

	Petitions from Euhemeria	ArchID 187. Version I (2011) Birgit Feucht
Place	Arsinoites (Fayum), meris of Themistos, Euhemeria	
Date	AD 28-42	
Language	Greek	
Material	Papyrus	
Number of texts	33 certain	
Type	Official archive	
Collections	Manchester, John Rylands Library; London, British Library	
Find/Acquisition	Probably found by sebbakh diggers in Qasr el-Banat (Euhemeria); acquired before 1915	

Bibliography

- P. Ryl. Gr. II*, 1915, p. 117-119 ('124-52. Petitions from Euhemeria').
- N. HOHLWEIN, 'Euhéméria du Fayoum', *JJP* 3 (1949), p. 63-99 (esp. p. 68-79, 83-85, 88-91, 93-94, 96).
- P. KOOL, *De phylakieten in Grieks-Romeins Egypte*, diss. Amsterdam, 1954, p. 67-85 (esp. p. 67-71, 81-83).
- N. LEWIS, *Life in Egypt under Roman rule*, Oxford, 1983, p. 77-78, 120-121, 127.
- J. FRANCE, *Theadelphia and Euhemereia. Village History in Greco-Roman Egypt*, unpubl. diss. Leuven, 1999, p. 136-137, 172.

The numbers in **bold** refer to *P. Ryl. Gr. II*.

Description

The archive contains 33 texts, which can be dated between AD 28 and 42.¹ They were probably found by sebbakhin in Qasr el-Banat, the ruins of ancient Euhemeria. Most were acquired somewhere before 1915 by the Rylands collection. Four papyri were purchased by the British Library between 1895 and 1903.²

The texts form an official archive of petitions sent to different nome officials. Seventy percent were addressed to the police chief or *epistates phylakiton*. In the Ptolemaic period this high ranking police officer had a jurisdiction covering an entire nome. After the Roman conquest the office continued until the first half of the first century AD.³ Fifteen percent were sent to the *strategos* of the Arsinoite nome.⁴ Further petitions⁵ were addressed to a priest of Tiberius (**133**),⁶ to a centurion (**141**), and to Tiberius Claudius Philoxenos, who was *strategos*

¹ **124** has no exact date (first century AD).

² *P. Ryl. Gr. II*, 1915, p. 117 and *P. Lond. III*, 1907, p. iii.

³ **152** (AD 42) is one of the last attestations of the *epistates phylakiton* (cf. Kool 1954, p. 67-85). Cf. also T. Derda, *ΑΡΣΙΝΟΙΤΗΣ ΝΟΜΟΣ. Administration of the Fayum under Roman Rule (JJP Suppl. 7)*, Warsaw, 2006, p. 79.

⁴ In **129**, **131**, **135** the *strategos* is defined as *strategos* of the Arsinoite nome, in **143**, **149** and **152** the title *strategos* is not further specified. Until ca. AD 60 the Arsinoite nome was administered by one *strategos*. From ca. AD 60 onwards the number of *stratego*i rose to three (and decreased again to two ca. AD 136/137); cf. Derda 2006 (n. 3), p. 93-99. Hence, the *stratego*i in **143**, **149** and **152** (dated AD 38, 39 and 42) were also in charge of the entire Arsinoite nome.

⁵ The addressee of two texts is unclear: **124** has no addressee and the beginning of **126** is lost. Derda 2006 (n. 3), p. 91 (following *P. Ryl. Gr. II*, 1915, p. 123) tentatively supplements Dionysodoros *strategos* of the Arsinoite nome as the addressee of **126**.

⁶ This seems strange, since priests normally did not have police power. *P. Ryl. Gr. II*, 1915, p. 130 suggests that the

and *epistates phylakiton* at the same time (152).

Even though the archaeological context is lost, the papyri must originate from Euhemeria. About one third of the petitions mention the police chief or *archephodos* of Euhemeria.⁷ This village official received orders from the *strategos* or *epistates* to investigate the reported crimes and/or to bring the culprits before them for punishment.⁸ In a few cases the *archephodos* appears in a subscript as the addressee to whom these petitions were forwarded by the *epistates* or the *strategos*. Some petitioners explicitly ask to forward their request to the *archephodos*. Hence, it is likely that all petitions were forwarded to the latter⁹ and that the archive was found in the office of the *archephodos* in Euhemeria.¹⁰

In 145, 19, the petitioner asks to forward his petition to ‘the *archephodos* of Taurinou (Kome)’. Taurinou Kome was situated close to Euhemeria and Dionysias, probably between Dionysias and the hamlet or *epoikion* called Amminon (‘Sandy’) belonging to the territory of Euhemeria, near lake Moeris.¹¹ In *P. Lille Dem.* II 62 and 66 *P3- .wy-(n)-Twrynws* is even rendered as Euhemeria, perhaps because Taurinou Kome in Ptolemaic – and maybe even early Roman – times was a hamlet of Euhemeria. France considers a common police office for both villages.¹² A similar cooperation between officials of neighbouring villages might also explain why a complaint concerning theft and burglary (127) in a house in Dionysias was forwarded to the *archephodos* in Euhemeria.

The petitions give an overview of crimes reported in early Roman Euhemeria. These are often economic in origin and typical of an agricultural community:¹³ theft (30%), damage to crops due to incursions by cattle (18%), assault (16%), robbery (12%), burglary (10%), vandalism (2 cases), insult, false accusations, breach of contract and unlawful entry.¹⁴

The choice of the addressee of the petition apparently did not depend on the type of crime. Complaints of the same kind (e.g., theft) have been sent to the *strategos* and the *epistates*.¹⁵ The goal of all petitions is similar: restitution for the damage suffered.¹⁶

priest Euandros might have had another (judicial) function (cf. 149 addressed to Gaius Iulius Asklas, *archiereus*, *exegetes* and *strategos*). The omission of this function in an official complaint would be odd.

⁷ 127, 132, 135, 136, 139, 142, 148, 150-152, *SB XX* 15032, *SB XX* 15182. All texts either mention Euhemeria in connection to the *archephodos* or this link can be deduced from the mention of the title *archephodos* and the location of the crime scene in Euhemeria or its *epoikia*. On the *epoikia* of Euhemeria: Hohlwein 1949, p. 75-78.

⁸ Cf. 152, 17: ἀρχεφόδω κόμης, Kool 1954, p. 67, 82.

⁹ Pace Kool 1954, p. 82, who argues that the petitions without subscript were sent directly to the *archephodos* by the petitioner, although the *epistates* (or *strategos*), and not the *archephodos*, is mentioned as addressee.

¹⁰ *P. Ryl. Gr.* II, 1915, p. 117; P.J. Sijpesteijn, ‘Another οὐσία of D. Valerius Asiaticus in Egypt’, *ZPE* 79 (1989), p. 196; P.J. Sijpesteijn, ‘Petition to the Chief of Police’, *ZPE* 91 (1992), p. 102.

¹¹ France 1999, p. 172; Hohlwein 1949, p. 76; K. Mueller, *Settlements of the Ptolemies. City foundations and new settlement in the Hellenistic world* (*Studia Hellenistica* 43), Leuven e.a., 2006, p. 25-26; TM Villages no. 2276.

¹² France 1999, p. 137.

¹³ Some detailed descriptions are given by Hohlwein 1949, p. 70-74.

¹⁴ Theft (125, 127-130, 134-135, 137-140, 142, 146, 148, *SB XX* 15032), damage by cattle (126, 131-132, 138, 143, 147, 149, 152, *SB XX* 15182), assault (124, 136, 141, 144-145, 150-151, *P. Lond.* III, 895), robbery (124, 141, 144-145, 150-151), burglary (127, 129, 138, 146, 148), vandalism (133, 152), insult (150), false accusations (144), breach of contract (128) and unlawful entry (151). Because *P. Lond.* III 1218 is damaged, the content of the complaint is unknown.

¹⁵ Kool 1954, p. 82.

¹⁶ B. Kelly, *Petitions, Litigation, and Social Control in Roman Egypt*, Oxford, 2011.

The dimensions of both the Rylands and the British Library papyri are remarkably uniform.¹⁷ Almost all texts are 23 to 29 cm high and 6 to 11 cm wide. The Rylands papyri can be assigned to four (or maybe five) scribes.¹⁸ The texts follow the *hypomnema* format: name and function of the addressee in the dative followed by *παρά* with the identification of the petitioner in the genitive. The actual petition often begins with a reference to the date of the crime and ends with a request to undertake action against the (known) offenders (e.g., ‘I therefore ask that the accused be brought before you for the ensuing punishment’) or, if the culprits are not known, to order an investigation by the *archepodos* (e.g., ‘I therefore request you to write to the *archepodos* of the village that he may make an inquiry’). The petition ends with the reverential ‘Farewell’ (ἐντύχει), sometimes followed by the petitioner’s name.

Archive texts

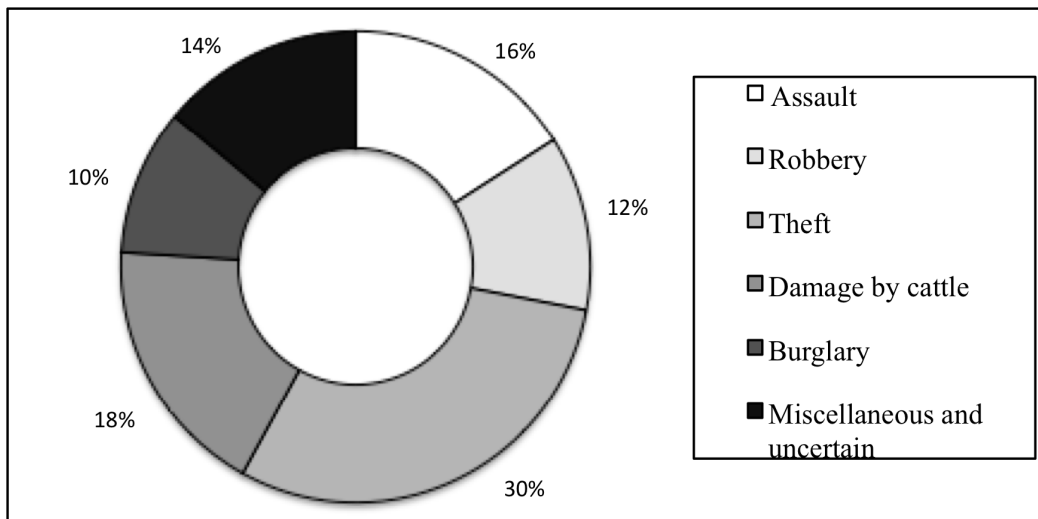
P. Ryl. Gr. II 124-152; *P. Lond.* III p. 129-130 no. 895; p. 130-131 no. 1218; *SB XX* 15032 (= *P. Lond.* III 894 descr.), *SB XX* 15182 (= *P. Lond.* III 891 descr.).

Text type

Petitions = incoming documents.

Appendices

App. 1. Crimes identified in the filed complaints



¹⁷ *P. Ryl. Gr.* II, 1915, p. 117.

¹⁸ *P. Ryl. Gr.* II, 1915, p. 117; Kool 1954, p. 82.

App. 2. Chronological survey of texts and officials

The date may refer to the day when the crime was committed (C), when the petition was written (P) or when it was forwarded to the *archepodos* (F).

Official addressed*	Text	Mention of archepodos	Date
Not mentioned	124	No	6 Tybi AD 28-42 ca. (C)
Serapion, <i>epistates</i>	125	No	Mesore y. 14, AD 28-29 (C)
[Dionysodoros, <i>strategos</i>] of the Arsinoite nome?***	126	No	y. 15, AD 28-29 (C)
Serapion, <i>epistates</i>	127	Ro: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria	16/17 Sebastos y. 16, AD 29 (C)
Serapion, <i>epistates</i>	SB XX 15182	Ro: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria?	22 Pachon AD 29-31 (C)
Sarapion, <i>epistates</i>	P. Lond. III 895	No	ca. AD 30 (C)***
Serapion, <i>epistates</i>	128	No	19 Mecheir y. 16, AD 30 (C)
Dionysodoros, <i>strategos</i> of the Arsinoite nome	129	No	15/16 Phamenoth y. 16, AD 30 (C)
Dionysodoros, <i>strategos</i> of the Arsinoite nome	131	No	16 Phamenoth y. 17, AD 31 (C)
Athenodoros, <i>epistates</i>	130	No	3/4 Phaophi y. 18, AD 31 (C)
Athenodoros, <i>epistates</i>	132	Ro/Vo: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria	Pauni y. 18, AD 32 (C) 16 Epeiph y. 18, AD 32 (F)
Euandros, priest of Tiberius	133	No	17 Neos Sebastos y. 20, AD 33 (C)
Gaius Arrius Priscus, <i>epistates</i>	134	No	6 Pharmouthi y. 20, AD 34 (C)
Lysanias, <i>strategos</i> of the Arsinoite nome	135	Ro: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria	21/22 Pharmouthi y. 20, AD 34 (C)
Gaius Arrius Priscus, <i>epistates</i>	136	Ro/Vo: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria	Pachon y. 20, AD 34 (C) 9 Pachon y. 20, AD 34 (P/F)
Gaius Arrius Priscus, <i>epistates</i>	137	No	1 Pauni y. 20, AD 34 (C)
Gaius Arrius Priscus, <i>epistates</i>	138	No	22 Epeiph y. 20, AD 34 (P)
Gaius Arrius Priscus, <i>epistates</i>	139	Ro: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria	25 Epeiph y. 20, AD 34 (C) 29 Epeiph y. 20, AD 34 (P)
Gaius Arrius Priscus, <i>epistates</i>	140	No	18 Neos Sebastos y. 23, AD 36 (C)
Gaius Trebius Iustus, centurion	141	No	2 Pachon y. 1, AD 37 (C)
Athenodoros, <i>epistates</i> ****	142	Ro: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria	21/22 Mesore y. 1, AD 37 (C)
Didymos, <i>strategos</i>	143	No	Pharmouthi y. 2, AD 38 (C)
Athenodoros, <i>epistates</i>	144	No	2 Pauni y. 2, AD 38 (C)
Athenodoros, <i>epistates</i>	145	Ro/Vo: <i>archepodos</i> of Taurinou	3 Tybi y. 3, AD 38 (F)
Athenodoros, <i>epistates</i>	146	No	14 Pharmouthi y. 3, AD 39 (C)

Gaius Iulius Pholus, <i>epistates</i>	147	No	1 Pauni y. 3, AD 39 (C)
Gaius Iulius Pholus, <i>epistates</i>	<i>P. Lond.</i> III 1218	No	30 Mesore y. 3, AD 39 (C)
Gaius Iulius Asklas, <i>archieus, exegetes</i> and <i>strategos</i>	149	No	Soter y. 4, AD 39 (C)
Gaius Iulius Pholus, <i>epistates</i>	<i>SB XX</i> 15032	Ro/Vo: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria	29 Tybi AD 39-41 (C)
Gaius Iulius Pholus, <i>epistates</i>	148	Ro: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria	17/18 Pachon y. 4, AD 40 (C)
Gaius Iulius Pholus, <i>epistates</i>	151	Ro/Vo: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria	20 Soter y. 5, AD 40 (F)
Gaius Iulius Pholus, <i>epistates</i>	150	Ro/Vo: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria	22 Soter y. 5, AD 40 (F)
Tiberius Claudius Philoxenos, <i>strategos</i> and <i>epistates</i>	152	Ro/Vo: <i>archepodos</i> of Euhemeria	9 Pharmouthi y. 2, AD 42 (F)

* Derda 2006 (n. 3), p. 98-99 gives hypothetical fasti of the *strategoï* of the Arsinoite nome for the period 30 BC – ca. AD 60.

** Cf. Derda 2006 (n. 3), p. 91.

*** *BL* I, 1922, p. 281.

**** It is unclear whether this Athenodoros is identical with the *epistates* in AD 31-32.