

CAPInv. 1316: hoi en Philadelpheia Arabes

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Egypt
ii. Nome	Arsinoites (00)
iii. Site	Philadelpheia

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	οἱ ἐν Φιλαδελφείαι Ἄραβες (PSI V 538, ll. 1-1)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>hoi en Philadelpheia Arabes</i>

III. DATE

i. Date(s)	258 (?) - 256 (?) BC
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IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY

ii. Name elements	Ethnic:	<i>Arabes, Arabs</i>
	Geographical:	Philadelpheia

V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	PSI V 538 (258-256 BC?)
Online Resources	PSI V 538 TM 2160
i.a. Source type(s)	Papyrological source(s)
i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Request in Greek to the <i>dioiketes</i> Apollonios by the <i>dekadarchai</i> of the Arabs of the village of Philadelpheia for the appointment of an <i>epistates</i> .

i.c. Physical format(s)

Papyrus.

VII. ORGANIZATION

ii. Leadership

ἐπιστάτης, *epistates* (l. 2). It seems that the main characteristic in order to be fit for the post was to be able to afford the expenses of the charge (l. 4: χρεία, *chreiai*).

Known practice of appointment

The Arabs of Philadelpheia forwarded the names of Sostratos and Maron, two of their *presbyteroi* who could afford the charge (ll. 4-5; the actual practice of nomination is unknown), to the *dioiketes* Apollonios, who is asked by them to appoint one of them as their *epistates*.

iii. Members

Among the membership of the Arabs there was a category called πρεσβύτεροι, *presbyteroi*: τινες ἐν τοῖς παρ' ἡμῖν Ἄραψιν πρεσβύτεροι, *tines en tois par' hemin Arapsin presbyteroi* (ll. 3-4). If the interpretation of the passage is correct, the group may enlist other members and requests the *dioiketes* that they be officially registered as such: δεόμεθα (l. δεόμεθα) οὖν σου γράψαι | Ζώιλοι ὅπως ἂν οὖς ἂν προσαγάγωμεν τούτους καταχωρίζειν (l. καταχωρίζει), *deometha oun sou grapsai Zoiloi hopos an hous an prosagagomen toutous katachorizei* (ll. 4-5).

iv. Officials

δεκαδάρχαι, *dekadarchai* (l.1). There were at least two *dekadarchai*, Demetrios and Petechon.

VIII. PROPERTY AND POSSESSIONS

i. Treasury/Funds

As there is mention of some salary (ll. 6, 7: ὀψόνιον, *opsonion*) being paid, it is possible that the group had a treasury.

iii. Income

The Arabs mentioned in their request to the *dioiketes* that he should see that their monthly salary (*opsonion*) is paid to them, as they rely on it (ll. 6-7). It is uncertain whether such a salary constituted the communal income of the group or was rather the income of the single individuals.

IX. MEMBERSHIP

ii. Gender

Men

Note

All the attested names are male

iii. Age

Adults
Elders

Note

Given the presence of *presbyteroi* the group must have included at least adults and elders (however, the term may in fact only refer to relative and not actual age).

iv. Status

The groups seems to gather people with the same ethno-cultural background (at least originally?). The Arabs are also a privileged tax category in Ptolemaic tax-registers (see Clarysse - Thompson 2006: II 159-61) and may in fact be used as a professional-designation for police corps (see also Honigman 2002: esp. 61-9).

vi. Proper names and physical features

Δημήτριος καὶ Πετεχῶν δεκαδάρχαι τῶν ἐμ Φιλαδελφείαι Ἀράβων.
Σώστρατον
Μάρωνα

XII. NOTES

iii. Bibliography

Clarysse, W., and Thompson, D. J. (2006), *Counting the People in Hellenistic Egypt*. Cambridge.
Honigman, S. (2002), 'Les divers sens de l'ethnique Ἀραῦ dans les sources documentaires grecques d'Égypte', *AncSoc* 32: 43-72.

XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association

Possible

Note

The Arabs of the village of Philadelpheia possessed an organised structure with officials (*dekadarchai*), a complex level of membership (with *presbyteroi* alongside 'common' members) and with a person in charge of their affairs (*epistates*); they may have had common funds, also deriving from their salary. It is therefore possible that they formed a private association (perhaps of shepherds, as sheep-farming seems to be one of the two typical occupations – next to policing – of Arabs in the Zenon archive, to which this text belongs). However, it seems in fact more likely that the Arabs in question represented a police force and not an association, probably employed as private guards by the *dioiketes* Apollonios to patrol his *dorea* in Philadelpheia.