

Katoikoi

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The *katoikoi* are the “inhabitants” of a place (Arist. *Oec.* 1352a33), the noun being synonymous with the participial form *katoikountes*, while a *katoikia* is a “settlement” or “colony” (village or town) lacking the status or the institutions of a *POLIS* or “city” (Polyb. 2.32.4; Strabo 7.4.4). In a narrower sense, found in papyri and inscriptions, the term *katoikoi* refers to military settlers in the Hellenistic armies. For a long time, the nature of *katoikoi* and *katoikiai* in the Seleucid and Attalid kingdoms has been reconstructed on the basis of the better documented cleruchic system in Egypt (see CLERUCHS, EGYPT), but some differences are noticeable. In Egypt, the term *katoikoi* appears only in the second century BCE and refers only to cavalrymen, and *katoikia* designates the status of *katoikoi hippeis* (cavalry settlers), not a settlement.

In the Seleucid Empire, the *katoikoi* are both cavalrymen and infantrymen, with land allotments (*kleroi*), fiscal privileges, and sometimes even billets, according to the earliest epigraphical attestation in Magnesia ad Sipylum (OGIS 229, soon after 242 BCE?), which alludes to allotments already granted by Antiochos I. SMYRNA grants citizenship to the *katoikoi* living in Magnesia and those encamped nearby, all employed by SELEUKOS II, and to the other inhabitants (*oikountes*) of Magnesia. As in many cases, the *katoikoi*’s origin is unknown, but Greco-Macedonian origin is generally assumed. Later writers tend to describe many *katoikiai* as those of Macedonians (e.g., Thyateira in Strabo 13.4.4; OGIS 211 without the term *katoikia*) but settlers’ origin was not restricted. There were, for instance, Mysians, Thracians, and Jews in the Seleucid armies, though it is unclear when they had the status of *katoikoi* (Launey 1949).

The Attalid kings used large numbers of mercenaries but also granted land-allotments of various sizes (RC 51), perhaps already in the

260s BCE (RC 16). *Katoikoi* appear in PERGAMON, where diverse groups of soldiers are registered in the garrison (*phourion*) and others in the old city (OGIS 338). An inscription from Daldis published by Hermann and Malay (2007, *New documents from Lydia* no. 32, after 188 BCE) reveals the term *katoikia* in the Hellenistic documentation from Asia Minor. Mysian settlers (*katoikountes*, A l. 3), plausibly soldiers, were transferred to “the settlements of the huntsmen” (*katoikiai ton kunegon*, B l. 22), whose inhabitants, hunters or some kind of soldiers, according to the editors, are to be assigned new plots.

The civilian or military character of the *katoikiai* in the Seleucid and Attalid kingdoms is still debated (Cohen 1991 *contra* Bar-Kochva 1976: 22–6), because most sources are Roman and refer to civilian settlements. The evidence rather suggests that *katoikoi* could be settled anywhere next to civilians and that *katoikiai* initially grouped both civilian and military settlers.

In Egypt, the settlement of soldiers (cleruchs) already started under the first Ptolemies (see CLERUCHY), especially on reclaimed land in the FAYYUM, but the term *katoikoi* appeared only in the second-century evidence (except Uebel 1968, nos. 4 and 1453) to designate a particular category of cleruchs, namely, the cavalry settlers with plots of land of theoretically one hundred arouras (27.5 ha). Until then they were usually identified as one-hundred-aroura men or as cleruchs. Polybius (5.65.10) was the first author to use *katoikoi* with the sense of military settlers for Thracian and Galatian soldiers in his description of the Battle of Raphia (217 BCE) but he might have borrowed a second-century technical term not yet employed in the Ptolemaic army at the time of the battle. The term *katoikia* appeared in conjunction with the *katoikoi* when the cleruchic system was reorganized (Van ’t Dack 1977: 84–90): some policemen who already had a *kleros* (*P.Tebt.* I 30.27) and other cleruchs (*P.Tebt.* I 62.46) could obtain this higher status without automatically receiving one hundred

arouras, and some private owners might have bought *kleroi* and obtained the status (*P.Lips.* II 124.78; Thompson, forthcoming). In theory, katoikic land still belonged to the king and could be confiscated if the *katoikoi* did not pay their taxes or fulfill their military obligations. Their *kleroi* could not be alienated, but only transferred through cessions (*parachoreseis*) to other *katoikoi* or later to their descendants. Although the *katoikoi* were often of Greek origin, there are examples of Egyptian *katoikoi*, such as Amenrosis, son of Paieus in Thebes (*O. Wilcken* 701) and Hatres, son of Petephibis in Panopolis, who wrote a Demotic will to bequeath his land to his sons (Thompson, forthcoming, no. 6, 69 BCE). However, since many Egyptians entering the army took Greek names (*P.Tebt.* I 64a.107), it is difficult to identify them.

The *katoikoi* sometimes defended their group-privileges through petitions to the kings. They paid collectively a fixed amount of tax – established by the *dioiketes* – on their land into a “cavalry account,” and when some allotments had been confiscated, they complained that they were being overtaxed because of them (*P.Lips.* II 124, 137 BCE or later). Some royal decrees are probably responses to such petitions to keep these groups loyal. They protect the *katoikoi* from extra charges or legal prosecutions, confirm that *kleroi* could be hereditarily transmitted, and acknowledge the cessions to other soldiers (*P.Tebt.* I 124.23–45, 118 BCE; *BGU* IV 1185, after 61/60 BCE).

In Roman Egypt, the term *katoikoi* no longer implied military obligations but is found in connection with katoikic land, the name given by the Romans to private land previously in cleruchs’ hands (see LAND AND LANDHOLDING, GRECO-ROMAN EGYPT). It was taxed at the same rate as private land, as indicated by the “one artaba of the *katoikoi*” still found in

the third century CE (*SB* XVI 12493). However, sales of katoikic land still followed the conventional form of cessions. “The *katoikoi* from the total of 6,475 *Hellenes* in the Arsinoite” (*SB* XII 11012, Fayyum) formed a special group, whose members descended at least partly from the Ptolemaic *katoikoi* and which remained to some extent exclusive. Like gymnasial groups in other towns, they benefited from a lower poll tax and displayed Greek culture (Nelson 1979: 36–9).

SEE ALSO: Antiochos I Soter; Cavalry, Hellenistic; Colonization, Greek; *Dioiketes* (Egypt); Ethnicity, Egypt; Gymnasium, Classical and Hellenistic times; Hellenes; Magnesia ad Sipylum; Military lands; Phalanx (Macedonian); Raphia, battle of; Seleucids.

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