

Pylon 3 (2023)
ISSN: 2751-4722

A Fragment Mentioning the *Legio III Cyrenaica*?

Dan Deac

Heidelberg: Propylaeum, 2023



Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.48631/pylon.2023.3.98163>

Textvorlage
Text exemplar

Citation:

D. Deac, "A Fragment Mentioning the Legio III Cyrenaica?," Pylon 3 (2023). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.48631/pylon.2023.3.98163>.

P. Heid. Inv. G 826

11.3 (h) × 5.6 (w)

Ankyron
81–96

- §1 P.Heid. inv. G. 826 is a small papyrus fragment of medium brown color.¹ It was acquired by Friedrich Bilabel during the ‘Badische Grabungen’ conducted in el-Hîbeh in the winter and early spring of 1914.² It preserves most of the large top margin and the upper part of the left-hand margin (fig. 1); the verso is blank. 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.
- §2 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 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
- §3 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 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.

² A general account of the excavations is available in [Habermann and Fuchs 2014](#).

³ For the papyrological documentation dating to the reign of Domitian see the overview of selected papyri in [Bellucci and Longo 2020](#), especially chapter 1.3.

⁴ For this legion both in Egypt and Arabia see, for instance: [Speidel 1982](#); [Alston 1995](#): esp. 73; [Wolff 2000](#); [Gatier 2000](#); [Haensch 2012](#): esp. 69; [Fischer-Bovet and Sängier 2019](#): 172; [Bagnall 2021](#): 62–63. See also: [Stoll 2003](#); [Perea Yébenes 2003](#): 116–118; [Coşkun 2008](#); [Speidel 2016](#): 223–225; [Perea Yébenes 2020](#): 69–75; [Stoll 2022](#). For the latest epigraphic discoveries pertaining to the legion in the Eastern Desert of Egypt see [García-Dils de la Vega et al. 2022](#), including further bibliographic references at 114–115, note 16; for the latest epigraphic discoveries from Arabia, see [Fiema et al. 2020](#).

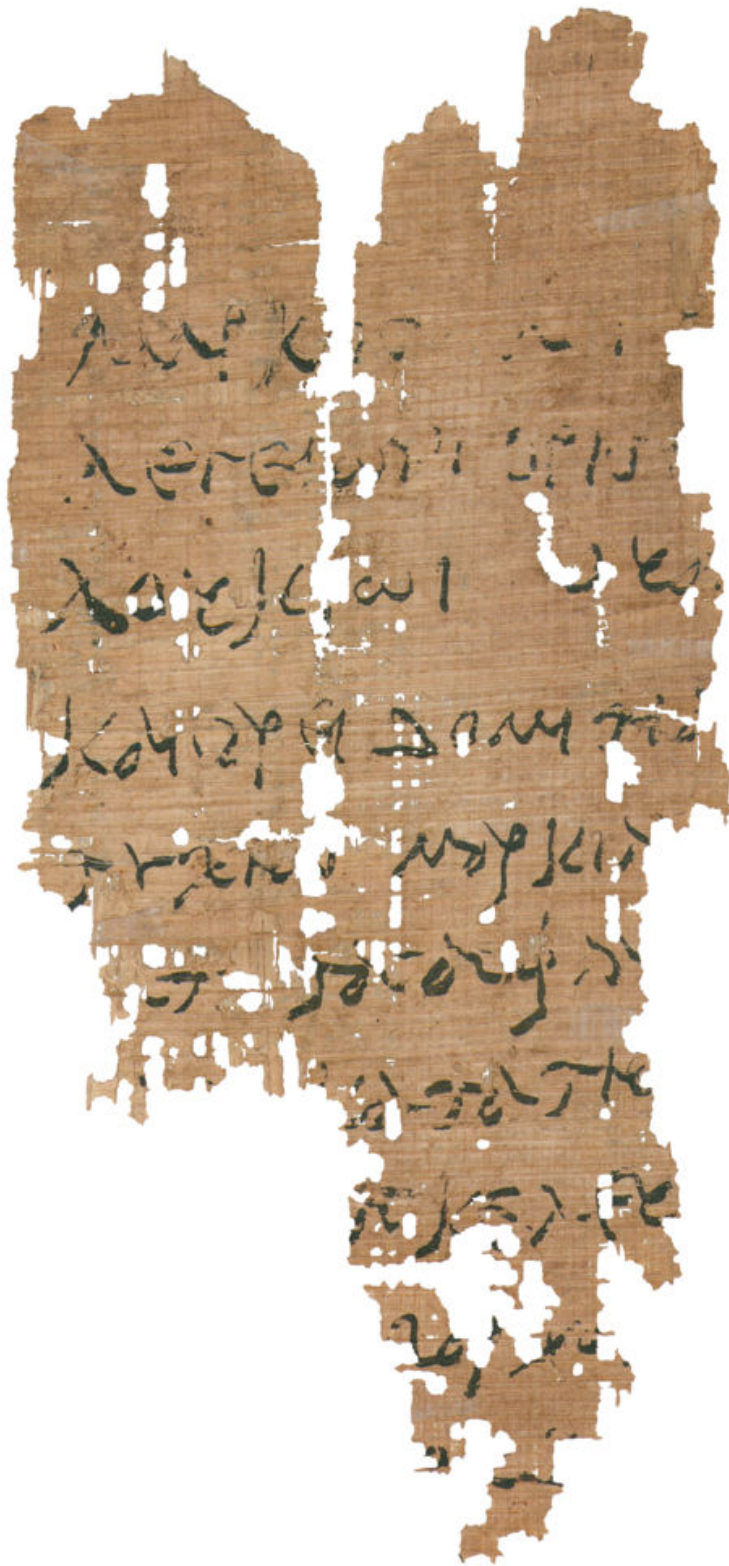


Fig. 1: P.Heid. inv. G. 826 recto. Photo: Elke Fuchs; © Institut für Papyrologie, Universität Heidelberg.

Μάρκος Α [-ca.?-]

λεγειῶνι τρίτη[ς Κυρηναϊκῆς (?) -ca.?-]

Λούκιωι Οὐαλ[ερίωι -ca.?- χαίρειν (?) -ca.?-]

Καίσαρει Δομυτία[νοῦ Σεβαστοῦ -ca.?-]

5 τυχήν Μάρκον [-ca.?-]

[-2-3-]στολας ἀσφαλ[-ca.?-]

[-ca.5-] κατὰ τῇ[ν -ca.?-]

[-ca.5- τ]ῇ κελευ[σθείσῃ (?) -ca.?-]

[-ca.7- ὅ]παρχο [-ca.?-]

10 [-ca.7-] . . . [-ca.?-]

2 *l.* λεγεῶνος 4 *l.* Καίσαρος

§4 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.

§5 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 τρίτῃ[ι Κυρηναϊκῇ].

§6 Several Greek and Latin papyri from Egypt referring to the *legio III Cyrenaica* have known provenance. One comes from Oxyrhynchus, ☞ P.Oxy. 64 4434 (22 August 154?), and another probably from Alexandria, ☞ BGU 1 140 = M. Chr. 373 = Sel. Pap. 2 213 (4–29 August 119), while the rest come from the Arsinoite nome: ☞ P.Tebt. 2 586 = SB 12 11041 (20/21, Tebtunis); ☞ SB 18 13235 (69–78, Aueris); ☞ ChLA 46 1364 (92, Arsinoites); ☞ P.Lond. 2 142 (28 November 95, Karanis); ☞ P. Mich. 9 571 (26 May–24 June 96, Karanis); ☞ P.Mich. 8 465 and ☞ P.Mich. 8 466 (107/108, Karanis), two letters sent by Iulius Apollinarius while stationed with the legion at Bostra; ☞ P.Mich. 9 562 (1 September 119, Karanis). See also ☞ Lash and Verhoogt 2015 for a *signifer* from Karanis presumed to be from this legion. The provenance of other papyri mentioning the legion (☞ ChLA 10 431; ☞ RMR 34; ☞ RMR 58) is not clear.

§7 3 Marcus's address to Lucius Valerius probably ended with the customary χαίρειν.

§8 3–5 If τυχήν 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 Αὐτοκράτορος] | Καίσαρει (*l.* Καίσαρος) Δομυτία[νοῦ Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ (?)] | τύχην. An oath by the fortune of the emperor is attested in two Domitianic papyri, a census declaration ☞ P.Hamb. 1 60 = CPJ 3 485 (10 December 90, Hermopolis), ll. 19–22: [καὶ ὀμ]γύωι (*l.* ὀμνύω) τὴν Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Δομυτι[ανοῦ] [Σεβαστο]ῦ Γερμανικοῦ τύχην <μὴ> ὑπάρχειν μοι [ο]ἴκ[ίαν] ... ἔξω τῶν προγεγραμμέ[νων], and a fragmentarily preserved delivery assurance, ☞ SB 6 9087 (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 τυχήν in l. 5 was the end of a personal name, such as Εὐτύχην.

- §9 6 One can clearly read στολάς. 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]στολάς, ‘letters’, or [δια]στολάς, ‘payments’. Another possibility to consider is [τὰς] στολάς ‘the garments’; a good parallel from the late 1st century, involving military officials, is found in a receipt from the receivers of public clothing in Tebtunis (☞ [P.Tebt.UC 1607c](#)) cf. ll. 6–8: παρ[ε]λήφσαμεν -ca.?-] | [-ca.?-] παρ’ ὁμῶν τὰς στολάς [-ca.?-] | [-ca.?-] α ἀνή[κ]οντα ἀγούσας [-ca.?-]; see further ☞ [Gibbs and Sampson \(2019\)](#). The form of ἀσφαλ[] is impossible to ascertain, nor its connection to the preceding word.
- §10 8 Since the first preserved letter in the line is an *eta*, I suggest that it is part of the article τῇ and that the following word is the dative singular of the participle feminine passive of the verb κελεύω.

Bibliography

- ☞ [Alston, R. \(1995\)](#) *Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt. A Social History*, London & New York.
- ☞ [Bagnall, R. \(2021\)](#) *Roman Egypt. A History*. Cambridge.
- ☞ [Bellucci, N. and Longo, B. \(2020\)](#) *L’Egitto dei Flavi: Sintesi e prospettive d’indagine alla luce della documentazione papirologica ed epigrafica egiziana*. Oxford.
- ☞ [García-Dils de la Vega, S., Ast, R., Oller Guzmán, J., Fernández Abella, D. and Trevín Pita V. \(2022\)](#) “Locality and the legio III Cyrenaica in New Inscriptions from the Roman Emerald Mines of Wadi Sikait (Eastern Desert of Egypt),” *ZPE* 223: 109–119.
- ☞ [Coşkun, A. \(2009\)](#) “Galatische Legionäre in Ägypten. Die Konstituierung der legio XXII Deiotariana in der frühen Kaiserzeit,” *Tyche* 23: 21–46.
- ☞ [Fiema, Z., Villeneuve, F. and Bauzou, T. \(2020\)](#) “New Latin and Greek Inscriptions from Ancient Hegra,” *ZPE* 214: 179–202.
- ☞ [Fischer-Bovet, C. and Sängler, P. \(2019\)](#) “Security and Border Policy: Army and Police,” in K. Vandorpe (ed.), *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*. Hoboken: 163–178.
- ☞ [Gatier, P.-L. \(2000\)](#) “La legio III Cyrenaica et l’Arabie,” in Y. Le Bohec (ed.) *Les légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire. Actes du Congrès de Lyon (17–19 septembre 1998)*. Lyon: 341–349.
- ☞ [Gibbs, M. and Sampson, C. M. \(2019\)](#) “A First Century Receipt from the Receivers of Public Clothing in Tebtunis (P.Tebt.UC 1607C),” *BASP* 56: 64–78.
- ☞ [Habermann, W. and Fuchs, E. \(2014\)](#) *Die Badischen Grabungen in Qarâra und el-Hibeh 1913 und 1914. Wissenschaftsgeschichtliche und papyrologische Beiträge* (P.Heid. X). Heidelberg.
- ☞ [Haensch, R. \(2012\)](#) “The Roman Army in Egypt,” in C. Riggs (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*. Oxford: 68–82.
- ☞ [Lash, S., and Verhoogt, A. \(2015\)](#) “Receipt of a *signifer* (P.Mich. inv. 5923),” *ZPE* 193: 223–225.
- ☞ [Perea Yébenes S. \(2003\)](#) “Campamentos y defensa del territorio en el Egipto romano,” *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie II. Historia Antigua*, 16, 2003: 111–140.
- ☞ [Perea Yébenes S. \(2020\)](#) “Campamentos y defensa del territorio en el Egipto romano,” in Perea Yébenes S., *El ejército romano en Egipto*, Madrid: 67–104.
- ☞ [Speidel, M. P. \(1982\)](#) “Augustus’ Deployment of the Legions in Egypt,” *CdÉ* 57: 120–124.
- ☞ [Speidel, M. A. \(2016\)](#) “Die Throninschrift von Adulis und das Römische Reich am Roten Meer zur Beginn des dritten Jahrhunderts n. Chr.,” *ZPE* 200: 287–300.
- ☞ [Stoll, O. \(2003\)](#) “Der Gott der arabischen Legion: Zeus Ammon-Sarapis und die legio III Cyrenaica in der römischen Provinz Arabia,” in L. Schumacher and O. Stoll (eds.), *Sprache und Kultur in der kaiserzeitlichen Provinz Arabia, Mainzer Althistorische Studien* 4. St. Katharinen: 70–109.

- ☞ **Stoll, O. (2022)** „Die Augen der Legionen“ und Iuppiter Optimus Maximus Hammon *noster*. Zur Rolle des römischen Militärs bei der Sicherung überregionaler Handelsrouten und zu neuen Zeugnissen zum Gott der *legio III Cyrenaica* aus Hegra, NW-Saudi-Arabien,” Marburger Beiträge zur antiken Handels-, Wirtschafts und Sozial Geschichte 40: 27–113.
- ☞ **Wolff, C. (2000)** “La legio III Cyrenaica au Ier siècle,” in Y. Le Bohec (ed.) Les légions de Rome sous le Haut-Empire. Actes du Congrès de Lyon (17–19 septembre 1998). Lyon: 339–340.

Deac, Dan

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4711-8623>

Babes-Bolyai University

dan_deac1923@yahoo.com