

In the year 12 CE, a man named Harthotes submitted a census declaration to the local authorities. One of tens of thousands submitted by families across the Roman province of Egypt, it remains the only known record of this census, the last taken under the auspices of Augustus. But one person was missing from this declaration, his daughter Tahaunes. Where was she? Scholars were quick to assume that she had already been married off and had joined her new husband's household, but the true story is more surprising: she was at work.

From papyrus documents recently deciphered, we learn that Tahaunes had in fact been sent to a neighboring village to live and work on an imperial estate. One question might now be answered, but the discovery of these documents and others from Harthotes' archive raises many more. Why did this father send his young daughter out of the house to work in another village? How does this decision fit in with what we know of the family's social and economic position? Did ancient families typically send away young children, boys and girls, under similar conditions? Do these labor arrangements resemble those found in other historical societies?

The aim of this project is to reunite these family papers, now scattered across many collections, and study the social strategies and economic challenges of the Egyptian peasantry at the beginning of Roman. What sets this archive apart from the hundreds of others from Greco-Roman Egypt is the insight it provides on a village family of modest means: although peasant farmers made up the majority of Roman Egypt's population, their family papers are severely underrepresented in the surviving documentation. Amidst a changing world with new imperial demands, Harthotes' family faced a precarious existence, with three generations of children sent out of the house to work as indentured servants, including Tahaunes. Yet in all cases, the evidence from the Harthotes archive allows us to see that the family was able to repay their debts and eventually redeem their loved ones. In short, the papers of Harthotes show that even a moderately prosperous peasant family in Roman Egypt could find themselves mortgaging the bodies of their children, both girls and boys, but also that they, unlike some of their peers, were well positioned to redeem them.

Once reassembled and properly understood, Harthotes' papers can offer a unique perspective on the lived experience of marginalized people in antiquity. To achieve this goal, one methodology adopted in this project is *archival reconstruction*. A revolution in papyrological research and the study of Greco-Roman Egypt has brought increased focus on papyrus archives, which allow for a more in-depth and nuanced view of ancient families and the dynamics of ancient social life. But since papyrus archives have generally not been tidily preserved for the ancient historian, they must be *reconstructed*, which ultimately on a careful reading of the documents for internal indications: prosopographical connections, above all, but also place names, and handwriting are critical to identifying texts once belonging to the family of Harthotes. To date, 45 Greek papyri, dating between 20 BCE and 60 CE, have been identified as belonging or likely belonging to the archive.

Another methodology of this project is *comparative peasant studies*. One aspect of this approach is to identify comparable family archives among the hundreds known from Greco-Roman Egypt in order to better elucidate Harthotes' place in local village society. The other is diachronic and transcultural comparison within the larger field of peasant studies. One thrust of the field's research is the dismantling of the notion of a monolithic and self-sufficient agrarian peasantry, which is being replaced by a more diversified and dynamic model, which allows for small-scale commodity production and seasonal wage labor. This model provides a better fit for the complex peasantry of Roman Egypt, which cannot be disassociated from the cultural and economic pull of local urban centers.

The proposed result is a monograph on the family of Harthotes, which will have broad relevance for our understanding of the ancient peasantry under Roman rule.