. φοινικῶν φοινικῶν ? ar. φοινικῶν	? ? ?	210 dr. 440 dr. 285 dr.
P.Mich. V 240.i.15 .35 .38	Tebtunis	46	φοινικῶν 2 ar. φοινικῶν φοινικῶν	? ? ?	? ³ 225 dr. ⁴ 440 dr. ⁵
P.Soter. 4	Theadelphia	87	1.5 ar. φοινικῶν + ἔδαφος	6 years	50 dr. + extras
P.Lond.inv. 1602a	Ibion Eikosi-pentarouron	91	1.5 ar. φοινικῶν	4 years	180 dr. + extras
P.Heid. IV 329	Theadelphia	105/6?	1 ar. φοινικῶν + ἔδαφος	2 years	land: 52 dr. + extras crop: 24 dr. + extras
BGU XV 2484	Arsinoite	117–161	palm grove + arable land	1 year ⁶	taxes paid in lieu of rent
P.Corn. 10	Philadelphia	23.viii.119	1.5 ar. arable land with palm trees	4 years	120 dr. (for both land and palm trees)
P.Stras. IV 267	Soknopaiou Nesos	126–128	7.875 ar. φοινικῶν	7 years	80 dr. (+ προσδια- γραφόμενα)
P.Mich. IX 564	Karanis	29.xi.150	1 ar. φοινικῶν	3 years	taxes paid in lieu of rent
P.Oxf. 13	Boubastos	154/5	4(?) ar. φοινικῶν ὑποσπειρόμενος + 1.33 ar. vineland	5 years	year 1: 145 dr. + extras years 2–5: 200 dr. + extras
P.Phil. 13	Philadelphia?	12.vii.150	0.95 ar. φοινικῶν	1 year	280 dr. + extras
SB I 5670	Boukolon	mid II c. ⁷	φοινικῶν ὑπο- σπειρόμενος ⁸	1 year	300 dr.
P.CtYBR inv. 962 ⁹	Thphois	II c.	φοινικῶν	1 year	?
P.Stras. VI 571	Philadelphia	29.ix.175	9 ar. φοινικῶν ὑποσπειρόμενος	4 years	1000 dr. + extras

² I have not included CPR I 47 (ii), which may or may not belong; P.Laur. III 72 (118–38), a lease of land with olive and date-palm trees and other plants; P.Oslo II 36 (Thead.; 146), a contract to build a wall around a leased palm-grove of 0.875 ar. (*pace* Hohlwein, it is not of annual duration). Leases of date crops: P.Duk. inv. 85, ed. R. Mairs, *ZPE* 172 (2010) 183ff. (Bakch.; 14), P.Mich. XII 630 (Tebt.; 26.ix.38), BGU II 591 (Ars.; 56/7), P.Hamb. I 5 (Philad.; 89), P.Stras. IX 812.15–20 (Ars.; 128/9 or 149/50), SB XVI 13008 = 13009 (Thead.; 144), P.Phil. 12 = PSI I 33 (Philad.; 150/51 or 173/4), BGU III 862 (Ars.; 154/5?) (said to be a lease of ‘palmeraie’ by Hohlwein, p. 40), BGU II 604 (Philad.; 167/8), 603 (Philad.; 28.viii.168), P.Mich. XII 631 (Ars.; 13.viii.185), P. Aberd. 57 (Sokn. Nes.; ii).

³ The note ad loc. associates this entry with P.Mich. II 128.ii.21, which refers to a rent of 360 dr.

⁴ Duplicate of P.Mich. II 128.iii.15, but the amount is slightly different.

⁵ Duplicate of P.Mich. II 128.iii.18; the amount is restored.

⁶ ‘The size of the grove and the period of time covered by the lease are not presented in the extant portions of the lease.’ (BGU XV 2484 introd.) The editor argues that ‘the lease was to cover only a portion of a year or of a two year period’, but there is nothing to indicate that this would have been longer than twelve months.

⁷ The date is given as ‘167/192’ by Hohlwein, retained in HGV, but the text dates from a year 10, which would be of Antoninus Pius or Marcus Aurelius.

⁸ Line 7, . . .]ίνου [.] . οι () ὑ[π]οσπειρο ().

⁹ Ed. A. Benaissa, *ZPE* 172 (2010) 178f.

SB XVIII 13582	Theadelphia	19.ix.184	1 ar. with palm and fig trees	1 year	? art. dates
P.Corn. 11	Philadelphia	204/5 or 233/4	5 ar. φοινικῶν ὑποσπειρόμενος + 1 ar. other land	4 years	year 1: 100 dr. years 2–4: 200 dr.
P.Ryl. II 172	Hephaistias	14.ix.208	φοινικῶν	unspecified	1000 dr. + extras
P.Stras. V 336	Hephaistias	212 ¹⁰	φοινικῶν	1 year	1200 dr. + extras
SPP XX 21	Kerkessoucha	29.v.215	6 ar. φοινικῶν ὑποσπειρόμενος	1 year	land: 10+ art. wheat crop: 60 dr. + extras
SB IV 7441	?	230(?)	φοινικῶν	1 year	160 dr. + extras
SPP XX 70	Dionysias	1.iii.261	φοινικῶν + 7(+) ar. of ἐλαιῶν	3 years	100 dr. + extras (for the φοινικῶν)
P.Hamb. IV 269	Pyrria	late III c.	7 ar. [φοινικῶνος]	2 years	35 art. wheat

2. Notification of death

P.Lond. inv. 1594

8 (w) × 22.5 (h) cm

11 December 117

The document is virtually complete but abrasion and some small holes obscure the reading at some important points. A man possibly from Dionysias (see 5 n.) writes to the royal scribe to notify him of the death of his sister's husband, who was registered in Philoteris. Several death declarations are submitted by widows, sometimes with their brothers as guardians (C.Pap.Gr. II 7 and 24), but this is the first time we find a widow's brother in this role. The term used to describe the deceased person's relation to the poll-tax, .[.]. εἰρημένος τῆς λαογραφίας (11–12), is unparalleled and not easy to restore; all we can tell is that he was over-age and presumably no longer liable to the poll-tax, which is normally expressed by the participle ἀπολελυμένος, 'released'. Another point of interest, though likewise affected by physical damage, is the attestation of a new royal scribe of the division of Themistos, Theon alias -on.

For a bibliographical update on texts of this type, see P.Monts.Roca IV 68 introd.; add PSI Com. 6.13, SB XXVIII 16834–5, and perhaps XXVI 16494.

The text is written along the fibres and the back is blank.

Θέωνι τ[ῷ κ(αὶ)] .[.] .ωνι βασι(λικῷ)
 [γρ(αμματεῖ) Ἀρσι(νοῖτου) Θεμ(ίτου) μ]ε[ρ]ί(δο)
 π[α]ρὰ Ἀπολλῶτος τοῦ
 Ε[.] .[.] .[ο]ς τῶν ἀπὸ
 5 κώμης Διογ[υ]σι[άδ]ο(ς).
 ὁ τῆς ἀδελφῆς μου
 .[.] .[.] .[.] ἄνῃρ
 Πρωτῶς Ἡρωνος
 τοῦ Πρωτῶ μητρὸς
 10 [.] .[.] .[.] ὑπερετῆς
 .[.] .[.] εἰρημένος
 τῆς λαογραφίας ἐπὶ
 κώμης Φιλωτερίδο(ς)
 τῆς [α]ντῆς μερίδος

¹⁰ Dated to year 21 Caracalla (= 212/13), with the crop said to 'fall' in year 21, which cannot be later than autumn 212.

- 15 ἐτε[λε]ύτηεν τῶι
 Χοιακ μηνὶ τοῦ ἐνεστῶ(τος)
 δευτέρου (ἔτους) Αὐτοκράτορος
 Καίσαρος Τραϊανοῦ Ἀδρι[ανο]ῦ
 Σεβαστοῦ. διὸ ἀξιῶι ταγήν(αι)
 20 αὐτὸ[ν] ἐν τῇ τῶ(ν) τετελ(ευτηκότων) τάξει.

(m.²) τῶι κωμογρ(αμματεῖ)· εἰ ταῖς ἀληθ(εῖαις) οὕτως
 ἔχει, ἐπιτέλ(ει) ὡς καθήκ[ε]ι.
 (ἔτους) β Ἀδριανοῦ τοῦ κυρίου, Χοιακ ιε.
] . () . . .

1 βασι 10 ὑπερετής 13 φιλωτερίδ^ο 16, 23 l. Χοιακ 16 ενεστ^ο 17, 23 L 18 τραϊανου
 19 l. ἀξιῶ 20 τ^οτετελ^λ 21 κωμογρς, αλη^ο 22 επιτελ^λ 24] . ς

‘To Theon alias -on, royal scribe of the Arsinoite (nome), division of Themistos, from Apollos son of E-, one of those from the village of Dionysias. The husband of my sister ..., Protas son of Heron grandson of Protas, mother ..., who, being over-age (and?) removed (?) from the poll-tax in the village of Philoteris of the same division, died in the month of Choiak of the present 2nd year of Emperor Caesar Traianus Hadrianus Augustus. Therefore I request that he may be listed in the list of the deceased.’

(2nd hand) ‘To the village scribe: if it is really so, do what is appropriate.

‘Year 2 of Hadrianus the lord, Choiak 15. ...’

- 1 . [] . ωνι. The letter before ω is epsilon or iota, less likely sigma. I have tried to read Εἰ[ς]ῶνι or Ἰῶνι but had no success. No royal scribe of the division of Themistos has been attested between 109 and 128, other than someone whose name in the dative ends in] . νι, in office sometime under Hadrian (SB XIV 12117.3); see Th. Kruse, *Der Königliche Schreiber und die Gauverwaltung* (2002) ii 981.
- 2 There are scattered specks of ink where the text is shown as if totally lost.
 Θεμ(ίctου) μ]ε[ρ]ί[δ]oc is restored on the basis of the reference to Philoteris as ‘of the same division’ in 14.
- 5 Διον[υσ]ιδ[ο]c] is a plausible suggestion by G. Messeri, though the reading is hard to ascertain. Dionysias (TM GeoID 565) was located not far from Philoteris, in the northwestern edge of the Fayum.
- 10 ὑπερετής. On other attestations of the term, see C.Pap.Gr. II.1 25.7 n. On exemption from taxes and liturgies on grounds of age, see P.Oxy. LXXXII 5319.7–8 n.
- 11 . [] .]εἰρημένoc. The expression is new but presumably synonymous to ἀπολελυμένoc, which occurs in texts of this kind in connection with over-age persons; see e.g. C.Pap.Gr. II.1 25.7–8 (Ars.; 111) ὑπερετής ἀπολελυμένoc τῆς λαογραφίας. If εἰ is correctly read, this can hardly be a compound of λέγω. εἰ may stand for η: εἰ is often used for the reduplication of αἰρέομαι, especially ‘in the early Roman period and in the Fayum’ (Gignac, *Grammar* ii 238). The word could be [ἀφ]εἰρημένoc. A potential parallel in a contemporary text comes from P.Oxy. III 500.11 (130) (πρότερον) [Ἰ]ουδαίω[ν ἀφ]εἰρη[μ]ένων (text after H. Harrauer, *Handbuch der griechischen Paläographie: Textband* (2010) 303, essentially due to A. Świderek, *JJP* 16–17 (1971) 47 n. 6, 60 n. 23; see further J. Mélèze Modrzejewski, *Un peuple de philosophes. Aux origines de la condition juive* (2011) 293–303); but there the term is used in the context of confiscations, which is not what we have here. In any case, if our papyrus had [ἀφ]εἰρημένoc, the sense would be ‘removed from the poll-tax’, but the construction of the verb with the genitive is very thinly attested; see *DGE* s.v. ἀφαιρέω II.1. It might have been preceded by κᾶ[ι], but I cannot match the traces at the beginning of the line with any letters.
- 13 Φιλωτερίδο(c). Philoteris (TM GeoID 1780) belonged to the division of Themistos.

- 21–2 This is one of the shorter versions of the instructions given to the village scribe; see L. Casarico, *Il controllo della popolazione nell'Egitto romano I: Le denunce di morte* = C.Pap.Gr. II.1 (1985) 20. The closest parallel comes from P.Col. VIII 218.17–18 (Tebt.; 139), where however τῆς ἀληθείας is read.
- 23 The declaration was submitted not more than two weeks after the person's death, which would be remarkable for someone no longer liable to the poll-tax.
- 24 These are the remains of a registration note; see C.Pap.Gr. II.1 9.19 n. (cf. p. 20). The line might have ended γ]ρ(αμματεὺς) ζ[ε]ζη(μείωμαι). It is unclear whether this was written by another hand.

3. Order to divide shore-land

P.Lond. inv. 1578b

22.5 (w) × 9.5 (h) cm

Second/third century

An unnamed authority orders the ἀρχέφοδος and village elders of Soknopaiou Nesos to divide the shore-land 'equally', no doubt for leasing: parcels of shore-land reclaimed from the lake were leased from the state. The division had to involve the priests, but their role is unclear, as is the background to the whole affair.

The format and structure of the text are similar to those of summonses, which are generally thought to emanate from the strategus' office. The strategus was responsible for the leasing of shore-land (the same holds for the royal scribe), and the issue would have fallen under his remit. The unnamed official speaks of an encounter in the village, where he gave instructions in person; such visits to the rural hinterland by the strategus (or the royal scribe) are poorly documented. Was this an extraordinary situation? The official's involvement could have been due to a dispute that was referred to him: SB I 4284 (207) is a petition submitted to the strategus by 'a committee of twenty-five, active as spokesmen for the state farmers of Soknopaiou Nesos',¹¹ who had been prevented from working on shore-land by five other persons. If there were a dispute, did it involve the priests? Was the land to be divided 'equally' between the village authorities and the priests? If so, this might imply that not more than half of the population of the village were members of the priestly class, or that the priests could for some reason¹² claim half of the land available for leasing for themselves regardless of their number.¹³ Or perhaps there was no dispute, and the village authorities had to supervise the division of the land in equal shares jointly with the priests. In that case, the exercise would have defined the acreage of these parcels, but to judge from the extant leases of shore-land and rent accounts, the acreage varied. Another implication of this alternative scenario would be that in this case the state put the priests at the same level as its agents at village level, but there is no other evidence for such a practice.

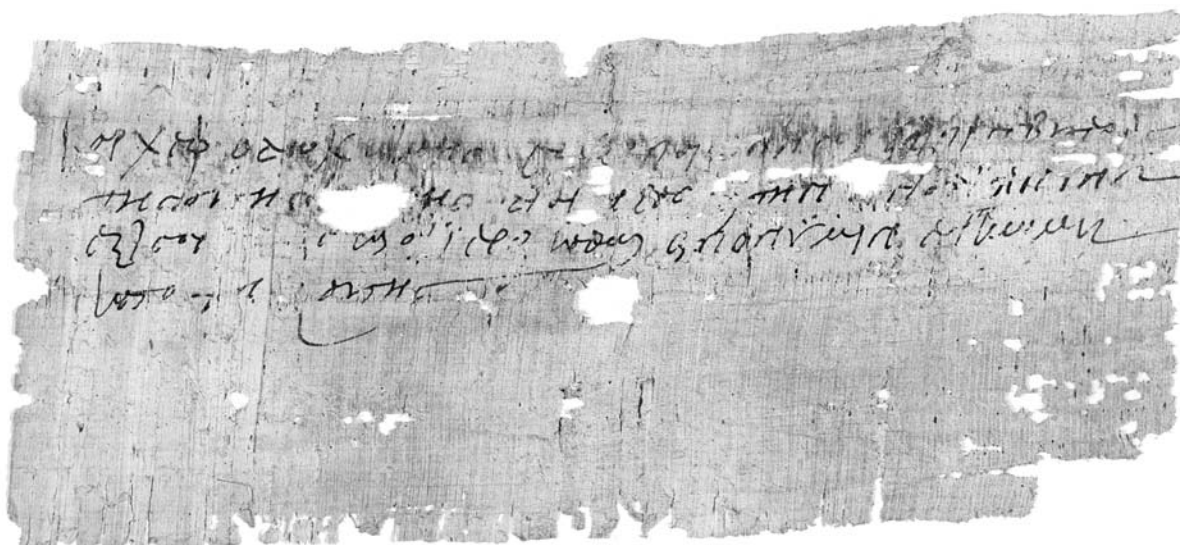
The village scribe is not among the addressees; it is likely that there was no one in office at that moment, and, as often, the village elders exercised his functions. More remarkable is the presence of the ἀρχέφοδος, responsible for public order; it could be that the division of the land required the presence of the security apparatus of the village, or that the ἀρχέφοδος is included because the order concerns all the local agents of the state, the so-called δημόσιοι κόμης. It may also be relevant that a village elder and an ἀρχέφοδος headed the 'committee' from Soknopaiou Nesos that petitioned the strategus in SB I 4284.

The text is written across the fibres, as was common practice for summonses. The back is presumably blank, since the papyrus is mounted on paper.

¹¹ Expression borrowed from N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule* (1983) 181.

¹² Priests petition the prefect in P.Tebt. II 302 = W.Chr. 368 (71/2) concerning their right to cultivate state land that earlier was temple land.

¹³ The prospective lessee is not described as a priest in any known offer to lease shore-land, but this need not be conclusive. Such offers are found in SB VI 8976 (105), BGU II 640 (185), III 831 (201), P.Lond. II 350 = W.Chr. 353 (212), and CPR I 32 (218).



P.Lond. inv. 1578b – © The British Library Board

ἀρχεφόδω κώμης Σοκνοπαίου Νήσου καὶ πρεσβυτέροις
 τῆς αὐτῆς κώμης· διαί[ρ]ήσας[θ]αι τὴν αἰγιαλίτιν γῆν
 ἐξ ἴσου ὑμεῖς καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς καθὼς εἶπον ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ κώμῃ
 κατ' ὄψ[ι]ν [ἐ]ξαυτῆς.

3 ὑμεῖς, ἱερεῖς, ὑμῖν

‘To the *archephodos* of the village of Soknopaiou Nesos and to the elders of the same village. Immediately divide the shore-land equally, you as well as the priests, as I told you in person at the village.’

- 1 ἀρχεφόδω κώμης Σοκνοπαίου Νήσου καὶ πρεσβυτέροις. Cf. SB XVIII 13172.1 (88–96) ὁ στρατηγὸς πρεσβ(υτέροις) καὶ ἀρχεφ(όδω) Χαινῆς (text after D. Hagedorn, *ZPE* 159 (2007) 265); cf. also P.Lond. II 379.1 or P.Petaus 58.8f. The two offices are juxtaposed also in SB I 4284, mentioned above; BGU I 6.5 (157/8) γραφὴ πρεσβ(υτέρων) καὶ ἀρχεφόδων καὶ ἄλλων δημοσίων; sim. P.Oxy. XVII 2121.4 (209/10).
- 2 αἰγιαλίτιν γῆν. On land of this kind, see D. Hobson, *BASP* 21 (1984) 89–109; D. Bonneau, *YCS* 28 (1985) 131–43; J. Rowlandson, *CRIPEL* 25 (2005) 183.
- 3 ἐξ ἴσου. Cf. SB I 4284.16 ἔχ[εσθαι] ἐξ ἴσου [ἡ]μᾶς πάντας τῆς σπορᾶς τῆς ἀποκαλυφείσης γῆς, though there the expression refers to equal opportunities rather than to equal shares.
- 4 [ἐ]ξαυτῆς is to be taken with διαί[ρ]ήσας[θ]αι. The adverb is often written at the end of summonses from the Arsinoite nome; see U. Hagedorn, *BASP* 16 (1979) 63.

4. Acknowledgement of debt of vegetable-seed(?)

P.Lond. inv. 1708b

8.7 (w) × 9.4 (h) cm

23 September 215

The document is complete but abrasion obscures the reading in places. Two men, probably brothers (see 8 n.), receive a quantity of λάχανον at the end of the month of Thoth, which they promise to repay in Payni, eight months later. Loans involving this product are rare; the only parallel I have found is BGU IV 1015 (Herm.; 221/2), which concerns one artaba of λάχανον to be repaid also in Payni. In the Berlin text, the description of λάχανον as καθαρὸν ἄδο(λον) ἄ[β]ολ(ον) κεκ[οκκινευ(μένον)] (12–13) makes it clear that the word was used in the sense of λαχανόσπερμον, ‘vegetable seed’, as in a number of other texts (see below, 12 n.). This may also apply to our text.

The creditors are two village elders (πρεσβύτεροι), two local notables (εὐγχήμενες), and one other described as ‘chief of the thief-catchers’ (unless the last three were all ‘chiefs’). Somewhat reminiscent of this grouping is BGU I 43 (II/III), which refers to an εὐγχήμενος, a πρεσβύτερος, and an ἀρχέφοδος, another police officer; N. Lewis, *BASP* 30 (1993) 112, was surely right to speak of ‘members of a police supervisory board’, as when an ἀρχέφοδος and εὐγχήμενες appear together. What connects them all in this document is a matter of speculation, but it would probably be fair to say that they were a committee representing the administration of the village, which may explain the unusual expression heading the text, ‘agreement of the village of Soknopaiou Nesos’. Whether this had any relation with the (unknown) occupation of the two debtors, we cannot tell. It is also unclear who exactly possessed the product given out on credit.

Most of the persons mentioned in this text are known from the documents of the so-called ‘tax archive’ of Soknopaiou Nesos (TM Arch ID 337). Could this be part of it? At least one other London papyrus (inv. 1590a, ed. *ZPE* 200 (2016) 418) acquired with this one may have belonged.¹⁴

The text is written along the fibres and the back is blank.

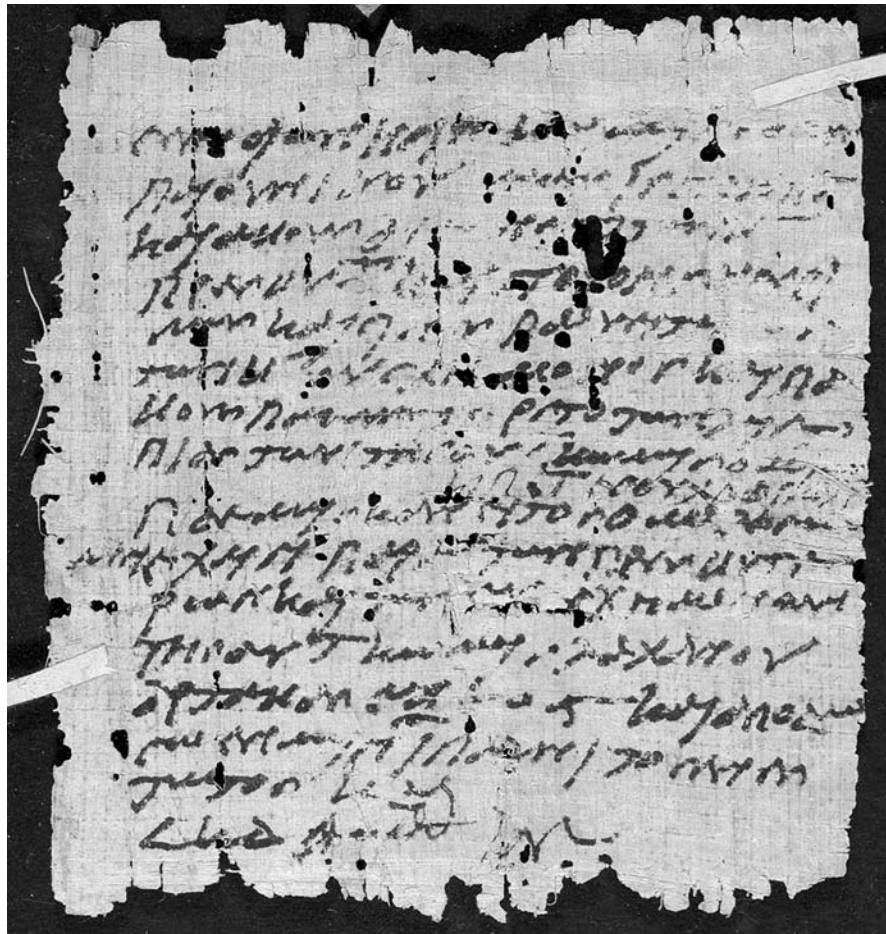
- 5 συγφώνησις κώμης Σοκνο-
 παίου Νήσου. Ἀκᾶς .ις ος
 καὶ Ἀβοῦς Αἰωνέως τῶν β̄
 πρεσβυτ(έρων) καὶ Στοτοήτης Ἐρι-
 5 έως καὶ Σινᾶς Παουειτῆ[τ]ος
 τῶν β̄ εὐγχήμενος καὶ Πα-
 βοῦς Παβοῦτος πρετότων ληστο-
 πιαστῶν τῆς αὐτ(ῆς) κώμης ὁμοίως
 10 Πάμεις Κάνειτος καὶ Πετεςούχος ὁμολογῶ-
 μεν ἔχειν παρὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέ-
 ρων καὶ τῶν εὐχνημόνων
 τῆς αὐτ(ῆς) κώμης λαχάνου
 ἀρτάβας ἕξ, (γίνονται) (ἀρτάβαι) ζ, καὶ ἀποδώ-
 σω ἐν μηνὶ Παυνι τοῦ ἐνεσ-
 15 τῶτος κδ (ἔτους).
 (ἔτους) κδ, Θωθ κε.

1 l. συγφώνησις 4 πρεσβυτ̄ 6 l. εὐχνημόνων 7 l. προεστῶτων or προεστῶτος 8, 12 αυτ̄
 9 l. ὁμολογοῦ- 13 /- 15 ζ 16 L

‘Agreement of the village of Soknopaiou Nesos. (To) Akas son of ... and Abous son of Aionis, the 2 elders, and Stotoetes son of Herieus and Sinas son of Paoueites, the 2 notables, and Pabous son of Pabous, chief(s) of the thief-catchers of the same village, likewise, (from) Paemis son of Kanis and Petesouchos ... We acknowledge that we have received from the elders and notables of the same village six artabas of vegetable-seed(?), total 6 art., and I shall repay (them) in the month of Payni of the current 24th year. Year 24, Thoth 25.’

- 1 συγφώνησις. It may be easier to read σε, but this would be difficult to reconcile with what follows. The word has occurred only in O.Did. 390.26f. (early II?) συνφώνησιν.
 2–7 The names are given in the nominative instead of the expected dative; for other erratic instances of the use of cases cf. 3 (with n.) and 6. I have indicated what was probably the intended structure in the translation, but have decided not to burden the apparatus with the regularized forms.
 2 Ἀκᾶς .ις ος. The name Ἀκᾶς is attested in Soknopaiou Nesos but apparently not this person. I have not managed to match what I can read of the name of his father with one recorded in this village.
 3 Ἀβοῦς Αἰωνέως is attested as πράκτωρ ἀργυρικῶν in 225 (BGU I 42.4).

¹⁴ G. Messeri observes that the hand is very similar to, if not identical with, that of P.Louvre I 46 (217–20), one of the archive texts.



P.Lond. inv. 1708b – © The British Library Board

- τῶν β̄. Cf. 6. The genitive does not correspond to what is described, given in the nominative.
- 4–5 Στοτοήτης Ἐπιλέως. Cf. SPP XXII 169.18 (216), 174.26 (218), BGU I 35.3–4 (222); not all of them necessarily refer to the same man. In D. Hobson Samuel's list of 'Taxpayers at Socnopaïou Nesos, A.D. 207–209', there are two persons of this name, nos. 99–100; see *BASP* 14 (1977) 202f.
- 5 Τινῶς Παουειτῆ[τ]ος = *BASP* 14 (1977) 200f., no. 98. On this well-known person, see P.Louvre I 46.5 n., and P.Eirene III 3.3 n. He was a πράκτωρ ἀργυρικῶν in years 20 and 25.
- 6 εὐσχήμενος. On this term, see generally N. Lewis, *BASP* 30 (1993) 105–13. In Soknopaïou Nesos it has occurred in PSI VIII 927.3 (after 186) εὐσχήμενες [ο]ύων, and in BGU II 381.2ff. (ii/iii), εὐσχήμενες παραλήμπται | συναγοραστικῆς κριθῆς | Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος, who interact with πρεσβύτεροι. εὐσχήμενες and πρεσβύτεροι appear together also in P.Stras. IV 245 (215–16), in another liturgical context; cf. also O.Leid. 328 (ii).
- 6–7 Παλβοῦς Παβοῦτος is probably identical with no. 53 in *BASP* 14 (1977) 194f. A Pabous son of Pabous is nominated as ἀρχέφοδος in P.Ryl. II 89.10 (191/2), and as πράκτωρ ἀργυρικῶν in P.Gen. I² 37.17 (186).
- 7–8 πρετότων λητοπιαστών. Does πρετότων (l. προετώτων) refer to the two εὐσχήμενες and Pabous, or should it be corrected to προετώτος? Or do we have to articulate πρετο (l. προετώς) τῶν λ.? The number is wrong in 6, singular for plural. A 'chief thief-catcher' occurs in P.Oslo II 20.1 (iii) προετώτος λητοπιαστικῆς κόμης Καρανίδος, also in a peculiar spelling. A plurality of 'chiefs' and thief-catchers are mentioned as two distinct groups in SB XX 15095.8–9 (Herm.; iv) τ[ο]ύς προε[τ]ώ[τας καὶ] | [τοὺς] λητοπιαστάς (the restored καὶ τοὺς suit the space). Of the five λητοπιασταί of Soknopaïou Nesos mentioned in BGU I 325 = W.Chr. 472.7–9 (iii), the first is described as προϋ . . . (); I have tried to read προιτωῶς on the basis of the online image, but it is very difficult.

The office of *λητοποιαστής* is first attested as liturgical in 265, with a *πόρος* of 2,000 drachmas; see N. Lewis, *The Compulsory Public Services of Roman Egypt*² (1997) 36. Such a *πόρος* suggests a person of some means, as presumably the *εὐχρήμονες* were.

- 8 ὁμοίως may imply that Pabous was also an *εὐχρήμων*; the creditors are said in 10–11 to be ‘elders and notables’, with no separate mention of the chief(s) of thief-catchers. It is less likely that ὁμοίως should be taken with τῆς αὐτ(ῆς) κώμης.
- 9 Πάμευις Κάνειτος is listed as no. 59 in *BASP* 14 (1977) 194f.
 ‘καὶ Πετεκοῦχος . . .’. The traces at the end of the line are not compatible with ἀδεῖλ(φός) (Paemis and Petesouchos were brothers; see *CPR* XV 37.20 n.).
- 9–10 The addition of the second debtor in 9 led to the added *μεν* in the left-hand margin of the next line, to go with the preceding ὁμολογῶ (l. ὁμολογοῦμεν). ἀποδώσω in 13–14 was left unchanged.
- 12 λαχάνου. See above, introd. In a few texts *λάχανον* was used in the sense of *λαχανόπερμον*, ‘vegetable seed’; see H. C. Youtie, *ZPE* 29 (1978) 287 (the first text mentioned there is now *P.Col.* VII 183), and *LSJ* Rev. Suppl. s.v.
- 14–15 Payni, year 24 = 25 May – 24 June 216.

5. Tax receipt

P.Lond. inv. 1712a + 1573b¹⁵

14 (w) × 9.5 (h) cm

6 September – n November 237

Two contiguous fragments kept under different inventory numbers preserve the upper part of the document except for some loss on the right. The text is a cumulative receipt for money paid by the heirs of a veteran to the *πράκτορες ἀργυρικῶν* of ‘Bakchias Hephaistias’ in the first three or four months of the Egyptian year. Before the papyrus breaks off, five payments are recorded, all made in tetradrachms, totalling 44 drachmas (28 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 4). The name of the charge is not given, but the sums suggest it was the *κυντάξιμον*, for which a rate of 60 drachmas is attested in the Fayum in the early third century; see J. Shelton, *ZPE* 25 (1977) 165f. The latest receipt for *κυντάξιμον* published to date is *P.Münch.* III 111 (222–35), also from Bakchias; our papyrus is slightly later. But it is also possible that the payments concerned a different tax.

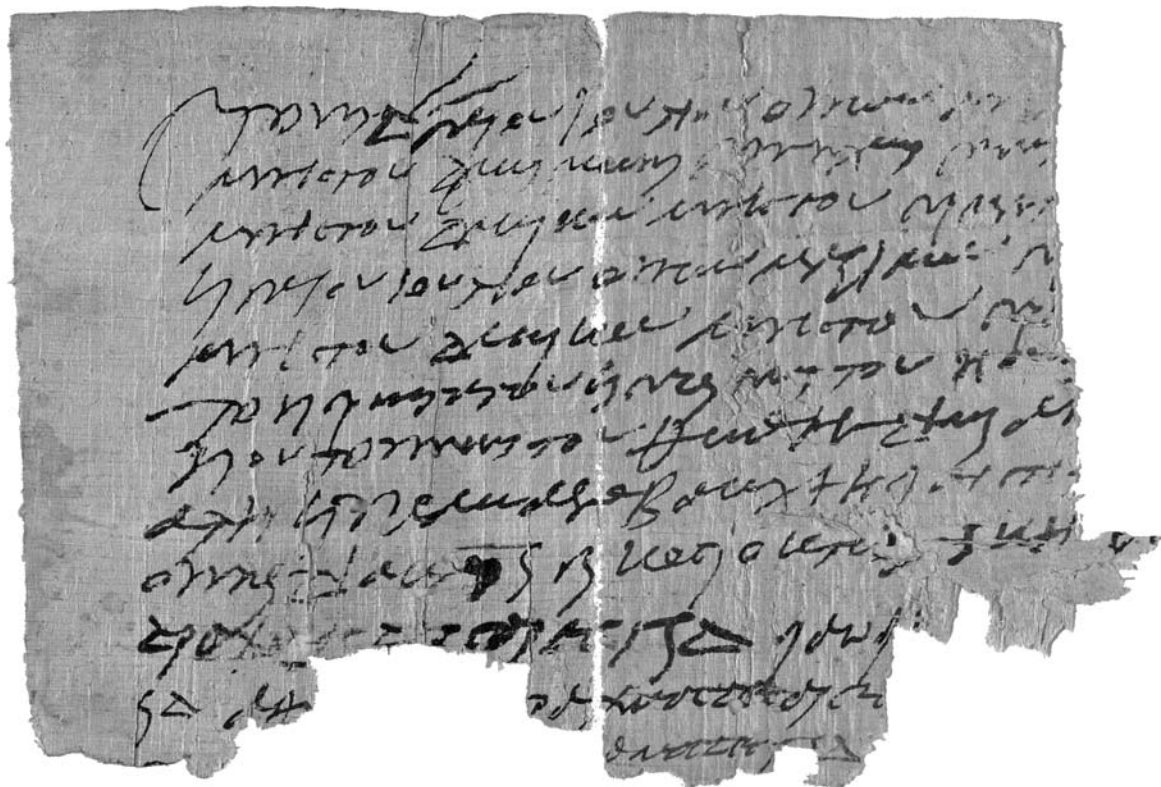
This is one of the latest dated documents from Bakchias, if not the latest; previously this position was held by *W.Chr.* 49 (6.viii.237). Only *SB* XXVI 16540, which refers to years 5 and 6 of an unnamed emperor could postdate it: it was assigned to the second half of the third or the early fourth century, but the single year figures rule out a date in the Tetrarchic period; it cannot be later than the reign of Probus (years 5 and 6 = 279/80 and 280/81).

The text is written along the fibres and the back is blank.

- ἔτους δ’ Γαίου Ἰουλίου Οὐήρου Μαξι[μίνου]
 {Μεγίστου} [Δ]Εὐσεβοῦς Εὐτυχοῦς Σεβασ[τοῦ Γερμανικοῦ]
 Μεγίστου Δακικοῦ Μεγίστου Καρματι[κοῦ Μεγίστου]
 καὶ Γαίου Ἰουλίου Οὐήρου Μαξίμου Γερ[μανικοῦ]
 5 Μεγίστου Δακικοῦ Μεγίστου Καρμ[ατικοῦ Μεγίστου]
 τοῦ ἱερωτάτου Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ υἱοῦ τ[οῦ Σεβαστοῦ]
 {υἱοῦ τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ}, Θωθ η̄. διέγρ(αψεν) Αὐ[ρη(λίω) c. 8]
 αλη καὶ με(τόχοις) πράκ(τορσιν) ἀργ(υρικῶν) Βακχι(άδος) Ἡφαιστιά[δος c. 8]
 οὔτερ(ανός) διὰ κλη(ρονόμων) (δραχμὰς) εἴκοσι ὀκτώ, (γίνονται) (δραχμαὶ) κη. (m.²) ΘϞ[θ. c.]
 10 δραχμὰς δέσσαρες, (γίν.) (δρ.) δ. (m.³) Φαωφι [c.] δραχμὰς δέσσαρες, (γίν.)
 (δρ.) δ’ ΑθϞ[ρ. c.] δ]ραχμὰς δέσσαρες, [(γίν.) (δρ.) δ., Χοιακ(?) c.]
 . [δρ]αμὰς δέ(ς)αρες, (γίν.) (δρ.) δ [

7 διεγρς 8 καίπρακαρῶβακχι 9 ουετρς, κλη ς 9, 10, 12 / ς 12 l. δραχμὰς 10, 11, 12 l. τέσσαρας

¹⁵ The two fragments were transcribed separately by Bell, who did not make the connection.



P.Lond. inv. 1712a + 1573b – © The British Library Board

‘Year 4 of Gaius Iulius Verus Maximinus {Maximus} Pius Felix Augustus Germanicus Maximus Dacicus Maximus Sarmaticus Maximus and Gaius Iulius Verus Maximus Germanicus Maximus Dacicus Maximus Sarmaticus Maximus, the most sacred Caesar, Augustus, son of the Augustus, {son of the Augustus} Thoth 8. (Name,) veteran, through (his?) heirs paid to Aurelius -ales and associates, collectors of money taxes at Bakchias Hephaistias, twenty-eight drachmas, total 28 dr.’ (2nd hand) ‘Thoth *n*, four drachmas, total 4 dr.’ (3rd hand) ‘Phaophi *n*, four drachmas, total 4 dr. Hathyr *n*, four drachmas, total 4 dr. ... , four drachmas, total 4 dr. ...’

- 2 {Μεγίctου} [Δ]. The scribe intended to write Μεγίctου Δακτικοῦ, which would have been out of place. The mistake was corrected only in part.
- 5 The restored Μεγίctου looks too long for the break, but its omission would be unwarranted.
- 7 διέγρ(α)ψεν. I have restored the grammatical form of the verb, in the construction called ‘Formulaire II’ by Nachtergaele (below, 8. n.), p. 303. Nachtergaele argues that when scribes wrote out the verb in full, they normally used the passive form (διεγράφη), which should not be corrected to διέγραψε. This use is not limited to Bakchias; see O.Tebt.Pad. 13.2 n. The passive occurs also in the Heracleopolite P.Vind.Sal. 14.5 and 11, but there the name of the taxpayer is introduced by ὑπό.
- 8 Βακχι(ά)δος Ἡφαιστι(ά)δος. Cf. BGU XIII 2297.6–7 (168) Ἰεμούθη καὶ μετό[χ(ο)ις] πράκτ(ο)ρσι ἀργ(υ)ρικῶν] | Βακχι(ά)δος Ἡφαιστι(ά)δος, but the name of the office is restored. See generally G. Nachtergaele, La fusion de Bakchias et d’Hèphaistias d’après les reçus de taxes de l’époque romaine, in: *Studium atque urbanitas. Miscellanea in onore di Sergio Daris* = *PLup* 9 (2000) 297–310.
- 9 οὐτερ(ανό)ς. I owe the reading to G. Messeri. No identification of this veteran is possible.
διὰ κλη(ρονόμ)ων. If the tax was the συντάξιμον, death did not end liability to it: as was first suggested by Wilcken, *Grundzüge* 196, the full amount of poll-tax was due if someone died after Mecheir, the sixth month of the year, and half of it if this happened in the first half of the year (cf. Casarico, *Le denunce di morte* 17).

(δραχμάς) εἴκοσι ὀκτώ. Among Arsinoite texts of this date, we find this sum in O.Oslo 8 (Tebtynis; 210), paid for λαογραφία, and P.Vind.Sal. 13 (Hephaistias; 219), as the annual quota for a τέλος paid by a τέκτων; cf. also the tax rates of 28 drachmas in O.Mich. I 8 (II/III).

- 10 δέσσαρες, l. τέσσαρα. The third hand adopts the same spelling with the additional simplification of sigma in lines 11 and 12 (hence the restored δέσσαρες in l. 10).
- 11 The line would be too short unless there was a date at the end, for a new entry. If so, this would be a date in Choiak rather than another in Hathyr.
- 12 Possibly ὁ[μοίως ἄλλα δρ]αμάς, as Ben Henry suggests.
 δρ]αμάς, l. δραχμάς. There are several examples of δρσμ- for δραχμ-, all of them from the Fayum.
 δέσ(αρες). Cf. P.Oxy. X 1297.6 (iv) σφυρίδια τέσ. But it is also possible that the word was abbreviated.

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