

Census Edict for Roman Egypt

DESCRIPTION	
Language:	Greek
Medium:	papyrus
Size:	21.3cm high 15.2cm wide
Length:	21 lines of writing
Genre:	Official Census Edict
Date:	104 CE
Place of Discovery:	Egypt
Date of Discovery:	c. 1905
Current Location:	British Museum, London
Inventory Number:	P.London 904

TEXT

GREEK TEXT

(from [Hunt & Edgar 1934:108](#))

*(This is readable as Greek
if "Symbol" font is installed)*

αν απογραφης ενεστωσης αναγκαιον εστιν πασιν τοις καθ ηντινα δηποτε αι
θη οικονομιαν της απογραφης πληρωσωσιν και τη προσηκουση αυτοις γεωργ

αντας τους ευλογον δοκουντας εχειν του ενθαδε επιμενιν αιτιαν απογραφεσθ
γκαιαν αυτων την παρουσιαν λημψονται κατα τουτο το παραγγελμα εντος τη





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the role and status of the "Prefectus of Egypt" within the Roman Empire? How does this compare to the "Prefectus Alae"? Where does each of these fit on the Roman *cursus honorum*?

2. What does this edict indicate about the relationship between the city and the countryside and the state's right to control who stays in the city?

3. What functions did a census serve in the ancient world? How do these functions relate to the primary tasks/concerns of aristocratic empires? (Read 2 Samuel 24:1-25; Luke 2:1-7; Acts 5:37)

4. What role does the Roman census play in the narrative about Jesus' birth in Luke's gospel? What historical problems have been raised about the dating of that census?

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