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Copres, a Village *tesserarius* of Pharbaithos, in the Arsinoite Nome

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- §1 The papyrus was sold to Heidelberg University by K. Reinhardt, the first Dragoman of the German Imperial General Consulate in Cairo, who purchased it in 1896.¹ The provenance is unknown, but the village name Pharbaithos points to the Arsinoite.² The verso is blank.

 **P.Heid. inv. G 263**

14 (h) × 6.5 (w)
4th century

Arsinoite nome (?)

¹ See in detail  **Seider 1964**: passim. Most recently about the history of the acquisition also in  **Deac 2024**, §1.

² <https://doi.org/10.11588/diglit.67024> accessed on October 3rd 2024 (link embedded in edition header). 'Inhalt: Liste; Steuer; Liste mit Namen von Steuerzahlern u. ihren Zahlungen. Militär: tessararius. Personennamen: Kopres. Herkunft: Arsinoites(?)'.

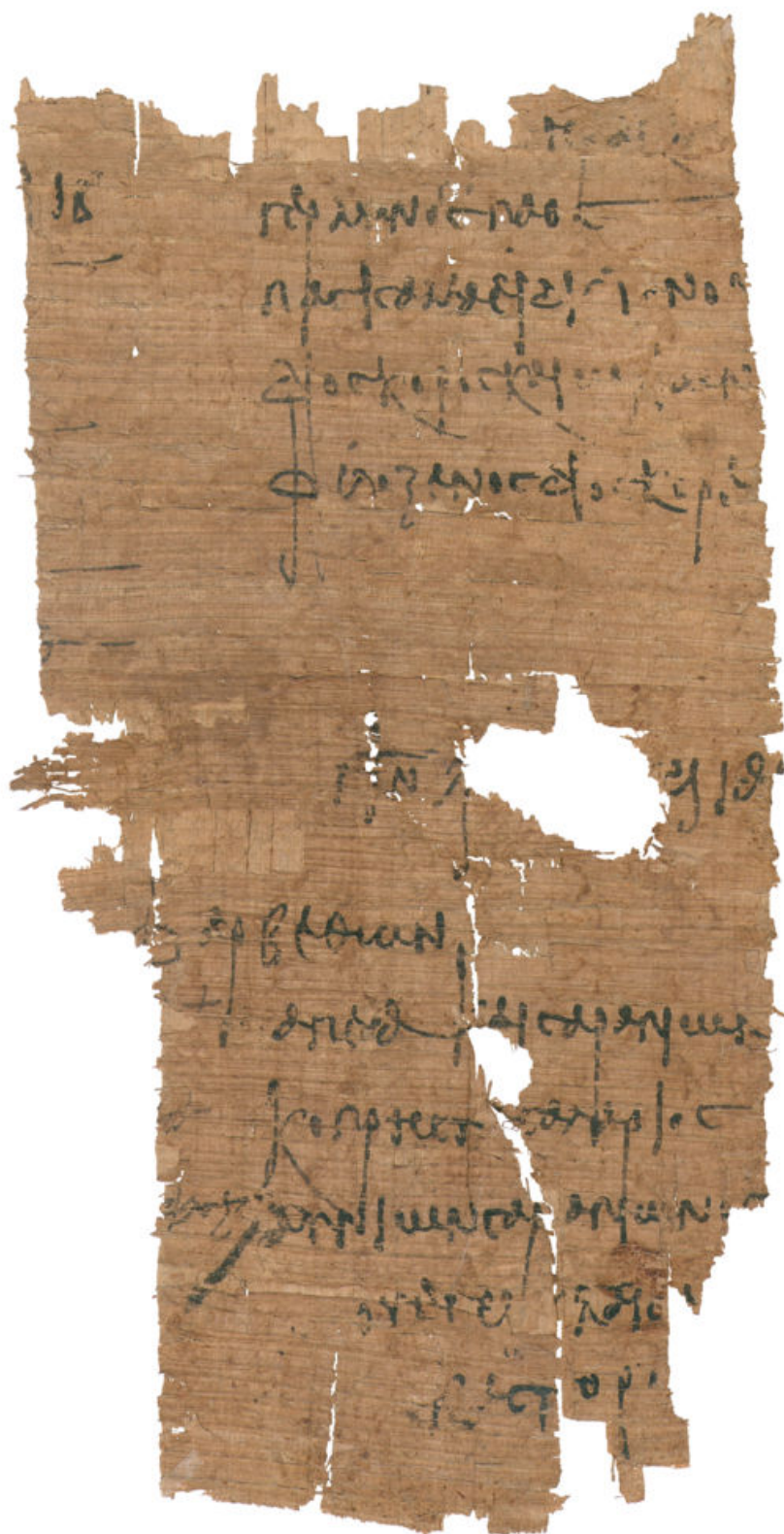


Fig. 1: P. Heid. inv. G 263. Photo: Elke Fuchs; © Institut für Papyrologie, Universität Heidelberg.

- §2 The light brown papyrus contains remains of two columns. Col. I preserves the end of several lines and is separated from the next column by an *intercolumnium* of 1.5 cm. The extant part of col. II has parts of 12 lines written in black ink. The lines are incomplete, with some names and numbers missing on

the right. The text is written along the fibers. The endings of the lines in col. I are in a slightly finer ink, perhaps in a different hand from col. II.

- §3 Although the papyrus is fragmentary, it appears to be from a tax register or account, or similar document. The bottom half of col. II refers to individuals from the village of Pharbaitos in the Arsinoite nome. The upper half might refer to individuals from another settlement of the Arsinoite nome.
- §4 Pharbaitos ([TM Geo 1750](#)) was located in the Herakleides district, somewhere near the village of Persea ([TM Geo 1701](#)). This is only the second occurrence of this village name in papyri securely dated to the 4th century, the previous one being in a list of payments from Karanis, perhaps also a tax register or account ([SB 22 15825](#)).
- §5 Given what appears to be a total amount in λίτραι, οὐγκίαί and γράμματα in l. 6 of the second column, one might interpret the text as referring to either gold or silver. The next section concerns residents of Pharbaitos, including a Sarapion, Copres the village *tesserarius*, and Aunion.
- §6 One of the most interesting aspects revolves around Copres, the *tesserarius* of the village of Pharbaitos. The office of *tesserarius* was a compulsory public service about which we know little. It is attested in the fourth century, which aligns with our document. The semi-cursive, rather practiced and upright handwriting points to this same period. What has been established so far, based on the available papyrological sources, is that this office lasted for six months, individuals like Copres being appointed either at the beginning of the year (Thoth 1) or on Phamenoth 1.³ N. Lewis notes that ‘a confusing variety of duties is attested in the documents’ related to the *tesserarius* ([Lewis 1997: 47](#)). A.E.R. Boak had earlier noted that the *tesserarius* ‘was a civilian village official appointed primarily to supervise the collection of certain public imposts levied upon the villages, particularly perhaps the levies imposed to meet the needs of the military establishment’ ([Boak 1951: 333](#); see also [Berkes 2017: 203](#)). Apparently, as N. Lewis points out, literacy was not required for this office ([Lewis 1997: 47](#)), as the best known *tesserarius*, Aurelius Isidorus from Karanis, who held the position around 313 – early 314, was himself illiterate, as is revealed by a number of documents from his archive ([TM archID 34](#)).

³ However, recent research has suggested that the office spanned an entire year, and that the *tesserarius* was appointed by the *praepositus* after being nominated by the komarch ([Solieman 2012: 715-716](#)).

I

[-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-] ιβ [-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-]
 5 [-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-]θ
 [-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-]
 10 [-ca.?-]
 [-ca.?-] Φιλοξ()
 [-ca.?-]
 [[--- --- ---]]

II

[[--- --- ---]]
 [-ca.6-] [..] Ἡρακλ [-ca.?-]
 Γερμανὸς Παδὸς [-ca.?-]
 Πᾶσις Ἀμαει δι(ὰ) Ἰανου[αρίου -ca.?-]
 Διόσκορος καὶ Ὠρίων [-ca.?-]
 5 Φιλόξενος Διοσκόρου [-ca.?-]
 γίν(ονται) λί(τραι) [οὐ(γκίαι)] γρ(άμματα) ια [-ca.?-]
 Φαρβέθων
 Ἀπέα καὶ Σαραπίων [-ca.?-]
 Κοπρῆς τεσαλάριος [-ca.?-]
 10 Αὐνίων Σαραπίωνος [-ca.?-]
 ... γρ(άμματα) . καί [-ca.?-]
 Καστορ [-ca.?-]
 [[--- --- ---]]

II.2 I Παῶτος **II.3** ἱανου[αρίου papyrus **II.7** I Φαρβαίθων **II.8** I Ἀπία **II.9** I τεσσεράριος

[...] son of Herakl[...] | Germanos, son of Paos [...] | Pasis, son of Amaeis, through Iannuar[ius?...], | Dioskoros and Horion [...] | Philoxenos, son of Disokoros [...]. | [...] total: [x] pounds, [x ounces], 11 grams [...] | (The village of) Pharbaithos [...] | Apia and Sarapion [...] | Copres, *tesserarius* [...] | Aunion, son of Sarapion [...] | [...] | (son of) Kastor/Kastorion [...].

Col. I

- §7 **1-12** Except for Φιλοξ() in l. 11, traces of letters are visible. The abbreviated Φιλοξ() might refer to the name Φιλόξ(ενος) (☞ **TM Nam 3267**) or one of its variants, perhaps indicating the same person as in Col. 2, l. 5.

Col. II

- §8 **1** Above omicron and sigma from Germanos one can distinguish two descending strokes which must be part of the first name in this line. For the second name of the line, which is heavily effaced, one can observe a vertical stroke and parts of the diagonal strokes (especially the descending one) which stands for kappa; traces of the next letter are visible as well, namely a part of the left diagonal stroke of a letter that might be interpreted as a lambda. Thus, the name should be a form, for instance, of Ἡρακλῆς (☞ **TM Nam 4560**) or Ἡρακλείδης (☞ **TM Nam 4550**). A second way to construe it which cannot be completely disregarded is with Ἡρακλεῖ[δου μερίδος].
- §9 **2** Παός instead of Παῶς appears with omicron instead of omega only once more, in the nominative, in a fiscal diary from Dionysias, in the Arsinoite nome (☞ **SB 26 16560.107**). However, the name here should have been in genitive since it must have been a patronymic.
- §10 **3** Ἀμαεῖ is likely genitive of the name Ἀμαῖς (☞ **TM Nam 1926**). The end of the line is quite effaced, which makes reading the second name difficult. Before it, the preposition διὰ can be read without alpha, an abbreviation stroke being visible after iota; here one can observe a diaeresis over the beginning of the following name, likely Ἰανου[αρίου] (☞ **TM Nam 9608**).
- §11 **6** The closest analogy is an unprovenanced inventory of silver tableware dated to the 1st century, which on two occasions states after γίνονται the number of λίτραι, οὐγκίαι and γράμματα (☞ **BGU 3 781** col. I, l.9 and col. VI, l.5). The same succession of λίτραι, οὐγκίαι and γράμματα is to be found in an early 4th century assessment of gold and silver (☞ **P.Oxy. 46 3307. 26**), in accounts of receipts and expenditures (☞ **P.Oxy. 16 1918**, esp. recto col. I, l. 15) from the Apion archive (☞ **TM Arch 15**) and in an account issued by the Antaiopolis office of finance (☞ **P.Cair. Masp. 1 67057. 19–22**), part of the Dioskoros archive (☞ **TM Arch 72**).
- §12 **7** Φαρβέθων is to be understood as the genitive plural. It occurs in this form in a register of a tax collector from Philadelphia (☞ **SB 20 14576. 516**); in two other instances in the same document the village name appears as Φαρβαίθ(ων) (☞ **SB 20 14576. 540, 549**); for this very common interchange – αι/ε – see ☞ **Gignac 1976: 192–193**.
- §13 **10** The large oblique stroke before Aunion looks like a checkmark and belongs to col. II.
- §14 **11** It is tempting to read οὐ(γκίαι) δὲ γρ(άμματα) καὶ .[, but there are no good parallels for οὐ(γκίαι) being abbreviated this way. Only slightly possible, and certainly less attractive, is the personal name Οὐνέρριος (l. Οὐννέρριος) (☞ **TM Nam 10910**); outside Egypt the name is understood in an epitaph discovered at Thessalonike, in Macedonia, dated between the mid 2nd and mid 3rd century (☞ **Adam-Velene and Sverkos 2001: 24–26**, no. 5; **AE 2001, 1773**; **BE 2002, 278**; **SEG 51, 895**).
- §15 **12** There are three possibilities for the name in this line: Ῥάστορο[ς], the patronymic of a person named in the preceding line; Ῥαστορί[ων]; or Ῥαστορί[ωνος].

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