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**A LETTER OF Q. AEMILIUS SATURNINUS,
*PRAEFECTUS AEGYPTI****

INTRODUCTION

SOMETIME IN THE WINTER OF 199/200 CE, the sinister career of C. Fulvius Plautianus, later consul and father-in-law to Caracalla, intersected with that of Q. Aemilius Saturninus, former *praefectus Aegypti*. The murder of Saturninus would follow by the spring of the new year. Rarely for an Egyptian prefect of this period, the prefecture of Saturninus, who probably presided over the historic visit of Septimius Severus to Egypt, is illustrated in historiography as well as the usual papyrus documents. One more of the latter can now be recognized, an official letter from the prefect,¹ copied on the back of a land register probably from the Oxyrhynchite nome of Egypt.

* Todd Hickey, who is preparing the publication of a selection of documents from the lot to which this papyrus belongs, is thanked for information on it; as are Nick Gonis, Gabriella Messeri, and Graham Claytor for comments on the edition, which was prepared from a facsimile, then checked on the original (September 2016). An anonymous reviewer made further suggestions. All remaining errors are the author's own.

¹ For prefects' letters, see recently *O. Bagnall* 8; *P. Coles* 17; F. HOOGENDIJK, 'Beginning of a letter of the acting prefect Mussius Aemilianus', *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 54 (2017), pp. 113–125 (with D. HAGEDORN, 'Bemerkungen zu Urkunden', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 207 [2018], pp. 142–143 no. 11); and the survey of R. HAENSCH, 'Quelques observations générales concernant la correspondance conservée des préfets d'Égypte', [in:] J. DESMULLIEZ, Ch. HOËT-VAN CAUWENBERGHE, & J.-Ch. JOLIVET (eds.),

The report of the murder given by Cassius Dio indicates that Saturninus had been promoted to praetorian prefect as colleague of Plautianus.² Tenure of the office of prefect of Egypt (securely dated only in 197/8, but possibly as late as 200) had preceded that role, and Saturninus was probably promoted directly to the praetorian prefecture. He may have been removed from that office already by April of 200, when there is evidence that Plautianus, who accompanied the emperor to Egypt, had made himself chief prefect.³ The earlier career of Saturninus is unknown, but that of his successor Q. Maecius Laetus may be compared,⁴ a man similarly promoted directly to the praetorian prefecture, who was previously *procurator Augusti* for Arabia. The last secure attestation of the predecessor of Saturninus as prefect, M. Ulpius Primianus, dates to 25 February 196; a successor, Q. Maecius Laetus, is not securely attested until 13 May 200.⁵ Although it has been suggested that Maecius Laetus took over already in the summer of 199,⁶ and hence was the one to preside over the imperial visit, the evidence, in the form of an official letter from him ordering the registration of Nile boats, is not conclusive. Saturninus is probably the

L'étude des correspondances dans le monde romain de l'Antiquité Classique à l'Antiquité tardive. Permanences et mutations, Villeneuve-d'Ascq 2011, pp. 95–113.

² Πλαυτιανὸς τὸν Αἰμίλιον Σατορνίνον ἀποκτείνειας τῶν ἄλλων τῶν μετ' αὐτῶν ἀρξάντων τοῦ δορυφορικοῦ πάντα τὰ ἰσχυρότατα περιέκοιψεν (75.14.2); see also B. CAMPBELL, 'The Severan dynasty', [in:] A. BOWMAN, A. CAMERON, & P. GARNSEY (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History XII: The Crisis of Empire, A.D. 193–337*, Cambridge 2005 (2nd ed.), p. 13. On Plautianus, see recently C. T. MALLAN, 'Plautianus' zebras: A Roman expedition to east Africa in the early third century', *Classical Quarterly* 69 (2019), pp. 461–465.

³ CIL VI 225 (VI 30720; ILS 2186; IDRE I 47; M. P. SPEIDEL, *Die Denkmäler der Kaiserreiter. Equites singulares Augusti*, Cologne 1994, no. 56) of 1 April 200, which, if correctly restored, names Plautianus as sole praetorian prefect; see further L. L. HOWE, *The Praetorian Prefect from Commodus to Diocletian (A.D. 180–305)*, Chicago 1942, pp. 69–71.

⁴ PIR² s.v. 'Maecius 54', and see further below.

⁵ G. BASTIANINI, 'Lista dei prefetti d'Egypto dal 30^a al 299^a', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 17 (1975), pp. 303–304.

⁶ S. SCHEUBLE-REITER, 'Ein Brief des Präfekten Q. Maecius Laetus an die Strategen der Heptanomia und des Arsinoites mit Aufforderung zur Deklaration von Schiffen', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 200 (2016), p. 452.

eponym in a building inscription for restoration work in 199/200 that has a better claim to have been motivated by an imperial visit (see no. 12 below).

Aside from the evidence of Cassius Dio, nothing of the tenure of Saturninus as praetorian prefect is known. His dealings as *praefectus Aegypti* are documented in somewhat more detail, thanks in particular to papyrological data.⁷ Fourteen certain or probable papyrological and epigraphic attestations of the prefect were previously known, including two of his letters (nos. 6 and 14 below), to which the new papyrus can now be added. A list of previously known papyrological and epigraphic attestations of Q. Aemilius Saturninus as *praefectus Aegypti* includes:

1. *P. Oxy.* XLIX 3474: an application for a loan of seed-corn dated 197/8, made ‘according to the decree of Aemilius Saturninus the *clarissimus praefectus*’ (κατὰ τὰ δόξαντ(α) Αἰμιλλίω Σατουρνείνω τῷ λαμ(προτάτῳ) ἡγεμόνι, ll. 10–12), with an undertaking to sow ‘according to the order of Aemilius Saturninus the *clarissimus praefectus*’ (κατ’ ἐνκέλε(υσιν) τοῦ λαμ(προτάτου) ἡγεμόνος Αἰμιλλίου Σατουρνείνου, ll. 20–21); see also below.

2. *P. Mich.* VI 422 and *SB XXII* 15774: a petition in duplicate addressed to him, dated on external grounds to February–May 197, from the archive of Gemellus Horion.

[3. *P. Oslo* III 81: an anonymous prefect mentioned in a copy of legal proceedings as having returned a petition with subscription on 3 March 197 is probably he.]

4. *P. Oxy.* LXV 4484: a petition addressed to him probably of April–May 197, mentioning the *epistrategus* Calpurnius Concessus and a γραμματεὺς πρακτόρων σιτικῶν; see also below.

5. *P. Mich.* VI 423–424: a citation of an earlier petition to him, and of his reply with subscription, in a petition to a *strategus* from the same archive as no. 2, dated 22 May 197.

⁷ See BASTIANINI, ‘Lista dei prefetti’ (cit. n. 5), p. 304; IDEM, ‘Lista dei prefetti d’Egitto dal 30^a al 299^p: Aggiunte e correzioni’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 38 (1980), p. 85; P. BURETH, ‘Le préfet d’Égypte (30 av. J.C. – 297 ap. J.C.) (I)’, [in:] *ANRW* II 10.1 (1988), p. 490; G. BASTIANINI, ‘Il prefetto d’Egitto (30 a.c. – 297 d.c.) (II)’, [in:] *ibidem*, p. 512; *PIR*², s.v. ‘Aemilius 403’; A. JÖRDENS, *Statthalterliche Verwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Stuttgart 2009, p. 529; *TM Per* 128470.

6. *BGU* I 15 ii (with *BL* I, 8 and Jördens, *Statthalterliche Verwaltung* [cit. n. 7], pp. 299–301): a later copy of an official letter issued by him, dated 11 July 197, copied along with one column of legal proceedings from a trial in 194; see also below.

[7. *P. Coll. Youtie* I 30 (= *SB* XIV 12144): an edict in the form of a letter (*ἐπιστολή*) suppressing divination (*μαντεία*) of 198/9 is probably to be attributed to him.]

8. *P. Mich.* VI 425: a copy of a petition to him, returned to the petitioner with his subscription, forwarded in turn with a cover letter to the *epi-strategus*, dated 26 August 198, from the same archive as nos. 2 and 5.

9. *P. Oxy.* VI 916 (= *W. Chr.* 185): a receipt for payment of a tax introduced by him, dated 21 October 198.

10. *P. Lund.* IV 1: a petition addressed to him, dated 8 November 198.

11. *AE* 1919, 23 (= *SB* III 6223): a wooden diptych with legal *acta* in which he grants a guardian to a petitioner at Alexandria, dated 23 November 198.

[12. *SB* V 8561 (= *IGR* I.5.1113): he is probably named as eponym in a building inscription for the restoration of the pavement (*στρώμα*) on the platform and steps leading up to the Sphinx at Giza, dated 199/200: ([ἐπι ---] *NOY* ἐπάρχου Αἰγύπτου, l. 9). The facsimile of Henry Salt used for the edition in *CIG* III, Add. p. 1189 no. 4701b, suggests a lacuna just large enough to fit, [ἐπι Κ· Αἴμ· Σατορνί]νου; the name of his successor Q. Maecius Laetus certainly cannot be read, while the proposal of Grosso to read the name of Alfenus Apollinarius, whose brief prefecture, if it ever occurred, rests solely on an inference from *P. Mich.* VI 426, l. 24, is onomastically improbable.⁸]

13. *P. Oxy.* VI 899 r^o (= *W. Chr.* 361): his introduction of special taxes (*ἐπικλασμοὶ κελευσθέντες*) is mentioned in a petition submitted shortly before 3 March 199, cited in another petition of 29 August 200.

14. *PSI* XIII 1357 v^o: an undated official letter issued by him mentioning past instructions delivered ‘before his tribunal’ (*πρὸ βήματος αὐτοῦ*,

⁸ On the inscription, see also BASTIANINI, ‘Lista dei prefetti’ (cit. n. 5), p. 304 n. 1; É. BERNARD, ‘Pèlerinage au grand Sphinx de Gizeh’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 51 (1983), p. 186; IDEM, *Inscriptions grecques d’Égypte et de Nubie. Répertoire bibliographique des IGRR*, Paris 1983, p. 32.

ll. 5–6) to the *strategus* of the Oxyrhynchite in response to a petition from the city.

The concern of Saturninus with the collection of tax grain is visible at multiple stages of the process, from sowing to transport,⁹ and is commensurate with his office. His introduction of new regulations concerning loans of seed has been tentatively suggested based on the wording of an application for such a loan of 197/8 (*P. Oxy.* XLIX 3474 with the introduction, no. 1 above). From earlier in his tenure of office, a decree dated 11 July 197 is preserved in the form of a circular letter to the *strategi* of the middle *epistrategia* in a later copy (*BGU* I 15 ii; no. 6 above). The circular addresses a shortfall in the shipments of tax grain onwards from Alexandria because the *strategi* had been mismanaging the requisitioning of donkeys for transport, and the prefect shows himself to be on guard against collusion between *strategi* and donkey-drivers, having written already to *strategi* on this matter but been ignored. The fragmentary document *P. Oxy.* LXV 4484 (no. 4 above), probably of April–May 197, reflects the now obscure concern of a petitioner involving in some way a *grammateus* of the collectors of the tax grain (*πράκτορες σιτικῶν*).

To this context, a concern with the tax grain, belongs the further evidence of the new text for the prefecture of Saturninus. It proves to be a cover letter to a copy of a letter sent by the prefect to a *beneficiarius* who has acted in praiseworthy fashion in connection to a shortfall in the shipments. One could speculate that the actions of this otherwise unknown Komon, presumably a member of the *officium* of the prefect, were simply euergetic, contributing out of his own funds to making up the shortfall, or, perhaps more likely, corrective, taking charge in person of particularly poor management of shipping. The details are lost, for the text breaks off amid what are probably instructions for further circulation of copies of the letter among subordinates of the *strategi*. This concern was not unique to the prefect among officials – the *procurator* of Alexandrian Neapolis (*ἐπίτροπος (τῆς) Νέας πόλεως*), for example, occupies himself with deficiencies in the grain shipment in an official letter (*SB* XII 11082) – nor

⁹ For the process and personnel of shipment of tax grain, see the discussion of P. J. Sijpesteijn and K. A. Worp in *P. Mich.* XX, pp. 15–33.

among prefects to Saturninus. But his tenure can be seen as marked by an attempt to deal with a troubled system, coupled with pressure from above in a time of Roman fiscal crisis. The new taxes introduced under Saturninus came at a time of mediocre inundations, bowing nevertheless to pressure to maximize receipts: in the assessment of Danielle Bonneau, ‘on cherche (...) à faire produire le moindre morceau de terre’.¹⁰ There were probably poor inundations in all or some of the years 196–198, coinciding with an outbreak of plague in Upper Egypt at the time of the visit of Septimius Severus in the winter of 199/200,¹¹ which will have generated financial burdens of its own. The visit of Severus was also followed by an administrative reorganisation, with establishment of *boulai* in Alexandria and the nome capitals, which transferred much of the responsibility for tax collection to these municipal bodies, away from the state.¹²

That even this reorganization did not remove such problems is witnessed by a letter from a prefect copied sometime after 227/8 (*P. Oxy.* LXXXIII 5362). Addressed to a similar group as the letter of Saturninus published here, the *strategi* of the Heptanomia and Arsinoite ‘minus the Oasis’ (στρατηγοὶ ἑπτὰ νομῶν καὶ Ἀρσινοΐτου χωρὶς Ὀάσεως), it no longer preserves the name of the sender, but the first editor concludes that it was sent by the prefect. The latter complains of previous problems with purity of grain sent to Alexandria ([περὶ τῆς τοῦ πεμφθέντος εἰς τ]ῆν λ[α]μπροτ[ά]την Ἀλεξάνδρειαν πυροῦ καθαριότητος, l. 2), and renews calls for the attention of the *strategi*, *sitologi*, and *episphragistae* to the cleaning and storage of the grain from the coming harvest, which they have apparently ignored in the past. The *procurator* of Alexandrian Neapolis (ἐπίτροπος τῆς Νέας Πόλεως) is specifically mentioned, who in this case has joined with the prefect in taking issue ([ἂ μὲν ὑμᾶς τοῦ κρ]ατ[ί]στ[ου] ἐ]πι-

¹⁰ D. BONNEAU, *Le fisc et le Nil. Incidences des irrégularités de la crue du Nil sur la fiscalité foncière dans l'Égypte grecque et romaine*, Paris 1971, p. 188.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 252, and Cassius Dio 75.13.1–2.

¹² A. K. BOWMAN, *The Town Councils of Roman Egypt*, Toronto 1971; *idem*, ‘Egypt from Septimius Severus to the death of Constantine’, [in:] BOWMAN, CAMERON, & GARNSEY (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History XII* (cit. n. 2), pp. 317–318; JÖRDENS, *Statthalterliche Verwaltung* (cit. n. 7), p. 292.

τρόπου τῆς Νέας Πόλεως αἰτιασαμένου, ἃ δὲ καὶ αὐτός, κτλ., l. 3). As in the new letter, the preservation of the Oxyrhynchus copy is probably due to the receipt and filing of the original circular in a local bureau: in this case the copy is on the back of a lease contract for irrigation works (P. Oxy. LXXXII 5320).

The successor of Saturninus as prefect also issued a letter to the same group of *strategi* mentioning the Alexandrian ναύκληροι and grain fleet and the registration of ships (PSI X 1155).¹³ The precise purpose is lost due to damage, but an opening reference to the provision of assistance ([παῖσα]ν? βοήθειαν παρασχεθῆνα[ι], l. 3) might suggest some urgency in propping up a failing grain supply, and it is tempting to connect the mention of an edict (διάταγμα, l. 8) with a disposition of Saturninus. The proposals of the text's most recent editor, to connect them rather with requisitions related to Septimius Severus or Fulvius Plautianus, are less attractive if Saturninus is accepted as the prefect in office during the imperial visit, which his probable mention in the building inscription for restoration of the Sphinx at Giza in 199/200 (no. 12 above) suggests, perhaps connected to the emperor's interest in sight-seeing.¹⁴

EDITION OF THE LETTER

P. Lond. inv. 2205 back

16.2 × 16.6 cm

after 197
Oxyrhynchite

Medium-brown papyrus complete at top with margin, at left with small margin, and at right, but much damaged. A small, unrelated fragment from a later text has been mounted in the bottom part of the frame. The original document on the front (edited in the appendix) is a land register probably extending over the better part of a roll, concerning land in the tax-category *eonemene* classified as *monartabos*, which, in conjunction with a reference to a known toponym, may indicate an Oxyrhynchite provenance, of a date no

¹³ Re-edited by SCHEUBLE-REITER, 'Ein Brief des Präfekten' (cit. n. 6).

¹⁴ Cf. Cassius Dio 75.13.2

earlier than the joint reign of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (ll. 2, 15) and probably no later than that of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. A sheet has been cut from this roll to receive on the back a copy of an official letter in an elegant hand approaching the chancery style.¹⁵ In a blank space in the right margin orthogonal to the original text on the front, in the intercolumnium between the two surviving columns, the same hand is also responsible for a single line of text, but without any clear connection to the prefect's letter, or obvious connected sense, and hence perhaps simply as a pen-trial (see 14 n.). It is likely that this reuse occurred in a central bureau in a nome capital (Oxyrhynchus?), where there would have been a use both for the land register, for assessment and collection of tax, and for the official letter, for whatever new dispositions for tax collection and shipment it may have introduced. The choice of script would seem to support a context among scribal employees of a bureau, for whom the opportunity to practice writing this official script, adopted by prefects themselves, would have significance beyond purely archival purposes.¹⁶ A similar re-use of tax-list for local copy of a prefect's letter to *strategi* in a chancery hand (alongside court proceedings) can be seen in *P. Oxy.* XII 1446 and 1408 respectively.¹⁷

The papyrus was acquired by Bernard P. Grenfell for the British Museum in 1920 as part of a miscellaneous lot, which includes other Oxyrhynchite texts.¹⁸

¹⁵ On this style, see recently P. ORSINI & W. CLARYSSE, 'Early New Testament manuscripts and their dates: A critique of theological palaeography', *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 88 (2012), pp. 458–459.

¹⁶ For writing practice in chancery script, see *P. Ryl.* I 59 with L. SARDONE, 'Novità dal riasame di *P. Ryl.* I 59, recto e verso', *Segno e testo* 17 (2019), pp. 35–45; for prefects' letters in chancery script, e.g. *P. Oxy.* XIX 2227 with G. CAVALLO, 'La scrittura del P. Berol. 11532. Contributo allo studio dello stile di cancelleria nei papiri greci di età romana', *Aegyptus* 45 (1965), pp. 217–218, and G. BASTIANINI & J. WHITEHORNE, *Strategi and Royal Scribes of Egypt: Chronological List and Index*, Florence 1987, pp. 53, 72.

¹⁷ On the latter, see CAVALLO, 'La scrittura' (cit. n. 16), p. 237.

¹⁸ For further references on the acquisition: T. M. HICKEY, 'The workers and the vineyard (P. Lond. inv. 2238)', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 58 (2013), p. 302.

back (↓)

Αἰμίλιος Σατουρνίνου στρατηγού̄ς ζ̄ νομῶν καὶ
 Ἀρσινοίτου χαίρειν·
 α. [c. 5] Κόμων ὁ βενεφ[ι]κιάριος τὰ γραφέν[τα vac.?
 4 ὑπ' ἐμοῦ περὶ ἧς πεποιήνται ἐκδείας οἱ ναύκληροι τοῦ χε[ι-]
 ρισμού τῆς Νέας πόλεως ὑπὸ τῆς πρὸς τὸ ταμεῖον σπουδῆ[s]
 ἐνροῶν· ἐδήλωσε γάρ μοι ὡς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ προθυμίαν δ[ει-]
 8 τὸ μέτρον ὑπερβᾶσαν προενόησεν· ὅθεν τὰ πρα-
 χθέντα μαθῶν ...[.]. θεις ἀντέγραψα αὐτῶ τὰ ὑπογεγραμ-
 μένα [...]. φ. [c. 10] [.]. [c. 5] κ[.]εν το[ι]ς ὑφ' ἡμᾶς
 [c. 25-30] οἰς ἐκείνω ἐπεσταλμέν[α]
 12 [c. 25-30] ατων μὴ ἐνεχομένω
 [c. 25-30] ...[.]την[c. 5]

front (↓)

ἀπαιτῆσαι καὶ τῆς ἀπαιτῶν καὶ τῆς [

i. 1. Ἀρσινοίτου || 4. χε[ι-] pap.

*Aemilius Saturninus to the strategi of the Heptanomia and Arsinoite, greet-
 ings. Komon the beneficiarius, considering out of zeal towards the treasury
 the (letter) written by me concerning the shortfall that has been left by the
 skippers of the cheirismos of Neapolis, has [...] – for he has demonstrated to
 me that he has [opportunistically?] furnished his eagerness, displayed in all
 respects and in every manner and surpassing measure. Hence, learning what
 had been done, I, having been [...], wrote in response to him the (letter)
 copied below [...] to the ones under your authority [...] orders given to him
 [...] not being liable [...]*

1-2. στρατηγού̄ς ζ̄ νομῶν καὶ Ἀρσινοίτου (i. Ἀρσινοίτου). For the address of
 prefects' letters to this group of *strategi*, see Scheuble-Reiter, 'Ein Brief des
 Präfekten' (cit. n. 6), p. 446.

3. α. [c. 5]. Only λ and ν suit the traces. A gentilicium, for which ἄν[νιος] seems likeliest (see also the following note), would leave the first period without a main verb, for which a prolepsis of the one in the parenthetical in γάρ introduced in 6 is not a very satisfactory solution. Both the construction and the readings in the following lines are difficult, but the possibility of a main verb here should be preferred, which might have been, e.g., ἀν[ῆλθεν] of travel up-river (suggestion from an anonymous reviewer), or ἀν[έδωκε], ‘distributed’, governing τὰ γραφῆν[τα], though it cannot be excluded that some other verbal form construed with the latter stood at the end of this line.

Κόμων ὁ βενεφ[ι]κάριος. The man is not otherwise known among the *beneficiarii* (see below). There is nothing to suggest a connection between him and the Komon who was the subject of the roughly contemporary *responsum* of Septimius Severus copied in *P. Col.* VI 123, ll. 48–52. For his office, as a member of the *officium* of the provincial governor, see J. Ott, *Die Beneficiarii. Untersuchungen zu ihrer Stellung innerhalb der Rangordnung des römischen Heeres und zu ihrer Funktion*, Wiesbaden 1995, pp. 82–150; J. Nelis-Clément, *Les beneficiarii. Militaires et administrateurs au service de l'empire (1^{er} s. a.C. – 6^e s. p.C.)*, Bordeaux 2000, pp. 115–126; in general, see *P. Louvre* II 120, l. 27 n.; L. H. Blumell, ‘Petition to a “beneficiarius” from late third century A.D. Oxyrhynchus’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 165 (2008), p. 189 n.

4. ἐκδείας. For the word as a quasi-technical term in texts relating to the *sitologia*, see *P. Bingen* 109, l. 67 n.

4–5. The ναύκληροι in this context are managers of ships owned by the state: K. A. Worp, ‘*Nauklēroi, kybernētai and nauklērokybernētai and their ships in Roman and Byzantine Egypt*’, *Analecta papyrologica* 26 (2014), pp. 261–278; M. Clauss, ‘Die mächtigste Gruppe: Die Reeder Alexandrias’, [in:] S. Panzram (ed.), *Menschen und Orte der Antike. Festschrift für Helmut Halfmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, Rahden 2015, pp. 349–360; Scheuble-Reiter, ‘Ein Brief des Präefkten’ (cit. n. 6), p. 447. The ναύκληροι χειρισμοῦ τῆς Νέας πόλεως were concerned exclusively with shipment of tax grain down the Nile, to be collected in this district of Alexandria for transport onwards to Italy: P. J. Sijpesteijn, ‘*Varia papyrologica III*’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 100 (1994), p. 264; *P. Oxy.* LX 4063, l. 7 n.; on Alexandria as a transfer-point for cargoes from local to Mediterranean shipping routes: B. Sirks, *Food for Rome: The Legal Structure of the Transportation and Processing of Supplies for the Imperial Distributions in Rome and Constantinople*, Amsterdam 1991, pp. 103–105; for the *procurator Neaspoleos* (ἐπίτροπος (τῆς) Νέας πόλεως): the introduction to *P. Oxy.* LX 4069; Jördens, *Statthalterliche Verwaltung* (cit. n. 7) pp. 199–200; *P. Oxy.* LXXXIII 5362, l. 3 n.

6. ἐνροῶν. The apparent ink at the beginning, before an enlarged initial ε, is interference from ρ in line above. The participle (the traces do not suit ἐνόησεν) should govern τὰ γραφῆν[τα], either on its own (if, e.g., ἀν[ῆλθεν] is restored in l. 3)



Fig. 1. Letter of Q. Aemilianus Saturninus, P. Lond. inv. 2205 back
(© British Library Board)

or in conjunction with the main verb (in case of e.g. ἀν[έδωκε]). For the verb, cf. the petition *P. Ryl.* IV 621, l. 11: *πονηρότατον πρᾶγμα [έν]νοηθείσα ή Θαήσις*, ‘Thaesis, having been considered [to have done?] a very wicked deed’; and the honorific inscription *I. Priene* 69, l. 33: *τήν πείραν έλαβεν ου ψευδη των έννοηθέντων[ν]*, ‘he got proof by experience, and no false one, of what had been considered’.

8. *ύπερβᾶσαν*. The high juncture of the crossbar of ε to ρ is clear and excludes α in this hand; the expected, nearly vertical bow of ε is disturbed by a misplaced fibre. For the construction, but with a negative connotation in reference to a woman, cf. *P. Cair. Masp.* III 67295 p. 1, l. 20: *ύπερβ[άσα τ]ήν φύσιν τοις έργοις*, ‘having gone beyond nature in her actions’.

..... The scant traces could suit e.g. *τῷ καιρῷ*, construed with the following verb, ‘at the (critical) time’, ‘opportunistically’.

προενόησεν. The praiseworthy actions of the *beneficiarius* are described with a cognate of *πρόνοια*, a programmatic term with which the dispensations of prefects themselves were presented: A. Jördens, ‘Zum Regierungsstil des römischen Statthalters – das Beispiel des *praefectus Aegypti*’, [in:] H.-U. Wiemer (ed.), *Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Berlin 2006, pp. 93–94.

9. The traces do not favor *ἀξιοθείς*; [ή]σθείς, ‘being pleased’ (sc. with what the *beneficiarius* did), subject the prefect, has been considered, but what might have stood before it remains unclear: *καί [ή]σθείς* (or even *καί ήσθείς*) seems likeliest. For the use of *ήδομαι* in general, cf. *P. Oxy.* XLII 3069, a stylish private letter addressed to a *φιλόσοφος*, which opens *κομισάμενός σου τὰ γράμματα πάνν ήσθην*, ‘having received your letter, I was very pleased’ (ll. 3–4), but *πάνν* cannot be read here; for its use by superiors in reaction to benefactions, a letter of Caracalla to Ephesus, *I. Eph.* 2026 (with *SEG XXXI* 955; *XXXVIII* 1180), ll. 13–14: *εύφράνθην και ήσθην και πολ[ύ] μείζον προς τ]ήν Έφεσον φίλτρον έλαβον*, ‘I was gladdened and pleased, and much more charmed with Ephesus’. It is perhaps to be restored in a letter of Hadrian to Pergamon, *SEG LIX* 1424, ll. 27–28: *έγώ τ[οις έκει]ρου ναοις πολύ πλέον ή τοις [έμοις ήδ]ομαι*, ‘I am pleased by the temples of that one (sc. my father) much more than by my own’.

9–10. Apparently, the point of the covering letter is reached here: introducing a copy of the correspondence of the prefect with the *beneficiarius* concerning the shortfall in tax grain, which is now forwarded to the *strategi*. This enclosure is entirely lost, as the following meagre traces of three further lines (11–13) show no sign of a transition to a new document, probably rather continuing the instructions to the *strategi*: is the *beneficiarius* being held up to them as an example, or marked for special honours or privileges in their jurisdictions? Cf. the following note.

12. *μη ένεχομένω*. The sense of *ένεχόμενος* is usually of liability to penalties for breach of contract and similar (e.g. *SB XXIV* 16073, ll. 68–69) but might here extend to exemptions conferred on the *beneficiarius* as a reward.

14. ἀπαιτῆσαι καὶ τῆς ἀπαιτῶν καὶ τῆς [. There is no connected sense to this sequence, as far as preserved; the genitive is not expected with ἀπαιτέω, and the repetition of καὶ τῆς without any accompanying substantive is anomalous. The same writer responsible for the copy of the prefect's letter has probably set himself two verb forms from the same broad register (taxation) as the letter and possibly drawn (without attention to syntactic context) from its body, perhaps as a pen-trial in preparation for the copy itself.

APPENDIX

FRAGMENT OF A LAND REGISTER

Understanding of the original text, whose substrate was re-used for the copy of the prefect's letter, is hampered by a lack of close parallels and its damaged state, too fragmentary for translation. A text is offered here despite the remaining obscurities, in view of its interest as a rare example of a land register attesting the *monartabos*-tax on land classified as 'purchased' ((ἐ)ωνημένη: see 1 n.), with various other designations by land-use following. Although the *monartabos* designation first appeared for katoikic land in the Arsinoite and Herakleopolite nomes in the later Ptolemaic period, attestations in the Roman period cluster in the Oxyrhynchite (1 n.), and there may also be a reference to a known Oxyrhynchite *kleros* here (7 n.). Only the middle, including a top margin, of a left column and the first letters of a few lines of a right column remain in a small, fluent cursive. Complete internal dates for the sale of plots of land given in the first line range from year 42 of Augustus, 12/13 CE (probably his 21st year again as *Καῖσαρ* in l. 2, 10/9 BCE, and 33rd year again as anonymous eponym, 3/4 CE, in l. 9) to year 4 of Tiberius, 17/18 CE. References in lines 2 and 15 to two co-Augusti, for which the years are lost, nevertheless in context place the text no earlier than the joint reign of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (161–169); the other possibility is the joint reign of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (176–180), that of Septimius Severus and Caracalla (198–211) probably being too close to the date of the text on the back. The first of the landowners listed, of whose name only the termination -sios survives, was a veteran of the Roman army (ἀπολύσιμος στρατιώτης).

P. Lond. inv. 2205 front

16.2 × 16.6 cm

1st–2nd cent. CE
Oxyrhynchite

col. i

-].σιος ἀπολύσιμος στρα(τιώτης) ὠνημ(ένης) μβ (ἔτους) δια.....() (ἄρ.) γ δ (ἔτει)
Τιβ(ερίου) (ἄρ.) α (μοναρτάβου) (ἄρ.) δ
] τῶν κυρίων Σεβαστῶν ἀπὸ ὠνημ(ένων) ξ̄ (ἄρ.) ς ὠνημ(έναι) κα (ἔτει)
Καίσαρος (ἄρ.) λβ
-] . vac. (γίν.) (μοναρτάβου) vac. (ἄρ.) . [c. 5]
- 4] Ἄγ]αθὸς Δαίμων καὶ ὡς χρημ(ατίζει) ὠνημ(ένης) ὦν τῶν ἰδι[ων ..]
] ουμένης τῶ αὐτῶ (ἔτει) (μοναρτάβου) vac. (ἄρ.) αζ
] () (ἄρ.) ε (ἀρτ.) ι (μοναρτάβου) (ἄρ.) ρζd // (γίν.) (ἀρτ.) ρζd (γίν.) (ἄρ.) ριζd
 (ἀρτ.) ριζd
-] . [. .] . Καλλιστράτου κλήρου
- 8] ἀπὸ μὲν τετελευ(τηκότων) ὀμ(οίως) ω φυτ() ἐλαι(ν) (ἀρτ.) . δ . . [c. 10]
] . vac. . . [.] δη() () λγ (ἔτ.) . [.] (μοναρτάβου) [c. 10] —
] φυτ() ἀν(ὰ) αζ (ἄρ.) [.] . . [. .] . α (μοναρτάβου) (ἄρ.) . . [c. 10] (ἄρ.) [c. 5] . .
] . γῆς ἰδίας .. δι..... [.] . ἐδάφη .. [. .] vac. (μοναρτάβου) (ἄρ.) ιε
- 12] . κ (ἄρ.) [.] ιε . vac. ...
 τετε]λευ(τηκ) ὀμ(οίως) . φυτ() . [.]
] ἀμπελ() vac. (ἄρ.) // d η̄ (μοναρτάβου) . [.]
] . . τῶν κυρ[ίω]ν Σεβαστῶ[ν]
- 14] ἀμπ() ... vac. ἀν[(ὰ)] (μοναρτ.) ἀμφ[.] . [.]
] . . [.]
-

col. ii

- ο[
 θ[
 [
 4 [
 [
 κ[

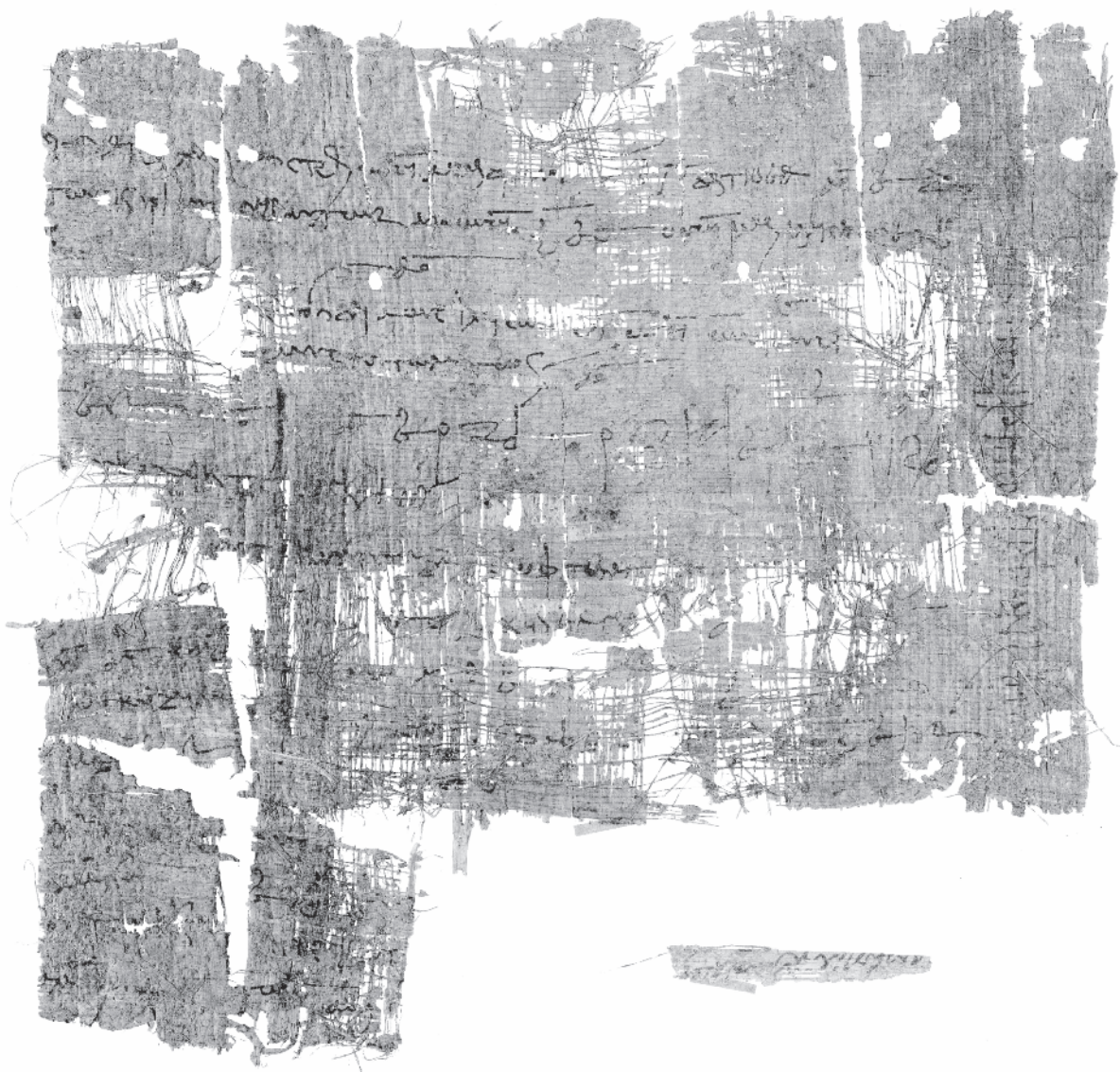


Fig. 2. Fragment of land register, P. Lond. inv. 2205 front
(© British Library Board)

i.1. στρ^{α'} ωνῆ μβ) δια..... ἄ ἄ δ) τλ^β ἄ pap. | α^τ ἄ pap. || i.2. ωνῆ pap. | ἄ pap. | ωνῆ κα) pap. | ἄ pap. || i.3. ἄ α^τ pap. | ἄ pap. || i.4. χρῆ ωνῆ pap. || i.5. ἄ α^τ pap. | ἄ pap. || i.6. ἄ ἄ pap. | α^τ pap. | ἄ pap. | ἄ pap. || i.8. τετελε ὀ pap. | φυ^τ ελαυ ἄ pap. || i.9. δηδ . λγ) pap. | α[^τ] pap. || i.10. φυ^τ αν pap. | ἄ pap. | α^τ ἄ pap. | ἄ pap. || i.11. α^τ ἄ pap. || i.12. ἄ pap. || i.13.]λε^τ ο pap. | φυτ) pap. || i.14. αμπε pap. | ἄ pap. | α^τ pap. || i.16. αμ pap. | αν α^τ pap.

Col. i

1. The 4 aruras consist of 3 purchased in the 42nd regnal year of Augustus (12/13 CE) and one purchased in the 4th year of Tiberius (17/18 CE), all taxed at the rate of 1 artaba per arura in kind (*monartabos*). This tax-category is best attested in the Oxyrhynchite during the Roman period: see *P. Oxy.* XLII 3047 with J. Rowlandson, ‘*P. Oxy.* XLII 3047, VII 1044, and the land tax in kind’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 67 (1987), pp. 283–292; eadem, *Landowners and Tenants in Roman Egypt: The Social Relations of Agriculture in the Oxyrhynchite Nome*, Oxford 1996, pp. 35–36: ‘*monartabos* used as a category term (...) is completely absent from the Arsinoite and Apollonopolite documents’; but note also ἐπὶ μοναρ[τάβου] applied to land in the Arsinoite in a petition to the prefect of the second or third century, *P. Diog.* 17, ll. 12–13; for the Ptolemaic background, and earlier instances in the Herakleopolite and Arsinoite: A. Monson, *From the Ptolemies to the Romans: Political and Economic Change in Egypt*, Cambridge 2012, p. 183.

δια(). Perhaps διακείμε(ναί), the suggestion of Gabriella Messeri; for this participle to denote land in registrations, see *BGU IV* 1034, ll. 11–12 (with *BL I*, 90): διακε(ειμένας) (sc. ἀρούρας) κατὰ παράθ(εσιν) ὄντων αὐτῆς ἀγοραστ(ῶν), ‘(aruras) lying parallel to the ones purchased by her’ (sc. from a named previous owner). The traces could also suit a double compound verb in διακατ-, but no parallels in land-registers have yet been found.

2. Perhaps the sense is that the 21 aruras purchased in the 21st year of Augustus (10/9 BCE) are a subset of a larger holding of 60.

5.]ουμένης. Possibly [παραχω]ρουμένης of ceded or [γεωρ]γουμένης of farmed land (sc. γῆς) respectively; for the latter, cf. the Oxyrhynchite land register *P. Hoogendijk* 32, ll. 16–18: προγεωργουμένη ὑπὸ κλη(ρονόμων) Αὔσιος Κάστορος καὶ Κάστορος Αμόιτος, νυνὶ διὰ Πατερμουθίου Αὔσιος κατὰ τὸ (ἦμισυ) καὶ Αμόιτος Θωνίου κατὰ τὸ λοιπ(όν) (ἦμισυ), ‘previously cultivated by the heirs of Ausis son of Kastor and Kastor son of Amois, currently through Patermouthios son of Ausis for half and Amois son of Thonios for the remaining half’.

7. Καλλιστράτου. Apparent additional ink between τ and ρ is interference from the tall ι in the line above. The toponym may have been [Ἡρακλέου]ς [το]ῦ Καλλιστράτου κλήρου, a known *kleros* associated with the Oxyrhynchite village of Sinaru: see A. Benaissa, *Rural Settlements of the Oxyrhynchite Nome. A Papyrological Survey* [= *Trismegistos Online Publications* 4], Leuven 2021 (3rd ed.), p. 356 (<<https://trismegistos.org/dl.php?id=19>> [last accessed 14 November 2022]); but

a *Καλλιστράτου κλήρος* is also on record in the Hermopolite: M. Drew-Bear, *Le nome Hermopolite: Toponymes et sites*, Missoula, MT 1979, p. 136.

8. *φυτ() ἐλαι(ν)*. Cf. *P. Ryl.* II 138, a petition complaining of damage to 200 *φυτὰ ἐλάινα* (ll. 11–12).

10. *ἀν(ὰ) αλ(ἄρ.)*. Apparently, an orchard or vineyard (cf. *φυτ() ἐλαι(ν-)* in l. 8 above) is taxed at an unusually low rate of 1 1/2 artabas per arura; for the expression, cf. *ἀν[(ὰ)] (μοναρτ.)* in 16 below. The same rate is reflected in *P. Oxy.* XLII 3047, but for arable land.

13. .[. Perhaps *ἐ[λαι(ν)]*, cf. l. 8 above.

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