

Lajos Berkes

**TAX ISSUES AND RIOT
IN THE HIPPODROME OVER MAGICIANS:
A NEW EDITION OF THE BYZANTINE
PAPYRUS LETTER SB XXVI 16519***

THE DOCUMENT REEDITED HERE was first published by Grace Ioannidou in 2000 and subsequently included in volume XXVI of the *Sammelbuch* as no. 16519. The papyrus was bought in al-Ashmunayn on 20 December 1905 and is kept in ‘Blechkiste 229’ in the Berlin collection.¹ It contains remnants of forty-seven lines of a Greek letter written *transversa charta*, palaeographically dateable to the second part of the sixth or first half of the seventh century (Ioannidou 2000: 51). The *editio princeps* has recognised the interest of the text, which, among other things, gives an account of a riot in a hippodrome. The first editor established that the papyrus was written in Antinoopolis, since the seat of the *dux* of the Thebaid, who is mentioned in the document (ll. 7, 9, and *passim*), was located there. This is consistent with the reference to St Kollouthos (l. 5), a prominent saint of Antinoopolis, and to a hippodrome, which the city possessed (Ioannidou 2000: 54–55).

* I thank Marius Gerhardt, the curator of the Berlin collection, for providing me with a scan of the papyrus and permission to publish it. For helpful reading and interpretative suggestions, I thank Sophie Kovarik, Claudia Kreuzsaler, Anastasia Maravela, Korshi Dosoo, Nikolaos Gonis, Bernhard Palme, and Michael Zellmann-Rohrer, as well as the anonymous reviewer. All translations are mine, unless otherwise stated.

¹ See <<https://berl.pap.smb.museum/05332/>> (accessed 2 December 2024).

The understanding of the text was severely hampered by the numerous holes in the papyrus, which also exhibits heavy abrasion at various points. This is probably also the reason why this interesting document has not received virtually any attention in papyrological scholarship since its publication. I offer here a new edition based on the original and the digital image available online.² The new readings offer significant progress in understanding this intriguing, but problematic document. The most important result the revision has produced is that the riot in the hippodrome seems to have happened over magicians (*φαρμακοί*), who were not identified as such in the *editio princeps*.³ They were probably involved in manipulating the charriot races with spells, which ultimately led to their arrest and subsequent legal investigation. The papyrus therefore offers rare documentary evidence on a legal investigation against magicians in late antiquity.

The letter is incomplete both on the top and the bottom. The left margin is mostly preserved, the right margin on the top, but the lower part of the papyrus is mostly missing on the right. As mentioned before, the sheet contains several holes and the surface is heavily abraded in places. Eight unplaced fragments, containing only a few letters, appear at the bottom right of the image. The preserved forty-seven lines are written *transversa charta* in black ink. The dimensions of the document are impressive: while its width of 32.5 cm fits with the usual height of papyrus rolls in the period, the 73 cm height is remarkable. The back is blank.

Since no address is preserved, the identity of both the sender and the addressee remain elusive. Nevertheless, the text itself permits to establish that they were both high-status individuals, involved both in tax administration and court procedures. The legal training of the sender can be inferred from his involvement in writing a legal document (ll. 5–6, 17–18) and his report on a court case (ll. 32–47). His fine education is also evidenced by the high-register vocabulary of the text, the use of rare words,

² See above, n. 1.

³ The references to the term were understood to derive from *φάρμακον*, and its interpretation was left open, although the possibility of a magic spell was mentioned, see IOANNIDOU 2000: 60–61.

the generally good spelling, and the smooth syntax. The addressee is twice styled as σοφώτατοι ὑμεῖς, ‘you, the most wise’ (ll. 21 and 37), which epithet usually qualifies *scholastikoi* and, in rare cases, some other high-ranking officials (Morelli 2022: 262–263).

The preserved body of the letter consists of two main parts, neatly connected with a transition formula in ll. 20–21. Despite the incompleteness of both parts, it is still possible to reconstruct the outlines of their content. The first part concerns difficulties and ensuing conflicts that occurred between high ranking officials. The sender explains that he has made all effort, including writing a letter to the addressee, until he finally convinced the *dux* to put pressure on ‘lord Theodorakis’. This can be inferred from the repeated use of the verb ὀχλέω in ll. 3, 5, and 7, which seems to suggest that the *dux* had a disagreement with Theodorakis. As already the *editio princeps* had observed (Ioannidou 2000: 55), the involved *dux* must be the one of the Thebaid who had his seat in Antinoopolis. Theodorakis appears to have been a high-ranking official or perhaps a great landowner who would have been important enough to have direct dealings with the provincial governor. This has apparently been resolved through a legal document (ll. 5–6: ὁμολογία), which the sender of the letter drew up. This was presumably a document acknowledging the receipt or perhaps the guarantee of tax payments.

The following lines (ll. 7–16) are severely damaged. It appears that after his dispute with the *dux* was resolved, Theodorakis initiated a conflict with a certain lord Komitas, who may have been responsible for the issues with the *dux*, potentially due to his failure to forward taxes, as suggested by the mention of *canonica* in l. 23 (on these taxes, see Ioannidou 2000: 58–59). In what follows, it seems that at least partially direct speech is quoted, referencing unspecified ‘orders’ (προστάγματα). It appears that Theodorakis asked the sender (ll. 11–12) to provide him with the previously mentioned legal document, which would help him to condemn Komitas, who presumably did not fulfil his promise made in it. We also find a reference to a *comes* (l. 13), whose role remains elusive. The conflict was escalated to the legal level, as the *dux* was probably asked to be a witness (see l. 10 n.) and a formal imperial oath was sworn (see ll. 13–14 n.). The affair ended with the *dux* insulting Komitas, who might have reproached the

sender of the letter as a consequence (see l. 16 n.). Finally, the sender reports again on his hard work in drawing up a (new?) legal document and promises to deliver the ‘orders’ to a *chartularius*, when he arrives (ll. 17–20).

The rest of the letter deals with unrest in the hippodrome, the subsequent arrest of magicians (*φαρμακοί*), and their interrogation as part of a legal proceedings. The sender’s report starts with recalling a dispute of the *dux* and Theodorakis about taxes (*canonica*), which happened on the day when the chariot races took place (ll. 21–23). While the text could suggest that we are dealing with a new conflict, it seems more likely that the sender refers back to the previous one between the two men in order to establish a chronology for his subsequent narration. The following lines (ll. 24–47) are partially obscure because of the damaged state of the papyrus. The sender first remarks that also the *praeses* (*ἄρχων*), presumably again of the province of Thebaid (on this office, see Ioannidou 2000: 55), was present at the races. After the races had been finished, a certain Serenus, a former *kastresianos*, enters the scene, and appears to be seized. The title could be military or a court one (see below l. 25n.), but it is unclear if we are dealing with a former soldier or perhaps a high-status person. It seems that because of the victory in the race (l. 26: ἐπὶ τῇ νίκῃ τοῦ ἵπποδρομίου) certain persons transgressed (l. 26: παραβάντω[ν] something. It is tempting to understand this as the start of the unrest, which breaks out because of the unpopular outcome of the race. This would suggest that part of the crowd transgressed their designated area and started to riot.

Next, the *praeses* appears to have left the hippodrome, possibly due to the growing unrest, and instructed the *dux* to have Serenus removed from the crowd (ll. 27–28). After the *dux* had complied with the request, ‘the (whole) city’, probably hyperbolically referring to a large crowd, came shouting against Serenus and the magicians, who are mentioned here the first time (ll. 29–31), which implies that Serenus was probably part, or even leader, of the group of magicians (*φαρμακοί*). Given that the outrage is connected to the outcome of the race, it seems probable that they were caught practising rituals to fix the game, or at least thought to have done so. It appears that the outraged mob tried to lynch Serenus and the magicians, who were then removed from the crowd by the *dux*. They were subsequently seized, and ‘other magicians’ on the following day too (ll. 31–32).

They were then handed over to the *dux*, who took them, probably in order to start preparations for the court proceedings (ll. 32–33).

The lower part of the papyrus is especially badly preserved, thus it is difficult to reconstruct the following events. Serenus was questioned (l. 34: ἐξετάσθη), and ‘some silly lies’ (l. 35: *τινα μωρ[ὰ] καὶ ψευδῆ*) were probably part of the testimony he or a magician gave. The sender considered it necessary to inform the addressee about these matters (ll. 36–37), presumably because the latter will also be involved in this affair at some point. We find further references to production of evidence, as well as readings, perhaps of the magician’s testimonies (ll. 39, 40 and 42) and the mention of stenographers (l. 43: ἐξέκτετορος[ιν]), who perhaps made notes of what was being said. The word ‘reconciliation’ (l. 41: διαλλ[αγήν]) could suggest that the affair ended without the condemnation of the accusees.

The term *φαρμακός* occurs here for the first time in Greek papyri. However, the Coptic letter *P. Bal.* 207 (Bala’izah, 7th–8th cent.), l. 4, mentions a *φαρμακός* in an unclear context (ⲡⲏⲧⲁ ⲡⲓⲥⲁⲭⲟ ⲙⲑⲁⲣⲙⲁⲓⲁⲥ). Furthermore, the unpublished *P. Lips. inv.* 85, a letter from the Hermopolite Senouthios-archive dating around 643–644, mentions the arrest of robbers and a *φαρμακός*.⁴ In addition, a handful of papyri make reference to *φαρμακεία*, which is, however, ambiguous, since it can refer to the ‘use of any kind of drugs, potions, or spells’ (LSJ, *s.v.*). Since charges of *φαρμακεία* in Graeco-Roman Egypt have recently been discussed in detail by Eftychia Stavrianopoulou (Stavrianopoulou 2023), I will add here only the two examples which were not relevant for her discussion and were thus not mentioned in her article. In *P. Cair. Zen.* I 59018 (Palestine, 258 BC), ll. 4–5, the sender states that he was unwell on account of *φαρμακεία*.⁵ The *editio princeps* interpreted this as a reference to ‘having taken a dose of medicine’, but I wonder if we could also understand it as poisoning or a spell that the sender believed to be a victim of. Furthermore, the fragmentary letter *P. Leid. Inst.*

⁴ ll. 3–6: *καλῶς | [π]ο[ι]εῖ ἡ λαμπρότης σου πέμπουσά μοι | τοὺς ληστὰς καὶ τὸν φαρμακὸν τοὺς κρατη[θέν]τας*, ‘your brilliancy does well to send me the robbers and the *pharmakos*, who were arrested’.

⁵ *ἐγὼ μὲν [ο]ῦν | [ἄρρωστος ἐτύγχανον ἐκ’ φαρμακείας ὧν*, ‘I happened to be unwell because of *pharmakeia*’.

I 69 (Hermopolite or Oxyrhynchite, late 5th – early 6th cent.), l. 5 mentions a landowner who was poisoned or enchanted (ἐφαρμακεύθη ὁ γεοῦχος).

Contrary to the few documentary mentions, the term is well attested in Greek and Coptic literature from late antique Egypt. It is an externally applied, unspecific term for practitioners of ‘undesirable or illegitimate ritual practices’ (van der Vliet 2019: 242–243 [quote p. 242], and, for examples, *passim*). It frequently occurs in conjunction with μάγος, yet it occasionally retains its original association with poisoning. In our text, the sorcerers appear to have been accused with influencing the game applying magical practices. Binding spells against horses or charioteers are well known from the (Eastern) Roman Empire.⁶ Magicians performing rituals in the hippodromes themselves, especially at the starting gates and the turning points, are amply documented both archaeologically and in literary sources (Heintz 1998: 339–340). A number of such spells have been found in Egypt. The fourth-/fifth-century papyrus *P. Oxy. LXXIX 5205* preserves a spell against horses, possibly also against charioteers, and an unpublished lead tablet contains one directed against horses, also from Oxyrhynchos (Jordan 1994: 332). Furthermore, the sixth-century ostrakon *SB XXVI 16369* was inscribed with a curse against the Green circus faction. Finally, the fourth-century *Pap. Graec. Mag. III*, ll. 1–164 (r^o, cols. 5–10), part of a papyrus roll containing magical formularies, preserves the so-called ‘Ritual of the Cat’, which can be primarily used against charioteers. The practitioner is supposed to drown a cat in water, and perform various rituals on the cadaver, including wrapping it in a papyrus, which bears the names of the charioteers and horses to be targeted. Then the ritually prepared cadaver should be buried in a cemetery or the hippodrome itself. Finally, the practitioner is required to sprinkle from the water, in which the cat was drowned, in the circus or wherever he needs his spell to work.⁷ These sources clearly demonstrate that it is reasonable to assume that, in our papyrus, the crowd of the hippodrome would have found (or imagined) magicians performing rituals to fix the races.

⁶ The bibliography of this topic is vast. For references, see H. AMIRAV, G. BEVAN, & D. COLOMO, in HENRY & PARSONS 2014: 149–150.

⁷ On the text, see the notes of HEINTZ 1998: 342, esp. n. 34.

Literary sources provide us with ample evidence of riots in the circus, which could break out for various reasons, often with the strong involvement of the circus factions (Cameron 1976: 271–296). Although the factions, especially their financing, is well documented in the papyrological record (Gasco 1976 = Gasco 2008: 51–71), our papyrus does not seem to contain any clear sign of their involvement in the events.⁸ It is interesting to note, however, that our document is, as far as I can see, the first example of a riot on account of magical practices. It is also remarkable how quickly and decisively the *dux* and the *praeses* reacted to the situation. Given the frequency and often violent nature of circus riots, we can easily understand their rapid intervention, which seems to have succeeded in calming the situation.

Magical practices were a perennial issue in Roman law, but the repeated prohibitions underscore that the often severe punishments associated with this delinquency did not have a significant effect in reducing such activity (see the summary of Troianos 1990). A famous example in the papyrological record is the edict *SB XIV 12144* (provenance unknown, 198–199), in which the prefect of Egypt announces the death penalty for anyone who practices divination or (magical) ‘trickery’ (l. 7: *παγγανίας*, l. *μαγγανείας*). A possible, approximately contemporary parallel is provided by a document probably addressed to the *dux* of the Thebaid, *P. Cair. Masp.* II 67271 = Balamoshev & Nowak forthcoming: no. 3 (Antinoopolis, c. 565–574), in which we read in a fragmentary context about ‘witchcraft’ (Fr. B, l. 8: *ἐπὶ γοηθείας*). The editors note that the document ‘must have been related to the administration of justice, likely in a criminal case’, but it ultimately remains unclear, although likely, whether the defendants faced charges of ‘witchcraft’ (Balamoshev & Nowak forthcoming).

It is noteworthy that the fragmentary description of the magicians’ questioning in our papyrus shows parallels to a story reported by Anastasius of Sinai (7th cent.). It is worth quoting the relevant part⁹ in extenso:

⁸ The term *δημιος* in l. 28, and at the end of l. 31, is most likely used in our papyrus in a general rather than a technical sense, see IOANNIDOU 2000: 59.

⁹ NAU 1904: 68, esp. n. 1 has argued that these events must have transpired before the Arab conquest, since the conquerors would not have entrusted a prison and the questioning of criminals to a Christian. However, this view is not warranted, since administrative

Ἀνὴρ τις φιλόχριστος ἐν Βαβυλῶνι τῆς Αἰγύπτου τῶν ἐντίμων ὑπάρχων
 πρὸ τούτων τῶν ὀλίγων χρόνων ἐπιστεύθη ὑπὸ τῆς ἐξουσίας τὴν φροντίδα
 τῆς φυλακῆς, καλῶς καὶ συμπαθῶς χρησάμενος τοῖς ἐν αὐτῇ κατακλειομέ-
 νοις (...). Οὗτος ἡμῖν ὅρκους φρικωδεστάτοις διηγέιτο ὅτι τινῶν φαρμακῶν
 ἀποκλεισθέντων ἐν μιᾷ πρὸς με, εἰσερχόμενῃ πολλὰκις κατ' ἰδίαν ἐξετάσαι
 αὐτούς, καθὼς ἐστὶν ἔθος τοῖς πεπιστευμένοις τὸ τοιοῦτον ἔργον, λαμβάνων
 ἐγγράφως τὰς καταθέσεις καὶ τὰς φωνὰς αὐτῶν, εἰς τὸ ἀναγαγεῖν τὰ κατ'
 αὐτοὺς τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ (...)

Sometime ago, a Christ-loving man in Egypt's Babylon, one of the
 esteemed, was entrusted by the authority the care of the prison. He
 behaved nicely and sympathetically with those who were locked in it (...) He
 told us under horrible oaths that 'after one day some magicians (φαρ-
 μακῶν) were locked in to me, I entered to them often to examine (ἐξε-
 τάσαι) them one by one, as is custom for those who are entrusted this
 charge, noting in writing their depositions and their testimonies, so that
 I can bring their case before the authority (...)'¹⁰

The quoted passage recalls the interrogation of Serenus in our papyrus
 (l. 34: ἐξετάσθη), which, as discussed above, included the taking of testi-
 monies to be read later in court. On the one hand, these parallels between
 this story and our papyrus suggest that Anastasius of Sinai is providing a
 fairly accurate contemporary context for his story in this case. On the
 other hand, his story helps to provide a framework for imagining how the
 interrogation of the magicians in our papyrus might have taken place.

P. Berol. 25706 (Fig. 1)

32.5 × 73 cm

Antinoopolis (?), 6th/7th cent.

traces of 1 line

c. 12 [c. 12] o [c. 3] c. 5 [c. 5] ηο ... [c. 4]

[c. 4] .. ει σοι ὀχλήσαι αὐτῷ περὶ τ... [c. 2] .. πάντ[α] τρόπον ἐ-
 ποιήσαμεν

continuity between Byzantine and Arab Egypt has well been established in scholarship
 since Nau's remark.

¹⁰ Edited in BINGGELI 2001: Edifying Tales 14.1-9, 13-15 (p. 235; translation at p. 550).
 This passage is sometimes referenced in its earlier edition: NAU 1904: 68-69. For a dis-
 cussion of the story, see WORTLEY 2001: 305 and HANSEN 2023: 106-107.

- 4 [κα]ὶ ἐγγράψαμεν ὑμῖν τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρᾶ[γμα ἔω]ς οὐδ' ἐπέισαμεν τὸν
 δ[ο]ῦκα
 [δ']χλῆσαι αὐτῷ περὶ τούτου. μὰ τὸν ἅγιον Κολλοῦθον, συνετάξα-
 μ[εν] [γ]ράψ[α]ι
 [όμολο]γίαν ἕως οὐδ' ἐνδεδωκεν [c. 2-3] κ[α]ὶ μεθ' ὃ ἔμαθεν ὁ κύριος
 Θεο[δωρ]άκ[ις]
 [ὅτι οὐ]κέτι ὀχλεῖ αὐτῷ περὶ τούτου ὁ π[α]νέφυμος δούξ, προ-
 ἦλθεν [c. 4]. [c. 2]
- 8 προ[σ]τάγματα καὶ ἐποίησεν μεγάλην μάχην τῷ Κομιτᾷ ἐπὶ τοῦ
 [c. 4]. os
 μαρτυράμενος τὸν δοῦκα ἐπὶ [...]των καὶ κελεύσας τὸν εκ[κλ]η[...]
 ... καὶ ἐπὶ αὐτοῦ διαμαρτυρεῖ...ηρασ...ουθελ[...]. ειν
 ... ε[ἰ]ς τὸ πρᾶγμά σου, ἀλλὰ ἰδο[ὺ] τ[ὸ] ἀ προστάγμα[α]τά σου καὶ
 δός μοι
- 12 [τὴν δ']μολογίαν μου ὥστε αὐτὸν κατ[α]γνωσθῆναι ἐπὶ τούτῳ c. 8
 [c. 6]. os καὶ τοῦ κόμετος .ο...[.] καὶ μεθ' ὃ τ[α] [c. 5]ε.ο...ν. [c. 7]
 [Θεόν] παντ[ο]κράτορα καὶ [τὴ]ν σωτηρίαν τῶν Χριστ[ι]ανῶν
 βασιλέω[ν] c. 3]
 [...]. σεβ[ε]ρήμιν διὰ τοῦτο ὁ δ[ο]ῦξ καὶ ὕβρισεν τὸν κύρ[ιον] Κομιτᾶν
 ε...[c. 2]
- 16 [ὥστ]ε τὸν κύριον Κομιτᾶν [ἐπ]ὶ τούτῳ χολέσαι καὶ φ[α]ν[ε]ρ[ῆ]ν αὐτῷ.
 μὰ τὸν [c. 6]
 [τοῦ] Θεοῦ τοῦ ζόντος ἕως [οὔ] ἐσβέσθη ἡ φανα ἕως [οὔ] ἐποιη-
 σάμε[ν] τ[ὴ]ν
 [c. 3] ὁμ[ο]λογίαν καὶ ἐλάβαμ[εν] τὰ προστάγματα. πλὴν ἰδοῦ, τὰ
 προστάγματα ..
 [...]. μεν τοῦ Θεοῦ κελεύοντ[ος] καὶ κατερχομένου τοῦ μεγαλο-
 πρ[ο]φ[ε]στατου) χαρτουλαρίου
- 20 [μετ]ὰ καλοῦ ἀναδιδούμεν αὐτῷ τὰ αὐτὰ προστάγματα. καὶ ταῦτα
 μὲν περὶ
 [τοῦ]του. ἵνα δὲ καὶ τοῦτο μὴ λάθῃ τοὺς σοφωτάτους ὑμᾶς· τῇ
 ἡμέρᾳ,
 [ἐν] ᾗ ἦχθη τὰ ἵπποδρόμια, ὅδε ὁ κύριος Θεοδωράκις ἐμάχετο
 τῷ δουκὶ περὶ τῶν καγονικῶν. ὁ μεγαλοπρ[ο]φ[ε]στατος) ἄρχων
 ἐθεόρρησε τὰ αὐτὰ

- 24 [ι]πποδρόμια καὶ μετὰ τ[ὸ] α...[...]θῆναι αὐτὰ ἐκ τ...[c. 5]...[c. 6]
 Σερῆνόν τινα ἀπὸ καστρησιανῶ[ν δ]ν ἔλαβον [...]ρ.σι[c. 12]
 ἐπὶ τῇ νίκῃ τοῦ ἵπποδρομίου καὶ παραβάντω[ν ...][...] καὶ [c. 12]
 ἄρχων ἐκ τοῦ ἵππικου εἶπεν τῷ δουκὶ ὅτι πέμψο[ν]ρι[c. 12]
- 28 καὶ [ἀ]πόσπασον Σερῆνον παρὰ τοῦ δήμου τοῦ ἐφ[c. 6]σι[c. 9 τοῦ]
 [δο]υκὸς πέμψαντος καὶ ἀποσπάσαντος τὸν [α]ὐτὸν [Σερῆν]ον [c. 4
 ἦ]λθεν ἡ
 [π]όλις, σχεδὸν εἰπεῖν, κράζουσα κατ[ὰ τ]οῦ αὐτ[οῦ Σερ]ήνο[ν c. 10]
 φαρμακῶν καὶ τῇ ἐξῆς ἄλλων φαρμακῶν κρατ[ηθέν]των [c. 4]..
 δῆμου
- 32 καὶ παραδοθέντων τῷ πανευφύμῳ δουκὶ ἐπ[c. 5].α...[...]ω ὁ
 πανε[ύφημος]
 δοῦξ ἐδέξατο τοὺς αὐτοὺς φαρμακ[ο]ύς .τ.. φ[c. 8].. ἐδι[.....]ας
 καὶ
 μεθ' ὃ ἐξετάσθη ὁ αὐτὸς Σερῆνος, εἰπ[ε]ν [...]τ..κατα.[c. 4].. αὐτοῦ
 τινα μωρ[ὰ] καὶ ψευδῆ [c. 5]α.[c. 3]των μὴ ...[...][...]ων αὐτ..
 36 καὶ κατα...[...], ος καὶ...[c. 10]..την...[c. 2 ἀναγ]κ[αῖο]ν ἡγῆσά-
 με[ν]ος]
 [γ]ράβαι τοῖ[s σο]φωτάτοις ὑ[μῖν c. 3].[c. 2]θ.τε.[c. 5]...[...]
 ...[...][...]σαντος τοῖς [c. 7].[c. 2]..φ..[c. 9]μ.[?]
 ταῦτα δη[μο]σιευθῆναι κ[c. 10]..[...].θ[c. 9]..τ.[?]
 40 ταῦτα ἀνα[γ]νωσθῆναι καὶ [c. 10]πιεν[...][c. 9]..[?]
 οὐκ ἀφο[...].εν τὴν διαλλ[αγὴν c. 6]ε[c. 3]η[c. 10]
 ἀναγνωσθ[έν]τα δὲ μεν.[c. 10].[c. 3].[c. 10]
 καὶ τοῖς ἐξέκ[ε]πτορσ[ω]ν επ[c. 2]τ[c. 11]φ[c. 14]
 44 διδασκ[α]λεία[.] τὸν [α]ὐτ[c. 11].[c. 14]
 .οθεν[c. 7]..[...][---]
 [c. 3].[---]
 traces of 1 line

Apparatus papyrologicus

9. τόν: ο corr. ex ω || 11. ἰδο[pap. || 17. 1. ζώντος || 18. 1. ἐλάβομεν || 20. 1. ἀναδίδομεν | αὐτά:
 ν corr. ex τ || 21. ἴνα pap. || 23. ἐθεώρησε: ο corr. ex ρ, 1. ἐθεώρησε || 26. ἵπποδρομιον pap. ||
 27. ἵππικου pap. || 29. ἀποσπάσαντος: σ secundum corr. ex ν



Fig. 1. SB XXVI 16519

Apparatus lectionum editionis principis¹¹

2. c. 48 προσε, τόν ed. pr. || 3. c. 30 γὰρ τρόπον ἐποιήσαμεν ed. pr. || 4. ἐγράψαμεν ὑμῖν τὸ ..τε.....[.....]σου ἐπέισαμεν τὸν [...]μ.[ed. pr. || 5. [δ]χλήσαι: [...]πῆσαι ed. pr. | συνετάξαμεν [...] ed. pr. || 6. κ[α]: μεθ' ὁ: κ[...] μεθ' ὁ ed. pr. || 6-7. Θεο[δωρ]άκ[ις, ὅτι] | [οὐ]κέτι ed. pr. || 8. τῷ Κομιτᾷ: τὰ κόμματα ed. pr. || 9. ἐπὶ [...]των: ἐπὶ.....[.] ed. pr. || 11. ἀλλὰ ἰδο[ύ]: ἀλλα [...] ed. pr. || 13. ο.....[.] καὶ μεθ' ὁ τὰ[c. 5] ε.ο.,υ.[c. 7]: ο.....σθο.....[.]...σθο.....[.]...ο..... ed. pr. || 14. [Θεὸν] παντ[ο]κράτορα καὶ [τῇ]ν σωτηρίαν: [...].....[.]...βορ..... σωτηρία ed. pr. || 15. [...] σεῖ ἡμῖν διὰ τοῦτο ο.[: [...] c. 11 τρω[υ] ed. pr. | Κομιτᾶν: κόμματα ed. pr. || 16. Κομιτᾶν: κόμματα ed. pr. | μὰ τὸν [c. 6]: τοῦτο[υ] ed. pr. || 17. [...] ἑαυτοῦ [θε]λ[ο]ντος [...] ἐσβέσθη ἡ φωτιά ε. [...]. ἐποιησάμε[θα] ed. pr. || 18. [σὴν (?)] ὁμ[ο]λογίαν: [τῇ]ν ὁμολογίαν ed. pr. | πλὴν ἰδοῦ: ὑπ' αὐτῶν ed. pr. || 20. [μετ'] ἃ καλοῦ ἀναδιδοῦμεν αὐτῶ τὰ αὐτὰ προστάγματα: [κατ]ακολουθήσαι, ἰδοῦ μὲν ἐν τοῦτο[υ] αὐτ[ῶ] τὰ προστάγματα ed. pr. || 23. ἐθεόρησε τὰ αὐτὰ: ἐθερ,ο.....[.] αὐτ., ed. pr. || 24. μετὰ τ[ὸ] α.....[.] θῆναι αὐτὰ ἐκ τ.....[c. 5].....[c. 6]: μεταμελ.,ην.,τα.,ε.,.....[.....].....[.] ed. pr. || 25. καστρησιανῶ[ν] ὅ[ν] ἐλαβον [...] ρ. σι[c. 12]: κἀστρ[ω]ν, ἀπ[.....].....[.] ρτο[ύ] ed. pr. || 26. παραβάντω[ν]: παραβάντα [ed. pr. || 27. ἄρχων: φίλων ed. pr. | ὅτι: πέμψο[ν]: ὅτι: χ.,μ.,[ed. pr. || 28. [ἀ]πόσπασον: ὑπόσπασον ed. pr. | τοῦ εφ[:ε.[ed. pr. || 29. τὸν [α]ὐτόν [Σερῆν]ον [c. 4 ᾗ]λθεν ἡ: τὸν [...],ον[.....].....[.] ed. pr. || 30. [π]όλις: [μ]όλις ed. pr. | κατ[ὰ] τ[ὸ] αὐτ[ὸ] Ὑ[περ]ήνο[υ] c. 10: κατ[ὰ] τ[ὸ] ὅ[ν][.].....[.] θ.ε.,[ed. pr. || 31. τῇ ἐξῆς: τὰ ἐξῆς ed. pr. | κρατ[ηθέν]των: κρ[.....]των ed. pr. || 32. [...]ω ὁ πανε[ύφημος]: [...]δα.,ταῖα[ed. pr. || 33. [...]ας καί: [...]εκαψ[ed. pr. || 34. ἐξετάσθη: ἐξεπ[π]άσθη ed. pr. | εἰπ[ε]ν: ἐπ.....[ed. pr. |]τ., κατ[α]:]τ.....τα[ed. pr. || 35. τῶνα μωρ[ά] καὶ ψευδῆ[:]τιναμα[.]ψέ.,η.,[ed. pr. || 36. ...κατ.....[.....]ου καὶ[c. 12].....[.....]σαμε ed. pr. || 37. σο[φωτάτοις] ὑ[μῖν]: σο[φωτάτοις] ed. pr. || 39. δη[μο]σιευθῆναι: δὴ [...] εὐθηναι ed. pr. || 41. διαλλ[αγὴν]: διάλλ[υσιν] ed. pr. || 43. ἐξέκ[ε]πτοροσ[ιν]: ἐμ[.....]επ.ορε[.] ed. pr. || 44. διδασκ[α]λεία[: διδασκ[.....]ε.[ed. pr.

[—] you to trouble him about the [---] we did in every manner and we wrote to you the matter concerning me, until we convinced the dux [---] to trouble him about this. By Saint Kolluthos, we ordered to write [---] an agreement until he conceded (to you?) [---] and after lord Theodorakis learned that the all-praiseworthy dux does not trouble him about this anymore, he came forward [---] orders and made a big fight with Komitas before the dux (?) having called the dux as a witness about these things (?) and having ordered the [---] and to give testimony (?) in his presence [---]

¹¹ Changes that do not result in reading new words are not recorded. For a detailed comparison, the reader can consult the *editio princeps*. Note that the lines have been renumbered (there are traces of one less line at the top than suggested in the *editio princeps*).

regarding your matter, but lo, (here are?) your orders and give me my agreement so that he be convicted because of it [---] and the comes [---] and after [---] (swearing by) God almighty and the salvation of the Christian emperors [---] the dux [---] us because of this [---] and he offended lord Komitas [---] so that lord Komitas became angry because of this and scared us/put us to silence (?). By the Son (?) of the living God, (it was) until the lamp (?) went out until we made your (?) agreement and received the orders. Besides, lo, [---] (?) we [---] the orders on God's command, and when the most magnificent chartularius comes down, we give him the same orders in good order. And so far about this. Furthermore, lest this matter escapes you, the most wise: on the day, on which the horse-races were held, this lord Theodorakis fought with the dux about the canonica. The most-magnificent praeses watched the same horse-races and after [---] they from [---] a certain Serenus, a former kastresianos, whom they seized [---] upon the victory of the horse-race, and after (they) passed beyond [---] and [---] the praeses (having come out?) from the circus said to the dux: 'Send [---] and have Serenus removed from the people!' [---] after the dux sent and had the same Serenus removed [---] the city came, roughly speaking, shouting against the same Serenus and the [---] magicians [---] and on the next day, after other magicians were seized [---] (by the?) people and handed over to the the all-praiseworthy dux [---] the all-praiseworthy dux received the same magicians [---] and after the same Serenus was examined, he said [---] him, some silly lies [---] and [---] since I thought it necessary to write to you, the most wise [---] having [---] the [---] these things be produced as evidence [---] these things be read and [---] not [---] the reconciliation [---] what was read [---] and the stenographers [---] petition (?) [---]

3. ὁχλήσαι αὐτῷ περὶ τ... [c. 2]...: It is tempting to supply περὶ τούτου καί, as in l. 5 ([ὁ]χλήσαι αὐτῷ περὶ τούτου), but the traces do not allow for certainty.

4. τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρᾶγμα: For the expression, see *P. Lond.* V 1677 (Antinoopolis, c. 568–570), l. 9: τὸ κατ' ἐμὲ πρᾶγμα διδάσκων, 'informing about the matter concerning me', and *P. Oxy.* I 131 (Oxyrhynchus, 6th/7th cent.), ll. 2–3: διδάσκω τὸν ἐμὸν ἀγαθὸν δεσπ(ότην) τὸ κατ' [ἐ]μὲ πρᾶγμα[α], 'I inform my good lord about the matter concerning me'.

6. ἕως οὗ ἐνδέδωκεν [c. 2–3]: The lacuna may contain a personal pronoun, perhaps μοι or σοι.

8. [c. 4]. os: Perhaps ἐπὶ τοῦ [δου]κός, ‘before the *dux*’, with a ligature of *kappa* and *omikron*. See also l. 10: ἐπὶ αὐτοῦ.

9. ἐπὶ [...]. τῶν: Maybe ἐπὶ [τοῦ] τῶν / [αὐ]τῶν.

ες[...]. ν: Perhaps ἐκβ[ιβασμό]ν?

10. διαμαρτυρεῖ...: Probably διαμαρτυρεῖ[ν, dependent on κελεύσας, ‘having ordered to give testimonies’.

θελ[...]. εἰν: Perhaps θέλω[ν λ]αβεῖν, ‘wanting to take’.

13–14. ο. ν. [c. 7] | [Θεὸν] παντ[ο]κράτορα καὶ [τῇ]ν σωτηρίαν τῶν Χριστ[ι]ανῶν[ν] βασιλέω[ν]: The reading βασιλέω[ν] was suggested by the anonymous reviewer. One could perhaps read ὁμνύμ[ενος] at the end of l. 13. Alternatively, we could think that the oath was introduced by μά, as was the one taken by St Koluthos in l. 5. This is a reference to the imperial oath formula that was common in legal documents, see Bagnall & Worp 2004: 282–289.

16. [ὥστ]ε: The reading/supplement was suggested by the anonymous reviewer.

χολέωα: The verb χολέω, ‘become angry’, is rare and occurs only in late authors, see Lampe, s.v.

φ[c. 4] αι: Perhaps φ[οβίς]αι (< φοβίζω), ‘to scare’, or φ[ιμῶσ]αι, ‘to put to silence’.

16–17. μὰ τὸν [c. 6] | [τοῦ] Θεοῦ τοῦ ζώντος: This could be a reference to Jesus Christ as the ‘Son of the living God’, see, e.g., Matthew 16:16: σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζώντος, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God’ (English Standard Version). The phrase occurs in the fifth-century amulet *P. Oxy.* VIII 1151, ll. 23–25: Χ(ριστ)έ, υἱέ καὶ λόγε τοῦ Θ(εο)ῦ τοῦ ζώντος (l. ζώντος), ‘O Lord Christ, Son and Word of the living God’ (transl. *ed. pr.*). So we might supply [υἱόν] at the end of l. 16.

17. ἕως [οὔ] ἐσβέσθη ἡ φανα: As Maria Nowak pointed out to me, the motif of working late into the night recalls the beginning of the preface to the eighth chapter of Justinian’s *Novels*: Ἀπάσας ἡμῖν ἡμέρας τε καὶ νύκτας συμβαίνει μετὰ πάσης ἀγρυπνίας τε καὶ φροντίδος διάγειν αἰεὶ βουλευομένοις, ὅπως ἂν χρηστόν τι καὶ ἀρέσκον θεῷ παρ’ ἡμῶν τοῖς ὑπηκόοις δοθείη. Καὶ οὐ πάρεργον τὴν ἀγρυπνίαν λαμβάνομεν, ἀλλ’ εἰς τοιαύτας αὐτὴν ἀναλίσκομεν βουλὰς διημερεύοντές τε καὶ νυξίν ἐν ἴσῳ ταῖς ἡμέραις χρώμενοι, ὥστε τοὺς ἡμετέρους ὑπηκόους ἐν εὐπαθείᾳ γίνεσθαι πάσης φροντίδος ἀπηλλαγμένους, ἡμῶν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς τὰς ὑπὲρ ἀπάντων μερίμνας ἀναδεχομένων. ‘It falls to our lot to spend every day and night considering, with all vigilant care, how some benefit pleasing to God might be bestowed by us upon our subjects. We take this vigilance seriously, so much so that we exercise it all day, using nights just as much as days, on such plans as will ensure our subjects’ welfare, and their freedom from every care; we take upon ourselves their concerns on all matters’ (transl. Miller & Sarris 2018: 128). Given the date of our papyrus, the writer may well have known this passage.

ἡ φανα: This word occurs here for the first time. It seems to be a variant of φανή, ‘torch, lamp’ (see LSJ, *s.v.* and *LBG*, *s.v.*). In the context of drawing up a contract, the meaning ‘lamp’ seems to be more appropriate.

18. [c. 3]: Supply perhaps σήν.

τὰ προστάγματα .: It is not entirely clear whether the traces at the end of the line are remnants of letters or not. If they are, we could consider εἰ as the beginning of the expected verb, see the next note.

19. [.].μην: A short verb is expected, but see also the previous note.

20. [μετ]ᾰ καλοῦ: The phrase could go with κατερχομένου from l. 19 or ἀναδιδούμεν in l. 20, since it is used with both verbs in papyri, see *P. Köln* V 240 (Antaiopolite [?], 6th cent.), l. 7: κατελθεῖν μετὰ καλοῦ, ‘im Guten hinunter zu gehen’ (transl. *ed. pr.*); *P. Oxy.* LIX 4007 (6th/7th cent.), ll. 11–12: μετὰ καλοῦ | δός, ‘make delivery properly’ (transl. *ed. pr.*); *P. Oxy.* XVI 1855 (6th/7th cent.), l. 16: οὐ προσδοκοῦσιν δοῦναί τί ποτε μετὰ καλοῦ, ‘(the people of Pinuris) do not propose to give anything whatsoever with fair dealing’ (transl. *ed. pr.*); *CPR* XXXVI 47 (Hermopolite, c. 643–644), l. 4: κατέλθατε οὖν μετὰ καλοῦ, ‘Venite giù dunque in pace’ (transl. *ed. pr.*). The word order suggests, however, that the phrase belongs to ἀναδιδούμεν, which is much closer to it than κατερχομένου. On the phrase, see the detailed discussion by Morelli 2022: 279 (with further references). The anonymous reviewer also notes the parallel of the Modern Greek phrase με το καλό, ‘all being well’, and suggests that this meaning, close to ‘God willing’, be translated here. As the meaning of the phrase varies in different contexts, I have rendered it as ‘in good order.’

22. ὅδε ὁ κύριος Θεοδωράκης: The use of the demonstrative pronoun ὅδε, ‘this here’ is unexpected. Since it was rarely used by this time, we could explain its occurrence here by assuming that the writer did not properly understand its meaning (Gignac 1981: 173, esp. n. 6).

23. ἐθεόρησε: The scribe wrote first *rho* and corrected it to *omikron*. For the shape of the *epsilon-rho* ligature, see κατερχομένου in l. 19.

24. μετὰ τ[ὸ] α...[...]|θῆναι αὐτὰ ἐκ τ....[c. 5]...[c. 6]: We expect an articular infinitive complemented by αὐτά as subject. One may consider a compound of ἄγω, but, if so, an adverb would be required to complement it due to space reasons. In any case, the meaning is expected to be ‘after they [the races] had been finished’.

25. ἀπὸ καστρησιανῶ[ν]: The title καστρησιανός, deriving from Latin *castrensis*, could refer to a court official, but also to an obscure military functionary, see Lampe, *s.v.*, *LBG*, *s.v.*, and Ast & Bagnall 2016: 143.

]..ρ.σι: The anonymous reviewer wonders if the piece of papyrus containing the letter *rho* has fallen lower. If so, one could perhaps read] χρύσι[να, which would suggest that Serenus was caught having received money to fix the win.

27. ἐκ τοῦ ἵππικου: Perhaps ἐξελθὼν ὁ | ἄρχων ἐκ τοῦ ἵππικου *vel sim.*, as suggested by Anastasia Maravela.

29. [c. 4 ῆ]λθεν: Probably a compound, e.g. προῆ]λθεν.
30. [π]όλις: The new reading (μ]όλις *ed. pr.*) was suggested by Michael Zellmann-Rohrer.
- σχεδόν εἰπείν: For this expression, see LSJ, s.v. σχεδόν IV.2.
31. [c. 4].. δῆμου: Perhaps [παρὰ / ὑπὸ τ]οῦ δῆμου, ‘by the people’.
33.].. εἰδ[ι: The anonymous reviewer suggests reading]ν ἔδρ[ασαν, wondering if the *dux* wanted to know what the sorcerers had done.
34. εἰπ[ε]ν: or εἰπ[ώ]ν.
39. δη[μο]σιευθῆναι: The reading was suggested by the anonymous reviewer. The verb could mean here to produce something used as evidence in the process, as it is attested in clauses of contemporary legal documents referring to the documents themselves, see *WB*, s.v. and LSJ, s.v.
41. ἀφο[.]εν: A verb form would be expected, perhaps ἀφόρ[ις]εν (l. ἀφώρ-ρυσεν), ‘he separated.’
44. διδασκ[α]λεία[: διδασκ[.]ε[.] *ed. pr.*, but διδασκ[α]λεία[was suggested in the commentary, see Ioannidou 2000: 61. This could be both a reference to a petition (see *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67283 [Aphrodito, 547], p. 3, l. 6) or an honorary epithet of the addressee (see *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67020 [Aphrodito, c. 566–573], l. 14).
45. ..οθεν[: Perhaps ὁπόθεν [.

Lajos Berkes

Humboldt University
 Faculty of Theology
 New Testament Seminar
 Burgstraße 26
 10099 Berlin
 GERMANY
 e-mail: berkesla@hu-berlin.de

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AST, R., & BAGNALL, R. S. (2016), *Ambeida III: Ostraka from Trimithis*, vol. 2: *Greek Texts from the 2008–2013 Seasons*, New York.
- BAGNALL, R. S., & Worp, K. A. (2004), *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt*, Leiden – Boston (2nd ed.).
- BALAMOSHEV, C., & NOWAK, M. (forthcoming), ‘Four unpublished texts from the archive of Dioscorus of Aphrodite’.

- BINGGELI, A. (2001), *Anastase le Sinaïte: 'Récits sur le Sinaï' et 'Récits utiles à l'âme'. Édition, traduction, commentaire*, unpublished PhD thesis, Université Paris IV, Sorbonne.
- CAMERON, A. (1976), *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*, Oxford.
- GASCOU, J. (1976), 'Les institutions de l'hippodrome en Égypte byzantine', *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 76, pp. 185–212.
- GASCOU, J. (2008), *Fiscalité et société en Égypte byzantine* [= *Bilans de recherche* 4], Paris.
- GIGNAC, F. T. (1981), *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, II: *Morphology* [= *Testi e documenti per lo studio dell'antichità* 55/2], Milan.
- HANSEN, B. (2023), 'Making Christians in the Umayyad Levant: Anastasius of Sinai and Christian rites of maintenance', *Studies in Church History* 59, pp. 98–118.
- HEINTZ, F. (1998), 'The archaeological context of circus curses', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 11, pp. 337–342.
- HENRY, W. B., & PARSONS, P. J., (2014), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri LXXIX*, London.
- IOANNIDOU, G. (2000), 'P. Berol. 25706: Riot in the hippodrome?', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 46, pp. 51–61.
- JORDAN, D. R. (1994), 'Magica Graeca parvula', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 100, pp. 321–335.
- MILLER, J. D. & SARRIS, P. (2018), *The Novels of Justinian. A Complete Annotated English Translation*, 2 vols., Cambridge.
- MORELLI, F. (2022), *Documenti del primo periodo arabo dall'archivio di Senouthios anystes e testi connessi* [= *Corpus papyrorum Rainieri XXXVI*], Berlin – Boston.
- NAU, F. (1904), 'Le texte grec des récits utiles à l'âme d'Anastase (le Sinaïte)', *Oriens Christianus* 3, pp. 56–90.
- STAVRIANOPOULOU, E. (2023), 'Intrige, Krankheit, Verwünschung oder Mord? Der Verdacht auf pharmakeia im ptolemäischen und römischen Ägypten', [in:] BERKES, L., CLAYTOR, G. W., & NOWAK, M. (eds.), *Papyrologische und althistorische Studien zum 65. Geburtstag von Andrea Jördens* [= *Philippika* 167], Wiesbaden, pp. 11–28.
- TROIANOS, S. N. (1990), 'Zauberei und Giftmischerei im mittelbyzantinischer Zeit', [in:] PRINZING, G., & DIETER, S. (eds.), *Fest und Alltag in Byzanz*, Munich, pp. 37–51.
- VAN DER VLIET, J. (2019), 'Roman and Byzantine Egypt', [in:] FRANKFURTER, D. (ed.), *Guide to Ancient Magic*, Leiden – Boston, pp. 240–276.
- WORTLEY, J. (2001), 'Some light on magic and magicians in late antiquity', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 42, pp. 289–307.

THE JOURNAL OF JURISTIC PAPYROLOGY

FOUNDED BY
RAPHAEL TAUBENSCHLAG

EDITED BY
TOMASZ DERDA
ADAM ŁAJTAR
GRZEGORZ OCHAŁA
JAKUB URBANIK

VOL. LIV (2024)



ΕΥΓΡΑΦΙΟΣ Τ
ΗΕΗΩΘΗ
ΠΑΡΔΔΟ



UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW
FACULTY OF ARCHAEOLOGY
CHAIR OF EPIGRAPHY AND PAPYROLOGY



UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW
FACULTY OF LAW AND ADMINISTRATION
CHAIR OF ROMAN LAW AND THE LAW OF ANTIQUITY



THE RAPHAEL TAUBENSCHLAG
FOUNDATION

THE JOURNAL OF JURISTIC PAPYROLOGY

FOUNDED BY
RAPHAEL TAUBENSCHLAG

EDITED BY
TOMASZ DERDA
ADAM ŁAJTAR
GRZEGORZ OCHAŁA
JAKUB URBANIK

VOL. LIV (2024)

SCIENTIFIC BOARD

José Luis Alonso (Universität Zürich), **Roger S. Bagnall** (New York University), **Benedetto Bravo** (Uniwersytet Warszawski), **Willy Clarysse** (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), **Bernard H. Stolte** (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen), **Dorothy Thompson** (Girton College, Cambridge University), **Jacques van der Vliet** (Universiteit Leiden/Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen), **Ewa Wipszycka** (Uniwersytet Warszawski)

LANGUAGE CONSULTANTS

English: **Giovanni R. Ruffini** (Fairfield University), French: **Chris Rodriguez** (Université Paris I), German: **Martin Lemke** (Uniwersytet Warszawski), Italian: **Fabiana Tuccillo** (Università degli studi di Napoli «Federico II»)

© For the book by Fundacja im. Rafała Taubenschlaga
© For the constituting papers by the authors

Computer design and DTP by
Piotr Berezowski, Tomasz Derda, Grzegorz Ochala, and Jakub Urbanik

Cover design by
Maryna Wiśniewska

Warszawa 2024

ISSN 0075–4277

This publication has been published with financial support
from the Faculty of Archaeology and Faculty of Law and Administration
of the University of Warsaw

Wydanie I (wersja pierwotna)
Nakład: 200 egz.
Druk i oprawa: Sowa Sp. z o.o., ul. Raszyńska 13, 05-500 Piaseczno

CONTENTS

Lajos BERKES

Tax issues and riot in the hippodrome over magicians:

A new edition of the Byzantine papyrus letter SB XXVI 16519 1

Abstract: This is a revised edition of the Byzantine papyrus letter SB XXVI 16519 (P. Berol. 25706), which addresses matters pertaining to taxation and a riot that occurred within the context of circus races. The new readings allow for the identification of a cohort of magicians as the cause of the unrest, whom the crowd probably believed to have employed magical incantations with the intention of influencing the outcome of the race.

Keywords: papyrus, letter, Egypt, late antiquity, taxation, magic, law.

Agata DEPTUŁA

The power of words: Insights from two Greek magical ostraca

from the citadel of Dongola 19

Abstract: The article presents the *editio princeps* of two Greek ostraca discovered at Old Dongola during excavations conducted by the Polish archaeological mission of the University of Warsaw. The ostraca were found at the citadel in secondary contexts of a much later date, alongside other pottery fragments. Based on their script and context, they are broadly dated to the late Christian period (11th–14th centuries). Certain characteristic features allowed the identification of these ostraca as amulets. This edition offers a closer examination of the texts and provides insights into magical practices in medieval Nubia.

Keywords: medieval Nubia, ostraca, amulet, magic.

Jean-Luc FOURNET

Une demande de transfert d'imposition (epistalma) à Copenhague 33

Abstract: Édition d'un papyrus de la Bibliothèque royale de Copenhague (P. Copenhagen Royal Library Udst. 32), remarquablement conservé, livrant un *epistalma* (demande de transfert d'imposition à la suite d'une mutation foncière) appartenant au dossier de Flavius Magistôr (Hermopolis, 622). Il présente l'intérêt d'être le dernier *epistalma* connu et, à ce titre, d'éclairer l'évolution formelle et diplomatique qu'a subi ce genre, dont plus de 30 exemples ont survécu. Une liste des *epistalmata* papyrologiques, avec leurs principales caractéristiques diplomatiques et formulaires, est donnée en annexe.

Keywords: *epistalma*, Flavius Magistôr, Hermopolis, monastère de la Méta-noia, fiscalité.

Nikolaos KOLVERIS

Once again on homologia: The papyrological documentation revisited 81

Abstract: This article contributes to the ongoing discussion of the complex issue of *ὁμολογία* in ancient Greek law by examining it as a bilateral process that produces legally binding agreement. I argue that this process is reflected in legal documents preserved in papyri from Graeco-Roman Egypt. Specifically, I demonstrate that the content of these documents aligns fully with the essence of the Athenian law on contracts, *ὅσα ἂν τις ἐκὼν ἕτερος ἐτέρῳ ὁμολογήσῃ κύρια εἶναι*, thereby highlighting the continuity and preservation of this Athenian legal principle in shaping legal transactions in Graeco-Roman Egypt.

Keywords: *homologia*, consensus, legal documents, contracts, papyri, Graeco-Roman Egypt, ancient Greek law.

Lorenzo LIVORSI

A new constitution of Gratian 105

Abstract: The article offers an edition and commentary of a previously unknown constitution of Gratian, discovered on the final folio of Arras, Médiathèque Municipale MS 644 (CGM 572). Although severely abridged and difficult to read, this newly identified document addresses the status of formerly abandoned children (*expositi*) who have been taken in within an ecclesiastical context. It establishes that the biological father – or, in the case of slaves, the original master – can no longer reclaim them. This law is best understood within the broader context of late antique legislation on *expositi*, while early Christian sources illuminate the historical circumstances that may have prompted such legislation. Finally, the hypothesis that this law may have originated from the *Theodosian Code* is examined. An appendix highlights the utility of prose rhythm in establishing the text.

Keywords: Gratian, *expositi*, Church and society, *Theodosian Code*, *Collectio Quyesnelliana*.

Gabriella MESSERI

SB XII 10892, riedizione 139

Abstract: The present article provides a new edition of *SB XII 10892*, a register of the land administration, plausibly from Karanis and presumably dated to 188/9 CE. It contains the description of cadastral parcels numbered in succession, including land 'once belonging to the Jews' and land 'once belonging to the Hellenes', which, having become the property of the State following confiscation, are gradually assigned on a five-year lease to δημόσιοι γεωργοί and to farmers' collectives. The papyrus was edited for the first time by Anna Świderek in 1971, but a series of abbreviations recurring in the record of each parcel remained unresolved, affecting the understanding of the purpose of the register. The administrative registers published in large numbers in the last fifty years allow us to satisfactorily resolve all the abbreviations that remained unclear, gaining full understanding of the contents of the register. The reading of other doubtful or incorrectly deciphered points has also been improved, prompting a re-edition of the entire text. The register is written on the recto, while the back was later used for a wine account which will be published separately in another contribution.

Keywords: Roman Egypt, land administration, Jews, Hellenes, numbered *sphragides*, abbreviation system.

Maria NOWAK

Circulation of imperial legislation in Egypt between 324 and 525:

Catalogue and commentary 177

Abstract: This article offers a list and commentary to imperial laws preserved on papyrus between Constantine the Great and Justinian. The aim of the presented work was to collect both constitutions and secondary witnesses, that is mentions of law, if they could be indeed identified as a piece of legislation. The work is divided into sections grouping the material according to its genre and type. The initial section of the catalogue contains fragments that have been categorised as legal literature, encompassing excerpts from the Theodosian Code, literature pertaining to the Codex Theodosianus, and other compilations of imperial legislation. The second section consists of the documentary papyri, which are divided into three parts: generally binding laws, rescripts, and references.

The collation of a compendium of papyrological witnesses of imperial laws permitted the drawing of some general conclusions regarding the scope of the use of these constitutions in Egypt. One of these is dedicated to the circulation of the Theodosian Code. The recent publication of new fragments

of the Theodosian Code, coupled with analysis of their provenance, has allowed a more optimistic assessment of the Code circulation than was previously proposed.

A further conclusion is reached regarding the process of communicating general laws and obtaining imperial rescripts in the province. The papyrological evidence provides a comprehensive reconstruction of the chain of communication, extending from the emperor to the praetorian prefect, governor, strategos, and lower officials otherwise known thanks to the C.Th. and the Code of Justinian. The rescripts, when collected, reflect the changes undergone between the Tetrarchy and Justinian's reign, demonstrating that there were no discrepancies between the theory and practice of their application. The interpretation of these sources in their respective contexts, such as the archives and scribal traditions to which they belonged, facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the dissemination of laws among the subjects of Roman emperors.

Keywords: Imperial law, constitutions, late antiquity, Egypt, *Theodosian Code*, papyrology.

Paul SCHUBERT

Greek contracts from Egypt: When do they turn Byzantine?

217

Abstract: This article is focused on the shift from the so-called 'Roman' to the 'Byzantine' period in the perspective of papyrologists: is there a clear sign of a change in the way scribes prepare their documents between the late third and early fourth century? This view is challenged on the basis of a survey of a specific category of documents, namely contracts (Greek deeds of private law). From a typological perspective, there are gradual changes from the third till the early sixth century, but the real change seems to take place in the fifth century, shortly before Justinian's lawyers formalise what could be observed among Greek papyri from Egypt in the preceding centuries..

Keywords: periodisation, Roman Egypt, Byzantine Egypt, typology, Justinian, contract.