

Heron son of Dioskoros

TM [Arch 685](#). Version I (2022)
W. Graham Claytor

Place
Date
Language
Material
Number of texts
Type
Collections
Find/Acquisition

Arsinoites (Fayum), meris of Themistos, [Theadelphia](#)
AD 118 - 148
Greek
Papyrus
4 certain
Family archive (2 generations)
New York, [Columbia University](#); Oslo, [University Library](#); Paris, [Sorbonne, Institut de Papyrologie](#)
Clandestine digging at Batn el-Harit (Theadelphia) ca. 1922

Description

This small archive from Theadelphia consists of four texts acquired under the same circumstances as the archive of Hermas, son of Heron ([TM Arch 569](#)). The Columbia and Oslo papyri derive from the Anglo-American consortium purchases in 1923,¹ while the Graux papyrus was acquired around the same time.

Three papyri belong to Heron son of Dioskoros ([TM Per 255135](#)) and date to the 8th, 10th, and 11th years of Antoninus Pius: [P.Oslo II 36](#) (19 July, 145 CE), [SB IV 7466](#) (= *P.Graux I 6*) (18 Feb., 147 CE), and the unpublished [P.Col. inv. 55a](#) (148 CE). In the Graux papyrus, Heron is said to be the grandson of Herakleides, which allows us to suggest that [P.Oslo III 131](#) (17 Jan., 118 CE) was drawn up for Heron's parents and also belongs to the archive.

In the latter document of 118, written in Theadelphia's *grapheion*, Dioskoros son of Herakleides and his wife Sarapias daughter of Theon receive a loan of 28 drachmas and an advance payment for 1 7/12 artabas of wheat, which they are to repay and deliver after the harvest. Heron would conclude a similar contract nearly 30 years later, accepting an advance for six and a half artabas of wheat in [SB IV 7466](#). These so-called advance sales were functionally cash loans repaid in kind, with interest presumably calculated into the amount to be delivered. Farmers relied on these arrangements and traditional loans to cover their expenses before the harvest.²

That Heron was a public farmer is suggested by [P.Col. inv. 55a](#), a receipt for the *monodesmia chortou*, a money tax assessed on public land.³ He may be found in the tax rolls of the Theadelphia administrative archive ([TM Arch 247](#)), although both his and father's name are common.

Heron also leased a private grove of date palms, as we learn from the *cheirographon* [P.Oslo II 36](#) drawn up through the notary of nearby Euhemereia. He had evidently found the property in unsatisfactory condition, as the previous tenant agrees to quickly rebuild the mud brick wall around the grove, which had been in place when he took over the leasehold.

¹ Acquired from Nahman: H.I. Bell, "Second report on papyri sent by Nahman July 1923," Sep. 3, 1923.

² Cf. the high concentration of loans and advance sales drawn up through the neighboring *grapheion* of Polydeukeia and Sethrenpaai: W.G. Claytor, "[A Schedule of Contracts and a Private Letter: P.Fay. 344](#)," *BASP* 50 (2013), p. 77-121 (TM 25730).

³ F. Reiter, [Die Nomarchen des Arsinoites. Ein Beitrag zum Steuerwesen im römischen Ägypten](#) (Paderborn 2004), p. 204.

Archive texts

[P.Col. inv. 55a](#), [P.Oslo III 131](#), [P.Oslo II 36](#), [SB IV 7466](#)

Text types

Loan + advance sale, advance sale, work contract, tax receipt (incoming documents).