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CAPInv. 1292: **hoi nekrotaphoi**

I. LOCATION

i. Geographical area	Egypt
ii. Nome	Oxyrhynchites (U19)
iii. Site	Oxyrhynchus (?)

II. NAME

i. Full name (original language)	οἱ νεκροτάφοι (P.Ryl. II 65, l. 3)
ii. Full name (transliterated)	<i>hoi nekrotaphoi</i>

III. DATE

i. Date(s)	95 (?) - 67 (?) BC
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IV. NAME AND TERMINOLOGY

ii. Name elements	Professional:	<i>nekrotaphoi</i>
iii. Descriptive terms	ἔθνος, <i>ethnos</i>	
Note	<i>Ethnos</i> : P.Ryl. II 65, ll. 3 and 6.	

V. SOURCES

i. Source(s)	P.Ryl. II 65 (24 Mecheir = 1 March 67 BC)
Note	The year (67 BC) is uncertain, as the reigning Sovereign is not specified.
Online Resources	P.Ryl. II 65 TM 5284
i.a. Source type(s)	Papyrological source(s)

i.b. Document(s) typology & language/script	Greek judicial proceedings and sentence of the <i>chrematistai</i> (i.e. Greek court of justice) against some members of the <i>ethnos</i> of the <i>nekrotaphoi</i> who did not abide by the provisions of the rules of the <i>ethnos</i> concerning the division of shares for the burial of bodies. The <i>ethnos</i> had petitioned the authority in order to seek justice against their wrong-doing members.
i.c. Physical format(s)	Papyrus.

VI. BUILT AND VISUAL SPACE

ii. References to buildings/objects	Αἰγυπτία συγγραφή, <i>Aigyptia syngraphe</i> l. 3 σώματα, <i>somata</i> l. 9
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VII. ORGANIZATION

iii. Members	The members of this group are called οἱ ἐκ τοῦ ἔθνους νεκροτ[άφοι, <i>hoi ek tou ethnous nekrotaphoi</i> (l. 3). If we are to take the expression literally, we would have to conclude that: 1) the <i>ethnos</i> was formed by <i>nekrotaphoi</i> and members coming from other backgrounds; and/or 2) there were some <i>nekrotaphoi</i> who did not (have to) belong to the <i>ethnos</i> .
vi. Laws and rules	The <i>nekrotaphoi</i> belonging to the <i>ethnos</i> signed a contract or group's regulations written in Demotic (Αἰγυπτία συγγραφή, <i>Aigyptia syngraphe</i> , l. 3). The document regulated the division of shares of each member in the business of the burial of corpses which had been agreed upon by the members themselves and was registered in the local <i>grapheion</i> or record office on 9 Phamenoth of the nineteenth regnal year of an unmentioned Sovereign (it should be Ptolemy X Alexander I and Cleopatra Berenice = 23 March 95 BC. Ll. 3-5: ἦσαν πάντες οἱ ἐκ τοῦ ἔθνους νεκροτ[άφοι τε]θειμένοι Αἰγυπτίαν συγγραφὴν [ἀναγραφεῖς]αγ [τῶ]ι ιθ (ἔτει) Φαμενώθ θ διὰ τοῦ ἐν τῇ[ι αὐτῇ] πόλει γραφίου περὶ ἀποδιαστολῆς [τ]ῶν [ὑπ' αὐτ]ῶν σ[υμ]φωνηθέντων μερισμῶν, <i>esan pantes hoi ek tou ethnous nekrotaphoi tethemenoi Aigyptian syngraphen anagrapheisan toi 19 (etei) Phamenoth 9 dia tou en tei autei polei grapheiou peri apodiastoles ton hyp'auton symphonethenton merismon</i>). Some members did not abide by the shares agreed and refused to pay the relevant fines. Therefore, almost thirty years after the registration of the contract/regulations, on 24 Mecheir of the fourteenth year of another unmentioned ruler (it should be Ptolemy XII Auletes = 1 March 67 BC), the <i>ethnos</i> wrote a petition (l. 8: ὑπόμνημα, <i>hypomnema</i>) to the authority to ask for justice. The proceedings of the judicial sentence state quite clearly how the injunctions and dispositions had been agreed upon by the members of the <i>ethnos</i> in the contract/regulations which had been entered voluntarily by the members; these regulations were considered valid and binding by the authority: συνεκρίναμεν τὰς διὰ τῆς τεθειμένης ὑπὸ τ[ούτων] ἐκουσίως πρὸς ἀλλήλους Αἰγυπτίας συγγραφᾶς διαστολὰς καὶ τὰλλα τὰ δι' αὐτῆς δι[ω]ρισμένα μένειν κύρια καὶ ἀπαράβατα, <i>synekrinamen tas dia tes tetheimenes hypo touton hekousios pros allelous Aigyptias syngraphes diastolas kai ta alla ta di' autes diorismena menein kyria kai aparabata</i> (ll. 16-18). The fact that the <i>ethnos</i> had to petition the authority shows how difficult internal enforcement of the regulations sometimes was.
vii. Judicial system	Fines (ἐπίτιμα, <i>epitima</i> ll. 6 and 11) are to be paid to the <i>ethnos</i> and to the state in case of breach of the dispositions regarding the shares of work agreed upon in the contract/regulations: ἐπάναγκες τὸν παραβησόμενον ἢ ἀντι ποιησόμεν[ο]ν τῶν ἀποδισταλμένων ἐκάστωι ἀποτεῖσαι τῷ ἔθνει ἐπίτιμον χαλκοῦ νομίσματ[ος], καὶ εἰς τὸ βασιλικὸν τὰ ὕσα, <i>epanankes ton parabesomenon e antipoesomenon ton apodiastalmenon hekastoi apoteisai toi ethnei epitimon chalkou nomismatos [] kai eis to basilikon ta isa</i> (ll. 5-7).

VIII. PROPERTY AND POSSESSIONS

i. Treasury/Funds	The <i>ethnos</i> must have had a treasury where the funds levied from fines were kept.
iii. Income	The <i>ethnos</i> could avail over fines by those who did not abide by the regulations – these fines were not always easily exacted from the members, as the present case testifies. Other sources of income are also possible.

IX. MEMBERSHIP

ii. Gender	Men
Note	The two names of the members preserved (Petosiris and Paris) are male names.
vi. Proper names and physical features	τοὺς περὶ τὸν Π[ε]τοσεῖριν καὶ Παρεῖν

X. ACTIVITIES

iv. Honours/Other activities	The <i>nekrotaphoi</i> belonging to the <i>ethnos</i> were busy in the funerary activities of burial of corpses (<i>somata</i>) and as a group they had agreed upon the different shares (<i>merismoî</i>) that each member was entitled to.
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XII. NOTES

i. Comments	The group may overlap with CAPInv. 1230 .
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XIII. EVALUATION

i. Private association	Probable
Note	The <i>ethnos</i> displays a well-organised structure and durable intent. It had the ability to interact with the authority and had regulations entered voluntarily by its members which were recognised as valid and contractually binding by the authority too. A system of fines to be exacted in favour of the <i>ethnos</i> (and of the Crown) was in place too: how difficult this may have been appears clear in the present case. All this shows that it is very probable that the <i>ethnos</i> to which the <i>nekrotaphoi</i> belonged was a private association, either grouping together different people involved in funerary proceedings and related activities, or some <i>nekrotaphoi</i> only. However, there is also the possibility that the group was in fact a mere business enterprise.