

ROGER S. BAGNALL

THE PEOPLE OF P. MICH. INV. 5806

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 105 (1995) 253–255

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn



### The People of P. Mich. Inv. 5806

In *ZPE* 98 (1993) 283-91 P.J. Sijpesteijn publishes this Michigan papyrus, which contains a copy of a cession of real estate and slaves (A.D. 121) in settlement of a debt, followed by copies of three extracts from census registers. The cession and the third extract (A.D. 133) concern one family (Sijpesteijn's "Family II"), based in a fraction of a house<sup>1</sup> in the amphodon of Hermouthiake in Arsinoe. The first and second extracts (A.D. 119 and 133, but in reverse chronological order) concern a different family (Sijpesteijn's "Family I"), based in a fraction of a house in the amphodon Phremei. The reason for the appearance of all four documents together on a single sheet (copied at an unknown date after A.D. 138) is not evident, but there may have been a marriage connection between the two families that we cannot now recover.

Family I appears in the first declaration (lines 42-60) as composed of Apronius son of Marcus, his wife Ammonous daughter of Heron, their three children (Apronios alias Pasinikos, Sempronia, and Kronia), and Apronius' mother Kronous, who was the declarant of the original document which is excerpted and reorganized in the register here reproduced in extract. In addition, they had three slaves. In the second declaration (lines 23-41) the same five family members appear, but no slaves. I shall be mainly concerned here with this family.

The copyist was no perfectionist. Apart from some minor errors logged in the apparatus<sup>2</sup> by the editor, he gives (as the editor points out, p. 287) two different mother's names for Kronous in the two extracts, and he has botched line 44 fairly thoroughly. Instead of Κρονοῦτος Μάρωνος μητρός he gives Κρονίου τοῦ Μάρωνος μητρός. We are therefore at least justified in keeping in mind the possibility that difficulties in the text could be the product of scribal error.<sup>3</sup> There is in fact a difficulty, obvious if the people are tabulated:

<sup>1</sup> Described as a tenth in line 7. In line 63 the editor reads οἰκία(α) ι {λ}, about which he says, "I do not know of what the lambda could be the beginning in the present context." It seems to me most likely that it is a 1/30 part of the house, ignored in the cession.

<sup>2</sup> The correction to lines 30-31 (Ἀμμωνοῦτος) looks odd, since Sijpesteijn's text presents exactly that; but a typographical error has occurred in the text, which actually reads Ἀμμωνοῦντος here.

<sup>3</sup> Not all errors are the scribe's, however. At the end of line 44 the editor has inserted ⟨Πρα. ὄτος⟩ after μητρός. This is a misunderstanding of the passage, which reads in full ἐξ ἰκονικμοῦ β (ἔτους) Ἀδριανοῦ ἀμφόδου Βουταφίου οἰκία(α) ζ' μέρος ἐπὶ Φρεμεῖ Κρονίουτου (read by editor as Κρονοῦτος) Μάρωνος μητρός, before turning to the list of names. This is translated, "From the census register incorporating descriptions of the 2nd year of Hadrianus, quarter Butaphion, a 1/6 part of a house, near (the quarter) Phremei, of his mother Kronus, daughter of Maron, her mother being Pra.us." It is obvious from this that the editor is making μητρός do double duty, as both "of his mother" and "her mother being." That "of his mother" is correct can be seen from the parallel of lines 23-26, which read ἐξ εἰκονικμ(οῦ) ις (ἔτους) θεοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ ἀμφόδ(ου) Βουταφίου οἰκία(α) ζ' μέρος τῆς μητρός Κρονοῦτος ἐξ ὑπομνήματος αὐτῆς. There is thus no reason to think that Kronous was given in the second instance a mother's name.

Name	Age in 117/8	Age in 131/2
Apronius	48	61
Apronius alias Pasinikos	8	21
Kronous	64	78
Ammonous	36	47
Sempronia	20	married out
Kronia(ina)	17	31

The age difference should, of course, be 14 in each case. Kronous and Kronia(ina) conform; Kronous in 131/2 is the oldest woman listed in a census declaration, and given the check of the previous declaration, the age is probably reliable. Since Sempronia is at the time of the second declaration registered with her husband, her later age is not given. Father and son each show a difference of 13. Since the father is said to have been discharged from laographia, one must at least suppose that the authorities had checked his age, but it would not be surprising if he were really 62.

With Ammonous, however, the problem is acute: a difference of 11. It is most unlikely that this can be right, so the question is whether the error is the copyist's or the editor's, or even both. The reading 36 is clear (I am indebted to Ludwig Koenen for an excellent photograph printed to scale), but the editor's  $\mu\zeta$  in line 36 shows some reasonable doubt on his part. Indeed, if 47 were right, it would make Ammonous only 13 at the time of Sempronia's birth (unless *her* age in the first declaration is erroneous, of course). There is only one secure example of a birth this young among the census declaration, 15 being otherwise the earliest age of giving birth.<sup>4</sup> The photograph, indeed, does not support the reading of 47. Most of the vertical of the L-sign for year is visible on the left side of a hole, and just a trace of the right tip of its horizontal to the right of that hole. Its width was about 5.5 mm, fairly typical for this scribe. What remains after it is about 6 mm, with another hole, at the top and bottom of which horizontal strokes remain; these were the basis of the editor's zeta. But it is obvious that they must represent a single character representing a number equal to or greater than 50, and  $\xi$  then appears inescapable.<sup>5</sup> Ammonous is thus described not as 47 but as 60.

This reading in turn poses a problem, of course, because the difference between the two declarations is now 24, not 14. This suggests that one of the ages is wrong by an even decade. Interchange of  $\nu$  and  $\xi$  seems most unlikely, and there is no other demonstrable error

<sup>4</sup> See R.S. Bagnall and B.W. Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge 1994) 112. The one example of a birth at 13 is *P. Lond.* II 452.9-13 (p. 65; cf. *BASP* 28 [1991] 123-24); the Michigan papyrus came into our hands too late to be used in this book. Other women are known to have been married at 13, but not mothers. The one instance of a mother age 9 tabulated there on p. 340 certainly rests on a copyist's error; it is *P. Lond.* II 324.1-24 (p. 63), where a woman 29 supposedly has a son 20. Her other children (daughters), both by the same husband, are 8 and 4, and I suppose that the son was listed as 2 ( $\beta$ ), not 20 ( $\kappa$ ) in the original.

<sup>5</sup> One may compare  $\xi$  in lines 29 and 55. In both cases the top and bottom strokes of the  $\xi$  are virtually parallel at the same distance as in line 36. I am grateful to Traianos Gagos for looking at the age and confirming my description of the strokes.

in *reporting* of anything like ten years in the surviving census declarations. But a misreading of λς for μς by the copyist is anything but remarkable: he had only to overlook one hump, a minor error compared to what he did in line 44. If that is what happened, then Kronous is a year (or at most two) younger than her husband.

Family II is represented by only one declaration. But this contains one noteworthy item to be compared with the cession. The cession, dated 3 July 121, includes a slave named Heron, offspring of Hediste. The declaration, presumably dated to the summer of 133 but referring to 131/2, includes Heron and gives his age as 9. The regnal year 131/2 began later than July, of course, and even if Heron was a newborn in 121, he was at least 10 by the year represented by the declaration. The C. Sempronius Diogenes mentioned in line 64 was presumably provided with an age in line 66, where the space allows it.<sup>6</sup> Crescens, the slave listed next after him, is said to have undergone epikrisis before a former strategos (lines 69-70):

ἐπικεκριμένος ὑ[πὸ  
μαίου γενομένου στρατηγῶ ἰε (ἔτει)

About this, the editor comments (line note), "If ἰε (ἔτει) (Hagedorn's correct reading) stands, like in lines 29 and 32, for A.D. 130/1 the strategos whose name ends in -μαῖος could have been a strategos of the Themistos division of the Arsinoite nome functioning between A.D. 129 and A.D. 133." It might be noted, however, that one Ptolemaios was basilikos grammateus and acting strategos of the Polemon division as late as 4 August 133 (*SB XII 10842*; Bastianini-Whitehorne, *Strategi* 45). An identification is tempting, but "former" strategos is problematic, given that this extract should come from a declaration submitted around the same time as that in which the Polemon Ptolemaios appears as acting strategos. The register, however, may well have updated the information from the declarations, so "former" may be written from the standpoint of 133/4 or even 134/5.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that the free persons of this family have excellent Roman nomenclature, tria nomina in the case of the men and nomen plus cognomen in the case of Sempronia Akousarion. This is the best evidence yet to appear in support of the view that Roman citizens in Egypt did in fact have to submit census declarations, despite the fact that they were not subject to the capitation taxes imposed on the Egyptians.<sup>7</sup>

Columbia University

Roger S. Bagnall

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that in 65 the correct reading is Ἄκου[σαρίου]; the epsilon is entirely preserved. In 61, the omicron at the end of the line and at the very edge of the papyrus appears raised above the line, suggesting Ἄδριανο(ῶ). In 62, there is not room for κολλήματα in full in the lacuna; probably it was abbreviated κολλήμ(ατος).

<sup>7</sup> We argue already for this position in *Demography* (p. 12) on the basis of the rather less decisive evidence known before the publication of this Michigan papyrus.