

A Roman Property Declaration from the Michigan Papyrus Collection¹

Sara Mohammad Mohammad El-Said

Ancient European Civilization Department,
Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University, Egypt
saramohammad774.sm@gmail.com

Abstract: The present research is an edition of an unpublished Greek documentary papyrus from the Michigan University collection; it was acquired from Nahman and formed a part of a consignment that reached the University of Michigan in 1923. The document is fragmented into two pieces, and it is a property declaration for a Catoecic land through the records office of the Arsinoites during the second century, it partly preserves the names of the parties, the description of the land, in addition to other clauses which represents the main items of such documents. The verso of the papyrus is a part of a land sale but not the same land.

Keywords: Documentary papyri- property records- Arsinoites.

إعلان ملكية من الفترة الرومانية من مجموعة برديات ميشيجان

سارة محمد محمد السيد

قسم الحضارة الأوروبية القديمة، كلية الآداب، جامعة عين شمس، مصر

saramohammad774.sm@gmail.com

ملخص: هذا البحث عبارة عن نشر بردية وثائقية يونانية غير منشورة من مجموعة جامعة ميشيجان، والتي تم الحصول عليها من نمان، وشكلت جزء من شحنة وصلت إلى جامعة ميشيجان عام ١٩٢٣. الوثيقة مجزأة إلى شذرتين، وهي عبارة عن إعلان ملكية لقطعة أرض عن طريق مكتب السجلات في إقليم أرسينوي خلال القرن الثاني الميلادي، وهي تحتفظ جزئيًا بأسماء أطراف العقد، ووصف الأرض، بالإضافة إلى عبارات أخرى تمثل بنودًا أساسية في مثل هذه الوثائق. الجزء الخلفي من البردية عبارة عن جزء من عقد بيع لقطعة أرض، لكن ليست هي نفسها.

الكلمات الدالة: البرديات الوثائقية - سجلات الممتلكات - إقليم أرسينوي.

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The papyrus P.Mich.Inv.1343 was acquired from Nahman and formed part of a consignment that reached the University of Michigan in 1923. It is fragmented into two pieces. The first fragment A (7.8 x 8.8 cm) is torn from the right, left, and bottom, in addition to, holes gaps, and a slightly large one at the bottom, and horizontal slits. Moreover, there are brown spots on this piece on the right and left sides, which do not affect the clarity of the writing. The second fragment B (6.3 x 8 cm) is broken from the left and the bottom, with intact upper and right margins, and slightly wide holes in the middle. The blank space of the upper margin in the two pieces is 1.8 cm. Furthermore, two *kolleses* in the second fragment, the first one is about 2 cm from the left edge, and the second one is about 3 cm from the previous one. The first piece preserves 16 lines and the other 15 lines.

The text is written with a professional hand in semi-continuous large letters, and close to literary handwriting. It is similar to P.Wisc.I 35 (Theadelphia (Arsinoites); AD 144), PSI III 189 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 157-161?), BGU II 446 (Herakleia? (Arsinoites); AD 169-177). The papyrus might maintain a portion of a regular property declaration ἀπογραφή as it is addressed to the keepers of the property records (l.1), and partial preservation of the declarant (l.2), with her guardian (ll.3-4). The hypomnematic introduction τῷ δεῖνι παρὰ τοῦ δεῖνος is one of the features of property declarations in general. (cf. P.Ryl.II 108, ll.1-3 (Hermopolis; AD 110-111), P.Lond.III 940, ll.1-5 (Hermopolis; AD 226), P.Lond.III 942, ll.1-3 (Hermopolis; AD 227), and the location of the plot (ll.4-5), the size of it (l.5), and its kind (l.6) after the declaration clause (l.4)¹.

The construction of this kind of documents, according to the parallels, (cf. P.Eirene.III 1 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 155-168), P.Flor.I 67 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); after AD 161-169), PSI III 189 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 157-161?) is as follows: firstly, mentioning the records keepers and the declarants, then, the declaration clause, and the description of the land and its location.

It is noteworthy that, the plot's location is recorded around the village of Herakleia in *meris* of Themistos (TM Geo 2366). Still, the contract is registered through the record office of Ptolemais Arabon (ll.8-9) which was located in the *meris* of Herakleides (TM Geo 285). This could be attributed to the reduction in the number of the γραφεῖα by the end of the second century. The last references to these offices in the Arsinoites date between AD 160 and 170, with a few exceptions in places like Kerkesoucha and Ptolemais Arabon, so, our document might belong to this period. Notably, Ptolemais Arabon is the last documented location with a γραφεῖον in the Arsinoites, as seen in P.Col.X 274, l.10 (Arsinoites; AD 209), making it the only known γραφεῖον in the region during that period². Therefore, the current papyrus is, so far, the only declaration

¹ About the form of regular declarations, see Sandra Avogadro, "Le ΑΠΟΓΡΑΦΑΙ di proprietà nell' Egitto greco-romano," *Aegyptus* 15 (1935): 180.

² W. Graham Claytor, "The Municipalization of Writing in Roman Egypt," in *Literacy in Ancient Everyday Life*. (Boston: de Gruyter, 2018), 326-327; idem, "The Central Manager of the Arsinoite Notariate in the Late Second Century," *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete* 66 2 (2020): 334; and Micaela Langellotti, "Record-Offices," in *Villages in Roman Egypt, in Village Institutions in Egypt in the Roman to Early Arab Period*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020): 104-105.

addressed to the abovementioned keepers from Ptolemais Arabon, as most of their documents originate from Ptolemais Euergetis, with the exception of one papyrus from Soknopaiu Nesos (cf. SB X 10294 (Soknopaiu Nesos (Arsinoites); AD 157).

→

[Ἴσι]δώρω καὶ Ἀνταρίωνι τῷ καὶ Ἀρ[σινόω γεγυμ(νασιαρχηκόσι) βιβ(λιοφύλαξι) ἐγκτή]σεων Ἀρσι(νοίτου)

[π]αρὰ Ἀπολλοδώρας τῆς καὶ Ἀπο[±17 Π]τολεμαίου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου(υ)

[κ]εκοσμητευκότος ἀναγραφομένη[ς ἐπ' ἀμφοδ(ου) ±9 (name) τ]όπων μετὰ κυρίου τοῦ συγ

[γεν]οῦς τοῦ υἱοῦ Διδύμου κεκοσμη[τευκότος ἀπογρά]φομαι δι' ὑμῶ[ν π]ερὶ κώμην

5 [Ἡρακλ]εῖαν τῆς Θεμίστου μερίδος δὶμ[οιρον μέρος κοινὸν κ]αὶ ἀδιαίρετον [τ]ῶν ὑπογε-

[γραμμ]ένων κλήρου κατοικικοῦ ἀρου[ρῶν ±11 ἀ]πὸ ἀρουρῶν εἴ[κοσι μιᾶς κα η-

[± 5] ἡμίτους μέρους ἐκ τοῦ με[± 18]ν εἴκοσι μιᾶν ὑπερ παρακε-

[χώρ]ημαι κατὰ δημόσιον χρημ[ατισμὸν τελειωθέντα] διὰ γραφείου Πολεμαί[δο-]

[ς Ἀρά]βω(ν) τῷ ἐγεστῶτι μηνὶ Παῦ[νι ± 18]. πεντακ[ο]σίων παρ[ἀ]

10 [Διοσ]κόρου καὶ Ἡλιόδωρου ἀμφοτέρων ±16] Φιλοξένου [±9]

[Ἀπο]λλωνίου Ἱερακείου μὴ α[± 20] εἰς αὐτοῦ[ς] ἀπ[±9]

[±5]ς κατὰ μητέρα αὐτ[±18 Σα]ραπίων [±9]

[±10 ἀ]μφοδου . [±2] .. [± 20 τελ]έσματα [±9]

[± 10]ν ἐπτά σ[± 20]του ἐκ το[ῦ ±9]

15 [±14]σω ο ημ[± 20]τους διὰ [±9]

[±15] οὔτ[± 35]

Translation: II.1-11

To Isidorus and Antarion also called Arsinous the former gymnasiarchs and the keepers of the records of the Arsinoites from Apollodora alias Apo[] ... Ptolemaios son of Ptolemaios former kosmetes registered in ... with her guardian her akin ... son of Didymos, former kosmetes, I register through you around the village Herakleia in the division of Themistos two-thirds aroua common, undivided and undermentioned Catoecic allotment half-share in ... twenty-one I have ceded in virtue of a public deed executed through record-office of Ptolemais Arabon ... in the present month (Payni) ... five hundred from Dioskoros and Heliodoros, both together, sons of ... Filoxenus ... district of the Hawk Shrine of Apollonios ...

Commentary:

II.1 [Ἴσι]δώρω καὶ Ἀνταρίωνι τῷ καὶ Ἀρ[σινόω γεγυμ(νασιαρχηκόσι) βιβ(λιοφύλαξι) ἐγκτή]σεων Ἀρσι(νοίτου): Both Isidorus and Antarion are mentioned in four papyri from the second half of the second century as keepers of the property records of the Arsinoites, and also ex-gymnasiarchs in four papyri from Ptolemais Euergetis and one papyrus from Soknopaiu Nesos. (cf. P.Eirene.III 1, II.2-3 (AD 155-168) Ἴσιδώρω καὶ

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Ἀ[νταρίων]ι τῷ καὶ Ἀ[ρ]σινόῳ [γεγυμ(νασιαρχηκόσι)] βιβλιοφύλαξιν ἐ[γκτ(ήσεων) Ἀρσι(νοίτου)], P.Flor.I 67, ll.34-35 (after AD 161-169), PSI III 189, ll.1-2 (AD 157-161?), SB X 10294, ll.3-5 (Soknopaiu Nesos (Arsinoites); AD 157). Through this period the βιβλιοφύλακες ἐγκτήσεων were chosen from the class of ex-gymnasiarchs. (see Naphtali Lewis, “A Note on the Recruitment of 'bibliophylakes enkteseon',” in *on Government and Law in Roman Egypt*. (Atlanta/ Georgia: Scholars Press, 1995): 105) Moreover, Antarion the former gymnasiarch is mentioned in one papyrus as a lessor (see Pieter Johannes Sijpesteijn and Klaas A. Worp, “Einige Papyri aus den Giessener Papyrussammlungen IV,” *Aegyptus* 56 (1976): 31; cf. SB XIV 11603, ll.1-2 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 157-159).

Applying to the βιβλιοφύλακες ἐγκτήσεων was the second step after writing the contract, and their job was to examine the submitted declarations to make sure that there was no dispute over the mentioned property and to provide the consent declaration, as the clerks could not implement the contract without the approval of the βιβλιοφύλακες. This system of the registration of land sale or cession contracts started after the second half of the first century AD after the separation of property records from public records. The property records also have an archival function by being a warehouse of land register files that contain the submitted property declaration documents. (see David M. Ratzan, “Contract Norms and Contract Enforcement in Graeco-Roman Egypt” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2011), 9; Uri Yiftach-Firanko, “Metepigraphê: Ptolemaic and Roman Policies on the Alienation of Allotment Land,” in *Sale and Community: Documents from the Ancient World. Individuals' Autonomy and State Interference in the Ancient World*. (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2015): 133-134; A. Jördens, “Öffentliche Archive und römische Rechtspolitik,” in *Tradition and Transformation: Egypt under Roman Rule*. (Boston: Brill, 2010): 160; Thomas Kruse, “Archives and Registration in Roman Egypt,” in *Law and Legal Practice in Egypt from Alexander to the Arab Conquest*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 70; and Emil Kiessling, “Ein Beitrag Zum Grundbuchrecht,” *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 15 (1965): 77 and 82).

Property declarations are divided into two categories regular and general, or as Kiessling named them ordinary and extraordinary. The first is a declaration of recently obtained property to correct and supplement διάστρομα (the abstract of title deeds in the land registry), while the other is the one of every property acquired at a specific time required by the governor to revise the land register. (see Emil Kiessling, “Ein Beitrag Zum Grundbuchrecht Im Hellenistischen Ägypten,”: 81-82; for more information about the procedures of registering properties, see François Lerouxel, “Marriage and Asymmetric Information on the Real Estate Market in Roman Egypt,” in *Managing Information in the Roman Economy*. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020): 135-140; Thomas Kruse, “Archives and Registration in Roman Egypt,”: 69-71; and François Lerouxel, “The βιβλιοθήκη ἐγκτήσεων and Transaction Costs in the Credit Market of Roman Egypt (30 B.C.E. – ca. 170 C. E.),” in *Law and Transaction Costs in the Ancient Economy*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015): 180).

1.2 Ἀπολλοδώρας τῆς καὶ Ἀπο[±17]: This name appeared in the papyrus once (about the interchange between ο and ω, see Francis Thomas Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods, vol.1* (Milano: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino-La Goliardica, 1975): 275-277; and cf. P.Lips.I 97, col.13, l.21 (Hermonthis; AD 338). According to the number of the missing letters the supplement

of this sentence can be Ἀπο[λλωναρίου θυγατρὸς], furthermore, the Greek name Ἀπολλωνάριον is common in the Arsinoites (cf. W.Chr. 220, l.12 (Arsinoites; AD 117), BGU I 56, col.2 l.3 (Arsinoites; AD 150-199), PSI III 189, l.2 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 157-161?), P.Berl.Leihg.I 17, l.12 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 164).

l.3 [κ]εκοσμητευκότος: The use of the participle as an adjective for ex-officials usually emphasizes the dignity that follows the assumption of the office, and it means that they have accomplished their duties, therefore remain to have an honorable status in the society. It continued to be common until the third century AD, and McKay suggests that using it might be stopped because of modifications in the administrative system more than linguistic changes (see K. L. McKay, “On the Perfect and Other Aspects in the Greek Non-Literary Papyri,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 27 (1980): 37 (note 64); and idem, “The Use of the Ancient Greek Perfect Down to the Second Century A.D.,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 12 (1965): 13).

ἀναγραφομένη[ς ἐπ’ ἀμφοδ(ου) ±9 (name) τ]όπων: According to the number of the missing letters the name of the quarter might be Διονυσίου (cf. PSI III 189, l.3 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 157-161?).

ll.3-4 μετὰ κυρίου τοῦ συγ | [γεν]οῦς: The μ is partly erased, and the shape of ρ is different from the rest of the text as it looks like sigma. The last six letters (l.3 τοῦ συγ) of this sentence are not clear due to the fading of the ink, and the supplement of it is based on another document (cf. P.Prag.I 20 R, ll.9-10 (Dikaiu Nesos (Arsinoites); AD 159).

l.4 [ἀπογρά]φομαι δι’ ὑμῶ[ν]: The supplement of this sentence is based on another declaration (cf. P.Mich.IX 542, l.6 (Karani (Arsinoites); AD 100-212) ἀπογράφομαι διὰ ὑμῶν.

Διδύμου κεκοσμη[τευκότος]: He might be the former κοσμητῆς and bank owner, who is attested in five papyri from the Arsinoites in the same period of the current papyrus (cf. P.Bas.II 19, l.4-5 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 141), P.Münch. III.1 81, l.5-6 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 142), CPR I 15, l.4-5 (Soknopaiu Nesos (Arsinoites); AD 149), P.Muench III.1 101, l.2-3 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 150), P.Stras.IV 204, l.6-7 (Arsinoites; AD 161-169). According to Claytor, he is also mentioned in P.Lond.II 336, l.6 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 167) but without the title of former kosmetes and his bank located in (l.6 Φρέμμει) so, he likely another person. (see Sabine R. Huebner, et al., *Papyri of the University Library of Basel (P.Bas. II)* (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2020): 93).

l.5 [Ἡρακλ]είαν: Herakleia (TM Geo 772) is situated at the entrance of a small canyon, in which the canal runs coming from the city of el-Fayum. According to Römer, its name comes from deme Herakleios or directly from the semi-god Herakles, it also had obvious linkage with Soknopaiou Nesos by giving its inhabitants good real estate. Therefore, in the first century, the village and Soknopaiou Nesos and Neilopolis shared a γραφεῖον. (see Deborah Hobson, “The Village of Heraklia in the Arsinoite Nome,” *BASP* 22 (1985): 101-115; eadem, “The Inhabitants of Heraklia,” *BASP* 23 (1986): 99-123; eadem, “Agricultural Land and Economic Life in Soknopaiou Nesos,” *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 21 (1984): 101; and Katja Mueller, Places and Spaces in the Themistou Meris (Fayum / Graeco-Roman Egypt: (Locating Settlements by Multidimensional Scaling of Papyri), *Ancient Society* 33

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(2003): 117; Cornelia Römer, et al., *The Fayoum Survey Project the Themistou Meris* (Leuven: Peeters, 2019): 315-317).

[κοινὸν κ]αὶ ἀδιαίρετον: The letters α, ι, and ρ in ἀδιαίρετον are partly missing due to a horizontal lacuna, so just the upper part occurs, and the ν is also uncertain because of a thin slit on the left side of it and part of a wide lacuna. The supplement of this phrase is based on other contracts from the same period. The supplement of this clause is based on another declaration (cf. PSI III 189 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 157-161?).

1.6 κλήρου κατοικικοῦ: The Catoecic land appeared in the late period of the Ptolemies who gave these lands to settlers of soldiers and cavalrymen, and it remained under this name until the end of the third century. In the Roman era, it couldn't be bought by a regular sale contract but conveyanced by παραχώρησις (cession) and had different procedures than the other private immovables. (see Jane Rowlandson, *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 179-180; Andrew Monson, *From the Ptolemies to the Romans Political and Economic Change in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 95; Alan K. Bowman and Dominic Rathbone, "Cities and Administration in Roman Egypt," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992): 110; Amin Benaissa, "Sixteen Letters to Agoranomi from Late First Century Oxyrhynchus," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 170 (2009): 158; and Tomasz Derda, A Roman Province in the Eastern Mediterranean, in *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*, (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2019): 67; Christelle Fischer-Bovet, *Army and Society in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 235).

μῦς: The upper part of the first three letters is missing and also the right part of σ because of a wide lacuna.

1.7-8 παρακε-[[χώρ]ημα: The upper part of η is partly missing due to the left tear.

1.8 κατὰ δημόσιον χρημ[ατισμὸν τελειωθέντα]: This clause is common in property declarations (cf. PSI III 189, 1.8 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 157-161?), P.Flor.I 67 col.1, 1.10-11 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); after AD 161-169), ZPE 186 (2013), 1.7 (Karanis (Arsinoites); AD 222-235).

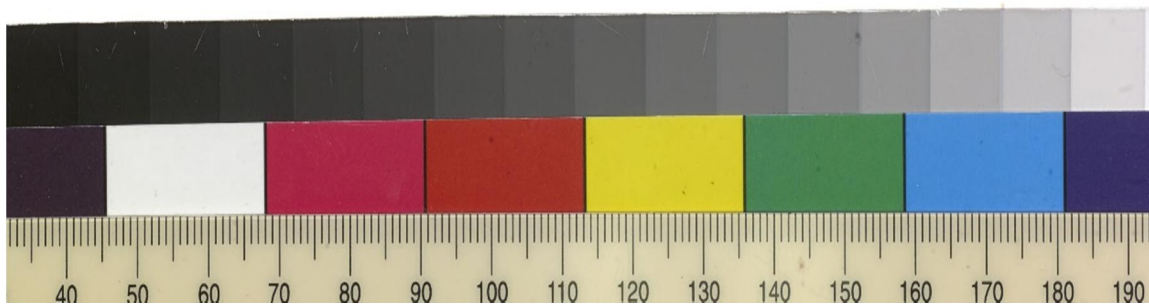
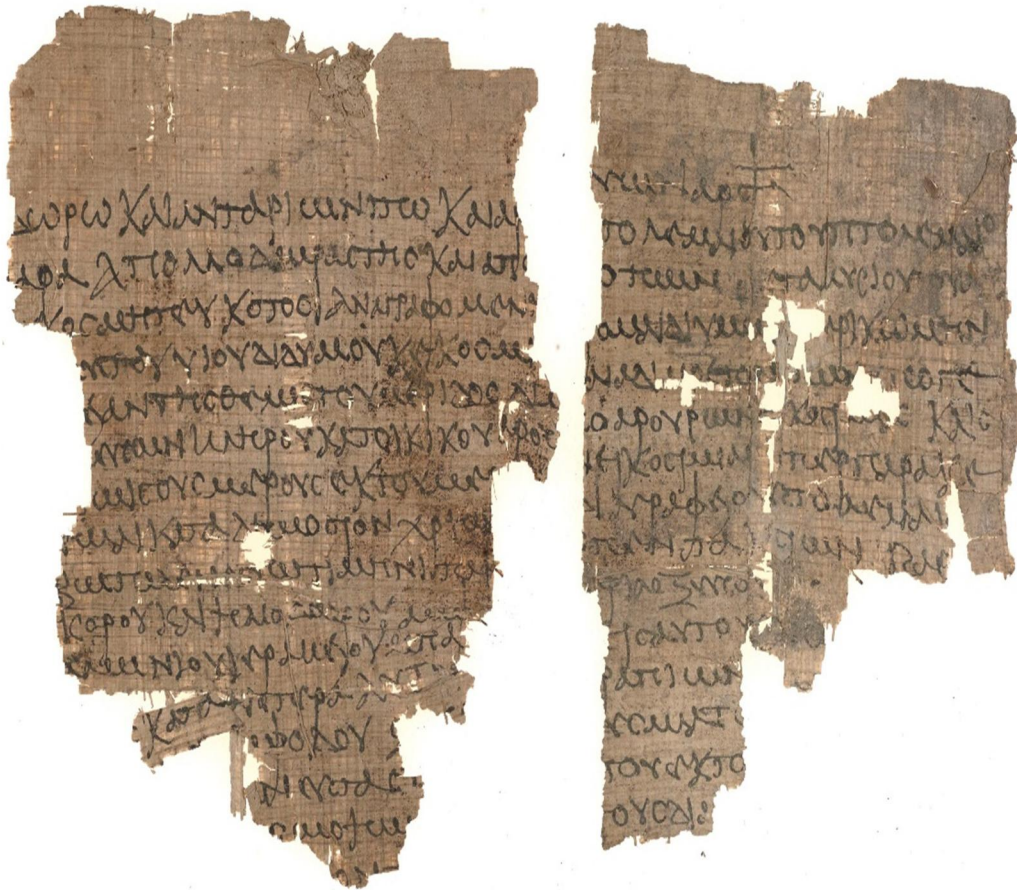
1.9 τῷ ἐνεστῶτι μηνὶ Παῦ[νι]: The first five letters of ἐνεστῶτι are not sure due to a thin horizontal cut passing through them, however, they are recognizable from the top and the bottom. This clause may refer to the time between the purchase and the notification. (about the periodicity of registrations, see Avogadro, "Le ΑΠΟΓΡΑΦΑΙ,": 190).

[± 18]. πεντακ[ο]σίων: The right part of κ and the letter ο are erased. This might be the price of the plot, and according to the number of the missing letters the supplement of this sentence can be [ἔξ τιμῆς ἀργυρίου δραχμῶν] (cf. P.Flor.I 67 col.2, 1.41 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); after AD 161-169).

1.10 Ἡλιοδώρου: This name is common in the Arsinoites through the second century (cf. P.Oxf. 2, 1.44 (Arsinoites; AD 141), SB XVI 12297, 1.3 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 176), P.Petaus 126, 1.27 (Arsinoites; AD 184), SB VI 9619, 1.3 (Ptolemais Euergetis (Arsinoites); AD 184).

Φιλοξένου: A common name in the Arsinoites through the second century (cf. SB VIII 9768, 1.3 (Theadelphia? (Arsinoites); AD 122), BGU IX 1893, col.6, 1.150 (Theadelphia (Arsinoites); AD 149), P.Ross.Georg.II 28, 1.30 (Arsinoites; AD 163), P.Louvre III 181, col.2, 1.2 (Karanis (Arsinoites); AD 176-200).

1.11 [Ἀπο]λλωνίου Ἱερακείου: Hawk Shrine of Apollonios is a district in the Arsinoites (TM Geo 257) mentioned in many papyri often from the period from the first century to the third century. (see Sergio Daris, "I quartieri di Arsinoe in età romana,"



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