

The Beginnings of the Roman Provincial Census: A New Declaration from 3 BCE

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THE PROVINCIAL CENSUS was one of the most durable and pervasive institutions of the Roman Empire.¹ Although organized at the provincial level and marked by local variation,² the institution was an emblem of imperial rule. Luke's famous narrative of the nativity census, while problematic in detail, is important evidence for the provincial im-

¹ See generally L. Neesen, *Untersuchungen zu den direkten Staatsabgaben der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Bonn 1980), especially 33–44; P. Brunt's review-essay on this work, "Revenues of Rome," *JRS* 71 (1981) 161–172 (repr. *Roman Imperial Themes* [Oxford 1990] 324–346); C. Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor 1991) 133–139; and E. Lo Cascio, "Census provinciale, imposizione fiscale e amministrazioni cittadine nel Principato," in W. Eck (ed.), *Lokale Autonomie und römische Ordnungsmacht in den kaiserzeitlichen Provinzen* (Munich 1999) 197–212. For the census in Roman Egypt see R. S. Bagnall and B. W. Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt*² (Cambridge 2006), and A. Jördens, *Statthalterliche Verwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit: Studien zum praefectus Aegypti* (Stuttgart 2009) 62–94. The starting point for study of the Ptolemaic census is W. Clarysse and D. J. Thompson, *Counting the People in Hellenistic Egypt I–II* (Cambridge 2006).

² Some provincial censuses focused on registering inhabitants, as evidenced by the *κατ' οἰκίαν ἀπογραφαί* from Egypt, and were thus geared toward the collection of the poll tax (though not exclusively, for women and children were included in the declarations even though not liable to the tax); others followed Ulpian's *forma censualis* by including a declaration of property, thereby facilitating the assessment and collection of property taxes, as in the Arabian census of 127, discussed below. See H. M. Cotton, "The Roman Census in the Papyri from the Judaean Desert and the Egyptian *κατ' οἰκίαν ἀπογραφή*," in L. H. Schiffman (ed.), *Semitic Papyrology in Context: A Climate of Creativity* (Leiden/Boston 2003) 105–122.

pression of the census as universal and stemming from the direct command of the emperor.³ The census reinforced imperial ideals, strengthening the notion that the emperor could “see everything and hear everything,” even when ruling from the Palace in Rome.⁴ It also of course aided imperial interests, such as the collection of revenue and the maintenance of social hierarchy. For most provincials, on the other hand, the census and the closely-related poll tax were simply facts of life and burdens from which there was little chance of escape; for some, the imposition of a poll tax and regular censuses could have become “a potent symbol of subjection to Roman rule.”⁵ In short, the census was a common feature of the imperial experience and a key component of Rome’s control over provincial society.

When we move from general considerations to a more detailed examination of the mechanics of this system, we find a dearth of evidence. At the very least, it is clear from literary and documentary sources that Augustus played a central role in the extension of the census throughout the empire, beginning with his personal reorganization of Gaul (and possibly

³ Lk 2:1: ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐξῆλθεν δόγμα παρὰ Καίσαρος Αὐγούστου ἀπογράφεσθαι πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην, “in those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered” (transl. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*⁴). The standard translation of ἀπογράφεσθαι as a passive should be reconsidered in light of the middle ἀπογράψασθαι in Lk 2:5 and the consistent use of the middle voice in the papyri. Luke’s impression was shared by later writers (some influenced by Luke): see Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics* 137. See further B. Palme, “Die ägyptischen κατ’ οἰκίαν ἀπογραφαί und Lk 2, 1–5,” *Protokolle zur Bibel* 2 (1993) 1–24, and “Neues zum ägyptischen Provinzialzensus: ein Nachtrag,” *Protokolle zur Bibel* 3 (1994) 1–7, as well as Jördens, *Statthalterliche Verwaltung* 62–64.

⁴ Plin. *Pan.* 80.3. Aristides (*Or.* 26.33) famously stresses that the emperor could easily govern through letters without leaving Rome.

⁵ D. W. Rathbone, “Egypt, Augustus and Roman Taxation,” *CCG* 4 (1993) 81–112, at 86.

Spain) in 27 BCE.⁶ Actual responsibility for conducting the census generally lay with the emperor's representatives, the provincial governors, who in turn relied on subordinates and local organs of government to see the process through.⁷ For example, during the well-known census of Syria and recently-annexed Judaea ca. 6 CE, the assessment of the *polis* of Apamea was entrusted to a military prefect "on the orders of [P. Sulpicius] Quirinus," the governor to whom Luke refers at the beginning of his work.⁸ In Egypt, by comparison, the phrase κατὰ τὰ κελευσθέντα ὑπὸ NN τοῦ κρατίστου ἡγεμόνος (*vel sim.*) in census declarations submitted to local officials becomes common from 89 on, although the earlier censuses were probably likewise set in motion by prefectural edict.⁹

As usual, the papyrological evidence from Egypt provides the most-detailed picture of the workings of this system. Every fourteen years the inhabitants of Egypt were required to submit a declaration to local authorities containing the names, ages, and other identifying information of all co-residents. Many such declarations survive on papyrus, often as lone documents deprived of their original context, but occasionally still glued together as part of administrative rolls or traceable to an archive of family papers. There are now secure witnesses for every census between 33/4 and 257/8 CE, and the extension of this cycle back to 19/20 remains a distinct possibility;¹⁰ but

⁶ Cass. Dio 53.22.5. For a collection of literary, legal, and epigraphic evidence on the provincial census see Brunt, *JRS* 71 (1981) 171–172 (= 345–346).

⁷ See Brunt, *JRS* 71 (1981) 165–167 (= 333–335).

⁸ *CIL* III 6687 [*ILS* 2683]: *iussu Quirini censum egi Apamenaee civitatis millium homin(um) civium CXVII*.

⁹ Bagnall and Frier, *Demography* 11.

¹⁰ The question hinges on the declaration *P.Oxy.* II 254, whose date is not preserved, although the addressees are known from *P.Oxy.* II 252, dated to 19/20. See R. S. Bagnall, "The Beginnings of the Roman Census in Egypt," *GRBS* 32 (1991) 255–265, at 259–260, and Bagnall and Frier, *Demography* 3.

the relative paucity of early-Roman documentation from Egypt has meant that even in this province the introduction and early development of the institution remain poorly understood, leaving the door open to speculation.

The declaration published below helps fill this gap. It is the earliest declaration so far identified and comes from an archive that has long been central to discussions of the early-Roman census in Egypt.

In 1928 Calderini published nine papyri recently purchased for Milan's Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, which formed the core of what is now known as the Harthotes archive, named after its main figure, a public farmer and minor priest from the village of Theadelphia.¹¹ The text that garnered the most attention in this group was the top half of a census declaration submitted by Harthotes (*P.Mil.* I 3). Although its precise date was missing, scholars recognized that the oath sworn by Καῖσαρ limited it to the early decades of Roman rule and attempted to fit the papyrus into various schemes for Rome's introduction of the census into the new province of Egypt.¹² Bagnall's discovery of the document's lower half in the Columbia collection in 1991 provided both a precise date for the papyrus (12 CE) and a better basis for explaining the scant earlier evidence for the Egyptian census.

This evidence hinges on "indications of government attempts to establish population lists around 4/5 and 11/2," which "acquir[ed] a certain benchmark status" in later declarations.¹³ Nelson suggested that the first general status examination (ἐπίκρισις) occurred in Augustus' 34th year (4/5 CE),¹⁴ while Hombert and Préaux drew attention to an ἐπίκρισις attested

¹¹ *P.Mil.* I 4–12, republished by S. Daris in 1967 (*P.Mil.* I²). For the archive see www.trismegistos.org/archive/99.

¹² See Bagnall, *GRBS* 32 (1991) 255–260, for a summary of earlier proposals.

¹³ Bagnall, *GRBS* 32 (1991) 260.

¹⁴ C. A. Nelson, *Status Declarations in Roman Egypt* (Am.Stud.Pap. 19 [Amsterdam 1979]) 23.

for year 41 (11/2 CE) in *P.Oxy.* II 288.35 and proposed that this procedure in fact referred to a census, an interpretation later supported by Braunert.¹⁵ Drawing on this observation and on age indications in the Harthotes archive, Montevecchi suggested that Harthotes' then-undated declaration was prompted by a census announced in 11/2 CE.¹⁶ Bagnall's joining of the Milan and Columbia fragments of what is now *SB XX* 14440 confirmed that a census was indeed conducted in Augustus' 41st year, 11/2 CE.

An interesting feature of Columbia's fragment of this papyrus allowed Bagnall to further propose a scheme for earlier censuses in Roman Egypt, even though direct evidence in the form of actual declarations was lacking. After the declaration proper, Harthotes and his son Harpatothoes were listed with their ages and identifying marks, which are typical features of the official documentation of the province. Before their ages, however, were two notations, κ^{\perp} and ϵ^{\perp} , which Bagnall interpreted as the respective years since each had first been declared in the census, counting exclusively. Alternatively, if we count inclusively, the two notations could refer to the timespan since the establishment of registers the year after declarations were due, a two-stage process that appears to be attested for the census years 34 (4/5) and 41 (11/2).¹⁷ Under either interpretation, the young Harpatothoes would have been first declared in year 34 (4/5), which aligns with the $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\iota}\kappa\rho\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$ of that year, while his 55-

¹⁵ M. Hombert and C. Préaux, *Recherches sur le recensement dans l'Égypte romaine* (Pap.Lugd.Bat. 5 [Leiden 1952]) 48–49, pointing to the expression $\kappa\alpha\tau' \omicron\iota\kappa\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu \acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\iota}\kappa\rho\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$ in *P.Hamb.* I 60.8–9 (Hermopolis, 90 CE) (cf. now *SB VIII* 9869a.6 [Hermopolite, 160 CE] and *SB XIV* 12110.6–7 [Antaiopolite, 90–91 CE]); H. Braunert, "Zur Terminologie der Volkszählung im frühen römischen Ägypten," in *Symbolae R. Taubenschlag dedicatae III* (*Eos* 48.3 [1956]) 53–66, at 56.

¹⁶ O. Montevecchi, "Il censimento romano. Precisazioni," *Aevum* 50 (1976) 72–84, at 73–74.

¹⁷ See Bagnall, *GRBS* 32 (1991) 264, and D. W. Rathbone, *CCG* 4 (1993) 89–90.

year-old father Harthotes would have first been declared in year 20 (11/0 BCE).¹⁸ Such an explanation implies both that a seven-year cycle was in place before the later 14-year cycle and that year 20 (11/0) was the first such general census held, since otherwise Harthotes would have been registered earlier.

Harthotes now has more to offer to the story. Claytor's research in the University of Michigan papyrus collection has brought to light a dozen more papyri belonging to the archive, including the document published below.¹⁹ Although faint and effaced in many places, the type of document and its date are beyond doubt: it is a census declaration submitted by Harthotes at the end of Augustus' 27th year (3 BCE) to five registration officials (λαογράφοι) of his home village Theadelphia. Harthotes is described as a 41-year-old public farmer with a house in the village, where he and two other occupants live. His age is in perfect agreement with the later census declaration and he is further described as "registered in the village" (λαογραφούμενος περὶ τὴν κώμην, 6–7), referring, we presume, to the population register that was first established in 11/0 BCE or the year following.

With its date in year 27, this declaration provides the missing piece of evidence for the early seven-year census cycle proposed by Bagnall: the census years 20 (11/0 BCE), 27 (4/3), 34 (4/5 CE), and 41 (11/2) are all now attested either directly through declarations or indirectly through the notations in *SB* XX 14440.²⁰

Bagnall's reconstruction was incorporated into his and Frier's

¹⁸ Indirect evidence for an initial census around this time "may come from a petition from four priests against a demand for arrears for the years back to, but no further than, 9/8 B.C.," which Rathbone sees as "another indication that the collection of *laographia* was put on a new footing after 10/9 B.C.": *CCG* 4 (1993) 90. The text in question is *BGU* IV 1198.

¹⁹ Claytor, N. Litinas, and E. Nabney are preparing a publication of four contracts, which will include an updated list of all known texts.

²⁰ *SB* XXIV 16011, palaeographically dated to Augustus' reign, might therefore be attributed to one of these four censuses.

1994 monograph *The Demography of Roman Egypt* and the existence of the early seven-year cycle has been generally accepted. Yet the idea that the Romans waited some twenty years before taking stock of the population of Egypt has met with skepticism. Bowman and Rathbone reasoned that the collection of the poll tax, attested in Egypt already in the 20s BCE,²¹ must have been preceded by a census, an assumption about Roman imperial rule shared by other historians.²² Monson, however, has recently weakened the logical support for this idea through his convincing argument that the Roman poll tax in Egypt was an adaptation of Ptolemaic practice.²³ The innovation was not the tax itself, which was collected both before and after the conquest under the name of σύνταξις (among other terms) and based on local population registers, but rather in the method of collection, namely a switch to silver rather than bronze drachmas and a regularization of collection tend-

²¹ See Rathbone, *CCG* 4 (1993) 88. Monson's re-dating of a group of poll-tax receipts on ostraka from Karanis puts a number of them in the same decade, some as early as Augustus' first or second year (A. Monson, "Receipts for *sitónion*, *syntaxis*, and *epistatikon* from Karanis: Evidence for Fiscal Reform in Augustan Egypt?" *ZPE* 191 [2014] 207–230). Otherwise, the earliest references to the poll tax in the Fayyum are the declarations *P.Grenf.* I 45 and 46 (= *W.Chr.* 200a and b, 19–18 BCE) and the unpublished poll-tax receipt P.Heid. inv. G 1026 (Theadelphia, 16/5 BCE), being edited by Claytor.

²² A. K. Bowman and D. Rathbone, "Cities and Administration in Roman Egypt," *JRS* 82 (1992) 107–127, at 113: "the conduct of a census was normally the prerequisite for raising a poll-tax" (in a further analysis, Rathbone abandoned the idea of an early census in favor of a system of annual declarations: *CCG* 4 [1993] 90). Cf. D. Kennedy, "Demography, the Population of Syria and the Census of Q. Aemilius Secundus," *Levant* 38 (2006) 109–124, at 116–117, "in order to function adequately, the Roman taxation system presupposes a census," as well as Brunt, *JRS* 71 (1981) 163 (= 329–330), and L. Capponi, *Augustan Egypt: The Creation of a Roman Province* (New York 2005) 90. Cf. below with n.29.

²³ A. Monson, "Late Ptolemaic Capitation Taxes and the Poll Tax in Roman Egypt," *BASP* 51 (2014) 127–160. Cf. already Brunt, *JRS* 71 (1981) 162 (= 327–328).

ing towards monthly installments. If the poll tax was simply reformed rather than newly imposed, there would not have been such a pressing need for an immediate province-wide census.

Approaching the problem from a different point of view, Capponi found it “odd” that Augustus would have taken censuses in less-bureaucratized provinces (such as Gaul in 27 BCE), but not in Egypt.²⁴ Analogy is no substitute for evidence, however, particularly during the formative early years of the Principate and in regard to an institution which was never coordinated across the empire.²⁵ The further hypothesis “that the seven-year cycle of censuses of the Egyptian population began around 26/5 BC” rests on weak foundations.²⁶

In our opinion, it seems safest to conclude on present evidence that the Romans perpetuated Ptolemaic methods of population registration, supplemented by ad-hoc arrangements,²⁷ until it was decided to hold a general census through household declarations in 11/0 BCE.

Such developments may not have been unique to Egypt. We

²⁴ Capponi, *Augustan Egypt* 90; cf. L. Capponi, *Roman Egypt* (London 2011) 19.

²⁵ It is also more felicitous to turn the logic around: pre-existing institutions would make it easier to tax and control the population without much innovation, a point which Capponi herself makes in the conclusion to the chapter (*Augustan Egypt* 95).

²⁶ Capponi, *Augustan Egypt* 91. *SB XXVI 16683* (a receipt issued by ὁ πρὸς τῆ λαογραφίᾳ τοῦ νομοῦ) is evidence only for the poll tax (as are the other tax documents mentioned) and its date (25 BCE or 19 CE) is uncertain; for the back-to-back declarations from 19 and 18 BCE see the next note.

²⁷ Into this category may fall *P.Grenf.* I 45 and 46 (= *W.Chr.* 200a and b, 19 and 18 BCE), which are back-to-back declarations from a public farmer residing in Theadelphia, with no mention of co-residents (there is no other evidence for annual declarations, which in any case seem infeasible on a large scale), and the fragmentary reference to “the others who have been registered by us in the 15th year of Caesar (= 16/5 BCE),” καὶ ἄλλων τῶν ὑφ’ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τοῦ ιε (ἔτους) Καίσαρος λελαογραφημένων (*P.Oxy.* IV 711). Cf. Rathbone, *CCG* 4 (1993) 90.

may compare the province of Arabia, conquered and incorporated into the empire in 106 CE, which has produced the only papyrological evidence for the census outside of Egypt. In the best-preserved document, we learn that a woman named Babatha appeared before local officials in Rabbat, an administrative center of Arabia, because “an evaluation of the province was being conducted” by the governor L. Aninius Sextius Florentinus in the year 127.²⁸ Cotton has argued that this was the first census conducted in the recently-conquered province, based on (1) the appearance of the appellation “*new* province of Arabia” in the dating formula, (2) the holdover of a pre-Roman monetary unit (the *melaina*) and the Nabataean royal tax (*stephanikon*), and (3) an indication that the census was personally ordered by Hadrian.²⁹ In both cases, then, the Roman administration would have been satisfied with consolidating their rule and modifying pre-existing structures before arranging for a general census after a couple of decades of governance.

Census Declaration from 3 BCE

P.Mich. inv. 4406a³⁰ 25.5 x 9.5 cm 26 Jan.–24 Feb., 3 BCE,
Theadelphia

²⁸ *P.Babatha* 16.11–13: ἀποτιμήσεως Ἀραβίας ἀγομένης ὑπὸ Τίτου Ἀνεϊνίου Σεξσιτίου Φλωρεντείνου πρεσβευτοῦ Σεβαστοῦ ἀντιστρατήγου ...

²⁹ H. M. Cotton, “Ἡ νέα ἐπαρχία Ἀραβία: The New Province of Arabia in the Papyri from the Judaean Desert,” *ZPE* 116 (1997) 204–208, at 206. Turning to a wider range of evidence, she further argues that we must “dispel ... the notion that a provincial census followed immediately upon the annexation of a territory to the Roman empire.” Cf. Jördens, *Statthalterliche Verwaltung* 63–64 and 69.

³⁰ According to the Michigan Inventory of Papyri, the papyrus was purchased by Arthur Boak from David Askren in 1925 as part of a group of “miscellaneous fragments” (P.Mich. inv. 4400–4471). Harold Idris Bell described this group as follows: “those left undescribed may very well likely include some which are of value, but the majority are not promising.” Digital images can be found in Michigan APIS: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/apis/x-12560/4406AR.TIF>

The papyrus was folded from top to bottom in antiquity, as evidenced by fold lines and a repeating pattern of loss on the left side. Otherwise, the papyrus is mostly complete, although the ink is badly effaced in many areas. These losses affect specific readings rather than the overall structure of the text. Early declarations from Arsinoite villages to which we may compare the formulae are few; the earliest are Harthotes' later census declaration, *SB* XX 14440 (12 CE, Theadelphia), and *SB* I 5661 (34 CE, Philadelphia). Also early but metropolitan is *SB* X 10759 (Arsinoe, 34 CE). No other Arsinoite declarations before the census of 47 CE are known. Otherwise, there are census declarations before that year only from Oxyrhynchos, but these do not follow the same formula, and some of them are uncertainly dated.

The papyrus provides a new 'snapshot' of the family of Harthotes. Since Claytor intends to provide a fresh overview and analysis of the archive in a future publication, we keep the following discussion brief. With the agreement of his two census declarations, we can place Harthotes' birth precisely in 44/3 BCE.³¹ The earliest document in the archive is an unpublished service contract from 20/19 BCE,³² in which Harthotes and his mother Eersythis send Harthotes' younger brother Marsisouchos off to work in another villager's home. In this document and elsewhere in the archive Harthotes' father Marres is conspicuous by his absence and was likely already deceased. Eersythis' *kyrios* is Harthotes and it is fair to imagine her living as a widowed mother with her two sons at the time of this contract.

In the new census declaration from 3 BCE, Harthotes states that he is a public farmer living in his own house and declares two co-residents besides. Neither of these is his mother Eersythis, who would later rejoin his household before the next

³¹ On the basis of inclusive reckoning: see N. Kruit, "Age Reckoning in Hellenistic Egypt," in A. M. F. W. Verhoogt and S. P. Vleeming (eds.), *The Two Faces of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Pap.Lugd.Bat. 30 [Leiden 1998]) 37–58.

³² P.Mich. inv. 4299, in preparation (see n.19).

census in 11/2 CE. Her absence in the present declaration could indicate that she remarried and joined the new husband's household, but remarriage for Egyptian women with adult sons was uncommon,³³ so we prefer to imagine that Harthotes simply acquired his own house, probably near his aging mother, who was around 55 years old in 3 BCE. The occasion for this move may have been his marriage to Taanchorimphis, who is perhaps the second household member listed in the declaration (see on lines 7–8).

By the next census in 12 CE, Harthotes had become a priest of Tutu and was living within the precinct of a local temple.³⁴ In the meantime, he had welcomed back his mother Esersythis, now about 70 years old, and was raising Harpatothoes, his nine-year-old son by Taanchorimphis. Since Taanchorimphis herself is not listed in the declaration, she had either died or at least was divorced from Harthotes. In her place, the aged Esersythis was probably looking after the boy, if indeed she were healthy enough to do so. Harthotes also had an elder daughter named Taphaunes (born ca. 1 CE: *P.Mil.* I² 7) who might have also been expected to help with Harpatothoes' upbringing, but Harthotes had sent her away to the neighboring village Philagris to work at an imperial oil mill, which explains why she was not declared in his household.³⁵

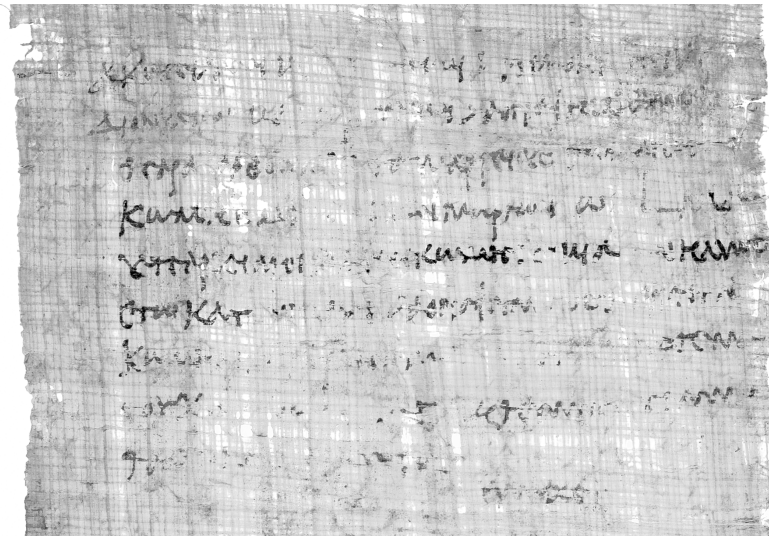
³³ Bagnall and Frier, *Demography* 123–127. Cf. S. Huebner, *The Family in Roman Egypt* (Cambridge 2013) 97–106, who points to the possibility that the remarriage of younger widows may be underrepresented by the sources.

³⁴ *SB* XX 14440.2–6: Ἀρθώτου τοῦ Μαρήου δὴμ[ό]σις γεωργὸς καὶ εἰερεὺς Τοθοίου θεοῦ. ἔχω ἐν Θεαδελφῆα οἰκίαν ἐντὸς περιβόλου εἰ[ι]εροῦ, ἐν ἧ (etc.).

³⁵ This information comes from the service contract *P.Mich. inv.* 931 + *P.Col.* X 249, in preparation (cf. n.19). The agreement states that Taphaunes is to work for two-and-a-half years starting in Pachon of Augustus' 39th year, that is, roughly from May of 10 CE through November of 12 CE. The census declaration *SB* XX 14440 dates to January of 12 CE. It was previously thought that Taphaunes' absence was due to her already being married: Bagnall, *GRBS* 32 (1991) 257.



P.Mich. inv. 4406a. Image published courtesy of the University of Michigan Papyrology Collection



P.Mich. inv. 4406a, detail

Ἀκουσιλάωι κ[αὶ] [] ισίωι κ[αὶ] ἰ Τιμοκρ[ά]τηι καὶ
 Διονυσίωι καὶ ρ νωι λαογράφης Θεαδελφ[εία]ς
 παρὰ Ἀρθώτου τοῦ Μαρρείου τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς
 κώμης δημοσίων γεωργῶν ὡς (ἔτων) μα.
 5 ὑπάρχει μοι ἐν τῇ κώμῃ οἰκία ἐν ἣ αὐτὸς
 ἐγὼ κατ[α]γίν[ο]μαι λαογραφοῦμενος περὶ τὴν
 κώμην [] [] [] ἰ Πετε-
 σούχου ὡς (ἔτων) λγ καὶ ἡ τ υτ
 Τα []
 10 εὐτύχει
 κατακεχώρ[ι]στ[α]ι (ἔτους) κζ Καίσαρος Μεχεῖρ .
 21. λαογράφοις 51. ὑπάρχει

To Akousilaos and –isios and Timokrates and Dionysios and NN, laographoi of Theadelphia, from Harthotes son of Marres one of the public farmers of the village, about 41 years old. I own a house in the village, in which I myself live, registered for the poll tax in the village, and ... son/daughter of Petesouchos, about 33 years old, and NN ... Farewell.
 Registered in year 27 of Caesar, Mecheir .

- 1 [Αφ]ρ[ο]δισίωι? The right corner of delta is compatible with the visible traces. The earlier trace is compatible with rho but very scant.
- 1–2 This is the earliest secure reference to λαογράφοι, who thus seem to have been in place from the beginning of the Roman census in Egypt.³⁶ Their next secure appearance is in census declarations of 33/4: *SB I* 5661 (Philadelphia, 34 CE), also addressed to five λαογράφοι (and the κωμογραμματεύς), and *SB X* 10759 (Arsinoe, 33/4). We have not found a name to match the traces of the fifth official in line 2.
- 2 λαογράφης Θεαδελφ[εία]ς. It is difficult to read the expected λαογράφοις, since an eta seems to follow the phi.³⁷ The rest of the line becomes increasingly unclear,³⁸ but the mention of Harthotes' home village Theadelphia is at least guaranteed by the following references to "the village."
- 3–4 τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἰ κώμης δημοσίων γεωργῶν ὡς (ἐτῶν) μα. That Harthotes was a public farmer was known from several other texts of the archive, such as *P.Oslo II* 32 (1 CE).

³⁶ For an overview of this office see L. Capponi, "P.Oxy. IV 786: Conclusion of a Census-Return," *ZPE* 140 (2002) 177–180, at 179 (on line 18). For other possible early references see M. Resel, "Zahlungsanweisungen für Weizen aus dem Tempel des Soknobkonneus in Bakchias – Das Archiv des Sitologen Akousilaos," *JfurP* (forthcoming). We thank the author for providing us a draft in advance.

³⁷ We prefer this reading, but cannot absolutely rule out the possibility that these three strokes represent (1) a narrow omicron (cf. that of λαογρ-, just before); (2) a superfluous ligature (cf. the writing of ὑπάρχι in 5); (3) a short iota. Interchange of η and οι is called "occasional" by F. T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods I* (Milan 1976) 265; most instances are later, in fact, but he cites one example in the same direction as here and closely contemporary with our papyrus, from 1 CE, in the letter *P.Oslo II* 47.18, giving μη for μοι.

³⁸ We have considered the suggestion that kappa follows eta, with perhaps a raised omicron indicating an abbreviation. A form such as (λε)λαογραφηκό(σι), however, requires both the omission of a syllable and the reading of an otherwise unattested active use of the verb λαογραφέω. We have also tried to find κώμης in this space, to no avail.

It is noteworthy that he is not identified as a priest here, in contrast to the later declaration (*SB* XX 14440, 12 CE) and the petitions *SB* XX 14098 and 14099 (ca. 1–10 CE). He thus seems to have joined the priesthood later in life and perhaps only for a relatively short time. As for the final element of Harthotes' description, his age, we note the perfect agreement between the two census declarations, while rounding is evident in other documents from the archive (e.g., *P.Oslo* II 32).

- 6 κατ[α]γίν[ο]μαι. We find καταγίνομαι (in the participial form καταγινόμενον, because the female declarant is listing her son before herself) also in *SB* I 5661. One may well wonder whether the restored [ἀπογραφό]μεθα in *SB* X 10759.5–6 should not be replaced by [καταγινό]μεθα, which is the same length.
- 6–7 περί frequently complements λαογραφούμενος to indicate the taxpayer's legal domicile, but not as a rule.³⁹
- 7–8 Only exiguous traces remain after κόμη, with space for about 20–25 letters before the letters at the end of line 7. Given the size of the lacuna, we anticipate both the relationship and the name of the second person listed, which would make Πετελσούχου a patronymic (the case ending cannot be determined from the faint traces of ink alone). A Petesouchos is so far not known in the family of Harthotes, so this patronymic may belong to Harthotes' wife Taanchorimphis.⁴⁰ A possible reconstruction of these lines, therefore, runs as follows: καὶ ἡ γυνή μου Ταανχόριμιφις Πετελσούχου ὡς (ἐτῶν) λγ.⁴¹ We have also considered

³⁹ Pace R. Duttonhöfer, "Drei Todesanzeigen," *ZPE* 79 (1989) 228, note to line 1. Besides ten cases of λαογραφούμενος + περί, *DDBDP* searches return twelve cases of ἐπί and even one of ἀπό (*C.Pap.Gr.* II.1 37.5, Arsinoe, 141 CE), which is likely due to confusion with the ἀπὸ τῆς κόμης formula.

⁴⁰ We owe this observation to Paul Heilporn. Taanchorimphis is attested only in the next declaration, *SB* XX 14440.10–11, as the mother of Harthotes' son Harpatothoes.

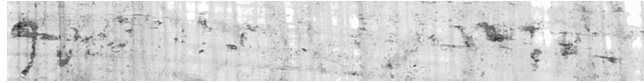
⁴¹ An eight-year age difference between husband and wife would not be

(given the uncertainty of the ending) the possibility that this entry concerns Harthotes' brother Marsisouchos, for whom the given age would be suitable, but the traces at the end of line 7 are not compatible with *Μαρσι-*. This hypothesis would therefore require the supposition of an error in recording his name.

8–9 καὶ ἡ τ υτ | Τα [.]



End of line 8



Line 9

The article in line 8 and the Τα at the beginning of 9 indicate that a female member of the household is being declared here, but this is unfortunately the only clear aspect of the reading. After the article, we suspect either *ταύτης* or *τούτου* was written, referring to a relation of one of the preceding persons listed. This relationship should then be spelled out at the end of the line, but we have not lighted upon the solution.

- 11 κατακεχώρ[ι]στ[α]ι (ἔτους) κζ Καίσαρος Μεχέιρ . The day is perhaps δ or λ. It is striking to find a subscription related to registration here, since Hombert and Préaux remark with respect to Fayyum villages, “Aucune déclaration à destinataire unique [a category that for them includes multiple *laographoi*] n’a reçu de souscription. Ainsi, aucune n’a été transmise d’un fonctionnaire à l’autre ni remise à titre de reçu au déclarant. Elles sont donc restées en la possession de l’administration.”⁴² They noted the

unusual: Huebner, *The Family in Roman Egypt* 94. We cannot, of course, rule out the possibility of an otherwise unknown person being declared here.

⁴² *Recherches* 89.

contrast between this situation and that found in Arsinoe itself, where such marks of registration were routinely found. Their view was modified (but without comment) in Bagnall and Frier: “Once again, however, we find that they do not (as far as preserved) contain signatures, but that they do have official subscriptions.”⁴³ In fact, *SB I* 5661, cited above in the note to lines 1–2, has both *κατακ(εχώρισται)* (*BL* 9.244) and a following date and signature. Hombert and Préaux do not refer to *SB I* 5661 in this context, nor on p.95 in their table.⁴⁴

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⁴³ *Demography* 21.

⁴⁴ The authors thank Rodney Ast, Dieter Hagedorn, Paul Heilporn, and Sabine Huebner for their comments.