One day, a man named Dionysodoros from the Egyptian village of Kerkesoucha wrote to the king to complain of an instance of allegedly unjust imprisonment (P. Enteux. 84 [Ghoran, 285–221 BC]). He had been asked by a relative to watch over a number of private records (byblaria). His kinsman had since requested their return, but Dionysodoros couldn’t find them. Consequently, the kinsman handed him over to a police officer (phylakitês), who transferred Dionysodoros to a jailor (desmophylax) for detention until the relative ordered his release. These orders had since come, but release did not follow. Instead, the jailor had accused Dionysodoros of being a criminal (kakourgos) and sent him to another prison (desmôtêrion) in Krokodilopolis. Unfortunately, what happened next remains a mystery, for, as is so often true with papyri, the text breaks off in the middle of the action.

Papyrus documents shed a great deal of light on the phenomenon of prisons and imprisonment under the Ptolemies. There has been some recent valuable work on the subject by Hélmis (1986), Ambaglio (1987) and Marcone (1999), but our ideas are still basically shaped by Taubenschlag, whose definitive treatment of the topic is now a half-century old. A reexamination of the evidence is in order. I will argue here for four modifications to prevailing views on imprisonment under the Ptolemies: (1) that unlike in other ancient Mediterranean states, a variety of public and private offenses regularly led to imprisonment in Ptolemaic Egypt; (2) that there were at least two—and perhaps more—different sorts of prison complexes under the Ptolemies; (3) that different types of prisons did not house different classes of offenders, but rather that offenders were generally placed in the nearest available place of detention; and (4) that prison stays were usually brief, but that very lengthy periods of detention were not unheard of. These findings suggest that we may need a new model for the Ptolemaic prison system.

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1 All abbreviations for editions of papyri are after Oates et al. 2005. Dates and provenances for papyri derive from the Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis der griechischen Papyrusurkunden Ägyptens (http://www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de/~gv0/gvz.html), except in the case of the Demotic documents cited in this paper and the Appendix, as well as a few texts published in recent volumes of APF and ZPE, for which the dates and provenances recorded by the original editors have been retained.

2 Taubenschlag 1959.
First, however, a few words on imprisonment in antiquity.\(^3\) The Greek and Roman materials agree on only a few points. For one, detention in the ancient world was almost never a purely punitive measure. Offenders might be locked up temporarily in advance of a trial (if they were considered a public threat or flight risk, for example) or in the immediate aftermath of a judgment (i.e., before a sentence had been carried out). This was certainly the case at Athens. The orators provide an abundance of evidence for both practices. We see an accused homicide arrested as a \textit{kakourgos} and thrown into prison, ostensibly because he posed a flight risk (Antiphon 5.9, 5.13 and 5.17–18). A passage from Demosthenes reveals that the Eleven were responsible for the detention of delinquents until the receipt of sureties (24.80–81), and one from Lysias that clothing thieves could be imprisoned at the discretion of these same officials (10.10). Socrates provides perhaps the most famous example of an offender imprisoned after a trial and in advance of a sentence (Plato, \textit{Crito} 43a–44c). Imprisonment before sentencing was also common under the Romans. A number of cases are known from the reign of Tiberius. Cassius Dio, for instance, reports on the condemnation and prolonged detention of Asinius Gallus (58.3). Suetonius mentions a \textit{senatus consultum} for the execution of condemned criminals ten days after sentencing (\textit{Tiberius} 75). Tacitus details the imprisonment and execution of Lutorius Priscus (\textit{Annals} 3.51).

In the greatest number of instances we see individuals arrested and jailed for debts to the state.\(^4\) There are many references in the sources to imprisonment for public debt at Athens. For instance, we know that the Athenian \textit{Boulê} had the power to detain defaulting tax farmers (Andocides 1.92–93). Demosthenes makes it clear that a man might leave the prison upon payment of debt (22.34) and also that a debtor to the public treasury (\textit{dêmosion}) could be deposited into prison (53.14). In Rome, the Twelve Tables mandated arrest, detention and enslavement for a convicted debtor at the hands of his creditor (3.1–6). Cicero (\textit{Pro Flacco} 48) and Quintilian (\textit{Inst. Or.} VII 3.26–27), among others, provide evidence that the practice remained in use throughout the Republic and into the Empire. Here, too, however, detention was not really punitive, but rather

\(^3\) The most recent discussions of detention in antiquity are Bertrand-Dagenbach, Chauvot, Matter and Salamito 1999; Tovar and Martin 2003; and Bertrand-Dagenbach, Chauvot, Salamito and Vaillancourt 2006.

\(^4\) On imprisonment or other punishments for debt in antiquity see Taubenschlag 1959; Mélèze-Modrzejewski 1962; Finley 1965; Lintott 1999; and Maffi 1999. For Athens in particular see also Barkan 1936; Hunter 1994; and Allen 2000.
coercive: imprisoned debtors were freed upon repayment. To be sure, there were exceptions to these rules. Imprisonment might be inflicted in exceptional circumstances, such as the climate of fear which prompted Caesar to propose that the Catalinarians be sentenced to life in prison for their crimes against the state (Sall., Cat. 51.43) or the religious crackdowns of 186 BC, responsible for the permanent (?) incarceration of numerous members of the Bacchanalian conspiracy (Livy, Epon. 39.18). At the end of his trial on charges of corrupting the youth of Athens and introducing new gods—exceptional circumstances indeed—Socrates first proposed life imprisonment (ζῆν ἐν δεσμωτηρίῳ) as a possible penalty and then suggested that he might alternatively be detained until he had paid his (monetary) debt to the state (ἀλλὰ χρημάτων καὶ δεσμωτηρίῳ ἐος ἄν ἐκτείσοι) and in so doing distinguished between the two possible types of imprisonment (Plato, Apol. 37b–c). Yet circumstances such as those that led to the imprisonment of Socrates or the Catalinarians were certainly rare. For the most part, prisons were temporary holding cells in which offenders, and these mainly debtors, endured brief stays.

Egypt provides a contrast. Thanks to the thousands of papyri that survive, we are well informed about the criminal justice system of Ptolemaic (and later Roman) Egypt. The documents reveal that a state police force patrolled the towns and villages of the chôra. This force was composed primarily of the phylakitai and their supervisors, among these archiphylakitai (police chiefs) and epistatai phylakitôn (police commissioners). The phylakitai and other Ptolemaic law enforcement officials performed a number of traditional police functions: among these arresting malefactors, investigating crimes and even meting out

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5 This passage, among others, suggests the possibility that long-term, penal imprisonment was more common (at Athens, at least) than many have thought: see Allen 2000:226–230 for a good discussion of the evidence and additional citations.

6 On law enforcement in Ptolemaic Egypt, see Kool 1954; Hélmis 1986; and Bauschatz 2005.

sentences. But police under the Ptolemies also performed a number of duties generally outside of the occupational sphere of modern police officers: among these providing security for agricultural infrastructure and collecting tax arrears. The Ptolemaic police were largely autonomous officials empowered by the central government to take a variety of steps to prevent wrongdoing and solve crimes. The law enforcement system empowered not only its institutions and officials, but also the general population. As the petitions demonstrate, even the poorest, most disadvantaged villagers had relatively fast and reliable access to remediation.

We are concerned here, of course, not with the reporting of offenses or the arrest of suspects, but the imprisonment of offenders. Our details on this process are many. Once an offender had been arrested, a period of temporary detention was commonplace before transport to another official for trial or punishment. In most instances police officials detained (katechesthai, synechesthai) or secured (asphalizesthai) criminals or collected tax arrears, e.g.: BGU VIII 1798 (Herakleopolite, 64–44 BC); C.Ord. Ptol. 53.188–192 (Kerkeosiris?, 118 BC); P.Cair.Zen. II 59232 (Arsinoite, 253 BC); protecting crops, e.g.: BGU VIII 1818 (Herakleopolite, 60–59 BC); 1851 (Herakleopolite, 64–44 BC); PSI IV 344 (Philadelphia, 255 BC); government infrastructure: PSI IV 344 (Philadelphia, 255 BC); P.Tebt. III.1 706 (Tebtynis, 171 BC); 733 (Tebtynis, 143–142 BC); people: C.Ord.Ptol. 47 (Kerkeosiris?, 139 BC); 62 (Memphis, 99 BC); ships/shipments, e.g.: P.Berl.Salmen. 17 (Herakleopolis, 77 BC); P.Tebt. III.1 824 (Tebtynis, 171 BC); 8754 (Herakleopolite, 77 or 48 BC?); keeping order at public auctions, e.g.: BGU VI 1219 (Hermonopolite, II BC); P.Ryl. II 253 (Hermopolis Magna, 142 BC?); UPZ II 219 and 221 (Thebes, 130 BC); at civil trials (?): Chrest.Mitt. 32 (Arsinoite, 181 BC).

On petitions to Ptolemaic law enforcement officials see Bauschatz 2005:65–102; for petitions in general, Hombert and Préaux 1942; di Bitonto Kasser 1967, 1968 and 1976; and Parca 1985. Greeks and Egyptians seem to have made up the majority of petitioners, but it is difficult to determine which of these two segments of the population wrote the bulk of appeals to the police, as (for example) petitioners with Greek names were not necessarily Greeks.

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8 The Ptolemaic police executed arrests (e.g.: P.Athen. 8 Arsinoite, 193–192 BC; P.Enteux. 82 [Trikomia, 221 BC]; P.Ryl. II 68 [Hermopolis Magna, 89 BC], visited crime scenes (BGU VI 1253 [? II BC]; P.Frankf. 3 Tholthis, 212 BC); P.Petr. III 32 [Sebentys?, 217 BC]), detained wrongdoers (e.g.: BGU VIII 1854 [Herakleopolite, 74–73 or 45–44 BC?]; Chrest.Wilck. 166 Arsinoite, 218 BC; SB VIII 9792 [Hermopolis Magna, 162 BC]), seized evidence (e.g.: BGU VIII 1761 [Herakleopolite, 50 BC]; P.Hib. II 198.100–105 [Arsinoite?], after 224 BC); SB XIV 12089 [Herakleopolite, 130 BC]), conducted searches and raids (P.Giss.Univ. 10 Euhemeria, 145–116 BC); UPZ I 5, 6 and 6a [Memphis, 163 BC], sealed homes and buildings (SB I 4309 [? Arsinoite, III BC?]; XIV 12089 [Herakleopolite, 130 BC]; ZPE 141 2002:186–190 [Herakleopolite, 137 BC]), transferred offenders to trial (e.g.: BGU VIII 1780 [Herakleopolite, 56 or 50 BC?]; P.Cair.Zen. II 59140 [? 256 BC]; P.Cair.Zen. II 59145 [? 256 BC]; P.Hib. II 233 [? III BC]; P.Tebt. I 43 [Alexandria, 117 BC]).

9 Collecting tax arrears, e.g.: BGU VIII 1798 (Herakleopolite, 64–44 BC); C.Ord. Ptol. 53.188–192 (Kerkeosiris?, 118 BC); P.Cair.Zen. II 59232 (Arsinoite, 253 BC); protecting crops, e.g.: BGU VIII 1818 (Herakleopolite, 60–59 BC); 1851 (Herakleopolite, 64–44 BC); PSI IV 344 (Philadelphia, 255 BC); government infrastructure: PSI IV 344 (Philadelphia, 255 BC); P.Tebt. III.1 706 (Tebtynis, 171 BC); 733 (Tebtynis, 143–142 BC); people: C.Ord.Ptol. 47 (Kerkeosiris?, 139 BC); 62 (Memphis, 99 BC); ships/shipments, e.g.: P.Berl.Salmen. 17 (Herakleopolis, 77 BC); P.Tebt. III.1 824 (Tebtynis, 171 BC?); SB V 8754 (Herakleopolite, 77 or 48 BC?); keeping order at public auctions, e.g.: BGU VI 1219 (Hermopolite, II BC); P.Ryl. II 253 (Hermopolis Magna, 142 BC?); UPZ II 219 and 221 (Thebes, 130 BC); at civil trials (?): Chrest.Mitt. 32 (Arsinoite, 181 BC).
possessions in some sort of prison. Taubenschlag asserted that offenders in Greek and Roman Egypt were placed in prison for two major reasons: they had not paid off debts or had committed misdemeanors. For the most part the papyri support his claims, though they yield more than a few surprises. Non-payment of both public and private debts was met with the same penalty: detention until repayment. At least, this appears to have been the general rule. But where debtors and debts are mentioned in the papyri, the surrounding circumstances are often vague. The nature of a debt (i.e., whether it was public or private) must generally be determined from other evidence in the text. This is often a difficult task. Further, in perhaps only as many as eighty cases are the offenses justifying imprisonment known. Yet of one hundred forty-eight discrete instances of detention in the Ptolemaic period, only thirty-five can be demonstrated to have been carried out for defaulting debts and/or private debts owed to the state, e.g.: BGU VIII 1821 (Herakleopolite, 57–56 bc); P.Col. IV 103 (Philadelphia?, III bc); P.Col.Youtie I 12 (Kroko
The circumstances are varied. In one case, a beekeeper was arrested and taken to jail for an outstanding debt (*P. Cair. Zen.* III 59520 [Krokodilopolis?, III BC]). In another, a man locked away for a debt of sixty drachmas offered to sell some wine in order to secure a release (*P. Cair. Zen.* IV 59626 [?, III BC]). Another man related that he had measured a certain amount of grain into the granary and asked that, as a consequence, his sons be released from prison (*PSI* V 532 [Philadelphia, III BC]). Given the predominance of debt-based incarceration in other ancient states (especially at Athens), evidence for the practice in Ptolemaic Egypt is not surprising.

But just how common was imprisonment for non-payment of debt? Roughly two-thirds of the thirty-five instances of debt-related detention are dubious and may not even concern imprisonment for debt.\(^\text{16}\) One man wrote to the *stratêgos* from prison to complain that he had been arrested and detained by a tax collector and some accomplices, in spite of the fact that he owed nothing to the state (*BGU* VIII 1821 [Herakleopolite, 57–56 BC]). Yet the petitioner’s assertion of innocence on this specific charge suggests that he may have been guilty of it, or at least that the arresting officials believed he was. Another man was taken to the *desmôtêrion* by an official bent on extracting one hundred drachmas from him (*P. Cair. Zen.* III 59492 [Philadelphia, III BC]). In his letter, the prisoner suggests that the official was acting out of ill-will and seeks help, but he does not assert that he owed no debt to the official and in fact lists his limited assets. In a final case, an imprisoned priest wrote

\(^{15}\) *APF* 48 2002:101 (Arsinoite, II BC), two prisoners; *BGU* VIII 1821 (Herakleopolite, 57–56 BC); *P. Bürgsch.* 17 (Memphis, 159 BC); *P. Cair. Zen.* I 59130 (Memphite, 256 or 254 BC); II 59275 (Arsinoite, 251 BC); III 59421 (Memphis, 258–256 BC); 59492 (Philadelphia, III BC); 59496 (Krokodilopolis, 248–241 BC); 59520 (Krokodilopolis?, III BC); IV 59626 [?, III BC]; *P. Col.* III 18 (Philadelphia, c. 257 BC); IV 103 (Philadelphia?, III BC); *P. Coll. Youtie* I 12 (Krokodilopolis, 177 BC), four or more instances of imprisonment for one man (and his guarantors), perhaps for two separate debts; 16 (Arsinoite, 109 BC?); *P. Gur.* 10 (Arsinoite, III BC), multiple imprisonments; *P. Heid.* VI 378 (Pelousion, III BC); VII 417 (Herakleopolis, 190 or 189 BC); *P. Hib.* I 41 (Oxyrhynchite, c. 261 BC); *P. Mich.* XVIII 773 (Oxyrhyncha or Krokodilopolis, c. 194 BC); *P. Mil. Congr. XVII* pg21/22 (Arsinoite, after 142–141 BC); *PSI* V 529 (Philadelphia, III BC); 532 (Philadelphia, III BC), three or more imprisonments; *P. Tebt. III.* I 772 (Tebtynis, 236 BC); *SB* III 7202 (Arsinoite, 227 BC), at least two imprisonments; XIV 11639 (Philadelphia, 248 BC); 12000 (Krokodilopolis, II BC); XXIV 16285 (Krokodilopolis, 202 BC).

\(^{16}\) See the Appendix. Of the thirty-five instances of imprisonment for debt listed there (and in the previous note), as many as twenty-five may have actually been carried out for other reasons. In nine of these cases, petitioners alleged that they had been arrested unjustly, whether on a trumped-up charge of debt or with no charge stated at all. In those cases where no charges were specified, circumstances suggest that the prisoner may have owed a debt.

\(^{17}\) On the *stratêgos* see Van ’t Dack 1948; Bengston 1964–1967 III; Hohlwein 1969; and Mooren 1984. The *stratêgos* was the judicial official of primary importance in the third century for criminal cases: see the documents published as *P. Enteux.* and Wolff 1970:162–163.
to an unknown official and reported that he had been arrested in the aftermath of a temple inspection (*P. Heid. VI* 378 [Pelousion, III BC]). According to the priest, the examination of the temple’s grain had turned up no irregularities; but his subsequent arrest suggests otherwise.

The evidence for debt-based detention is substantial, but not without its problems. Moreover, at least twenty-nine cases detail detentions carried out for crimes ranging from assault to theft, from poor workmanship to disturbing the peace. One man was placed in jail after assaulting the local *epistatēs* (*P. Tebt. I* 15 [Kerkeosiris, 114 BC]). A carpet weaver was sent to prison after being charged by a coworker with shoddy workmanship and corrupting the other weavers (*P. Cair. Zen. III* 59484 [Philadelphia, III BC]). A whole group of people was locked up for public drunkenness (*P. Eleph. 12* [Diospolis Magna, 222 BC]). A woman asked a *phrourarchos* to detain a runaway slave in a garrison’s jail for a few days until her husband could come to fetch the fugitive (*P. Diosk. 9* [Herakleopolite, II BC]).

As we saw in the case of Dionysodoros, even a file-management mishap could land an unfortunate in prison (*P. Enteux. 84* [Ghoran, 285–221 BC]). We also see evidence in the papyri that people were sometimes imprisoned with little or even no cause. In such cases petitioners and prisoners claimed that local police and other government officials had acted with recklessness or even malice by jailing them, friends and family members unjustly.

18 Assault: *P. Tebt. I* 15 (Kerkeosiris, 114 BC); theft: *Chrest. Mitt. 45* (Sebennytos?, 224–218 BC?), four imprisonments; *P. Diosk. 5* (Herakleopolite, 146 BC?); *P. Hib. I* 34 (Oxyrhynchite, 243 BC) and 73 (Oxyrhynchite, 244–243 BC), the same prisoner in both texts; *P. Ryl. IV* 570 (Krokodilopolis, 254–251 BC); *SB I* 4309 (Arsinoite, III BC?), two or more prisoners; assault and theft: *PSI IV* 380 (Philadelphia, 249 BC); substandard work: *Chrest. Wilck. 166* (Arsinoite, 218 BC), two or more prisoners; *P. Cairo Zen. III* 59368 (Memphis?, 241 BC), two or more prisoners; 59484 (Philadelphia, 249 BC); IV 59639 (Krokodilopolis, III BC); *P. Enteux. 84* (Ghoran, 285–221 BC); *P. Petr. II* 19, Fr2 (Arsinoite, III BC); *PSI IV* 353 (Philadelphia, 254 BC), two prisoners; public disturbances: *P. Eleph. 12* (Diospolis Magna, 222 BC), two or more prisoners; *PSI IV* 406 (Philadelphia, 260–258 BC). Offending or runaway slaves seem to have been subject to imprisonment, as well: *P. Cairo Zen. III* 59369 (Krokodilopolis, 241 BC); *P. Diosk. 9* (Herakleopolite, II BC); *P. Tebt. III.2* 904 (Oxyrhyncha, 115 BC), three prisoners.


20 *Phrourarchoi*, the heads of Ptolemaic garrisons, were military officials who had a number of police duties. For an overview of the office and bibliography see *P. Diosk.*, the archive of Dioskourides, *phrourarchos* of Herakleopolis in the mid-second century BC; also Bauschatz 2005:57–59 for a summary of the police duties of *phrourarchoi*.

21 By “unjust” I mean “arbitrary”: that is, imprisonments carried out by officials acting without legitimate grounds for arresting suspects. In many cases, such “unjust” detentions appear to have been carried out because of personal grudges or greed and without any charges leveled against victims; but see below on the reliability of the evidence for allegedly “unjust” detentions.
which arbitrary imprisonments may have taken place. One individual was arrested while traveling and imprisoned without an official hearing (P.Cair.Zen. IV 59619 [Memphite?, III bc]). An oikonomos unjustly arrested a chortophylax who was subsequently put in chains and kept in detention for eight months (P.Cair.Zen. III 59368.22–25 [Memphis?, 241 bc]). A farmer was arbitrarily jailed, eventually released and then forced to flee in order to avoid additional persecution at the hands of a corrupt kômarchês (SB XX 14708 [Theadelphia, 151 bc]). A woman was imprisoned by another kômarchês after being attacked by another woman and was only released after she had surrendered her himation (P.Enteux. 83 [Magdola, 221 bc]). The kômarchês then gave the clothing to the offending woman.

At first glance, the evidence for arbitrary imprisonment by police and other officials (and, indeed, for police corruption in general) in Ptolemaic Egypt seems extensive. But upon closer examination, much of what initially appears to offer definitive proof that phylakitai, archiphylakitai and other law enforcement officials routinely incarcerated the Egyptian populace for spite or personal gain becomes suspect. Indeed, one must handle the documentation for allegedly “unjust” imprisonments with extreme care. The bulk of the data for this phenomenon comes from petitions, sources which by nature are heavily biased. As prisoners understood, those detained arbitrarily were more likely to receive fast official assistance in obtaining release than those incarcerated for legitimate reasons. Consequently, imprisoned petitioners regularly portrayed themselves as victims of unscrupulous officials whether or not the facts bore out their claims. In many cases it is probable, if not likely that those arrested and detained for allegedly unjust reasons were

22 BGU VIII 1821 (Herakleopolite, 57–56 bc); 1847 (Herakleopolite, 51–50 or 50–49 bc?); multiple prisoners; Chrest.Mitt. 5 (Arsinoite, c. 218 bc); P.Cair.Zen. III 59368 (Memphis?, 241 bc); 59492 (Philadelphia, III bc); IV 59619 (Memphite?, III bc); P.Coll. Youtie I 12 (Krokodilopolis, 177 bc); 16 (Arsinoite, 109 bc?); P.Enteux. 83 (Magdola, 221 bc); 84 (Ghoran, 285–221 bc); P.Gur. 10 (Arsinoite, III bc), multiple prisoners; P.Heid. VI 378 (Pelousion, III bc); P.Hib. II 203 (?; 246–221 bc); P.Mich. XVIII 773 (Oxyrhyncha or Krokodilopolis, c. 194 bc); P.Ryl. IV 570 (Krokodilopolis, 254–251 bc); P.Tebt. III.1 701.331–347 (Tebytyns, 235 or 210 bc?); multiple prisoners; 777 (Tebytyns, II bc); SB XIV 12093 (?; II bc); XX 14708 (Theadelphia, 151 bc); XXIV 16285 (Krokodilopolis, 202 bc); ZPE 127 1999:138–139 (Arsinoite, c. 140/139 bc).

23 Oikonomoi: see Berneker 1935:94–102 on these state financial officials; and Bauschatz 2005:52–56 on the various types of phylakes with police duties, among these chortophylakes.


26 See note ten (above).
in fact arrested with just cause.\textsuperscript{27} In light of the complicated nature of the evidence, it seems best to allow that while arbitrary detentions of villagers sometimes occurred, the practice was not widespread.

We see, then, that Ptolemaic prisons housed far more than tax cheats. Non-payment of debt appears to have been the major reason for imprisonment in Ptolemaic Egypt, but the split in the evidence suggests that crimes other than debt were met with imprisonment far more frequently than one might have assumed. This in turn suggests that the administrators of the towns and villages of Greek Egypt were very concerned about matters of personal security and empowered their police to arrest and detain people who posed threats to civic order. The degree to which law enforcement officials in the \textit{chôra} were encouraged to imprison offenders is unclear and perhaps unknowable. For the most part local law enforcement matters were left to local police and higher officials were involved only when necessary.\textsuperscript{28} But it seems natural that the Ptolemies would have supported crime-prevention measures that sought to ensure peace and prosperity in the countryside. Disturbances were not conducive to productivity and troublemakers needed to be removed.

Criminals came in a variety of shapes and sizes. What about prisons? Taubenschlag argued that offenders were imprisoned in three types of jails: \textit{desmôtêria}, \textit{praktoreia} or \textit{logistêria} (715–716). But reality was more complicated. A wide variety of prisons occurs throughout the time and space of Ptolemaic rule. We find \textit{desmôtêria} in thirty-three texts, but in only one instance does a \textit{praktoreion} seem to have been outfitted with cells for debtors (\textit{P.Heid. VIII} 417.24 [Herakleopolis, 190 or 189 BC]) and in no case do we see an offender detained in a \textit{logistêrion}.\textsuperscript{29} Furthermore, \textit{phylakai} appear far more frequently than any other type of jail:

\textsuperscript{27} See those instances in the Appendix where multiple possible reasons for imprisonment, including official bias (U), have been specified.

\textsuperscript{28} Indeed, many petitions to law enforcement reached town or village officials, among these \textit{archiphylakai}, e.g.: \textit{P.Giss.Univ. I} 7 (Euhemeria, II BC); \textit{P.Heid. II} 217 (Kerkeosiris?, II BC); \textit{P.Tebr. I} 41 (Kerkeosiris, 105–90 BC); \textit{epistatai}, e.g.: \textit{P.Mich. III} 173 (Philadelphia, 169 BC); \textit{P.Tebr. II} 283 (Tebtynis, 93 or 60 BC?); \textit{SB} X 10273 (Magdola, 235 or 210 BC?); \textit{phrowarchoi}, e.g.: \textit{P.Diosk. 1} (Herakleopolite, 154 BC?); 2 (Herakleopolite, 154 BC?); \textit{SB} V 8009 (? II BC); and even \textit{phylakai}, e.g.: \textit{P.Hib. I} 36 (Talae, 229 BC); 37 (Talae, 235 BC?); 144 (Herakleopolite?, 229 BC).

\textsuperscript{29} For attestations of \textit{desmôtêria}, see the twenty-eight texts cited in the Appendix—including three documents marked with a (?)—as well as \textit{BGU} VIII 1828.4–5 (Herakleopolite, 52–51 BC); \textit{P.Cair.Zen. II} 59296.12–13, 25–26, 34–35, 37 (Arsinoite, 250 BC); \textit{IV} 59628.7 (? III BC); \textit{P.Hib. II} 241.1–2 (Aphroditopolis?, III BC); and 248, Fr 3.7 (Oxyrhynchite, c. 250 BC). For \textit{praktoreia}, see \textit{P.Heid. VIII} 417.24 (Herakleopolis, 190 or 189 BC) with \textit{pp} 216–217; \textit{P.Hels. I} 29.36 (Herakleopolite, 161–160 or 158–157 BC); \textit{PSI Congr.XXI} 6.4 (? 116–107 BC); and \textit{P.Tebr. II} 467 (no line numbers given; Tebtynis, II BC). \textit{Logistêria} do not seem to have served as places of detention in the Ptolemaic period. For detention in \textit{logistêria} in the Roman period, see (e.g.) \textit{P.Amh. II} 80.4 (Arsinoite, AD 232–233); \textit{P.Panop. 29.9} (Panopolis, AD 332); \textit{P.Tebr. II} 420.26–27 (Tebtynis, III AD).
in sixty-eight texts. Variety was the rule. We see a desmophylakion in the village of Oxyrhyncha into which a number of wrongdoingslaves were to be deposited (P.Tebt. III.2 904.6–7, 14 [Oxyrhyncha, 115 bc]), as well as a drapetagōgion, where a housekeeper was imprisoned after being attacked by a doorkeeper (BGU VIII 1881.7 [Herakleopolite, 80–30 bc]). We know of offenders placed in εφημερευτεία, too: among these a self-described “helpless widow” (χήρα εἰμί | καὶ ἄβοθῇτος, 20–21) who had been arrested by a honey seller (SB XXIV 16285.13–15 [Krokodilopolis, 202 bc]).

We can say with confidence that ochyrômata occasionally contained prisoners, as well. In one instance the wall of an ochyrôma collapsed and posed an immediate housing problem for a number of inmates (P.Petr. II 13,Fr3.2 [Arsinoite, 255 bc]). In addition, “the pen,” heirkê, is mentioned in seven texts. In one of these an

30 In addition to the forty-seven texts cited in the Appendix—including four texts marked with a (?)—phylakê appear in the following twenty-one documents: BGU VIII 1786.3 (Herakleopolite, 50 bc); C.Ord.Ptol.2 53.24 (Kerkeosiris?, 118 bc); P.Bon. I 12,FrA,r 7 (Diopolite Mikros, III bc); P.Cair.Zen. I 59011.v 6 (Palaestina?, c. 259 bc); 59031.14–15 (Alexandria, 258 bc); II 59289.10, 20–21 (Alexandria?); III 59392.3–4 (?), III bc; IV 59753.29 (?), III bc; P.Hib. I 110.23, 24–25 (?),271 bc; II 198.123–140 (Arsinoite?, after 242 bc); P.Köln X 411,A.i.4 (Arsinoite, after 178 bc); P.Lond. VII 1945.4 (Alexandria, 257 bc); P.Louvre II 96.14 (?), II bc; PSI XIII 1315.7–8 (Arsinoite, 127 bc). The term can also simply mean “protection” or “guarding,” whether of objects (e.g.: P.Cair.Zen. III 59362.35–36 [?, 243 bc]: τὴν | τῶν ἄγραφων βοῶν φυλακῆν) or people (as in the phrase meta phy lakês, “under guard,” e.g.: BGU VIII 1761.13 [Herakleopolite, 50 bc]). The term can also have a temporal signification: SB IV 7351.9–10 (Philadelphia, 200 or 176 bc?): περὶ πρῶτην φυλακῆν | τῆς νυκτὸς.

31 Ephēmerēuteiría appear in only two additional texts: P.Petr. II 10.ii.13 (Arsinoite, 221–205 bc) and UPZ I 119.11–12 (Memphis, 156 bc). The ephēmerēutērion in the latter case had a very specific designation: τὸ ἐφημερευτήριον τῶν | πασχοφόρων τοῦ πρῶτον ἄγαυον τοῦ Σαράπη[δασ].

This is the only text that provides explicit evidence that prisoners were held in ochyrômata. We are uninformed about the nature of the imprisonments that took place in these buildings, but it was perhaps the case that those detained in ochyrômata were prisoners of war, not the criminals and private offenders discussed in this essay. On prisoners of war in Ptolemaic Egypt, see Van Minnen 2000. Ochyrômata appear in a number of additional Ptolemaic texts: P.Berl.Zill.2 1.47 (Herakleopolis, 155 bc) and P.Diosk. 6.15–16 (Herakleopolite, 146 bc), both of which refer to the ochyrôma in Herakleopolis; P.Lond. III 880.26 (Pathyris, 113 bc), 1204.19, 21 (Pathyris, 113 bc), VII 2191.36, 39 (Pathyris, 116 bc) and P.Stras. II 85.23 (Pathyris, 113 bc) for the ochyrôma in Pathyris; P.Tebt. III.2 875. ii.16 (Kerkesoucha, II bc), which mentions the ochyrôma in Kerkesoucha; and P.Petr. III 119,FrBv 4 (Arsinoite, after 222–221 bc?).

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33 BGU VIII 1773.8 (Herakleopolite, 58 bc?); 1847.18–19 (Herakleopolite, 51–50 or 50–49 bc?); C.Ord.Ptol.2 34.ii.20 (Oxyrhynchas?, 186 bc); 53.260 (Kerkeosiris?, 118 bc); 55.13 (Tebytynis, c. 118 bc); P.Mil.Congr.XVII pg21/22.11 (Arsinoite, after 142–141 bc); and P.Tebt. I 15.13 (Kerkeosiris, 114 bc).
opportunist took over the allotment of a man imprisoned *en heirktéi*, sowed his land and then carted off the produce (BGU VIII 1773.8 [Herakleopolite, 58 bc?] ). Finally, a man named Adrastos was placed in a jail known as the *synoché* by a group of officials who also confiscated his seed (BGU VIII 1821.21, 28 [Herakleopolite, 57–56 bc]).

Initially it seems clear that a wide array of prisons dotted the Ptolemaic landscape. Yet this apparent diversity raises the sticky issue of vocabulary. The words employed to designate prisons by those who wrote about them were not necessarily technical terms: one man’s *desmôtêrion* may have been another’s *heirkté*. The documents generally provide few indications that jails with different names served different purposes or differed fundamentally in size or layout. In a few instances we have clues that suggest that there were real differences. For instance, it is safe to assume that *ochyrômata* were large complexes that did not serve exclusively as prisons. In one case the wall of an *ochyrôma* in the Arsinoite nome collapsed, endangering the lives of several bound prisoners and requiring immediate official attention (P.Petr. II 13,Fr3–Fr4 [Arsinoite, 255 bc]). At least one other *ochyrôma* contained houses within its perimeter.34 Aside from these details about *ochyrômata*, however, we know very little about the size or structure of Ptolemaic prisons. Indeed, in most cases all one knows is that a given jail held prisoners. But at least two of the terms employed for prisons, *phylakê* and *desmôtêrion*, occur frequently enough and in clear enough contexts to suggest that the two terms were meaningful and did designate different types of prisons. This in turn could suggest that the rich vocabulary of Ptolemaic prisons reflected real differences in prison types.

Of all the attested types of prison, *phylakai* occur over the broadest geographical expanse.35 The documents reveal that a number of officials with police and financial duties worked in *phylakai*. For one, jailors

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34 The *ochyrôma* at Pathyris: see P.Lond. III 880.26 (Pathyris, 113 bc) and P.Stras. II 85.23 (Pathyris, 113 bc), the same house in both instances; also P.Lond. III 1204.19, 21 (Pathyris, 113 bc) and VII 2191.36, 39 (Pathyris, 116 bc). On the types of prisoners contained in *ochyrômata*, see note thirty-two (above).

35 *Phylakai* are attested for Alexandria (P.Hib. I 110.22–23 [? , 271 bc]), Aphroditopolis (e.g.: P.Cair.Zen. IV 59753.22–29 [? , III bc]), Arsinoe (P.Köln X 411.A.1.4 [Arsinoite, 178 bc?]), Boubastos (?) (P.Cair.Zen. I 59044.3 [Alexandria, 257 bc]), Diospolis Magna (P.Eleph. 12.2 [Diospolis Magna, 222 bc]), Herakleopolis (P.Diosk. 9.12 [Herakleopolite, II bc]), Hermopolis Magna (?) (P.Cair.Zen. III 59392.1–4 [? , III bc]), Krokodeilopolis (e.g.: P.Coll.Youtie I 12.9–10 [Krokodeilopolis, 177 bc]), Memphis (e.g.: UPZ I 125.36–37 [Memphis, 89 bc]), Oxyrhynchus (e.g.: ZPE 127 1999:138–139.7–9 [Arsinoite, c. 140/139 bc]), Pelousion (?) (P.Heid. VI 378.15–23 [Pelousion, III bc]), Philadelphia (e.g.: P.Mich. I 85.3–4 [Philadelphia, III bc]), Schedia (P.Hib. I 110.24–25 [? , 271 bc]), Speos Artemidos (?) (P.Hib. II 198.125–131 [Arsinoite, after 242 bc]), Tebetny (e.g.: P.Polit.Iud. 17.14 [Herakleopolite, 143 bc]), Tektho (or Techtho) (?) (P.Hib. II 198.125–128 [Arsinoite?, after 242 bc]) and an unknown location in the Kynopolite nome (?) (P.Hib. II 198.125–129 [Arsinoite?, after 242 bc]).
might be found there. We see desmophylakes in a phylakê receiving prisoners (SB III 7202.17, 35 [Arsinoite, 227 BC]) as well as bail payments from prisoners (P.Tebt. III.1 777.5 [Tebtynis, II BC]) and wine (PSI XIII 1315.4 [Arsinoite, 127 BC]). A number of other officers appear to have been employed in and around Ptolemaic phylakai, as well. In one text, hoi pros tais phylakais tetagmenoi confiscated a quantity of iron from a grain-transport ship (P.Cair.Zen. I 59031.14–15 [Alexandria, 258 BC]). In another, a man requested that hoi epi tês phylakês not detain a traveler bearing a letter (P.Cair.Zen. III 59392.3–4 [?, III BC]). A royal decree concerning police regulations mandated that hoi [.].estêkotes tôn phylakôn were to receive runaway royal sailors who had been arrested by the phylakitai (P.Hib. II 198.89–90 [Arsinoite?, after 242 BC]). Yet though a variety of officials worked in phylakai, the documents generally do not specify the individual officers in charge of these complexes. This is perhaps not all that surprising, given that phylakai were apparently quite versatile buildings. Our evidence makes it clear that in addition to serving as places of detention, phylakai were also guard posts and stations for the collection of tolls. One document even suggests that private contracts might be drawn up there (UPZ I 125.7, 36–37 [Memphis, 89 BC]). Our evidence is limited, but it seems probable that areas of heavy traffic along the Nile, where the passage of ships would have necessitated greater security measures and where the collection of shipping fees would have been regular, were equipped with phylakai that served as headquarters for many different government agents and in which seized goods and individuals were held.

36 Wine for a phylakê is also mentioned at UPZ I 149.11 (Memphis, c. 208–206 BC?).

37 Hoi pros tais phylakais are also mentioned at P.Würzb. 7,2.7–8 (Thebais, II BC). In P.Zen.Pestm. 61.2 (Arsinoite, 246 or 245 BC?), hoi epi tou phylakeiou are instructed to register a man’s arrival and let him pass. It is probably safe to assume that the official with the title ho hêgoumenos tês phylakês, found in a handful of second-century BC grain loading orders from the Arsinoite nome, was not connected to a given phylakê but was rather an onboard security guard: P.Erasm. II 23.7; 24.4; 25.12 (all 152 BC); 35.7 (II BC). On this official see P.Erasm. II p. 96.

38 Guard posts: Chrest.Wilck. 1.i.7, ii.17–18 (Arsinoite, c. 246 BC); UPZ II 218.i.16–17 (?) (Thebes, 131–130 BC); toll stations, e.g.: C.Ord.Ptol. 53.24 (Kerkeosiris?, 118 BC); P.Cair.Zen. II 59289.10, 21 (Alexandria?, 250 BC); P.Lond. VII 1945.4 (Alexandria, 257 BC). The editors of P.Hib. II 198 (Arsinoite?, after 242 BC) distinguished between two types of phylakai: those that functioned as guard posts and those that served as toll stations (p. 99 n. on 89). Wilcken, too, was unsure whether all phylakai served the same purpose (UPZ I 125 [Memphis, 89 BC] introduction, p. 590).
The evidence for desmôtêria paints a very different picture of these complexes. Like phylakai, desmôtêria were scattered throughout the chôra.39 The papyri suggest that desmôtêria were usually supervised by a jailor who received prisoners (Chrest.Mitt. 45 [Sebennytos?, 224–218 BC?]) and bail payments (P.LilleDem. I 3 [Ghoran, 243 BC]). There is little evidence for additional officials working in desmôtêria. In one case men with the title hoi tetagmenoi epi tou desmôtêriou received payments, as did some stoncutters (hoi latomêsantes) who were working there, too (P.Cair.Zen. II 59296.12–13, 25–26, 34–35 [Arsinoite, 250 BC]). A number of officials were empowered to deliver criminals to the desmôtêrion or order their release. Among others, archiphylakitai, desmophylakes, epistatai, oikonomoi, phylakai and even private citizens could perform these functions.40 Yet it seems to have been the case that the only officials regularly stationed in these buildings were desmophylakes. Moreover, it appears that desmôtêria served exclusively as prisons. We have no evidence that agents from different spheres of government worked there. This should not surprise us. In most Egyptian towns and villages, extensive, multi-purpose security buildings like phylakai would not have been necessary. Simple prisons for the detention of offenders were the rule, and to judge from the evidence, these were commonly called desmôtêria.

39 Desmôtêria are attested for Akanthon polis (?) (P.Cair.Zen. III 59520.2–6 [Krokodilopolis?, III BC]), Aphroditopolis (?) (e.g.: P.Hib. II 241.1–2 [Aphroditopolis?, III BC]), Bousiris (P.Cair.Zen. III 59368.23–25 [Memphis?, 241 BC]), Kerkesoucha (P.Enteux. 84.10–14 [Ghoran, 285–221 BC]), Krokoedilopolis (e.g.: P.Enteux. 84.18–19 [Ghoran, 285–221 BC]), Philadelphia (e.g.: P.Cair.Zen. II 59296.12–13, 25–26, 34–37 [Arsinoite, 250 BC]), Phnebieus (BGU VIII 1828.4–5 [Heracleopolite, 52–51 BC]), Sinary (e.g.: P.Hib. I 34.1–3, 4 [Oxyrhynchite, after 243 BC] and 73.8–9, 9–11 [Oxyrhynchite, 244–243 BC]), Takona (?) (P.Hib. II 248,Fr3.6–7 [Oxyrhynchite, c. 250 BC]), Taskry (PSI IV 380.1–12 [Philadelphia, 249 BC]) and an unknown location in the Koite nome (?) (P.Hib. II 203.14–19 [?, 246–221 BC]).

40 Archiphylakitai: P.Hib. I 34.4, 7–8 (Oxyrhynchite, 243 BC) and 73. 9–11 (Oxyrhynchite, 244–243 BC); P.Hib. II 203.14–19 (?), 246–221 BC); desmophylakes: P.Enteux. 84.17–21 (Ghoran, 285–221 BC); epistatai: P.Hib. I 34.1–3 (Oxyrhynchite, 243 BC) and 73.7–9 (Oxyrhynchite, 244–243 BC); oikonomoi: P.Cair.Zen. III 59368.24–25 (Memphis? 241 BC?); phylakai: P.Enteux. 84.10–17 (Ghoran, 285–221 BC); private citizens: P.Cair.Zen. III 59520.6 (Krokodilopolis?, III BC), where a beekeeper brought a man to the desmôtêrion; P.Enteux. 84.21–24 (Ghoran, 285–221 BC), where a man’s kinsman asked that the man be released from prison. In P.Cair.Zen. III 59492.5–6 (Philadelphia, 3 BC) an official with the title ho epi tôn myriôn arrested a man and imprisoned him in the desmôtêrion. In a number of texts, prisoners wrote to the well-known Zenon of Kaunos to secure release from prison, either for themselves or their kin: P.Cair.Zen. III 59482 and 59492 (Philadelphia, 3 BC); 59520 (Krokodilopolis?, III BC); IV 59601 (?) (Aphroditopolis?, III BC); 59626 (?., III BC); P.Mich. I 87 (Arsinoite?, III BC); and PSI IV 416, 419 and V 532 (Philadelphia, III BC). In P.Cair.Zen. IV 59619 (Memphite?, III BC) a petition noted that Zenon had previously released a petitioner from the desmôtêrion.
Certainty is impossible, but it seems likely that there were at least two distinctly different types of prison in Ptolemaic Egypt, *phylakai* and *desmôtêria*. This, in turn, at least raises the possibility that a variety of prisons existed throughout the *chôra*. Did each type house a specific class of offender? Taubenschlag thought so. He argued that private offenders were placed in *desmôtêria* (715). But the offenses for which individuals were imprisoned in these facilities are varied and include both private and fiscal wrongdoing. Private wrongdoers were also regularly placed in other prisons, most commonly *phylakai*. As for fiscal offenders, Taubenschlag specified that their incarceration took place in *praktoreia* or *logistêria* (715); but we have already seen that this is hardly supported. In addition, three texts describe incarceration in *heirktai* for offenses against the state, and a fourth mentions detention in the

41 Of the twenty-five Ptolemaic texts that mention detention in *desmôtêria* (see the Appendix), fifteen provide some indication of the reasons for imprisonment. Among these, one finds cases of imprisonment for both fiscal and private wrongdoing: assault and theft (*PSI* IV 380 [Philadelphia, 249 bc]), debt (*P.Cair.Zen. III 59492 [Philadelphia, III bc]; 59520 [Krokodilopolis, III bc]; IV 59626 [?, III bc]; *P.Col. IV 103 [Philadelphia, ?, III bc]; *PSI* V 532 [Philadelphia, III bc], three or more prisoners; SB XIV 11639 [Philadelphia, 248 bc]), theft (*P.Hib. I 34 [Oxyrhynchite, 243 bc] and 73 [Oxyrhynchite, 244–243 bc], the same case in both texts), work-related offenses (*P.Cair.Zen. III 59484 [Philadelphia, III bc]; *P.Enteux. 84 [Ghoran, 285–221 bc]; *PSI* IV 353 [Philadelphia, 254 bc], two prisoners), and a few cases of arbitrary arrest (*P.Cair.Zen. III 59368 [Memphis?, 241 bc]; 59492 [Philadelphia, III bc]; IV 59619 [Memphite?, III bc]; *P.Enteux. 84 [Ghoran, 285–221 bc]; *P.Hib. II 203 [?, 246–221 bc]).

42 One finds instances of imprisonment in *phylakai* for debt (*APF* 48 2002:101 [Arsinoite, II bc], two prisoners; *P.Cair.Zen. II 59275 [Arsinoite, 251 bc]; III 59496 [Krokodilopolis, 248–241 bc]; *P.Coll.Youtie I 12 [Krokodilopolis, 177 bc], four or more imprisonments; *P.Gur. 10 [Arsinoite, III bc], two or more imprisonments; *P.Heid. VI 378 [Pelousion, III bc]; SB III 7202 [Arsinoite, 227 bc], two or more imprisonments; *XXIV 16285 [Krokodilopolis, 202 bc]), public disturbances (*P.Eleph. 12 [Diospolis Magna, 222 bc], two or more imprisonments; *PSI* IV 406 [Philadelphia, 260–258 bc]), offending slaves (*P.Cair.Zen. III 59369 [Krokodilopolis, 241 bc]; *P.Diosk. 9 [Herakleopolite, II bc]), theft (SB I 4309 [Arsinoite, III bc?], two or more imprisonments) and work-related wrongdoing (*P.Petr. II 19,Fr2 [Arsinoite, III bc]), as well as a number of cases of arbitrary imprisonment (*Chrest.Mitt. 5 [Arsinoite, c. 218 bc]; *P.Coll.Youtie I 12 [Krokodilopolis, 177 bc]; *P.Enteux. 83 [Magdola, 221 bc]; *P.Gur. 10 [Arsinoite, III bc], two or more imprisonments; *P.Heid. VI 378 [Pelousion, III bc]; *P.Tebt. III I 777 [Tebtynis, II bc]; SB XIV 12093 [?, II bc]; XX 14708 [Theadelphia, 151 bc]; XXIV 16285 [Krokodilopolis, 202 bc]; ZPE 127 1999:138–139 [Arsinoite, c. 140/139 bc]).

43 See *P.Heid. VIII 417 (Herakleopolis, 190 or 189 bc), a receipt for a payment of grain in which the recipient agreed to allow a (private) debtor to be released from the *praktoreion*; also SB XIV 11639 (Philadelphia, 248 bc), where a man was reported to the *logistérion* for an outstanding debt but detained in the *desmôtêrion*. 
synochê for non-payment of a debt to the crown.\textsuperscript{44} It seems that regulations for the incarceration of suspects may have been more flexible than has previously been allowed.

But did such regulations even exist? Three royal decrees indicate that the rulers of the kingdom were concerned about what went on in, and who went into, their prisons. In each of these texts, a number of officials (among these stratêgoi and epistatai) were barred from imprisoning en heîrktêi those who had wronged them personally.\textsuperscript{45} Admittedly, the decrees do demonstrate that police officers were forbidden from detaining a specific class of offender in a specific type of jail. But the prisoners mentioned in these texts had been jailed unjustly. Clearly, the decrees were issued as deterrents to wrongful imprisonment. The sovereigns did not mean to suggest that police were to carry out arbitrary detentions in other kinds of jails. The decrees also do not provide guidelines for warranted imprisonment. As no additional evidence survives, one must admit the possibility that such guidelines did not exist. A comparison of the types of offenses that landed prisoners in the two most common types of prisons (desmôtêria and phylakai) is enough to show that both were employed for a variety of public and private transgressions.\textsuperscript{46} This suggests that any public prison, regardless of name, could serve as a place of detention for any malefactor arrested on any jailable offense. This is only reasonable, if not provable: wrongdoers were usually arrested and taken to the nearest available place of detention. To be sure, this is not always explicit in the documents. But in most cases,

\textsuperscript{44} BGU VIII 1773 (Herakleopolite, 58 bc?), a record of proceedings concerning a land dispute in which it was noted that one of the litigants had spent some time in the heîrktêi; P.Mil.Congr.XVII pg21/22 (Arsinoite, after 142–141 bc), a petition from a man who had been wronged by a kômogrammateus and had been locked up (?) in the basilikê heîrktêi; P.Tebr. I 15 (Kerkeosiris, 114 bc), a report of an assault on an epistatês and the subsequent imprisonment of one of the attackers in the heîrktêi; BGU VIII 1821 (Herakleopolite, 57–56 bc), a petition to the stratêgos from a man who had been unjustly (?) arrested by a tax collector and some accomplices and placed in the synochê.

\textsuperscript{45} C.Ord.Ptol.\textsuperscript{2} 34.ii.10–20 (Oxyrhynchus?, 186 bc); 53.255–264 (Kerkeosiris?, 118 bc); 55.10–13 (Tebtynis, c. 118 bc). C.Ord.Ptol.\textsuperscript{2} 34.ii.10–17 prohibits the following officials from performing illegal detentions: [μηδένα δί] μήτε τῶν στρατηγῶν [μήτε] [τῶν επιστατῶν μήτε τῶν ἐπιμελητῶν] [μήτε τῶν πρακτόρων μήτε τῶν χρηματιστησῶν μήτε] τῶν οἰκονόμων μήτε τῶν σώματον τῶν [πρὸς ταῖς] [χρείαις πραγματευομένων τεταγμένων ἐπί] [τῶν τῶν βασιλικῶν καὶ πολιτικῶν καὶ ἑρευνητικῶν]. 53.255–257 reads μηδὲ τοὺς στρατηγοὺς μηδὲ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν | πρὸς χρείαις πάντας τῶν τῶν βασιλικῶν καὶ πολιτικῶν καὶ ἑρευνητικῶν. 53.255–257 contains the same text as 53.255–257.

\textsuperscript{46} See above, notes forty-one and forty-two.
context makes it clear that imprisonments took place in nearby detention facilities. For example, a woman from Krokodilopolis, a city in the Arsinoite nome, who was visiting the Herakleopolite nome requested that the phrourarchos in Herakleopolis detain her runaway slave girl in that city’s phylakê (P.Diosk. 9 [Herakleopolite, II bc]). A village scribe reported an assault on the local epistatês and revealed that one of the assailants had been taken to the village heirkê (P.Tebt. I 15 [Kerkesiris, 114 bc]). A pair of cases seems to suggest that an offender might be moved to a different prison after an initial period of detention in the local jail. In the first of these, a man was transferred from the desmôtêrion in Kerkesoucha to the desmôtêrion in Krokodilopolis (P.Enteux. 84 [Ghoran, 285–221 bc]); in the second, a woman was moved from the éphémereutêrion in Krokodilopolis to the Krokodilopolis phylakê (SB XXIV 16285 [Krokodilopolis, 202 bc]). The details in each instance are few, but it was perhaps the case that the transfers were motivated by administrative concerns.47

Types of prison may have differed throughout the countryside, but the treatment of prisoners apparently did not. Letters to the outside world from prisoners make plain the horrors of incarceration. The prison experience entailed isolation, poverty and the threat of death. In one case a prisoner noted that during his detention he had lost everything and was in need of the necessities of life (P.Lond. VII 2045.3 [Philadelphia, III bc]: ἐγκέλοιπε ἡµᾶς πάντα ὦστε καὶ τὸν ἀναγκαίον ἐνδεής εἶναι). In another, an inmate swore that he had learned his lesson and sought pity, given his foreign status and the fact that he had already spent what he, at least, considered a sufficient amount of time locked up (P.Polit.Iud. 2.6–12 [Herakleopolite, c. 135 bc]: τυγχάνοι καταξίωσ | νενοθετημέγες, | καὶ πείραν φυλακής | εἰλήφως ἰκανύς τε | ἡµέρας κατεφθαρμένος ὄν ἐπὶ ξέγης, | κούκ ἔχων τὰ ἀναγκαία).48 Prisoners seem to have been expected to provide for their own sustenance while locked up, to judge from the many references to dying from hunger preserved in petitions from prisoners. One man

47 In the first case the prisoner was moved to a different desmôtêrion after the desmophylax of the first desmôtêrion decided that he was a kakourgos (20–21), a possible indication that the charges against the prisoner had been altered or that he now faced legal action in a different area. In the second case the details are obscured by lacuna (16–18). The prisoner may have been moved from the éphémereutêrion to the phylakê for examination by the police and financial officials there in order to determine whether or not she could be held legitimately.

claimed that he had been wasting away in the *phylakê* for ten months (*Chrest. Mitt. 5.2–5* [Arsinoite, c. 218 BC]: *καταδεδυναστεύομαι ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ | λιμώι παραπολύμενος, μὴνες | εἰσὶν δέκκα*). Three others requested help so that they would not die of hunger in the *desmôtêrion* (*PSI IV 419.2–3* [Philadelphia, III BC]: *μὴ παραπολύμενο ἐν τῷ δὲσμῷ τῷ λιμῶι*).\(^{49}\) Further evidence for the provisioning of prisoners is provided by a few additional texts. In one we see a man bringing bread to a prisoner, which suggests that those in detention might have expected—or been expected—to receive food from those on the outside (*SB XVI 12468* [Arsinoite?, III BC]). Three documents provide evidence that the state supplied prisons with provisions. The first records payments made for food (*opson*) in a *phylakê* (*SB IV 7451.81–82, 105–106* [Ptolemais Hormou, before 210 BC]). In the other two, wine is delivered to *phylakai* (*PSI XIII 1315* [Arsinoite, 127 BC] and *UPZ I 149.11–12* [Memphis, c. 208–206 BC]).\(^{50}\) Unfortunately, we cannot be sure for whom these provisions were intended; but it is perhaps more likely that they were earmarked for the officials assigned to the *phylakai* and not the prisoners. In fact, one of the documents seems to suggest as much (*PSI XIII 1315.3–5*: *τὰ εἰθεσεμένα | τῶν δὲσμοφύλαξι ὁνοῦ κεράμια | δῶοι [read δόοι]*). One might assume that provisions for prison officials were also distributed to prisoners via these officials, but this is uncertain. And in light of the strong evidence from petitions from prisoners that starvation was a serious problem for those in detention, it seems safe to assume that only the officials in *phylakai*, *desmôtêria* and the like were fed by the state while prisoners went hungry.

Poverty, hunger and general misery were serious concerns for prisoners under the Ptolemies. We also have evidence that their time spent in detention was not always simply a drawn-out wait for either release or death. Some prisoners were bound. In one case, a man was arrested, shackled and imprisoned for seven days (*PSI IV 406.22–24* [Philadelphia, 260–258 BC]). In another, an *oikonomos* arrested, fettered and jailed a *chortophylax* in a *desmôtêrion* for eight months (*P.Cair. Zen. III 59368* [Memphis?, 241 BC]).\(^{51}\) In a third, a prisoner wrote to request a reexamination of his case, after having spent almost a year in bondage in a *phylakê* (*PSI IV 347.8–10* [Philadelphia, 255 or 254 BC]). A pair of Demotic documents suggests that the Ptolemies may have employed prison labor on work details. In the first of these a man writes

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\(^{50}\) In the second text (*UPZ I 149.11–12*) cups (*kotylai*) accompany the wine.

\(^{51}\) The post of *chortophylax* (“hay guard”) occurs only here.
to an employer or superior to request that he not be deported to the South, evidently to face hard labor, perhaps as a prisoner (P.LilleDem. I 5 [Ghoran, 245 BC]). The second document records the deportation of several hundred people to the South, again perhaps to serve as a labor force (P.LilleDem. I 32 [Ghoran, 264/3 or 226/5 BC]). Another seems to provide a Greek parallel. In this text, there is reference to people being sent to the “upper works” (APF 48 2002:98–99.20–21 [Alexandria?, 225 BC]; τάκοι ἄνω ἐργα). That these individuals were prisoners is suggested by the fact that one of them had been left behind in the phylakê. The labor performed by prison work crews might have included mining, as suggested by a final text, a letter detailing the excavations carried out by a number of desmôtai (PSI IV 423 [Philadelphia, III BC]). The evidence is only suggestive, but it may have been the case that many, if not most of the prisoners sent out on work details were prisoners of war.52

In spite of the climate of misery in prison, not all prisoners laid stress on their own misfortunes in their letters to the outside world. Some took a different tack in their petitions for release, hinting that their prolonged stays in jail were having a deleterious effect on state finances. Two imprisoned swineherds admitted their guilt but stressed the necessity of their release for the well-being of their pigs (P.Cair.Zen. III 59495 [Philadelphia?, III BC]). A man imprisoned for defaulting on a debt asserted that only liberation would enable him to obtain some wine necessary for repayment (P.Cair.Zen. IV 59626 [?, III BC]). A tax collector requested release so as to return to his business (P.Tebt. III.1 777 [Tebtynis, II BC]). An imprisoned shepherd strongly suggested that his freeing was necessary for the supervision of flocks and the safeguarding of fodder. He even offered to leave his wife behind in his place if released (P.Mich. I 87 [Arsinoite?, III BC]).53

52 Prisoners of war: Van Minnen 2000; prison labor: P.Eleph.Wagner 1 (Elephantine, 241–240 BC?), a legal judgment against two men who were to be arrested and made to work; P.Petr. II 13,Fr3 (Arsinoite, 255 BC) and Fr4 (Arsinoite, 256 or 255 BC), correspondence concerning the collapse of the wall of an ochyrôma and the impending arrival at the ochyrôma of additional desmôtai; Diodorus 3.12–14 for a detailed description of prisoners condemned to Egyptian mines; and Fraser 1972:176 and 543.

53 See also (e.g.) Chrest.Wilck. 166 (Arsinoite, 218 BC), where a grain-transport official requested that a number of imprisoned shipbuilders be released so that they could be at the service of the crown and so that a number of grain transport ships would not be left idle; P.Cair.Zen. IV 59639 (Krokodilopolis, III BC), a petition from a prisoner who swore that if he were released, a project would be completed within forty days and that he would find additional workers for any project the addressee should choose; P.Hib. I 141 (Oxyrhynchite, c. 261 BC), in which one official instructed another to obtain a guarantee of appearance for a collector of tax arrears and then release him to his business.
One assumes that in most cases a criminal was apprehended by police, the proper officials notified of the developments and a trial arranged within a few days or weeks. Yet periods of detention in Ptolemaic jails were flexible, as Taubenschlag and other scholars have indicated. How long did the typical offender remain in jail? The question is a difficult one. Petitioners often expressed the fear that they would remain in prison until their resources were exhausted and their lives over, or asserted that they had already spent a great deal of time in detention and were near death. But the documents rarely provide precise indications of the lengths of prison stays. Out of a total of one hundred thirteen texts detailing one hundred forty-eight separate imprisonments, only twenty-three indicate the duration of detention. Seventeen of these detail imprisonments of less than a month; fourteen describe imprisonments which may have lasted a week or less.

54 The efficiency of the Ptolemaic police force is best illustrated by petitions to law enforcement officials that contain both dates and dated dockets. Such texts demonstrate that turnaround was very quick: a response within a day of a petition's composition was the norm (e.g.: BGU VIII 1832 [Herakleopolite, 51 Bc]; P.Enteux. 8 [Magdola, 221 Bc]; UPZ I 7 [Memphis, 163 Bc]). Naturally, such speedy redress was not always the case. Longer periods of time (weeks, months) occasionally elapsed between the delivery of an appeal and a police response (e.g.: BGU VIII 1761 [Herakleopolite, 50 Bc], a petition dated to February 12 but only forwarded to a stratēgos on March 16; P.Enteux. 12 [Sebennytos, 244 Bc], a petition to the king received by the office of the stratēgos on August 28 and forwarded to a subordinate on September 27; SB XVI 12468 [Arsinoite?, III Bc], a petition to an unknown official in which the petitioner noted that he had previously petitioned the same addressee and had not received a response). Yet it seems to have been the case that petitions very rarely sat unattended in an official's office for more than a few days. On the petitioning process in Ptolemaic Egypt see note ten, above.


56 Fear of prolonged suffering or death in jail, e.g.: P.Mich. I 85 (Philadelphia, III Bc), a letter from a pair of men who requested that a third man be released from prison so that he would not die there; P.Petr. II 19 (Arsinoite, III Bc), two petitions from prisoners in which each man expressed the wish that he not be left to die in jail; III 36A (Herakleopolite, 218 Bc), a letter to a financial official from a prisoner who saw death as a prospect of his imprisonment.

57 P.Cair.Zen. I 59038 and 59044 (Alexandria, 257 Bc), the same case in each text, 26 days or more; III 59495 (Philadelphia?, III Bc), two prisoners, 3 days or more; 59519 (Alexandria, III Bc), 3 days or more; 59520 (Krokodilopolis?, III Bc), 22 days or more; V 59819 (Krokodilopolis?, 254 Bc), 3 days; P.Coll.Youtie I 16 (Arsinoite, 109 Bc?), less than 1 day; P.Diosk. 5 (Herakleopolite, 146 Bc?), 2 days or more; P.Enteux. 81 (Magdola, 221 Bc), likely 4 days or more; 83 (Magdola, 221 Bc), 4 days; P.Mich. XVIII 773 (Oxyrhyncha or Krokodilopolis, c. 194 Bc), less than 1 day; PSI IV 406 (Philadelphia, 260–258 Bc), 7 days; P.Tebt. I 15 (Kerkeosiris, 114 Bc), 2 days or more; III.1 701.331–347 (Tebytnis, 235 or 210 Bc?), two or more prisoners, a fraction of a month; 754 (Tebytnis, II Bc), 2 days or more; 777.6–19 (Tebytnis, II Bc), less than a month; SB XVIII 13119 (? , 255 or 254 Bc?), 1 to 8 days.
option for prisoners, it is not surprising that a good many were freed after only a few days in detention. A number of written agreements to provide bail survive. As a rule of thumb, a potential guarantor wrote to the official with supervisory powers over an imprisoned person and agreed to a number of conditions. In one typical case, a man wrote to an archiphylakitês to arrange for bail for a prisoner (P.LilleDem. I 4 [Ghoran, 247 BC]). In his letter he agreed that he had received the prisoner and that he would present him in a certain village at a time in the near future when the archiphylakitês was present. The writer acknowledged that he had five days in which to make an appearance with his charge after he received a summons, and that he would keep the prisoner away from places of asylum before and during that time period. If he did not present the prisoner as agreed, he was liable to any conditions imposed by the archiphylakitês.

Though bail was a possibility for most prisoners, not all prisoners were bailed out within a few days or weeks. Some were held for longer periods of time. At least seven texts describe detentions lasting longer than a month, one of these as long as three years. A produce guard was arrested because of his connections to some beehive smugglers and only released from jail eight months later (P.Cair.Zen. III 59368 [Memphis?, 241 BC]). An imprisoned tax collector complained that a jailor had been dissatisfied with his bail payment and refused to release him, resulting in an eight-month stay in prison (P.Tebt. III.1 777 [Tebtynis, II BC]). A third man feared that his many petitions from prison had been ignored and insisted that he was starving, having spent ten months locked up already (Chrest.Mitt. 5 [Arsinoite, c. 218 BC]). The many references to prolonged suffering in jail, and even death, contained in letters from inmates reveal that villagers were aware of the possibility of lengthy

58 E.g.: Chrest.Mitt. 35 (Itos?, 133 BC); P.Bürgsch. 7 (Krokodilopolis?, 202 BC); P.Hib. I 92 (Muchinaryo, 264 BC). See also Chrest.Mitt. 45 (Sebennytos?, 224–218 BC?), a register of court cases and outcomes detailing offenses committed and bail payments received; P.Bürgsch. 16 (Memphis, 159 BC), a letter to an archiphylakitês from a man who had written previously to arrange a bail payment for a prisoner; and P.Tebt. III.1 777 (Tebtynis, II BC), where a prisoner complained that a bail payment to a desmophylax had failed to secure his release. Accused persons were also sometimes able to avoid imprisonment by supplying guarantors for their eventual appearance at an inquiry (paramonê, e.g.: C.Ord.Ptol. 27 [Alexandria?, 237 BC]; P.Cair.Zen. III 59421.3–5 [Memphis, 258–256 BC]; P.Hib. I 41.4–9 [Oxyrhynchite, c. 261 BC]; see also Préaux 1937:40 and Hélmis 1986:184–185).

59 BGU VIII 1773 (Herakleopolis, 58 BC?), approximately 11 months; Chrest.Mitt. 5 (Arsinoite, c. 218 BC), 10 months; P.Cair.Zen. III 59368 (Memphis?, 241 BC), 8 months; P.Coll.Youtie I 12 (Krokodilopolis, 177 BC), 3 years or more; P.Lond. VII 2045 (Philadelphia, III BC), 5 months or more; PSI IV 347 (Philadelphia, 255 or 254 BC?), 1 year; P.Tebt. III.1 777 (Tebtynis, II BC), 8 months.
imprisonment. But the limited evidence for the practice suggests that it was rare. This makes perfect sense: prolonged detentions would not have been in the best (that is, financial) interest of the state. Prisoners did not tend allotments, harvest crops or deliver grain. It seems reasonable to assume that some of those who were detained for exceptionally long periods of time were victims of administrative breakdowns or miscommunications between officials. For the most part, the written records kept by police officers prevented the sorts of slip-ups that allowed prisoners to fall through cracks in the legal system. Yet mistakes must have been made from time to time.

Official abuses and administrative disputes were also occasionally responsible for arbitrary imprisonment or denial of release. In one case an archiphylakitès arrested a number of shipbuilders and refused to release them (after having been ordered to do so by the oikonomos) unless he received orders from the epimelêtès (Chrest.Wilck. 166 [Arsinoite, 218 B.C.]). In another case a police official complained about the illegal release of a prisoner by an archiphylakitès acting against the orders of his commanding epistatês (P.Hib. I 34 [Oxyrhynchite, 243 B.C.] and 73 [Oxyrhynchite, 244–243 B.C.]). Elsewhere a prisoner noted that he had given a bail payment to a desmophylax to be released from prison but had not been freed due to the greed of the desmophylax (P.Tebt. III.1 777 [Tebtynis, II B.C.]). As we saw above, three royal decrees suggest that illegal detentions and denials of release were not uncommon (C.Ord. Ptol.2 34.i.10–20 [Oxyrhynchus?, 186 B.C.]; 53.255–264 [Kerkeosiris?, 118 B.C.]; 55.10–13 [Tebtynis, c. II B.C.]). Without a doubt, bad apples in the Ptolemaic law enforcement system were occasionally responsible for improperly extended detentions. It seems likely, however, that in most cases where an offender was kept in jail for an excessive period of time, the prolonged detention was due to a lack of outside resources. The criminal justice system provided prisoners with the possibility of trials, but this did not always mean freedom if innocence was unproven or debts unpaid. Without support from friends, family and funds, even

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60 Egyptian wisdom literature also provides evidence for the phenomenon of long-term detention. See P.Brit.Mus. II 10508, the primary manuscript of the so-called “Instruction of ‘Onchsheshonqy,” a tale set in the Saite dynasty but written in the Ptolemaic period. The papyrus tells the story of the priest ‘Onchsheshonqy who became privy to a plot against the Pharaoh but did not inform him of it. After the conspirators were caught and executed, ‘Onchsheshonqy was imprisoned at Daphnae and remained there even after the Pharaoh had freed all of the other prisoners. On this tale, see Smith 1980 and Thissen 1984.

61 On the Ptolemaic epimelêtès, an upper-level official with certain financial duties, see Berneker 1935:90–94.

62 On Ptolemaic criminal trials see Bauschatz 2005:130–135 and the sources cited there.
the least dangerous offender might be kept locked up indefinitely. As many letters from prison demonstrate, prisoners were often unable to post bail for themselves. Petitions from the imprisoned, their family members and even other officials sometimes contained requests for bail. For instance, in a third-century petition to the king a woman requested that the sovereign have the stratēgos contact an epistatēs to arrange for a man to be bailed out of prison (P.enteux. 81 [Magdola, 221 bc]). A second-century petition from a prisoner contained a request that he be bailed out to tend to his tax collecting duties (P.Teht. III.1 777 [Tebtynis, II bc]). In a final case, one official asked another to examine the case of an imprisoned farmer and bail him out if appropriate (SB IV 7285 [Philadelphia, 237 or 212 or 195 bc?]).

The Ptolemaic prison system differed in many respects from those observable in other ancient societies. First, detention took place for a variety of public and private offenses, from debt to assault, from theft to disturbing the peace. Second, it appears that at least two different types of prisons, phylakai and desmōtēria, housed offenders of every sort in the various towns and villages of the Egyptian countryside. This may have been due in part to the administrative requirements of the local police, but also to the needs of the communities in which prisons were established. Third, offenders were generally placed in the nearest available place of detention by arresting officials, regardless of offense. There do not appear to have been regulations concerning the placement of specific classes of wrongdoers in specific prisons. Finally, imprisonment was immediate and usually brief. It was not in the state’s best interests to keep offenders locked up for long periods of time. Nevertheless, though offenders were often freed on bail or otherwise released soon after imprisonment, prolonged detention sometimes occurred. The Ptolemaic prison system was a unique entity. It extended into every corner of the chôra, took a variety of physical forms, housed offenders of every stripe, provided for both short- and long-term detention, and was accessible to the police and civil officials who ran it and unforgiving of those who ran afoul of it. Prisons were the tools by which the Ptolemaic police secured both law and order and those who disturbed it.

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63 See also P.Bürgsch. 16 (Memphis, 159 bc), a letter to an archiphylakitēs from a man who had previously written about bailing out a prisoner but had yet to receive a response; and P.Mich. I 85 (Philadelphia, III bc), a letter to Zenon seeking release or bail for a jailed youth.
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**APPENDIX: PTOLEMAIC PRISON STAYS**

The following list of sources for Ptolemaic prison stays was created with the assistance of the Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri (DDBDP: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cache/perscoll_DDBDP.html). The majority of texts cited below are accessible via this databank, though some of the documents that appear in APF 48, ZPE 127 and 141, and the editions of Demotic papyri are not. The list was compiled by running a number of searches of the databank. The initial search was limited to those terms for “prison” attested in Ptolemaic papyri (*desmophylakion, desmôtêrion, ephêmereutêrion, heirktê, ochyrôma, phylakê, praktoreion, synochê*). Subsequent searches centered around the vocabulary of arrest (*anagein, apagein; apokathistanai, kathistanai; epilambanein, paralambanein; paradidonai*), detention (*asphalizesthai; katechesthai, synechesthai; phylassô*) and release (*aphienai, ditenai; apoluein; exagein*) or transport (*-agein, -pempein, -stellein*) from prison. Finally, those texts containing references to the police (*archiphylakitai, epistatai phylakitôn, phylakitai*), security (*-phylakes*), military (*phrourarchoi*) and civil officials (*epistatai, kômarchai, stratêgoi*) who most commonly arrested, detained and freed prisoners were examined for any instances of detention that might have been missed. A handful of additional documents were discovered by chance or suggested by other scholars. The list is comprehensive but not exhaustive. Any errors it contains are those of the author.

**Key:**  **Reasons for Detention**  
**A:** assault  
**D:** debt  
**P:** public disturbance  
**S:** slaves  
**T:** theft  
**U:** unjust/arbitrary  
**W:** work-related  
**S:** reference in entry to multiple prisoners  
**#:** same instance of imprisonment mentioned in one or more additional entries  

Demotic documents have entries entirely in bold.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Place of Detention</th>
<th>Length of Detention</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Reason(s) for Detention, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APF 48 2002:98–99.20–21 (?) (Alexandria?, 225 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>official letter containing mention of people being sent to the “upper works” (20–21: [πά]ξων ἐφγα), perhaps as prison labor; or are these prisoners of war?</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APF 48 2002:98–99.22–23 (Alexandria?, 225 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>one of those being sent to the “upper works” has been left behind in the phylakê (see previous entry)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APF 48 2002:101 (= SB XXII 15767) (Arsinoite, II BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>official notification concerning the escape of two tax farmers from the phylakê; they were in debt to the dioikêtês and were probably jailed for this or a similar debt</td>
<td>D, $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGU VIII 1773 (Herakleopolis, 58 BC?)</td>
<td>heirktê</td>
<td>approx. 11 months</td>
<td>record of proceedings concerning a crop dispute; over the course of the dispute one of the litigants had been imprisoned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGU VIII 1821 (Herakleopolite, 57–56 BC)</td>
<td>synochê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a prisoner concerning an allegedly arbitrary arrest; the petitioner denies owing any debt (though this may have been the charge against him)</td>
<td>D, U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGU VIII 1847 (Herakleopolite, 51–50 or 50–49 BC?)</td>
<td>heirktê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from prisoners who declare their innocence and note their dire straits; it seems that they were previously found innocent but remain in jail</td>
<td>U, $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrest.Mitt. 5 (Arsinoite, c. 218 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>10 months</td>
<td>petition from a prisoner who claims he was unjustly arrested because of the severity (akribeia) of the stratêgos and has yet to receive a trial</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrest.Mitt. 30 (Alexandria, 228 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>report from a trial; someone in jail had been unable to attend the proceedings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrest.Mitt. 35 (Itos?, 133 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>bail agreement for a prisoner; Chrest.Mitt. 35 = P.Lond. II 220.ii; imprisonment in phylakê also mentioned in P.Lond. II 220.i (below); same instance of imprisonment in both columns? #</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrest.Mitt. 45.1–5 (Sebennytos?, 224–218 BC?)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>court register: a man who dug into a home and stole goods paid 200 drachmas and was released to the desmophylax T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrest.Mitt. 45.6–7 (Sebennytos?, 224–218 BC?)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>court register: a man who stole sheaves with two accomplices paid 100 drachmas and was released T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrest.Mitt. 45.8–11 (Sebennytos?, 224–218 BC?)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>court register: a man was released after paying 600 drachmas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrest.Mitt. 45.12–15 (Sebennytos?, 224–218 BC?)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>court register: a man was released after paying 300 drachmas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrest.Mitt. 45.16–18 (Sebennytos?, 224–218 BC?)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>court register: a man (and his sons?) was released after posting bail $</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrest.Wilck. 166 (Arsinoite, 218 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>official letter concerning an archiphylakitês who had detained out-of-nome shipbuilders (for illegally crossing into his nome or working there without permission?) W, $</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.Ord.Ptol.: 27 (= P.Mich. I 70) (Alexandria?, 237 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>royal decree concerning appearance at trial of prisoners free on bail; mentions the case of one man who was imprisoned and then freed by a guarantor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Nature of Text</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>P. Bürgsch.</em> 7</td>
<td>Krokodilopolis?, 202 BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>agreement to provide bail for a prisoner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P. Bürgsch.</em> 8</td>
<td>Krokodilopolis?, 202 BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>agreement to provide bail for three prisoners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P. Bürgsch.</em> 16</td>
<td>Memphis, 159 BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>letter: a man notes that he had written to an archiphylakités agreeing to post bail for a prisoner but that he had not received a response from the archiphylakités</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P. Bürgsch.</em> 17</td>
<td>Memphis, 159 BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>official letter: an imprisoned village official is to be freed, as he has made arrangements to pay off his debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P. Bürgsch.</em> 22</td>
<td>Ghoran, 243 BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>agreement to provide bail for a prisoner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P. Bürgsch.</em> 23</td>
<td>Ghoran, 243 BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>agreement to provide bail for a prisoner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P. Cair. Zen.</em> I 59038</td>
<td>Alexandria?, 257 BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>phylakê unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P. Cair. Zen.</em> I 59044</td>
<td>Alexandria, 257 BC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>phylakê 26 days later than time of writing of previous letter (<em>P. Cair. Zen.</em> I 59038)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. I 59077 (?, 257 BC)</td>
<td>desmôtérian</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>letter concerning a sailor released from prison, perhaps improperly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. I 59130 (Memphite, 256 or 254 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>letter concerning a farmer who had evidently been arrested (for not paying the salt-tax?) and was to be released</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. II 59228 (?, 253 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>fragmentary letter, perhaps concerning imprisonment (7: [ca ?]ν αὐτὸν εἰς φυλακῆς)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. II 59275 (Arsinoite, 251 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a man arrested by tax officials for non-payment of tax</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. III 59368.22–25 (Memphis?, 241 BC)</td>
<td>desmôtérian</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>same oikonomos as above (P.Cair.Zen. III 59368.12–22) unjustly jailed a chortophylax</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. III 59369 (Krokodilopolis, 241 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a man jailed after being (falsely) accused at trial of being a slave</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. III 59421 (Memphis, 258–256 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from an imprisoned sitometrês who asks that the recipient of his petition intervene in his case; he was probably arrested and jailed for a debt to the crown</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. III 59450 (?) (?, III BC)</td>
<td>desmôtérian</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>a letter concerning a tavern-keeper who owes a debt to Zenon and may have landed in the desmôtérian, though this is unclear</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. III 59482 (Philadelphia, III BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition; man requests the release of his wife</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. III 59484 (Philadelphia, III BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition in which a carpet weaver complains about an offending coworker and notes that he brought the offender to prison</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. III 59492 (Philadelphia, III BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a man imprisoned arbitrarily (as he alleges) or perhaps because of debt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. III 59495 (Philadelphia?, III BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>3 days (at writing)</td>
<td>petition from two jailed swineherds who admit their guilt but do not state their crime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. III 59496 (Krokodilopolis, 248–241 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a prisoner who denies that he has been arrested for debt since he has paid the amount due (though the arresting party may not have known this)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. III 59519 (Alexandria, III BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>3 days (at writing)</td>
<td>petition from an imprisoned sitometrês</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. III 59520 (Krokodilopolis?, III BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>22 days (at writing)</td>
<td>petition from a beekeeper imprisoned for debt</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. IV 59601 (Aphroditopolis?, III BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petitioner asks that his jailed wife be freed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. IV 59619 (Memphite?, III BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition: someone imprisoned without episkepsis (that is, unjustly)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. IV 59623 (?, before 253 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a prisoner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Petitioner/Debtor</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Cause of Imprisonment</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. IV 59626 (?, III BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petitioner imprisoned for a debt of 60 drachmas</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. IV 59636.1–5 (?, III BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>man writes agreeing to provide bail for a prisoner whom he had bailed out previously</td>
<td>(see below, P.Cair.Zen. IV 59636.6–7, for the previous instance of imprisonment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. IV 59636.6–7 (?, III BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>previous instance of imprisonment mentioned above (P.Cair.Zen. IV 59636.1–5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. IV 59639 (Krokodilopolis, III BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a man who seems to have been imprisoned for shoddy/incomplete work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. V 59819 (Krokodilopolis?, 254 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>report from a swineherd who notes that an archiphylakitês had detained him while he was transferring pigs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Cair.Zen. V 59826 (?, 254–251 BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from two or more individuals, likely prisoners (3–4: ἡμᾶς [ca? εἰς τὸ δεσμωτήριον])</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Col. III 18 (?, c. 257)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a prisoner who swears that he will furnish guarantors; perhaps he had been arrested because of debt: he seems to suggest that he will make payments if released</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Col. IV 103 (Philadelphia?, III BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a man released from jail and immediately forced to pay a tax; detention perhaps debt-related</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Account</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.Col. IV 115,F (Arsinoite?, III B.C.)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>official letter: recipient told to have the phylakitai free a number of cleruchs</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Coll. Youtie I 12.1–4 (Krokodilopolis, 177 B.C.)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a man who notes that his guarantors had been released from prison; he had perhaps been arrested because of debt (see below, P.Coll. Youtie I 12.9–11)</td>
<td>D, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Coll. Youtie I 12.9–11 (Krokodilopolis, 177 B.C.)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>3 years (at writing)</td>
<td>same petitioner (see above, P.Coll. Youtie I 12.1–4) relates that a tax official subsequently had him imprisoned, likely on a charge of debt; he had been released from the charges but not yet freed</td>
<td>D, U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Coll. Youtie I 16 (Arsinoite, 109 B.C.?)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>less than 1 day</td>
<td>petition from a cobbler concerning a home invasion, arrest and detention carried out by an archiphylakitiês and associates; petitioner alleges that the arrest was arbitrary; perhaps a government raid to extract repayment of a debt?</td>
<td>D, U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Congr.XV 8 (Philadelphia, III B.C.)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>letter concerning a man being imprisoned until trial</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P.Diosk. 5 (Herakleopolite, 146 B.C.?)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>2 days (at writing)</td>
<td>letter to a phrourarchos requesting that he continue to detain a smuggler (until trial)</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Diosk. 6 (?) (Herakleopolite, 146 B.C.)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition concerning a series of assaults and the arrest (and detention?) of some offenders; document forwarded to a phrourarchos with instructions for him to guard the offenders until their trial</td>
<td>A, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Phylakê</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Source</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.Diosk. 9 (Herakleopolite, II BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a woman asking that a runaway slave be impounded</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Eirene I 3 (?, III BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition: someone is in prison, release is sought</td>
<td>P, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Eleph. 12 (Diospolis Magna, 222 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>official letter concerning people locked up for public drunkenness</td>
<td>P, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Enteux. 81 (Magdola, 221 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>likely 4 days (at writing)</td>
<td>petition concerning an assault, etc. in which a woman asks that someone be released from prison</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Enteux. 83 (Magdola, 221 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition concerning the arbitrary jailing of a woman by a kômarchês</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Enteux. 84.1–17 (Ghoran, 285–221 BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a man who had been imprisoned for misplacing the records of a kinsman; second leg of his imprisonment detailed below (P.Enteux. 84.17–24)</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Enteux. 84.17–24 (Ghoran, 285–221 BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>same case as above (P.Enteux. 84.1–17): now petitioner moved to a different desmôtêrion (perhaps on a different charge) in spite of orders to release him</td>
<td>U, W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Frankf. 7 (?, after 218–217 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>lengthy petition, perhaps containing an indication that a man was found innocent of the charges against him but jailed anyway (verso 6–9: [ἀπ]έριπνσαν μὲ τῶν ἔγκρατων [ματων? τὴν φυλακὴν διά τὸ [[σα]</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Grad. 3 (Thmoineptis, 226 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>bail agreement for a prisoner; inner script and duplicate of SB III 6301 (see below)</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Petitioner</td>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.Gur. 10 (Arsinoite, III BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition concerning the ransacking of a temple and the jailing of some religious (?) officials; petitioner alleges that the arrest was arbitrary, though a debt may have been responsible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Heid. VI 363 (Herakleopolite, 224–218 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>notes concerning a trial; very fragmentary, but contain references to imprisonment, likely for multiple people</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P.Heid. VI 378 (Pelousion, III BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a priest arrested and jailed arbitrarily (as he alleges) or perhaps because of a debt he does not acknowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Heid. VIII 417 (Herakleopolis, 190 or 189 BC)</td>
<td>praktoreion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>agreement allowing an imprisoned debtor to be released</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Hels. 2 (?) (Arsinoite, c. 195–192 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a burned bather who claims that he was wrongly handed over to the phylakitai (and subsequently detained?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Hib. I 34 (Oxyrhynchite, 243 BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition concerning an imprisoned thief wrongly released by an archiphylakitês; same imprisonment mentioned in P.Hib. I 73 (below)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Hib. I 41 (Oxyrhynchite, c. 261 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>official letter: a dokimastês is to be released to collect tax-arrears; was he arrested for a debt to the state?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Hib. I 73 (Oxyrhynchite, 244–243 BC)</td>
<td>desmôtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition concerning an imprisoned thief wrongly released by an archiphylakitês; same imprisonment mentioned in P.Hib. I 34 (above)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| P.Hib. I 92  
(Muchinaryo, 264 BC) | not specified | unclear | bail agreement for a prisoner |
| P.Hib. I 93  
(Oxyrhynchite, c. 250 BC) | not specified | unclear | bail agreement for a prisoner |
| P.Hib. II 203  
(?, 246–221 BC) | desmôtêrion | unclear | petition from a man seeking an investigation into an archiphylakitês who unjustly arrested one of his slaves |
| P.LilleDem. I 3  
(Ghoran, 243 BC) | not specified | unclear | bail agreement for a prisoner |
| P.LilleDem. I 4  
(Ghoran, 247 BC) | not specified | unclear | bail agreement for a prisoner |
| P.LilleDem. I 5 (?)  
(Ghoran, 245 BC) | not specified | unclear | a man writes to a superior/master concerning his deportation to the south to work as slave labor (?), probably because of a debt to this master/superior |
| P.LilleDem. I 32 (?)  
(Ghoran, 264/263 or 226/225 BC) | not specified | unclear | account of several hundred prisoners (?) who have been or will be transferred to the south (to work as slave labor?) |
| P.Lond. II 220.i  
(Itos?, 133 BC) | phylakê | unclear | petition (?) with a mention of imprisonment; P.Lond. II 220.ii = Chrest.Mitt. 35 (above); P.Lond. II 220.ii is a bail agreement for a prisoner; is the same imprisonment mentioned in both columns of P.Lond. II 220? |
| P.Lond. VII 2023 (?)  
(Alexandria?, III BC) | desmôtêrion | unclear | forwarded petition, perhaps concerning a detention (10: δεσμωτηρια ερεις σα;) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Lond.</em> VII 2045</td>
<td>(Philadelphia, III BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>5 months (at writing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Mich.</em> I 63.12–14</td>
<td>(Memphite?, 247 BC)</td>
<td><em>phylakê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Mich.</em> I 85</td>
<td>(Philadelphia, III BC)</td>
<td><em>phylakê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Mich.</em> I 87</td>
<td>(Arsinoite?, III BC)</td>
<td><em>desmôtêrion</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Mich.</em> XVIII 773</td>
<td>(Oxyrhyncha or Krokodilopolis, c. 194 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>one night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Mil.Congr.XVII pg21/22</em></td>
<td>(Arsinoite, after 142–141 BC)</td>
<td><em>heirkê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Petr.</em> II 4,Fr7.1–2 (?)</td>
<td>(Arsinoite, c. 256–255 BC)</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Petr.</em> II 4,Fr7.4–6</td>
<td>(Arsinoite, c. 256–255 BC)</td>
<td><em>desmôtêrion</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Description</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Petr. II 5,A</em> (Arsinoite, 256–255 BC?)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>letter concerning the imprisonment of someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Petr. II 10</em> (Arsinoite, 221–205 BC)</td>
<td>ephémereutérion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a scribe who had been arrested and jailed after making an account at the logistérion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Petr. II 13,Fr3 (?)</em> (Arsinoite, 255 BC)</td>
<td>ochyrôma</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>official report: a prison wall has collapsed and the remains are endangering the rest of the prisoners; more prisoners are arriving soon; are these prisoners of war?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Petr. II 13,Fr4 (?)</em> (Arsinoite, 256 or 255 BC)</td>
<td>ochyrôma</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>additional correspondence concerning the events detailed in <em>P.Petr. II 13,Fr3</em>; mention of πλείονα σώματα (9), likely the soon-to-arrive desmôtai from Fr3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Petr. II 19,Fr1</em> (Arsinoite, III BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a prisoner who begs for release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Petr. II 19,Fr2</em> (Arsinoite, III BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a man jailed because someone had found fault with his work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Petr. III 36,r</em> (Herakleopolite, 218–217 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a prisoner who claims that his penalty (epitimon) is not proper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Polit.Iud. 2</em> (Herakleopolite, c. 135 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a prisoner who asks that he be released since he has learned his lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Polit.Iud. 17</em> (Herakleopolite, 143 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>official letter sanctioning release of prisoners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Time Period</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Princ.</em> III 117 (?)</td>
<td>(Theadelphia, 55–54 or 4–3 BC?)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Ryl.</em> IV 570</td>
<td>(Krokodilopolis, c. 254–251 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>PSI</em> IV 347</td>
<td>(Philadelphia, 255 or 254 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>PSI</em> IV 348 (?)</td>
<td>(Philadelphia, 254 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>PSI</em> IV 353</td>
<td>(Philadelphia, 254 BC)</td>
<td>desmōtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>PSI</em> IV 367</td>
<td>(Philadelphia, 250 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>PSI</em> IV 380</td>
<td>(Philadelphia, 249 BC)</td>
<td>desmōtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>PSI</em> IV 406</td>
<td>(Philadelphia, 260–258 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>7 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>PSI</em> IV 416</td>
<td>(Philadelphia, III BC)</td>
<td>desmōtêrion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>desmōtērion</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI IV 419 (Philadelphia, III BC)</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from three prisoners who seek a trial against their accuser.</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI IV 423 (?) (Philadelphia, III BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>Report on the activities of some desmōtai: ten had been mining, one hundred thirty others had not been working; are these prisoners of war?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI V 529 (Philadelphia, III BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a man detained because of debt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI V 532 (Philadelphia, III BC)</td>
<td>desmōtērion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>A man and his sons, all imprisoned, write a petition asking for release and note that they have made a grain payment, perhaps towards a debt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Tebt. I 115 (Kerkeosiris, 114 BC)</td>
<td>heirktê</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>(at writing) draft of a report concerning a man imprisoned for an assault on an epistatês.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Tebt. I 34 (Arsinoite, c. 100 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>Letter concerning a prisoner who is to be released.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Tebt. III.1 701.331–347 (Tebtynis, 235 or 210 BC?)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>fraction of a month</td>
<td>Petition from a group of villagers who have been detained and seek release; they have been unable to obtain justice from the kômarchai.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Tebt. III.1 754 (Tebtynis, II BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>at least 2 days</td>
<td>(at writing) Private letter concerning a visit to a man in detention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Tebt. III.1 769 (?) (Tebtynis, 237–236 or 212–211 BC?)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>Petition concerning cultivation of flax; at one point, it appears that the petitioner or his crops was impounded (50–51: [ca ?]) ἀπέθετο εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν καὶ τὴν φυλακὴν (?), perhaps because of a debt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Tebt. III.1 772 (Tebtynis, 236 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a tax collector who was arrested and imprisoned because of non-payment of taxes by the inhabitants of his district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Tebt. III.1 777.1–6 (Tebtynis, II BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>between 7 and 8 months</td>
<td>petition from a prisoner who had presented guarantors for his release after 7–8 months in jail, but had not been released from prison; see below (P.Tebt. III.1 777.6–19) for the apparently arbitrary second leg of his imprisonment; he had already been in prison eight months at the time of his petition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Tebt. III.1 777.6–19 (Tebtynis, II BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>less than a month</td>
<td>petition from a prisoner who had presented guarantors for his release after 7–8 months in jail, but had not been released from prison; see above (P.Tebt. III.1 777.1–6) for the first leg of his imprisonment; he had already been in prison eight months at the time of his petition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Tebt. III.1 782 (?) (Tebtynis, c. 153 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a royal cultivator who may have been a prisoner or former prisoner (15–16: [ca ?]μενον ἐν φυλακή]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Tebt. III.2 895 (?) (Berenikis Thesmophorou, c. 175 BC)</td>
<td>phylakê</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition perhaps containing mention of someone in prison: (48–49: [ca ?] ἐν φυλακῇ ἕφω [ca 11], ὁς)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Tebt. III.2 904 (Oxyrhychna, 115 BC)</td>
<td>desmophylakion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>official letter concerning three wrongdoing slaves placed in prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Tebt. III.2 920</em> (?)</td>
<td>Herakleopolite, II BC</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>P.Zen.Pestm. D</em> (?)</td>
<td>Arsinoite, 248 BC</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SB I 4302</em> (?), III–II BC</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>phylakê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SB I 4309</em> (Arsinoite, III BC?)</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>phylakê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SB III 6301</em> (Thmoineptis, 226 BC)</td>
<td></td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SB III 7178</em> (?)</td>
<td>Herakleopolite, 243 BC</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SB III 7202.1–14</em> (Arsinoite, 227 BC)</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>phylakê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SB III 7202.28–31</em> (?) (Arsinoite, 227 BC)</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>phylakê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SB III 7202.32–37</em> (Arsinoite, 227 BC)</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>phylakê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SB IV 7285</em> (Philadelphia, 237 or 212 or 195 BC?)</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>phylakê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB XIV 11639 (Philadelphia, 248 BC)</td>
<td>desmôtērion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a man who had been imprisoned for debt, but who had since paid up; he seeks release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB XIV 12000 (Krokodilopolis, II BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>bribe: a prisoner offers a tax payment to the recipient in return for release; he was probably detained because of debt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB XIV 12093 (?, II BC)</td>
<td>phylakē</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition or letter concerning a man unjustly arrested and imprisoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB XVI 12468 (?) [Arsinoite?], III BC</td>
<td>phylakē</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a man who had planned to visit a prisoner but instead had been harassed by a police officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB XVIII 13119 (?, 255 or 254 BC?)</td>
<td>desmôtērion</td>
<td>1–8 days</td>
<td>petition from a farmer who had been jailed and eventually released</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB XVIII 13256 (?) (Arsinoite, 268–246 or 230–221 BC?)</td>
<td>desmôtērion</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>lengthy petition; mention at end of someone writing petitions who is imprisoned, but this section of text has been deleted by the scribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB XX 14708 (Theadelphia, 151 BC)</td>
<td>phylakē</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition concerning the activities of a crooked kômarchês and his unjust imprisonment of the petitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB XXII 15546 (Theadelphia, II BC)</td>
<td>phylakē</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition mentioning jailing, likely of the petitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB XXII 15762 (?) (Krokodilopolis, 210 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a woman concerning the arrest (and detention?) of her daughter and some workers because of the debt of her son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Prison Type</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB XXIV 16285.9–15 (Krokodilopolis, 202 BC)</td>
<td><em>ephêmereutêrion</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a widow imprisoned in the <em>phylakê</em>, but initially placed in the <em>ephêmereutêrion</em>; arrest/imprisonment was allegedly arbitrary, though perhaps she owed a debt; see below (SB XXIV 16285.23–31) for the second leg of her imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB XXIV 16285.23–31 (Krokodilopolis, 202 BC)</td>
<td><em>phylakê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition from a widow who had been imprisoned in the <em>phylakê</em>, but initially placed in the <em>ephêmereutêrion</em>; imprisonment arbitrary or because of debt; see above (SB XXIV 16285.9–15) for the first leg of her imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPZ I 64 (Memphis, 156 BC)</td>
<td><em>phylakê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>letter to a former prisoner concerning his recent release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZPE 127 1999:138–139 (Arsinoite, c. 140/139 BC)</td>
<td><em>phylakê</em></td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>petition concerning the arbitrary seizure and imprisonment of a man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZPE 141 2002:186–188 (Herakleopolite, 137 BC)</td>
<td>not specified</td>
<td>unclear</td>
<td>official correspondence concerning the arrest of a man by some <em>phylakitai</em> with instructions for an <em>archiphylakitês</em> to detain him until trial; the man was presumably in detention at the time of the composition of the document</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOTALS:

at least 113 discrete texts

at least 148 instances of imprisonment

1 instance of imprisonment for assault (A)

1 instance of imprisonment for assault and theft (A, T)

35 instances of imprisonment for debt (D)

3 instances of imprisonment for public disturbances (P)

5 instances of imprisonment for slaves (S)

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64 In this total Chrest.Mitt. 35 and P.Lond. II 220.i count as one text, as do P.Grad. 3 and SB III 6301. Also, the total of one hundred sixty does not include the seventeen documents marked with a (?) as uncertain.

65 The total of one hundred fifty-four is likely much lower than it should be. For starters, no instances of imprisonment marked with a (?) have been counted, including P.LilleDem. 132, which may preserve a list of several hundred prisoners. In addition, in every case where multiple prisoners are recorded but no firm data is presented for their numbers, I have only counted two prisoners. Three texts are counted twice each (and appear twice in the list above) because they feature imprisonments that seem to have been initiated for one reason, but then prolonged for another: P.Euteux. 84; P.Tebt. III.1 777; SB XXIV 16285.

66 P.Tebt. I 15. P.Diosk. 6 is uncertain and not included in the total. PSI IV 380 is included under the heading of “assault and theft.”

67 P.Tebt. I 12. P.Heid. VI 417; P.Hib. I 41; P.Mich. XVIII 773; P.Mil.Congr.XVII pg21/22; PSI V 529; 532, three or more prisoners; P.Tebt. III.1 772; SB III 7202, at least two imprisonments; XIV 11639; 12000; XXIV 16285. The total is very uncertain. It includes all instances in which debt is specified as the reason for detention, as well as those instances in which debt seems likely to have been responsible for arrest and imprisonment. The latter include arrests of financial officials (APF 48 2002:101; P.Cair.Zen. II 59421; P.Hib. I 41), allegedly unjust imprisonments (BGU VIII 1821; P.Cair.Zen. III 59492; P.Tebt. Youtie I 12, perhaps four or more imprisonments; 16; P.Gur. 10, at least two prisoners; P.Heid. VI 378; VIII 417; P.Hib. I 41; P.Col. III 18; IV 103; P.Coll. Youtie I 12, perhaps four or more imprisonments; 16; P.Gur. 10, at least two prisoners; P.Heid. VI 378; VIII 417; P.Hib. I 41; P.Col. III 18; IV 103; P.Coll. Youtie I 12, perhaps four or more imprisonments; 16; P.Gur. 10, at least two prisoners; P.Heid. VI 378; VIII 417; P.Hib. I 41; P.Col. III 18; IV 103; P.Coll. Youtie I 12; 16; P.Gur. 10; P.Mich. XVIII 773; P.Mil.Congr. XVII pg21/22; PSI V 532; SB XIV 12000). SB XXIV 16285 has been counted only once, in spite of the fact that it highlights an imprisonment in two legs, both of which were perhaps due to one debt. Finally, the total does not include any text marked with a (?)

68 APF 48 2002:101, two prisoners; BGU VIII 1821; P.Bürgs. 17; P.Cair.Zen. I 59130; II 59275; III 59421; 59492; 59496; 59520; IV 59626; P.Col. III 18; IV 103; P.Coll. Youtie I 12, perhaps four or more imprisonments; 16; P.Gur. 10, at least two prisoners; P.Heid. VI 378; VIII 417; P.Hib. I 41; P.Mich. XVIII 773; P.Mil.Congr. XVII pg21/22; PSI V 529; 532, three or more prisoners; P.Tebt. III.1 772; SB III 7202, at least two imprisonments; XIV 11639; 12000; XXIV 16285. The total is very uncertain. It includes all instances in which debt is specified as the reason for detention, as well as those instances in which debt seems likely to have been responsible for arrest and imprisonment. The latter include arrests of financial officials (APF 48 2002:101; P.Cair.Zen. II 59421; P.Hib. I 41), allegedly unjust imprisonments (BGU VIII 1821; P.Cair.Zen. III 59492; P.Tebt. Youtie I 12, perhaps four or more imprisonments; 16; P.Gur. 10, at least two prisoners; P.Heid. VI 378; VIII 417; P.Hib. I 41; P.Col. III 18; IV 103; P.Coll. Youtie I 12; 16; P.Gur. 10; P.Mich. XVIII 773; P.Mil.Congr. XVII pg21/22; PSI V 532; SB XIV 12000). SB XXIV 16285 has been counted only once, in spite of the fact that it highlights an imprisonment in two legs, both of which were perhaps due to one debt. Finally, the total does not include any text marked with a (?)

69 P.Eleph. 12, multiple prisoners; PSI IV 406.

70 P.Cair.Zen. III 59368; P.Diosk. 9; P.Tebt. III.2 904, three imprisonments.
9 instances of imprisonment for theft (T)

24 instances of unjust imprisonment (U)

10 instances of imprisonment for work-related wrongdoing (W)

18 instances of imprisonments lasting less than a month

7 instances of imprisonments lasting more than a month

71 Chrest.Mitt. 45, four prisoners; P.Diosk. 5; P.Hib. I 34 and 73, the same instance in both texts; P.Ryl. IV 570; SB I 4309, two or more imprisonments. The total does not include PSI IV 380, classified under “assault and theft,” or any document with a (?) by its name.

72 BGU VIII 1821; 1847, two or more prisoners; Chrest.Mitt. 5; P.Cair.Zen. III 59368.22–25; 59492; IV 59619; P.Coll.Youtie I 12.9–11; 16; P.Enteux. 83; P.Enteux. 84.17–24; P.Gur. 10; two or more prisoners; P.Heid. VI 378; P.Hib. II 203; P.Mich. XVIII 773; P.Ryl. IV 570; P.Tebt. III.1 701.331–347, two or more prisoners; 777.6–19; SB XIV 12093; XX 14708; XXIV 16285; ZPE 127 1999:138–139. By “unjust” I mean “arbitrary:” i.e., cases where individuals were detained on trumped-up or no charges because of the biases or greed of officials with the power to arrest and imprison. I have not included in this category instances of accidental imprisonments, i.e. cases where arrests were made and detentions carried out on legitimate charges, but where the wrong individuals were hauled in (PSI IV 380). I have also not included cases where people claimed that they had been wrongly arrested because of false charges supplied by personal enemies (P.Cair.Zen. III 59369; P.Lond. VII 2045). Ten texts are counted here as well as in other categories because the main cause of imprisonment is uncertain in each one: BGU VIII 1821; P.Cair.Zen. III 59492; P.Coll.Youtie I 12.9–11; 16; P.Enteux. 84.17–24; P.Gur. 10; P.Heid. VI 378; P.Mich. XVIII 773; P.Ryl. IV 570; SB XXIV 16285. SB XXIV 16285 has only been counted once, in spite of the fact that it details two separate imprisonments. It seems likely that if the detention of the petitioner actually was arbitrary, both of her prison stays were due to the intrigue of one official or a handful of officials.

73 Chrest.Wilck. 166, two or more prisoners; P.Cair.Zen. III 59368.12–22, two or more prisoners; 59484; IV 59639; P.Enteux. 84; P.Petr. II 19,Fr2; PSI IV 353, two imprisonments. P.Enteux. 84 has been counted once, as the text describes the two consecutive imprisonments of a man jailed for one on-the-job foul-up.

74 P.Cair.Zen. I 59038 and 59044, the same case in each text; III 59495, two prisoners; 59519; 59520; V 59819; P.Coll.Youtie I 16; P.Diosk. 5; P.Enteux. 81; 83; P.Mich. XVIII 773; PSI IV 406; P.Tebt. 115; III.1 701.331–347, two or more prisoners; 754; 777.6–19; SB XVIII I 3119. For P.Cair.Zen. I 59038 and 59044, the first text written after an unknown extent of time had passed during the incarceration of the prisoner, and the second written twenty-six or twenty-seven days later than the first, I have adopted the conservative estimate that the prisoner had spent, in toto, a period of less than thirty days in prison by the time of composition of the second letter. I have been similarly conservative with P.Tebt. III.1 754. P.Tebt. III.1 777 is counted both here and in the total for detentions lasting over a month. The prisoner in this text had spent between seven and eight months in prison on what one assumes were legitimate charges, but then an additional fraction of a month in prison because of the bias of the jailor, who had refused to release him even after he had furnished two guarantors.

75 BGU VIII 1773; Chrest.Mitt. 5; P.Cair.Zen. III 59368.22–25; P.Coll.Youtie I 12.9–11; P.Lond. VII 2045; PSI IV 347; P.Tebt. III.1 777.1–6. On P.Tebt. III.1 777 see the previous note.