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'Sitologia' in Roman Egypt

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SITOLOGIA IN ROMAN EGYPT

To the memory of Pierre Jouguet who initiated me into the science of papyrology and trained me into its first rudiments, I dedicate this paper. In commemoration of his name I find no better and more adequate means than making this modest contribution in the sphere of papyrological science which he upheld and furthered its advancement until the very last moment of his fruitful career.

PAPYRUS FUAD No. 233.

A duplicate report of two *sitologi* and *episphragistai* to the strategus of the Lycopolite nome.

17×11,5 cm.

-Dated 3rd July 229 A. D.

Recto A (see Pl. IV a)

Αυρη^λ(ιωι) Σαραπιωνι τωι και Σαραπαμμωνι
στρατηγω Λυκοπολει (του)

παρα Πουωριος Παρεχατου και Ψενθαησις

Πουωριος }^χ σιτολοκων και επισφραγιστων

5 θησαυρου Θηβαϊκης χωρας Ανουβιου εμετρηθη-
σαν εις τον προκειμενον θησαυρον γεννηματα
του ενεστωτος ης πυρου σωρου αρταβας

εξ[η]κοντα πεντε / $\frac{7}{10}$ σω $\frac{1}{10}$ ξε αι ουσαι

πρακτοριας Θηβαϊκης \angle η αυτοκρατορος

10 καισαρος Μαρκου Αυρηλιου Σεουηρου —

Αλεξανδρου ευσεβους ευτυχους
 σεβαστου επειφ θ̄ Αυρηλιος Πουωρις
 Παρεχατου επισφραγιςτων̄ επιδεδω[κα]?
 . [].....ς Κολλουθ̄ος [εγ]ραψᾱ υπερ̄ α[υτ]ου
 15].....

Written vertically upwards on the left margin :

απ' Αυρηλιωι
 α(πο) Αυρηλιωι
 Αυρη[λ]ιωι

Recto B (see Pl. V) — Upside-down.

Αυρηλιωι Σαραπιωνι τωι και
 Σαραπαμμωνι στρατηγω<ι> Λυκοπο(λειτου)
 παρα Αυρηλιοι Πουωρις Παρεχατου
 και Πετβης Παρεχατου } χ
 5 σιτολογων και επισφ[ρ]αγ̄(ιστων) θ̄ησ(αυρον)
 Θη^β(αϊκης) χωρας Ανουβιου·κατ' ανδρα
 του μεμετρημε[ν]ου εις τον
 προκειμενον θησ(αυρον) μηνος
 επειφ του ενε[στω]τος ης
 10 εστι δε Α[υρηλιο]ι
 Πουωρις Παρεχ[ατου] ο̄
 Πετβης Παρεχατο[υ] ο̄

Written vertically on the right margin (lower part):

κατ' ανδρα του μεμετρημενου
 εις τον προκειμενον θησ(αυρον)
 15 μηνος επειφ του ενεστωτος
 ης εστι δε Αυρηλιοι

Verso Col. I

	επειφ $\overline{\kappa\gamma}$	= 23 rd Epeiph
	Πλε. . . ρ̇	
	καλο [] . [] .	
	κφα / $\overline{\kappa\delta}$	= 1/24
5	τα [.] ε̇ $\overline{\sigma}$	
	υιο [ς] σαρ $\overline{\gamma\sigma}$	= 1/3 1/12, son of Sarapion (?)
	$\overline{\kappa\delta}$ [. . . .] . . ποϚ $\overline{\sigma}$ α	= one artaba, 24 th Epeiph
	τε [. . .] ου̇ . $\overline{\sigma}$ θ	= 9 artabae
	τιο [.] ο . . $\overline{\zeta}$	= 1/6
10	πα [.] . $\overline{\sigma}$ α)	= 1 1/2 artabae
	π . . . ο $\overline{\sigma}$ α) — / $\overline{\sigma}$	= 1 1/2 1/12 „ (?)
	$\overline{\kappa\epsilon}$ $\overline{\gamma}$ υνη̇ εστως $\overline{\sigma}$ δ	= 4 artabae, 25 th Epeiph
	θ̇ . . η̇ εις̇ ε . . το̇ ελ̇ $\overline{\sigma}$ βς̇ — / $\overline{\sigma}$	= 2 1/12 1/12 arts.
 $\overline{\sigma}$ ια	= 11 arts.
15 $\overline{\sigma}$ γ	= 3 arts.
	. . . τασ̇ . $\overline{\sigma}$ δ̇ ζ̇	= 4 1/6 arts.
	$\overline{\kappa\zeta}$. . [.] $\overline{\gamma}$	= 1/3 on the 27 th Epeiph
	τ̇ . ε̇ $\overline{\chi}$. . . // $\overline{\sigma}$ ας̇ / $\overline{\gamma}$	= 1 1/2 1/3 arts.
	. μι̇ . $\overline{\sigma}$. $\overline{\gamma}$	= a unit + 1/3 arts.

Verso Col. II

	ηρων σ / $\overline{\sigma}$	= Heron 1/2 1/12
	λουφκωμ(αρχων) $\overline{\sigma}$ α / $\overline{\sigma}$	= Louf(as?) komarch 1 1/2 arts.
	[γ]υνη̇ αυτου σ / d /	= His wife 1/2 1/4 = 3/4
	$\overline{\lambda\eta}$ α̇ι̇ κωμ $\overline{\zeta}$	= 1/6
5	Ψεντερεις̇ σαρ $\overline{\sigma}$ α̇ $\overline{\zeta}$	= Psentereus son of Sarapion (?) 1 1/6 arts.
	$\overline{\kappa\eta}$ σαλε $\overline{\sigma}$ δ	= 28 th Epeiph. Sales(?) 4 arts.

σαλε	ζ / d /	= Sales? $1/2 \ 1/4$
Φιομ .	ζ / d	= $1/2 \ 1/4$
παουζ /	ζ / d /	= $1/2 \ 1/4$
10 xολ ^λ πα	ζ / d /	= $1/2 \ 1/4$
	ν ζ ε (?)	= Total 65 artabae.

TRANSLATION

Recto A.

To Aurelius Sarapion, also called Sarapammon, strategos of the Lycopolite nome from Pouoris son of Parechates and Psenthaesis son of Pouoris, associated sitologi and episphragistai of the granary of the Theban estate of Anoubios (?). There were measured into the aforesaid granary, being produce of the current eighth year, sixty five artabae of heaped wheat, i. e. 65 art.. hpd. wht., which is the property of the praktor's office of Thebes. The 8th year of the Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander Pius, Felix Augustus. Epeiph 9th. I, Aurelius Pouoris son of Parechates one of the episphragistai have submitted this... I... Kollouthos wrote for him, he being illiterate?

Vertically on the left margin:

From Aurelius

From Aurelius

Aurelius

Recto B.

To Aurelius Sarapion, also called Sarapammon, strategos of the Lycopolite nome from the Aurelii Pouoris son of Parechates and Petbes son of Parechates associated sitologi and episphragistai of the granary of the Theban estate of Anoubios(?). Individual list of the corn measured into the aforesaid granary during the month of Epeiph of the current eighth year viz: — The Aurelii Pouoris son of Parechates art. — — — Petbes son of Parechates art. — — —

Vertically on the lower part of the right margin:

Individual list of the corn measured into the aforesaid granary during the month of Epeiph of the current 8th. year i. e.: The Aurelii.

TEXTUAL NOTES

Recto A.

4. σιτολοκων a mistake for σιτολογων; the γ and κ sometimes interchangeable: γυριος = κυριος and καμοι = γαμοι.

7. *αρταβας*: the writer who is not well educated used the accusative instead of the nominative. He is very erratic about his grammar. This word stands for *artabae*, *ἀρτάβαι*, agreeing with *αἱ οὔσαι*.

8. *α*: either the writer meant *α*? the relative pronoun or far better *αἱ* the article.

14, 15. These are partly deleted and overwritten by line 12 of recto B written upside down. This is an instance of palimpsest. At the end of line 14 *αὐτου* is illegible and only faint traces of it remain. It was most likely followed by *ἀγραμμάτου* = *illiterate* or *μη εἰδοτος και γραμματα* = *not knowing writing*.

Recto B.

3. *Αυρηλίου*: a mistake for *Αυρηλιων*, the genitive after *παρα*.

3, 4. Both names *Πουωρις* and *Πετρης* occur in the nominative instead of the genitive and need *σιτολογων* which is indicated by a sign in line 4.

12. *Παρεχαιο[υ]*: the *χ* is written as correction over.

COMMENTARY

SITOLOGI AND THEIR COMPETENCE

This text touches upon one of the most important topics dealing with the state granaries (*δημόσιοι θησαυροί*) in Roman Egypt and its working system. During the first three centuries of our era, the eyes of Rome were firmly and steadfastly fixed upon Egypt. It is a well-known fact that the contents and entries of these grain stores which dotted the country, were carefully watched, registered and reported to higher authorities at short periods, by a hierarchy of officials: keepers, *sitologi*, and associates (*μέτοχοι*) and assistants, *episphragistai* (= *sealers*). It was perhaps the rule in Roman Egypt that *sitologi* would submit report of this nature to their immediate superiors i. e. *strategi* on the extent of their entries every decade or week, every month, every four months and every year (See Preisigke, Introduction to P. Strassb. 45; Scherer, Commentary on P. Fouad I No. 67 p. 148; Jouguet, P. Thead. No. 298 p. 147; Wilcken, *Griechische Ostraka* I p. 662). But it has been proved by many texts that in practice this rule was not absolutely rigid. The monthly account (*μηνιαῖος λόγος*) was either general, giving the global entry (*ἐπὶ κεφαλαίου*) as in P. Fouad I No. 67 or (*ἐν κεφαλαίῳ*), or detailed, furnishing an account of individual entries (*κατ' ἄνδρα*) such as the instance we are publishing herewith¹.

¹ Jouguet, P. Thead., Commentary on No. 28; P. Strassb., No. 45 is a detailed report of the *sitologi* of Theadelphia dating from the year 312 A. D., whereas P. Theadelphia No. 28 is a general report. But there is no means of knowing if these were fortnightly, monthly or yearly.

The usual system of checks and balances upon which the Roman administration was bent everywhere, can be seen at work in handling this commodity, its storage at these repositories and its safeguarding and its ultimate transportation to the impoverished Roman populace. The usual procedure was that *sitologi* in conjunction with their associates and *episphragistai* had to report on the individual entries detailing their contents and names of contributors at short intervals to their superiors. It seems that the intents and purposes of this procedure were to keep the central government well informed and to help in checking upon the activities of these local officials. Moreover the budgetary status could be regulated according to the proceeds of this income in kind. At any short notice the prefecture of Egypt could know how much of the corn due was collected.

There is abundant papyrological evidence dealing with *sitologi* and the different aspects of the functions of officials attached to the state granaries. Some are concerned with receipts issued by *sitologi* and their associates to contributors of corn, testifying to the fact that certain amounts of corn were handed in and duly measured. Others are mere reports submitted to the *strategi* stationed at the *metropoleis* of the nomes, transmitting to their knowledge the *status quo* of the contents of each granary. This group of papyri dealing with this most important topic of taxation in Roman Egypt has been dealt with by Wallace, Johnson as well as other eminent scholars. The papyri dealing with *sitologia*, its collection, the personnel concerned with it and their whereabouts and the system of storage and transportation are scattered and of a varied nature. Some are concerned with the certificates issued by *sitologi* for the amounts of corn received by them after the harvest season yearly. It is welcome to have some new light shed on the working system of this tax collection and the activities of *sitologi* in this connection. In the autumn of each year these *sitologi* used to distribute seed corn among the individual peasant at the rate of one artaba of grain for each aroura. Thus they have to keep in complete touch with the peasants in their entourage and satisfy their requirements in the way of supplying them with the necessary seeds. A group of receipts for such seed grants were published by Viereck². This

² Viereck, *Quittungen aus dem Dorfe Karanis über Lieferung von Saatkorn*, *Hermes* XXX pp. 107 ff.

entails one of the multiple tasks of *sitologi*. After the harvesting season another important task commences. The repayment of amounts of corn already advanced plus the rate of interest which amounted to something less than a fourth of the original grant was exacted from the cultivators and stored in the public granary. The corn which was accumulated in these granaries was destined to meet the requirements for such grants in the following year. Moreover, there was another and more important task for the *sitologi* to undertake i. e. the collection of the annual tribute of corn needed for Rome.

The text, which I am publishing herewith, accords in many respects with the already published papyrological documents dealing with *sitologia* at large. The general phraseology, technical terms, the style are quite in conformity with the published texts. But the main interest of this text lies in the following facts.

Firstly the recto contains a complete dating and a formula of full titles of the emperor Severus Alexander.

Secondly the unusual occurrence of *episphragistai* who were at the same time acting *sitologi*, adds to its interest. The office of these *episphragistai*, whose main duties were to place official seals upon the grain stores in heaps in the state granaries, was according to Wallace (*Taxation in Roman Egypt*, p. 36) an innovation of the third and fourth centuries A. D., introduced by Rome³. Calderini (*Θησαυροί* p. 86) is also of the same opinion that the principal task of sealing the granaries revolved upon some special officials who were called *episphragistai* who appear in some examples dating from the third and fourth centuries A. D. He quotes Preisigke, *Girowesen*, p. 58; Oertel, *Liturgie*, p. 257 n. 1, and gives an instance from P. Tebt. 340 dated 206 A. D. which is a return submitted by some corn-receivers (*σιτοπαράλημπται*) of Hermopolis to the strategus of the Mendesian Nome informing him that corn was stored in the granary under the seal of Ammonios the *episphragistes* (line 13). In P. Oxy. 1491 lines 11–12 a certain Dionysios styled *episphragistes* is an official attached to the village granary.

I have lately chanced upon a few wooden seals in the Coptic Museum in Cairo, which were used by such officials to seal the bottom sides of these heaps of corn all round, thus ensuring that

³ P. Tebt., 340, 38; P. Oxy., 1491, 11.

these heaps were not tampered with. Some of these seals measure about a cubit, others are smaller, bearing the name of the proprietor or a short phrase or even a verb. On one instance there is ΕΠΑΓΑΘΩ, preceded by a wide open palm incised to the left (Pl. VI *a*); on another ΕΡΜΟΥΘΕΟΣ (Cairo Museum No. 45950; Pl. IV *b*) written upside down (possibly genitive of 'ΕΡΜΟΥΘΙΣ); on a third there is ΑΘΗΓΟΝ (Coptic Museum entry No. 1034; Pl. VI *f*) written from right to left with a palm and part of the wrist incised to the left; on a fourth there is Χ ΤΟ ΚΕΦ + (Coptic Museum No. 1029; Pl. VI *b*) which might stand for τὸ κεφάλαιον i. e. the capital amount; on a fifth there is ΑΡΤΕΠ (Cairo Museum No. 44249; Pl. VI *c*); on a sixth there is ΔΙΔΑΤΟ (Cairo Museum No. 45952; Pl. VI *d*) which might stand for ΔΙΔΟΤΩ i. e. *let him give*; and lastly on a small wooden seal three letters ΛΕΗ occur, (Coptic Museum No. 1033; Pl. VI *e*), the meaning of which cannot be easily explained. These are the prototypes of those which are still used for the same purpose in large estates in modern Egypt and as I am informed by Prof. Alan Wace in Greece and Turkey.

Thirdly the arrangement of this text adds to its peculiarity. It has five folds lengthways from right to left with an indication of the contents written across on the outside. The script is cursive. The curious feature about it is that it is written in a more less duplicate form upside down or tête-bêche, on the recto — a feature which cannot be satisfactorily explained and has only one parallel to my knowledge. This parallel is a *μηνιαῖος λόγος*, total account of measured corn for the month of Pachon published by Scherer in P. Fouad No. 67 dated 39 A. D., arranged in this peculiar way and giving the global entry (*ἐπὶ κεφαλαίου*). The scribe made the total entry on the verso, indicating the fact that this total amount was received to the account of the *fiscus* (*διοίκησις* or *θησαυρὸς διοικήσεως*). A second entry which was not indicated was entered to the account of the temples (*θησαυρὸς ἱερῶν* or *ἱερατικά*) also on the verso. Then the scribe goes back to the recto to write a note of three lines upside down against lines 1—4 and when obviated by these four lines, he goes on to complete his note right across in the right margin. This parallel sheds some interesting light on the present text and the conditions which faced the scribe in compiling his monthly report.

Fourthly another interesting feature is the nomenclature furnished in the personnel indicated in the text under discussion. A certain Aurelius Sarapion, also called Sarapammon, the strategus of the Lycopolite Nome appears to be new. He is not found in the lists compiled by Henne⁴, nor can he be identical with any of the Sarapions or Sarapammons listed by Preisigke, *Namenbuch*. Thus this Aurelius Sarapion ὁ καί, alias, Sarapammon is known for the first time to have been strategus of this Lycopolite Nome officiating in the month of Epeiph, the ninth year of the emperor Severus Alexander — equating the third of July 229 A. D.

The *sitologi* Pouoris and Petbes sons of Parechates are combining the offices of *epispthagistai*. It is worth noting that this Pouoris is in partnership with Petbes, presumably his brother; but in the duplicate text his partner is a certain Psenhaesis son of Pouoris, probably his own son, but possibly a cousin. These *sitologi* found it incumbent upon themselves to submit their periodical report to the above-mentioned strategus of the Lycopolite Nome bringing to his knowledge that they in their capacity as officials of the above-mentioned granary have measured sixty five artabae of sifted wheat. The nature of this entry is revealed explicitly. This amount is said to be the property of the office of the praktors of Thebes, presumably the πράκτορες σιτικῶν.

In the writing of the text, the scribe used in lines 4 of recto A and B, a sign (\int^{χ}) which does not seem to have any parallel in the published texts. I suggest rather tentatively that this stands for μέτοχοι, a suggestion supported by the context and the analogy of other documents. Of all the signs and abbreviations appended to the published papyri in the BGU, P. Tebt., P. Oxy., P. Lond., I have not found any that bears any close similarity. However, P. Lond. No. 290 and No. 315 give the word μέτοχοι abbreviated in the following manner: P. Lond., 290 line 3 οἱ μ^λσιτο^λ Απιαδος; P. Lond. No. 315, line 2 μ[ετο]^λσιτο^λ. In both cases it refers to associated *sitologi* and the letter χ is written slightly above the line. On the analogy of these abbreviations one may venture to take the sign (\int^{χ}) for μέτοχοι, the first part of the sign standing for μ.

⁴ H. Henne, *Liste des stratèges des nomes égyptiens à l'époque gréco-romaine*, Le Caire 1935.

The competence of these *sitologi* and their associates and the system of their recruitment need to be discussed here at some length in the light of the papyrological evidence. The Roman prefectorate of Egypt made special arrangements in order to stabilize its corn income and assure its quality by insisting on receiving clean grain and honest weight at the measuring of the public corn. To guard against mishaps and miscalculations, a hierarchy of officials, some of whom were men of means and ability and had a valued property, were compelled to supervise the public granaries as a liturgical office. The office of *sitologi* seems to have been held as a liturgy and their charge was rather an important one and figured in the category of state charges. This liturgy does not only fall on the person of its occupant but also on his property. Preisigke in his commentary on P. Strassb. No. 45 touches upon the liturgical phase of this office and refers to Wilcken, *Gr. Ostraka*, I p. 660; P. Lond. III p. 113, No. 1159, lines 36 ff.⁵ Both *sitologi* functioning in P. Strassb. No. 45 were illiterate. Johnson has advanced the view that *sitologi* held their more or less coveted post as a public liturgy and were supposed to enjoy certain privileges in return for undertaking the task of storers of grain and making payments from their deposits as banks⁶. But it is hard to believe that they accepted their charges without any remuneration. Most likely they were somehow adequately compensated and perhaps a certain commission or infinitesimal fee amounting to 1½% was allotted to them from among the fees exacted in the collection of the tribute⁷.

According to Jouguet⁸, *sitologi* were appointed either by the komogrammateus or by the grammateus of the city (γραμματεὺς τῆς πόλεως). In P. Flor. I, it was the komarch who nominated them. In the second century A. D. *sitologi* were the directors of granaries situated in the villages, the *merides* of the Fayum, the toparchies and the *metropoleis*⁹. Sometimes two villages were grouped together to share one granary. This fact has been infer-

⁵ Preisigke, *Griechische Papyrus*, Strassburg 1912, No. 45, p. 157.

⁶ Johnson, *Roman Egypt*, pp. 490—502.

⁷ Johnson, *Roman Egypt*, Chapter IV (III) p. 511., (BGU 552, 557). This tax was called (πίδωμα) and it is not definitely specified whether this extra charge was for storage or went as a remuneration.

⁸ Jouguet, *Vie municipale dans l'Égypte Romaine*, p. 223.

⁹ Wilcken, *Gr. Ostraka*, I p. 655.

red from the evidence furnished by a document in P. Lond. Vol. II No. 346, dated 194 A. D., (p. 92). A certain Sarapion functioning as *sitologus* of Nilopolis issued separate certificates for three artabae of wheat to recipients who resided in Soknopaiou Nesos. This supports the inference that villages had recourse to this measure for facilities in collecting the corn revenue, thus using one granary for them all. Jouguet has advanced the tentative view that the two villages: Theadelphia and Arsinoe had perhaps one granary (P. Thead., p. 146). *Sitologi* of the villagers of the village Theadelphia in addressing their report to the strategus of the Arsinoite Nome declare upon oath (χειρογραφία) that they received and stored in the public granary of the village 27 artabae of pure corn from crop and 24 artabae on behalf of the inhabitants of the village of Arsinoe, (P. Thead., No. 28 dated August 26 year 320 A. D.).

These *sitologi* were assisted in the sealing operation by special *episphragistai*. Sealing seems an important and vital operation for safeguarding the contents of these granaries. P. Ryl., No. 90, dating from early third century has revealed the case of nominating certain persons to take up such tasks over a period of one year in two villages of the Arsinoite Nome. The *episphragistai* were charged with the task of cooperating with *sitologi* to undertake the tasks of collecting the tribute in kind and receiving back the loans during the harvesting season. The tribute was generally exacted sometime after the threshing operation was completed and peasants were permitted to remove their grain after payment of all their dues. An *aphesis* (ἄφεσις) or permit was issued to them to this effect entitling them to do so. It seems that peasants were often in arrears. This is proved by an official document dating from the first century A. D.¹⁰, in which a *certain Preiskos acting strategos showed that certain peasants, owing their royal rent, and one and a half the amount of their seeds, had died leaving small houses and small farms of very little value, while others had left nothing...* This state of affairs made the task of *sitologi* and their associates rather a difficult one.

Apart from the village granaries, the government chose strategic and central locations for building up state granaries for the safe storage of grain collected as tribute or dues. The *sitologi* in

¹⁰ Preisigke, *Sammelbuch*, No. 5230, Col. 3, lines 26—30.

charge of them were responsible and had to cooperate with a number of collaborators: *episphragistai*, sifters, guards, *praktores sitikon*, wharf guards and camel and donkey keepers. There are many references in the papyri to *sitologi* engaged on many sided operations. Some are revealed issuing receipts for contributions of corn received by them after the harvest season yearly, during the months of Pachon, Pauni and Epeiph. P. Lond. vol. II contains a group of documents of this nature. *Sitologi* also have to submit periodical reports to their superiors bringing to their knowledge the nature and the total or the details of individual amounts received. It is worth noting that the usual formula of these receipts was something as follows. The name or names of the chief *sitologus* or *sitologi* were given and their colleagues were mentioned collectively and referred to by the word μέτοχοι either written fully or abbreviated in various ways. Then a statement to the effect that they have measured a certain amount of corn, sifted or otherwise, for such and such individual in the public granary of a certain village or two villages or a *topos* or a *meris* on a certain date which would vary during the month of Pachon, Pauni and Epeiph. P. Lond., No. 180 dated 228 A. D. is a register of different amount of corn received and measured by *sitologi* on various dates during these months. It seems that Pauni was the month in which the new corn harvest was available for repayment of seed loans, state demands as well as other claims. It is definitely stated in a number of documents in P. Lond. that loans of corn were to be repaid in the month of Pauni following.

In these receipts, *sitologi* are mentioned officially as the only recipients of the corn contributions and are shown in the commentary of P. Lond., Vol. II p. 89, to be functioning as village officials. Evidently these were naturally counted as local officials but those who supervised bigger granaries in the *topos* were toparchy officials who ranked much higher than the more local ones in the villages since a *topos* or a toparchy might contain some twenty or more villages¹¹. These village officials occur also in many other documents besides P. Lond. The Byzantine loans on corn or advance purchases given in P. Oxy., 131—3 etc. refer

¹¹ P. Fuad University, V, published by D. S. Crawford; P. Hibeh 112 and Hibeh Vol. I. (Introduction p. 8) for Koite *topos* of Heracleopolite Nome; and P. Oxy., 1285 for toparchies of Oxyrhynchite Nome.

to payments in Pauni. *Sitologi* are not coupled with other officials whereas in the present instance they appear to combine the offices of *sitologi* and *episphragistai* and thus furnish a new instance of some interest.

The exact number of *sitologi* engaged on these operations is not stated. One would surmise that they would not amount to so many as to be a burden. *Sitologi* were generally plural: often one or two names only mentioned, the others being described as their associates (*μέτοχοι*). In P. Lond., No. 180 dating from the reign of Severus Alexander, two *sitologi* are mentioned for the village of Nilopolis. In P. Strassb., No. 45, they are also two in number. But the usual formula gives one name with his patronymic followed by *καὶ μέτοχοι* which implies a larger number. Besides these *sitologi* there are casual references among many others, to officials concerned with corn collection such as *σιτοπαράλημπται*¹², and to *πράκτορες σιτικῶν*¹³. These *σιτοπαράλημπται*, occurring in a monthly revenue return (P. Tebt., No. 340) submitted to strategus, were corn receivers who were attached to granaries but were quite distinct from the usual officials called *sitologi* and *praktores sitikon*. In BGU., No. 49, line 5 there is mention of another official styled *ἐπιτηρητής γηνημάτων* i. e. overseer of crops. It is not easy to define the nature of the work of these officials nor their exact sphere of competence with reference to our *sitologi*. In some instances it is definitely stated how the *sitologi* measured the amounts of wheat received by them, *μέτρῳ δη(μοσίῳ) ξεστῶ* which may presumably be translated by *public measure levelled-off*.

Local *sitologi* had dealing with other officials who were charged with the transportation of corn from individual villages where it was collected to the sea coast for further transportation to its final destination in Rome. It is a process in which many officials take part. A document in P. Lond., No. 295 dated 118 A. D. reveals a certain Papeeis functioning as a camel-keeper (*καμηλοτρόφος* line 3) giving a receipt to the *sitologi* of the toparch of Dionysias for the hire (*φορτερα*) of his camels which were employed as a means of transport for conveying the amounts of corn amas-

¹² Berlin Pap., No. 81, line 4 dated 188—189 A. D. and No. 425 lines 5—15 dated II—III century A. D.

¹³ BGU 414 line 1 dated 161 A. D. and No. 425 line 18 dated II—III century A. D.

sed in the granaries of the *meris* to the appointed wharves. The stipulation of the granaries of the *meris* (θησαυροὶ τῆς μερίδος line 7) singles out these central stores from the minor and more local village granaries which could be spotted all over the countryside. The Arsinoite Nome (and no other as far as I know), being large, was subdivided into *merides*, of which the Ἡρακλείδου μέρις is commonly mentioned. Each *meris* had its own strategus and therefore probably the full administration of the nome. In other nomes, not divided into *merides*, the *thesaurus* (*shouna* in Arabic) of the nome would presumably be the equivalent. The natural inference would be that there were two processes for the inland corn transportation. The first entailed its conveyance from the village granaries to some central spot before its dispatch to the river-side. The second entailed its shipment in the canals and the Nile branches for further transportation to Alexandria. In Upper Egypt any central depot was almost necessarily on the river. In the Delta it would probably be on a branch of the Nile or on a navigable canal. The Fayum differed from the rest of Egypt. Only in this nome was the stage from the central depot to any river wharf necessary. Normally, I presume there were two stages. P. Lond. No. 295, describes the middle stage, necessary in the Fayum where there were three stages in transport: I — from the village to the central *thesaurus* of the *meris*, II — from that to the river, III — shipment to Alexandria or export of surplus after putting aside the *annona* of Alexandria. Johnson has dealt *in extenso* with this topic of corn transportation by land and river. He illustrates how shipments of the *annona* were entrusted to various guilds of *nauleri* and public donkey drivers (δημόσιοι ὄνηλάται) under the control of the government¹⁴. The state tried to enforce the law which requires that public donkey drivers engaged in the transportation of grain should keep at least three donkeys¹⁵.

From their dealings with people connected with different means of transport like camel-keepers or members of the guild of public drivers and guilds of *nauleri*, it is not easy to surmise whether the competence of the *sitologi* extended to the second process of conveying corn stored in the *thesauroi* for further trans-

¹⁴ Johnson, *Roman Egypt*, pp. 400—404.

¹⁵ Johnson, *Roman Egypt*, p. 417; BGU 15, 11.

portation to its destination. But the natural inference would be that village *sitologi* were very much concerned, not only about the safe custody of this all important commodity, but also about its transportation from the village granaries to some central spot before being conveyed to the river for exportation to Alexandria.

However, the abundance of material collected by Calderini in his book (Θησαυροί) has not yet fully illustrated the competence of *sitologi* and their many sided activities. The document published herewith reveals some more details pertaining to the payment system of tribute in kind and sheds a much welcome light on the working apparatus of tax collection of dues and arrears which are the property of the *praktors'* office of Thebes. The amount of sixty five artabae of heaped wheat was measured into the granary of the Theban estate of Anoubios. Moreover it touches upon the duty incumbent upon *sitologi* to furnish their superiors (strategi or *basilikogrammateis*) regularly with a periodical report, recurring fortnightly or monthly, particularly during the very busy season of harvesting (Pachon, Pauni and Epeiph). These *sitologi* of whom two are mentioned by name were apparently also *episphragistai* reported on the collection of dues in kind during the month of Epeiph. It is worth noting that these *sitologi* did not find it prudent to refer in their report to the kind of measure used in the entry. There is no means of telling whether it was measured by the usual smoothed public measure or otherwise. They have endorsed on the verso small amounts of corn in artabae and fractions collected from individual persons on various dates beginning with Epeiph 23rd, 24th, 25th, 27th and ending with the 28th. The total of these amounts which can be read and safely restored is $52^{23}/_{24}$ artabae. At the end of Col. II there is a slanting stroke meaning *ginetai* followed by ξ and ε partly effaced meaning 65 in all. The lacunae would probably allow for the remaining $12^{1}/_{24}$ artabae to complete the figure of 65 given on the recto as the total amount delivered. Fragmentary though the names endorsed on the verso might be, they are not devoid of some interest for the study of nomenclature and because some seem to have some official title written in abbreviation like komarch. The son of Sarapion (?) col. I 6; Heron col. II 1; Louf(as ?) komarch col. II 2; his wife col. II 3; Psentereus son of Sarapion (?) col. II 5 — all figure among others who delivered small quantities of corn.

This particular *thesaurus* in the Theban district of Anoubios into which this amount was collected to the account of the *praktors'* office of Thebes raises a question as to the whereabouts of this Theban *chora* or estate of Anoubios and whether it was lying within the entourage of the Lykopolite Nome or elsewhere but fell under the competence of the strategus of this nome. I have not been able to identify this place through the evidence furnished by the papyrological texts and therefore this question still remains to be solved.

Such were the multiple tasks of the *sitologi* stationed in the midst of the *fellahine* of Egypt. Their services to the Government of Roman Egypt must have been most valuable. Thanks to them the heaps of corn accumulated in the great granaries of Alexandria and amounting at one time to twenty million *modii* were collected and entered into registers in the most scrupulous manner¹⁶. The eyes of the Roman prefects watched their steps and knew their movements. The greater part of the corn accumulated in this way and forwarded to the central granaries was ultimately destined to be shipped off to Rome to satisfy its annual needs and feed its clamouring proletariat. The annual yield of shipments of grain destined to Rome is estimated to have reached twenty million *modii* during the reign of Augustus. It is a well-known fact that the *Arcana* transmitted by Augustus to his successors stressed the importance of guarding Egypt: its inlets and outlets and keeping an eye on the magnates of the Romans who chose to visit the country. One may wonder if this was due to its strategic position and its special status in the Mediterranean or because of its richness in *sitos* or *frumentum* upon which Rome depended for much. If the stream of corn flowing from Egypt to Rome was deviated or diverted, it ultimately meant the immediate impoverishment of the Roman populace. Evidently the grain of Egypt must have meant a lot for Rome and its supply was used as a political weapon by ambitious generals such as Vespasian, who used the threat of cutting off the supply of corn from Egypt to compel the submission of Rome.

Between seven and seventeen years later than the third of July 229 A. D., which is the exact dating of our present instance, the office of *sitologus* lapsed. The *sitologi* seem to have been

¹⁶ Wallace, *Taxation in Egypt*, pp. 336, 337.

superseded by *decaproti*. The institution of the *decaproti* and its various phases have been studied *in extenso* and carefully examined in an article compiled by E. G. Turner in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*¹⁷. The general assumption was that these functionaries had been introduced into Egypt after Severus' visit in 200 A. D.¹⁸ and disappeared in early IV century. It has been supposed that this office lapsed in turn sometime about 307/308 A. D., when a wholesale process of reorganization of the nome system into numbered *pagi* instead of toparchies took place. But in the light of the new evidence furnished by papyri and ostraca¹⁹, it has been proved that the latest mention of *decaproti* was sometime in the year 302 A. D., between the 24th of March — the 31st of June²⁰. After examining a number of papyrological documents where the office of *decaproti* is mentioned it can be safely assumed that their sphere of competence was the toparchy where they acted in *collegia* of two or four as found in Fayum (P. Fay. 85). The normal tenure of office is not definitely fixed. There are instances where a four year period or even a five year period (P. Oxy. 1410) was the case. But it is not absolutely sure whether the duration of this office was limited for a period of four or five years or it was merely prolonged for some reason or another.

These *decaproti* seem to have been recruited from among men of a high standing, who proved to have had a prosperous career in their local towns. They were appointed through the municipal channels by election in local senates from among certain nominees. The collection of taxes both in kind and in money²¹ from various

¹⁷ E. G. Turner, *Egypt and the Roman Empire: The Dekaproti*, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. XXII pp. 7—19.

¹⁸ Wilcken, *Gr. Ostraka*, Vol. I p. 626 ff., *Grundzüge*, p. 217 ff.; Jouguet, *Vie municipale*, p. 366 and p. 389; Oertel, *Liturgie*, p. 211; Calderini, *Θησαυροί* p. 95; E. G. Turner, *Dekaproti*, *Journ. Egypt. Arch.* vol. XXII, p. 7 n. 4.

¹⁹ P. Lips., 84, cols. III and IV; Amundsen, *Ostraca Michigan*, Nos. 499 and 501.

²⁰ Schwartz, *Le Nil et le ravitaillement de Rome*, *Bull. d'Inst. Franç.*, 1948, p. 192; E. G. Turner, *Dekaproti*, *Journ. Egypt. Arch.*, vol. XXII p. 8 and p. 18 n. 4.

²¹ E. G. Turner, *Dekaproti*, *Journ. Egypt. Arch.*, vol. XXII p. 10 n. 1, where he cites instances from the Fayum, Hermopolis and Oxyrhynchus; also p. 14, where he states that they acted as taxation officers for the benefit of the central government.

classes of cultivators was their chief concern. They were in close touch with the granaries and were chiefly occupied with the corn transport to the river harbours within their limited area — all being duties achieved beforehand by *sitologi*. Moreover they had dealings with *naucleri* and submitted lists of their accounts to *strategi* with whom they were in close and constant touch. But this institution which was merely a product of a system organized independently in the Empire, soon lapsed in Egypt and the *sitologi* resumed their tasks. The question of how the two offices followed one upon the other in dating has been dealt with by E. G. Turner and Schwartz. Dated references to *sitologi* cease for a period after 236/237 A. D. (the last is mentioned in PSI. No. 1121, dated 236/237 A. D.), though common before that²². E. G. Turner has examined seventeen references to *decaproti* of which the earliest is January 247 A. D.²³ The change must therefore have been made between 236 and 237 A. D. Since the duties of the two offices were identical, the *decaproti* must have followed closely upon the *sitologi* without the least overlapping. This conclusion has additional support from the fact that at the very beginning of the fourth century A. D. the disappearance of the office of the *decaproti* meant the immediate reappearance of *sitologi*²⁴. Schwartz cites P. Leipzig 84 (I 5 and VI 20) to illustrate that *decaproti* disappeared after December 301 A. D. and *sitologi* resumed their old function before August 303 A. D. Moreover the span between these two dates can be narrowed on the strength of the evidence furnished by two Greek Ostraca from Karanis²⁵ published by Amundsen, Nos. 499—501. In the first, dating March 24th 302 A. D., a certain Gerontius is styled *decaprotos*. In the second one, the appearance of the *sitologi* is certain as late as June 21st, 302 A. D. The change has thus been proved to have taken place sometime between the 24th of March and the 21st of June 302 A. D.

²² Schwartz, *Le Nil et le ravitaillement de Rome*, Bull. d'Inst. Franç., 1948, p. 192.

²³ E. G. Turner, *Dekaprottoi*, Journ. Egypt. Arch., vol. XXII p. 8, note 3 (P. Fayum 85).

²⁴ Schwartz, *Le Nil et le ravitaillement de Rome*, Bull. d'Inst. Franç., 1948, p. 192.

²⁵ Amundsen, Ostraca Michigan, Nos. 499 and 501.

These *decaproti* like the earlier *sitologi* were toparchy officials²⁶. According to Johnson and West the *sitologi* disappeared again after 372 A. D.²⁷ It is not known what district the revived *sitologi* did administer after the disappearance of the toparchy in 307/308 A. D. and the organization of the country into *pagi*. According to Johnson and West the *decaproti* exercised general oversight of the collection of taxes until the *pagus* was organized in 307/308 A. D. The *sitologi* also functioned as the village collectors of money as well as of grain²⁸. But this date which associates the change with the introduction of *pagus* is disproved by the evidence furnished above. In P. Fuad University XXXV the *praktores sitikon* receive cash²⁹. Here presumably cash was paid in lieu of corn. Perhaps the *sitologi*, as well as the *praktores*, sometimes allowed commutation into money. A propos of *praktores*, one may suppose that the *praktores sitikon* collected arrears only, while the *sitologi* dealt with payments produced when due, presumably the *praktores* got the list of defaulters from the *sitologi* and handed over the wheat they collected to them.

Whatever might have been the duties of these *sitologi* towards the central government, their various dealings with this hierarchy of officials and their services rendered to the farmers, it seems that the office of *sitologia* survived and even proved its utility. The versatile activities and exactitude of these *sitologi* in their reports and endorsements and their declarations to their superiors, sometimes upon oath, were all matters of regular procedure left to their initiative. On the whole, the text published herewith is hoped to add some details to our knowledge of *sitologia* and its procedure in the third decade of the third century in Roman Egypt³⁰.

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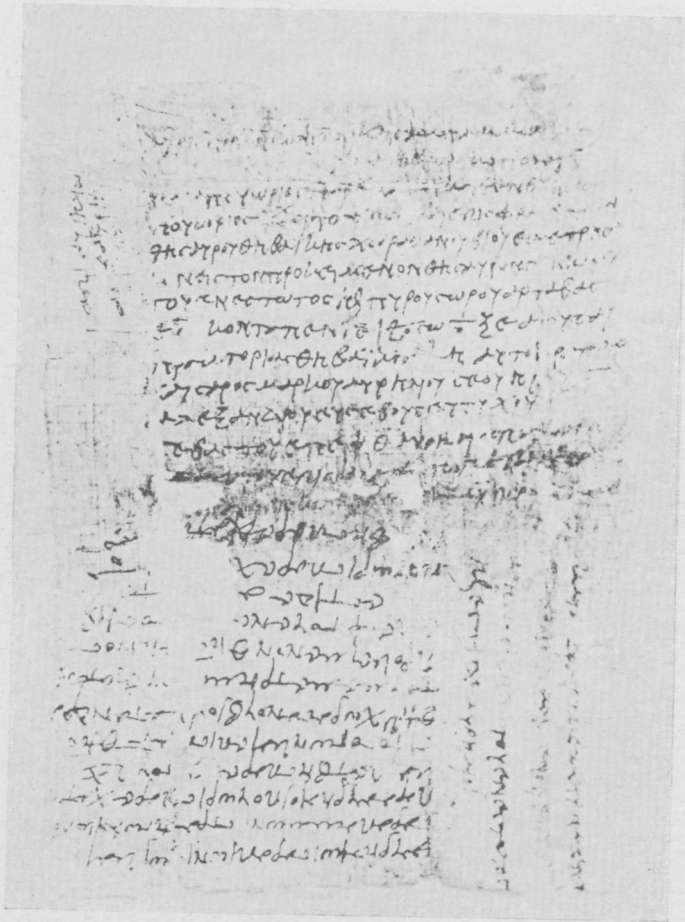
²⁶ P. Thead. 26—27.

²⁷ Johnson — West, *Economic Studies*, p. 327 where the authors quote P. Leipz. 85.

²⁸ Johnson — West, *Economic Studies*, p. 326 footnote 41; P. Thead., 29; Kase, *Papyrus Roll*; P. Flor. 36 (312 A. D.).

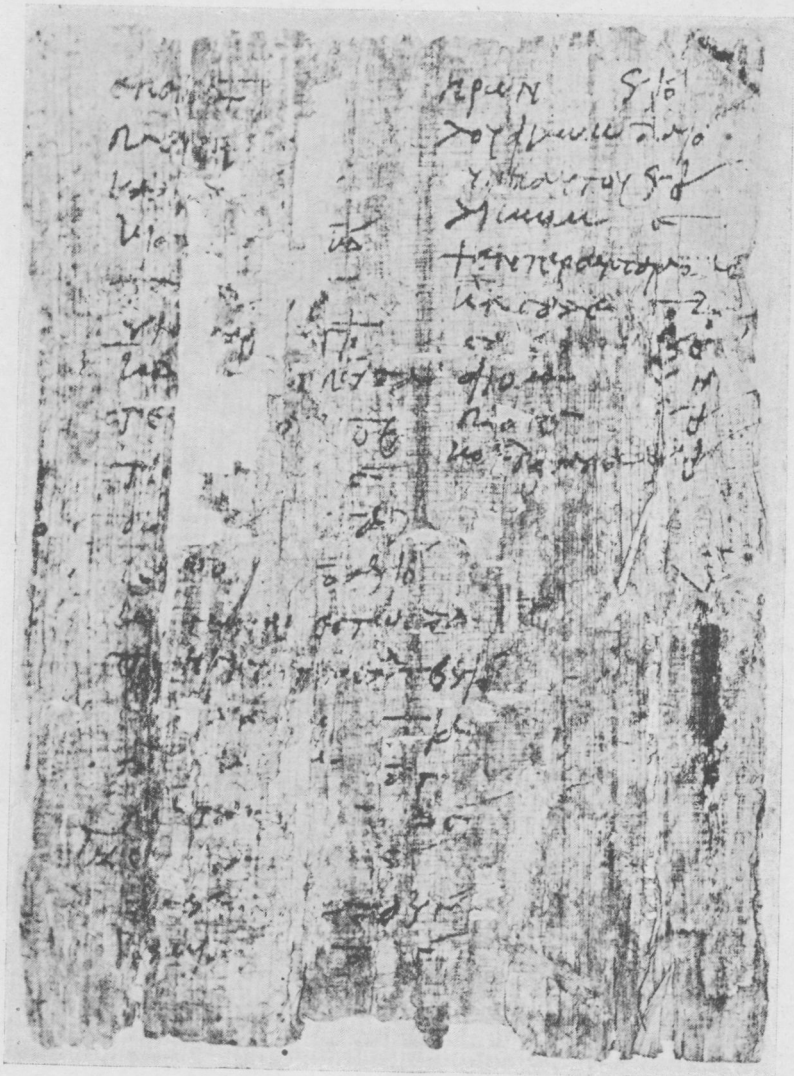
²⁹ P. Fuad University, published by D. S. Crawford, 1949.

³⁰ I am greatly indebted to my colleague Jean Scherer of Fuad I University, for pointing out this text as worthy of publication and equally grateful to my colleague D. S. Crawford for his valuable assistance and suggestions on various points. I wish also to thank Prof. R. Taubenschlag for his kindness in asking me to participate in commemorating our late friend Pierre Jouguet.



a) Papyrus Fuad No. 233 recto.

b) A small wooden seal in the Coptic Museum with a Cairo Museum No. 45950.
About 40 cm in length × 7 cm in breadth.



Papyrus Fuad No. 233 verso.



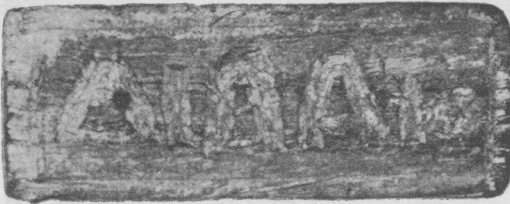
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b



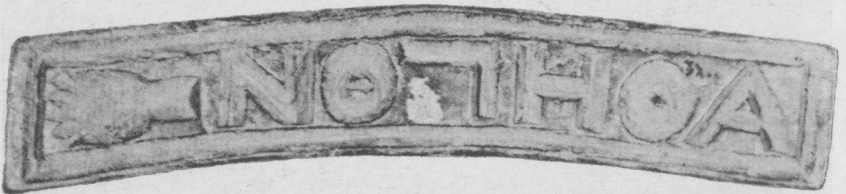
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d



e



f

- a) A large seal in the Coptic Museum.
- b) A small wooden seal, Coptic Museum No. 1029. 17.5 cm in length \times 4.2 cm in breadth.
- c) A small seal in the Coptic Museum with Cairo Museum No. 44249. 14 cm in length \times 3.5 cm in breadth.
- d) Wooden seal in the Coptic Museum with Cairo Museum No. 45952. 16 cm in length \times 6 cm in breadth.
- e) A small wooden seal, Coptic Museum No. 1030. 8.5 cm in length \times 4 cm in breadth.
- f) Wooden seal, Coptic Museum No. 1034. 36.5 cm in length \times 6.5 cm in breadth.