

	<b>Mechphres son of Horos</b>	ArchID 461. Version I (2018) Elien Zoete
Place	Diospolis (Theban East bank)	
Date	AD 137 (17 June) – 139 (31 Aug.)	
Language	Greek	
Material	Ostraca	
Number of texts	12 certain, 10 uncertain	
Type	Tax receipts archive	
Collections	Heidelberg, Institut für Papyrologie	
Find/Acquisition	Acquired by the German Papyruskartell in 1905	

### Bibliography

C. ARMONI / J.M.S. COWEY / D. HAGEDORN, *Die griechischen Ostraka der Heidelberger Papyrus-Sammlung* (Veröffentlichungen aus der Heidelberger Papyrus-Sammlung. N.F. 11), Heidelberg, 2005, p. 127-138.

The numbers in **bold** refer to *O. Heid.*

### Description

The archive of Mechphres (III), son of Horos, consists of twelve Greek ostraca, acquired by the German Papyruskartell in 1905 and now kept in the Institut für Papyrologie, Heidelberg. They are all tax receipts and date between 17 June AD 137 and 31 August 139. They are issued to Mechphres, son of Horos, grandson of Mechphres, with the exception of **135**, where the payment has been transferred by Mechphres' son Mechphres. Μεχρηῆς in **144**, probably a mistake for Μεχρηῆς, is to be identified with the protagonist Mechphres or his son.<sup>1</sup>

The ostraca show several orthographic variants of the name of the archive owner, including Μεχρηῆς and Μεκρηῆς. The former variant is regularly used by the tax collectors Psansnos and Casianus (**133**, **134**, **136**, **138** and **139**; see also **135** and **137**), while the latter variant appears in the receipts written by Horos and Asklas (**140**, **142**, **143** and **144**). The variant Μεκρηῆς is attested only once (**141**).

Other collections may also contain ostraca from the grandfather and from a grandchild of the protagonist Mechphres (see below).<sup>2</sup>

### TAXES

The ostraca contain tax payments from Roman Thebes; in a few cases the tax district of Agorai Duo (**141-143**) on the Theban East bank and of Agorai Borra (**140** with BL), which was part of Agorai Duo,<sup>3</sup> are mentioned. Six ostraca refer to the bath-tax (βαλανευτικόν, **134**, **135**, [**138**], **140**, **141** and **143**), a capitation tax. Also other capitation taxes are found in the receipts, often paid together with the bath-tax (payments of taxes together with the bath-tax are

<sup>1</sup> Armoni / Cowey / Hagedorn 2005, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>3</sup> The district of Agorai Duo, attested from about AD 120 onwards, includes both Agorai Borra and Agorai Notou, see B. Palme, 'Zu den Unterabteilungen des Quartiers Ἀγοραὶ in Theben', in *Tyche* 4 (1989), p. 125-129. The name Agorai Duo is only found in the titles of the tax collectors (e.g., *praktor argyrikon* of Agorai-Duo, **141**), but not in combination with the tax name, where Agorai Borra or Agorai Notou is still used (e.g., the bath-tax of year 2 for the Agorai Borra tax district, **140** with BL), see D. Hagedorn, 'Noch einmal zu den Unterteilungen des thebanischen Quartiers Agorai', in *Tyche* 22 (2007), p. 35-46, esp. 37.

marked by\*): the dike-tax (χωματικόν, **134\***, **141\*** and **143\***); the poll tax or *laographia* (λαογραφία, **138\*** and **140\***); the watchtower-tax (ὕπερ σκοπέλων, **133**, **134\*** and **139**), the guard-tax (ὕπερ φυλάκων, **133** and **134\***), the tax for the billeting of soldiers (ὕπερ διπλῶν, **134\*** and **142**) and some undefined money taxes (**136**, **137**, **139** and **144**).

The taxes were paid either to the money-tax farmers (*praktōres argyrikon*, among them Psansnos & Casianus: **133**, **134**, **136**, **138** and **139**, and Horos and/or Asklas: **140**, **142**, **143** and **144**)<sup>4</sup>, to the tax collectors (*apaitetai*) Paniskos and partners (**137**), or to the tax farmers of the temple granary (ἐπιτηρηταὶ τέλους θησαυροῦ ἱέρων, **135**) for the maintenance of the temple baths.

OTHER OSTRACA POSSIBLY BELONGING TO THE ARCHIVE (see App. 2)

The name Mechphres in combination with Horos is also found in a number of ostraca of earlier or later date, dealing with similar taxes for the same Theban district,<sup>5</sup> and kept in other collections. These are published in *O. Leid.*, *O. Brux.* and *O. Bodl.* II. They may belong to family members of our protagonist, but it is uncertain whether they were once part of a single archive.

The Theban ostraca in Leiden were acquired by J.H. Insinger in 1897-1901.<sup>6</sup> The Bodleian ostraca were purchased at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by A.H. Sayce.<sup>7</sup> The ostraca from *O. Brux.* were acquired from the collection of Jean Capart. Since Capart presented the Theban ostraca to Viereck in 1912, he must have acquired these in the early 1900s.<sup>8</sup>

The name Μεχφρῆς Ὡρου Μεχφ(ρή)ους is attested in *O. Bodl.* II 1182, dating from 15 July 89. The variant Μεχπρῆς Ὡρου appears in *O. Bodl.* 2 1191 (AD 103) and Μεκφρῆς Ὡρου is found in *O. Bodl.* 2 620 (6 August 105). As these texts are older than the time frame of the above archive, they may either refer to Mechphres III or to his grandfather Mechphres II.<sup>9</sup> Horos, son of Mechphres and grandson of Horos, attested in SB X 10418 (= *O. Leid.* 126) of 21 December 142, could either be the father of Mechphres III or his son. The Horos of *O. Brux.* 10 of 21 August 113, may be identified as the father of Mechphres III.<sup>10</sup> Other family members may be attested in *O. Leid.* 308, *O. Bodl.* 2 1866 and *O. Bodl.* 2 1891. A possible reconstruction of a part of the family is suggested by us in App. 1.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For a prosopographical list of the Theban *praktōres argyrikon*, see P. Heilporn, in *O. Strasb.* II, p. 333-385, to be supplemented with *O. Heid.*, p. 128-129 and 135.

<sup>5</sup> That is Agorai Borra (*O. Bodl.* 2 614 and 620), for which see above, note 3. Exception: *O. Bodl.* 2 1182, a receipt for the upper toparchy.

<sup>6</sup> R.S. Bagnall / P.J. Sijpesteijn / K.A. Worp, *Greek Ostraka: a catalogue of the collection of Greek ostraka in the National Museum of antiquities at Leiden with a chapter on the Greek Ostraka in the Papyrological institute of the University of Leiden* (Collections of the National museum of antiquities at Leiden 4), Zutphen, 1980, p. v.

<sup>7</sup> K.A. Worp, 'Konkordanz zwischen den Invertnummern der Bodleian Ostraka und deren Veröffentlichungen', *ZPE* 98 (1991), p. 105.

<sup>8</sup> J. Bingen, *Au temps ou on lisait le grec en Egypte: catalogue de l'exposition de papyrus et d'ostraca* (Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire), Bruxelles, 1977, p. 3; P. Viereck, *Ostraka aus Brüssel und Berlin* (Papyrusinstitut Heidelberg 4), Berlin, 1922, p. v; A. Martin, 'Les collections de papyrus conservées en Belgique', I. Andorlini (ed.), *Atti del XII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia (Firenze, 23-29 agosto 1998)*, vol. 2, Florence, 2001, p. 892.

<sup>9</sup> Armoni / Cowey / Hagedorn 2005, p. 127.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>11</sup> Armoni / Cowey / Hagedorn 2005, p. 127-128.

In some of these uncertain texts the same tax types are found as in the certain texts (see App. 2). The bath and dike-tax appear in *O. Bodl. 2 620*. The bath-tax also occurs in *O. Bodl. 2 614*, while in *O. Leid. 126* the guard-tax is combined with the watchtower-tax. Other taxes do not appear in the archive texts, e.g. the tax for the upper toparchy (*O. Bodl. 2 1182*), paid to the temple granary (θησαυρὸς τῶν ἱερῶν);<sup>12</sup> *O. Brux. 10* is a receipt for chaff.

Three *dekania*-lists are found among the uncertain ostraca (*O. Bodl. 2 1866*, *O. Bodl. 2 1891* and *O. Leid. 306*). According to *O. Bodl. 2 1191* Mechphres (II?) son of Horos was *dekanos* in AD 103, and according to *O. Bodl. 2 1891* Horos (I, III or IV) son of Mechphres was also active as a *dekanos* (date unknown). The *dekania*-lists *O. Bodl. 1866* and *O. Leid. 306* do not indicate the *dekanos* (for *dekania*-lists, see ArchID 459).

Archive texts

*Certain: O. Heid. 133-144 (O. Heid. 140 and 142 with BL)*

*Uncertain: O. Bodl. 2 614, 620, 1182, 1191, 1866, 1891; O. Leid. Gr. 126, 306, 308; O. Brux. 10.*

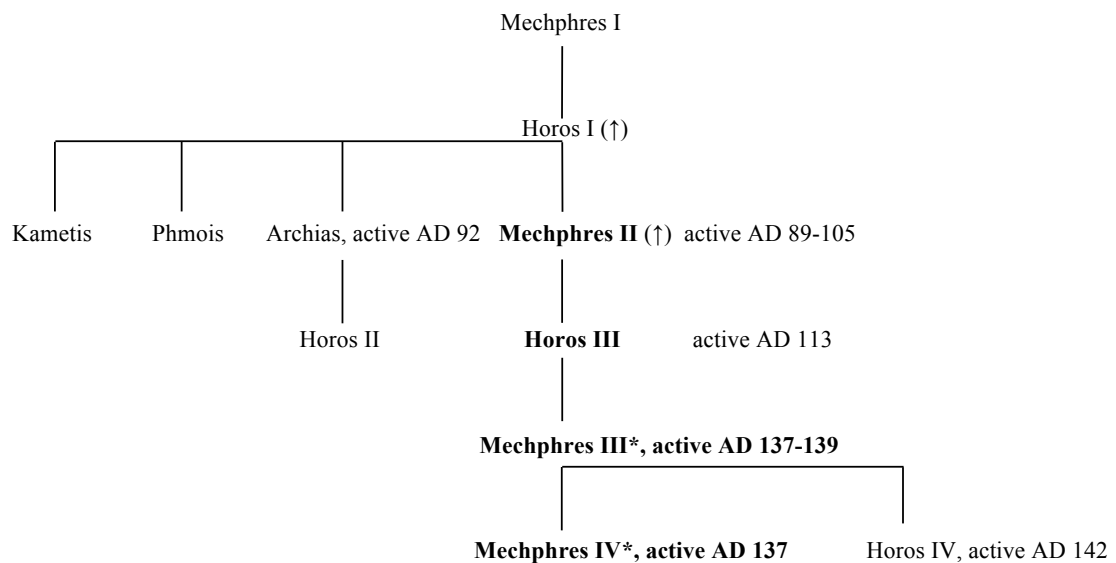
Text types

*Certain: tax receipts.*

*Uncertain: tax receipts (O. Bodl. 2 620, O. Bodl. 2 614, O. Bodl. 2 1182, O. Bodl. 2 1191, O. Brux. 10 and O. Leid. Gr. 126), dekania-lists (O. Bodl. 2 1866, O. Bodl. 2 1891 and O. Leid. Gr. 306), list of names (O. Leid. Gr. 308).*

Appendices

App. 1 Genealogy of the family of Mechphres son of Horos<sup>13</sup>



Legend

(↑) possible *dekanos*

\* protagonists of the archive

**Bold:** marks the certain information based on *O. Heid. 133-144*; the other additions to the family tree, suggested by us, are tentative

<sup>12</sup> S.L. Wallace, *Taxation in Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian*, Princeton, 1938, p. 35, 240.

<sup>13</sup> Based on the ostraca *O. Heid. 133-144*, *O. Bodl. II 614, 1182, 1866* and *O. Leid. 126, 308*.

App. 2 Ostraca possibly belonging to the archive

Ostracon	TM	Acquisition	Date AD	Name	Content
<i>O. Bodl. 2</i> 1182	71866	Sayce Late 19 <sup>th</sup> century	15 July 89	Μεχφρή(ους) Ὀρου Μεχφ(ρή)ους	Grain tax receipt (upper toparchy)
<i>O. Bodl. 2</i> 614	71305	Sayce Late 19 <sup>th</sup> century	26 July 92	Ἀρχίας Ὀρου Μεχφρή(ο)ς	Receipt for bath- tax (Agorai Borra)
<i>O. Bodl. 2</i> 1191	71875	Sayce Late 19 <sup>th</sup> century	29 Aug. 102 or 103	Μεχπρης Ὀρου (δεκανοῦ)	Grain tax receipts; Mechpres is <i>dekanos</i>
<i>O. Bodl. 2</i> 620	71311	Sayce Late 19 <sup>th</sup> century	6 Aug. 105	Μεκφρῆς Ὀρου	Receipt for dike-tax (Agorai Borra) and for bath-tax
<i>O. Brux.</i> 10 (with BL)	24375	Jean Capart Before 1912	21 Aug. 113	Ὀρος Μεχφρῆτος	Receipt for chaff
<i>O. Leid.</i> <i>Gr. 126</i>	24695	Insinger 1897-1901	21 Dec. 142	Ὀρο(υ) Μεχφρήους Ὀρου	Receipt for watchtower and guard-tax, and other taxes
<i>O. Bodl. 2</i> 1866	72549	Sayce Late 19 <sup>th</sup> century	1-199?	Ὀρου. Ἀρχίας Ὀρου Μεχφρή(ο)ς. Ὀρος Ἀρχίο(υ) Ὀρου. Μεχφρῆ(ς) Ὀσοροῦρ(το)ς.	<i>Dekania</i> -list
<i>O. Bodl. 2</i> 1891	72574	Sayce Late 19 <sup>th</sup> century	100-199	Καμητιο(ς) Ὀρο(υ) Μεχφρή(ο)ς. Φμόις Ὀρου Μεχφρή(ο)ς. (δεκανός) Ὀρος Μεχφρή(ο)ς.	<i>Dekania</i> -list Horos is <i>dekanos</i>
<i>O. Leid.</i> <i>Gr. 308</i>	30010	Insinger 1897-1901	100-199	[Με]χφρῆς Ὀρ[ου] Ὀρος Μεχφρῆ[τος] Ἀρχίας Ὀρου	List of names
<i>O. Leid.</i> <i>Gr. 306</i>	30008	Insinger 1897-1901	100-199	Μεκφρῆς	<i>Dekania</i> -list