#articleTitle

A Fragment Mentioning the Legio III Cyrenaica?

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|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| P.Heid. inv. G. 826 | 11.3 (h) x 5.6 (w) | el-Hîbeh |
|  |  | 81–96 |

P.Heid. inv. G. 826 is a small papyrus fragment of medium brown color.[[1]](#footnote-1) It was acquired by Friedrich Bilabel during the ‘Badische Grabungen’ conducted in el-Hîbeh in the winter and early spring of 1914.[[2]](#footnote-2) It preserves most of the large top margin and the upper part of the left-hand margin (fig. 1). Overall, there survive the beginnings of ten lines of a Greek text written along the fibers. The original length of the lines is impossible to determine. The ink is black and the writing is somewhat effaced.

The main interest of the fragment, which dates to the reign of Domitian and might have contained an oath by the fortune of this emperor,[[3]](#footnote-3) is in the mention of a ‘third legion’, which I suggest to identify with *legio* *III Cyrenaica.* This legion, created sometime at the end of the Republic, was stationed in Egypt after Octavian established the province. In the first century, it was garrisoned at Nikopolis, near Alexandria; later it participated in the conquest of Arabia in 106/107 and in Trajan’s eastern campaigns, returning to Egypt by 119; shortly after, it moved again to the eastern frontier provinces of the Roman Empire where, as early as 140, it was permanently garrisoned at Bostra.[[4]](#footnote-4)

It is difficult to assert what kind of document we are dealing with. It could be a declaration of some sort. The two parties involved bear common Latin names, Marcus and Lucius Valerius. The rest of the text is too fragmentary to offer definite conclusions.

1 Μᾶρκος  Ạ ̣ ̣ [ ]

λεγειῶνι τρίτη̣[ς Κυρηναικῆς (?) ]

Λούκιωι Οὐαλ̣[ερίωι *ca.?*  χαίρειν (?)]

Καίσ̣α̣ρει Δομιτια[νοῦ Σεβαστοῦ ]

5 τυχην̣ Μάρκον̣ [ ]

[2–3]στο̣λας ἀσφαλ̣[ ]

[ *ca*. *5* ] κ̣ατὰ τὴ[ν ]

[ *ca.5* τ][ῇ](https://www.trismegistos.org/words/detail.php?lemma=%25E1%25BD%2581&morph_type=article) κελευ[σθείσῃ (?) ]

[ *ca. 7* ὑ]παρχο.[ ]

10 [ *ca. 7* ] … [ ]

- - - - - -

**2. l.** λεγεῶνος. **4.** l. Καίσαρος.

#editionDDB

#metadata

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dimensions: height | 11.3 |
| Dimensions: width | 5.6 |
| Material | Papyrus |
| TM number | 142605 |
| HGV number | 142605 |
| ddb-filename | pylon.3.1 |
| ddb-hybrid | pylon;3;1 |
| Descriptive title | A fragment mentioning the Legio III Cyrenaica? |
| Date of text | 81-96 CE |
| Inventory | P. Heid. Inv. G 826 |
| Keywords | Deklaration ?, Eid ? |

#text

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1. Μᾶρκος  Ạ.2[.?]

2. <:λεγεῶνος|reg|λεγειῶνι:> τρίτη̣[ς Κυρηναικῆς (?)] [.?]

3. Λούκιωι Οὐαλ̣[ερίωι] [.?] [χαίρειν (?)] [.?]

4. <:Καίσαρος|reg|Καίσ̣α̣ρει:> Δομιτια[νοῦ Σεβαστοῦ] [.?]

5. τυχην̣ Μάρκον̣ [.?]

6. [.2-3]στο̣λας ἀσφαλ̣[.?]

7. [ca.5] κ̣ατὰ τὴ[ν] [.?]

8. [ca.5] [τ]ῇ κελευ[σθείσῃ (?)] [.?]

9. [ca.7] [ὑ]παρχο.1[.?]

10. [ca.7].3[.?]

11. lost.?lin

=>

*#*commentary

1. The *nomen gentile* could have started with a *lambda* instead of *alpha*; there follow traces of two unidentifiable letters. The lost part of the line must have had the *cognomen* and the legionary rank or status.

2. The dative is likely a mistake for the genitive, l. λεγεῶνος. Alternatively, if the dative was intended, line 1 may have ended with the preposition ἐν, preceded by a verb, thus - - - ἐν]| λεγειῶνι τρίτη̣[ι Κυρηναικῇ].

Several Greek and Latin papyri from Egypt referring to the *legio III Cyrenaica* have known provenance. One comes from [Oxyrhynchus](https://www.trismegistos.org/place/1524), [P.Oxy. 64 4434](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.oxy%3B64%3B4434) (22 August 154?), and another probably from [Alexandria](https://www.trismegistos.org/place/100), [BGU 1 140 = M. Chr. 373 = Sel. Pap. 2 213](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/chr.mitt%3B%3B373) (4–29 August 119), while the rest come from the Arsinoite nome: [P.Tebt. 2 586 = SB 12 11041](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/sb%3B12%3B11041) (20/21, Tebtunis); [SB 18 13235](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/sb%3B18%3B13235) (69–78, [Aueris](https://www.trismegistos.org/place/747)); [ChLA 46 1364](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/chla%3B46%3B1364) (92, Arsinoites); [P.Lond. 2 142](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.lond%3B2%3B142) (28 November 95, Karanis); [P. Mich. 9 571](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.mich%3B9%3B571) (26 May–24 June 96, Karanis); [P.Mich. 8 465](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.mich%3B8%3B465) and [P.Mich. 8 466](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.mich%3B8%3B466) (107/108, Karanis), two letters sent by Iulius Apollinarius while stationed with the legion at [Bostra](https://www.trismegistos.org/place/2987); [P.Mich. 9 562](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.mich%3B9%3B562) (1 September 119, Karanis). See also [Lash and Verhoogt 2015](https://papyri.info/biblio/86877) for a *signifier* from Karanis presumed to be from this legion. The provenance of other papyri mentioning the legion ([ChLA 10 431](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/c.ep.lat%3B%3B82); [RMR 34](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/chla%3B43%3B1242); [RMR 58](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/rom.mil.rec%3B1%3B58)) is not clear.

3. Marcus’s address to Lucius Valerius probably ended with the customary χαίρειν.

3–5. If τυχην̣ in l. 5 is the word τύχην, its proximity to the imperial titles would suggest that it formed part of an oath, in which the verb ὀμνύω stood in line 3. A possible reconstruction of ll. 3–5 could then be [… ὀμνύω τὴν Aὐτοκράτορος] | Καίσ̣α̣ρει (l. Καίσαρος) Δομιτια[νοῦ Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ (?)] | τύχην̣. An oath by the fortune of the emperor is attested in two Domitianic papyri, a census declaration [P.Hamb. 1 60 = CPJ 3 485](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.hamb%3B1%3B60) (10 December 90, Hermopolis), ll. 19–22: [καὶ ὀμ]ν̣ύωι (l. ὀμνύω) τὴν Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Δομιτι[ανοῦ] [Σεβαστο]ῦ Γερμανικοῦ τύχην <μὴ> ὑπάρχειν μοι [ο]ἰ̣κ̣[ίαν] … ἔξω τῶν προγεγραμμέ[νων], and a fragmentarily preserved delivery assurance, [SB 6 9087](https://papyri.info/ddbdp/sb%3B6%3B9087) (29 August 89–28 August 90). One would expect, however, that the content of the oath, which should have followed the word τύχην, would begin with an infinitival or an adverbial phrase, cf. P.Hamb. 1 60 cited above (or other sworn statements), and not a personal name in the accusative, as in the Heidelberg fragment, unless this Marcus—presumably different from the Marcus in l. 1—is the subject of the lost infinitive of the oath. Too little is preserved to allow one to draw any definite conclusion and it is conceivable that τυχην in l. 5 was the end of a personal name, such as Εὐτύχην.

6. One can clearly read στο̣λας. The letters probably form the ending of a word the beginning of which was written in the lost beginning of the line, for instance: [ἐπι]στο̣λάς, ‘letters’, or [[δια]στολάς](https://www.trismegistos.org/words/detail.php?lemma=%25CE%25B4%25CE%25B9%25CE%25B1%25CF%2583%25CF%2584%25CE%25BF%25CE%25BB%25CE%25AE&morph_type=noun), ‘payments’. The form of ἀσφαλ̣[ is impossible to ascertain, nor its connection to the preceding word.

8. Since the first preserved letter in the line is an *eta*, I suggest that it is part of the article τ][ῇ](https://www.trismegistos.org/words/detail.php?lemma=%25E1%25BD%2581&morph_type=article) and that the following word is the dative singular of the participle feminine passive of the verb κελεύω.

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{{Photo caption}}

P.Heid. inv. G. 826. Photo: Elke Fuchs; © Institut für Papyrologie, Universität Heidelberg

1. I would like to thank Prof. Andrea Jördens (Institute for Papyrology, Heidelberg University) for allowing me to study this papyrus fragment and the editors and anonymous reviewers of the journal for their very useful insights, corrections, and comments regarding previous versions of the manuscript; all errors are my own. The dates are Common Era unless specified otherwise. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A general account of the excavations is available in [Habermann 2014](https://papyri.info/biblio/95278). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For the papyrological documentation dating to the reign of Domitian see the overview of selected papyri in [Bellucci and Longo 2020](https://papyri.info/biblio/96324), especially chapter 1.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For this legion both in Egypt and Arabia see, for instance: [Speidel 1982](https://papyri.info/biblio/55357); [Alston 1995](https://papyri.info/biblio/13826): esp. 73; [Wolff 2000](https://papyri.info/biblio/69641); [Gatier 2000](https://papyri.info/biblio/16235); [Haensch 2012](https://papyri.info/biblio/81530): esp. 69; [Fischer‐Bovet and Sänger 2019](https://papyri.info/biblio/96053): 172; [Bagnall 2021](https://papyri.info/biblio/96322): 62-63. See also: [Stoll 2003](https://papyri.info/biblio/96329); [Perea Yébenes 2003](https://papyri.info/biblio/https://papyri.info/biblio/72759): 116-118; [Coșkun 2008](https://papyri.info/biblio/76986); [Speidel 2016](https://papyri.info/biblio/87001): 223-225; [Perea Yébenes 2020](https://papyri.info/biblio/96326): 69-75; [Stoll 2022](https://papyri.info/biblio/96327). For the latest epigraphic discoveries pertaining to the legion in the Eastern Desert of Egypt see [García-Dils de la Vega et al. 2022](https://papyri.info/biblio/96323), including further bibliographic references at 114-115, note 16; for the latest epigraphic discoveries from Arabia, see [Fiema et al. 2020](https://papyri.info/biblio/96321). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)