

A Reconsideration of *Epoikion* in Byzantine Egypt*

The Egyptian countryside comprised larger and smaller settlements called *kōmai* and *epoikia*¹. Although *kōmai* have continuously attracted researchers' attention, *epoikia* have been only occasionally an object of enquiry². The study of their character and their evolution could be a prism, through which we could understand the social relations of the early Byzantine period. The term *epoikion* occurs in Byzantine papyri and inscriptions³. It denotes a *ktēma* or a dwelling place belonging to a large

* This article is the outcome of my involvement in the preparation of the J. Karayannopoulos, *Λεξικό Βυζαντινής Ορολογίας. Οικονομικοί Όροι*, vol. II: Δ-Ι, ed. Polymnia Katsoni - Martha Gregoriou-Ioannidou (in press).

¹ A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt: Economic Studies* [Princeton University Studies in Papyrology 6], Amsterdam 1949 (repr. 1967), p. 94, 98 (hereafter: A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt*).

² R. S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, Princeton 1993, p. 151 (hereafter: R. S. Bagnall, *Egypt*). - Marianne Lewuillon-Blume, Problèmes de la terre au IV^e siècle après J.-C., in J. Bingen - G. Nachtergaele (ed.), *Actes du XV^e Congrès International de Papyrologie* (Bruxelles - Louvain, 29 août - 3 septembre 1977), vol. IV: *Papyrologie documentaire* [Papyrologica Bruxellensia XIX], Bruxelles 1979, p. 177-185, here 178 (hereafter: M. Lewuillon-Blume, Problèmes). J. Banaji and T. M. Hickey describe *epoikia* as small settlements. See J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity. Gold, Labour, and Aristocratic Dominance*, Oxford 2001, p. 11-12 (hereafter: J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change*). - T. M. Hickey, *Wine, Wealth and the State in Late Antique Egypt: The House of Apion at Oxyrhynchus*, Ann Arbor, MI 2012, p. 25-26 (hereafter: T. M. Hickey, *Wine, Wealth*). For the 3rd century *epoikia*, see D. Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in third-century A.D. Egypt: The Heroninos Archive and the Appianus Estate*, Cambridge 1991, p. 180 (hereafter: D. Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism*).

³ Papyri are cited according to the standard papyrological abbreviations; see *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, ed. J. F. Oates et al. [Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists Supplement 9], Oakville - Oxford 2001⁵. Web edition: <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/papyrus/texts/clist.html>.

For epigraphical abbreviations, see F. Bérard et al., *Guide de l'épigraphiste. Bibliographie choisie des épigraphies antiques et médiévales* [Guides et inventaires bibliographiques de la Bibliothèque de l'École normale supérieure 7], Paris 2010⁴.

estate⁴. An *epoikion* was located in the geographical area of a *kōmē* and included buildings, machinery and in some cases, churches⁵.

The editors of the papyri from ancient Tebtunis mention that “*in the Byzantine period the terms ἐποίκιον and χωρίον, which then generally takes the place of κόμη, become almost convertible*”⁶. Putting aside the term *chōrion*⁷, we notice that B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt draw the conclusion that *epoikion* and *kōmē* were almost undistinguishable⁸. The German papyrologist F. Preisigke considered *epoikion* to be equivalent to *kōmē*⁹. An attempt to describe *epoikion* was made by E. R. Hardy

⁴. Epigraphs: e.g. SEG XX 339. 10 [297]: “ἀνεστάθησαν ὄροι ἐπ(οικίου) Ζαερούς”. – SEG XX 342. 8 [297]: “ἀνεστάθησαν ὄροι ἐπ(οικίου) Καπερού”. According to B. W. Bacon in these cases, *epoikion* denotes a villa (country estate). See B. W. Bacon, A New Inscription from Upper Galilee, *American Journal of Archaeology* 11.3 (1907) 315-320, p. 316. – D. Feissel, Remarques de toponymie syrienne d’après des inscriptions grecques chrétiennes trouvées hors de Syrie, *Syria* 59.3 (1982) 319-343, p. 334. Papyri: e.g. P. Münch III 98 r. 10 [593-594]: “ἀπό ἐποικ[ί]ου Π[ε]κτῦ”, v. 1: “ἀπό κτήμα(τος) Πεκτῦ”. – P. Sakaon 39. 12 [318]: “οἰκοῦντα ἐν ἐποικίῳ Πτολεμαίου”. – P. Oxy. 137. 5 ff. [584]: “τοῖς εὐφρεστάτοις διαδόχοις τοῦ τῆς εὐκλεοῦς μνήμης Ἀπίων[ο]ς γενομένου πρωτοπ[α]τρικίου ... ἀπό ἐποικίου Αμβιοῦτος τοῦ Ὁξυρυγγίτου νομοῦ διαφερόντος τῆ ὑμῶν ὑπερφρεΐα”. According to R. S. Bagnall and M. Lewuillon-Blume, *epoikia* were country estates or hamlets. See R. S. Bagnall, *Egypt* 151. – M. Lewuillon-Blume, *Problèmes* 178. J. Banaji and T. M. Hickey describe *epoikia* as small settlements. J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change* 11-12. – T. M. Hickey, *Wine, Wealth* 25-26.

⁵. E.g. IGLS IV 1382 [?]: “Ἀβ[ω]σιν, κώ<μ>ης Μ[α]άραχης(?), ἐπνκ[ί]ου Κοε[ί]ν[του]”. – IG XIV 2329. 3-5 [V]: “ἀπό ἐποικίου Σέκλα ὄρων Ἀπαμίων κόμης Συρίας”. – P. Prag. I 46. 5-6 [522]: “ἀπό ἐποικίου καλουμένου [-ca.-]ολων κόμης Πέσλα”. – P. Stras. V 482. 3-4 [542]: “ἀπό ἐποικίου [Τη]ύπαρατ πεδίων κόμης Ἐνσεῦ”. – P. Oxy. 1917. 56 [616-617]: “ἐνοικ(ίου) ἐποικ(ίου) ὑπέρ κελλ(ίων) ρ”. – P. Lond. III 774. 10-13 [582]: “ἀπό ἐποικί(ου) Θώλθεως ... χρεΐας καὶ νῦν γεναμ(ένης) εἰς τὰς ὑπ’ ἐμὲ γεουχικὰς μηχανὰς τοῦ πλαγί(ου) ποταμο(ῦ)”. – P. Oxy. 3804. 169 [566]: “συνεχωρήθ(η) τοῖς γεωρ(γοῖς) μηχ(ανῆς) νέου λάκκου ἐν ἐποικ(ίῳ) Κοτυλεΐου σπειρομέ(νης)”. – P. Oxy. 4623 [VI]: “παράσ(χ)ου) εἰς χρεΐαν τῆς ἀγίας ἐκκλησίας ἐποικ(ίου) Ἀναγγελίου”. See D. Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism* 31-33. – J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change* 182. – P. Sarris, *Economy and Society in the Age of Justinian*, Cambridge 2006, p. 35 (hereafter: P. Sarris, *Economy*). – T. M. Hickey, *Wine, Wealth* 86, n. 145.

⁶. P. Tebt. II² App. II §3, p. 356.

⁷. R. S. Bagnall noted that it is not clearly shown “*that χωρίον comes in late Antiquity to be used synonymously with κόμη as a term for village*”. He describes *chōrion* as non-inundated land used for growing tree crops of various sorts. See R. S. Bagnall, The Date of P. Kell. I G.62 and the meaning of χωρίον, *Chronique d’Égypte* 74 (1999) 329-333, p. 332. – T. M. Hickey, *Wine, Wealth* 41-44. Cf. J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change* 175.

⁸. The technical term *kōmē* is translated by scholars as “village”, whereas *epoikion* is translated as “hamlet” or “country estate”. See A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 94, 98. – R. S. Bagnall, *Egypt* 151. The same usage of the terms “village” and “hamlet” is adopted hereafter.

⁹. F. Preisigke, *Fachwörter des öffentlichen Verwaltungsdienstes Ägyptens in den griechischen Papyruskunden der ptolemäisch-römischen Zeit*, Göttingen 1915 (repr. Hildesheim - New York 1975), s.v. ἐποίκιον (hereafter: F. Preisigke, *Fachwörter*). See also

who considered it as a piece of property (*ktēma*) that was inhabited by “registered” cultivators (*coloni adscripticii*)¹⁰. Further investigation was done by M. Lewuillon-Blume concerning the formation and features of *epoikia* in the 4th century¹¹. She also addresses the issue of labourers that resided in *epoikia*, the so-called *epoikiōtai*¹². She compares *epoikion* to the Arab *izba*, an Egyptian hamlet quite distinct from a village that belonged to a private owner¹³. The *izba* included houses and other facilities and could grow into a village¹⁴. P. Sarris suggested that each *epoikion* comprised a particular allotment (*ktēma*)¹⁵. He also expresses the idea that *epoikia* were places of semi-industrial activity¹⁶. J. Banaji notes that *epoikia* were a “system of labour organisation” (common labour pools) and their residents were “service tenants” with usufruct rights¹⁷.

The arising issues concern the nature of *epoikia* and their social stature in Byzantine countryside¹⁸. Attention should be paid to the liturgists and various collectives (*koina*) of *epoikia* in comparison with *kōmē*. Furthermore, we should examine the collective fiscal responsibility of the residents of *epoikia* and take into consideration their status. Fairly important are the changes in ownership and administration of *epoikia*.

Marie Drew-Bear, *Le Nome Hermopolite. Toponymes et sites* [American Studies in Papyrology 21], Missoula, MT 1979, p. 175 (hereafter: M. Drew-Bear, *Nome Hermopolite*). A settlement called Nestou is mentioned as an *epoikion* and also as a *kōmē*. See BGU II 455. 13-14 [early II]: “περὶ κώμη(ν) Ν[έ]στου ἐποικίου τῆς Ἡρακλείδου μερίδος [το]ῦ Ἀρσινόεϊτου νομοῦ”. A settlement called Μονύρθεως was characterised both as an *epoikion* and as a *kōmē*. See P. Flor. I 2. 235, 242-243 [265]: “κώμης Μονύρθεως”, “κομμαρχῶν ἐποικίου Μονύρθεως”.

¹⁰. E. R. Hardy, *The Large Estates of Byzantine Egypt* [Columbia University Studies in the Social Sciences 354], New York 1931 (repr. 1968), p. 132 ff. (hereafter: E. R. Hardy, *Large Estates*).

¹¹. See above note 2.

¹². Marianne Lewuillon-Blume, Problèmes de la terre en Égypte romaine: les *epoikiōtai*, *Chronique d'Égypte* 57 (1982) 340-347. Cf. D. Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism* 180. For the *epoikiōtai* in papyri see, P. Flor. II 180. 7-8 [249-259]. – P. Flor. III 322. 44 ff. [a. 248]. – SB 15603. r. 20 [III]. – P. Oxy. 4342. col. 1. 9 [336 ?]. – SB 7756. 19 [359]. – P. Oxy. 3307. 10 [IV]. – P. Cair. Masp. III 67291. r. 9 [540 ?]. – CPR XXV 32. r. 1 [643-644]. – SB 13599. 4 [VI-VII].

¹³. A comparison of *epoikion* to *izba* is also made by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt in *P. Tebt. II*² App. II §3, p. 356.

¹⁴. M. Lewuillon-Blume, Problèmes 185.

¹⁵. P. Sarris, *Economy* 31.

¹⁶. P. Sarris, *Economy* 35.

¹⁷. J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change* 184, 185 n. 94. Cf. T. M. Hickey, *Wine, Wealth* 87-88.

¹⁸. For *epoikia* as “private” property see, M. Lewuillon-Blume, Problèmes 179: “l'ἐποίκιον apparaît donc comme une propriété privée et bâtie, à activités rurales diverses”.

Epoikia and kōmai

According to M. Lewuillon-Blume, *epoikia* had the same functionaries of liturgies as did *kōmai*¹⁹. The liturgists of *kōmai* are well attested²⁰. In regard to the functionaries of *epoikia*, there is limited information. Two papyri from the Hermopolite nome comprise nominations of liturgic functionaries. *Kōmarchai* of the *epoikia* Monyρεῶς and Damaratou submit and report the names of persons eligible for compulsory duties²¹. *Kōmarchai* of *epoikion* Patelkiou nominate men for the duty of “ὑδροφυλακία”²². In a 4th century receipt from the Hermopolite nome an “ἀχυράριος” received ropes from *kōmarchai* of the *epoikion* Achilleῶς²³. Another receipt from Karanis mentions a liturgist called “ἀποδέκτης ἀχύρου” working for the *epoikion* Leukogiou²⁴. The tax collectors from Karanis delivered an amount of chaff to the *apodektēs*²⁵. The “ἀπ[αι]τη[τ]αί διατυπώσεως καί πάντων εἰδῶν” from the *epoikion*

¹⁹. The papyri supporting her suggestion are mentioned briefly in M. Lewuillon-Blume, *Problèmes* 177, n. 2: *P. Flor.* I 2 [265]. – *P. Lond.* III 1246 [345]. – *P. Herm.* 36 [IV]. – *P. Cair. Isid.* 46 [307]. – *P. Cair. Isid.* 60 [319].

²⁰. For the liturgies involving residents of *kōmai* see the meticulous inventory of N. Lewis, *The Compulsory Public Services of Roman Egypt* [Papyrologica Florentina XI], Firenze 1982, p. 72-73 (hereafter: N. Lewis, *Public Services*).

²¹. *P. Flor.* I 2 [265] col. 9. 242-243: “ἀμφοτέρων κομαρχῶν ἐποικίου Μονύρεως”; col. 10. 265: “ἀμφοτέρων κομαρχῶν ἐποικίου Δ[α]μαράτου”. See M. Lewuillon-Blume, *Problèmes* 177, n. 2. *Kōmarchēs* was responsible for the village’s administrative duties. See F. Preisigke, *Fachwörter* s.v. κομάρχης. – N. Lewis, *Public Services* 66-67 and s.v. κομάρχης. *Kōmarchēs* of a *kōmē* is mentioned in *BGU* XIX 2782. 6 [V]: “Ἄυρ(ήλιος) Πετβεύς . . . λουρογος κομάρχ[ης] κώμης Πτεμενκύρκεως”. – *P. Lips.* I 28. 6 [381]: “Ἀύρηλιον Προ[ο]ῦτος Κουλώτος κομάρχου ἀπό τῆς αὐτῆ[ς] κώμης Ἄρεως[ς]” (= *Chr. Mitt.* 363). – *P. Col.* X 281. 1-2 [287]: “ἀπό κώμης Φ[ι]λαδελφίας κομάρχης τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος γ (ἔτους)”. – *P. Flor.* III 346. 1-2 [V ?]: “Ἀύρ(ήλιος) Πάλλος βοηθός κώματος Τεμσεῦ Σκόρ[ιδῶν] κομάρχης καί γνωστήρι κώμης”.

²². *P. Lond.* III 1246. 5 [345]: “[ἀ]μφοτέρων κομαρχῶν ἀπό ἐπ[οικ]ίου Πατελκίου”. See M. Lewuillon-Blume, *Problèmes* 177, n. 2. *Hydrophylakia* probably included the guarding of the dikes containing the flood. See Danielle Bonneau, *Le Régime administratif de l'eau du Nil dans l'Égypte grecque, romaine et byzantine*, Leiden 1993, p. 190.

²³. *P. Herm.* 36. 2-4 [IV]: “Ἀύρ[η]λίιοι Τυραννός Πατώτος καί Κοπρεας Πόλιτος κομάρχαι ἐποικίου Ἀχιλλέως χαίρειν”. See M. Lewuillon-Blume, *Problèmes* 177, n. 2. For “ἀχυράριος” see N. Lewis, *Public Services* 17-18.

²⁴. *P. Cair. Isid.* 46. 1-2 [307]: “Ἀύρ[η]λίιος Σουχάμιων ἀποδέκτης ἀχύρου ἐποικίου Λευκογίου”. See M. Lewuillon-Blume, *Problèmes* 177, n. 2. *Apodektēs* was a functionary (liturgist) whose responsibility was the collection of fares or other taxes. See F. Preisigke, *Fachwörter* s.v. ἀποδέκτης. – N. Lewis, *Public Services* s.v. ἀποδέκτης. – J. Karayannopoulos, *Λεξικό Βυζαντινῆς Ορολογίας: Οικονομικοί ὄροι*, vol. I: Α-Γ, Thessaloniki 2000 (hereafter: J. Karayannopoulos, *ΛΕΒΟ*), s.v. ἀπότακτον (χωρόν), s.v. ἀποδέκτης.

²⁵. *P. Cair. Isid.* 46. 3-5 [307]: “ἀπαιτηταίς κώμης) [Καραν]ίδος ὀριοδικτίας. παρηγή[κατε] ἀχύρου λίτρας”. See M. Lewuillon-Blume, *Problèmes* 177, n. 2.

Kalou issue a receipt for chaff, fares and various taxes²⁶. The aforementioned examples suggest that *kōmarches*, *apodektēs* and *apaitētēs* apart from being liturgic functionaries of *kōmai*²⁷, they were also liturgic functionaries of *epoikia*.

Collective fiscal responsibility might be a second common characteristic that *kōmai* and *epoikia* shared. Although the collective fiscal responsibility of *kōmai* is a well established fact, it is not clearly demonstrated for *epoikia*²⁸. The accounts of the Apion estates offer information that may lead to the conclusion, that collective fiscal responsibility was effective for the inhabitants of *epoikia*. The Apions collected various taxes from their *epoikia*; among them, papyri mention taxes for abandoned lands. In several cases, collective fiscal responsibility is implied. In a 6th century account from Oxyrhynchus, farmers of an *epoikion*, probably called Tillōnos, paid dues for *apotakta chōria*²⁹. Likewise, papyrological texts mention other cases, such as the *epoikion* Nekōntheōs, which is being also taxed for *apotakta chōria*³⁰ and the farmers and winegrowers, probably from the *epoikion* Chenetōrios, paying the Apions the same taxes³¹. It is my belief that the inhabitants of *epoikia*, as well as inhabitants of *kōmai*, were collectively responsible for paying the taxes for abandoned lands.

Furthermore, fiscal documents, such as receipts for levies, offer more information and strengthen our position concerning collective fiscal responsibility. Dwellers of *epoikion* Petrok(i) from the Oxyrhynchite nome paid dues in kind, military garments, to an “ἐπιμελητής”, probably

²⁶. *P. Cair. Isid.* 60. 3-4 [319]: “ἀπ[αι]τη[τ]ῆ[ι]αί διατυπώσεως καί πάντων εἰδῶν ἐπ[οι]κίον Κάλου”. See M. Lewuillon-Blume, *Problèmes* 177, n. 2. *Apaitētēs* was a general collector of various taxes in cash or kind. See F. Preisigke, *Fachwörter* s.v. ἀπαιτητής. – A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 328. – N. Lewis, *Public Services* s.v. ἀπαιτήσις, ἀπαιτητής. – J. Karayannopoulos, *ΛΕΒΟ* s.v. ἀπαιτητής.

²⁷. N. Lewis, *Public Services* s.v. ἀπαιτητής, ἀποδέκτης, κωμάρχης.

²⁸. J. Karayannopoulos, *Die kollektive Steuerverantwortung in der frühbyzantinischen Zeit, Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 43 (1956) 289-322.

²⁹. *P. Oxy.* 2195. 18 [576-577]: “π(αρά) τοῦ κοιν(οῦ) γεωρ(γῶν) ἐποικ(ίου) [. . . .]ς ὑπέρ ἀποτάκ(ων) χωρίων”. *Apotakton chōrion* was formerly cultivated land that was abandoned. Cultivators of a *kōmē* were charged with the fiscal responsibilities of the *apotakta chōria*. See J. Karayannopoulos, *ΛΕΒΟ* s.v. ἀπότακτον (χωρίον).

³⁰. *P. Oxy.* 998 [575-599]: “τοῖς ἀπό Νεκώνθεως ὑ(πέρ) ἀποτάκ(ων) χωρ(ίων)”. The people “ἀπό Νεκώνθεως”, that are mentioned in *P. Oxy.* 998, were cultivators located at the *epoikion* Nekōntheōs. See *P. Oxy.* 2195. 20 [576-577].

³¹. *P. Oxy.* 1912. 81 [bef. 566]: “π(αρά) τῶν αὐ(τῶν) γεωρ(γῶν) καί ἀμπελουρ(γῶν) ὑπ(έρ) ἀποτάκ(ου) χωρ(ίου)” [bef. 566]. We know that the farmers and winegrowers were actually from Chenetōrios because it is mentioned in the same papyrus. See *P. Oxy.* 1912. 43; 79.

the *ἐπιμελητής ἐσθῆτος*³². The usage of the phrase “οἱ ἀπό ἐποικίου” may indicate that they paid the taxes en bloc³³. A list of arrears of clothing comprised two columns; the first registers *kōmai* or *epoikia* (e.g. “Θώλθεως, Δωσιθέου, ἐποικιον Γερωντᾶ”) and the second registers owed garments (e.g. “στιχάριον, πάλλιον”)³⁴. One should notice that this is a distinctive register per *kōmē* or *epoikion* (e.g. “ἐποικίου Γερωντᾶ, ἐποικίου Σαραπᾶ”)³⁵. The tax for the procurement of military equipment, *canon vestium*, was probably paid collectively by residents of *epoikia*, as well as by residents of *kōmai*³⁶.

The third characteristic, I believe, *kōmai* and *epoikia* shared, was that both their inhabitants formed collectives of the wealthiest villagers (“κοινόν κώμης”, “κοινόν εποικίου”)³⁷ or guilds of certain occupations (e.g. “κοινόν γεωργῶν”, “κοινόν αμπελουργῶν”, “κοινόν πλινθευτῶν”, “κοινόν ποιμένων”)³⁸.

Collectives of *kōmai*, as well as, collectives of *epoikia* are well attested in papyri³⁹. Two papyri from the Oxyrhynchite and the Hermopolite nome dating from the middle of the 6th century mention collectives of

³². *P. Oslo* III 119. 1-5 [319]: “Π[αρ]ήνεγκαν ἐπὶ τῆς πόλεως . . . θ(ήκηνη) (?) οἱ ἀπ]ό ἐπ[ο]ικ(ίου) Πετροκ() η/ πάγον δι(ά) Χ[.]. . . ἀπαι(τητοῦ) καὶ κοι(ωνῶν) ὑπ(έρ) παλ(λίου) ζῖ ἰνδικ(τίωνος) τά [ὑπ]έ(ρ) βασιλικῆ[ς] γ[ί]ης δηληγα[τευθ](έντα) δερματ[ί]α”. *Dermaticia* were dalmatian vestments or cloaks. See J. Karayannopoulos, *Das Finanzwesen des frühbyzantinischen Staates* [Südosteuropäische Arbeiten 52], München 1958, p. 112-113 (hereafter: J. Karayannopoulos, *Finanzwesen*). *Epimelētai esthētos* were the collectors of *canon vestium*, a tax for the procurement of military equipment. See J. Karayannopoulos, *Finanzwesen* 112.

³³. *P. Oslo* III 119. 2; 9 [319].

³⁴. *P. Oxy.* 1448. 10 ff. [318]. *Pallion* was a mantle and *sticharion* was a tunic. See E. A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (from B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100)*, vol. I-II, New York 1957 (orig. Cambridge, MA 1870 and 1887), s.v. πάλλιον, στιχάριον.

³⁵. *P. Oxy.* 1448. 10-13 [318].

³⁶. For *kōmai* paying collectively taxes in kind (e.g. garments), see *P. Michael.* 21. 9 [285]. – *P. Mich.* IX 547. 3 [298].

³⁷. e.g., *P. Gen.* I (2nd ed.) 70 [372-373]: “καὶ τό κοινόν [τ]ῆς κώμης ἐμισθώκαμεν”. – *P. Lond. Copt.* 1075 fol. 25. r. 9 [546-547 ?]: “κοιν(όν) ἐποικ(ίου) κ(εράτια) θδ τάλαντα Ηψ”. Also see A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 151. – J. Karayannopoulos, *Finanzwesen* 91. – T M. Hickey, *Wine, Wealth* 66-67.

³⁸. e.g. *P. Cair. Masp.* 67001. 4-5 [514]: “κοινόν τῶν ποιμένων καὶ ἀγοροφυλάκων τῆς αὐτῆς κώμης Ἀφροδίτης”. – *P. Col.* VIII 238. 16 [IV]: “τό κοιν(όν) τ[ῶν] γ[ε]ω[ρ]γῶν ἐποικ(ίου) Νε[τν]ήου τελε(εἶ) καὶ αὐ(τό)”. Also, see A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 152-153.

³⁹. For the *koina* of *kōmai* see, *P. Sakaon* 44. 2 [331-332] (= *P. Thead.* 17). – *P. Abinn.* 66. 32-33 [IV]. – *P. Gen.* I (2nd ed.) 70 [372-373] (= *Chr. Wilck.* 380). – *SB* 13148. 51 [IV]. – *P. Neph.* 19. 2 [IV]. – *P. Oxy.* 3985. 2 [473]. – *P. Lond. Copt.* 1075 fol. 21 v. 3; fragm. 1. 6 [546-547 ?]. – *P. Oxy.* 2243a. 42 [590]. – *SB* 16415. 3-4 [VI]. – *P. Lond.* I 113 10. 13 [639-640] (= *Chr. Wilck.* 8). – *P. Leid.* 77. 3 [VII]. – *P. Ross. Georg.* III 57. 9-10 [VII-VIII].

epoikia. The *koinon epoikiou* appears in a tax register from *kōmē* Tenseu Skordōn and *topos* Dēmeou (Hermopolite nome)⁴⁰. There is no certainty concerning the nature of the document (public or private). The frequent appearance of a *kōmē* (eight times) and a *topos* (five times) and the absence of functionaries of large estates indicate that it is a public document. In this supposedly public document, fiscal obligations of a *koinon epoikiou* are mentioned among fiscal obligations of a *koinon kōmēs*. The second appearance of *koinon epoikiou* comes from a private account of Apiones. The collective of *epoikion* Skytalitydos⁴¹ from the Oxyrhynchite nome had leased a dovecote and paid the corresponding rent⁴². It would be valid to support that the most prominent inhabitants of *epoikia* formed collectives, as the inhabitants of *kōmai* did.

Apart from *koina* of prominent inhabitants, papyri also report *koina* of various trades as guilds of *kōmai* and *epoikia*. Regarding the guilds of *kōmai*, it would suffice to consider a papyrus from *kōmē* Aphroditō. The *koinon* of shepherds and field guards of Aphroditō (“κοινόν τῶν ποιμένων και ἀγροφυλάκων τῆς αὐτῆς κώμης Αφροδίτης”) enters a contract and agrees to guard fields, cattle and tools⁴³. The trade guilds of *epoikia* are reported in private accounts from the Oxyrhynchite nome. Two accounts of rents and parcels of land mention the “κοινόν των γεωργῶν του εποικίου Νε[τν]ήου”⁴⁴ and the “κοινόν των γεωργῶν και αμπελουργῶν του εποικίου Σκυταλίτιδος”⁴⁵. These guilds of farmers paid rents for landed properties. The guild of farmers of the *epoikion*

⁴⁰. *P. Lond. Copt.* 1075 fol. 25 r. 9 [546-547 ?]: “κοιν(όν) ἐποικ(ίου) κ(εράτια) θδ τάλαντα Ηψ”. *Topos* was an administrative subdivision of a nome. See F. Preisigke, *Fachwörter* s.v. τόπος.

⁴¹. “*Epoikion Skytalitydos*” is not specifically mentioned in l. 5 (just “*Skytalitydos*”), but the following lines (l. 8; 15; 19; 22) clearly mention “*epoikion Skytalitydos*”. See *PSI* VIII 954. 5; 8; 15; 19; 22 [VI].

⁴². *PSI* VIII 954. 5 [VI]: “π(αρά) τοῦ κοινοῦ . . . Σκυταλίτιδος (ὑπέρ) φόρου περισσερεῶνος”. The three underdots indicate an uncertain reading. The editor suggests that the three underdots stand for “τ ἢ ζ”. Consequently, the text is restored as “κοινόν τῆς Σκυταλίτιδος”. See *PSI* VIII 954 notes on l. 5. The word *phoros* signifies a rent or a tax. F. Preisigke, *Fachwörter* s.v. φόρος. – A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 62. Cf. J. Gascou, *Les grands domaines, la cité et l'état en Égypte byzantine, Travaux et Mémoires* 9 (1985) 1-90, p. 12 ff. (hereafter: J. Gascou, *Grands domaines*).

⁴³. *P. Cair. Masp.* 67001. 4-5 [514]. For the *koina* and their corporate fiscal responsibility, see C. Zuckerman, *Du village à l'Empire. Autour du registre fiscal d'Aphroditō (525/526)* [Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 16], Paris 2004, p. 224 ff. (hereafter: C. Zuckerman, *Registre fiscal*). For other guilds of various trades, see *P. Cair. Masp.* 67283. 16 ff. [547].

⁴⁴. *P. Princ.* 136. 15-16 [IV] (=P. Col. VIII 238). For the “κοινόν των γεωργῶν”, see A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 152.

⁴⁵. *PSI* VIII 954. 21-22 [VI].

Tarousebt and the guild of farmers and winegrowers of an unknown *epoikion* paid Apiones rents for land and a dovecote⁴⁶. Additionally, trade guilds of *epoikia* are mentioned in papyri concerning tax exemption. The guild of winegrowers from the *epoikion* Opiōnos submitted a petition requesting a tax reduction⁴⁷. It would be fair to assume that a trade guild may have been more efficient than individual cultivators. In an account of remissions from Oxyrhynchus, the guild of farmers from the *epoikion* Perouen is being exempted for a remote parcel of land that was not flooded⁴⁸. It may be that these lands were not properly watered due to proximity to the desert⁴⁹. The guild of farmers was responsible for the cultivation of a land that probably was not always irrigated.

Kōmai and *epoikia* shared some common characteristics, which are depicted above. The same liturgical functionaries appear to be serving in *epoikia* and *kōmai*. The residents of *epoikia* and *kōmai* probably paid collectively taxes for *apotakta chōria* and the *canon vestium*. Furthermore, residents of *epoikia* and *kōmai* were organised in collectives and various guilds. These indicate that *epoikia* functioned, were taxed and were organised in a similar way to independent *kōmai*. It may be that the large estates found in the organisation of *kōmai* a functioning model.

Possession status and social mobility of epoikia

Pointing out some similarities between *epoikia* and *kōmai* would be futile, if it was not accompanied by an effort to view *epoikia* as a dynamic institution. Papyri mention *epoikia* that changed ownership or at least changed the manager that was fiscally responsible. *Ktēma* Monimou (also mentioned as an *epoikion*) is attested in an early 6th century

⁴⁶ P. Oxy. 1911. 53, 55, 63 ff. [557] (= SB 16324). We know that Tarousebt was also an *epoikion* from other papyri, e.g. P. Oxy. 2025. 20 [VI-VII]: “ἐποικ(ίου) Ταρουσεβτ”.

⁴⁷ SB 12554. 7-10; 15 [V-VI]: “πάλιν συγχώρησον ἡμᾶς τὴν μεγαλοπρέπεια τῆς σῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ τ[α]π[ι]νοῦσ[αι] ἡμῶν κατὰ τὴν κέλυσιν ἡμῶν τὰς ἑκατὸν [[πεντήκοντα]] διπλά τῆ ἀρουρᾶ”; “τό κοινόν τῶν ἀμπελουργῶν ἀπό ἐποικίου Ὀπίων ἐπιδεδόκαμεν”.

⁴⁸ P. Oxy. 2038. 20 [VI-VII]: “ὑπ(ἐρ) τῆς ἐξωτικ(ῆς) γῆς ὑπ(ἐρ) ἀβρο(χου) σίτου”. “Ἄβροχη” was land that had been usually under water, but at some point could not be watered. See Danielle Bonneau, *Le fisc et le Nil. Incidence des irrégularités de la crue du Nil sur la fiscalité foncière dans l'Égypte grecque et romaine*, Paris 1971, p. 66, 81 (hereafter: D. Bonneau, *Fisc*). – J. Karayannopoulos, *ΛΕΒΟ* s.v. ἄβροχος. For “ἐξωτικός”, see F. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden, mit Einschluss der griechischen Inschriften, Aufschriften, Ostraka, Mumienbilder usw. aus Ägypten*, vol. I-III, Heidelberg - Berlin 1925-1931, s.v. ἐξωτικός.

⁴⁹ D. Bonneau, *Fisc* 80.

lease from Oxyrhynchus as part of the Apion holdings⁵⁰. A tax account also from Oxyrhynchus mentions the same hamlet as part of the divine house⁵¹. As N. Gonis suggested it may be that *epoikion* Monimou changed ownership or at least administrator⁵². In a similar situation, *epoikion* Kineas⁵³ in the 6th century appears to be an Apion holding⁵⁴, but in two orders for payment it is included in the divine house's estates⁵⁵. As J. Gasco suggests, the Apions either rented the *epoikion* or they were commissioned to manage its activities⁵⁶. The third example comes also from the Oxyrhynchite nome. Pempo was described in an account as imperial land and it was probably administered by the Apions⁵⁷. *Epoikion* Pempo belonged to the imperial property (*θείος οἶκος*), but the Apions, at least for a short period, were responsible for its exploitation. Lastly, in a 6th century account of Apion estates, an *epoikion* Patrimonial(?) is attested among other hamlets⁵⁸. The name Patrimonial(ia) has led scholars to believe that this particular *epoikion* had been imperial property⁵⁹ that was transferred to the Apions⁶⁰. The aforementioned cases

⁵⁰. *P. Oxy.* 4615. 7 [505]: “γεωργός τῆς [ὑμῶν μεγαλοπρεπείας ὁμοῦμενος ἐκ τοῦ αὐτῆς κτήματος καλουμένου Μονίμου”. Monimou as *epoikion* is attested in *P. Hamb.* I 19. r. 8 [225]: “τό Μονίμου ἐποίκιον ἐκ τοῦ Πτολεμαίου”. A. Calderini - S. Daris, *Dizionario dei nomi geografici e topografici dell'Egitto greco-romano*, vol. I-V + Suppl., Cairo - Milano - Bonn - Pisa - Roma 1935-2009, s.v. Μονίμου (hereafter: A. Calderini - S. Daris, *Dizionario*).

⁵¹. *P. Oxy.* 2020. 13-14 [VI]: “διά τοῦ θείου οἴκου κριθ(ῆς) ... ὑπέρ τοῦ κτήματος Μονίμου”. The divine house (*θείος οἶκος*) was an administrative institution composed of imperial estates. See A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 36. - J. Gasco, *Grands domaines* 4.

⁵². *P. Oxy.* 4615 [505] notes on l. 7.

⁵³. A. Calderini - S. Daris, *Dizionario* s.v. Κινέας.

⁵⁴. *P. Oxy.* 2479. 2 [VI]. See J. Gasco, *Grands domaines* 77.

⁵⁵. *PSI* III 196. 1 [VI-VII]. - *PSI* III 197. 1 [VI-VII]. See J. Gasco, *Grands domaines* 77.

⁵⁶. J. Gasco, *Grands domaines* 77.

⁵⁷. *P. Oxy.* 1915. 1-3 and Intr. [560]: “ἀπό τοῦ κτήματος Πεμπῶ τοῦ θειοῦ (ἀτ)οῦ οἴκου δι[- ca. 18 -] τ . . . [ρ]. . . τῷ ὑπερφουσι(άτω) ὑπάτω ὀρδιναρ(ίω) Ἀπίωνος”. See J. Gasco, *Grands domaines* 77. - T. M. Hickey, *Wine, Wealth* 51-52. Also, see A. Calderini - S. Daris, *Dizionario* s.v. Πεμπῶ.

⁵⁸. *P. Iand.* III 51. 7 [VI]. The term *epoikion* is not explicitly mentioned, but the other localities (“Λεωνίδου”, “Ἀσιπιδᾶ”, “Σκυταλίτιδος”, “Μεγάλης Παρορίου”) that are mentioned in *P. Iand.* III 51 were *epoikia*. We have knowledge of that, from references to other papyri, e.g. *P. Oxy.* 2244 R. 3, 5, 25 [VI]: “ἐποίκιον Λεωνίδου”, *P. Oxy.* 4755. 10 [586]: “ἐποίκιον Ἀσιπιδᾶ”, *P. Oxy.* 2025. 28 [VI-VII]: “ἐποίκιον Σκυταλίτιδος”, *P. Oxy.* 2244 R. 1, 18 [VI]: “ἐποίκιον Μεγάλης Παρορίου”. Also see A. Calderini - S. Daris, *Dizionario* s.v. Πατρομουναλ(ι).

⁵⁹. The Latin adjective “patrimonialis” in Roman law is related to the imperial property (e.g. *fundi patrimoniales*, *comitiva sacri patrimonii*). For the term *patrimonium* and imperial property, see R. Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées et res privata. L'aerarium impérial*

indicate that *epoikia* could change owner or administrator for a certain period of time.

The dynamic character of *epoikia* is also emanated by examples of *epoikia* that evolved into *kōmai* and in some cases vice versa⁶¹. The *epoikion* Pisaïs located in the Arsinoïte nome is attested in two papyri from the 2nd and 3rd century⁶². During the Byzantine period a *kōmē* Pisaei is mentioned in a loan of wheat and in a list of villages both from the Arsinoïte nome⁶³. Presumably Pisaei had evolved at least from the early Byzantine times into a *kōmē*⁶⁴. A village named Tryphōnos appears in an account of private property from Oxyrhynchus⁶⁵. The editor identifies *kōmē* Tryphōnos with the homonymic *epoikion* mentioned in a census register⁶⁶. The scribe of the census uses the genitive “*Τρύφωνος*”, which indicates that the hamlet, before becoming a village, was private property of someone named “*Τρύφων*”. An *epoikion* Nilou is attested in southern Oxyrhynchite nome in the 4th century and a hamlet with the same name is mentioned in a porphyry tablet from the Hermopolite nome⁶⁷. In the 6th century a *kōmē* Nilou is mentioned in a list of payments to soldiers serving in Hermopolite nome⁶⁸. According to D. Bonneau the presumably three different settlements may well be the

et son administration du IV^e au VI^e siècle [Collection de l'École française de Rome 121], Rome 1989, p. 669-670, 675-676.

⁶⁰. A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 36. - J. Gascou, *Grands domaines* 30 n. 184.

⁶¹. The idea that hamlets evolved into villages is briefly expressed by D. Rathbone and R. S. Bagnall. See D. Rathbone, *Economic Rationalism* 180. - R. S. Bagnall, *Egypt* 218.

⁶². *BGU* I 277. 14 [130-160]: “ἐ[ν ἐ]ποικίῳ Πισαίει”. - *P. Fay.* 90. 14 [234]: “ἐν ἐποικίῳ Πισαεί”. See A. Calderini - S. Daris, *Dizionario* s.v. Πισαίς.

⁶³. *SB* 15286. 13 [362]: “ἐν τῇ αὐτῆ[κ]ῶ[μ]η Πισαεί”. - *SPP* X 78. 8 [VII]: “ἐκ τ(ῶν) ἀπό κ(ῶμης) Πισαεί”.

⁶⁴. A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 36. - J. Gascou, *Grands domaines* 30 n. 184.

⁶⁵. *P. Oxy.* 2195. 38 [VI]: “ἀπό κώμ(ης) [το]ῦ Τρύφωνος”.

⁶⁶. *BGU* VII 1619. 18 [II]: “Τρύφωνος ἐποίκ(ιον)”. See *P. Oxy.* 2195 [VI] notes on l. 38.

⁶⁷. *P. Oxy.* 997 [IV]: “[*-ca.?- ὑπ(?)*]ἐρ ι παρολκῶν Νει[ί]λου ἐποικ(ίου) κε”. - *SB* 8163 [?]: “Ἰωάννης ἀπὸ ἐπικίου Νίλος τοῦ ἑρμοπολίτου”. See M. Drew-Bear, *Nome Hermopolite* 183.

⁶⁸. *SB* 11076. 44 [early VI]: “χῶμ(ατι) τόπ(ου) Νει(λου) κ(ῶμης)”. See Danielle Bonneau, *Niloupolis du Fayoum*, in J. Bingen - G. Nachtergaele (ed.), *Actes du XV^e Congrès International de Papyrologie* (Bruxelles - Louvain, 29 août - 3 septembre 1977), vol. IV: *Papyrologie documentaire* [Papyrologica Bruxellensia XIX], Bruxelles 1979, p. 258-273, here 258 (hereafter: D. Bonneau, *Niloupolis*).

same *epoikion* that evolved into a *kōmē*⁶⁹. In the Fayum, the *epoikion* Nestou is attested in papyri dated until the 2nd century⁷⁰. In early 3rd century and later, Nestou is mentioned as a *kōmē*⁷¹. Furthermore, in the Hermopolite nome, the *epoikion* Monyris is mentioned in an account of military provisions and in a register, both dating from the 3rd century⁷². In a lease of land from late 4th century, Monyris appears as a *kōmē*⁷³. It would be reasonable to assume that the Roman *epoikia* Nestos and Monyris later became *kōmai*⁷⁴. These are only few of many examples of *epoikia* that probably had evolved into *kōmai*⁷⁵. Unlike the aforementioned examples, papyri report a reverse process, in which *kōmē* Chenetōrios, attested in early 4th century, is later mentioned as *epoikion* Chenetōrios⁷⁶. This reverse process could be also attested in two papyri from Arsinoite nome. The *kōmē* Kerkēseōs that is mentioned in a 7th century papyrus appears one century later in an Arabic papyrus as *epoikion*⁷⁷.

The aforementioned examples of *epoikia* that changed owners or at least administrators combined with the cases of *epoikia* that presumably had acquired the status of *kōmai*, in my opinion, allude a social mobility in the rural sphere that was already surmised by scholars⁷⁸.

⁶⁹. D. Bonneau, Niloupolis 258. – A. Benaissa, *Rural Settlements of the Oxyrhynchite Nome: A Papyrological Survey* [Trismegistos Online Publications IV], Köln - Leuven 2012², p. 202 (hereafter: A. Benaissa, *Rural Settlements*). It should be noted that A. Benaissa includes *epoikion* Nilou in the Oxyrhynchite rural settlements, but he does not mention it at all *kōmē* Nilou.

⁷⁰. *SB* 11067. 3 [I-II]. – *P. Fay.* 84. 6 [163]. – *P. Hamb.* III 225. 19 [II-III]. Also, see A. Calderini - S. Daris, *Dizionario* s.v. Νέστου ἐποίκιον.

⁷¹. *P. Hamb.* I 80. 2 [198-227]. – *P. Heid.* V 350. 35 [612]. – *SPP* X 138. 3 [early VII].

⁷². *BGU* II 553. 12-15 [262-263]. – *BGU* XI 2074. 5-7 [286-287]. See also A. Calderini - S. Daris, *Dizionario* s.v. Μονύρις.

⁷³. *P. Lips.* I 20. 7 [381].

⁷⁴. Nestou is present in a sale of a barn from the early 2nd century, but it is peculiarly designated as an *epoikion* and as a *kōmē*. See *BGU* II 455. 13-14 [early II]: “περὶ κώμη(ν) Ν[έ]στου ἐποικίου”. The case of Monyris is identical. In a nomination of liturgies, Monyris is mentioned as an *epoikion* and as a *kōmē*. *P. Flor.* I 2. 235, 242-243 [265]. Cf. *P. Tebt.* II² App. II §3, p. 356.

⁷⁵. See A. Benaissa, *Rural Settlements* s.v. Ἡρακλείδου, Ἡράκλειον, Θῶλθις, Ἴστρου, Κόσμου, Λευκίου, Ληνών, Νίγερως, Νόμου, Πανευεῖ, Σαραπίωνος Χαϊρήμονος, Φιλοστράτου. For a highly detailed survey of graeco-roman toponyms, see H. Verreth, *A Survey of Toponyms in Egypt in the Graeco-Roman Period* [Trismegistos Online Publications II], Köln - Leuven 2013².

⁷⁶. *P. Oxy.* 1912. 43, 66, 68 ff. [VI]. – *P. Oxy.* 3981. 3 [312]. See A. Benaissa, *Rural Settlements* s.v. Χενετώριος.

⁷⁷. *SB* 9402. 2 [VII]. – *SB* 9583. 7-8 [VIII]. For a different interpretation concerning the names of the Fayum hamlets and villages, see J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change* 175-176.

⁷⁸. A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 36. – T. M. Hickey, *Wine, Wealth* 51 ff.

Landed property in epoikia and beyond

While attempting to characterise *epoikia* we should define their territorial status. The surrounding area of an *epoikion*, unlike the territorium of a *kōmē*, is rarely mentioned in papyri⁷⁹. Did all the land around an *epoikion* belong to a sole proprietor? Were the residents of an *epoikion* able to possess land elsewhere? Papyri might offer some assistance answering these questions. We will present three cases of cultivators coming from *epoikia* that presumably rented lands outside their territory. We will also examine whether foreigners, residents of *kōmai*, could obtain land of *epoikia*.

A papyrus from the archive of Dioscorus mentions two peasants from *epoikion* Sakkou renting a piece of land that was part of Aphroditō's communal property⁸⁰. This particular field was “ἐν τῷ ἀπόρῳ”, which probably means that it was “ἄπορον τῆς κώμης”⁸¹. The field was part of Aphroditō's property and at some point, its owners abandoned it. Then, the abandoned land was leased to the residents of Sakkou. In another text from the same archive, Aurelios Abraamios coming from *epoikion* Psinsou⁸² leased a farm for the duration of three years⁸³. This land is also situated in the area surrounding *kōmē* Aphroditō, but it was privately owned. Leasing foreign land may also be the case of a papyrus from Apollōnopolite nome. Aurelios Iōannēs from *epoikion* Bespaiom leased arable and uncultivated lands from the monastery of Abbot Patoīs⁸⁴. The lease is *emphyteutic*, meaning perpetual lease with an obligation of improving the land⁸⁵. Assuming that Iōannēs was somehow working for the owner of that *epoikion* (since he resided there), he also could lease the monastery's land. Furthermore, we should note that

⁷⁹ P. Freer 1+2. 256 [524]. – P. Eirene II 28. 21 [557]. – SB 9777 v. 1 [597/598 ?]. – SPP X 145. 7 [VI]. – P. Ross. Georg. III 51. 12-13 [630]. – SB 4482. 3 [VI-VII]. – SB 14000. 3 [VI-VII]. – SB 9294. 27 [621-637]. – PSI IX 1056. 3 [VII]. – SB 12945. 2 [VII]. – SB 9459. 8 [VII].

⁸⁰ P. Cair. Masp. 67106. 8-11 [539]: “ὁμολογο(ῶ)μεν ἐξ ἀλληλεγγύης μισθώσασθαι παρ' ἑμῶν ... τ[ό] στρεφόμενον ἐν τῷ ἀπόρῳ γε[ώρ]γιον”.

⁸¹ The “ἄπορον τῆς κώμης” was land belonging to a *kōmē* that was abandoned by its previous owners. Residents of the *kōmē* or foreigners were allowed lease the abandoned land. See J. Karayannopoulos, ΛΕΒΟ s.v. ἄπορα ὀνόματα, ἄπορον τῆς κώμης.

⁸² P. Ross. Georg. III 33, 5-6 (522): “π(αρά) Αὐρηλίου Ἀβρααμίου [ο]ν [.] μητρὸς Σιβύλλας ἀπὸ ἐποικίου Ψινσου”. The use of ancestors (“πατρὸς”, “μητρὸς”) and the place of residence (“ἀπὸ ἐποικίου”) for the identification of the leaseholders is common in papyri. Here it is likely that “ἀπὸ ἐποικίου Ψινσου” refers to Abraamios. See examples at: P. Lond. V 1767. 5 [561-562]. – P. Iand. III 48. 12-13 [582].

⁸³ P. Ross. Georg. III 33, 5-6; 8-14 (522).

⁸⁴ P. Lond. II 483 [616].

⁸⁵ See A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 72-74.

epoikion and *emphyteusis* appear in Arabic papyri. An “ἐποίκιον Ἐμφυτευτῶν” is repeatedly mentioned in 8th century papyri from Aphroditō⁸⁶. “Ἐμφυτευτῶν” is merely a name; however, it implies that the residents of *epoikia* in the Byzantine period held land on *emphyteutic* lease⁸⁷. To summarise, in two cases from the first half of the 6th century, cultivators coming from hamlets near Aphroditō appear to lease foreign lands. Also in early 7th century, a cultivator from a hamlet rented foreign land owned by a monastery. The exact status of these cultivators is unknown to us, but we know they resided in hamlets, which means that they already cultivated lands belonging to their owners. The point to note is, even though the inhabitants of *epoikia* cultivated private land, they could lease land coming from other parties.

The suggestion that residents of *epoikia* could lease foreign land coincides with an opposite occurrence, meaning that foreigners could obtain and exploit land of *epoikia*. The cadaster of Aphroditō in the 6th century reports residents of Antaiopolis that possessed lands in *epoikia*⁸⁸. *Comēs* Damianos owned an orchard of half *aroura* located in the territory of an *epoikion*⁸⁹. Eudoxia, sister of *comēs* Theoteknos owned one *aroura* of arable land in the hamlet Kerameōs⁹⁰. The land was under the responsibility of a farmer (*geōrgos*) named Hermauos⁹¹. He probably cultivated the parcel, but we cannot define the mode of exploitation. The implication is that foreigners could possess lands in an *epoikion*. As noted above cultivators of *epoikia* were able to possess land outside the *epoikion*. Moreover, we have suggested the possibility of outsiders to own land of *epoikia*. These two suggestions imply a more complex property situation.

It is noteworthy that *epoikion* re-emerges again in the middle Byzantine period. The 11th century cadaster of Thēbes comprises taxpayers

⁸⁶. *P. Lond.* 1412-1414 [VIII]; 1416 [732-733]; 1418 [706-707]; 1419 [716-717]; 1427 [732-733]; 1432-1434 [VIII]; 1436 [719]; 1442 [VIII]; 1444 [VIII]; 1449 [711]; 1451 [701-702, 716-717 ?]; 1452 [VIII]; 1459 [VIII]; 1460 [ca. 709]; 1468 [VIII]; 1488 [VIII]; 1553 [VIII]. – *SB* 5645 [710]. – *P. Cair. Masp.* 67359 [715-716].

⁸⁷. The state and the church possessed the right to grant their land on *emphyteutic* lease. See A. C. Johnson - L. C. West, *Byzantine Egypt* 73-74.

⁸⁸. The proprietors mentioned in the cadaster were residents of Antaiopolis. See C. Zuckerman, *Registre fiscal* 37. Cf. J. Gascou - Leslie MacCoull, *Le cadastre d'Aphroditō, Travaux et Mémoires* 10 (1987) 103-158, p. 113 (hereafter: J. Gascou - L. MacCoull, *Cadastre*).

⁸⁹. J. Gascou - L. MacCoull, *Cadastre* 120 (= *P. Freer* I+2, 43 [524 ?]).

⁹⁰. J. Gascou - L. MacCoull, *Cadastre* 126 (= *P. Freer* I+2, 256 [524 ?]).

⁹¹. *P. Freer* I+2, 256 (524 ?): “σπ(ορ.) (ἄρ) α ... ὑπ(ό) Ἐρμανῶν Πανουφίου γεωρ(γόν)”. For the meaning of *geōrgos* see J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change* 190-192.

residing in Thēba and elsewhere⁹², and amounts of taxes with tax alleviations⁹³. An “ἀγροῖδ(ιον) ἐποί(κιον)” is part of the re-imposition of taxes on previously tax-exempted lands⁹⁴. These lands (including the *agridion epoikion*) were originally granted to an imperial overseer (*basilikos kouratōr*) Leobachos⁹⁵. In the middle Byzantine period, *agridion* was a small rural settlement located at a distance from a *chōrion*, however, it was fiscally dependent from the *chōrion*⁹⁶. Accordingly, in 11th century Boiōtia, *epoikion* denotes a small rural settlement (hamlet) that was part of a prominent family. Considering the continuity of the rural communities, as N. Svoronos suggested⁹⁷, we may surmise that *epoikia*, small rural settlements continued to exist, at least until the late 11th century, as part of independent landowning families.

Conclusions

In Byzantine Egypt, the term *epoikion* was used to signify a *ktēma* or a rural settlement. Since *epoikion* is so often mentioned in Byzantine papyri, we can identify its character and maybe understand its role in Byzantine society. A juxtaposition of *epoikion* to the free village (*kōmē*) reveals some common characteristics such as the functionalities of liturgies, collective fiscal responsibility and the collectives of wealthiest residents and various trades. These imply that *epoikia* and independent *kōmai* were parallel but similar units in the Egyptian countryside. Furthermore, Byzantine papyri indicate that *epoikia* were not immutable since they could change ownership or administrator. That is not the only kind of change that occurs in Byzantine sources. *Epoikia* could probably evolve into *kōmai*, which is indicative of social mobility. The cases of residents of *epoikia* that leased lands outside their hamlet, along with the conjecture that residents of *epoikia* held land on *emphyteutic* lease (*epoikion Emphyteutōn*), demonstrate that employment in *epoikia* was

⁹². Some proprietors resided in Athens, Euripos and Aulōna. See N. Svoronos, Recherches sur le cadastre byzantin et la fiscalité aux XIe et XIIe siècles: le cadastre de Thèbes, *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 83 (1959) 1-145, p. 142 (hereafter: N. Svoronos, Cadastre). The fact that some proprietors were non-Thēban residents is reminiscent of the proprietors from the Aphroditō cadaster (see above).

⁹³. N. Svoronos, Cadastre 8.

⁹⁴. N. Svoronos, Cadastre 15, A 83: “σὺν λιβάδιον τῆς Ἀργ(ας) [(καὶ τὸ) ἀγροῖδ(ιον) ἐποί(κιον)”.
⁹⁵. N. Svoronos, Cadastre 41.

⁹⁶. J. Karayannopoulos, *ΛΕΒΟ* s.v. ἀγροῖδιον.

⁹⁷. N. Svoronos, Cadastre 145.

not exclusive. There are also cases of residents of a *kōmē* possessing land in an *epoikion*.

The aforementioned characteristics of *epoikia* mitigate their “private” status. It is reasonable to suggest that the community of an *epoikion* was not part of a large estate, only the territorium of an *epoikion* was. *Epoikia* as rural settlements seem to be consistent with a remark by J. Gascou concerning large estates in Egypt: “*l’opposition traditionnellement instituée entre la grande propriété privée d’une part, la cité et l’État de l’autre, me paraît revêtir peu ou pas de portée*”⁹⁸. *Epoikia*, as described above, were essential elements of the large estates and they might have been a manifestation of their “public” character.

⁹⁸ J. Gascou, *Grands domaines* 60.

Η επανεξέταση του όρου *εποίκιον* στη Βυζαντινή Αίγυπτο

Ο όρος *εποίκιον* απαντά στους Βυζαντινούς παπύρους και σε ορισμένες επιγραφές με τη σημασία του αγροκτήματος ή του αγροτικού συνοικισμού που ανήκε σε μια μεγάλη γαιοκτησία. Η έρευνα δεν έχει ασχοληθεί επισταμένως με τον χαρακτήρα των *εποικίων* και τη θέση τους στην πρόμη Βυζαντινή κοινωνία της Αιγύπτου. Οι αγροτικοί αυτοί οικισμοί παρουσιάζουν ορισμένα κοινά χαρακτηριστικά με τις ελεύθερες *κώμες* της Βυζαντινής υπαίθρου. Τέτοια χαρακτηριστικά είναι οι λειτουργίες, η αλληλέγγυος φορολογική ευθύνη και οι συντεχνίες (*κοινά*). Ο δυναμικός χαρακτήρας των *εποικίων* τεκμαίρεται από αλλαγές στο ιδιοκτησιακό καθεστώς τους. Υπάρχουν παραδείγματα *εποικίων*, τα οποία άλλοτε αποτελούσαν κτήσεις του αυτοκρατορικού *οίκου* και άλλοτε κτήσεις ιδιωτών. Επίσης, ορισμένα *εποίκια* ενδεχομένως μπορούσαν να αποκτήσουν το καθεστώς της ελεύθερης *κώμης*. Οι κάτοικοι των *εποικίων*, αν και εξαρτώμενοι από τον ιδιοκτήτη της γης τους, είχαν τη δυνατότητα να μισθώνουν αλλότρια γη. Τα προαναφερθέντα χαρακτηριστικά μετριάζουν την εικόνα των *εποικίων* ως στατικών «ιδιωτικών» συνοικισμών. Τα *εποίκια*, ως δυναμικοί αγροτικοί συνοικισμοί των *οίκων* της Αιγύπτου, επισημαίνουν τον «δημόσιο» χαρακτήρα των γαιοκτησιών αυτών.